

graphed from the TV screen image of a shark eating a fish.

The prize for innovation in the reliquary form goes to Fura S (Nobi Shioya), who seals objects and images inside water-filled plexiglas containers. These look like prefab bubble skylights and refract a spooky aquarium light. One piece has bubbles. Maybe it's the carbon fiber but the half-reflective/half-transparent medium provides the spooky light that Wilhelm Reich so railed against as contributing to the obfuscation of religion. *Black Cross* directly hearkens back to Christianity, or its opposite. Another work submerges collaged pornographic images. In Fura S's works, as in the reliquaries prized by medieval pilgrims, it's all in the packaging.

Adam Licht's silver print photographs of body parts in Mason jars—finger, ear, a part of a penis?—somehow represent to Artburger the reliquary as psychopathology rather than scientific specimen. (Curator Berzinski views the work as a critique of science.)

I liked Ellen Sullivan's mysteriously numbered bottles—so precisely labeled, fractional numbers are needed—yet abandoned along with their possibly dangerous contents, salts of sulfuric or nitric acid around their stoppers. One is only stoppered with cheesecloth. Artburger can smell the fumes of forgotten secret experiments. Sullivan's work reminds me that the term "chemistry" is used for unexplainable factors. Perhaps her bottles contain the magic elixir or once did. Artburger did not much care for Sullivan's framed coin frottages and drawings, which didn't really belong in the show. Frames do not a reliquary make.

Williamsburger Meryllan McCorkle's works from her *Homages* series are the only works in the show to allude to the personal quality of traditional reliquaries—the "personal" power of a particular saint as an intermediary to the Divine. Here "portraits" encompass symbolic objects of significance to friends—Agnes, Elaine, John, Claire—or to the artist in thinking about them. Hung as similar works were at Black + Herron Space last season, these current

Just a Couple of Relics (Shows)

There's something fin de siècle about the interest in reliquaries: a combination of mistrust of the future and the suspicion that what is still to be experienced will somehow be less magical than what has passed. Although both *Reliquaries* a group show curated by Jon Berzinski at 123 Watts Gallery and Tim Thulen's solo show *Reliquiae* at Dana Bieff Gallery focus on the medium—the object within an object—the works generally seem closer to specimen cases than to pieces of art preserving an object of veneration—religious connotations of the form still exert inescapable power—even if none of the bones encased pretended to be of saintly origin.

The show at Josee Bienvenu's Tribeca gallery exhaustively defines the reliquary as a medium and intends to preserve the "spiritual" overtones. Work ranges from Krista Van Ness's use of mummified animal remains and bones to Claire Jervert's C-print cutout, pressed between sheets of plexiglas, photo-