

JENNY'S

Max Hooper Schneider
Tryouts For The Human Race
November 9 – December 29, 2018

When titling my show, I was concerned with evoking the distinct legacies of humanism and anthropocentrism that my work seeks to destroy; but when running the title (lifted from a late 70s song by the hardcore pop group Sparks) by my dealers, their immediate response was: "wait, but like who even reaches the finish line?!" This is exactly how I encourage you to feel.

The moderns who celebrated the exploitation and domination of nature now dwell with the lethal effects of their will-to-mastery. We have set goals and parameters for a race, a human race, which we will inevitably lose – we were never the chief architects of 'the world out there' and we are struggling to keep up with our nonhuman contenders. We will all too soon exit the planet. We've had good run, but it seems our species is too young to live.

While my last show at the gallery, *The Pound*, poeticized hope as being the saddest of lures, this exhibition configures a hope that is much harder to stomach but far more rewarding. We can be hopeful about an Earth from which we have been absented, not because we are gone, but on this future Earth neomorphic genesis and sempiternal beauty will continue to abound. It is almost too beautiful to imagine.

Four sculptures are presented as non-representational concept models, as worlds themselves. They do not attempt to represent a given system or fantasy of nature, they are nature itself. These compositions, as dense, holobiontic bodies, are meticulous. They are over-worked, out of control and have gained autonomy from the artist's heavy hand. They prevail and fail. Their narrative recombines with the limits of their materiality and the narratives of others. These sculptures are active, unstable, always undergoing morphogenesis.

Some things you will discover inside this putty-toned prism comprised of four constructed universes:

A reef of sultry, off-white, light-ripple-licked, plastinated lingerie; a life assemblage that is flowing yet rock hard. The epoxy-sodden architecture of thongs, fishnet fabrics, gloves, whips, garters, bras, panties, teddies and miscellaneous seductive wear from trashy lingerie manufacturer, *Lady Marlene*, provide vital substrates and endless refugia for colonial species of fish and invertebrate. Antibiotic polyesters are now slick with life-giving bacteria. Inside this ethereal theater, marine organisms dance, hide, decorate, feed, and tease; they strip their surroundings of their romantic residues and flaccid meanings, their collective machinations constituting a novel mode of erotic play. If only I could discover the inner worlds of Marlene's draping involutions and unfolding contortions as they do. Curse this hominid scale. My dying wish is to wake up as an aquatic dime-sized version of myself.

A landfill-like coffer of hundreds of pounds of junk jewelry forming rotund, softly pyramidal, submerged mounds. They display their own autopoietic self-organizing logic as if incubated within a gravitational chasm, or fertilized by the magnetic spells of the moon. Whatever the cause, they come from an environment of patterned, cultural neglect. From garage materialism to garbage materialism, hoarder to hoarder, matters once holding fantasy energy are modified to hold biocoenotic potential. Under a tangerine glow, an equatorial sunset perhaps, imagine seeing their encrusted tops emerge as a boiling sea gently recedes from a putrefying shoreline. The darting flecks of fluorescent pink and yellow of the genetically modified Danio fish are nearly indistinguishable from the errant bedazzlement and plastic polychromy suspended in the tannic waters. Motivational messages, remedial bracelets, anonymous faces, pairless earrings, lover's trinkets, artefacts of careless joy now bathe in silt and rust, their mirrored finishes beclouded like a blind eyeball. If only some of these matters knew their fated itinerary of recombination. Maybe they did.

JENNY'S

If it exists in the world it exists in miniature. *Mommy & Me* is presumably a post-disaster biome, besieged by fire, inhabited and repurposed by survivors of uricide, by extremophilic life, by nomads and orphans, by the disenfranchised. Yes, this structure could exist as a cross-section, quite literally, of pathos, for indeed a dollhouse is a sublimation device, but, be fooled not. This structure is vibrant with life, joyful abundance, communal coruscation. In the same way gothic and baroque structures illicit reverence through overstimulation, the overwhelming ruination of the dollhouse produces a deep nostalgia, but one that is humorous; a humor built into the failed accuracy and rendered imperfection of the cartoon-like dollhouse miniature. You will soon miss your new friends. The heavy metal fan, athletic, a teen spoiled with candy, toys and gifts, so mesmerized by his love for the genre that he was left with no choice but to hang himself. Neighboring Death, perched in his forest of electrical wire and parasitic vine, surveils his collection of lamps, charred stuffed animals and melted dolls. His glowing cloaked head is illuminated by one of the lamps from his collection. He is becoming lamp. Has his collecting become pathological? Can the true connoisseur continue to collect in the afterlife? Slinking about below on the first floor is the vinyl-clad aquarium attendant and her menagerie of exotic pets, bloodbaths, precious marginalia, roadside flotsam and alien cultivars. She also offers mailing services and sexual discipline. Activity abounds next door as the more transient, rag-clad occupants and a pack of mangy dogs attempt to make ends meet. This is a halfway house for hucksters, true bricoleurs. Do you see the person in the sleeping bag who just had surgery? Or the upright vendor selling farm fresh eggs, sex toys and a questionably sized hummingbird skeleton? Or the wide-eyed canine urinating on the liquor bottle *banco*? Amidst this landscape of ashen succulents, blood-soaked guillotines, soot-spackled palms, cinder blocks and rotting furniture there will always be more to see and you are always welcome at *Mommy & Me*.

Humans have calibrated their own time but there are times and landscapes independent of us, timeless things from before, more capable of harmonizing with a devastated planet. Geological time, or human fairytales thereof, is manifested as processes of layering, catastrophic upheaval and relentless accretion. In a practice that strives to perform its own ecology, modes of envelopment and invagination are employed to build novel substrates available to corrosion, colonization, reconstitution and reinterpretation. A vintage childhood HO-scale train set is immersed in, subsumed by and amassed with the media of prostheses: silicone, resin, polymer. The evolved landscape caricatures a world of imbecilic sexuality, frolicking gore, hybrid anatomy and the topos of the unconscious, but critically emphasizes the original conceit of utopia as no place, nowhere. This is a value-neutral, chromatically spartan world with no location. It departs from the moralizing hubris that plagues the 'topias' of the Anthropocene. A machinic metabolism, an electric symphony of nature naturing, we stand by as the organ-like train experiences the dermal wonderland of an infinite highway.

Max Hooper Schneider (b. 1982, Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles, and received his M.L.A. in landscape architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design (2011). He has exhibited in several national and international venues including the Baltic Triennial 13, Vilnius, Lithuania (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2017); ARoS Triennial, Aarhus, Denmark (2017); The High Line, New York, NY (2017); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2017); Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL (2016); David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK (2016); and the Mongolia Land Art Biennial, Orkhon Valley, Mongolia (2014). Schneider is the 2017 recipient of the BMW Art Journey Prize. This is the artist's second exhibition at Jenny's, following *The Pound* in 2014.