

PRESS RELEASE

Synnecrosis

January 10 – February 28, 2026



Ophelia Arc, *hypercathectisis (pupa)*, 2025

DON'T LOOK Projects is pleased to present "Synnecrosis," Ophelia Arc's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles at the gallery's 461 North Western Avenue location. In her exploration of trauma and inheritance, Arc creates visceral crochet sculptures that serve as exoskeletons for our deepest wounds. Her practice operates at the sharp intersection of family intimacy and the structures of the subconscious.

Drawing on Robert C. Lane's concept of the spider mother and Freudian theories of arachnophobia, the exhibition interrogates the ways motherhood becomes mythologized, reduced to archetypes that obscure its contradictory, entangled realities. The spider motif carries a particular charge in maternal discourse. Lane's seminal paper, "*Anorexia, Masochism, Self-Mutilation, and Autoerotism: the Spider Mother*," looks at how society often tries to fit mothers into reductive categories. This pattern simplifies the complex ideas surrounding womanhood itself.

Arc's sculptures materialize this psychological enmeshment through the tension of thread and loop, transforming the act of binding into an analogue for the excessive, boundary-dissolving intimacy Lane describes. Here, love becomes suffocating architecture. Lane argues that children subjected to such enmeshment may internalize control, expressing psychological struggle through the body itself—a painful transfer of mental anguish to physical form.

The spider thus becomes inseparable from our understanding of family: creator and devourer, provider and annihilator—roles we recognize in varying degrees across familial terrain. Lane contrasts the spider mother's intense, intrusive presence with André Green's concept of *The Dead Mother*, who embodies decathexis (emotional removal). The spider mother is not absent but excessively proximate, one who will "suck the blood out of their daughters or squeeze them to death." The spider emerges in this body of work as a site of profound ambivalence, suspended between creation and consumption. This is care that cannot recognize where one person ends and another begins.

The core of the collection dissects how the self is distorted within toxic intimacy. Through explorations of narcissistic enmeshment, obsessive hypercathectisis, and the burden of carrying another's unreconciled guilt, the work highlights the pervasive sense of vulnerability and fragmentation. Identity itself is presented not as a natural state, but as a fragile condition easily compromised and trapped. These pieces function as material metaphors—like fragile gauze webs and arrested pupa forms—reflecting an existence maintained in a state of high-risk precarity.

Ultimately, the series pivots toward a powerful assertion of agency. Recognizing the lacerations of the past, the final works represent an act of "intended kismet"—a defiant commitment to override passive destiny and chart an autonomous future.

"*Synnecrosis*" features eleven crocheted sculptures and two works on paper. It offers a powerful contemporary statement on the nature of being "inherited" and the fight for self-authorship. As Arc notes:

"I had the premonition that if I stayed, the house would eat me whole... I stew in what I can only recognize as a form of survivor's guilt."

In the reflection of these works, we may see the spider, but we also see ourselves: flawed and inherited, yet capable of choosing what to carry forward.

On view January 10th - February 28th, 2026, at DON'T LOOK Projects, 461 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA.

DON'T LOOK Projects is a contemporary art gallery in Los Angeles, CA. For inquiries, contact gallery@dontlookprojects.com.