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ON VIEW

'New Hells' at Derek Eller Gallery

By Will Heinrich · 07/30/14 1:44pm



Blue Devils by Jason Fox (2013). (Images courtesy Derek Eller Gallery)

The occult anxiety begins with Jesse Greenberg's *Brick Birth I*, a polyurethane magic-show effigy of a shamanistic cave vulva sitting on a low, icy green pedestal next to a stingray placenta. Several clean, white escape ropes drape across its orifice only to get stuck in its walls. A sculpturally cool, late 19th century ink and crayon drawing by Félicien Rops, *Gaieté Hermaphrodite*, points the way to Julia Wachtel's billboard-style, oil on canvas juxtaposition of a pair of sexily inhuman anime schoolgirls with a slightly fantastical

fast-food menu, *Doubles*, and Max Klinger's overheated allegorical etching *Ruler of Death (Second Part, Opus XIII)*, also a century old, directs the viewer to Lionel Maunz's cast iron, steel and concrete *Social Pattern Defect*, a ruefully funereal evocation of the ruins of a Socratic dinner party. Splitting the difference between technological threats to the body and social threats to the mind are Huma Bhabha's untitled headhunter trophy, a square piece of packing Styrofoam the size of a box fan, blackened and bloodied with acrylic and oil stick, marked with what are either deep, empty eyes or two bullet holes to the collar bone, and sitting atop a chunk of wooden beam on a glossy white pedestal; and Nancy Grossman's 1968 lithographic crayon drawing of an exile from Tatooine in torment, *Untitled (Head for N.G.)*. But it's painter Peter Linde Busk who provides the oozy synthesis, the distantly recognizable, cheerfully eerie new demigods at home in whatever comes next, with the small acrylic *Niagara Falls, Slowly I turned ...* and the larger *Tannhauser (Green Sky)*, which shows a hunched little figure with the oversized clothing of a child and eyes ripped open to the jaw taking shape in a poisonous green rain. He is either bestriding or emerging from a mucus-pink river of blood. The show was curated by the gallery's associate director Isaac Lyles.