

Adrienne Outlaw
Fecund (detail), 2003–
2005



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Adrienne Outlaw
Fecund (interior detail),
2003–2005



... Adrienne

Outlaw also uses organic materials to encapsulate the condition of paradox. Her wall pieces, collectively titled *Fecund* (p. 16), explore nature's capacity to be at once hazardous and nourishing. These sculptures are composed of funnels and other hollow forms covered on the outside with materials such as yarn, wax, velvet, and sinew. The funnels' shape suggests human breasts, the source of food and comfort for the very young. But when looking into their holes, often through reducing or magnifying lenses, one sees beautiful and occasionally morbid little sculptures constructed from a variety of spiky materials such as porcupine quills, a sea urchin, and a horse chestnut, or other natural substances such as the empty shells of cicadas. Once providing protection against predators, these disquieting objects now serve as trace elements of life that has passed. The title, *Fecund*, a word that means fertility, suggests that Outlaw's iconography relates as much to growth as to death. By uniting various forms together—puffer fish with horse chestnut, porcupine quills with sea urchin—Outlaw links the process of growth to the capacity of a species to thrive through adaptation. She considers the *Fecund* series to be "a system of shelters for potential creatures."¹¹

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