

objet A.D

Cold Cuts: First Contact—or, Dozens Killed

Duration: February 17 - March 19 2023

Location: Reisig and Taylor Contemporary (2680 S La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90034).

Exhibition: *Means and Ends—or, Nepotism and its Discontents*

Worker(s): objet A.D = E + Z

“A house a skin can be” (Ariana Reines, *The Cow*).

....

Stranded, stretched, carved, and cured. A record of the first encounter between hungry strangers. The leftovers of an aftermath. Something like the meat aisle at a super market. Somewhere like the food court at a museum. Or, like being strung-out somewhere between a butchery, a black hole, a family dinner, and a dark room (and a bright light). Wherever there is an economy of violence, consumption, mutilation, (medicine,) and mark-making. Of capitalization and capture.

This is a work of a process, processed. An anatomy of cuts. A *hole* a skin can be. This is a body giving an account of itself shifting between states of destruction and resurrection (or purification).

We ask: how to exchange one (part of a) body for another? How to exchange limits and lacks? The presented work begins to respond to these questions.

Procedurally, there are four phases of an eating body folded into this flattened dioramic display: (1) a body consumes itself; (2) parts become (w)holes; (3) treatments become cures; and, (4) origins are restored. Each layer of a piece is an event that records the form of another in itself. Each membrane displays a change in a body’s dimensions, moving from 3D, to 2D, and back again throughout the various processes of rendering. Reaching between five sculptures and two prints, each piece marks another, is caught-up in (or cut-up *by*) another. Collectively, they form parts of a body. Individually, they are separated bodies that remember one another.

(1) Consumption: Appropriation/Excretion

The three air-dry clay sculptures, and the one bone sculpture, were used to make the two prints. The latex and cellophane sculpture, *Stretcher (Long Pig)* is cut from a mold made of the polystyrene trays in which *Cut 0* and *Cut 1* are mounted. The mold surrounds the objects like a mouth—empty but formed to an absence marked only by its being filled. The mold is the shape of mouth needed to devour the inedible tray.

What I Love Is You is an angus beef shank bone that was cooked and (the marrow was) consumed before being carved and painted. Reenacting the absent vein of gelatinous marrow, an extruded—*excreted*—pink slop statically flows from beneath the weight of the cement blocks. Flesh falls from bone. The industrious blocks bleakly, and coldly, suggest the excruciating labor of butchery and preparation.

(2) Parts and Holes

(Parts) *Cut 0*, *Cut 1*, and *What I Love Is You* mark (the whole) *Cutaneous Imprint 0*. Each sculpture was first etched-into, then covered in sumi ink and applied to the paper in a looping sequence from *0* to *1* to

You, rotating/flipping the sculpture to another side in each repeated application. The negative voids of each sculptural object become the positive imprints that form the surface works.

The larger sculpture *Settler (Life Span)*, spread like a chest cavity, marks *Cutaneous Imprint 1*. This application followed the same initial process of etching-into and inking; however, instead of looping a sequence of alternating faces of a group of objects, the sculpture was stretched and deformed between each imprint on the paper. Afterwards, both of the prints and the three air-dry sculptures were coated in cold-wax medium, then sculpted and etched-into again. Each piece displays a different cut of “meat,” another layer of an alien body rendered through familiar modes of sale and consumption. A slice of Hormel ham, a sirloin steak, a fish fillet, or the absorbent pad underneath a packaged piece of meat....

The process acts-out the result, the result acts-out the process. This involution is what the works record.

(3) Treatments and Cures

But that is only part of the story. There is still the question of how someone ever arrived at a market. Questions of the connectedness of eating, owning, killing, colonizing, and recording (another). The Settler and the Consumer—one and the same. The Map as the self-image of the (White) Man. The mark as a brand on his breed. The limits of the legible as the end of the livable, as the imprint of a “life span” spun out of control. Each of these anxieties gives way to questions of space and time; that is, questions of spans and duration. And the question of how to record time and space in a singular object over multiple instants.

Accordingly, this is a work with spans, which spans. With this work we realize the “life span” of the works in the elapsed time of the exhibition itself, taking-up the gallery-space as a final frontier for a first contact that lasts a lifetime. The cold wax applied to the sculptures and prints begins with an opaque, lardy consistency but becomes increasingly more translucent and spectral as the exhibition continues. Similarly, the latex rubber material of *Stretcher (Long Pig)* begins the exhibition “fresh” and only just beginning to cure, gradually changing from hues of pink and white to a peachier orange as it finally cures—like a piece of ham. As part of the documentation of this temporal aspect of this work, twenty-five photographs of the curing (long pig) “(human) ham” are captured for twenty-five days of the exhibition. Twenty-five days is the minimum amount of time it takes a human body to decompose. The meat is made a corpse once again.

(4) Meat-Eaters

E—Of course, there is a chance something far less sinister is in the works. We ate a lot of deli meats as kids, so “cold cuts” is a natural phrase for us that refers to cured or processed meats; at the same time, this literally refers to the cuts made in the cold wax. Also, during each of our childhoods, one of our earliest memories of making art is with air-dry clay—“model magic” or maybe some off-brand version (knowing our family’s purchasing tendencies). The air-dry clay sculptures therefore hold a memory of working with something at our origins. A form of work that emerges from play. This is perhaps the biographical-historical-material first sense of “first contact.” We were always thrilled to work with this material, for some reason it always seemed alien or, to remain on-brand: “magical.” (Always a bow to the market....) Strange but immediately alluring. Sometimes we ate it, too....

Z—Of course, there is a chance something far more sinister is in the works. The “mentally ill” were never meant to eat meat. (I never meant to eat meat.) I eat meat. Meat, by definition, satisfies and encourages an appetite for flesh: both figural and literal. We eat meat. For the hypersexual the figure of flesh was assigned their primordial fetish, having never left the cave of carnivores. An overdetermined metaphor.

For the homicidal, or even the cannibalistic or coprophagic, the literal material of meat was assumed too provocative, too tempting. An immediate reification of desire. For the paranoid, meat was all too much of a trace, nothing but a bloody bag of suspicions. The lost cause of a cause. Maybe I shouldn't be eating meat. But now they say a diet consisting of meats might help. It might stop the seizures. It might dull the voices and the visions. But if I see meat it might not work. If I say meat, it helps. The sound of meat being eaten. Someone eating meat. Eating and another. A massacre and a mastication. Death and regeneration. But remember: meat never meant to hurt anyone.

In any case, this work is a science of the séance. Or, to follow H.G. Wells and Dr. Moreau, it is a test of “the limits of individual plasticity.” This is a test of the limits between bodies. But it is also a test of these limits come to be administered through a constantly shifting rhetoric of a body and its positions—its sanctities or edibilities. Looking to the title (*Cold Cuts: First Contact—or Dozens Killed*), the statement of “Dozens Killed” as a dual to the statement of “First Contact” recalls the declarative address of headlines and the double-bind (of *contact=violence*) imposed by the media's regulation of how outcomes and events are registered in public. Though, we do not attempt to resolve this double-bind; instead, we show how it opens and splits. This is our way of capturing the background noise in friction with the themes of this work.

However, ultimately and initially, we are most directly working with the primordial drives of creation, destruction, and consumption. This work evolves an encounter with a kind of other that can be eaten. A kind that can be cut. A kind that can be killed. A kind that can be harvested. A kind that can be consumed. A kind that can be bought and sold. *Another* kind. The kind of other that's made of meat. Meat that marks what it use to mean.

After all, we are[n't] what we eat....



(Image: Wide Installation View)

objet A.D

Cold Cuts: First Contact—or, Dozens Killed

2023



objet A.D

Cutaneous Imprint 1

Sumi Ink and Cold Wax on Paper.

18 x 25 inches.



objet A.D

Stretcher (Long Pig)

Latex, Cellophane, Wood Frame, Steel Nails.

17.5 x 21.5 inches (framed).



objet A.D

Cut 0

Air-Dry Clay, Sumi Ink, Polystyrene Tray, Epoxy, Cold Wax, and Steel Hardware.

8.75 x 6.5 inches (mounted).



objet A.D

Cut 1

Air-Dry Clay, Sumi Ink, Polystyrene Tray, Epoxy, Cold Wax, and Steel Hardware.

8.75 x 6.5 inches (mounted).



objet A.D

Settler (Life Span)

2023

Air-Dry Clay, Sumi Ink, Cold Wax, Epoxy, Wood, and D-rings.

13 x 15 inches.



objet A.D

Cutaneous Imprint 0

Sumi Ink and Cold Wax on Paper.

25 x 18 inches.



objet A.D

What I Love Is You

2023

Bone, Gesso, Oil, Sumi Ink; Cement; Latex and Cellophane.

25-Day Curing Period of *Stretcher (Long Pig)*: [Progression: Left to Right, Top to Bottom]:







