Metamorphoses

Frédéric Pollet's bestiary

We are told that the proliferation of jellyfishes, in the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere, is due to global warming… For some years they have also colonized Frédéric Pollet's works, in their own way, but it is less their milky and somewhat sly transparency than their surface that caught his look. Or he seems rather to have pushed the warming process to its close, and his pigment-based work has revealed parched, but above all magnificently colored, jellyfishes… It is walking on the beach in Brittany that he met the jellyfishes, driven ashore, scattered here and there among shells. He pictured them, in black and white, while they were lying on the sand, caressed by a wave from time to time… Corpses, of course, or rather bodies to which the artist, although no sort of compassion was involved in the process, felt like giving another life through colour… And we then see transfigured jellyfishes suspended on the walls – sometimes a bird eye's view, somewhat a full-face portrait, as if the painter had been swimming among them – jellyfishes which would have given off all their water and absorbed the colors of the sky, of the earth, of the flowers; jellyfishes preserved forever like all those animals whose anatomy is known by the trace they've left in the rock. One may see jellyfishes closely in major oceanariums. Frédéric Pollet took them out in the perspective of a harmless resurrection; and as for the Plexiglas cubes that he piles up into rigorous installations, they could very well become bowls for those creatures, most probably; actually, they house quite another, imaginary, fauna that the artist has gradually constituted along his trips to Africa, India, South America, and that represent an intriguing and spectacular contrast to the above-mentioned pastels, though their transparency.

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Translated by Charlotte Borie (St John's College, Cambridge University)
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