

Kelly Akashi

Figure Shifter

February 2 - March 10, 2019

I lived a life once. It was my life and it was what I knew.

Then things began to look strange. They grew wider and deeper.

I didn't know them. They were no longer mine.

What is mine anyways: my nails, my skin, my teeth
my hair, gathered up and plaited into a long braid, grazing my fingertips
ribcage inflated like a multifaceted globe of glass.

The structure was there, gridded out, compartmentalized, defined, displayed. When removed, gravity pulled everything down into the earth. There they lay for 66 million years until the earth fractured and they spiraled up again.

And I sought you there, in a tunnel left by the claws of an ancient crab; in the harsh ridges of the ecphora; in the extended fin of the whelk; in the swirl of a moon snail.

Your figure pushed out against the force of gravity, like the body of the universe trying to compress you into another thing. The sea brought other bodies into yours and you became the vessel for many.

I can't be you but I can enter you, see you, see your figure still. I can form you again, find your figure, catch your glance, take you into me.

But I won't ossify, I'll never cease my flow. I'll give you my nails, my skin, my teeth, and trade them for another kind of shell. I'll expand into the sea. I'll consume your filth and create crystal. Devour your poison, let it change me. I'll leave this earth, transform into a tube, find a pure figure and devour it whole.

François Ghebaly is proud to present Kelly Akashi's *Figure Shifter*, an exhibition of new works using glassblowing, lost-wax casting, tomography, cameraless photography, and water. This is Akashi's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Kelly Akashi and François Ghebaly wish to extend their gratitude to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County for access to the invertebrate paleontology collections. Thank you to Lindsey Groves, Jann Vendetti, and Austin Hendy.

Kelly Akashi was born in 1983 in Los Angeles. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Long Exposure*, SculptureCenter, New York (2017); *Being as a Thing*, Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2016); &, Tomorrow Gallery, New York (2015); and *SSOfILLY*, Michael Jon & Alan Gallery, Miami (2015). Selected group exhibitions include *Tissue of Memory*, Simon Lee Gallery, New York (2018), *Pine Barrens*, Tanya Bonakdar, New York (2018); *Dreamers Awake*, White Cube, London (2017); *Lyric on a Battlefield*, Gladstone Gallery, New York (2017); *LA: A Fiction*, Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon (2017); *Take Me (I'm Yours)*, Jewish Museum, New York (2016); *Streams of Warm Impermanence*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2016); and *Made in L.A.: a, the, though, only*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016). Her works reside in the collections of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; CC Foundation, Shanghai; M Woods, Beijing; and Sifang Museum, Nanjing. She lives and works in Los Angeles.