

DEBORAH SCHAMONI

Eric Sidner

Capillary Refill

13.03.–30.04.2022

Opening 12.03.2022, 4–7 pm

Capillary Refill refers to a medical procedure that tests the relative health of a patient's circulatory system. The soft tissues of the fingertips or toes are pressed until they blanch and the time that it takes for blood to return, restoring colour, is measured in order to diagnose potential respiratory or circulatory dysfunction.

The exhibition presents two series of works that Sidner developed in parallel over the past two years. Opulent blown glass and cast bronze sculptures hover throughout the space framed by a group of geometric drawings that span from the floor to the ceiling of the gallery space. Evoking anatomical forms, the works betray an occupation with the body, its organs, notions of circulation, health and mental states, particularly in respect to states of crisis that the pandemic has brought into sharp relief.

Produced in the Czech Republic by artisans using centuries-old Bohemian glass techniques, the hanging sculptures bring together an abundance of succulent and pneumatic forms. Constellations of visual motifs and abstract shapes are held together in delicate suspension from lost mould cast armatures, a process whereby the original sculptures, made of wicker, are entirely incinerated. While it is difficult to discern any specific references, the works generate an array of visual associations, ranging from cartoon animation to reliquaries, not to mention Venetian chandeliers (a comparison that is perhaps not merely superficial given their common Bohemian influences). The thematization of air and a logic of circulation unite these works, with their interconnected blown-glass vessels, representing human, vegetal and animal forms. Permeable and grotesque, they give rise to thoughts of bodily fragility, not to mention environmental and social anxieties, which the fish-out-of-water so obviously emblematises. Such a literal reading, however, would ignore their irrepressible buoyancy. Thoughts of dreary, mundane reality evaporate off their gleaming, artificial surfaces, giving way to a feeling of stilted optimism and evoking chimeras of a glittering social life.

While the sculptures operate in the realm of artificiality and figuration, Sidner's drawings seem to signify in a rather opposite direction, bringing to mind a sense of inner space. Composed of sinuous, fractal forms, rendered in charcoal and oil, the works evoke a sense of organic wholeness in their symmetry, while their exuberant artificiality keeps esoteric associations at a comfortable distance. The works are composed of many layers, developed gradually over time. At close proximity, their slightly larger than human scale engulfs viewers, while from a distance, they appear as trompe l'oeil portals. Emerging from an associative, bordering on automatic drawing process ("begun as doodles without any particular reference point," according to Sidner), the works conjure associations with bodily interiors and passages, bones, ligaments as well as botanical forms. In this libidinal confusion, further heightened by their illusive, optical qualities, the work blurs notions of physical and psychic states.

- Eric Bell