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My littoral zone

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PHOTOGRAPHY JENNI CARTER

If the unconscious refers to experiences outside our awareness, how can we get a glimpse of it? Well, maybe through the fiery prism of hot glass.

Floria Tosca's new exhibition, *My Littoral Zone*, is an ode to her psychoanalytic therapist who guided her into safe states of being over several decades. For this new installation at Nanda\Hobbs Gallery, she has created an entire consultation room as a Wunderkammer or cabinet of curiosities. Wunderkammer were 11–19th century cabinets or rooms in which rare and exotic objects were collected and displayed to represent the status, wealth, and scientific knowledge of the owner.

Designing her Wunderkammer as a Freud-like room to represent the littoral zone between her conscious and subconscious mind, the room includes armchairs and Victorian cabinets, wallpaper, paintings, and objects of interest. It not only creates a space of introspection and self-knowledge, but reclaims the Wunderkammer as a space of order. Tosca loves collecting and classifying. The room also presents as a new form of necro-decadence, which is a deathly and excessive indulgence in aesthetic beauty and decay.

These cabinets act as a memorial to the collected plants and animals which were once thought to live in endless bounty and everlasting fecundity. Viewers explore new worlds that Tosca has created from her imagination, from fragments of her subconscious. Some cabinets have open doors, others are closed. This is a metaphor for how we understand ourselves and our worlds.

There is a wallpaper produced from one of Tosca's 2022 skull drawings in two shades, which works as a subconscious membrane where human behaviours may be repeated. Mirrors act as portals into the analytical

process. Her cabinets have labels on the little doorknobs, with such words as Cabinet of Trusted Cures and Cabinet of Disappointments.

This is where the membrane between consciousness and the unconscious is slippery; it is perpetually and uncomfortably slipping. In her cabinets there are eyes, snakes, mushrooms, and goddesses. It is no coincidence that there are a lot of little broken-off penis shapes, made in glass. They are the phallic 'lack', and they represent all forms of psychological loss and grieving. They can be interpreted as the absence of women's stories and the beginning of repair.

The exhibition becomes a realm of psychoanalysis, a space where the artist and her viewers can grapple with ongoing ecological and personal mourning and start to wonder about future possibilities.

All of this psycho-wonder can happen whilst experiencing the thrall of her speculative glass-blown post-human beings. Tosca works with the risky, fast, and hot glass blowing process with fiery pluck. She works with several glass blowing studios and undertakes the physical and intellectual riot of turning and blowing molten material at pace. Her subconscious is accessed during this skilled practice, because there is no time to think, to rationalise, to master. Instincts fly. Some of her glass objects are opaque — we can't see the truth — but she tells me that transparency becomes a metaphor for forgiveness.

What Tosca shows us is that when we are able to glimpse our unconscious through a flimsy and delicate membrane of glass, it is possible to better understand feelings of anger and denial.

She suggests that much of the world is monotheistic, whereas there are a multitude of stories, narratives, scripts, folktales, and fables that deserve our attention.

PREVIOUS

Floria Tosca, *My Littoral Zone, Cabinet of Near Misses*, detail, Nanda\Hobbs Gallery.

OPPOSITE

Floria Tosca, *The Everything Ring and Little Ring With The Lot*, (both in collaboration with Bronwyn Sargeson), 2025. Blown glass.









One of those collective feelings of our times is the adverse impact of human activity on the natural world. Tosca mourns the lost diversity of nature and this exhibition ties into a cast of thinkers who interrogate the sentimentality (both schmalzy and emotional), and the mourning (the necro-end of the end), of our ecologies.

Nature has long been a fierce obsession for Tosca, who is known for her paintings, drawings, murals, and sculptures that reference fish, birds, frogs, spiders, slugs, monkeys, plants, and algae. As she says, “I am part of the natural world, not separate from it. All animals are important.”

Finally, her fierce glass goddesses are part of this exhibition. These objects go by the name of idol, guardian, totemic spirit figure. They refer to Asian traditions — Tosca’s own Korean heritage — and work as apotropaic protectors. There are also puns in this exhibition, which is in keeping with the original Wunderkammern, which often included a fake item. Her puns are the titles of these glass goddess statues. There are titles such as *Totem of Cognitive Protection* and *Totem of Ovarian Expiration*.

Tosca says, “I propose that if we worship nature to the level of gods and goddesses, not in terms of binary good vs evil but the whole cycle, then our perception will shift to respect and cherish our natural worlds.”

These big glass goddesses are part of Tosca’s desire to create female forms that must be idolised. She suggests that much of the world is monotheistic, whereas there are a multitude of stories, narratives, scripts, folktales, and fables that deserve our attention. Idolatry is important to Tosca, for a return to the spiritual and religious realm of the natural world. “Nature has personhood,” says Tosca. “It is as significant as the human.”

floriatosca.com
nandahobbs.com

PREVIOUS

Floria Tosca, *My Littoral Zone*, exhibition installation shot, Nanda\Hobbs Gallery.

ABOVE

Floria Tosca, *Totem of Spring Rites*, 2025. Blown glass and ceramic.