

David Altmejd

ANDREA ROSEN GALLERY

525 West 24th Street

January 31–March 8

Aesop's arboretum meets laboratory in "Juices," David Altmejd's latest exhibition, where three monumental works show life expanded by metamorphosis. The show's centerpiece, *The Flux and the Puddle*, 2014, is a layered vitrine-like installation that spans more than twenty-four feet across the gallery and reaches nearly eleven feet into the air. It reads like an abstracted hologram that twists into focus as one approaches: Walls of mirrors surround and weave through the towering Plexiglas grid that outlines a seemingly alive terrarium-like ecosystem coursing with parades of insects, fruits, and fauna. Though often grotesque, Altmejd's figures are tenderly embellished with quartz crystals where their skin, modeled in clay with the dimpled surfaces of Medardo Rosso sculptures, has split open. Transformation is shown through sequential progressions: From dark, abstracted human forms emerge businessmen, birds of prey, and apes. Hardened murky liquids in seminal white and black and light-fluorescent chemical hues drip and pool around the environment; this movement is repeated in cotton-candy-like looms of pastel threads that draw contours through the space.

The cosmic brilliance of *The Flux and the Puddle* contrasts with *The Eve*, 2014, a smaller, sparser vitrine: Like an inverted crucifixion of Rodin's *The Thinker*, a single bisected male figure is suspended upside-down at an invisible table, his head carved out in small holes as if it were burrowed into by moths. A pair of hands pushes through the small of his back like a hatching larva. In a third room, *Untitled*, 2014, vertically reflects the same sculpted face twice over an axis of deep-set glass eyes—an isolated motif of symmetry and rebirth that unlocks the larger presentation.

"Juices" tells a story of metamorphosis, but also of reincarnation: The double face in *Untitled* implies both an ending and another, fated, beginning. Mirrors blocking and reflecting one's views through *The Flux and the Puddle* render a fractured-infinity effect, suggesting a Hellenistic inevitability that carries through the show. As creatures transform and multiply, the Plexi cage grows around them like a tridimensional graph, asserting the mathematical interconnectedness of each living thing—their shared juices, categorized like science projects—while protecting and celebrating a delicate process of material and biological evolution.



David Altmejd, *The Flux and the Puddle*, 2014, Plexiglas, quartz, polystyrene, expandable foam, epoxy clay, epoxy gel, resin, synthetic hair, clothing, leather shoes, thread, mirror, plaster, acrylic paint, latex paint, metal wire, glass eyes, sequin, ceramic, synthetic flowers, synthetic branches, glue, gold, feathers, steel, coconuts, aqua resin, burlap, lighting system including fluorescent lights, Sharpie ink, wood, 10' 3/4" x 21' x 23' 1/2".

— Anne Prentnieks