

Susana Guerrero

MOTHER, CONSUMED

March 18 – May 15

In *Mother, Consumed*, her second solo exhibition at 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel, Susana Guerrero presents a collection of objects that explore the symbiosis between mother and child during gestation, that precarious period when two lives are inextricably intertwined and a woman shares of her own organs, sustenance, and spirit so that a new, fully autonomous being might spring into the world. Partially inspired by the Spanish-Mediterranean myth “La Mare dels Peixos,” in which a woman surrenders her own flesh to engender several other lives but is then parthenogenetically reborn, these works bear witness to that mysterious passage from unity to duality through which we all go at the inception of our lives, and which neither mother nor child ever fully leaves behind.

Guerrero’s works merge the traditionally feminine process of weaving with materials more commonly found in the historically male realm of mechanized mass fabrication. In *Arrancarse los Dientes (Tear off Teeth, 2018)*, a handful of ceramic human teeth rest inside a delicate womblike cage fashioned from thin strips of metal and the sharp thorns of the medicinal Agave plant. Gnashing, tearing, healing, and feeding are forced into an uneasy symbolic accord. A similar thorny cage is seen in *La Madre (The Mother, 2020)* as the bottom of a corset woven from red insulated electrical wire that flows down the wall and onto the floor and then transforms into a wavelike blue flood, hinting at the deep interconnection between the natural cycles of menstruation and the ocean’s tides. In contrast, some works in the show use a more blatantly industrial sheen to parody the softness of flesh, as in *Bomba de Leche (Milk Bomb, 2009)*, a hard ceramic sphere covered with gilded baby-bottle nipples, setting up an unsettling tension between warm maternal instinct and cold self-protection, and perhaps the idea that there’s strength to be gained through such self-surrender.

The exhibition’s grandest statements are found in two visually and thematically related works. The first, a series of pieces from 2018 and 2019 titled *El Mal en Tí (The Evil in You)* and *El Mal en Mí (The Evil in Me)*, is presented as a wall-wide display of five forms in black electrical wire with enameled ceramic, brass, and leather elements woven in. In addition to another corset with shiny red toothlike pendants dangling from tentacle-like straps, there are more amorphous scarf-like and sock-like shapes that are by turns uterine, serpentine, and intestinal. The second piece, *La Desollada (The Flayed Woman, 2018)*, features a red wire form with thin, leaflike brass blades that suggests a strange otherworldly flower, from which flows undulating red tubes that resolve themselves into the shapes of lungs, kidneys, heart, stomach, and liver. In addition to the previously mentioned theme of two lives unified during gestation, the titles and forms of these works reflect a deep ambivalence about motherhood, gender, and biological destiny that runs throughout the show. Guerrero’s works don’t want to give us easy answers about the complex, lifelong web of tensions that exist between mother and child; instead, they pose whispering but insistent questions that are meant to get under our skin and linger for days or years to come.

Susana Guerrero is a Fine Arts PHD, Miguel Hernandez University, Elche, Spain (2012). She received an Advanced Studies Award (D.E.A.), Miguel Hernandez University, Elche (2007), and graduated Sculpture and Print, Polytechnic University in Valencia, Spain (1996-1997). She is a professor at Miguel Hernandez University, Fine Arts Campus, Altea, Spain, since 2003. She is also the recipient of numerous fellowships and residencies in Italy, Germany, Mexico, and Greece, and has work in a dozen institutional collections throughout Europe and Mexico.

For further information or to schedule an interview with the artist, please e-mail us at info@532gallery.com