

DANGEROUS CARGO

One of the most fascinating characteristics of art lies in the fact that, beyond the ideas that constitute the starting point of a project, the development of creative and practical processes often leads us to results completely different from what we initially envisioned at the beginning of the journey. Such is the case with the set of pieces that make up Sofia Donovan's current exhibition, titled "Dangerous Loads." In these new works, the artist reformulates a part of what has been a constant in her nearly three decades of career: that is, to tangibly embody the human condition, particularly in regard to - as the artist herself has once stated - "the constant tension between life and death, order and chaos, beauty and cruelty."

Continuing a recent series in which she addressed notions of ruin, decay, and resilience, Donovan has this time elaborated her proposal around a central element that gradually appeared in her personal imagery during the turbulent recent years of pandemic and social upheaval in Chile: that element being none other than the idea of a bomb. Thus, starting from this artifact (and all the connotations and readings that can be derived from it), the artist has continued her exploration in the realm of experimental ceramics.

With the aim of generating art as intuitively and spontaneously as possible, and moving as far away as possible from an academic and erudite approach, Sofia Donovan freely examines the symbolic and visual implications of this initial idea. She takes us to a dizzying, surreal, and fractured territory where she unfolds her particularly bizarre sense of form, color, textures, transparencies, and proportions. Midway between seduction and the grotesque, the artist offers us a sinuous and sharp psychological landscape, mysterious and unsettling, a satirical exorcism of the tragedy that is reality. Whether on the brink of explosion or having already detonated, these visual "bombs" evoke the great collision between the world of nature (plants, minerals, and animals, our personal well-being, our mental and physical health, our connection with the sensory, etc.) and the world of culture (social conflicts, politics, education, economy, cinema, music, fashion, etc.).

Here, we encounter not only anger, rebellion, tearing, devastation, and shrapnel, but also the explosion of life from the Cambrian era, with marine corals, underwater geometry, rhomboidal prisms, algae and larvae,

germinating seeds and budding flowers, ceremonial offerings (hearts and other vital organs torn away at once): an apocalyptic and psychedelic vision that bursts and sparkles like incandescent lava flowing into the sea.

Cristián Silva, August 2023