

HÉLÈNE FAUQUET

Species of the Pod

24.1.–8.3. 2025

Meyer*Kainer presents *Species of the Pod*, an exhibition of Hélène Fauquet's sculptural reflections on seashells and the questions raised by their forms. Fauquet introduces a body of work composed of her collection of seashell souvenirs mounted on top of framed photographs, close-ups of various fluids, blobs and bubbles which had been the central subject of her previous exhibitions. Glamorously framed, the resulting objects exert the scintillating appeal of opaline alcoves. The sounds of distant waves echo across the pearlescent interior of each shell, espousing the circumvolutions of its thoughts like in a surrealist dream.

Water shapes the form of rocks and shells into what is known as *rocailles* (where the word Rococo comes from) and it feeds the flowers and vegetation that make up the ornamental vocabulary of 18th century pan-European style. Giving the illusion of animating the inanimate, Rococo achieves dynamism through asymmetry. This fluidity has an aquatic quality that results from the interweaving of scrolls undulations and waves; it twirls and crashes to ultimately dissolve into abstraction.

Species of the pod are basically "species of seashells" with a pod designating a self-contained and enclosed vessel or vehicle the artist chose it as a metonymy for the word "shell" and by extension, could be assimilated to the frames in which her shells are contained. The term "species" on the other hand points to a sort of taxonomy. Therefore, the types of animals catalogued in the exhibition can designate the ensemble formed by shells and the frames they're embedded in (along with the gooey photographs in-between) are the creatures referred to as "species"- or the creations that are being created. A pod is reminiscent of a space craft (an escape pod), a seed, and can also apply to architecture, designating an enclosed space. In marketing consumer products, a pod is used a lot for cosmetics as a small self-contained device that fits in the hand.

In 2019, the Meyer*Kainer Gallery presented wall works by Hélène Fauquet in the exhibition *Interiors*—photographs of semi-transparent Victorian stained-glass windows, which she printed on plywood panels, creating hybrids between artificial image and object. This ambivalent character is also evident in the current wall pieces in the exhibition *Species of the Pod*. Seashells and other remnants of sea creatures, applied to glass, sometimes extend beyond the frame of the image, revealing the underlying macro photographs of tinted liquids and tinctures.

Hélène Fauquet (b. 1989, France). Her solo exhibitions include *Sensoria*, Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf (2024); *Phenomena*, Rodeo, London (2024); *Nuit de Cellophane*, Ulrik, New York (2024); *Phenomena*, Kunsthhaus Glarus (2023); *Vivresse*, Alienze, Vienna (2022); *monde ouvert*, Édouard Montassut, Paris (2022); *Multiplexx*, Schiefe Zähne, Berlin (2020); Édouard Montassut, Paris (2020); *Interiors*, Boltenstern.Raum, Galerie Meyer*Kainer (2019); *Interiors*, Kunstverein Nürnberg (2019).