

ARTFORUM

“Tears Shared: Marc Camille Chaimowicz Featuring Bruno Pélassy”

FLAT TIME HOUSE
210 Bellenden Road
June 16–July 31

A beaded curtain that spells out “VIVA LA MUERTE,” (*Sans Titre* [Untitled], 1995), hangs on the far wall from the entrance to this South London gallery. Alas, this is the final exhibition before the venue closes forever. The show—a sprawling display of ornaments, vessels, and fetishes—features glassware made and collected by Marc Camille Chaimowicz, as well as a group of works by Bruno Pélassy. It is Pélassy’s untitled sculptures, such as the aforementioned hanging, that truly stand out. The artist, who died in 2002 due to AIDS-related illnesses, is known for his bejeweled assemblages, *objets* that seem to take after Robert Rauschenberg’s *Scatole Personali* (Personal Boxes), ca. 1952. Pélassy’s sculptures, in look and ethos, are kitsch things, numinously queered.



View of “Tears Shared: Marc Camille Chaimowicz Featuring Bruno Pélassy,” 2016.

One sculpture in particular confounds all categories—*Sans Titre* (Untitled), 2000, a simple construction made of a white kidskin glove and a piece of synthetic stone. Pélassy’s strange figurine assumes the appearance of a generic religious statuette placed in churches or personal altars. But his effigy is smothered by an amorphous, parasitic mass, as if a starfish had engulfed its entire body. It is sensual and suffocating.

Pélassy’s exquisite sense of *mal* suffuses the exhibition’s centerpiece: a jellyfish-like creature, crafted from black lace, pearls, satiny fabric, and little glass hemispheres, floating within an immaculately minimalist aquarium (*Sans Titre* [Untitled], 2000). Pélassy’s bijou monster requires no food to survive as it hovers all by itself, zombified. Indeed, this funereal artwork strikes a fitting tone for the end of this remarkable space—long live the dead.

— Andrew Witt

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