

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS



Josephine Pryde, *Cabinets (Six)*, 2019/2021, C-print, 15 x 10". From the series "Cabinets, [One–Nine]," 2019/21.

NEW YORK

Josephine Pryde

GANDT

31-45 37th St. Suite #G
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Josephine Pryde makes hard images. In this show, Pryde revisited her 2005 commission for the first issue of *Hard Mag*, for which its publisher, Dan Mitchell, asked her to contribute photographs of

shopping articulating "frustration, pain, humiliation, difficulty, failure, paranoia, [and] low self worth." For the assignment, Pryde began taking sea creatures, presumably dead, into changing rooms of various chain clothing retailers and photographing them with her Yashica T4 (the same point-and-shoot analog camera used by Terry Richardson). In *Cubicles* *Hard Mag Fenwicks (One)*, 2005, the only piece from the original series included here, an embryonic squid perches listlessly atop a patch of red fabric and what might be some Topshop denim. For the series "Cabinets, [One–Nine]," 2019/21, we see an octopus's tentacles gather gently in the sink of an airplane bathroom and, in another picture, adhere to a toilet-paper holder. Folded on a white cloth and placed on the gallery floor, *The Flight That Moved Them*, 2021, holds a hidden photograph; roughly conforming to the dimensions of the Astoria space, the piece will be unfurled as the show progresses.

Pryde is attuned to how our egos are shaped by embodied encounters. Sometimes, we manage to escape while trying on a new hat at Zara or to find refuge in a public bathroom. At other times, faced with our reflection in a poorly lit fitting-room mirror, we are left only with our wounded selves and must aim again for repair—try on something else, maybe, or take one more photo. Pryde infuses the sterile atmosphere of commodity and fashion photography with a visceral edge of confinement, abandonment, and permeability. Perhaps this is what Luce Irigaray meant when she said, “Femininity consists essentially in laying the dead man back in the womb of the earth, and giving him eternal life.” Her airless yet seductive tableaux of surfaces and skin express the desire for both contact and release.

—*Hiji Nam*