

Franz Kaka

SHANNON GARDEN-SMITH
IN A HARE'S FORM

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In a hare's form

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"...our space is a 'form,' like a container. I think our lives and the places we live in are like a dish that contains a jelly, and that substance...sort of melts and disintegrates. I think we're sort of like that in a way. Paintings are like that."

— Leonora Carrington, 1992

In a hare's form is an exhibition of pigment-stained gelatin lamp shades by Shannon Garden-Smith. Each of the works in the installation hangs in the way that its functional counterpart would adorn a living space, beckoning with warm glow. Peering through the lamps are the silhouettes of encased plant clippings; the hardened gelatin surfaces preserve a tableau of dried fronds and flowers that resemble strange wrinkled glass or acrylic, a delicate carapace. These works reflect Garden-Smith's ongoing artistic interests in defamiliarizing domestic decor and architectural forms through a material poetics of lack and excess.

By way of Surrealist artist Leonora Carrington, Garden-Smith calls attention to the spaces we linger and live in. These spaces are social molds of civilization, bearing a certain relation to our actual shape while also functioning as containers that form us. In the gallery, the arrangement of lamps washes the room with a soft incandescence tempered by their gelatin shell. A bone food, gelatin is comprised of ligaments, skin, and toes ground and boiled down. Unlike any other animal protein used in the kitchen, gelatin proteins do not create bonds on their own. Rather, in response to heat and water, they unravel and disperse, allowing the amorphous material to envelop and meld other objects into its form. Evoking processes of building up and down, congealing and melting, Garden-Smith signals to the shifting nature of forms as well as the joinery that binds them.

Within the structure of decorative light fixtures, *In a hare's form* suspends various dried and pressed flora collected on the artist's walks over the seasons, bringing (once) living things into the living milieu. In this way, these works consider ornamentation as not only a way to confound the passage of time, but also as a record of the durational and interspatial acts of foraging, gathering, and conserving. Ornamentation becomes a remnant, a vestige of places traversed like a shoeprint in the pavement—or the hollow of a hare's 'form,' the word for its nest. A shallow recess of petals and grass indented in the soil, the hare's form divulges what was once there to those who pay attention.

— Theresa Wang

Shannon Garden-Smith (she/her) is an artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada. She completed an MFA at the University of Guelph ('17) and a BA at the University of Toronto ('12). Working primarily in sculpture and installation, Garden-Smith's recent projects focus on the surfaces within and on which contemporary life unfolds. Through a slow, repetitive process that re-visualizes how the day-to-day architectures of our lives become invisibilized/naturalized through repeated exposure, Garden-Smith practices in an exuberant material poetics of lack and excess.

Garden-Smith has recently shown work with Gallery TPW (Toronto), The Plumb (Toronto), Christie Contemporary (Toronto), Pumice Raft (Toronto), Modern Fuel (Kingston ON), TIER: The Institute for Endotic Research (Berlin), YYZ Artists' Outlet (Toronto), and Birch Contemporary (Toronto). She and artist Amanda Boulos will present a project at The Bows (Mohkinstsis/Calgary AB) in the upcoming year.

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