

CRITICS' PICKS: New York

“Terrapin”

SVETLANA

Please make an appointment for address.

September 17–October 20

If art and wildlife have any correlation, a lover of both might evoke their propinquity to the sublime. “Terrapin,” organized by Magnus Schaefer, takes a direct, albeit frisky point of departure: Each work—save for one—features representations of animals, often conjured through differing levels of anthropomorphic adjustment. So the question could be posed, What is the sublime to an animal, and how do humans represent such? The answer, it would appear here, lies in absurdity and sex.

We might first examine the grouping’s exception: *Bethenny*, 2015, a swirling oil-on-canvas work by Lise Soskolne. Smiling, contorted daisies and gawky lavender spirals decorate its lower half. A crescent moon suspends above these forms, centering the composition with an enigmatic grin. Inside its lanky arc floats a logo—that of the horrorcore hip-hop duo Insane Clown Posse. This psychotropic quasi-firmament, while lacking in bodily creatures, emblemizes a screwy spirit carried forth in other works, such as Trevor Shimizu’s oil-on-canvas *Licking Cat’s Penis*, 2014, in which a human is seen giving a cat oral sex, or Sergej Jensen’s gracefully severe *Sketch for Leda*, 2014, an acrylic-on-linen composition that adapts the Greek myth wherein Zeus (materializing as a swan) rapes Leda.

Other photographic works are more serene, such as Roman Schramm’s *Turtles*, 2014, showing two piled-up turtles set within a border of a shadowy, digitally rendered space. In Heji Shin’s *The Great Penetrator 2*, 2012, a pensive horse gazes down from the camera, its mane windswept to one side and styled like bangs, stirring human empathy through unadorned representation of a nonhuman subject. And together, in their very production as images, this farcical array forms a metanarrative: one implicating humanity, witnessed as projecting its follies across the larger animal kingdom, and caught in its own pursuit of transcendence.

— Nicolas Linnert