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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 30 Jan. 2023

ALICJA KWADE

SILENT MATTER



Obsidian material used by Alicja Kwade for the exhibition *Silent Matter*. Courtesy of the artist © 2023. Photo by Adriana López.

OPENING RECEPTION: February 7, 2023; 6-10pm

February 7 – April 22, 2023

OMR | Córdoba 100, Col. Roma, 06700, Mexico City

OMR is pleased to announce the opening of ***Silent Matter***, the first solo exhibition in Mexico by German-Polish artist **Alicja Kwade**, taking place during Mexico City Art Week in our main exhibition space in Colonia Roma.

In *Silent Matter*, Alicja Kwade explores and questions the structures of our reality and nature of things, in this wide spectrum she reflects upon the perception of time in our daily lives and social systems. Creating immersive experiences based on complex concepts of time, space, philosophy, and science – all of which are themes materialized in her works – her enigmatic sculptures and installations make us question our perception of reality. “My efforts to understand and represent something I can barely grasp, and my failure to do so, bring forth my work,” said the artist.

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In an effort to save unnecessary transport routes and to work more intensively with local craftsmen, Alicja Kwade has decided to produce many works for *Silent Matter* in Mexico using local materials, such as obsidian – a naturally occurring volcanic glass formed when lava extruded from a volcano cools rapidly. Interested in obsidian's intrinsic properties related to heat, power, and the universe at large, the material presents a new opportunity for Kwade to explore its reflective qualities for a new body of works that give title to the exhibition.

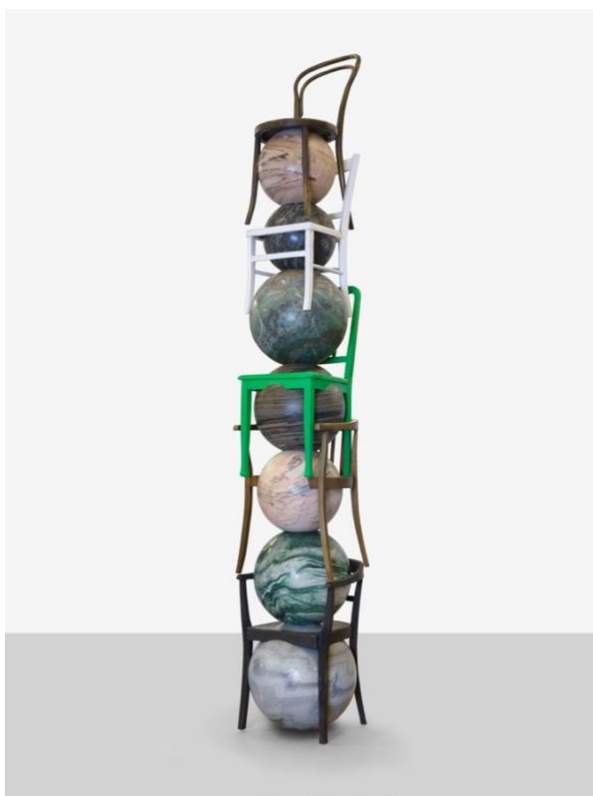
For this new body of work, *Silent Matter*, the artist has sourced rare, large raw obsidian stones from Mexico which have been finely and precisely sliced down the middle and highly polished to accentuate the black mirrored quality, allowing for a deep, dark surface with which the artist intervenes. This new material is combined with an older element from her work, black KAISER Idell lamps, which the artist places facing the inside of the stone's now flat, polished surface providing a reflection and revealing only a faint halo of light emanating from the round head of the lamp. It seems as if the lamps are trying to illuminate the dark matter, provoking its own reflection and appearing as a ghostly double. Mirrors and their quality to alter perception are an often-used material in Kwade's oeuvre, for example with the iconic artwork *Parallelwelt* (2007/2008).

In *Silent Matter*, with the interaction between the two essential elements – light and matter – it seems that the lamps attempt to revive the heat of the volcano that birthed the stones, and in this sense the very heat and power of the Earth's core, connected to the planetary origin of life. In addition, the obsidian stone's deep black surface, together with the light, remind us of the vast darkness of the Universe and astronomical events in its unfathomably long history from its creation to the present day. However, with this mystical material obsidian, one must also inevitably think of cultic actions, as this material was once used to carve out gods and goddesses in this region of Mexico – secrets which the lamps apparently intend to illuminate, yet remaining closed off from the viewer as the light turns away from us and perfectly faces the polished surface of the stones.

Alicja Kwade's sculptures are an exploration of three-dimensional space and the parameters of our perception, and in this exhibition are also displayed several mobiles of varying scales that float overhead and arise from the floor, as constellations of natural stones which act as symbolic depictions of orbiting planets or particles held in place by unseen forces made visible. Their stones hold the compressed time and knowledge of the Universe, as their compositive elements are the very ones that helped to establish life on this planet.

With *L'ordre des mondes* (2022), a new work developed from the series *Siège du Monde*, the viewer is presented with an ironic examination of the position of a human in space, on his own planet and society in a complex system of hierarchy and power. The solid stone spheres are reminiscent of different worlds or planets and stand for the possibilities of alternate realities. With bronze cast chairs placed atop each sphere, the artist makes an ironic metaphor of the need of humans for positioning, and our desire to rise above others for domination. Reminiscent of Piero Manzoni's *Socle du Monde* (1961), one

can literally sit atop the world and ponder these existential questions. In the case of *L'ordre des mondes*, Kwade presents the opportunity to sit atop an entire galaxy – a symbolic throne standing on the shoulders of another throne, like a pillar of power. Inevitably, this symbolic structure draws similarities to the characteristics of colonialism and systems of power and domination; one throne succeeding the other in an endless desire to reach the sky and elevate ourselves in something resembling the Tower of Babel. Likewise, the use of the totemic form brings forth references to indigenous art and spiritual and cultural expression, however with the use of recurring materials for the artist, being bronze casts of different chairs connected to solid stone spheres.



[1] Alicja Kwade, *L'ordre des mondes* (2022). [2] *Rocking* (2022). Courtesy of the artist © 2022. Photos by Roman März.

EDITOR'S NOTES



Alicja Kwade © Christian Werner.

ABOUT ALICJA KWADE

Born in Katowice, Poland, Alicja Kwade studied at the University of the Arts in Berlin and graduated in 2005. While she was there, she did an exchange for one year at Chelsea College of Arts in London, England. In 2017, the artist participated at the 57th Venice Biennale *Vive Arte Viva* showcasing her cosmological work, *Pars Pro Toto* (2017). In 2022, Kwade presented *Au cours des mondes*, curated by Jérôme Sans with the support of kamel mennour, Paris, as part of Paris+ par Art Basel "Sites" program, Place Vendôme, Paris.

Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Berlin; Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Dallas Contemporary; Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours; Blueproject Foundation, Barcelona; ESPOO Museum of Modern Art; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Fondazione Giuliani, Rome; Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich; YUZ Museum, Shanghai; de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam; Kunsthalle Nürnberg; Kunsthalle Schirn Frankfurt/Main; Haus am Waldsee Berlin; and on the occasion of the award ceremony of the Hectorpreis 2015, at Kunsthalle Mannheim. She has been included in group exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery, London; 57th Venice Biennale; Madam, Luxembourg; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach; Kunsthalle Wien; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; and CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco. She was the recipient of the

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Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2019 Roof Garden Commission. In 2015-2016, Public Art Fund commissioned "Against the Run," an installation in New York's Central Park.

Alicja Kwade's works belong to many important international private and public collections, such as: Burger Collection, Hong Kong; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart, Germany; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC, USA; Isabel and Agustín Coppel Collection (CIAC), A. C., Mexico; LACMA - Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; MACBA Collection, Barcelona, Spain; MATE - Mario Testino Museum, Barranco, Peru; Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany; Sammlung Boros, Berlin, Germany; Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf, Germany; Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China; and Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK, among others.

ABOUT OMR

OMR is a contemporary art gallery located in Mexico City. Founded in 1983 by Patricia Ortiz Monasterio and Jaime Riestra, the gallery is located in the Roma neighborhood, which is now recognized as the leading area of Mexico City's artistic scene. OMR represents emerging and established contemporary artists and since its beginning, has been a major influence of the arts in Mexico, showing avant-garde artists that have now become some of the referential points of the Mexican contemporary art scene. Among the fairs in which OMR participates are Zona MACO (Mexico), Art Basel (Switzerland), Art Basel Miami Beach (USA), Frieze London (UK), and Frieze Los Angeles (USA).

Instagram: @galeriaomr

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For more information, images, or inquiries, please contact Jacob Flood: jacob@omr.art

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