

Cooper Jacoby *Sun is Bile*

The Intermission × Fitzpatrick Gallery, Piraeus 14 January – 26 March

In the refurbished 1920s premises of The Intermission in Piraeus, the port city in Greater Athens whose harbour has been used continuously since antiquity, American artist Cooper Jacoby summons a local practice that has been dormant here since the early days of Roman Christians. Like a contemporary Pythia, the Delphic oracle who inhaled bay-leaf vapour while voicing riddles envisioning the future, a set of four wall-mounted panels literally heat up and cool down, augmented with digital displays that emit lines of drunken poetry. ‘Mirror Is Engine, Sun Is Bile,’ reads one. Epoxy-encapsulated with reflective surfaces, approximately the height of a full-length body mirror, each is fitted with an AI-modified thermostat that also generates text on its display in real time.

Reminiscent of the musings of horoscope columns, these are writings that we are ourselves scripted to project onto, mirroring our own

biases, fears, hopes. As the temperature changes, meanwhile, the chromogenic-paint hue mutates within a saturated autumn palette, coppers to greens to blues, in expression of temperamental affect. And as the sentient surfaces become aware of their own temperature fluctuations – a circle within circles, a closed system not unlike climate itself – the very meaning of consciousness is brought to the foreground, as is a history of existential cyclical allegory stretching from Narcissus to Hans Haacke’s *Condensation Cube* (1963–68), a sealed Perspex box with a changing opacity, depending on its surrounding temperature. Pointedly, amid a context of unpredictable heating and predicting, the title of this series asks *How will I survive?* (2022).

A metre above our heads, as if both observing and illuminating us, four pastel-coloured simulacra of streetlamps protrude from the walls. In the glass of each, diffusing a blurred

beam of coloured light, are what look like fungal growths, abstractions or, wait, abjections. These are clear-silicone cast animal intestines and organs, like miniature islands in a puddle of backlighting. Harking back to haruspicy, divination by reading animals’ entrails, a practice dating to Ancient Rome, this flickering iridescence is of a down-sampled projection of video behind the silicone ‘prism’, which diffuses it further, tinting the pulsing organ shapes, like enlarged microscope imagery in an animist flurry of ancient activity. In a time of dense futurology, conspiracies and technological fetishism, it’s salutary to be reminded that humans have always looked for answers beyond their own logic – whether through discursive technology or irrational divination. We did it then and, as we tragically avoid facing the magnitude of our environment’s cascading crisis, we do it now. *Athanasios Argianas*



Apopheniatic (infancy), 2021, polyurethane enamel, steel, fibreglass, silicone, LED array, 165 × 92 × 34 cm. Courtesy the artist and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris