

Chus Martinez
**The Octopus in
Love**

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The octopus is the only animal that has a portion of its brain (three quarters, to be exact) located in its (eight) arms. Without a central nervous system, every arm “thinks” as well as “senses” the surrounding world with total autonomy, and yet, each arm is part of the animal. For us, art is what allows us to imagine this form of decentralized perception. It enables us to sense the world in ways beyond language. Art is the octopus in love. It transforms of our way of conceiving the social as well as its institutions, and also transforms the hope we all have for the possibility of perceptive inventiveness.

1. Parts Being Totals

Let us now imagine an institution composed entirely of well-functioning parts of other institutions – a strange new form of urbanism that take the shape of a gigantic museum. Parts, as well as departments, would coalesce into a gigantic yet identifiable choreography, recognizable as an “institution” – defined as a behavioral pattern so powerful that the viewer could easily embody the sense of interiority such institutions create. The image I am trying to convey here is not that of an institutional “quilt” – of several well-functioning parts spread over a territory and dependent on a larger bureaucratic container centralizing all assorted activities. Rather, this is an image of a formation, a system that unravels multiple codes simultaneously. All these systematics would be invisible at first. We would not be able to name any of these parts as such; to us, they would appear and function as totalities. The simultaneity of these multiple meanings – forms of understanding art and practice – and the simultaneity of languages that present the heteroclit nature of art both today and in the past, would render the structure that holds them together innocent or even absent. And so, these different institutions – or better yet, organisms – in their natural way of inhabiting a coordination and even successfully broadcasting it, would render insignificant the prototypical academic prejudices of level, character, or style. None of these organisms – our former museums, art centers, art projects, art societies, kunsthallen, and so forth – would be arranged in a hierarchical formation. At the same time, it would be difficult to claim that the equality of these organisms is determined by any standardization of working codes. None of these parts or totalities would be embedded in a didactic form of organization.

2. The Rainforest

To present a rainforest inside a white cube is impossible. A rainforest is the radical other of a white cube: the opposite of culture, the opposite of an exhibit, the contrary of scale, the opposite

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of legibility, the opposite of ideology, order without subject matter – or rather, without any subject matter other than life in itself.

In a conversation we once had, the artist Raphael Montañez Ortiz, who founded El Museo del Barrio, said that when the Museo was conceived, he thought that all its exhibitions should start with a rainforest. Or rather, that the preamble of any form of art presentation should pass through a rainforest. He did, in fact, collaborate with the American Museum of Natural History to this end, by creating a rainforest room with their help. Unfortunately, no images of it have survived. After telling me about his idea of the rainforest, he stared at me and asked: “Do you understand?” I did not – or at least, I did not at that moment.

For a long time, I have been wondering what he meant – surely not that one should reproduce nature or a representation of nature inside the gallery. I remembered the title of his two-volume dissertation, *Towards an Authenticating Art*, published in 1982. The book is an exhaustive account of his growing interest, from the late sixties on, in psychic healing therapies and rebirthing. He coined the term “Physio-Psycho-Alchemy,” a physical reversal that can be carried out by means of the mind and its alchemic

power. A rainforest at the core of an institution is also a reversal – an alchemic reversal of the institution, turned first into an organism so that later, a “room” can host art, artworks, and artifacts.

Claude Lévi-Strauss was also fascinated by the potentiality of reversal. He often wrote about chiasmus, a rhetorical figure used masterfully by Shakespeare. A chiasmus is a reversal that produces a total confusion of identity that aims, later on, to reestablish that identity under a renewed contract, so to speak. The Museo del Barrio – invented, created, and developed by Ortiz under the special circumstances of diaspora and the civil rights struggle for equality – may have been disguised as a rainforest before it was able to emerge as an institution at all. How else could a museum for a still-forthcoming community be possible? Disguised as a rainforest, the new organism could convey both the monumental importance of the project and the futility of presenting itself as “alternative.” The transformative language that is required in order to change the art historical canon demands a radical metamorphosis – like that of becoming-nature – and not only a modulation in the narrative, or new additions to that canon. This museum of a certain future, which still needs to

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Utagawa Kuniyoshi, *Fashionable Octopus Games (Ryūkō tako no asobi)*, 1840-1842.



Stirrup jar with octopus, ca. 1200–1100 B.C.; Late Helladic III C.

flourish under a yet-unknown relation between modern aspirations and vernacular language, was forced to appear as a rainforest first, before becoming an institution. The rainforest is the beggar that will become the sovereign. What, then, is the question? How will this presentiment of radical transformation find its fulfillment, or, at the very least, its mode of performance?

I then recalled the distinction between game and ritual in Lévi-Strauss. As Boris Weisman explains, Lévi-Strauss defines a game as a structure that produces symmetry among the players through its rules:

An essential principle of every game is that the rules are the same for everyone; the starting point of every game is symmetry. The end result of a game is intended to engender asymmetry by producing a winner. This asymmetry is the product of non-structural factors: individual skill or talent, chance, or accident – in other words, an “event.”¹

Another kind of event – namely, death – is what gives rise to rituals:

Death ... brings about an asymmetrical relationship between the living and the dead, the sacred and the profane ... The purpose of the ritual is to perform a series of pre-ordained “actions” (which are different from the “actions” or events that make up a game; since they are pre-determined they constitute an integral part of its structure), and thereby ensure that all the participants to the ritual end up being “winners.”²

In the historical horizon of the museum-as-artwork that Raphael Montañez Ortiz proposed, it makes sense to believe that the rainforest provokes the institution to take ritual as its structure. The logic of the ritual may remedy or otherwise compensate for the social imbalance – disruption – that gave rise to the ritual (the rainforest/Museo). If the modern institution is one whose structure is closer to the logic of the game, in 1968 the emerging Museo embraced the ritual.

This play of inversion between game and ritual – the chiasmic logic – is intended here as a means of reconciling the vernacular and the modern: both can be used as models-for-thinking to address social and aesthetic paradigms. The former should no longer be regarded as belonging to an earlier, pre-scientific stage in an evolutionary process that invariably leads to the latter. Rather, both models must find a way – through art – to reflect one another in

such a way that the vernacular provides a kind of inverted mirror image of the modern way of structuring and interpreting the real. The Lévi-Straussian message – channeled here through Ortiz’s rainforest/Museo – is that the force separating vernacular from modern worlds is not time, or history, but rather, as Weisman puts it, “a synchronic system of symmetrical relationships of correlation and opposition.”³

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Dominique Gonzalez Foester, *Chronotypes and Dioramas*, 2010. Dia Art Foundation, New York.

There are many ways to interpret Ortiz’s vision of the rainforest as the preface to every exhibition. To put it simply, I think his rainforest introduces a very novel element into the existing discussion around the politics of the white cube. The debate has been a notably hard one, either taking architectural perspectives (as related to modernity) or flowing freely and responding to active discursivity and project-oriented energy (as in the late-nineties and the first decade of this century). Amidst all this, what the white cube discussion has lacked is precisely a rainforest: a principle that, in its radical otherness, defies the container, since the life force represented by a rainforest cannot be contained.

I still do not know exactly what to do about this incredibly beautiful image of a rainforest installed at the core of an art institution. It embodies all the difference in the world, separated from human agency and ideology, yet it also encapsulates the source of all that. It differs from the conventions of neutrality, and through its scale and its very nature it escapes from any formal canons. It compels a form of intelligence without consciousness to erupt into the white cube. “The rainforest,” as Ortiz has said, “is an element that really helps us to think about class and labor and autonomy and dependency, just introducing a radically different

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Simon Blanc, *Untitled*, 2008. CGI wallpaper image.

viewpoint, the viewpoint of the rhythm of moisture.”

In short, it seems very fertile to picture art that is outside the notion of culture. Can you imagine a white cube adopting a rainforest?

3. The Invention

The rainforest marks one of the multiple ends of the era of critical philosophy. Critical philosophy seeks necessary conditions or general foundations in order to determine possible relations. Instead of casting solid architecture, it casts doubt – an enormous parenthesis that allows us to avoid entering into the details of things. A museum emerging from a diasporic community that suffers from social and legal inequality could not possibly start by presenting itself as an “alternative” to modern institutions. There were no shared general conditions that could produce a “new modern Museo” – not enough social, political, or aesthetic consensus. Thus, in 1968, the Museo was not an alternative art space, but rather, through the rainforest, a true invention. This idea of invention is given the greatest importance by French philosopher Michel Serres. He defines philosophy as aspiring to give birth to a world of politics and professional ethics, rather than remaining crouched in an immovable position from which it either approves or condemns modernity or rationality – or the clarity of all discourse, for that matter.

In philosophy as in life, and in life as in the sciences, I personally prefer invention accompanied by the danger of error, rather than rigorous verification paralleled by the risk of immobility. As Serres has pointed out:

All around us, language replaces experience. The sign, so soft, substitutes itself for the thing, which is hard. Yet, I cannot think of this substitution as an equivalence. It is more like an abuse – a violence ... The sound of a coin is not worth the coin; the smell of cooking does not fill the hungry stomach; publicity is not the equivalent of quality; the tongue that talks annuls the tongue that tastes or the one that receives and gives a kiss.⁴

It is very complicated to give an exact meaning of the word “invention,” or to apprehend the central role that the senses play in Serres’s writing. He argues for a reinvention of the site of relations between law and science. To invent, according to Serres, means to abandon the notion that philosophy has the right to judge. In the process, philosophy regains its ability to create. To invent is to produce that which will foster production, to formulate and express a system of laws, to

understand and apply scientific possibilities.

This simple mention of the rainforest represents the opposite of the critical project: a rejection of the narcissism that defines the re-institutionalization of the forms of knowledge and culture that transform artworks into cultural products, and exhibitions into ideological demarcations of experience. It is also the opposite of the demand that art be significant, that it deliver what we could call a “situation of reading,” of extending meaning and memory into a sterile void. The image of the rainforest embodies an ongoing, performative speculation about ways of affecting and being affected, about ways of naming – a language, a place, a time. The viewer must find a language, imagine a place, and conceive a time, while at the same time producing a position far away from it all.

This, I suppose, is what we call invention.

4. Thinking Through The Skin

“For Serres,” Laura Salisbury writes, “before language, before even the word, there was noise, a ‘background noise, which precedes all signals and is an obstacle to their perception.’” She goes on: “This noise, against which previous philosophies have blocked their ears, is both the very possibility of language and also its interference; it is the multiple sound of the universe that ‘the intense sound of language prevents us from hearing.’”⁵

“What is mathematics,” Serres asks, “if not a language that assures perfect communication free of noise?”⁶ In other words, as Salisbury explains,

in order for these diverse systems of coding to speak to one another, the philosopher’s work must establish pathways of communication between this network of systems; it must also read communication itself as an enactment of the turbulent relationship between contingent pockets or figures of order and the swirling disorder that is its ground.⁷

Serres writes that “noise is the basic element of the software of all our logic, or it is to the logos what matter used to be to form.”⁸ In this vein, Salisbury notes that for Serres,

communication only emerges from background noise, from signs differentiated from an infinite cacophony of other signs and from the static that will not admit to being read as a sign at all ... The analysis of the flows and thrusts, the prepositions that link together these turbulent systems, become, perhaps unexpectedly, part of Serres’s project to construct “a decent

philosophy of the object.”⁹

Salisbury goes on to explain that in his book *The Five Senses*, Serres “demonstrates that sensory embodiment renders it impossible to stand in front of or outside the world, to free oneself from its entangled networks and the multiple spaces and times traced by the circulation of objects.”¹⁰ This thought, however, is very difficult to convey. Serres rejects analytic philosophy, which he identifies with the critical school. But he also distances himself from writers like Foucault and Deleuze. His thought operates within an intriguing and fascinating refusal of language. Salisbury again:

Part of this refusal of language is a turning away from the discourse of phenomenology, which has a lineage that links the poststructuralism of Derrida back through Heidegger’s fundamental ontology to Husserl. Serres tells Latour that the ‘return to things’ always runs up against the barrier of logic within philosophy; phenomenology, in particular, always filters sensory experience through structures of language.¹¹

Serres refuses this “agreement” on which language depends, an agreement that petrifies objects and suppresses the chaos caused by the senses. In place of this refusal, the embodied subject is shown to feel, think, and construct itself through the already multiple effects of information dispersed and condensed, as well as the centripetal and centrifugal forces that make both center and periphery impossible to locate. These forces and processes are the sensory body’s work of self-making and self-transformation.

5. The Egg

Federico Manuel Peralta Ramos, an Argentinian artist, created a large egg as his contribution to the final Instituto Torcuato di Tella show in 1965. The egg was entitled *We Are Outside*. Very little documentation remains of this piece, although there are a few pictures. At first sight, the pictures show the large egg alone with its maker on a thin plinth on the gallery floor. The black-and-white photographs show some dark areas in the plaster; the piece was not entirely dry at the time of the show. The few surviving friends who saw the piece recall that the work was made in such a hurry that it broke immediately after the jury declared it the “winner” of that year’s final show. A relative of Peralta Ramos similarly told me that the artist miscalculated the tension between the metal structure and the plaster skin – the piece imploded right after the prize

ceremony. Yet there is also a picture that shows Peralta Ramos destroying the piece himself. Either way, the work, too large to be moved, was made inside the gallery space and was always fated for destruction.¹²

Over the years, and because it was his last art object, the egg formed part of the myth surrounding Peralta Ramos. Some say he abandoned art (he later became an important character on a late-night television show), but in actuality, he did not. The egg brings to an end the anxiety of becoming a conceptual artist, a part of an international movement – a figure able to comment and contribute to a certain tradition. Like the rainforest, the egg is also an end of critical thinking. And also like the rainforest, the egg is an invention. It is an invention of a different kind: a more classical one, still organized around appearance and what is hidden – around enigma and truth. Unlike the rainforest, the egg depends on language; it establishes a dialogic form that calls attention to the physicality of the object – its texture, shape, and even its sound as a form inhabited by a void amidst the space. The egg actually speaks. It is the egg that says we are outside. The piece traces a clear correspondence between rationality (sense) as “outside” and irrationality (non-sense) as “inside.” The momentum of meaning is delayed as the egg starts to fall apart, turning all possible narratives into debris. During this process of announcement, presence, and disappearance, a movement of another sort arises: not production but seduction.



Federico Peralta Ramos, *Nosotros afuera*, 1965. Installation view of the work at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina. Courtesy Peralta Ramos family.

In the years following the egg, Peralta Ramos devoted himself to life, giving parties with his grant from the Guggenheim Foundation, but also meeting friends in cafes during the day and at cabarets at night. He performed living as an

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Federico Peralta Ramos, *Nosotros afuera*, 1965. Installation view of the work at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina. Courtesy Peralta Ramos family.

artwork while writing maxims on bar napkins, paper, and canvas. It all indicates that the egg was part of an avant-garde gesture focused on a personalized surrealist take on total autonomy, the destruction of art, and the overlapping of rules that separate form from content. But, apart from the obvious, the interesting part of all this lies in how Peralta Ramos ended up on the other side, so to speak. If “we are outside,” it is because he – the egg/the artist – is inside. He did not stop making art; he just started making it from the other side. In this sense, the egg marks more of a beginning than an end. The egg – Humpty Dumpty – is, like Serres, tired of language, but still ultimately dependent on it. Like Humpty Dumpty, he and he alone can decide on the meaning of words. The egg can rename the world and invent it anew. However, since only he knows this meaning, the whole process may end up becoming a radically solipsistic effort. The world was invented that day. The egg stood in front of us – all of us, people from the past as well as the future. Peralta Ramos transfigured the world, changed the rules, and altered the universe in Buenos Aires – an act similar to the Psycho-Physio-Alchemy of Rafael Montañez Ortiz. And then?

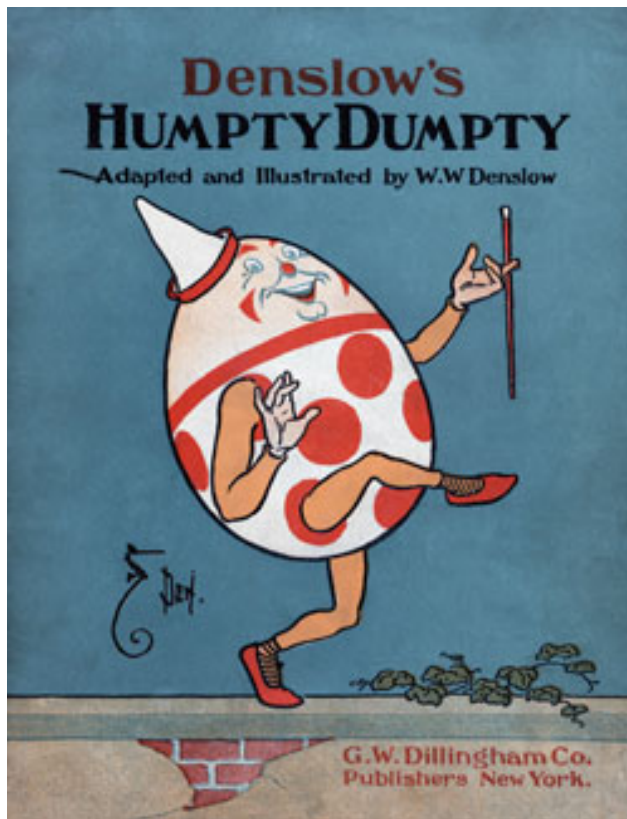
Like La Rochefoucauld, Federico Manuel

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Peralta Ramos took refuge in maxims. This is not mere coincidence. Similar to the French thinker, Peralta Ramos had intuited how to transform negativity – nobody but him saw or felt the world change – into a voluntary force toward the good, toward living life as a second passion.

While living, he coined thousands of maxims. Sentences full of a “terse” wisdom: “Believe in an invisible world, beyond the fars and the nears”; “I am a start, since I only go out at night”; “I am a piece of atmosphere.” People came to see him, at a cafe he used to go to every day, looking for a saying: a sentence he would often write to them on a piece of paper. They called him a street philosopher at times, a pacifist scholar at others. The sentences are quite stupid, in the best sense of the word. He was stupid because he needed to embody the expression of refusal without defensiveness. This form of refusal is much more difficult to locate, since it seems to appear as something not there or not understood or not contained.

Another way of interpreting this production is to read all these sentences as maxims – sentences expressing the profound structure of a wisdom yet to come. This gigantic production of sentences written here and there, handed to all those who came to see him, express the vertigo



Cover illustration by W.W. Denslow from the 1903 book *Denslow's Humpty Dumpty*.

of knowing that we can never give an ultimate definition of man. Their flow traces an endless trail of demystification. Without knowing Peralta Ramos, Roland Barthes wrote: “The infinite demystification which the Maxims stage for us could not fail to involve (to expose) the maxim-maker himself.”¹³ It may be useful to recall here that wisdom is different from knowledge, in that wisdom is impossible to describe as being “produced” – a distinction that is very present in the thought of Michel Serres. In a chapter entitled “Boxes” in *The Five Senses*, Serres states that the body “should not become a statue or tomb,” because it “radiates wisdom.” It is our duty not to “receive sense data as a gift, without reciprocating.”¹⁴ One could say, with Lauren A. Benjamin, that the sentences of Peralta Ramos conceived of “a philosophy rooted in the experience of the world (with a deep responsibility for giving back to that world – in whatever form – in return).”¹⁵ *Whatever form*, because the way the artist relates to the world is not as a participant, or a citizen, but as a visitor. Remember? He went inside the egg. The egg is a shell, like a spaceship, and spaceships often change direction while heading toward their destination. Like “Ulysses and Columbus, Bougainville or Cook,” Peralta Ramos had, “together with all sea populations, the rare chance of inhabiting and travelling simultaneously.”¹⁶



Giuseppe Recco, *Still Life with a Cat Stealing Squid*, c. 17th century.

6. Of All Inhabitants of the Sea: The Octopus

The octopus is a very friendly monster. It was not easy to convince a bunch of teenagers from a village on the Atlantic coast of Spain that an octopus could become a friend. They used to

meet at breakwaters on the weekends, late in the afternoon. It was not dark, but dark enough to be unable to distinguish who exactly was sitting there and what they were doing. One of the village boys had an almost academic look, a remarkable trait in a group of school dropouts. They were all at the end of their teenage years. Their conversation oscillated between sex, death metal, family life, joblessness, and that octopus thing. In addition to being a huge part of the gastronomic tradition of the region, octopi represent a kind of bridge between the inhabitants of the sea and the inhabitants of the coast. Not that they were treated in a particularly friendly way. It was not uncommon to see a group of woman hitting octopi against the rocks. Their body fibers need to be broken, they say, otherwise they are inedible. Years later, it was said that freezing them was enough to guarantee a great texture once cooked. Two images were iconic in that remote coastal spot in northwest Spanish: three or four octopi cooling on the windowsill, with their heads on a glass; and a large freezer full of octopi. I remember no less than thirty or forty in my own family's larder.

After a while, everyone was talking about that academic-looking boy becoming friends with an octopus. They said that the animal came to look for him at the same time every day. They said that the octopus came onto the shore every day to visit him. The boy took some photographs to prove to the others that the octopus “stared” at him. He claimed that they sat together on a cliff every day for hours, watching the sun go down. I remember him talking about it nonstop at bars, discos, and all the other gathering places one finds in a boring village. I loved the story, but I lost touch with him, since I only visited my family from time to time.

I recently came across new research on octopi in an article in *Wired*, published less than a year ago:

The octopus is weird; it has an eerily malleable body, sucker-studded arms, skin that can transform into a convincing facsimile of seaweed – or sand – in a flash. It can solve mazes, open jars, and use tools. It even has what seems to be a sophisticated inner life. What's confusing about all of this is that the octopus has a brain unlike that of almost any creature we might think of as intelligent. In fact, the octopus brain is so different from ours – from most of the animals we're accustomed to studying – that it holds a rare promise. If we can figure out how the octopus manages its complex feats of cognition, we might be closer to discovering some of the fundamental elements of thought and to

developing new ideas about how mental capacity evolved. “Part of the problem in working out what’s essential to intelligence in the brain is working out which are the features that, if you took them away, you would no longer have an intelligent system,” says Peter Godfrey-Smith, a philosopher at CUNY who studies animal minds. “What’s essential as opposed to an accident of history?” Think about it: chimpanzees are, like us humans, primates. Dolphins are mammals. Even clever crows and ravens are at least vertebrates. But our last common ancestor with the octopus was probably some kind of wormlike creature with eye spots that lived as many as 750 million years ago; the octopus has a sophisticated intelligence that emerged from an almost entirely different genetic foundation. If you want to study an alien intelligence, Godfrey-Smith says, “octopuses are the closest thing we have.”¹⁷

I quoted this research somewhere and, in a recent visit to my village, somebody left a name and a number for me to call as soon as I arrived. I did. “It’s me,” a male voice said, “the octopus friend.” I recognized his voice. “You left your number?” I did not know quite what to say. “It is because of the octopus thing, you know. I saw you mentioned something, on Twitter. You know,” he was talking slowly, “it changed my life. The octopus, I mean.” Silence. “I was about to quit school, you know. But I decided to go on and do something after that summer. I was there sitting for hours and feeding that animal and I felt that I also should do something intelligent.” “Did you take him home?” I asked. I felt stupid, even girlish, asking such a question. “Home? An octopus? No. Never thought of it actually. I just went to see him one day and he was not there anymore. I was shocked, but I guess it’s normal. But I think of it every day, you know, even today. And I decided to become an electric engineer.” I thought this was weird, but also the most logical conclusion in the world.

A large part of the neuronal mass of the octopus is spread throughout its eight arms. Unlike humans, the octopus brain does not have a centralized encephalization, which shows that a centralized brain is not the only evolutionarily advantageous form of intelligence. The octopus’s unusual neuronal distribution allows for its eight arms to be “autonomous.” They can carry out activities on their own, or coordinate among themselves, without needing the head to be involved.

It is very difficult to imagine this. It is like imagining a finger that is a self-sufficient

totality, but also part of a body. It is like a small institution that is individually operated, but also an essential part of the cultural organism. This image shatters our notions of how information flows and how the senses think. It cannot yet be expressed efficiently in metaphoric language.

7. The Embrace

[Aesthetic autonomy is] the idea that art has its own sphere demarcated from other human activities and determines its own principles or rules. Art cannot be replaced by other activities without loss. Aesthetic experience should be explained by aesthetic terms or attributes, and art should be valued by itself alone. The idea is intended to protect art from being assimilated to scientific, religious, or moral functions and to insist that art has a different domain from science and morality.¹⁸

This definition exposes a cognitive demand, a demand that serves as the basis for judgment. And so, the question is how to judge without judgment, how to think without the critical method, how to speak without creating an order that excludes the disorder created by the senses. Judgment and its exercise are so deeply embedded in our way of understanding art, culture, and the outside-inside relationship between thought and body, object and thought, body and touch, that it seems almost counterintuitive to take seriously the demand to leave it behind. The Era of Judgment is the home of our complex institutional urbanism of aesthetics; it believes in order, not chaos, as the principle that secures the preservation of objects and values. It also perpetuates a cognitive attitude that prevents invention. The Era of Judgment, to borrow an idea from the historian Henry Focillon, is marked by the flow of time, by consecutive-ness. But it is also an era organized around the logic of transcendence, the game of oppositions between death and life, creation and noncreation – a logic that philosophy has tried many times to contest, especially since 1968. But Michel Foucault, in his critique of institutions and power, is more digestible and comforting than the later Giles Deleuze or Michel Serres on the matter of politics and invention. And art and artists have resisted the logic of transcendence, emphasizing, for example, the importance of not being creative – in other words, of *being* life without *generating* life, of being life without seeing an artwork as a “production.”

Multiform and monotonous, repetitive of various forms of disorder, art since the mid-

sixties – if not before – has sought ways to surpass the Era of Judgment, to find a path that preserves life and is able to transmute our sense of politics. Art, like quantum physics, looks towards photosynthesis to help in imagining new forms of time and perception. In other words, art tries to imagine the way it all connects, in order to preserve the values that we learn from our political past, but that are unable to define our future. It is a future that we cannot even call a future because is not ahead of us, but inside.

And this is how I came to think about this new demand to travel beyond judgment, like the rainforest and the egg. It is one among millions of other demands that ask us to *become life*.

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Chus Martínez is a Spanish curator with a background in philosophy and art history, and is currently Head of the Institute of Art at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design in Basel. Recently she was director of El Museo del Barrio in New York and dOCUMENTA (13) Head of Department and Member of Core Agent Group. Previously she was Chief Curator at MACBA, Barcelona (2008–10), Director of the Frankfurter Kunstverein (2005–08) and Artistic Director of Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2002–05). For the 50th Biennale di Venezia (2005), Martínez curated the National Pavilion of Cyprus, and in 2010 served as a Curatorial Advisor for the 29th Bienal de São Paulo. She lectures regularly and has written numerous catalogue texts and critical essays.

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Boris Weisman, "Claude Levi-Strauss, Chiasmus and the Ethnographic Journey," *Arachnofiles* no. 2 (Autumn 2001) http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.815081/fileManager/Claude%20Levi%20Strauss%20Chiasmus%20and%20the%20Ethnographic%20Journey.pdf

2
Ibid.

3
Ibid.

4
Michel Serres with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 193.

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Laura Salisbury, "Michel Serres: Science, Fiction, and the Shape of Relation," *Science Fiction Studies* 31, no. 98 (March 2006) <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/98/salisbury98.html>

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Serres with Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, 78.

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Salisbury, "Michel Serres," *Science Fiction Studies*.

8
Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 7.

9
Salisbury, "Michel Serres," *Science Fiction Studies*.

10
Ibid.

11
Ibid.

12
Another, very unclear image shows the piece as part of an ensemble that also includes a mural painting and an obelisk. Although there are no pictures of the obelisk, there is one of the painting, situated just behind the egg. The paint has the texture of molten rock forming a trail moving down the wall. The black-and-white image allows us to perceive the painting's dark colors, combined with brighter ones, but we are unable to imagine either its real tones or its effect next to the egg.

13
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