

How They Made Another Me

By

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*How they made another me,
by the ritualistic manipulation and/or demise of something beautiful.*

Upon entering the darkly lit gallery space, one is presented with six suspended cages containing quiet and still creatures. The murky, metal containers are rusting through their black patinas, suggesting use and age. Each cage connects to a hoist system by rough, manila ropes, suspended 30' above, tightly secured to tie-offs on adjacent walls (figure 1,2). Dominance describes the feeling of the taut rope as it holds the delicate copper creatures inside. Faint breezes push the cages in smooth rhythmic motions, creating a mysterious lullaby.

As the cages sway, a film of rope fibers gather on the floor below, implying movement to different positions, perhaps new cages were added or the old discarded. The dirty ground, reminiscent of an abandoned barn or remote warehouse, constructs a feeling of storage or display. By entering the space freely, we are in a position of control and witness a moment of silence in this strange psychological space (figure 3).

Direct light illuminates the circle of cages, but is swallowed by the room. Ambient light hits the wall, creating elongated vertical shadows of the rope (figure 4). The ghostly outlines further intensify power the space holds over the caged creatures. When walking closer to the circle, the atmosphere suggests a silent reverence. The strong verticality and symmetry of the cages' placements are similar to the

architecture of church buttresses. Though what is held inside appears helpless, the space feels glorified.

After experiencing the room, we are drawn to the creatures individually. A more intimate relationship is warranted due to their details and size. The first cage barely exists above the floor (figure 5,6), weighted down by the flesh inside. Thick slab of rubber turns into coagulated flesh with a copper entity emerging. The creature's tendrils dance as it is born from the flesh and/or devours it (figure 7).

As we move around the circle, another cage comes into view (figure 8). A specific piece of anatomy is evident in this creature, locked between two Plexiglas stocks. A rubber breast is cupped by a bulbous copper form tapering to a conical point (figure 9,10). The breast feels alive, but is disconnected from the body and unable to fulfill its purpose. Every caged creature contains manipulated casts from my body. Originally created in clay, they were pushed, pulled and transformed into these rubber facsimiles. Each part provokes an emotional reaction from me, filling the mind with worries or irritations or madness or joy. As with many obsessions, they take on a life of their own. In this gallery, they are infused into these creatures, living as physical manifestations of my emotional mind.

Around the circle lies another caged body part, specifically a belly. Cast in dark rice and rubber, it connects to a copper shell (figure 11,12). As it rests on the wood floor of its cage, the belly appears to be leaking into the porcelain tusks below, meant to catch the waste while protecting it (figure 13). But it isn't a perfect representation of my body; rather, it has been manipulated and pushed outside of

expected reality. The combination of surprising and impractical things such as the rice belly, copper, porcelain tusks and the metal cage create a visual poetry, echoed through the rhythm of the rope. Though the object/creature is based in my obsession of the body/psychology, forms and materials dance together moving past this simple explanation into a multi-dimensional, surrealistic one (figure 14). Originally, the pieces were just a collection of parts, now they are alive and create an intangible narrative. Jan Svankmajer, a Czech filmmaker, greatly influenced this progression with his piece “Darkness, Light, Darkness” and “Little Otik”. Each film utilized inanimate objects to tell an abstract story. And through the manipulation of materials combined with the audience’s imagination, they were given life.

With the act of living comes the strain of confinement, held back by oneself or others. The more alive we are, the more visible boundaries are that restrict us, similar to the metal cages and creatures. Each cage was specifically built for the shape of the sculpture inhabiting it, similar to the gibbet. As a torture device, the gibbet (hanging cage) was built for the human form and encapsulated the immobile person in a standing position for physical punishment or humiliation. In figure 15 and 16 this creature is also detained by the Plexiglas stocks, allowing its head to peak out the underside. At the opening of the mouth, cast acrylic teeth wrap around a dollop of rubber as it rolls out of the orifice into the porcelain tusk below. The creature’s vulnerabilities are apparent through this immobilization and draining of its innards.

Similarly in figure 17 and 18, the creature’s contents appear forcibly emptied. Manipulated rubber breasts seem to melt and leak from the copper shell. But in this

cage, an opening clamps around the creature's bottom. Positioned outside the cage, one's hand is allowed to touch the porcelain teat and presumably milk out liquefied breasts (figure 19).

Physical interaction is also possible with the final creature (figure 20). We are given the power of touch if we choose to enter the cage's two hand holes. It's position places our hands upon a long copper shaft excreting gelatinous body parts, implying a squeezing or milking action. Unable to move within its exposed state, the copper form slumps over while depositing offspring into the basket below (figure 21). The creature was based and edited off of a uterus with its fallopian tubes pulled and pinned to the top level (figure 22, 23). Forced to create versions of itself through the formation of digested body fragments, the creature continues to reproduce a manipulated reality.

Our digested selves are the products of emotional experiences. Every harrowing event, every love story, every disturbing dream, every unanswered desire systematically build these cages. Our identity is trapped in the architecture of containment and destruction. We hold onto the past, allow it to fester, reproduce and grow larger than itself.

Who made another me?

I did.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

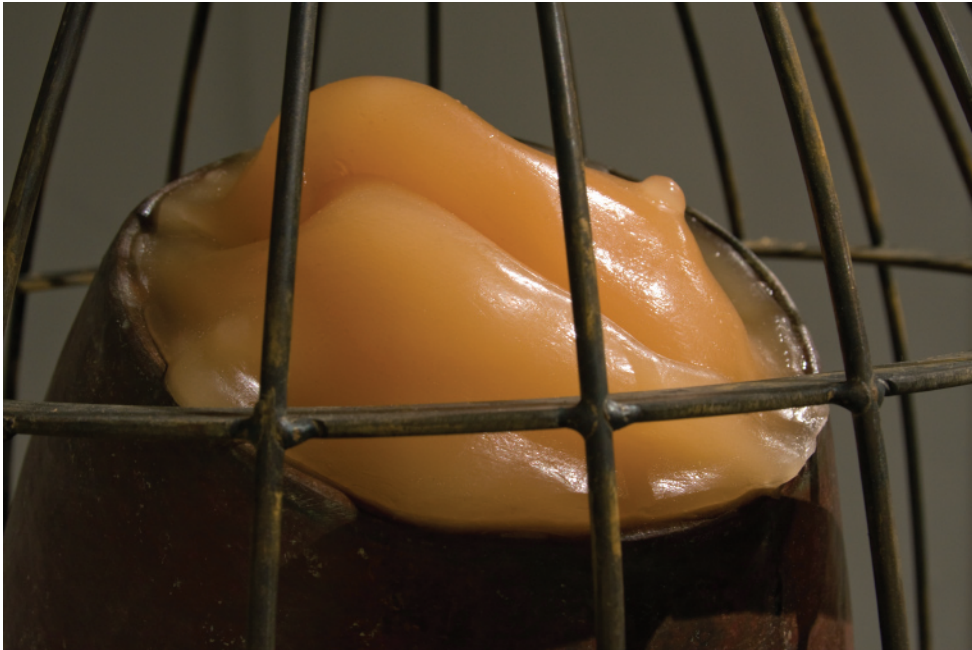


Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Supplementary Images

1. *How They Made Another Me*, installation view, 2008, mixed media, 30' x 30' x 20', photographed by Aaron Paden
2. *How They Made Another Me*, installation view, 2008, mixed media, 30' x 30' x 20'
3. *How They Made Another Me*, installation view, 2008, mixed media, 30' x 30' x 20', photographed by Aaron Paden
4. *How They Made Another Me*, installation view, 2008, mixed media, 30' x 30' x 20', photographed by Aaron Paden
5. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 1*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 14" x 12" x 12"
6. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 1*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 14" x 12" x 12"
7. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 1*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 14" x 12" x 12"
8. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 2*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, Plexiglas, 16" x 11" x 11", photographed by Aaron Paden
9. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 2*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, Plexiglas, 16" x 11" x 11"
10. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 2*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, Plexiglas, 16" x 11" x 11"
11. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 3*, 2007-2008, rubber, rice, copper, steel, porcelain, 25" x 28" x 13"
12. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 3*, 2007-2008, rubber, rice, copper, steel, porcelain, 25" x 28" x 13"
13. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 3*, 2007-2008, rubber, rice, copper, steel, porcelain, 25" x 28" x 13", photographed by Aaron Paden
14. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 3*, 2007-2008, rubber, rice, copper, steel, porcelain, 25" x 28" x 13", photographed by Aaron Paden

15. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 4*, 2007-2008, plastic, copper, steel, rubber, porcelain, 30” x 12” x 12”, photographed by Aaron Paden
16. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 4*, 2007-2008, plastic, copper, steel, rubber, porcelain, 30” x 12” x 12”
17. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 5*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, porcelain, 25” x 17” x 17”
18. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 5*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, porcelain, 25” x 17” x 17”
19. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 5*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, porcelain, 25” x 17” x 17”, photographed by Aaron Paden
20. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 6*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 57” x 17” x 17”
21. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 6*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 57” x 17” x 17”
22. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 6*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 57” x 17” x 17”
23. *How They Made Another Me – Cage 6*, 2007-2008, rubber, copper, steel, 57” x 17” x 17”, photographed by Aaron Paden