

# REVIEWS

PARIS

## Anita Molinero

Musée d'Art Moderne

"Extrudia," Anita Molinero's recent retrospective, reminds us that art is (among other things) about the transformation of matter and/or meaning. In her process-oriented sculpture, Molinero does not render the human body, though she does allude to it through the objects and materials that she employs—to things inside it, to its role as container, to its surface, damaged or not, and to its desires and needs. Laying most traditional sculptural media to rest, just as she does traditional subject matter, she steers away from carving with ham-

mer and chisel, modeling soft matter with her bare hands, and casting metal. Ready-made base metals occasionally pass muster, however, as do cheap sawn pieces of wood nailed in place, collected clay tiles and glass vases, and concrete, all of which feature in her assemblage sculptures. These materials, some admittedly of considerable antiquity, are central to modernity. Embracing industrialization, chemistry, and technology, Molinero underscores how these sciences bring forth much that is good, as well as much that is not.

Recycled plastics serve

as her signature material. Consequently, her initial forms can begin with one or several found objects. On one level, her subject is glut—the rising tide of plastic things, which are here to stay. Plastic is cheap, capable of taking on an endless number of permutations, and easy to mass produce; it is seductive and equally poisonous to life. These conflicting characteristics no doubt appeal to an artist who wants to seize the present while signaling alarm.

Molinero's approach is to melt her appropriated objects, a creative process that, like more traditional methods involving marble or bronze, is intimately linked to an act of destruction, or rejection. The transformation of the object can be partial, as in *Sans titre (Amiat)* (2015), which consists of a large dark-green and light-gray plastic garbage container. One flank, melted and pulled outward, captures an odd image of velocity with echoes of Boccioni's super-human *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*. With wheels raised high on cinderblock supports, Molinero's ode to waste and wastefulness remains locked in place. A monument to global warming, for we who stay frozen in our ways?

The transformation of the original found object can also be radical, as in

an untitled wall-hugging sculpture (2019) from the "Fond de cuve" ("Bottom of the vat") series. Here, a blob of polypropylene resembling a damaged heart (the real thing, not the stylized evocation) was gently sprayed with acrylic paint. Color plays a singularly important role in Molinero's work. Her fearless handling of hue and texture comes to the fore in the relief *Croûûte criarde (Liquitex-ée)* (2016), an abstraction combining (inner) organic with (outer) rectilinear forms. Craters of uneven width and depth are melted out from a rectangular orange slab of extruded polystyrene, sprayed unevenly green around the center, and placed like a hazardous sample or relic inside an open, slightly larger purple Plexiglas box.

Play and torture, trial and error, risk-taking (good taste is checked at the door), hits and misses, and accident all play a part in Molinero's post-Dadaist, post-punk, do-it-yourself aesthetic. Her interest in breakdown, liquification, and ruin was precipitated by the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl in 1986, which occurred shortly before her career switched into high gear.

*Sans titre (La Rose)* (2003), one of the most indelible works in the exhibition, consists of a wall built up of thin plates



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**ANITA MOLINERO**

OPPOSITE:  
**L'Irremplacable  
Expérience  
de l'explosion de  
Smoby,**  
2010.

PVC shed and wood,  
400 x 450 x 150 cm.

THIS PAGE,  
TOP TO BOTTOM:  
**Sans titre,**  
from the "Fond de cuve"  
series,  
2019.

Polypropylene and  
acrylic spray paint,  
81 x 74 x 14 cm.

**Sans titre (Amiat),**  
2015.

Melted bin and  
concrete blocks,  
308 x 208 x 150 cm.

of extruded polystyrene laid one on top of the other and then worked with a blowtorch, thereby materializing charred wounds of varying outline, depth, and unctuousness. The appearance of damaged flesh has rarely been more strikingly achieved, in any artistic medium, as red streaks

into white, topped with a dissolving black crust. Seldom has sculpture taken on the creaminess of oil painting with such gusto. The flamethrower as metaphor for the brush, and more, brings up artistic precedent (Otto Piene and Yves Klein), while other works resonate with additional anteced-

ents (Duchamp, Dalí, Burri, Rauschenberg, Chamberlain, César, Arman, Benglis, and Koons). The destructive gestures and savage energies let loose in Molinero's work provide a haunting evocation of violence, war, and our uncertain, heat-saturated future.

—MICHAËL AMY

