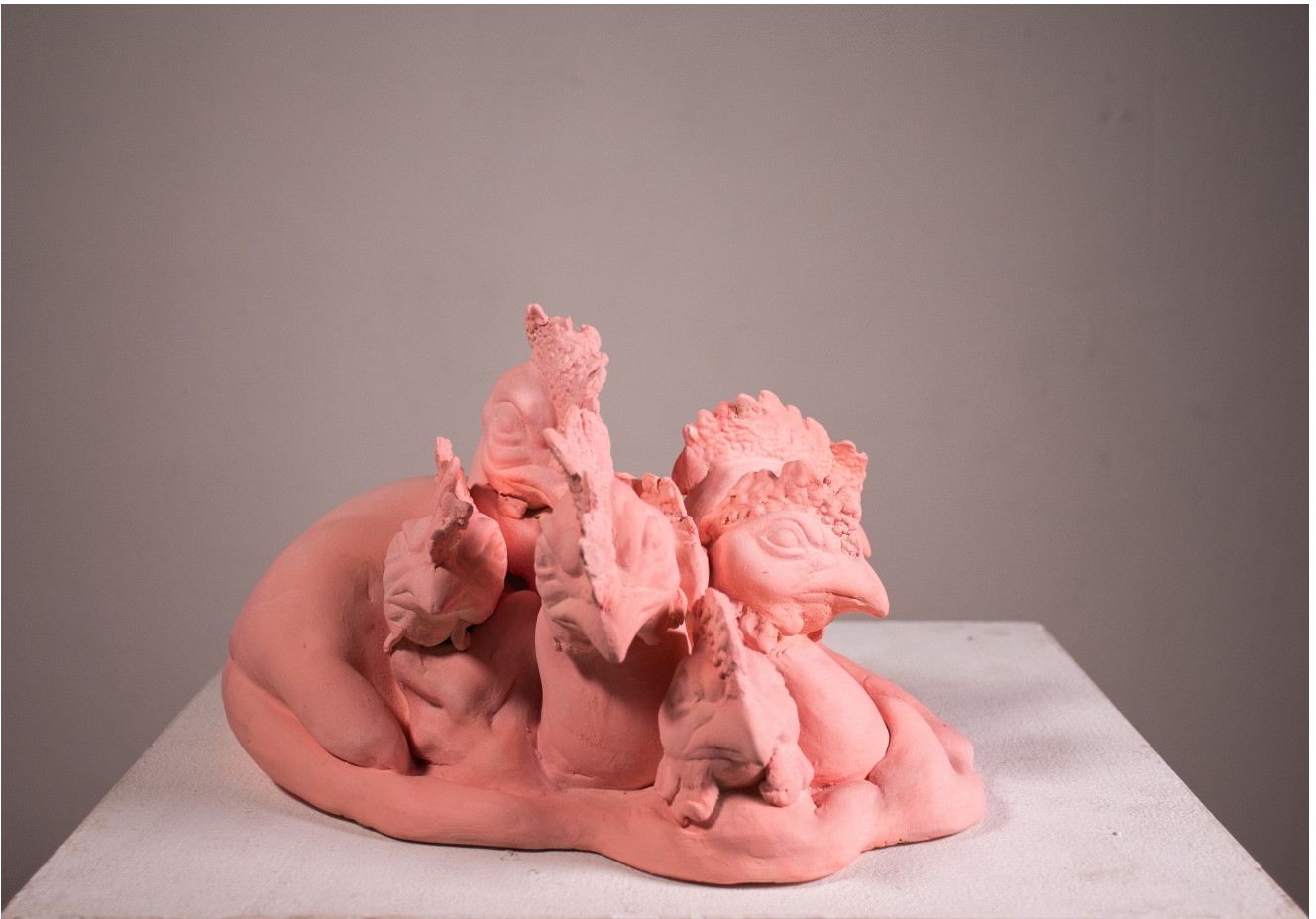




## Hen Hydra 3

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According to myth, this lake-dwelling, polycephalous creature possessed the ability to regrow extra heads after decapitation. For me, this story conjures up the image of battery chickens — their swollen forms crammed so tightly together that a viewer is unable to differentiate the individual bodies, instead appearing as a many-headed mass. The Hydra was described as a terrible monster. However, her monstrosity was not an inherent quality — rather, it was foisted upon her by the person who attempted to slay her. This imposed mutation is also a characteristic of the poultry industry.



In places, the Hydras' plump, slip-cast bodies bulge and collapse under the weight of their many heads. Although in reality the ceramic is brittle, the seemingly soft, dimpled forms resemble folds of ample human flesh; patterns of hairline cracks recall stretch marks. In this way, viewers might be able to identify with these abject animals.

In the marshes of Lerne, the Hydra did not lead a solitary existence. According to myth, when Heracles attacked, giant crab came to her aid. This was Carcinus.

For me, this brief example of queer, multispecies allyship is the most exciting part of that story and is deserving of celebration. Although the specific, symbiotic details behind the Hydra-crab relationship are not clear, this mythical alliance hints at the multispecies entanglements which characterise organic life.

Frame	None
Medium	Ceramic and Plaster of Paris
Location	Cape Town, South Africa
Height	35.00 cm
Width	23.00 cm
Artist	Gabriele Jacobs
Year	2024

