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## **New Museum Presents “Andra Ursuța: Alps,” the Artist’s First New York Museum Exhibition**

**“Andra Ursuța: Alps” Features a New Sculptural Installation and Recent Works**

**April 27–June 19, 2016**

New York, NY...“Andra Ursuța: Alps” is **the first New York museum exhibition of the work of New York–based artist Andra Ursuța** (b. 1979, Romania). Ursuța’s sculptures and installations thrive on paradox and engage a visual language that weaves an art historical homage with a homespun, anarchic sensibility. From early in her career, Ursuța has used a fatalistic dark humor to expose power dynamics, to probe the vulnerability of the human body, and to examine modes of desire. The Romanian-born artist immigrated to the United States in the late 1990s, but many of the narrative facets of her upbringing—from occult folk traditions to blundering nationalist propaganda—resonate throughout her work. **Ursuța’s New Museum exhibition debuts a new sculptural installation, *Alps* (2016)**, which is presented in dialogue with the artist’s recent sculptures, including her series *Whites* (2015), which has its United States premiere in this exhibition. **“Andra Ursuța: Alps” is on view on the Fourth Floor of the New Museum from April 27 to June 19, 2016.**

The sculptures that compose *Whites* take the form of anthropomorphic obelisks—bone-like shrunken monuments with eye sockets and nostrils cast from human skulls. Half figure and half stela, they haunt the gallery like ghosts and are seated on chairs whose designs reference periods of European colonialism. Ursuța’s *Alps* transposes her obelisk-like figures to an artificial landscape that envelops the gallery space. Informed by stylized representations of natural landscapes—from indoor rock-climbing walls to the rocks depicted in Byzantine paintings—*Alps* flanks the walls of the gallery with craggy geometric forms jutting out like crystalline growths. The work’s title denotes a specific geographical feature: Europe’s Alps are a major natural barrier, which has taken on a new significance in light of current efforts by migrants to cross into western Europe. Seen alongside *Whites*, the squadron of forlorn obelisks that patrol the premises like specters of bygone imperialist ambitions, and the marble Roma women of *Commerce Exterieur Mondial Sentimental* (2012), *Alps* suggests a commentary on the impulse to guard and fortify borders. Cast in the surfaces of these pallid panels, pouches of bodily mass—in the shape of inflatable toy skeletons—appear suspended like flies in a web or frozen like fossilized bog bodies. Other skeletal cavities perforate the surface and, together with penis-shaped climbing holds, offer rude and morbid grips for a hypothetical climber.

In ***Commerce Exterieur Mondial Sentimental***, life-size marble figures adorned with coins glare at the viewer with palpable contempt. Informed by a socialist-realist aesthetic and inspired by a news image of a Roma woman being deported from France, they evoke lifeless mannequins trapped in an economy in which the value of both human beings and commodities is determined by foreign powers. ***Scarecrow*** (2015), an unusual apparatus for a nonexistent sport, is part goalpost, part concrete flag: at its center is a cartoonish inflatable eagle, whose tumescent arms are pumped up in victory. In this work, a classic emblem of European nationalism is transformed into an icon of empty threats—a monument of imperial folly more than a real menace.

The exhibition is curated by Natalie Bell, Assistant Curator, and Massimiliano Gioni, Artistic Director. It is accompanied by a publication with contributions by Bell and artist Maurizio Cattelan and an interview between the artist and Gioni.

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Andra Ursuța was born in 1979 in Salonta, Romania, and lives and works in New York City. She has exhibited internationally at venues including the 13th Biennial of Lyon, France (2015), the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014), the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), MoMA P.S.1, New York (2013), CAPC, musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2013), and Frieze Projects New York (2012). Her recent solo presentations include "Enslavables" at Massimo De Carlo, London (2015); "Whites" at Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2015); "Orthodoxinator" at Art Basel Unlimited (2014); "Scytheseeing" at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2014); "As I Lay Drying" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2014); "Solitary Fitness" at Venus Over Manhattan, New York (2013); "Mothers, Let Your Daughters Out in the Streets" at François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2012); and "Ο Νότος θα εγερθεί ξανά" [The South Will Rise Again] (2015), "Magical Terrorism" (2012), "Vandal Lust" (2011), and "The Management of Barbarism" (2010) at Ramiken Crucible, New York.

### **SUPPORT**

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### **ABOUT NEW MUSEUM**

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.