

Tatiana Wolska

Trash To Treasure

5 February – 22 March 2025

55 Riding House Street
Fitzrovia
London W1W 7EE



I DEV / l'étrangère is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Tatiana Wolska.

At the heart of Wolska's work is a fascination with disposability and waste and a quest to uncover the potential in what is discarded, rehabilitating the humblest materials to recast them as the ultimate commodity: the work of art.

Born in Poland, Tatiana Wolska's childhood was spent in the twilight of Soviet rule, defined by scarcity and the attendant disciplines of thrift and reuse, and a barter economy forged on a sharpened understanding of the exchange worth of redundant goods beyond mere monetary value. Moving in 2000 to France for her studies and settling in Belgium, she discovered a society riding a crest of consumerism: feeding on escalating cycles of gratification and disposability, whilst muttering about climate change and seemingly wishing it away.

This striking dissonance is at the heart of Wolska's artistic practice. Reimagining the radical principles of Arte Povera through the 21st century lens of environmental activism, she sifts for treasure in skips, collects detritus from friends, seeks out offcuts and discarded materials. "I put my hands in the rubbish and take something that nobody wants," she explains, describing how she cleans and "reorganises" them.

She applies a conceptual rigour to her wooden sculptures: adding nothing, but instead setting out to find the form in the material through the time-honoured practice of carving and sanding. *Decomposed Chair* is a ghost of its original, worn down and reassembled to a poetic shadow of itself. *Serpent* and *Coil* started off life as standard square units of timber merchants' wood: cut at angles, sanded and reassembled, they are rendered sinuous and dynamic, climbing upwards and curling around themselves. Other fragments find new life as swans and sensuously organic forms.

These biomorphic shapes are echoed in her *Modules* series, first seen in London at Frieze Sculpture and Sculpture in the City in 2021. Collecting discarded water bottles and sorting them by colour, the artist cuts them up, soldering them into bright, cloudlike baubles the beauty and whimsy of which belies their utilitarian origins.

Wolska is the winner of the 2024 Drawing Now Award and *Belladonna*, her accompanying exhibition, is on show at Drawing Lab Paris until 20 April 2025. She begins every day with coffee and a “morning drawing”. Tuning into the meditative cadences of the waking mind, she works intuitively, letting movement suggest form. The resulting images – oneiric, surrealistic and floating – seem drawn from the realms of dreams and the subconscious. She enjoys this freer way of working as a counterpoint to the hard edges of solid matter, yet the two aspects of her practice share a lexicon of bodily and botanical forms, evocative of internal organs, wisps of viscera, fleshy undulations, corals, pods and pupae. Whether using crayon, watercolour or more unusually biro, she presses at the tensions between hard and unforgiving line, and the soft puddle and blur of colour.

Trash To Treasure follows on from Tatiana Wolska’s solo exhibition *Leisure As Resistance* at Midlands Arts Centre and her participation in the Gangwon International Triennale: Ecological Art from Beneath in 2024.

Tatiana Wolska was born in Zawiercie, Poland in 1977 and graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts in Villa Arson, Nice in 2007. She lives and works in Brussels.

She has exhibited widely in Europe and internationally, including at Palais de Tokyo (Paris), FRAC Corse (Corte), FRAC Centre-Val de Loire (Orléans) and Domaine de Chamarande (Essonne) in France; Villa Empain/ Fondation Boghossian and Bruges Triennial in Belgium; Lustwarande (Tilburg), Holland; and Gangwon International Triennale in Korea.

In the UK, she has had solo shows at Midlands Arts Centre and HS Projects, and participated in Frieze Sculpture and Sculpture In The City.

She is the 2024 winner of the Drawing Now Art Prize (Paris), and was awarded the Salon de Montrouge Prize in 2014.

Her work is held in private and public collections including the Musée d’Ixelles, POC – Galila Barzilai Foundation and Fondation Boghossian in Belgium; and Château de Chamarande, Département de l’Essone, BIC Collection and FRAC Corse in France.