

ARTFORUM

BERLIN

“Claude Mirrors: Victor Man, Jill Mulleady, Issy Wood”

SCHINKEL PAVILLON

Oberwallstrasse 1

September 11–December 15, 2019



View of “Claude Mirrors: Victor Man, Jill Mulleady, Issy Wood,” 2019.

This group show is named after the tinted, convex pocket mirrors favored by British landscape painters from the eighteenth century: Claude mirrors. Reflected through the black glass, a surrounding scene would appear in distilled color with a softened focus and a framed perspective. The tool was popular with travelers and artists, notably the originator of the picturesque genre, Reverend William Gilpin, who advocated for its results, which he called akin to “the visions of the imagination” and “the brilliant landscapes of a dream.”

Gilpin’s praise could be repurposed to describe the visions exhibited at Schinkel Klaus—the basement space within the eccentric, octagonal Schinkel Pavillon—where hallucinatory and allegorical landscapes conjured from the imaginations of Victor Man, Jill Mulleady, and Issy Wood are staged in dialogue. But there is no high color here—rather, there are murky bruises of green and gray, black and blue, rendered in oil paint on canvas, linen, velvet, and even the furry pelt of a skinned rodent. Wood’s canvases depict aliens alongside classical sphinxes, blurring classical antiquity and science fiction into one uneasy temporality.

Mulleady’s theatrical figures are possessed, too. In the viridescent *The Green Room, I*, 2017, the protagonist flails his arms, spilling his drink, as if engaged in an occult ritual or visitation. And in Man’s works, his characters have quite literally lost their heads—severed and placed tenderly on anonymous laps, as in *The Chandler*, 2018, or missing completely, replaced with architectural details on top of impenetrable, latex-clad bodies, as in *Untitled*, 2015. Charged with the semiotics of surrealism, the uncanny images linger.

— Philomena Epps