

SASKIA NEUMAN GALLERY

Tobias Bradford
Collecting Shells
15.01 – 28.02.2026

Tobias Bradford's exhibition *Collecting shells* centers on themes of embodiment, disembodiment and a traceable desire to transcend our physical limitations through technology. However unattainable, the physical feeling of longing itself, purely from a conceptual stance, becomes the focal point. Like a hermit crab restlessly shifting to and from various forms, leaving empty molts behind, the body as an exoskeleton protecting a soft, gushy and vulnerable core. The body as a vessel and the drive to escape it, find another one, discard it, to exist beyond the shell itself.

Where the idea or the physical concept of the body is delivered, to which realm is under constant question, and perhaps seeking where the ephemeral and the eternal converge. This exhibition invites viewers to explore the intimate relationship between human experience and the objects we create.

The individual sculpture is a story captured within its form, echoing the past while gazing toward a digital future, as in the case of the work *Duck, 2025*. The artwork plays with the notion of transformation, reflecting how advancements in technology provide us with new ways to reshape our identities, or as in the case of the installation *Duck, 2025* actually create one. Virtual reality, augmented experiences, and bodily augmentation blur the lines between the tangible and intangible, pushing us to confront our understanding of presence.

As we navigate these shifting landscapes, we are compelled to ask what does it mean to be human in an era marked by constant evolution? Are we able to transcend the body, and does technology enable, and allow us to do this? You can enter, or get to the core, and conquer your own biology. Technology is vast, but we know that it's about robots and computers. And, computer games. They're about escapism and leaving the world behind... or are they? Dilution of identity springs to our attention. What materializes when it becomes increasingly more difficult to gauge where the physical body stops and something else, new or other, takes over?

Can we embrace the discomfort of our vulnerabilities while simultaneously celebrating the beauty of our transient forms? The shell reminds us that while we may leave parts of ourselves behind, each transition adds to the richness of our existence. Where longing is both an act, as well as a larger concept. With this as its foundation, the exhibition explores themes inherent in Bradford's practice; melancholy, fear, but also elation and joy, and the effects these very real states of mind have on the human psyche, as well as the physical body. How these feelings embody difficulties of interaction and communication, subsequently leaving both transient and permanent marks on people, and undoubtedly technology.

Through *Collecting Shells*, we uncover layers of meaning that prompt reflection on our desires to connect, create, and ultimately transcend. The exhibition serves as a mirror, inviting us to examine not only the exteriors we don, but also the delicate inner worlds they contain—the emotions, memories, and dreams waiting to be released. Through this exploration, we embrace the complexity of being—a dance between attachment and liberation, a testament to the relentless pursuit of becoming more than we are.