

Art Now L.A.  
June 15, 2022

Fawn Rogers: 'Your Perfect Plastic Heart'  
*Reflections of the Exotic and Erotic, the Visceral and the Intellectual*  
Wilding Cran Gallery  
May 21 - June 25, 2022

by Jody Zellen



Paintings of oysters— sensual and gooey— dominate Fawn Rogers' exhibition, *Your Perfect Plastic Heart*. Why paint oysters? Rogers uses them as a metaphor and a point of departure to explore the aesthetics of sensuality, as well as issues relating to pleasure, lust and wealth. One could talk about ecofeminism, or the destruction in the Anthropocene, as Rogers explains these are some of her motivations. While she is immersed in cultural and art theory and has researched the pearl industry, as well as eaten her share of seafood, first and foremost this is an exhibition of painting. And the gallery is filled with lush, hyper-realistic, close-up paintings of oysters that are repulsive and seductive simultaneously.

A good place to begin is by watching Rogers' two channel video *The World is your Oyster* (6:52, 2020) that hones in on various mollusks, presenting their bulbous interiors, as well as footage in their natural habitats. At one moment in the video, a scallop appears to dart away from the camera, propelling itself just above the sea floor. Footage of pearl harvesting by female hands with brightly colored fingernails is juxtaposed with images of strands of pearls as a valuable commodity. The narrative presented in the video is complemented by a suite of paintings in the adjacent room. In these pieces (*The World is your Oyster, Video Still #1-15*, 2021), Rogers enlarges with photographic veracity images of female hands delving into and holding open oyster shells and digging within the vagina-like flesh for pearls.

Large paintings (65 x 85 inches) of open shells against solid color backgrounds such as *Epoquetude*, 2021, *The Most Beautiful Pearls Are Black*, 2021 and *Happy As A Clam #3*, 2020 not only display Rogers' aptitude as a painter, but celebrate her willingness to highlight both the male and female sexuality of these protandric creatures. In another series of small framed acrylic paint on cardboard packaging titled *Eat You Eat Me* (2020), Rogers uses oyster and sardine boxes as backgrounds on which to paint nude figures of differing skin colors— with male and female organs— in various sexually evocative poses. The labeling of the packages — Wild Planet, Powerhouse, Crown Prince, extra virgin, hand-packed— directs the interpretation of the works, as does the implication of 'eat you, eat me.' This series focuses on consumption, packaging, unpacking and who and what is a commodity.

The final room in the exhibition is meant to offer respite. It has light blue walls and functions as a reading room where viewers can relax on a comfortable, clam-shaped and colored couch, look at a range of art and theory books, listen to music from an old fashioned record player while regarding three of Rogers' most erotic and sexualized paintings. Vividly contrasting to the light blue walls are *Free of God*, 2021, *Our Lady Guadalupe*, 2020 and *Atmorelational*, 2021. Not only are Rogers' paintings of these sea creatures larger than life, they are meant to reference

themes that range from climate change to violence to art history to religion and reproduction.

If Rogers were not such an accomplished painter, and an intently focused artist, *Your Perfect Plastic Heart* might come across as a crass one liner and a presentation of kitschy sexualized images. But Rogers truly believes *The World is Your Oyster* and everyone has the opportunity to make the most of what life has to offer. Her use of myriad mollusks is a reflection on the exotic and erotic, the visceral and the intellectual with a dream of peaceful co-existence.

<https://artnowla.com/2022/06/15/fawn-rogers-your-perfect-plastic-heart/>