



IK-HO-RUS

2023

P O R
T F O
L I O

ESMERALDA KOSMATOPOULOS

“Tell me, Muse, of the man of many devices, whose boundless ambition led him to defy the ancient powers of Nature and brought him at last to ruin. His name was Ikarus.

Longing to rise beyond the limits of the human condition, Ikarus set his heart upon the sky, celestial kingdom of the falcon-headed god Horus. He felled the trees around him and built from their trunks the wings that would carry him into the realm of the gods. When far-seeing Horus looked down upon the earth, the forest had already vanished. Before him lay only barren soil and the remains of a broken tree. And the god wept for the living world Ikarus had destroyed.

Moved by grief and anger, Horus descended from the heavens and took the wooden wings from the reckless man. He did not strike him down, but offered him one final warning, hoping he might renounce his conquest and spare what remained of the earth. Yet Ikarus, blinded by pride, would not turn back.

Deprived of his wings, he felled the last trees and raised from them a ladder towards the sky. But as he climbed towards the forbidden realm, Horus commanded the sun to strike the wooden structure. A rung shattered beneath Ikarus's feet, and he plunged into the dark sea below. Thus ended the man who sought to possess the heavens and destroyed the earth beneath him.”

The End

ik-HO-rus

ik-HO-rus is a spatial fable that brings Icarus into collision with Horus, the falcon-headed Egyptian god of the sky and sun. Rewritten through the contemporary ecological condition, the myth begins with a man who destroys a forest to build the instruments of his ascent. His ambition is met first by the god's grief, then by a warning he refuses to understand, until his desire to conquer the sky becomes the architecture of his own fall.

Conceived as a theatrical work in three autonomous acts, the project translates this narrative into a succession of environments that must be physically entered and reconstructed. Broken trees, wooden wings, barren soil, a ladder, the sun and the sea become fragments of an interrupted stage set. Actions are never shown as they occur; each installation suspends their aftermath, leaving bodies, objects and landscapes to carry the narrative. Icarus is initially present only through the damage he has caused, shifting attention away from the traditional hero towards the world consumed by his ambition. Between ancient myth and contemporary cautionary tale, ik-HO-rus turns ecological collapse into a drama of extraction, denied limits and irreversible consequence.



ik-HO-rus — Act I

2023, Bronze, wood and soil

Act I stages the aftermath of an act of extraction. To construct the wings that will carry him into the celestial kingdom of Horus, Icarus has cut down the surrounding forest, transforming the living world into material for his ascent. Yet he never appears within the installation. His presence is reconstructed entirely through what remains after his actions: a broken trunk, barren soil and the fragments of a depleted landscape.

Above this desolate ground, the monumental golden eye of Horus watches and weeps. The god sees what Icarus, absorbed by his ambition, refuses to recognise. He does not yet intervene; grief precedes warning and retaliation. The installation suspends the scene after the forest has fallen but before the consequences have fully unfolded. By removing Icarus, the work shifts attention away from the traditional hero and towards the wounded landscape and the god who contemplates it. Human ambition becomes visible through what it extracts, consumes and leaves behind. The instrument of ascent begins with an act of destruction.



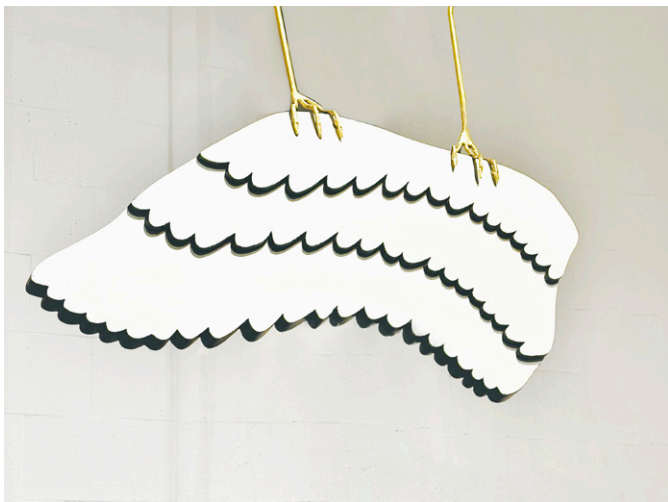


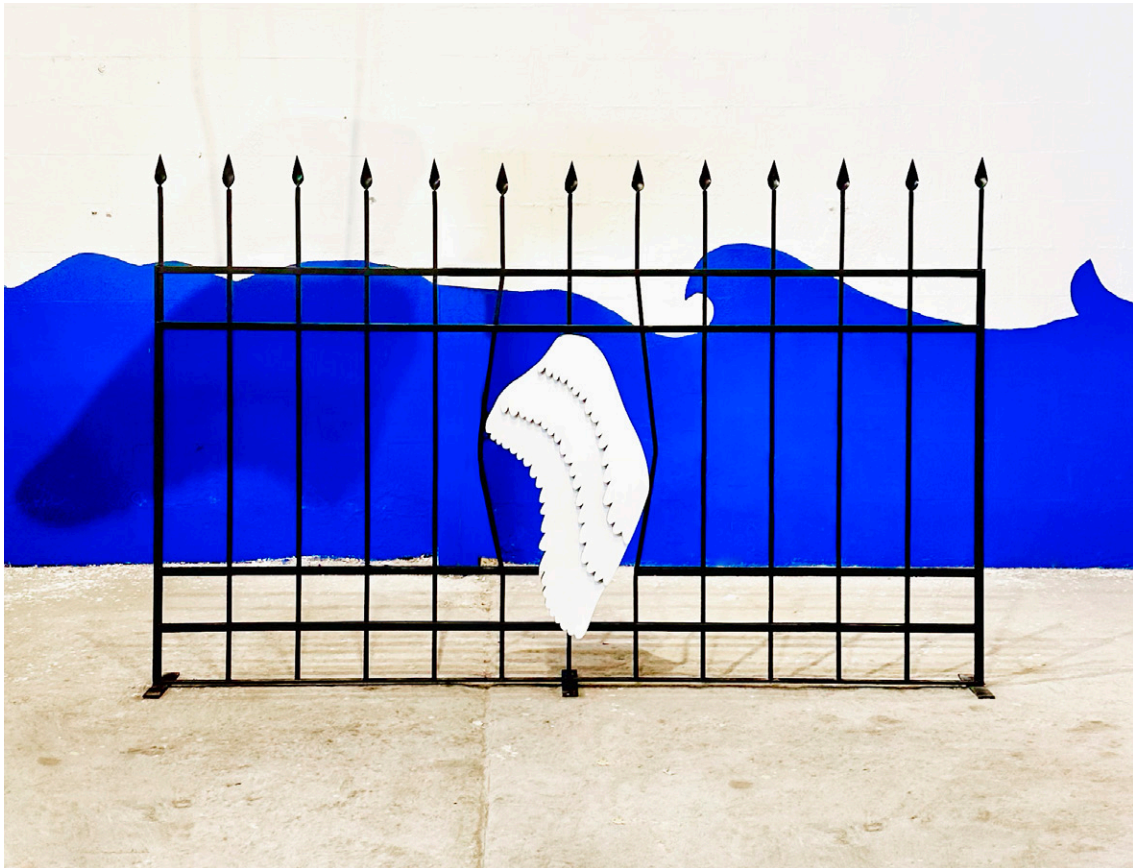
ik-HO-rus — Act II

2023, Bronze, wood, paint and steel

Act II stages the moment of warning. After witnessing the destruction caused by Icarus, Horus leaves his celestial position and removes the wings made from the fallen forest. Suspended above a rigid metal structure, the wooden wings are no longer attached to Icarus, yet they cannot return to the trees from which they were extracted. Held beyond his reach, they remain caught between confiscation, protection and captivity.

The installation freezes Horus in the act of removing the instrument of ascent. His intervention has begun but never reaches resolution: the route towards the sky remains blocked and the warning continues to be issued. Icarus is absent once again, but his refusal is already implicit in the scene. He will treat the limit not as a reason to stop, but as another obstacle demanding a new invention. The work therefore distinguishes between a warning that passes unseen and one that is consciously rejected. Catastrophe could still be avoided, but knowledge does not become restraint. The warning is not missed. It is refused.



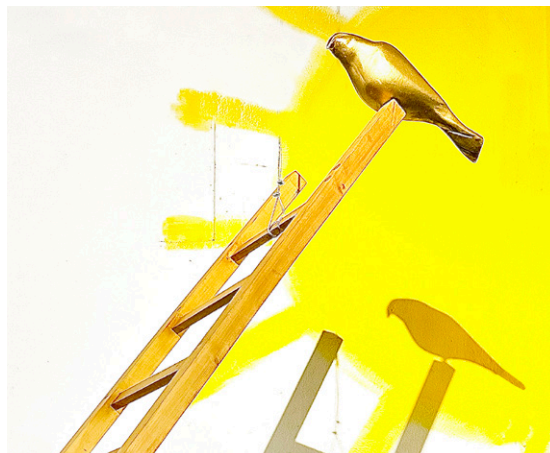


ik-HO-rus — Act III

2022, Bronze, wood and vinyl

Act III stages the immediate aftermath of the fall. Having lost his wings, Icarus cuts down the remaining trees and constructs a five-metre ladder to reach the celestial kingdom by another route. Horus directs the force of the sun towards the structure, breaking a step beneath him. The installation begins once the action has ended: Icarus has just crashed to the ground, and Horus looks down upon his fallen body.

For the first time in the cycle, Icarus becomes visible—but only in defeat. His monumental three-metre figure lies flat against the floor, reduced to a thin vinyl image without volume or verticality. Above him, a small bronze Horus watches in silence. Their disproportion reverses the apparent hierarchy: Icarus is enormous but weightless, while Horus remains small, dense and elevated. The broken ladder becomes an architecture of collapse, preserving the excessive ambition that produced it. Nature's response is not an arbitrary punishment, but the return of consequences repeatedly announced and deliberately ignored. The human disappears. Horus and the wounded earth remain.





**ESMERALDA
KOSMATOPOULOS**

Studio

28 abd el Azim Basha Rachid,
Agouza, Cairo, Egypt

25 rue de la Roquette,
75011, Paris, France

www.esmeraldakosmatopoulos.com

Contact

+33 6 14 30 60 10
ek@esmeraldakosmatopoulos.com
IG: @esmeralda_k_