

MANUEL FROLIK. JEWELS

Nov. 22, 2018 – Jan. 17, 2019

Drawing Room is happy to host the first solo exhibition by the artist Manuel Frolik (born 1979 in Vogtland and currently living and working in Dresden). In this exhibition entitled **Jewels** we are showing two early sculptural works from 2011 (*Dead Sailor. Self-portrait as a dead hero*) and 2012 (*The Jewels of Mirabelou*); six small-format silicone sculptures from the year 2016; and pigment prints from his two series of works of 2017 and 2018, *Phytophilia Dresdense* and *Herbarium Dresdense*.

In his works, Frolik poses the question of authenticity and authorship, and plays with our preconceptions about originals and forgeries. His process-oriented works are based on the appropriation and defamiliarization of "found footage", or rather of perfectly detailed reproductions of hyper-realistic or amorphous sculptural figures and objects.

For his series of works *Phytophilia Dresdense* (2017), Frolik worked with the *Herbarium Dresdense* teaching collection, and botanical garden of the Technical University Dresden. With reference to the preoccupation with the typological form of the herbarium specimens,



which go as far back as the 18th century, Frolik has produced high-resolution scans of original plant samples from the botanical garden, which draw upon the historical record, but thereby represent an independent, vivid transformation of the historical material.

Arranged in a block on the end wall are twelve digital prints behind acrylic (ea. 50 x 31 cm), from this contemporary adaptation of historical plant specimens.

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Hanging on the main wall are nine Reproscans of original 18th- and 19th-century herbarium specimens from the *Herbarium Dresdense* (2018). For these, from the large number of original historical specimens, the artist selected a few particularly exotic and auratic varieties which he freed from title labelling and the typical slips of paper, rearranged on original sheets of paper from the collection's holdings, and then likewise scanned at high resolution. He then printed the works (pigment printing) and laminated them behind acrylic (ea. 75 x 45 cm). Against the background of the vibrant cacti or palm leaves from Dresden's Botanical Garden, reproduced with their saturated colours in almost overly-sharp focus, these testimonials to historical plants, long ago collected, pressed, maltreated, dried out, and fragile, function like a *memento mori*, reminding us of the transitory nature of all life.



The attempt to create the most realistic possible image of humankind and of nature stretches back to antiquity. In the 1960s, Duane Hanson and John DeAndrea applied themselves to realistic depictions of the human body, and created hyper-realistic sculptures of members of America's lower and middle classes – the losers in the “American Dream”. In recent years artists such as Sam Jinks and Ron Mueck have captured unusual emotional states and intimate existential moments in their sculptural works, thereby enchanting viewers. Frolik's hyper-realistic sculpture and installation *Dead Sailor* can be located within this context. Created in 2011 as a graduation piece, it holds a special place in the artist's previous work. If we look more closely at the sailor's face, we can see that it is actually a self-portrait. Self-reflection, self-portrayal and self-deconstruction are questions Frolik has dealt with in various media since that time.

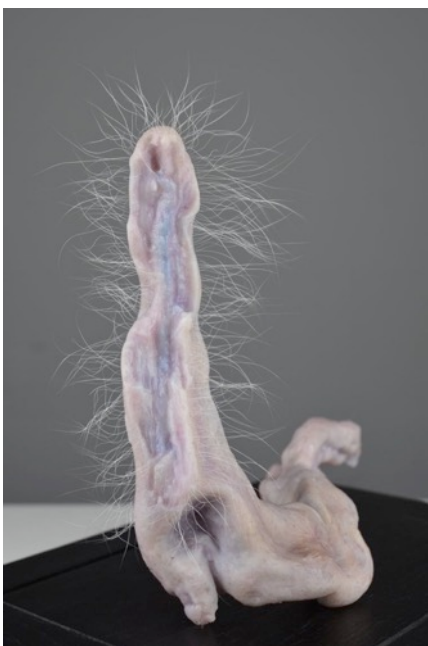
As dictated by the conventions of 19th century commercial shipping, the corpse is laid out on a deck plank, shrouded in sailcloth and provided with a heavy iron ball bound to its ankles. Storms, heavy seas and danger were a part of life on the ocean. Anyone who sailed the seas

exposed themselves to incalculable danger – when sailors bid their relatives farewell, they had to prepare for the possibility of it being a final goodbye. With this installation, Frolik has created his own historicising image of a burial at sea, and in this way celebrates the tragic notion of a dead hero who loves the ocean, the waves and the wind in the sails.

In the 21st century, however, the ocean ecosystem is also in danger due to the mass consumption of a constantly growing world population. On his many walks along the beaches of Mirabelou Gulf in eastern Crete, Frolik acted as an archaeologist of the present, collecting flotsam and jetsam. These ‘valuables’, meticulously arranged by colour and form as relics of the profane and vestiges of our disposable- and consumerist-society, are lined up on the side counter in the work *The Jewels of Mirabelou*. Manuel Frolik arrays the can openers, glass shards or screw caps like jewels, however he implicitly raises questions about plastic waste and microplastics, sustainability and our responsibility for the environment.

Six *silicone sculptures* produced by Frolik in 2016 are displayed on their wooden bases on the graphics cabinet. These appear like hybrid creatures from the depths of the Amazon rain forest, or the rain and peat swamp forests of Sumatra. These hairy, ashen shapes are fascinating, bewildering, and allow a wide range of associations. The art historian Dietmar

Rübel recognized in Frolik’s silicone sculptures an anthropomorphic materiality “(...) in which the human body has almost completely united with animal and vegetable components.” (D. Rübel, *SPFX, oder: Natur nach der Natur. Zu einer Werkgruppe von Manuel Frolik*) [D. Rübel, *SPFX, or: Nature from nature. On a series by Manuel Frolik*]. Frolik’s silicone sculptures show the viewer not just the last traces of the mutation of a post-human world, but according to Rübel they also stand for the demise of the romantic conception of nature which has characterized European aesthetics since about 1800.



VITA:

The artist Manuel Frolik, born 1979 in Vogtland and currently living in Dresden, studied at the HfBK Dresden. After obtaining his diploma, he completed his Master's there from 2011-2013 under Prof. Eberhard Bosslet, with concentrations in sculpture and spatial design.

Among other places, Frolik has had solo exhibitions in the Albertinum - Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2016), Berlin (2017), and in the Dresden City Art Gallery (Städtische Galerie Dresden) and in Hamburg (2018/19).

Manuel Frolik has also participated in many group exhibitions, including in France, Germany, Austria, England, and Spain.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

Jóvenes Artistas I, El Taller de Arte, Tías/Isla de Lanzarote, and *Jóvenes Artistas II*, Centro de Grabado Contemporáneo, Santa Cruz de Tenerife (2011); *Laufend anders – fünf Videos*, Albertinum - Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2012); *Schools of Art*, The Holden Gallery Manchester (2013); *Märkisches Stipendium für Bildende Kunst 2015*, Städtische Galerie Iserlohn (2014); *Viva Polaroid!* House of Photography, Vienna (2015); *Total – Move Baby, Move!*, Neuer Kunstverein Wuppertal e.V. (2016); *Paper Tigers Collection*, Syndicat Potentiel Strasbourg (2017); *Remembering the Future*, Altana Galerie in the Görges Bau at the Technical University Dresden, Galerie Ursula Walter, Dresden (2017/18), and *Aufbruch und Neuanfang #1*, Altana Galerie in the Görges Bau at the Technical University Dresden (2018).

In recent years Frolik has received numerous scholarships, including a project scholarship from the Liebelt-Stiftung Hamburg, and in 2016 a work scholarship from the Stiftung Kunstfonds Bonn, among others. In 2012 he was the recipient of the Hegenbarth-Stipendium der Dresdner Stiftung Kunst & Kultur der Ostsächsischen Sparkasse Dresden im Programm des Deutschlandstipendiums.

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