

# M+B

ARTSY

20 Artists to Watch at The Armory Show

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Portrait of Nevine Mahmoud in her Los Angeles studio by Emily Berl for Artsy.

Two years ago, Mahmoud carved an erotic peach from a slab of stone in what would ultimately spark a daring new body of work for the young sculptor. This week, in her debut at The Armory Show, the series culminates in a collection of handcarved forms that reference elements of the human body—including a lone tongue, a pair of lips, and a single breast.

“They’re disembodied body parts; parts without a whole,” says Mahmoud from her studio in a converted garage in eastern Los Angeles. Inspired by the fragmented bodies in works by Louise Bourgeois and Alina Szapocznikow, and the unsettling quality that can accompany even their most erotic or attractive forms, she laces beautiful shapes with strange, dark undertones. Though sensual, the sculptures are fashioned in hard stone and often affixed with metal and mechanical parts. “I’m always hoping to find a form that sits somewhere between familiar and bodily—something that you would recognize as your own, but something that’s also alienated,” she says.

The sculptures on view have been carved from alabaster, sun-yellow calcite, and opaque pink and white marble, using a traditional process that’s a departure from the plaster casting technique she employed for her MFA work at the University of Southern California. A particularly fruitful stone-gathering mission once led her to a stone-carving studio in Northern California, where she found a mentor in an older female sculptor. “That’s kind of how I’ve learned everything that I know,” she says of this new chapter of work, the next iteration of which will be on view in her fall solo with Los Angeles gallery M+B.