Composite Self

Winston Cheney

Bard College

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Composite Self

“…the multiform animal has an environment just as richly articulated as it is.”

Jakob von Uexkull, *A Foray Into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*

I am a compulsive art-maker. I have an obsessive level of focus but it is hard to harness that for an hour, not to mention a year. Oftentimes I can’t keep myself from switching directions, even when the turn is one-hundred eighty degrees. A more patient art maker might see me like a chipmunk, an animal incapable of fine movements, running, jerking, and staring all around its environment. I struggled with myself to make a practice where consistency was the thread that held the work together from day to day, because I used to think that is what I should do.

Now I have the inevitable final project – a collection. See, the common thread between these works is not conceptual, material, or methodical. The common thread of these works is that they are all irreducibly me.

When Bard shut down UBS and Fisher and I could no longer access my installation or my studio, I found myself weirdly not at any loss. I hardly had any desire to get my artworks out of those buildings. It was revealed to me then that I am not attached to what I am creating or what I have created, only what I will create. Creation is a way to get through, to move forward. Each piece that I make reveals something that I am and something that I am becoming.

The composite self is a paradox. There are millions of individual bacteria in my stomach with their own motive to survive, or the carcass of the chicken that I am digesting in order to be and do. Despite the fact that I am clearly not just myself, I can’t stop being myself! The art I make becomes a container for my body. Just as the water in my blood or the calcium in my finger nail becomes the vehicle to delineate my body, so does my art. The inverted boom box with plexi glass casing is an extension of myself because no one else could have made it in the same way. My composite self is thought by letting the world into the self, and then letting the self out into the world.