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Left: Jackie Brookner, *Opening I*, 1983. Painted bronze, 32.5 x 53 x 11.5 in.
Below: Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels, installation view of “a DEFECT // to DEFECT,” 2016, with detail of *Untitled (flooring)*, 2015, floor boards, shims, and plaster, 27 x 154 x 153 in.

Tongue Lounge (1994), a large, spoon-shaped chair made of earth and wood, is humorous and functional, resonating with Brookner’s interest in natural materials. She also worked with more traditional sculptural mediums, as evidenced by a group of small bronze sculptures, rather Giacometti-like in form and feeling. In the evocative and moving *Hand* (1980), long fingers extend upward. These works appear more personal, in part because of their smaller size, and reveal Brookner’s genuinely sculptural intelligence. The large, painted bronze *Opening I* (1983) was installed outside, next to the gallery entrance. Standing on four slender “legs,” the form consists of a long horizontal tube divided, or broken in half in the middle, each section continuing on in an upward curve toward the sky. Resembling a set of musical horns, the work displays Brookner’s lyrical sensitivity to the outdoors. Somehow she connected with land, sky, and water in a way that acknowledged and communicated the larger implications of human residency on earth while translating those concerns into formally accomplished and emotionally affecting visual works.

—Jonathan Goodman

NEW YORK

Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels Catinca Tabacaru Gallery

Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels re-built the floor and walls of the Catinca Tabacaru Gallery as part of her powerful installation. It seemed spare

while I studied it before the opening, but not after many hundreds of people jammed inside the relatively small space—and kept coming. The exhibition title, “a DEFECT // to DEFECT,” and its question, “How do we learn to change for a future we can’t imagine?” perfectly expressed the Trump election jitters experienced by many New Yorkers. This city—founded by the Dutch and

known for its support of immigrant rights, its tolerance, and its huge artist communities—is nervous about America’s future, not only for itself, but also for the world.

“A defect” suggests something flawed. It seems to be about letting acts of making be intuitive, even imperfect. The noun both contrasts with and parallels the verb “to defect,” which suggests running

away from something one is unwilling to support. Each work in the show offered a different expression of the title.

The pine planks in *Untitled (flooring)* burst up from the floor to create a bulging ovoid with both innocuous and threatening connotations—mound or artillery shell. It was a curious disruption—as though the floor were rising up in protest of its lowly function. Overhead, the classic, gold-painted tin ceiling was ripped open, with *Extrusion 5* hanging over the gallery entrance—a flower-like



wound that turned safety netting and plaster into a fragile form, casting its oblique shadow onto the nearby wall.

In *Emergent and Refulgent* (2016), more than a dozen pockets or craters, some with egg-like forms inside, were embedded in the newly built (fake) wall. Again the associations were unclear: Were these breasts with flat nipples, hand grenades, or just abstract shapes inside porthole-like openings? The title is loaded; something is coming forth, but it may not shine brightly—unless it's an explosive. It's as though the subconscious, or some other dimension, is emerging from inside.

Efflorescent 4, a wrinkled, urethane-foam wall relief installed on the opposite wall, puckered like angel wings or a rumpled sheet covering a body. Two geometric constructions, made from slender pieces of pine, formed triangles and spirals related to Bothwell Fels's earlier large constructions. Part of the fascination of these and other works in the exhibition was that the ruptures, the extrusions, the bulges, the cavities, and the constructions could be read or seen on many levels—including psychological, geophysical, metaphysical, and expressionist. Combining evocative titles with impressive carpentry skills, Bothwell Fels uses humble construction materials to make startling, provocative gestures.

—Jan Garden Castro

HILLSCHIED, GERMANY

Jochen Brandt

Kunstraum am Limes

Combining a conceptual foundation with elements of outsider art and archaic sculptural forms, Jochen Brandt's retrospective charted 20 years of multifaceted paths through six discrete installations. Each section presented ideas so highly concentrated and self-referential that subsequent galleries literally demonstrated the show's enigmatic title, "beyond this case."



Above: Jochen Brandt, *Die Stadt*, 1995/2016. Faience and cobblestones, 400 sq. cm. Right: Jochen Brandt, installation view of "beyond this case," 2016.

Brandt's mainly ceramic work stems from a creative process in which formal decisions are based on given material circumstances. His installations are hermetic, forming the impression of a landscape of clues in which everything is metaphor and nothing merely itself. Some of the titles are in English; Brandt plays on the gaps in meaning that result from translation, emphasizing the divide between the nature of his objects and their profound ambiguity.

Die Stadt (The City) reveals Brandt's interest in systems. Forty-two granite cobblestones and 45 identical miniature sky-blue ceramic house-forms are set in a sprawling grid on the floor. The cobblestones and the tiny houses are Lilliputian elements mirroring the illusory order of the contemporary city. The grid is only visible as such from two opposite ends. From this fixed view, the small, unevenly glazed houses stand in regimented lines separated by rows of crudely oblong cobblestones. Viewed from the other two sides, the measured symmetry of the grid falls into disorder, becoming an anti-Cartesian, staggered confusion of forms held within a square boundary.

out of lunch, which also deals with issues of scale and social systems, consists of four widely spaced, gracefully arching, 12-foot-long, poplar wood spoons accompanied by five large, black clay balls. The spoons have deep, oval bowls and long, thin stems; they only make contact with the floor at their ends. The ovoid, olive-like balls sit tantalizingly



near the bowls of the spoons, like spilled hors d'oeuvres. The spoon is a cultural artifact, what George Kubler called "a prime object." It is a symbol not just of the ritual of eating, but also of the desirability of things. Brandt's spoons are out-of-scale, Brobdingnagian; the unavailability of the balls speaks of frustrated appetites.

The penultimate installation combined two different bodies of large-scale, black ceramic objects—the *Lehmwerks (Mudworks) A, B, C, D and E* and three pieces from the "Tools of Enlightenment" series. Depending on the viewing angle, the smoky surfaces range from deepest black to rust to silvery gray. The "Tools of Enlightenment" are both pragmatic and ambiguous, suggestive objects with no visual relationship to utility. Though their oddness and obvious non-functionality stand in direct opposition to the Enlightenment focus on logic and rationality, they also echo that period's feats of invention. The *Lehmwerks* are even less formally defined. While seem-

ingly based on letterforms, they are, as Brandt describes them, a product of his gesture: "The size of the objects corresponds to the radius of my arms." They resemble thicker, more muscular, and totally abstract Giacometti figures; their utterly black, twisting extensions create objects that are, as Brandt puts it, "particularly concrete" and "as easy to grasp as scissor cuts."

—Kay Whitney

TEL AVIV

Eli Gur Arie

Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Hairless albino squirrels, darting here and there across a crowded floor or nibbling on quasi-scientific paraphernalia, formed a visual connection across the startling installations, freestanding assemblages, and zany reliefs in Eli Gur Arie's recent exhibition "Growth Engines." These sinister rodents, together with robotic metallic dogs, reflect the artist's unrelenting interest in genetic engineering and post-apocalyptic life; in this show, they played