

artillery

Tim Hawkinson

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While the underlying engineering of Tim Hawkinson's artworks appears to be of an extraordinarily complex order, the raw materials with which they are made, taken from everyday objects that are typically discarded after the substance in them is extracted, structure a world that opens to the possibility of amazement. It is a world with simultaneous and multiple centers of focus, in which the cosmology derived from the banal, or the physiological, morphs into a perpetual motion mechanism. It offers a microcosm of mathematical complexities, where, in repetition, the unremarkable illuminates the underlying structures that shape the world.



Courtesy of DENK Gallery.

An exemplary instance of Hawkinson's approach can be seen in *Personal Shell* (2019). In this cast urethane and epoxy sculpture the artist has drawn upon various body parts of his own, extracted the outermost shapes as molds and recast and assembled them into a sea-shell like form. Like other works of his, the use of coral and beige colors alludes to the statuary of classical antiquity and his own body, and disguises the work as a naturally colored seashell.

For *Butt head tri-cone bit* (2019), the artist has once again employed cast urethane. The roughly formulated flesh-toned tunnel-digging device appears as a large set of jaws with a trio of spheres at the base. These are studded with finger tips as though these stubs could be used to delve into the earth and explore what is underground. It is in this conflation of the body and as its extension as a tool that both the humor and the inquiry of his work is framed. Is our world really nothing more than a projection of us as creatures in it, or is there something more to this than just the simple addition of those two elements?

Sock drawer (2019) likewise reveals Hawkinson's wry humor. The artist has photographed the opening of a sock rotated by 360-degrees and arranged a multitude of images of this into a honeycomb that expands out from a darker center to lighter edges, creating an almost optical effect.

Even more humorously, after seeing the first work, each successive piece feels funnier than the last—*Double bag torso* (2019) is nothing more than a TrueValue hardware bag stretched over a paper bag that the artist filled with expanding foam. The result is a sort of statue fragment in which an armless T-shirt and pair of hiked up underwear house a body in the likeness of a distended paper bag. Fragments of antiquity play into the work and allow humor and vulnerability to question what is the true value of this thin material sheath that keeps us separated from the rest of the world.



Tim Hawkinson, *Orrery*, 2018.
Courtesy of DENK Gallery.

Tim Hawkinson presents a beguilingly complex set of questions in his art. The best way to describe it is as a kind of pragmatic philosophical exploration of where the obsessive (with its seemingly endless repetition and meaninglessness) and the philosophical (with its relentless search for the essential constructions of what we can know) uneasily intersect.