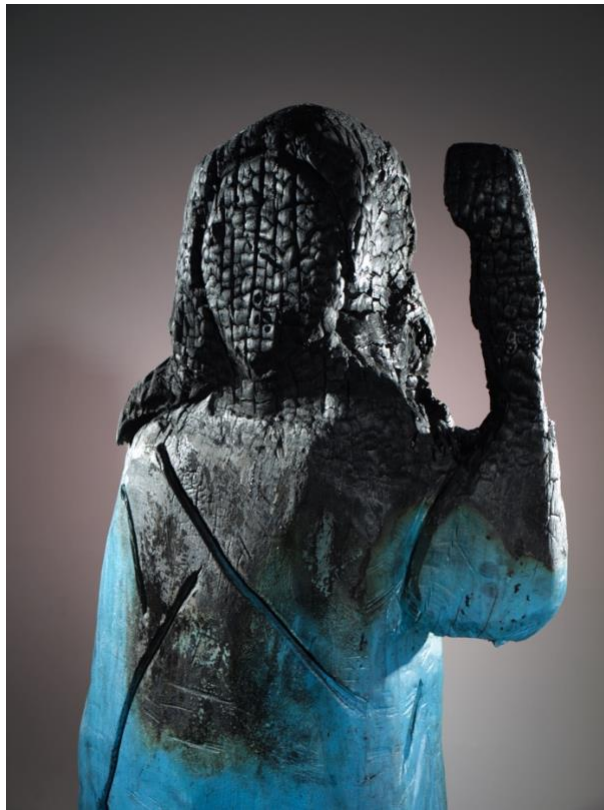


ALLOUCHE GALLERY

82 Gansevoort Street  
New York, NY 10014

## **Brad Downey** Melania and the Broken Feedback Loop

Opening: October 29 from 4pm to 8pm



Brad Downey, Wood Melania, 2020

Allouche Gallery is pleased to present *Brad Downey: Melania and the Broken Feedback Loop*, curated by Marko Vivoda.

The installation features the original wood Melania sculpture, carved out of a poplar tree by a local Slovenian chainsaw sculptor and installed in Sevnica, Slovenia, the town in which Melania Trump was born. The original sculpture, subsequently burned one year to the day it was

installed by unknown individuals, was deinstalled and cared for by Downey and the local community while plans were made to install a replacement sculpture. The exhibition will also feature three different iterations of the Melania sculpture in plastic, plaster and silicone, as well as two films. The first film, *Melania*, documents the construction of the sculpture by amateur chainsaw sculptor Maxi as well as examines the dichotomies between Maxi's life trajectory and that of Melania Trumps. The second film, a continuous loop of press feedback, clippings and interviews, highlights the global reaction to Downey's work and the meaning of the Melania sculpture juxtaposed against the current state of politics in the United States.

Text by Karlo Hmeljak (2020) for *Melania*, 2019-2020:

“The cause for the erection of the monument to Melania is Brad's first visit to Slovenia in the summer of 2018, when he discovered that it is the birthplace of the First Lady of his homeland. Another motivation could certainly be the aggressive anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies of her husband. So Brad decided to commemorate this contradiction named Melania together with a team of Slovenian colleagues and the local community. After choosing and buying the poplar tree and after meeting and bringing Maxi-an amateur chainsaw sculptor, born in the same month of the same year and in the same maternity ward as Melania-into the project, the monument was unveiled last year in Rozno, near Sevnica, on the day when the American people celebrate the declaration of their independence. One part of the art project is also the documentary film, a portrait of Maxi, which shows the crucial steps in the making of the sculpture. Brad and his colleagues then began to make replicas of the statue, based on the cast of the original. Exactly one year after the unveiling, on the 4th of July 2020, unknown perpetrators burned down the monument in Rozno. Brad then removed it, and joining forces with the local community that took care of the monument and its surroundings, began to plan the erection of a replacement. *Melania* is a multi-layered project that is simply not allowed to conclude by everything that is happening around it. All of *Melania*'s incarnations to date, except for the replacement, are presented in this part.”