

SARAH SANDLER

Manque de mordant | Lacking Bite

Exhibition from 13 to 23 January 2022

Opening Thursday 13 January from 4pm

For the moment, Sarah Sandler collects. A reassuring and minor ambition. It is the act of collecting that's the focus, not accumulation. For much time teeth, bone, stones, glass beads and lone earrings have lain quietly in brown cardboard boxes. It is not the ontological item that draws her to pick it up but the quality of its presence.

Occasionally, when removed from cardboard obscurity, these collected items are repurposed into artworks. Artworks that don't take centre stage, but side-projects, externalisations of thought created just because. These transformations (or emerging representations) have a spectral quality and in the works of *Manque de mordant* elicit their former owner's life.

Symbolically, the tooth is known to represent adaptation and growth, a kind of psychic mill whereby what's too rough to take in directly—to digest—can be ground up for conscious consideration, before eventual swallowing and metabolism.

Within the Oceania collection of the Linden Ethnographic Museum, Stuttgart, are items for personal adornment made from animal teeth. As the catalogue documentation reads, senior Traditional Peoples from the Solomon Islands wore teeth necklaces (dolphin, whale) to acquire the vitality they embodied.

Certain sculptural works in *Manque de mordant* contain collected stones, earrings, glass beads and also teeth. Stones and broken glass beads lay shroud in ceramic shoes and the silver of stray earrings repurposed into display stands.

In an esoteric attempt to get a sense of the animal behind the collected teeth, Sarah engaged a medium. Employing a technique similar to dental decoding (*décodage dentaire* or Odontomancy), it was communicated that the remains belonged to a tenacious, trenchant, decisive and enduring animal. An animal that lacked neither physical nor symbolic bite. An animal, *orienté vers son objectif, très tenace, qui lache rien, qui ne manque pas de mordant*.

Collecting has come into the foreground of Sarah's work recently. Both as a meditative practice and as part of an ongoing research residency within the Linden Museum. It's here that Sarah has started immersing herself in the subject that's been at the periphery of her practice for some time; the metabolic museum. Her outset enquiry asks how the ethnographic museum can function as a living and unfolding organism, a structure that isn't locked within a paradigmatic division of subjects and objects, or minds and matter, a structure doesn't *manque de mordant* by addressing the provenance of its collection. Curator Clementine Delisse argues that the collecting of objects is always incomplete, as the objects can never represent the whole—much like a single organ cannot represent the entire body.

Over the next year, while working within the Oceania collection of the Linden Museum, Sarah will develop a project that addresses the politics of artifact provenance through the unfolding of alternative narratives. On the debut of this long-term project, *Manque de mordant* is the occasion to present new works-in-progress that collage and mass together these initial reflections.

Sarah Sandler

Metabolic Museum by Clementine Deliss

Pharmako-AI by K Allado-McDowell

Book of Symbols Reflections On Archetypal Images by Ami Ronnberg (Editor)