



Viva Vivo! Living Art Is Dead

What is so sexy about the biological today? Are the technologies of cloning, transgenics and genomics just charismatic suck-holes seducing faux-independent art exploration? Is bioart a gateway drug, the road to harder drugs: psychopharmacological answers to all social problems, more and more creative accounting regimes and cuter new disease designs? One would hope that there are better reasons to scope out undulating living entities than market schemes. Is it naïve to think that aesthetes are not all just echoes of capital-intensive trends? Are there really broad, heterogeneous swaths of ideation coursing outside of the status quo? Can we dream of hunting beauty for pleasure without apology?

MEME PROTEOMICS

By reading this text you are incorporating it into your fleshy repertoire. During a focused semiotic transmission, more than thoughts change hands. Your basic physiology is altered as you read. Protein production is over- and under-regulated by intellectually reactive metabolites. Pride of knowledge, gullible acceptance, the deviant chuckle, these are not thoughts without physicality. There may be an avenue of interplay between communication and inheritance. If so, then this page is a transgenic vector, contagious, infective. Ideas received translate into proteins that have waiting receptors for novel gene expressions. Your children will have more or less bushy eyebrows if you continue reading. You may become too detached to breed! This is intergenerational selection, grammatological eugenics. You are now a trans-memic GMO!

TRANSHUMANISM

The feeling of being a morally superior, detached observer is a practice for scientist and art appreciator alike. We often play God, and the very human act of radical detachment produces endorphins. Our futile quest to commandeer universalism provides serotonin rewards. Artists may mock our human ego but only to hook casual observers on their own innate brain chemistry. Feigning anthropocentric distance, transhumanist advocates practice fluidity of self-definition. We are studying machines made of meat, worms on two feet, bacterial bioreactors, overgrown drosophila.

There is no human. Certainly there is no superior spectacularity of essential humanity. We love dross and sculpt to refine our aesthetic and/or anti-aesthetic molecules. That includes sculpting our kindred. We are breeding for pleasure in a world of hurt. Our children will be posthuman but not superhuman. Bodily enhancement suffers the same pangs as other aesthetic qualms; passé-ism includes all future versions of transhuman being. And we are proud not to be proud.

Facing page: Scope and Poke, micrograph of developing zebrafish embryos (19 hours), scoped with standard dissection microscope (40×) and poked with artist's tweezers. (© Adam Zaretzky) We are all congenital malformations that have stood the test of diversity versus time. This poking and jabbing is only a vamping of the creative play of organic mutations. Every day, the flux of morphology continues to reshape and remold concrete concepts of species integrity outside the grasp of command and control.

GERMLINE ONANISM

What excites you below the belt? What makes you wet and swollen with lust? These are the sites of erotic interchange. These are the acts that make you cum. That is life. That is pleasure, even diabolical pleasure. Study lust. Lust drives biotech: fantastic gender trouble. Fantastic taboo. Fantastic victimization. Fantastic biomorphic somnambulism. Fantastic reproduction. Fantastic creations. Our children are children of technolust. Jacking online into the spermbank of antiquated morphology, this is tomorrow's breed.

BIOPORN

Every new protocol creates taboo. What is screened out is an anarchic polymorphic stew created specifically to stabilize the repeatability of what is screened for. We build our foundations on normalized psychosis, which doubles as a cohesive monument to everyday stasis. Pornographic foci, in particular fetish monomanias, are the precursors to our most specific cultural norms. Fragments of social beauty are all in the eye of the monomaniac as beholder. This is culture, from banality to bestiality and back. Seedy imagination is the birthplace of our future bio-cultural norms.

ARTIFICIAL OMNIPOTENCE

The combination of creative lust and technical prowess has led us only to the realization of autoerotic fantasies: veil after veil lifts, in slippery sheens of translucent tissue. But there is no god for artists and scientists to imitate, supercede or impress. The human genome project, new reproductive technologies, trans-species chimeras, breast milk pharmacies: we are our own circus mirrors.

So, we will keep on playing voyeurs and exhibitionists in the great show of revealing nature. The hidden will be revealed, fact by fact, corpuscle by corpuscle. Erotic explorers hope that Nature, eventually, will lay terminally open, legs bound in universal stirrups, screaming and heaving under the heavy-handed methods of investigation. She is us, biting and bitten, laid bare and scoped thoroughly (see article frontispiece).

BECOMING ALIVE

Science as sexwork may explain why so many of the biophilic arts are tornadoes of undulation. The animal magnetic swarms in colorfields of breathing, swimming anarchy. Self-organizing patterns mingle in every corpuscle, barnacle, wallet and insignificant schmutz. There may be no reason or rhyme, but we, as organisms, are implicated. No hornet's nest of taxonomy can stop our sprouting morass. There is nothing like the abstract time travel of magnification to prove how foreign and indescribable a universe we live in—our universe, which we try to buy and sell, our universe that mocks control.

DIONYSIAN PHLEGMA

Let's celebrate our temporary passage through the vast unknown. Let's celebrate the insignificance of our petty reasoning. Let's celebrate the beauty of another world, one much like our own but without the impediment of faux recognition. The novelty of not knowing and the freedom of aesthetic-less bliss conjoin to make solid the unreal, the lost concept of admitting inexperience. Concepts are like tethers, sloughed nerves, responsiveness derailed. The brain is a sensual, wet organ, not a bodiless judge. It is a giant clitoris, not a super computer. Instead of imagining a "you" using your brain, surrender. Fail. Let subcognition win. Give up. Give up. Let it sweep you away in a spread-eagle interface of ungrounded mortal nguhhh. Vital flow is transitory by its throbbing nature. Give up on poise. Give up. Fail. Unbottle your miasma. Seep.

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