



ANTONIA PIA GORDON

# HELL ON EARTH

MY TIME ICON NO. II

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Antonia Pia Gordon

**My Time Icon No. II:  
Hell on Earth**

Polyptych – Installation on wheels

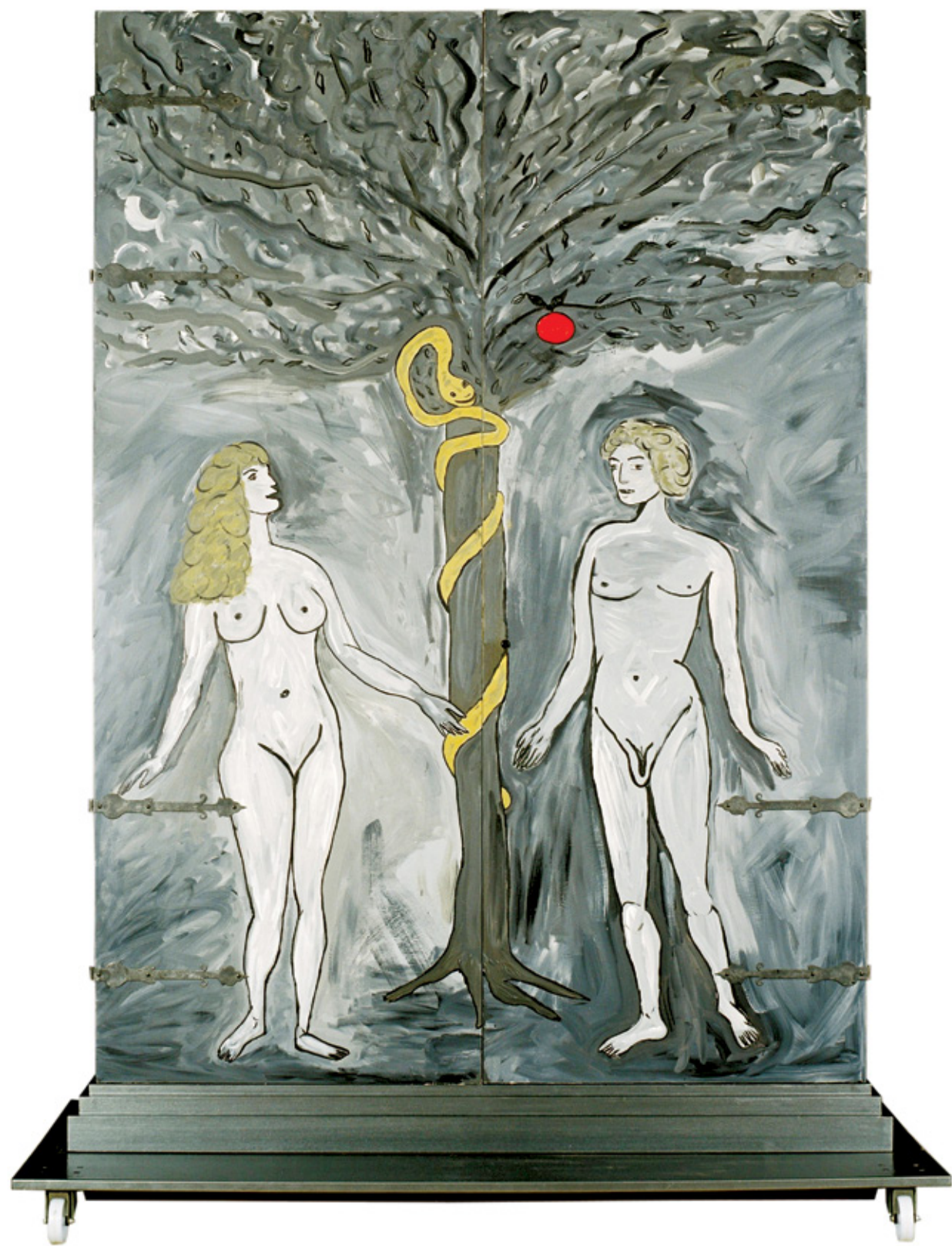
Diptych Outer gates: Paradise  
Triptych Inner gates: Purgatory

Interior: Hell

Mixed Media:  
Acrylic paint, wood, fiberglass  
and 230 Barbie dolls

Without base:  
H 260 cm x W 185 cm x D 42 cm

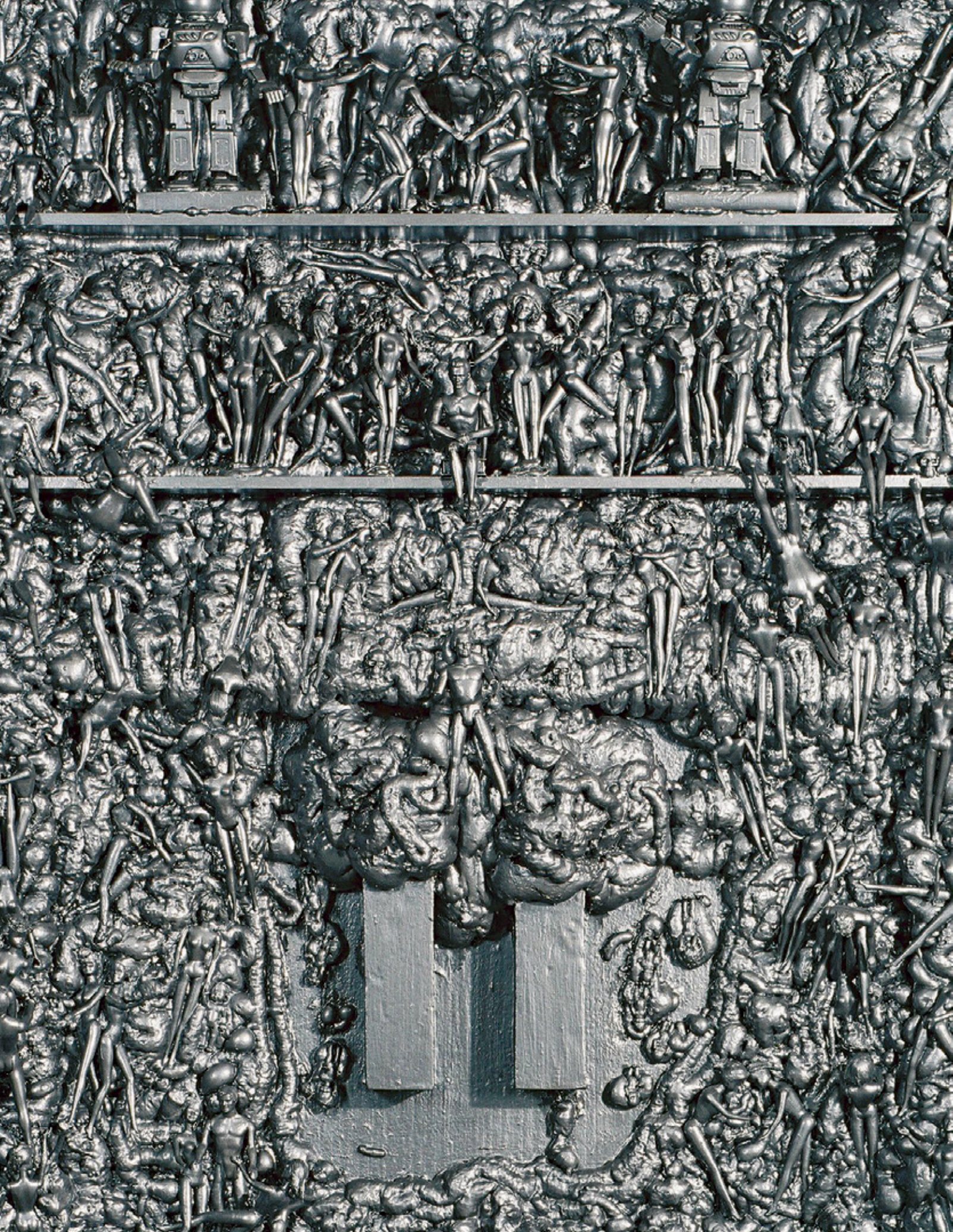
With base:  
H 275 cm x W 200 cm x D 80 cm



The World Trade Centre was a symbol of American economic power. James Dean was an American Idol, as was John F. Kennedy. When they died, a dream died with them.

Another American dream died with 9 /11: the dream of invincibility. Thus leading us into THE AGE OF BIASED SURVEILLANCE.





## PROLOGUE

### Hell on Earth

*Antonia Pia Gordon*

*Antonia Pia Gordon's* time icon *Hell on Earth* is a monumental witness to the aftermath of 9/11. The wooden cabinet mounted on a wheeled base that opens up to reveal more is clearly inspired by [Auguste Rodin's Gates of Hell](#) and integrates manifold and diverse Dante-esque elements.

*Hell on Earth* is an outstanding example of *Gordon's* talent in catapulting tradition into the modern with complete and yet epic ease. Entering the icon through a painting on the doors of the icon in a style, which bows its head to Hieronymus Bosch but at the same time in its topical setting is reminiscent of M.C. Escher's and Lucas Cranach the Elder's Garden of Eden and which symbolizes everyone's heaven and thus integrates classical topics with modern and naive styles. The viewer is faced with a stunning and highly expressive sculptured work including over 230 dolls and toys covered in layer after layer of metal-like paint with the integration of different powerful statements of essential human motivations, actions and attributes.

Two robots stand on the Bible representing apocalyptic struggles, automation and future struggles. These stand above the inferno of the towers, which is enhanced with tumbling children. Throughout this work Dante-esque morals of lust, envy and greed and attributes of human nature such as love and beauty can be found, which have their inspiration in [Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights](#) and also in [Boccaccio's Decamerone](#).

It is typical of *Gordon* to have chosen [Dante's Divine Comedy](#) as one of her sources of inspiration for her works, since many scholars see parallels between Dante's Divine Comedy and early Islamic philosophy as well

as with [Resalat Al-Ghufran](#), thus uniting universe values and universe questions and underlining *Gordon's* constant refrain from religious and political bias in all of her works. Again *Gordon's* fascination with dualities becomes clear in the spiking of *Hell on Earth* with the [C.G. Jung shadows](#) of the unconscious and conscious self, of the hidden and apparent attributes of people.

The toys integrated in this work of art were each separately grounded and painted before being applied to the painting to become an integral part of a modern classic. The use of toys in this work of art that took 3 years to complete takes toys out of their comfort zone in a typical *Gordon* combination of the good and the bad, but also bears witness to the fact that child-like symbols can go on to integrate themselves into classical forms just as the child in us develops into the complete adult. *Gordon* manages also with this seemingly static work of art to integrate lava-like movement of the paint into the moving statements of the horror of this event and to lead her audience once again to accompany her on her journey to hidden humanity.

*Hell on Earth* is a time icon on a mounted base that towers above its viewers and thus makes an impressive expression of the mixed emotions of its historical inspiration and is a statement to the versatility that can be found in *Gordon's* works. The historical relevance of the Time Icon *Hell on Earth* could form the basis for a constant increase in value.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

### Hell on Earth

#### My Time Icon No. II: Hell on Earth

«Perhaps our Earth is the Hell that some are threatened with on another planet.»

The World Trade Centre was a symbol of American economic power. James Dean was an American Idol, as was John F. Kennedy. When they died, a dream died with them. Another American dream died with 9 /11: the dream of invincibility.

The images of the World Trade Centre I saw on CNN on September 11, 2001 made an enormous visual impact that haunted me for months. I tried to paint it, but was not satisfied with the outcome – my visualisation did not resemble the strong images in my mind. I was looking for a way to express the horror of this vicious act of destruction. I was also attempting to place it in a historical context, to understand the political consequences and the way that 9 /11 would affect our future. I knew instantly that 9 /11 would brutally curtail our liberties. We would be forced to sacrifice privacy in the interests of national security. Restrictions on immigration and the transfer of financial assets are just two examples of this. I do not believe that such obvious interference will make a large contribution in preventing terrorist attacks in the long run. People are so easily manipulated by fear. Welcome to the Orwellian age!

In the summer of 2003 I visited the [Musée Rodin](#) in Paris to see the sculptor's Hands, the marvellous Cathedral, Hand of a Pianist and Hand of God. I wandered around the garden and came to [The Gates of Hell](#). It struck me that my horrific Interpretation of 9 /11 had to be large, bold, dramatic and three-dimensional. How could I link Rodin's imagination of horror with my vision of contem-

porary terror? As I sat there looking at the figures that embody characters in [Dante's Inferno](#) such as *Ugolino and his Children*, *The Shades* and *The Thinker*, Rodin's incarnation of Dante, the idea for a sculpture started to take shape in my mind. In the months that followed, I familiarised myself both with Rodin's oeuvre and with Dante's Divine Comedy.

In an attempt to focus my Attention, whilst my awareness was growing, I set out to modify 230 Barbie dolls. They became representatives of our society in my first large scale installation. Turning my vision into sculpture was indeed a «hellish» undertaking – it absorbed substantial parts of my time and thinking from summer of 2003 to 2006. Progressing on my installation venture made me aware of how brief the challenges I had to tackle were in comparison with what Rodin had to endure with his Gates of Hell – he spent a lifetime creating it.

Giving Dante, The Thinker, the features of James Dean, sitting on the Book of The Divine Comedy, was an audacious act. James Dean, an introvert thinker? A Myth. An American Legend. And legends die young, like JFK or Jesus or Marilyn Monroe, placed next to James Dean. The three Shadows above him symbolize the shadow as perceived by C.G. Jung, the darker, or different sides of our personality. Like James Dean's secret homosexuality. Or the tantalizing life of Marilyn Monroe – an ordinary brunette girl from next door who was transformed into a blonde sex bomb by Hollywood. She embodied sex and sensuality in an era when sex and sensuality were still taboo. Everybody lusted after her. Nobody took her seriously. And nobody

really cared for her. But many used her in one way or another. Marilyn: the star and the tragedy.

The two Robots standing on the Bible are a reference to the robotic age of the future and the potentially apocalyptic power struggle between man and machine. Below them, we see the WTC inferno, with two aircraft protruding from the towers and children falling out of the sky; children of God.

Over 230 Barbie dolls represent various aspects of human nature, such as Love, Intrigue, Lust, Resentment, Beauty, Envy, Murder, Death, God, Greed, Desire, Sodomy, and different acts of lesbian and homosexual love. [Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights](#) served me as a great source of inspiration when I looked for ways to visualize our morals and expressions of sexuality in our self-indulgent society.

Jung suggested that people, who are aware of and accept their forbidden desires, pose far less of a threat to themselves and others than those who suppress them. Those who deny their darker side are more likely to be driven by their shadow than to master it.

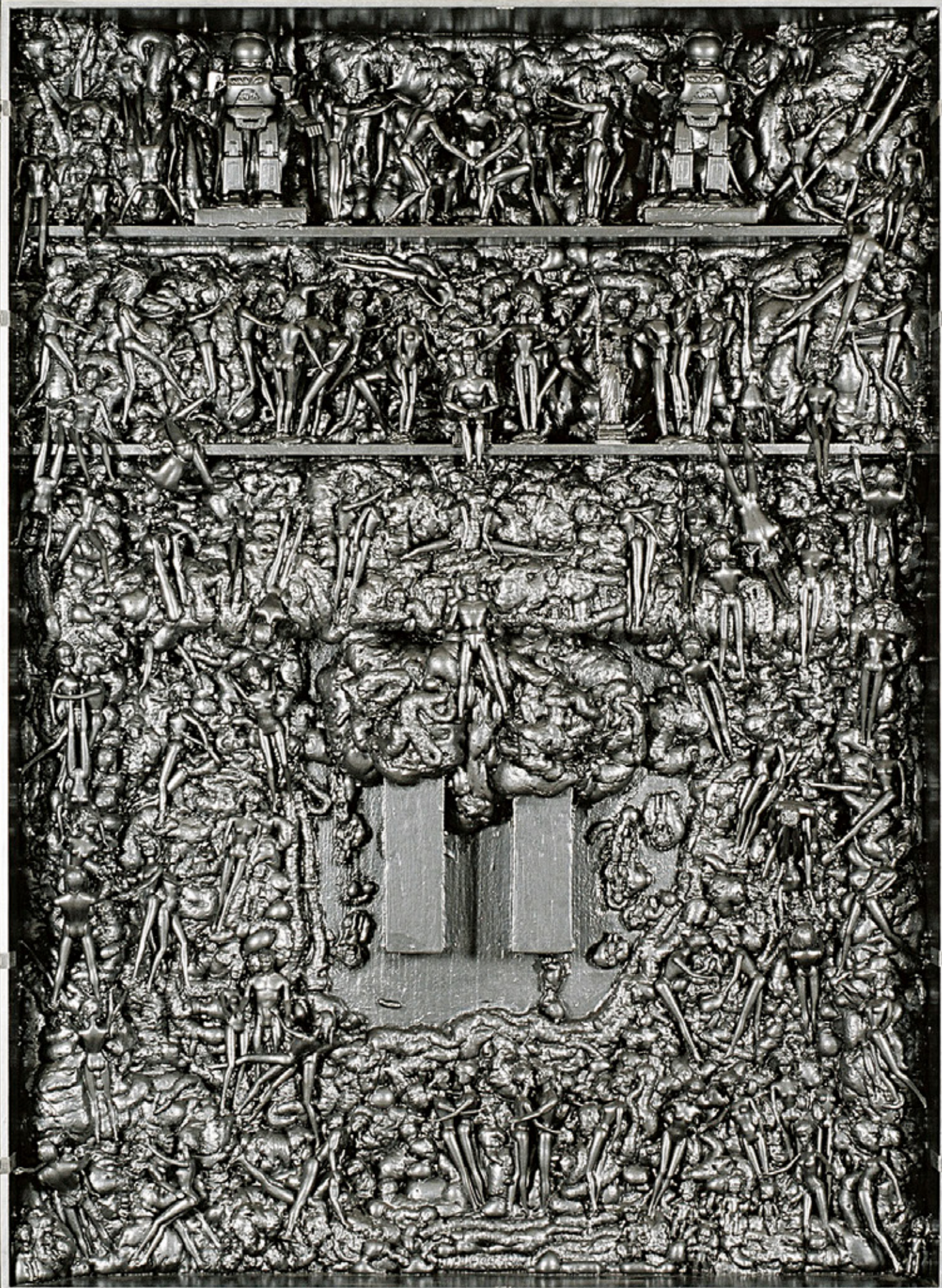
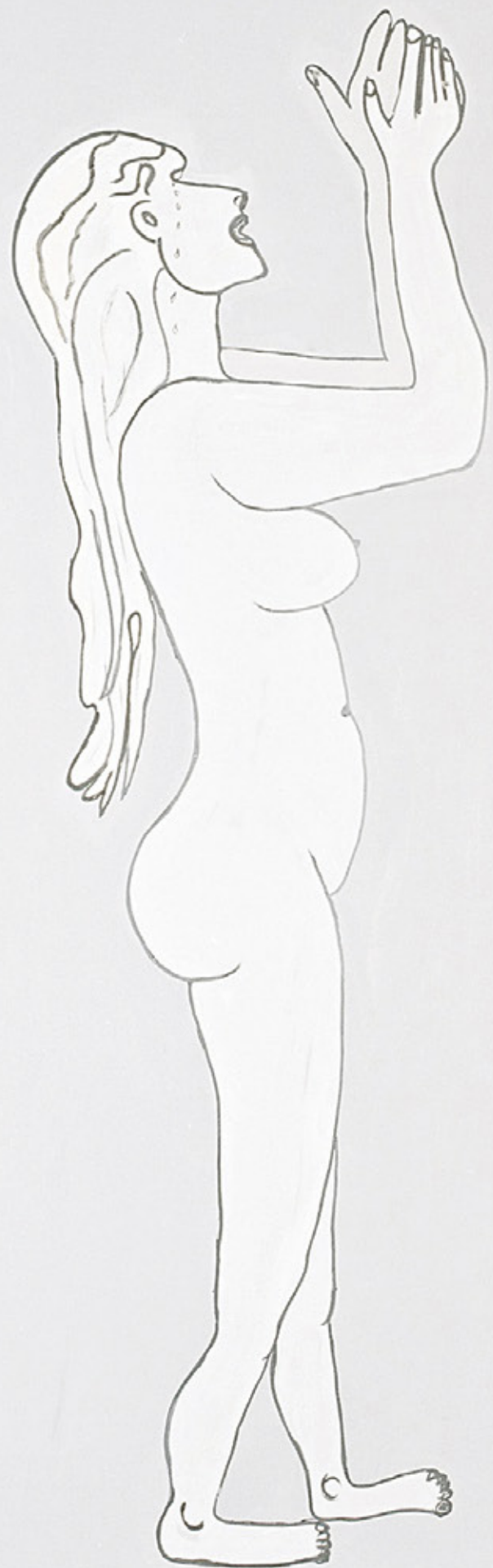
Every human life is in itself a «Divine Comedy», unconsciously writing its own script and creating its own heaven and hell. The archetypal dream of paradise, intrinsic to every human being and in every religion, is but a myth. However, it gives people hope. Spiritual and moral contestability has caused countless wars of religion in the past and is the cause of the present war in the Middle East.

I did not set out to interpret the event in a political context. On the contrary, I wished to communicate

the depths of human nature: At all times in history, under the most horrific circumstances and after purgatory in the sense of extreme hardship, we as human beings try to evolve and learn to master life as far as possible. Sometimes we progress sometimes we don't. From my point of view the tragic destruction of the TWIN TOWERS symbolically resembles the [myth of Ugolino Della Gheradesca](#), locked up in the tower of Muda, having eaten his children and grandchildren in madness and despair.

The incident 9/11, right at the beginning of the twenty first century, has had more influence upon our lives than we may be aware of just now.

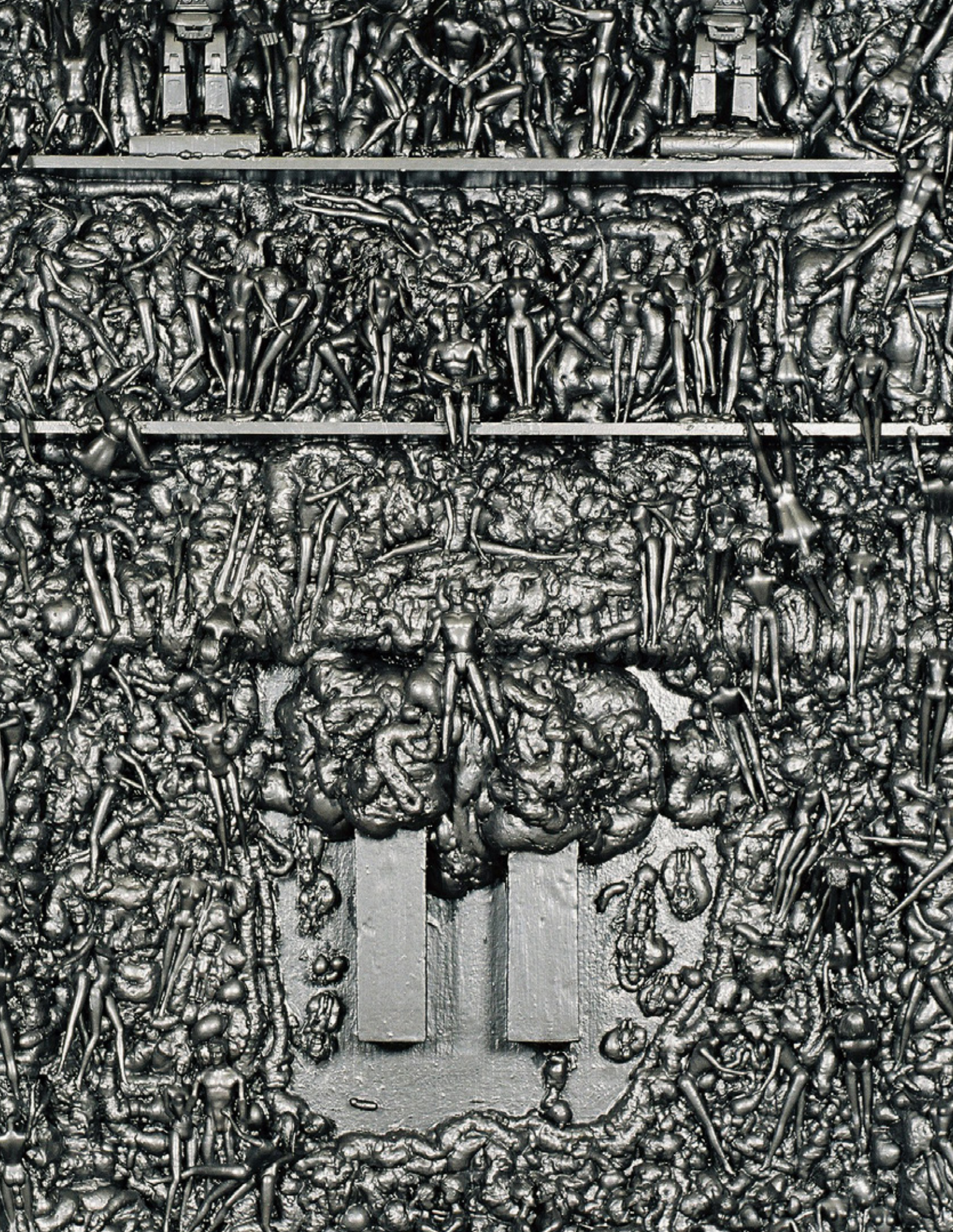












«Perhaps our Earth is the Hell that some are threatened with on another planet.»



## A SPIRIT ON THE MOVE

*Antonia Pia Gordon* is an artist, who unites an industrialist background and intercultural cosmopolitan understanding with a pulsating, versatile and expressive artistic vein that boldly transgresses spatial and intellectual borders in moving and intriguing paintings, sculptures and writing.

Born into an established industrialist family in Hamburg, at an early age *Gordon* combined metropolitan life with nature as she travelled between Germany and Switzerland, visiting the village school in St. Moritz in the winter months and a German school in remaining year and later visiting boarding school in Lausanne. At the Sorbonne in Paris, the city of light, she studied French, Literature, Art, Design and Psychology, which advanced her aesthetic senses and her eye for art and fashion.

After Business Management Studies in Zurich, Switzerland and further studies at the European Business Institute INSEAD in Fontainebleau, *Antonia Pia Gordon* successfully worked as an Assistant to her father, the Managing Director in the family company for a number of years, where in addition to professionalism she also learnt the values of respect and treating people well. On her numerous business trips around the world accompanying and representing her father she honed her professional and people skills in a progressive multi-national environment, whilst exploring interculturalism at first-hand experience.

In the 1990s she left the family company to devote herself to her vocation as an artist. She explored the works and techniques of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Chagall, Picasso, Rodin, Hockney, and Warhol in a quest to develop her own individual and expressive style. She continued this journey to individual expression by studying the methods of many renowned teachers. In 1989 she participated in an international theatre project on the Stanislavski-method in Poland upon invitation by Teatr Blik. With John Grinder in the USA, she studied neuro-linguistic programming. She completed media training with Dorothy Sarnoff, Lilian Wilder and Aviva Diamond (New York), Brian Lidstone (London) and the German Professor Rupert

Lay and she explored cross cultural communication with Dorothea Johnson, The Protocol School of Washington D.C., USA. *Antonia Pia Gordon* studied writing for the screen and plays for film and theatre with Viki King, UCLA, University of Los Angeles, USA, and Richard Wagner and Robert McKee in New York and with Jurgen Wolff, in London. She participated in London Media Workshops with Jocelyn Hay, BBC, London. She studied and read plays for theatre and was awarded the certificate in "Spoken English" at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Today *Antonia Pia Gordon* lives and works in the United Arab Emirates. Many of her ideas and visions are developed on travels and in constructive exchange with other artists and in an inner interaction with intrinsic questions.

*Antonia Pia Gordon* has left the beaten path in her artistic work with non-conformist and extremely versatile multi-textured and multi-media works with fearless combinations. Her versatile talent finds expression in moving, intriguing and bold but intuitive paintings, in mounted sculptures of great size that experiment with unusual materials and integrate new experiences as a source of continual change and inspiration into her works that invite her audience to join her on her journey as a spirit on the move transforming tradition.



# ANTONIA PIA GORDON

Born in Hamburg, Germany  
Lives and works in Dubai, UAE

2023 Online Gallery Open for Business  
2022 Completion of Digital Business Model  
2021 Execution of digital transformation & new business model  
2020 CORONA VIRUS LOCKDOWN - Idea for digital transformation & new business model  
2019 ANTONIA is currently on a research trip through Asia developing new artworks

## SELECTED BIENNALES

2017 Florence Biennale, Florence, Italy  
2017 Biennale Venezia Colateral, Venice, Italy  
2017 MEAM (Museu Europeu D'Art Modern) Barcelona, Spain  
2017 Biennale of Peschiera Del Garda, Mont Pellegrino, Italy  
2017 Biennale MEART (La Biennale Internazionale d'arte del Mediterraneo), Palermo, Italy  
2016 Biennale Riviera Del Brenta, Mira, Italy

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2011 Hotel De Paris, Monte Carlo, Monaco  
2011 Hotel Majestic, Cannes, France

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS & FAIRS

2018 Gallery THE ROOM, Venice Contemporary, Venice, Italy  
2018 Rhys Art Fair & Salon, Basel, Switzerland  
2017 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy  
2017 Palazzo Flangini, Venice, Italy  
2017 Gallery THE ROOM, Venice Contemporary, Venice, Italy  
2017 Società delle Belle Arti-Circolo degli Artisti, Casa di Dante, Florence, Italy  
2017 Clio Art Fair, New York, USA  
2017 Misericordia Chapel, Venice, Italy  
2016 Palazzo Flangini, Venice, Italy  
2016 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy  
2016 Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy  
2016 BAU International Academy of Rome, Rome, Italy  
2016 The Hotel Show, Dubai, UAE  
2016 Gallery Laura Haber, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
2016 Hilton Molino Stucki, Venice, Italy  
2016 Clerici Palace, Milan, Italy  
2016 Kent University, Kent, UK  
2016 World Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE  
2016 Basilica of Saint Paul, Rome, Italy  
2016 Index International Design, Dubai, UAE  
2016 Alliance Francaise, Dubai, UAE  
2016 Palazzo Fantuzzi, Bologna, Italy  
2016 Palazzo Borghese, Florence, Italy  
2015 Gallery BAC – Bogotà Arte Contemporáneo, Bogotá, Colombia  
2015 LACDA Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Los Angeles, USA  
2015 Politeama Theatre Palermo, Palermo, Italy  
2015 Art Elysees – Art & Design, Paris, France  
2015 Villa Castelnuovo, Palermo, Italy  
2015 Tarrant County College, Fort Worth, USA  
2015 Palazzo Duchi di Santo Stefano, Taormina, Italy  
2015 Tokio International Art Fair, Tokio, Japan  
2015 Nina Torres Fine Art, Miami, USA  
2015 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy  
2012 Gallery Art Rays, Shanghai, China  
2012 Top Marques, Shanghai, China  
2012 Arternativelight, Monte Carlo, Monaco

## Impressum:

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