

PERYTON, THE SUNSHINE: Episode 10

Nothing is true, Everything is alive (Prologue: Symbiogenesis)

Carlos Fernandez Pello, Carlos Monleón, and Julia Morandeira (curator)

Carlos Fernández-Pello

A.

Tombstones are not flat

Installation with video, printed textiles,
aluminium structure

Carlos Monleón

B.

Gastriculation

Jute and silicon rope, blown glass, silver
leaf, water kefir grains

C.

To eat is human, to digest is divine

Wet plaster, netting, polyester resin, clay
amphorae, molten glass

D.

*Life would, if it could, take all of the sun's
energy and turn it into itself*

Wet plaster, netting, polyester resin, slip
cast clay, residual wine

E. [upstairs, in bar]

Gravity is food

Techni-clay, wild yeasts, flower
arrangements

All works 2018

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This first series of exhibitions at Peryton takes
as its name *The Sunshine*.

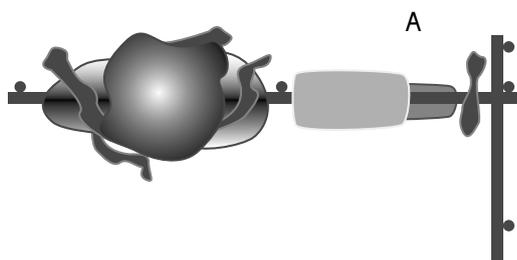
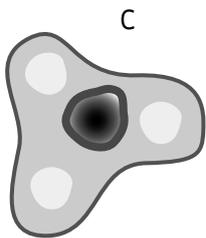
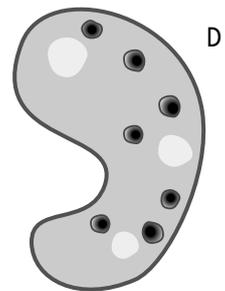
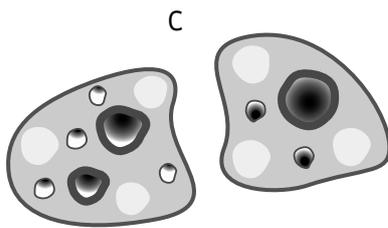
The series pairs sound and vision in the glow
of artificial daylight: works are staged on a
set of aluminium frames, the room is lit by a
freestanding afternoon window.

In this setting, contributors (artists, curators,
writers) have been invited to pair an object
with a sound.

As the home to *Oberon*, a publication built
around rhyme and association, Peryton is
an exercise in locating the processes and
strategies of the publication in an exhibition
program, in a physical space, within a city and
its sets of communities.

Specifically, *The Sunshine* takes as its premise
a sort of surrealist theatricality, where maybe
we can pretend for a second to be in a frozen
moment, at the edge of the day, as the sun
cusps the horizon.

FLOOR PLAN



Some organisms —such as lichens, scobys, or slime molds— perform fascinating symbiotic ways of being in the world. They operate through forms of relational nourishment, guided by sensibility and sensation. Furthermore, they experiment with distributed organisation, working through decentralized spatial intelligence and incessant bacterial activity. Potentially immortal, these organisms navigate thick temporalities, in which care and death are mutually reconfigured.

Symbiosis is simply the shared life of different organisms in physical contact with each other; it is a process of long-term physical associations of nourishment, care and mutual dependencies. *Nothing is true, everything is alive* is a curatorial research project that departs from a series of feminists readings of science and biology, to trace and enable the epistemological, sensory and aesthetic paradigms they reconfigure. This chapter focuses on the work of Lynn Margulis who stated that the true force of evolution is not competition amongst individual animals, but the incorporation of and entanglement with other organisms, throughout the work of bacteria.

Margulis wrote “*attraction, union, fusion, incorporation, cohabitation, recombination — whether permanent or cyclical— and other types of forbidden coupling are the main sources of the variation Darwin missed. Sensibility, seduction, union, acquisition, fusion, responsiveness, perseverance and other microbial capacities are in no way irrelevant to the evolutionary process. In fact, the opposite is true. Incorporation and integration of “outside” genomes — bacterial or other kinds — led to significant hereditary variation. Whole sets of genes, and even complete organisms with their own genome, are assimilated by and incorporated into others. As incorporated organisms coevolve, they lose their autonomy. They are no longer “independent” organisms. The process is called symbiogenesis. Symbiogenetic organisms of different species join and give rise to a third organism.*”

This exhibition takes symbiosis and symbiogenesis as a vital process through which to speculate on ways of living and dying together, as well as on forms of worlding and the different paradigms shifts —co-evolution, nature-culture divide, organisms and individuals, chrono-politics, exhibitions displays, inter and eco-dependencies, care and affect, contagion and viscosity— that these processes enact.

The installation *Tombstones are not flat* by Carlos Fernández-Pello cross-pollinates the biology of lichens with postmodern architecture through their connection to immortality. The project takes its title from an expression used by Anne Pringle, a mycologist from Harvard University, while exploring the families of lichens (a symbiosis of algae and fungus) growing on the tombstones of a cemetery in Petersham, USA. The focus of her research is Xantoparmelia, a lichen that contradicts one of the establish paradigms of evolutionary biology: aging. The longevity of lichen is well known, to the point of specimens being “inherited” in laboratories, but the fact that none of them show signs of aging points to two hypothesis: either they age in incomprehensibles ways to us, or they are immortal. From the perspective of architecture and poetry, and through the development of their foundation Reversible Destiny, Madeline Gins and Shusaku Arakawa devoted most of their lives to building environments aimed at slowing down the aging process. Students of Marcel Duchamp, they believed that longevity could be gained by living in uncomfortable environments (ie. irregular flooring, bent beds, dysfunctional kitchens) aimed at making life more complicated. This was done out of the belief that challenging habitats stimulate brain rewiring and body activity, and ultimately prevent the degradation associated with aging, thus tending to immortality.

Fernández-Pello’s work mingles both these stories through a complex installation invoking different forms of hapticity. The video at the entrance shows a visit of the artist together with Anne Pringle to the cemetery, in which discussions around the morphology and reproduction dynamics of the lichen, their

permanent writing over the inscriptions of the tombstones and whether to consider them as individuals or superorganisms emerge over extremely close shots of the biologist's fingers touching the specimens. Rigid and cold metal structures hold an accumulation of tender, bulging textile pieces of different dimensions, volumes and textures ranging from molds, lichens, and the designs of Arakawa & Gins, which have been digitally printed on them. The architects' motto "Choose Everything", which stated their will to neutralise subjectivity in order to gain access to the qualities of thingness present in the body, can be read on one of the structures. Suspended from Fernández-Pello's other structure, the seductive blue glow of a commercial fly trap stands as a *memento mori* in the midst of this immortal utopia, which together with the putrefaction process of the molds and the occasionally audible zapping of a fly, remembers the importance of death in all economies of life and gives way to ideas of life-regeneration and partial death. In the current climate, this is an ironic grin in the face of popular transhumanist fantasies. And as such, the artist perceives both installations as the poetic graves of Arakawa & Gins, where epitaphs of lichens and molds inscribe themselves endlessly.

Formally inspired by biological processes of endosymbiosis and ectosymbiosis, Carlos Monleón's works are an assemblage of different materialities, volumes and shapes infected by these logics. Glass (a fluid, most well know in its temporal solid state) is the primary material used under different forms and quantities, from entire vessels to brilliant grains inserted onto other pieces. The larger set of glass pieces host a series of fermentation processes, such as water kefir and kombucha s.c.o.b.y. (symbiotic cultures of bacteria and yeast), shared by a local network of producers living in Copenhagen. If well-cared-for, these cultures will be growing throughout the duration of the show, evolving in relation to ambient temperature and nourishment as well as reciprocally providing food, whilst filling the space with ever-changing acidic notes. Resonating with these digestive and transformative processes, the shapes of

the vessels echo Ancient Roman ointment containers, wine amphorae, and other gut-like forms or recipients. The textures of the works also vary, from hairy suspensions made of jute and silicon, to net-like resin surfaces and brilliant enamels. The varying densities, movement and consistency of these textural variations —further fueled by the evocative titles of the works— expand a material promiscuity and fabulation at the heart of Monleón's gesture.

After some time spent in the space, the tempo and rhythm of the show slows down, allowing for a formal symbiosis to emerge. Echoes of tubular forms and cup-shaped structures can be found throughout the installation, works recline and rest on each other, prints of molds that resulted from experiments between both artists pullulate. All together these resonances allow new assemblages to emerge as a sort of visual palimpsest, which are further connected with the working logics that have accompanied the show between the artists, the curator and the space. A logic of friendship, encounter, contagion and transforming each other along the way.

Nothing is true, everything is alive takes as its title a quote from Édouard Glissant, reclaiming the opacity inherent to all forms of being and knowing, against modernist transparency. The project is conceived as a series of curatorial exercises that displace scientific epistemological paradigms into contaminated, ambiguous and viscous stances. It is a continuation of the research initiated by the curator with *Canibalia*, a project that examines the logics and imaginaries of cannibalism and the cannibal as an ecosystemic perspective of being with the world. The invitation by Peryton stems from Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga's contribution to Oberon 1 magazine with her essay *Canibalia*. Peryton is the house of Oberon Magazine.