

ARTFORUM

Critics' Pick, December 17, 2018



Max Hooper Schneider, *Lady Marlene*, 2018, live marine ecosystem, fish, invertebrates, modeled landscape, glass aquarium, steel base, custom LED panel, 47 x 68 x 20".

Max Hooper Schneider

JENNY'S

4220 Sunset Boulevard

November 9 - December 29

In a tiny room with walls painted an unappetizing salmon color, above an off-gassing industrial gray carpet, four weird little worlds by Max Hooper Schneider cluster like apocalyptic toy sets. A model train chugs on a track that curves around a goopy pink faux-geologic landscape of blooming hard-ons in *Utopia* (all works 2018). *Lady Marlene* is housed in an aquarium, where starfish crawl, anemones pulsate, and other aquatic invertebrates skitter over a reef of off-white lingerie that has undergone plastination, leaving it ghostly and visceral and just a tiny bit lewd. The blackened, crumbling dollhouse of *Mommy & Me* is overstuffed with countless little scenes of heavy-metal suicide and hoarder horror—from the pentagram poster, the

hanged man, and the tar-globbed Tiffany lamp to the tiny books, bottles, and instruments.

And in the second aquarium, *Genesis*, two hulking piles of glistening cheap jewelry poke out above the water like a pirate's chest of dubious dime-store treasures.

During the opening for Schneider's exhibition, I watched a tiny fish, a fluorescent genetically modified *Danio*, wriggling between the knickknacks and the glass wall of *Genesis*. Schneider's hobbyist theaters qua sculptural tableaux are crawling with nonhuman creatures stuck in the mess of our accumulated detritus. These glittering clusterfucks, or scenes of entrapment, allure and disturb. The only perceivable hope Schneider presents is that the world, however we've junked it, will keep going without us. Or, as the artist puts it in an accompanying text, "We can be hopeful about an Earth from which we have been absented, not because we are gone, but [because] on this future Earth neomorphic genesis and sempiternal beauty will continue to abound. It is almost too beautiful to imagine."

— Andrew Berardini