

Semi-living Artifacts
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For the longest he was just standing on the sidelines, looking in. He was a stranger, uninvolved, maybe even deliberately so. Felt haunted, by the spectre of a world that could've been. A free one. Now things are different, even though he's unsure when they'd changed. Now he just sits there, *too late to turn back now*.

He sits reminiscent, hypnotized by this lil lava lamp in a corner of his room. He can see his blood bubbling and bumbling round and about, as he sits in a room of skin and muscle, but not on some Buffalo Billy, No, this a Bleeding Edge affair, a long, hard look at the fuzzy borders of what's been persistent and what not. No, this a blank stare upon an unknowable state of balance, Oh No, No, No. No unordinary act of violence had layed the fundament for this lil State of Semi-Living materials, whose no longer distinguishable Axis between any kind of Opposition creates the very same foundation that destroys it. Talk about Costume Grown Living Surfaces, like —

He disappears in a tilt, crumpled white sheets of epidermia, greyed out by faint shadows, he sits in a deathbed of his own making, spilling over, hypnotized by the bloodbubbles, as his project expands with every moment that passes, with every blink of the eyes on the walls of skin, like some sort of *productive* cancer. He feels like that's a redundant descriptor. He feels watched over, a chimera of loving grace, he's his own personal Vacanti, just that he can't locate his ears anymore.

First he was afraid, *petrified*, but it's been growing on him, or out of him, with, or because — that he doesn't know — this cultivation of bodyparts, multiplication of raw materials, this mathematical approach to cellular Life in vitro. Sometimes he still pulls back from the malaise that comes with disappearing as a singular body. Sometimes, he thinks, you need to pull back — perceive everything as a relatively large organism, harboring a thing called consciousness, anarchic communities of tissue, wet lumps and blobs of unknown descent, totems of flesh, fetishes of this dilapidation, all following some other order of uncertainty. He's been exploring too, mix'n'matchin, he isn't labeling his bags, but — There's some rabbit eyes in there, some mammalian skeletal muscle, eel & leech neuron cells, winged

monkeys, maybe some fish, amphibians, everything that grows. It may not be pretty, but it sure as hell is Alive — or is it? It rang hollow before, but now "*Is what it is...is it is what it is.*" has started to make some sort of sense. Sometimes he still pulls back, neurotically likens himself a scientist, maybe a vet, or mechanic, a farmer of some kind, nurturer, constructor, on bad days an artist. On good ones he no longer perceives *himself* at all.

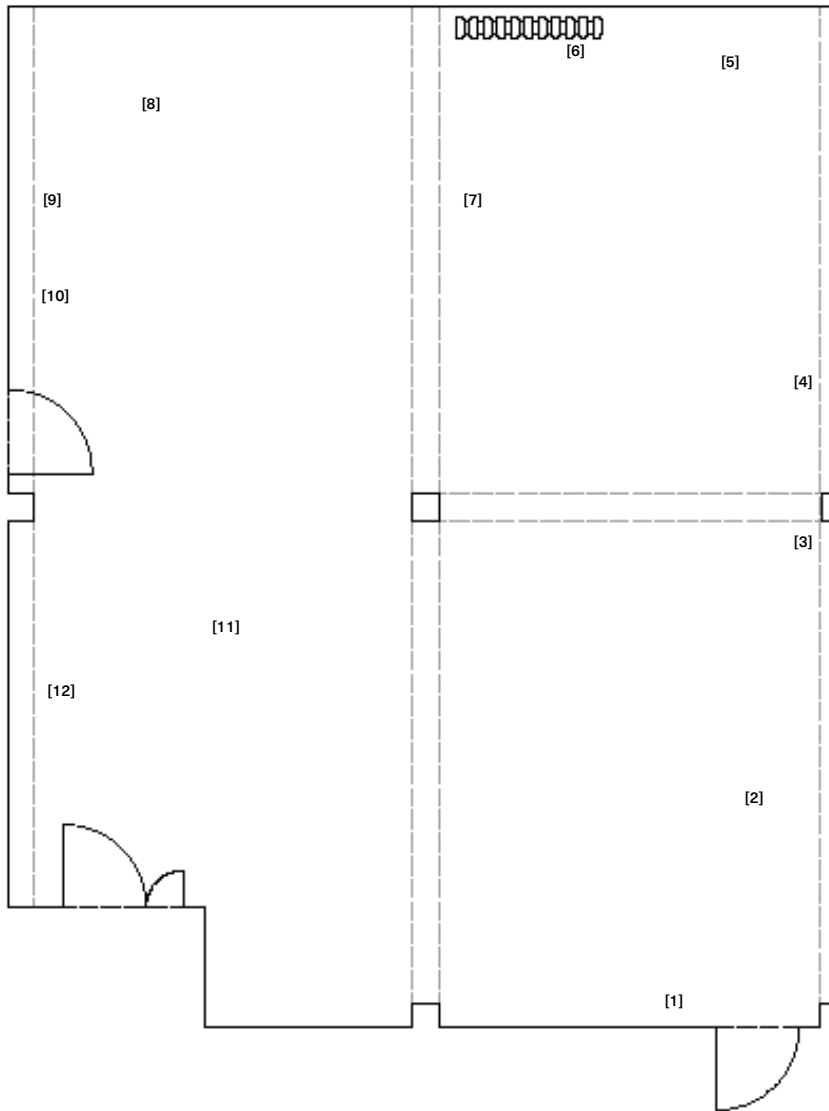
No more ,I am' — these violent words — one should adress them as them, as they slide back, this arrogant ,I', never accurate, ,them' it is now, back to them, no more "True Authentic Self", they unmasked that scheme, back into this body, not a body, as in a source, location and medium for other bodies to pass through, or holes to go in and out of; No, they've been taking it serious. Flesh just as plastic, shapable, alterable, temporary. Egalitarian Xenotransplantations, like fuck it. Xeno-Something atleast. McKenzy might know more. They've just been manipulating their own wholeness, are they not? They thinks, they was. They no longer ,is'. They can live without themselves, they figured. It's Scavenging, sure, desecration, maybe, but that's better than what's been going on before, that's fo sho. They figure, might as well hang up a sign above every living cell dwelling on earth, spelling it out:

"UNDER CONSTRUCTION"

While sucking on bone marrow, a true act of Love, they suppose, while slurping it up, they wonder, what has happened since this symbiosis began? Is ,he' dead? Have they become their own spectre? Some sort of murky mutation of an eukarytioc cell? Does it matter? They no longer think so. They no longer ,think', so — The question may no longer be whether they can reason, nor whether they can talk, but whether they can suffer.

They're not so different in the end, an assembly of living parts of one or more organisms — they may have thrown in some goldfish neurons here, some embryonic rat cortical neurons there, graft them together with some prenatal sheep cells to see what happens — an ongoing manufactured environment, a growing, moving, soft, moist, care-needing *thing*.

A window grew for the eyes to look out of. Infront of the burning sky they see gigantic towers of themself, their artificial capillary system covering the streets — thick, urban cell architecture, on some Blob type shit. They look back through the window, into the lil room, back to where it may have begun, still fascinated by the lil bubbles in the lava lamp, whose miracle has always been the appearance of a border, until they eventually pop.



[1] Ricardo Meli, *Trilobite*, 2024
metal
150 x 23 x 28 cm

[2] Isabell Sterner, *Wgamwke*, 2024
wax, epoxy resin, silicon, textile, wire
100 x 45 cm

[3] Isabell Sterner, *lebtji*, 2023
silicon, epoxy resin, hair
110 x 10 cm

[4] Ricardo Meli, *bodhi*, 2024
plaster, metal
80 x 23 x 16 cm

[5] Isabell Sterner, *NIP I, NIP II*, 2023
silicon
45 x 37, 20 x 27 cm

[6] Isabell Sterner, *PIN*, 2024
aluminium, wax
19 X 19 cm

[7] Isabell Sterner, *Banmlam*, 2023
silicon, aluminium, stainless steel
125 x 28 cm

[8] Hanna Köpfle, *Ein Dickes Fell Haben*, 2024
glas, plastic, wax, my own pulverised blood, oil, ethanol
32 x 63 x 30 cm

[9] Isabell Sterner, *I*, 2024
wax, latex, paper, textile, wool yarn, wood, silicon
50 x 60 cm

[10] Isabell Sterner, *II*, 2024
wax, latex, paper, textile, wool yarn, wood, silicon
50 x 60 cm

[11] Ricardo Meli, *Coast to Source*, 2023
plaster, metal
dimension variable

[12] Ricardo Meli, *Xantron*, 2024
plaster, metal
45 x 47 x 15 cm