

WHAT GROWS BY MIA DUDEK

Solo exhibition at Import Export

Opening: 6 June 2023

Mia Dudek: *What grows*

There are things in this world no one can see with the eyes – sound, smell, touch, feelings, gravity, air. In Mia Dudek's work, this world lays within gentle, low contrast: Organic foamy forms taking over brutal architecture, soft surfaces growing into derma-landscapes, expanding mushrooms bathing within pigmented resin. In her experimental practice, that varies from sculpture and painting to photography and installative works, Mia Dudek shifts between the architectural and the organic, exploring their ambiguity. She is blending both terms; a soft body becomes concrete and solid materials become light and spongy tangibles.

When looking at the characteristics of both skins and walls, her artworks first lead to the belief it's mostly surface. What one cannot see when observing superficially, is what grows beneath: the amount, the power, the roots. Fungi, another focus in her practice, get their nutrients from the soil or wood in which they grow. In *Fruiting Bodies, I - VIII (Resin series), 2023*, as well as the sculptural work *Wash Basin (II), 2023*, Dudek gives a foggy glimpse into this world beneath. The half see-through pigmented resin shimmers within a metal frame; bathing inside are mushrooms of all kinds. The expansion of the *Fruiting Body Series* resembles an intimate and maternal state. It is the magical, as well as fearful and always unknown moment of reproduction the artist has captured within the motif. The self-cleansing of something that is neither fruit nor animal, an organism that replicates itself. Dudek creates an environment that works with intimacy and occupation, and within the basin of mystical water it becomes bodily.

On a formal level, her photographic works of *Fruiting Bodies (2023)* focus on the arrangement, referring to the almost mathematical structures in which nature repeats itself. What one sees with the eyes is the seemingly uncontrollable growing of organisms, its exponential growth.

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These mushrooms are seemingly unflattering, dangerously formed, while at the same time shining extraterrestrially, almost erotic. It is their pale and gentle coloring that keeps the image from comparing their forceful growth to a catastrophic bomb¹. The mushroom represents the fine line between health and death, a timeless and lingering danger.

When scratching a surface, it becomes clear quite quickly that it's also the human body you cannot control – in Dudek's *Skin Series (2023)*, they are shining from within. A body that is trapped, cosmic and obscure looking. Bones and flesh take on a brutal orange and violet color, creating a captivating moon-like landscape. Like the mushrooms, exploding from within.

It is the uncontrollable outcome of growth – originating from the soul, of fears and trauma. Expressions of certain feelings are always part of an unconscious output; something that exploded within and is now coming to the surface. It is the paradox of not knowing where it grew. Because like fungi, they timelessly grow somewhere inside a person, unaware of being good or bad. There certainly are things in this world one cannot see – but within the Mia Dudek's works, this world becomes a surface of all things inhabiting it: from its captured landscapes to arrangements of underlying explosions, her practice tries to gently guide one through the terror of it with tenderness.

¹ Radioactivity of food from the areas particularly affected by the Chernobyl-Reactor accident: In 1993, the following percentages of tested samples exceeded the limit value: mushrooms 63%, berries 35%, venison 24%, birch juice 4%. In: Der Reaktorunfall in Tschernobyl von 1986 – ein Ausblick der BAGS Hamburg nach 10 Jahre, Behörde für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales, 1996.

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Open: Tuesday to Saturday | 12 - 6 PM

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Mia Dudek
Wash Basin [Illustrative photo], 2023
Antique wash basin, pigmented resin, mushroom
Variable dimensions
(MDU0089)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies VIII (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0088)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies VII (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0087)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies VI (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0086)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies V (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0085)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies IV (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0084)



Mia Dudek
Fruiting Bodies III (Resin series), 2023
Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom
40 x 30 cm
15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in
(MDU0083)



Mia Dudek

Fruiting Bodies II (Resin series), 2023

Stainless steel, pigmented resin, mushroom

40 x 30 cm

15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in

(MDU0082)



Mia Dudek

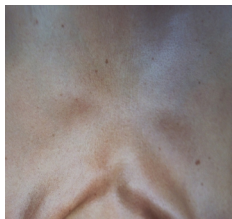
Untitled VIII [skin studies], 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper

80 x 80 cm | 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0080)



Mia Dudek

Untitled VII [skin studies], 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper

80 x 80 cm | 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0079)



Mia Dudek

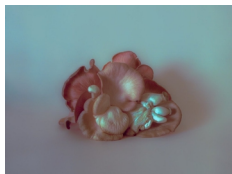
Untitled VI [skin studies], 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper

80 x 80 cm | 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0078)



Mia Dudek

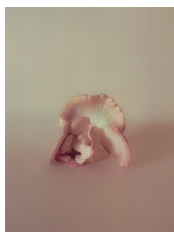
Fruiting Body XVII, 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper, artist frame, museum glass

111 x 148 cm | 43 3/4 x 58 1/4 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0077)



Mia Dudek

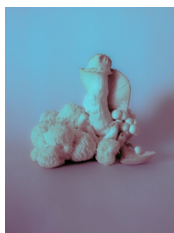
Fruiting Body XVI, 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper, artist frame, museum glass

148 x 111 cm | 58 1/4 x 43 3/4 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0076)



Mia Dudek

Fruiting Body XV, 2023

Giclée print on Hahnemuehle Baryta archival paper, artist frame, museum glass

148 x 111 cm | 58 1/4 x 43 3/4 in

Edition 1 + 1 AP

(MDU0075)