



When I started the piece, I wanted it to be sad; originally I had her head hanging much lower, but I raised it some. My wife's grandmother is such a strong woman, I thought it would be disrespectful to make her too pitiful. I don't want to sound too sentimental, but basically she is looking to the future, without much of it left – still facing upward a bit.

RON MUECK

Ron Mueck

Untitled (Seated Woman), 1999

Silicone, acrylic, polyurethane foam, and fabric

25 1/4 x 17 x 16 1/2 inches

Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,

Museum purchase

Acquired in 2000

Artists have long been interested in art's ability to perfectly imitate life. There is something both familiar and magical about seeing a hyper-realistic painting or sculpture. In Ron Mueck's *Untitled (Seated Woman)*, we see an elderly woman (based on his wife's grandmother) seated, hunched over, reproduced perfectly except for one aspect – her size. Mueck has made his sculpture just over twenty-five inches high. There is a frailness to the woman, which is emphasized by her posture, the introspective expression on her face, and, especially, by her diminished scale. Mueck is known for creating lifelike sculptures of people whose greatest effect is their larger or smaller than life-size scale. He began his career as a puppeteer and puppet maker, and eventually created special effects models for advertising, television shows, and films. In his current work, he makes a mold from clay and then casts it in silicone, adding skin color, hair, and other props to finish the piece. His work calls to mind the fascination with both dolls and monuments of humans, and how these shifts in size force us to consider ourselves and our lives differently. With *Untitled (Seated Woman)*, her small size brings out our sympathy, and even our pity for her fragile life. It's as if we observe her from a distance, without her being aware that we are watching her, and we imagine what she might be thinking and feeling as she stares at the ground.