

Found anatomy

What a promethean¹ title! And quite a statement coming from our shifting, chimerical organisation organism. As if, against our better knowledge and daily practice, we attempted to present a show that is determined, fixed, described, in short, a form that has ultimately been found.

Now, let's climb back to the start of this slide together and take another branch.

What if we proposed you to accompany us in our surprised discovery of a new arrangement of parts, in our unexpected access to another organic structure? One that hasn't been seized by scientific (anatomy) books yet. What if we suggested forms that can only be found at street-level, fleetingly appearing when studying our actual exchanges or when examining the daily encounters of this body - in any kind of definition of this word?

In Tomàs Maglione's work there is light, city dust and an invitation to explore and experience. He chose to present the work *Rayplatz* in our basement to negotiate the tension between a non-formal way of placing objects and the rather formal language of his video work. The images take us on a dizzyingly, rhythmically repetitive visit to an iconic place in Germany - with the crucial difference, that our perspective is for once situated just above pavement-level. When watching, it feels as if we literally were in a game of 'Kick the Can' and had forgotten to beforehand define the field, set the boundaries of our game, define the jail and consciously agree on the rules.

The series of drawings *Untitled (from the depressos & kaputcinno series)* equally renders the perplexity tangible that is stemming from our (non)decision on the structural arrangement of the game we play together daily. Maglione starts the drawings from an imprint produced by his shoe, carrying some city dust, on an A4 paper and then adds layer after layer. During the work process, the artist is digesting personal experiences collected in the social body in which he partakes.

The two light objects *Untitled (from the Probe Pobre series)* are inspired by an observation for which Maglione uses the term 'nomad furniture'. Imagine you know that you'll only temporarily stay in a place but that you still need to make your home inhabitable. Many people in the West might opt for the pragmatic solution of going to Ikea (or any other cheap furniture magnate) and buy a copy of the originally expensive and fragile Akari lamp. The artist points towards this changing relation we entertain with commodities - and commodities with us, by the way -, by building his own light objects: using cheap cigarette paper and building each object carefully by hand. The result of this process is a form that is again de-standardised and as such leaning more towards the original Akari design. At the same time, Maglione's light objects are neither another consumer commodity called 'design lamp' that can be bought with the aim of illuminating your (maybe more permanent) home - but an art object, thus testifying of yet another commodity status.

¹According to the story of Prometheus, or more recently the story of Frankenstein, a lone genius figure sets out to improve human existence. Both stories, also connected to the quest for scientific knowledge, result in tragedies because the form the creator fixes for their improved human being has (horrible) unintended consequences.

Lithic Alliance, a collective that counts minerals as its core members, expands the notion of a/ the body into a rhizomatic and evolving organism. Taking the domestic setting of Palazzina as a starting point, the work *Mineral Bodies* sheds light on the constant exchange and action of minerals in our human bodies. Enter our bathrooms, stretch out your hand, open your mouth and incorporate one (or several) of the displayed minerals. Can you feel them, how they move down your throat, are digested and sorted into currently 'wanted' and 'unwanted' ones? The wanted ones are entering your organism, enhancing it, making you more energetic, vital and stable. The unwanted ones will be transported to your bladder and exuded - flushed down the toilet they traverse the wastewater treatment plant, end up somewhere in the sea, eventually sediment, press together into new stone and shove up into mountain masses. Our human bodies depend on these minerals and the current form of our organic materiality is only one moment of yet another cyclical process. Maybe you start visualising this amazing, constantly evolving organic system - a bigger than human, mineral body - of which we are just one small part.

Minerals are equally central in the work *STILL BREAKING*. The slogan, translating to 'Humans shattered like stones / Stones shattered for humans', pinpoints the relationship between human bodies and mineral material in a diametrically opposite way of above-described work. In our quickly evolving and heavily loaded mediatic environment, images of debris are omnipresent. However, they only partially, if at all, render palpable the deadly impact of humanitarian crises. The connection to a reality of another geographical context, exemplified by the mines in Congo², might not be evident at first sight. Next to bringing the topic of accumulation-oriented capitalist extractivism to our living-room, Lithic Alliance's work raises a question about the function of mediatic coverage. How can we honestly (re)connect with people that endure the consequences of our, in many cases excessively luxurious, Western lifestyle? Lithic Alliance's way of turning inward an object that might be expected to address people outside (i.e. political leaders, majority of a democratic population) is certainly not anodyne - and temporarily disturbs our domestic security by reminding us of the places around the globe where the earth is currently turned over.

In the case of Guadalupe Ruiz's work, the aspect of representation - maybe comparable with scientific drawings representing nature in a supposedly neutral way - is shifted into focus. Starting from the medium of photography and captivated by the photogenic quality of a subject, the artist's work often interrogates the displacement that happens between original and copy, between a sentimental value and an aesthetic attraction. *Bordado 1 and Bordado 2* counterpoint the original embroidery Ruiz has obtained from her mother with a copy of this work, produced by the artist herself. The original embroidery shows a sumptuous natural environment, a motif that itself was copied by the handicrafting person. The artist remembers having been surrounded by embroidered objects when growing up in Colombia. As such Ruiz is acquainted with the embroidering technique since her childhood but now, working on the current copy, is wondering where her mother found time to realise all these embroideries.

A similar rigorous study of the act of (re)producing an image allows the work *Canasto*. We encounter the fascination emanating from the perfection of the process of reproduction - leading to the eventual creation of a series of originals in their own right. The starting point of

² For the extraction of cobalt, a material invaluable for technological devices and especially battery packs, the mineral must be forced out of the stone - a process where stones need to be shattered. Often this extraction is leading to inhumane conditions for the local population and to environmental disasters. See for example: <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2023/09/drc-cobalt-and-copper-mining-for-batteries-leading-to-human-rights-abuses/>

the work is another object that has already travelled a long distance: a handy basket, woven out of grass, following a traditional Colombian crafting technique. Through the process of photography and printing we are confronted with an image that could well be (artificially) generated - the thin natural fibres (*esparto*) unable to resist the transformation from form to image. By repeatedly printing the image, the artist invites us to approach, examine the details and discover the flaws and subtleties of a machine at the end of its life (the artist has inherited the printer from the person living in her apartment before, the presented prints are the last few prints after ten years of cohabitation and cooperation). In this way, we might be forging our way back to the organic original.

Finally, Ruiz shows the very recent and quite spontaneous video-work *Hermano*. Following once more the artist's gentle gaze, we encounter the male members of her family (the father, his twin-brother and his brother-in-law) that are grouping around and collaboratively working on a drawing of a body. We follow a fragmented and lighthearted discussion around this 'appearance', the status of art in an interwoven social body and the possible existence of this martian form amongst us.

Exhibition text by Vera Mühlebach.

Found Anatomy - Palazzina #27
Lithic Alliance, Tomás Maglione and Guadalupe Ruiz
08/11/2024—15/12/2024

Opening, Friday November 08th, 2024
6 P.M. to 10 P.M.