

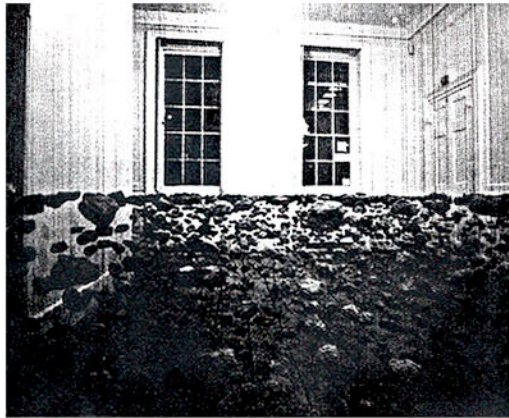
tema celeste

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cornelia parker

Frith Street Gallery
London

A recurring theme in Cornelia Parker's work is transformation—of taking one object, often a familiar, found piece, and through a process of explosion, compression, melting, or stretching, turning it into something else. Frequently, the final work seems to capture a moment in the process of this transformation, as if she has pressed the pause button during a violent rebirth. The works in this show continue this, moving objects out of their expected territory and into new dimensions, exposing hidden aspects of the familiar. In *Subconscious of a Monument* (2002), Parker takes large fragments of dry clay (ironically removed from beneath the Leaning Tower of Pisa where it was placed to prevent its collapse), and suspends them at various heights from waist-level to ground. The effect is a magical space-like landscape, as if the clay has been freed to move beyond its usual role as heavy foundation into a more beautiful, lighter existence. This supernatural atmosphere is continued in *Blue Shift* (2001-02), a two-part work featuring the negligee worn by Mia Farrow in the film *Rosemary's Baby*, which the artist purchased through



Cornelia Parker *Subconscious of a Monument*, 2002, soil excavated from beneath the Leaning Tower of Pisa, wire, dimensions variable.

an online auction. Displayed in a separate room, Polaroid images of Farrow from the movie, her face shown frame by frame as she realizes what she has given birth to, create tension. But by placing the negligee in another space and within a large light-box, Parker transports it out of its original fiction, transforming it into a ghostly apparition that floats towards the viewer.

Parker also exhibits a series of works made from gold wire. The pretty, abstract patterns seem initially almost frivolous, until the title, *Tooth Drawings* (2002), reveals that they have been formed from a mouthful of reclaimed dental gold. The violent image that arises from this is reinforced by *Spitting Secrets* (2002), exhibited opposite, in which the artist spat a mouthful of invisible ink which was then revealed through a burning process, creating a splash of liquid the color of dried blood. Here again Parker plays with the viewer's expectations, switching and contradicting the first impressions of beauty and peace to reveal a darker and more violent source.

Eliza Williams