

ARTFORUM

Max Hooper Schneider

JENNY'S

4220 Sunset Boulevard

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Instead of machined planes packing neat hunks of rot, Max Hooper Schneider favors rigs of steel chain, meat hooks, and C-clamps—dangling everything from neon drawings in Plexiglas to a resin model of a human spine. Paul Thek it ain't. Schneider's grotesque displays graft found or synthesized organics to factory supports, such as *Precor Crocodilian 9.1*, (all works cited 2014) a faux crocodile-hide belt retrofitted to a treadmill, or *Genus Watermeloncholia*, a square biomelon in a vitrine, beeping bummed messages on a little screen. The exhibition serves as a junk store for failed experiments; the works, creatures penned in limbo. It's "The Pound," after all—a title that suggests a nominalized, tenderizing punch or British currency or the place where puppies go to die. Dark no matter how you slice it.



Take Aral Spring Trolley, for example, an aquarium in a popcorn machine that has been filled to capacity with an invasive species of freshwater snail. This spawning, cannibal swarm is beautiful mostly in a mindlessly proliferating, bio-centric sense—not, so much, on art's ageless terms. (For that, Schnieder provides a handful of lysergic doodles in pen and enamel—cell-like, microscopically enhanced.) The artist's humor is cut with a sense of doom: In *CH59X Plasma Panderer*, a pelvis lolls awkwardly against its glass tank; the greasy red embalming fluids (a mix of pig blood, human blood, human bone powder, and alcohol) really do sting the nostrils of the living. In the corner is *The Conk*, where a pile of broken cinderblocks and dirt grows bent rebar, waving softly, stonily, like sea grass. Goofy, pathetic, hyperbolic, and desperate—like ugly puppies—these are artworks that maybe, queasily, will haunt our dreams forever, but that only their maker could love.

— Travis Diehl