

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

New York

Ivana Bašić

MARLBOROUGH CONTEMPORARY | NEW YORK

545 West 25th Street

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Ivana Bašić's recent exhibition centers on two sculptures of humanoid creatures with beautiful gold glass placentas encasing their drooping heads: *I will lull and rock my ailing light in my marble arms #1* and *#2* (all works cited, 2017). They are being born out of chrome shells à la Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, 1486, as envisioned by H. R. Giger. Elsewhere, two head-size chunks of pink alabaster are rhythmically pulverized by silvery robotic hammers (*A thousand years ago 10 seconds of breath were 40 grams of dust #1* and *#2*). Particles accumulate on the floor.

There is no high or low in contemporary culture—but there are light and dark sides of the moon. Full illumination saps a culture that seeks interpretation. The dark side's total obfuscation suggests potential. Not since Charlie White's memorable project *Understanding Joshua*, 2001, has there been a show that connects to the collective science fiction consciousness with so little mediation and such brightness. But the incandescence dims as we begin to take in Bašić's extravagantly visceral sensibility and realize that these pieces are their own gestating form of terror, more werewolf than alien. They are becoming part of the cyclic, driven, and threatening primal world that we are hell-bent on destroying.

Now that people in this country are feeling the End Times approach—like Bašić's ruthless hammers—*Orwellian* is trending, and Philip K. Dick has gone from kook to prophet. Bašić knows where our speculative fictions are headed. Her work suggests that we have not yet tasted the trauma we have envisioned. We are merely testing its reality.



Ivana Bašić, *I will lull and rock my ailing light in my marble arms #1 (detail)*, 2017, wax, glass, breath, weight, pressure, stainless steel, oil paint, silk, cushioning, marble dust, 126 x 128 x 14".