

Alma Allen

*1970 Heber, USA
lives in Tepoztlán, México



Spanning a wide range of materials including bronze, parota wood, various types of marble, obsidian and stalagmite, Allen's work retains a singularly unique energy and original aesthetic. From sinuously thin bronze shapes to magmatic and smooth marble outpourings, Allen's biomorphic forms seem to rise up effortlessly from the artist's chosen material. Allen's artistic trajectory has seen him progress from humble origins, selling hand-carved miniatures on the street in Soho, NY, to his breakthrough moment of recognition after his acclaimed presentation at the Whitney Biennial of 2014.

Largely self taught, there is a spontaneity and energy to Allen's work that seems to bear little connection to the artistic movements of this time. In fact they have more in common, formally and perhaps spiritually, with the vast expanses of territory and the monolithic natural formations that seem to have punctuated his life: Utah, where he grew up; Joshua Tree, California, where he lived for several years; and Tepoztlán, Mexico, where he currently has his studio, about 50 miles out from Mexico City. Rocks, branches, and unspecified biomorphic entities that exude a kind of prehistoric energy dominate his shows, their size and mass undermined by their apparent levity and effortless presence.

Alma Allen (b.1970, Heber, USA), lives in Tepoztlán, México

His most recent solo exhibitions include **Mendes Wood DM**, São Paulo (2023); **Museu Anahuacalli**, Mexico City (2023); **Museum Dhondt Dhaenens**, Sint-Martens-Latem (2023); **Mendes Wood DM & Van Buuren Museum & Gardens**, Brussels (2021); **Kasmin Gallery**, New York (2020); **Blum & Poe**, Los Angeles (2019); **Shane Campbell Gallery**, Chicago (2016); **Heath Ceramics**, Los Angeles (2009); **Play Mountain**, Tokyo (2009).

Additionally, his work has been included in group exhibitions such as **Lustwarande**, Tilburg (2022); **Mendes Wood DM at D'Ouwe Kerk**, Retranchement (2021); **Mendes Wood DM and The Gerald Luss House**, Ossining (2021); **MASA**, Mexico City (2019); **Palm Springs Art Museum**, Palm Springs (2018); **Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum**, Ridgefield (2018); **Whitney Museum of American Art**, New York (2014).



SELECTED
EXHIBITIONS



2023
Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo
Some Eyes

Widely known for his dexterity in handling materials as disparate as bronze, wood and various types of marble sourced from all over the world, Allen has turned his focus for this exhibition on bronze and on parota wood, also known as the Elephant-ear tree, native to the tropical regions of the Americas. Furthermore, the exhibition showcases Allen's recent interest in creating sculptural wall-pieces, rather than the free-standing floor sculptures that he is perhaps best-known for.

Allen's creative impetus for this series of works was put into motion during a recent trip to Egypt, where he was confronted with the country's monumental artistic heritage and ancient culture. He found himself particularly drawn to the visual symbolism of the eyes and the moon, which are ubiquitous throughout ancient Egyptian art. The eye, a universally recognized symbol of intellectual perception, enjoys a broader formulation in Egyptian culture: a pair of eyes, for example, would be painted on sarcophagi so the dead could see at the world outside. In Egyptian mythology, the moon is connected with Osiris, the god of the dead, and its phases are linked to the cyclical rhythms of birth and death.

Parota wood, which the artist has already incorporated into his practice before, appears in larger, essentially circular works, drawing on gestures that evoke organic forms. Meanwhile, the works made of bronze seem to mimic natural formations, archeological patterns, and evoke a mythological pantheon of references from as Egyptian murals to Pre-Columbian art. To a certain extent, the bronze reliefs in the exhibition are a continuation of Allen's work for his solo show at Museo Anahuacalli – a space designed by Diego Rivera as a “living” repository of primitive and modern artifacts – and further highlight the artist's deep interest and engagement with ancient cultures. Allen's forms are first made by hand in clay or wax models. They are shaped according to the artist's desires and then put through a 3D scanning process. The final pieces are developed in his studio in Tepotzlán, Mexico, in which a robot helps to finalize the large-scale process – but prior to that, it is the artist's hand that configures the relief, the formal arrangements, and the works' sense of fluidity.



Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2023



Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2023



Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2023



Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2023



Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2023

2023

Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City

Nunca Solo

Alma leaves the role of “the foreigner” behind to become the hermit who has journeyed from afar to decipher what this volcanic desert has in store for him. The Anahuacalli, landscape and object, sometimes functions like a shape-shifting vessel that carries you to the depths of a petrified ocean, tossing and dragging you on a non-linear journey. While this is happening and your heart is pounding in the darkness, you become yourself—and you end up being more you than the you that arrived at the start. The Alma of *Nunca Solo* is not the same one that arrived in Mexico. Here, Allen had no option but to abandon various certainties and allow himself to be vulnerable. Alma discovered that the only key to surviving the immensity of the human experience, to overcoming the insignificance of our existence, is company.





Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023



Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023



Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023



Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023



Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023



Nunca Solo, Museu Anahuacalli, Mexico City, 2023

2023

Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem

Not Yet Titled





Not Yet Titled, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, 2023



Not Yet Titled, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, 2023



Not Yet Titled, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, 2023



2022

Lustwarande, Tilburg, The Netherlands

Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis

Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis investigates the power of contemporary figurative and abstract sculpture as idols by presenting a connected yet very diverse group of works which, to a greater or lesser extent, consciously or unconsciously, refer to the tradition of devotional sculpture, the statue, the monument, the totem, the amulet and the talisman, all in their own individual way.



Godhead — Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead — Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead — Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



2021

Mendes Wood DM, Belgium

Alma Allen at Mendes Wood DM Brussels

Spanning a wide range of materials including bronze, Parota wood, various types of marble (such as the Mexican Orizaba and Rosa marbles), obsidian and stalagmite, Allen's oeuvre has been linked by art critics to the work of titans of 20th-century sculpture, such as Constantin Brancusi, Jean Arp, Louise Bourgeois, Isamu Noguchi, Barbara Hepworth, and Henry Moore. However, Allen's work still retains a singularly unique energy and original aesthetic that makes it almost instantly recognizable. Biomorphous forms seem to rise effortlessly out of the artist's chosen material – sinuously thin bronze shapes, or magmatic and smooth marble outpourings, for example. The artist's process is organic and so are his results, and it would appear that whatever form a sculpture takes, that form is somehow perfectly expressive of the raw material it was made from.



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead - Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



Godhead – Idols in Times of Crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, 2022



SELECTED
WORKS



Not Yet Titled

2023

bronze

67 x 70 x 6 cm

MW.AAL.057





Not yet Titled, 2021, bronze, 12 x 146.5 x 115 cm, MW.AAL.034





Not yet Titled, 2021, bronze, 78 x 86.5 x 91 cm, MW.AAL.025





Not yet Titled, 2021, parota wood, 54 x 216 x 60.5 cm, MW.AAL.012





Not Yet Titled

2023

bronze

90 x 100 x 9 cm

MW.AAL.048





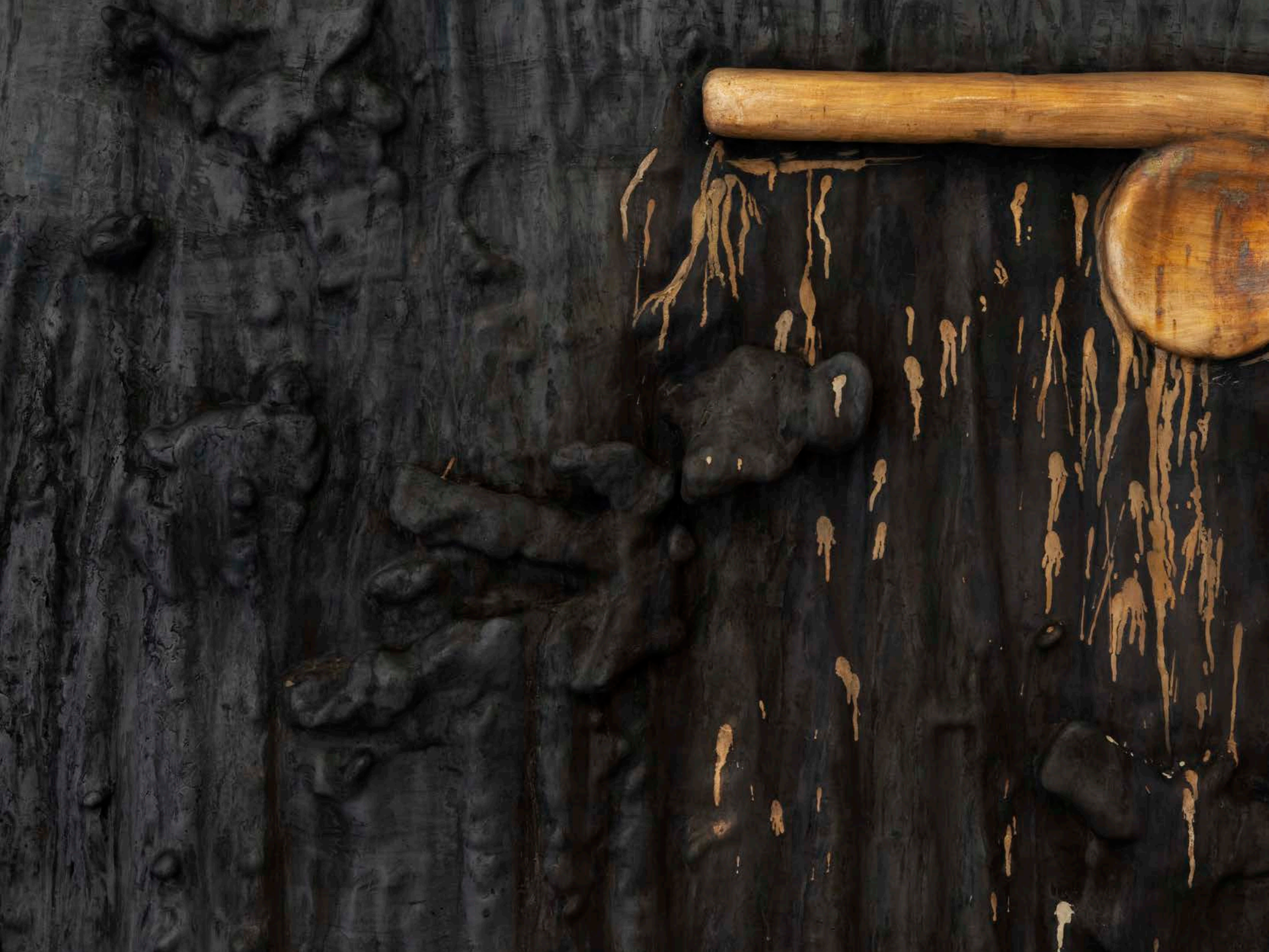
Not Yet Titled

2023

bronze

163 x 163 x 10 cm

MW.AAL.054





Not Yet Titled

2023

bronze

63 x 69 x 7 cm

MW.AAL.068





Not Yet Titled, 2023, bronze, 74 x 99 x 6 cm, MW.AAL.066





Not Yet Titled, 2022, bronze, 86 x 85 x 4 cm, MW.AAL.036





Not Yet Titled

2022

bronze

147 x 69 x 57 cm

MW.AAL.038





Not yet Titled
2021
orizaba marble
119 x 98 x 79 cm
MW.AAL.006





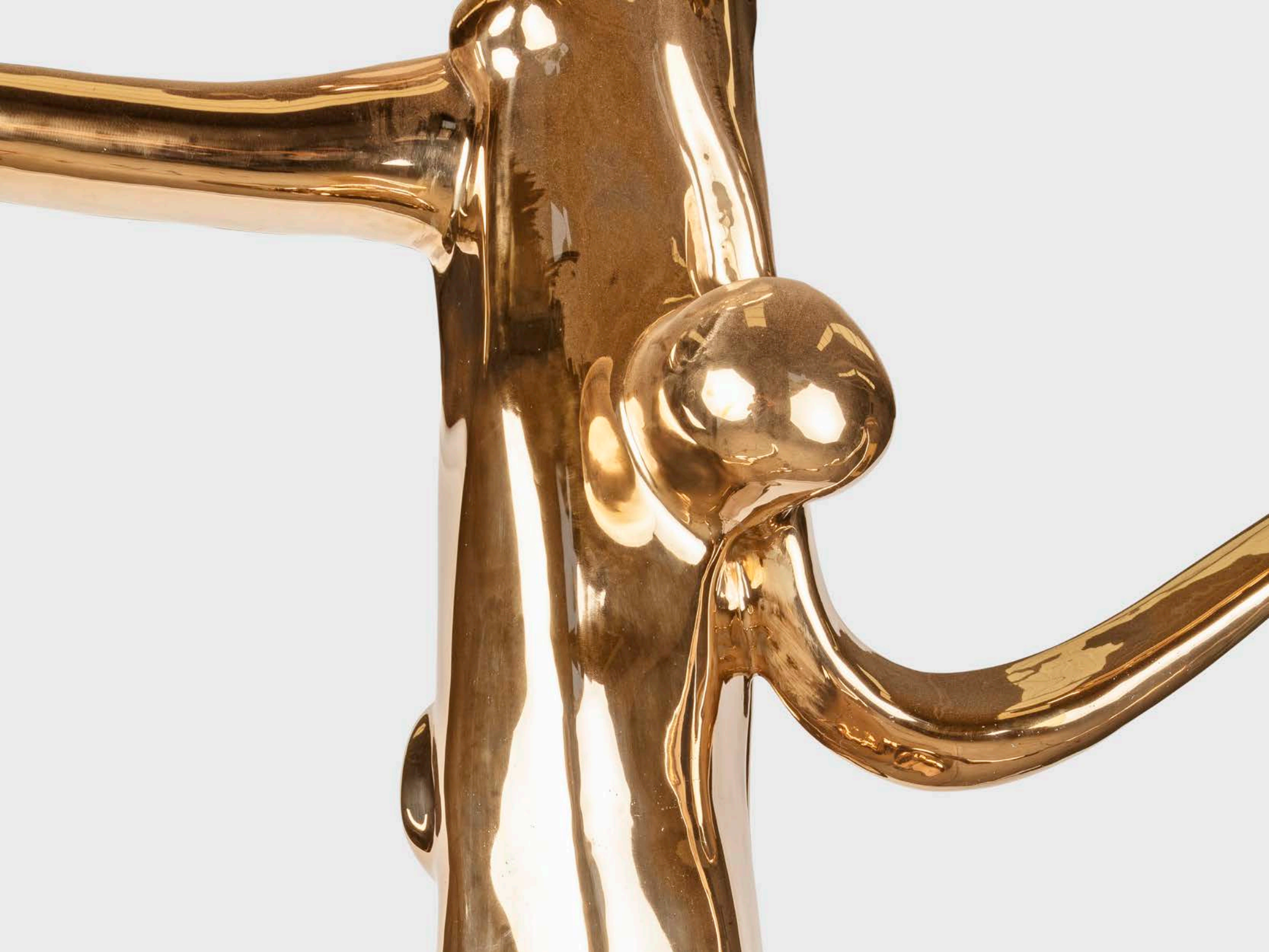
Not yet Titled

2021

bronze

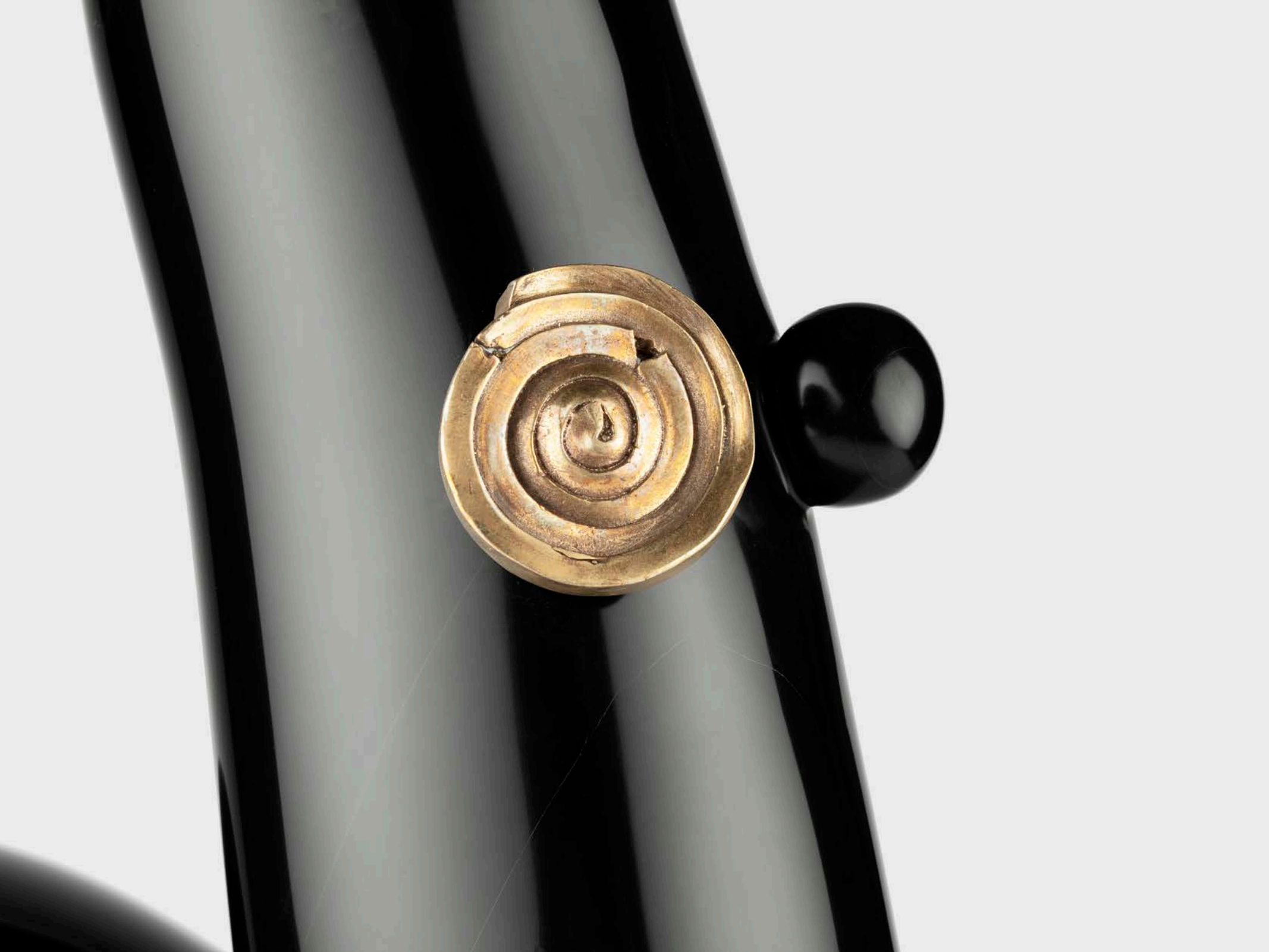
290 x 175 x 84 cm

MW.AAL.007





Not yet Titled
2021
orizaba marble
97 x 64 x 24 cm
MW.AAL.010





Not yet Titled

2021

bronze

19 x 183 x 110 cm

MW.AAL.013





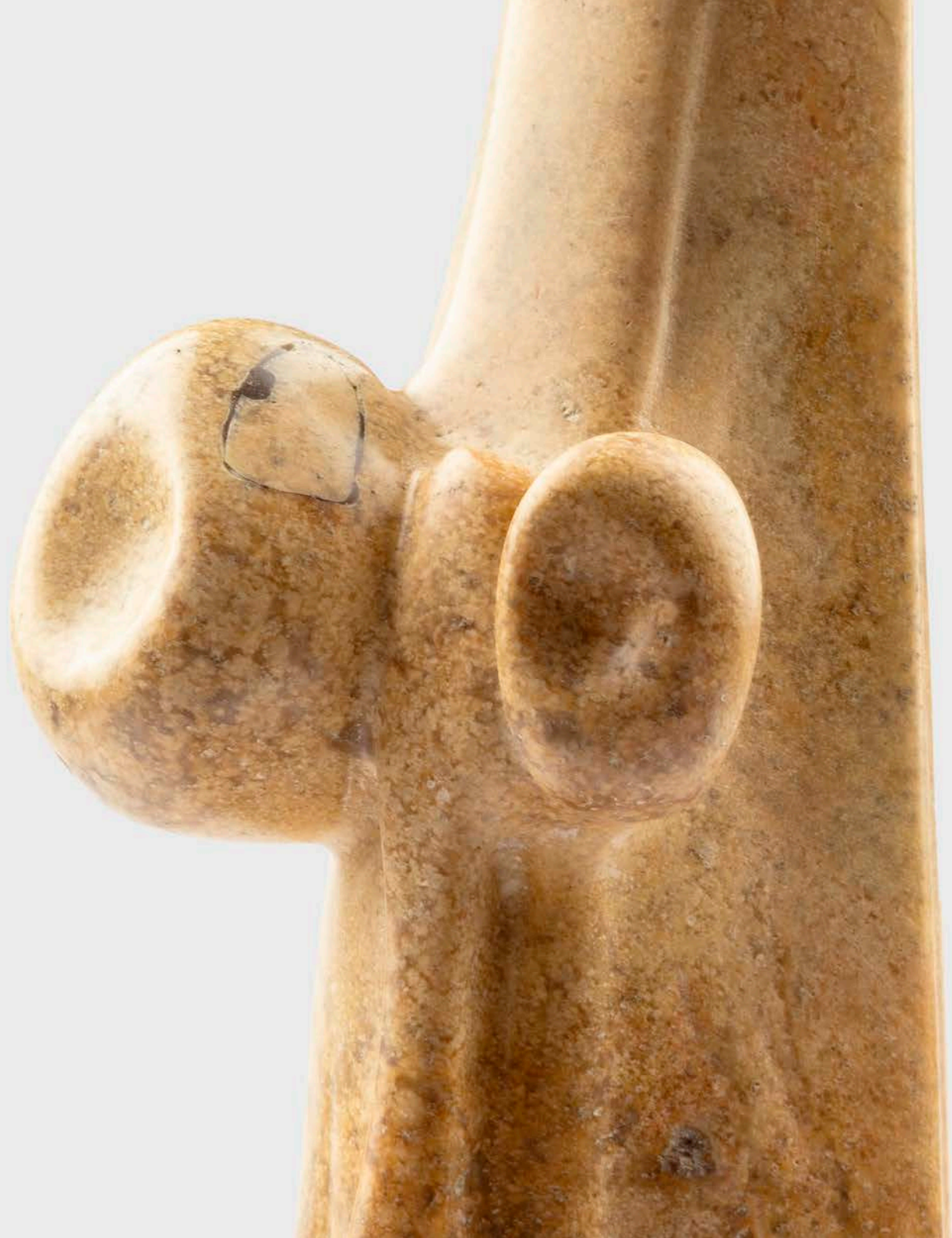
Not yet Titled

2021

marble

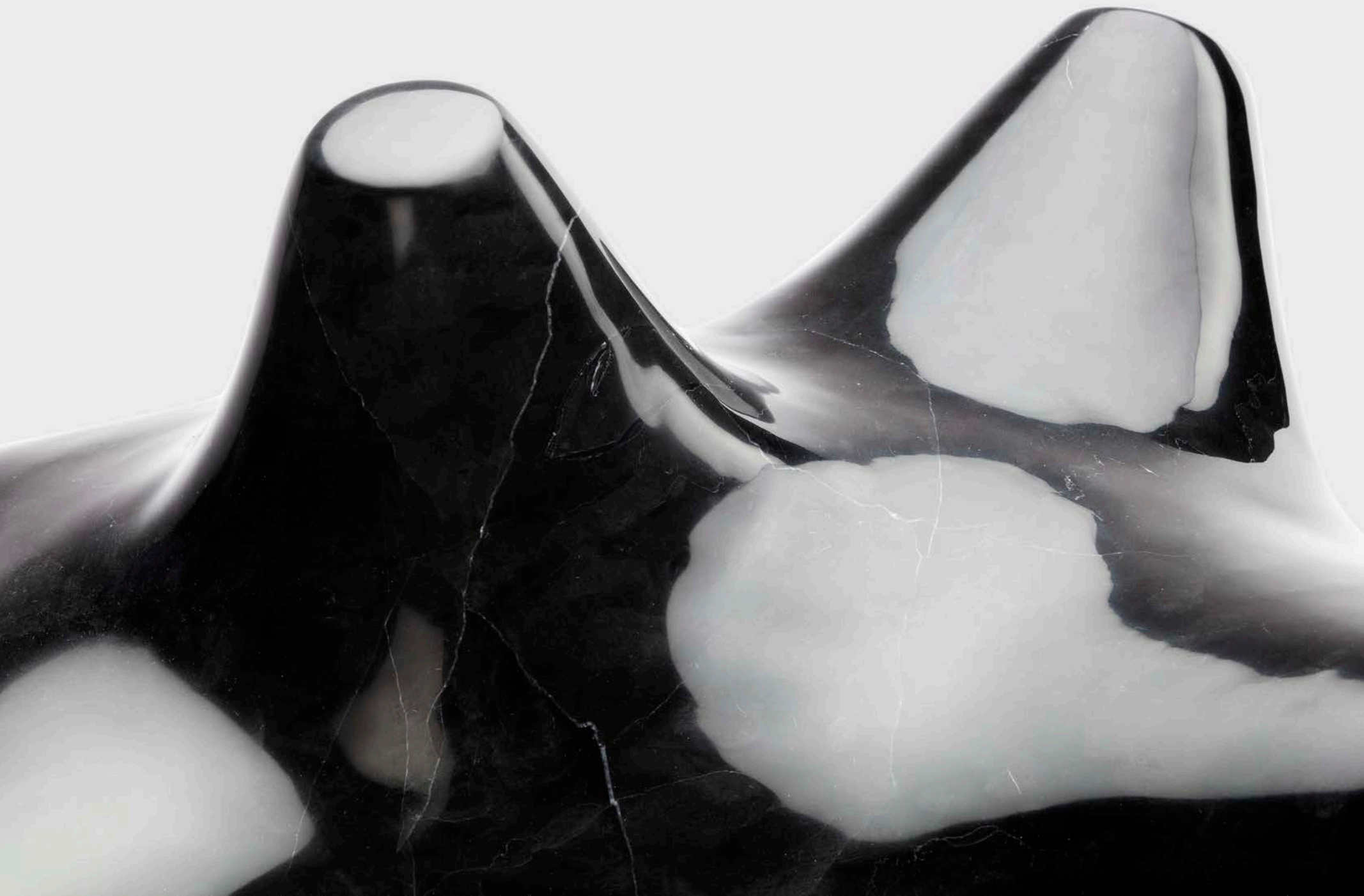
73 x 25.5 x 20.5 cm

MW.AAL.015





Not yet Titled, 2021, orizaba marble, 38.5 x 83.5 x 57.5 cm, MW.AAL.016





Not yet Titled, 2021, rosa marble, 61.5 x 76 x 65 cm, MW.AAL.017





Not yet Titled

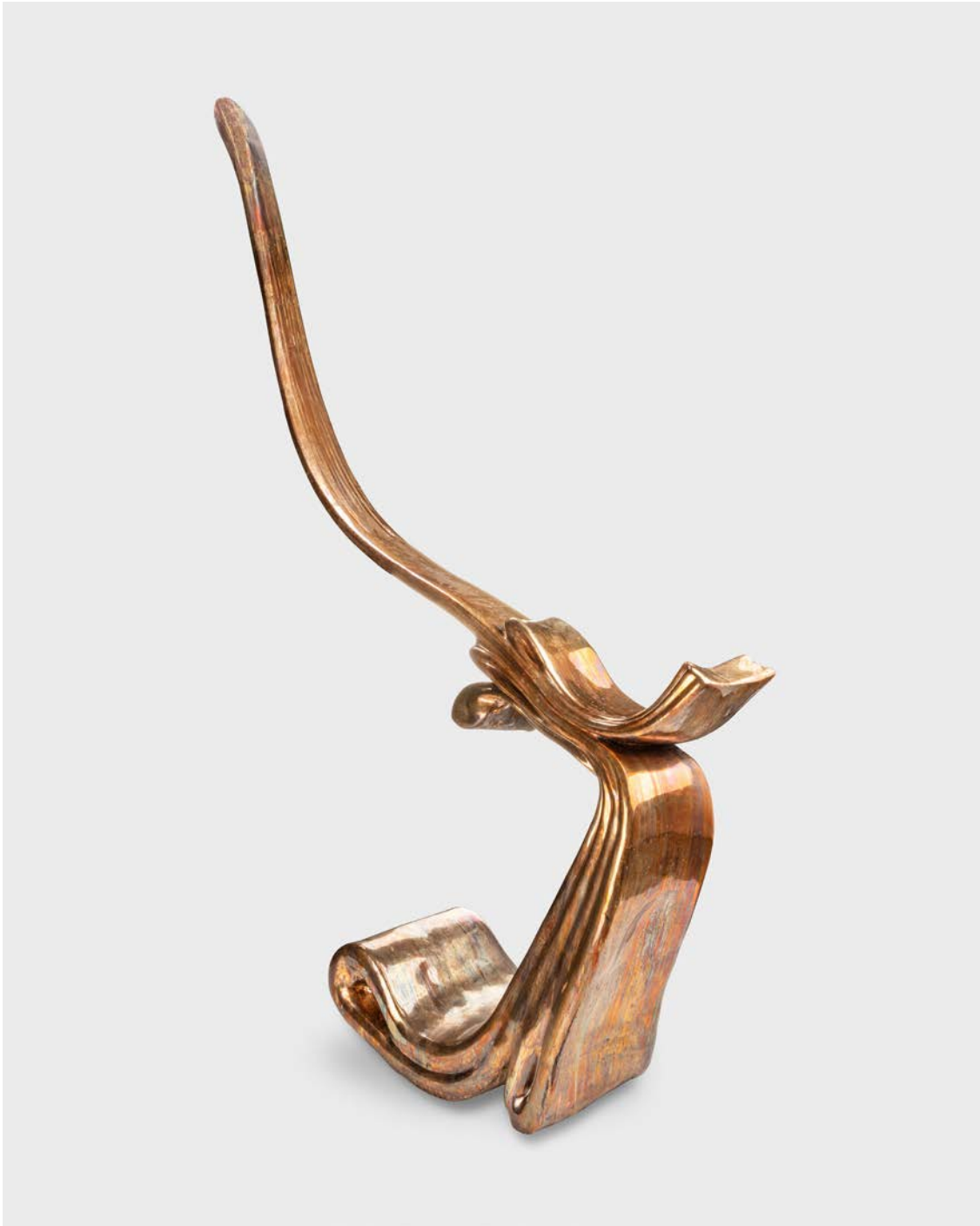
2021

bronze

303 x 76 x 63 cm

MW.AAL.033





Not yet Titled

2021

bronze

280 x 210 x 48 cm

MW.AAL.031





Not Yet Titled, 2014, bronze, 17.1 x 27.9 x 26.7 cm, MW.AAL.039





“I like to capture things in between, that are still progressing beyond the moment I make them,” Allen tells Artnet News. “I’m interested in that split second. The sculptures are often in the act of doing something: They are going away, or leaving, or interacting with something invisible. Even though they seem static as objects, they are not static in my mind. In my mind they are part of a much larger universe. They are interacting with each other as well, with works I made 20 years ago.”

— Fanny Singer
(*Artist Alma Allen’s Story Is Wilder Than Fiction*, 2020)

Solo Exhibitions

2023

Some Eyes, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

Nunca Solo, Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City, Mexico

Not Yet Titled, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

Alma Allen, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, USA

2022

Masa, Rockefeller Center, New York, USA

Poco Util, Ago Projects, Mexico City, Mexico

2021

Mendes Wood DM & Van Buuren Museum & Gardens, Brussels, Belgium

Kasmin Gallery, New York, USA

2020

Kasmin Gallery, New York, USA

2019

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA

2016

Blum & Poe, New York, USA

Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, USA

2015

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA

2009

Heath Ceramics, Los Angeles, USA

Hoodoos by Alma Allen, Play Mountain, Tokyo, Japan

2008

Sucking the Universe, Anthony Greaney Gallery, Boston, USA

1996

Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago, USA

1994

Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago, USA

1991

Cordell Taylor Gallery, Salt Lake City, USA

Group Exhibitions

2023

Elzéard Bouffier, TheMerode, Brussels, Belgium

2022

GODHEAD - Idols in the time of crisis, Lustwarande, Tilburg, The Netherlands

2021

Days of Inertia, Mendes Wood DM at D'Ouwe Kerk, Retranchement, The Netherlands

Between the Earth and Sky, Kasmin Gallery, New York, USA

At The Luss House: Blum & Poe, Mendes Wood DM and Object & Thing, The Gerald Luss House, Ossining, USA

2020

5,471 miles, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA

At The Noyes House Blum & Poe, Mendes Wood DM and Object & Thing, The Eliot Noyes House, New Canaan, USA

2019

Collective /Collectible, MASA, Mexico City, Mexico

Galería OMR, Mexico City, Mexico

2018

In Conversation: Alma Allen & JB Blunk, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs; traveled to Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, USA

Handheld, organized by Elizabeth Essner, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, USA

2017

HILL PEOPLE, curated by Benjamin Godsill, Performance Ski, Aspen, USA

2016

Gold Rush, De Saisset Museum, Santa Clara, USA

First Hand: Architects, Artists, and Designers from the L.J. Cella Collection, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, USA

2015

Small Sculpture, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, USA

2014

2014 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

2012

Function Dysfunction: Alma Allen, Ani Kasten, Adam Silverman, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2010

Alma + Adam + Commune + This Show, Heath Ceramics, Los Angeles, USA

2005

Pearce, Los Angeles, USA

2004

Pearce, Los Angeles, USA

2003

Pearce, Los Angeles, USA

2002

Pearce, Los Angeles, USA

1997

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York, USA

Museum and Collections

Palm Springs Art Museum

Villa Santo Sospir

Fondation Thalie

EKARD Collection

Mendes
Wood
DM

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