

# Andréa DeFelice: *Fraid*



By Will Corwin:

While using the methodology and appurtenances of scientific investigation, Andréa DeFelice instead turns the notion of observation inside out, and seeks to reconsider what we think we know. At The Brownstone art, the artist has installed a lilliputian science museum nestled neatly within the gallery; but its conceptual underpinnings are far from contained. The displays push back at the viewer: instead of lecturing, they question; the information they present is malleable and inscrutable. The performance/interactive installation *Your Bubble My Bubble (Not Me, But Somebody Else)* (2021-23) was created over the past two years in Greece and New York. The notion of personal bubbles immediately highlights a theme central to the show—the envelopes in which we, the viewer, and she, the artist, enclose ourselves. *Your Bubble My Bubble* visualizes the assumption of what we think we know, and the desire to escape from or hide in, those bubble-like ossified frames of reference—a conceptual structure that DeFelice pulls from the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer—philosopher of hermeneutics. We watch the artist negotiate this bubble dripping with multivalent meanings—a performance piece filmed during a residency in Greece, footage which can be manipulated in the gallery by the viewer themselves through VR—allowing them to access the bubble through the artist. Along the wall, DeFelice’s series photograph makes plain the escape from our illusions, and our/her iconoclasm—literally the destruction of the image—our preconceived notions. We watch the weather balloon pop and disintegrate in stop-motion, at the mouth of a pistol in the artist’s hand—will we miss it? Are we relieved?

DeFelice’s other displays haunt the room with a sense of morbid humor—birds, wolves, and rats are conjured by arcane machinery which spins, whirs, and expands, but whose purpose seems questionable or absurd. *Pigeon Clock (A Summertime Phone Call)* (2022), literally utilizes a device of that name, invented to time racing pigeons. DeFelice equates the ridiculous premise of a machine (now obsolete) created to time pigeons with the equally preposterous contemporary proposition of scam emails; something that seems impossible when explained but manages to have an oversize presence in our daily existences. How do ludicrous ideas grow and become accepted: DeFelice’s humorous investigations casts dark shadows that we can all recognize. The examples of pigeons and other beasts toy with the apparent foreign-ness of another species, forcing us to realize and ponder the seeming impossible and strange made possible through our own subtle habits, of which we are too often unaware. The artist’s background as a professor of New Media and Interactive digital technology places her in the unique position of being on all sides of the equation; as both programmer, tester, and recipient. While *Your Bubble My Bubble* is state of the art, *Rats Flat* (2021) is a motion-activated automaton: playing with hermeneutics again, the artist creates a Rube Goldberg apparatus of what a machine is, a broken-down future of unfulfilled aspirations.

Stitching together a final oxymoron, *Untitled (How Success Fails)* (2017) is a column disintegrating from the bottom up—a physical impossibility—as this magical architectural element both succumbs to gravity whilst simultaneously defying it. The crumbly substrate of the artist’s pillar is frozen mid collapse; time has stopped. Again, assumptions must be shed as we stand face-to-face with a very literal metaphor. In the effort to build do we often destroy our own foundations? The myriad readings of the works can always go forwards and back, and generally the most uncomfortable answer is the most likely.

## BIO

Andréa DeFelice is an artist based in New York. Exhibition venues include The Painting Center, The Austrian Cultural Forum, The Invisible Dog Art Center, and Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center. Works are in private collections in the United States and Europe. International exhibitions and alternative spaces include Periferic 8 Biennial for Contemporary Art: Art As Gift, in Iasi, Romania; The Lab for Electronic Arts & Performance in Berlin; The Contemporary Art Center in Greece, and Hafnarborg Museum in Iceland. Artist residencies include Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center (NYC), Hafnarborg: Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture & Fine Art in Iceland, Hungarian Multicultural Center in Budapest, White Sands Desert in New Mexico (self-declared), and Event Horizon in Crete (Greece). DeFelice's work has appeared in Hyperallergic, MAKE8ELIEVE, Porter Advisory, P.S. 1 MoMA, Art in America, and Art:21. She was nominated for the Anonymous Was A Woman Award, received awards from NYFA, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and Professional Development Grants from the City University of New York. DeFelice is a Professor of Media Studies and Art & Technology at two New York City colleges, and gallery exhibitions coordinator for the Digital Arts Department at Pratt Institute.

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### Exhibition Details:

#### **"Andréa DeFelice: Friad"**

January 22 to February 17

TheBrownstoneArt  
129 Park Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11217

**In-Person Opening: Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4 -6 pm**

**In-Person Closing: Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7:30 pm**

\*All other viewings by appointment

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