

# ARTFORUM

## Critic's Pick

### Fay Ray

By Simone Krug, April 25, 2018



Fay Ray, *Cans Corn Clay*, 2018, ink-jet print, 36 x 54".

Fay Ray invokes the planetary in her crisply constructed black-and-white photomontage prints, an odd solar system of surfaces. Her exhibition "I AM THE HOUSE" also incorporates hanging metal structures in which fragments of aluminum cacti, desiccated corn, and marble slabs appear affixed to chain link, hooks, and fasteners. The resulting forms resemble oversize dream catchers or intricate earrings. One such sculpture, *Calipatria*, 2017, incorporates queen conch shells joined to metal rods, a chic take on Poseidon's trident.

A similar air of the ethereal permeates Ray's two-dimensional work. *Egg Arch and Pearl Portal*, 2018, a photographic work printed on aluminum, is a domed altar panel of bright gems and loudly patterned painted eggs. At the work's center, a shiny pearl appears salaciously

wedged between a pair of feminine lips agape just so. This absurdist gesture is distinctly Marxist in its critique of our worship of material objects and feminist in its send-up of the idolization of female bodies. Gaudy pearls likewise festoon the outstretched fingers of two cupping hands that extend from an otherwise hidden figure, flaunting the bling as if in a lewd hand signal.

Other collaged prints, their compositions first assembled by hand and then rephotographed as seamless tableaux, are brimming, cacophonous fields. Some works are printed so sharply that their quality becomes paradoxically delicate, like a cut-glass vase whose delineated contours carry a warning. *Cans Corn Clay*, 2018, is a monochromatic study where cut-up images of crumpled beer cans, speckled eggs, furs, shells, and all manner of textures come together. Toying with luster, shadow, and patina, the artist's work resembles the mysterious realm evoked by luxury-goods advertising, relying so heavily on sparkle. Under this magical spotlight, even her corncobs resemble crystals. In Ray's cosmos, detritus takes on a celestial essence.