

A becoming on the line: painting and the genesis of form

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Artist

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A becoming on the line: painting and the genesis of form**Figure 1 - Impossible Creature - manifest 1**

Art puts a question upon the world of ideas and perceptions. A question that artists pause upon in their every day practices with matter, mediums and minds. It is composed of the vivid sense of openness, unpredictability and chance that emerges with creativity: how open is the world around us – and in us? It comes to challenge the vision we have concerning the world and primarily the notion of strong determinism. Art is occupied in the generation of forms, from the times of its beginning in the caves of the Paleolithic. Ever

since, and today more than ever, Art declares that aesthetic is not arrested in frozen objects, but rooted in the open dynamics of life, in the complex activity through which forms emerge, sustaining and modifying themselves. The journey of an artist into morphogenesis and aesthetics happens between experimental exploration and selected constraints. Through the subtle interplay between the chaotic and the coherent the artist understands aesthetic from within. The outcome is a work that confronts the constraints of what is the expected *dénouement* of a painting, and explodes in a multiplicity of images and worlds.



Figure 2 - Impossible Creature - manifest 2

Morphogenesis

Morpho-genesis, or the emergence of form, is one of the most fascinating and less understood territories of life and of human cognition (Kauffman 1993). How does nature acquire its forms and shapes? How does our mind recognize form? How does it deem particular shapes, and not others, attractive, elating, inspiring? The human continuously experiments the emergence of form, whether it be visual, structural or belonging to the level of significance and meaning (Focillon 1934). The artist, in his hunt, aspires to be intimate with it. From the eyes of an artist, morphogenesis provides the viscerally relevant territory to explore the bifurcating roots of aesthetics.

Though Art speaks mostly through a language of images, its meta-language – the complex creative process – is a constant gaze into the back-stage of morphogenesis (Kepes 1956). A backstage where softness and multiplicity are signatures of depth, marking art simultaneously as mature and experimental, and a refined commentary upon the generation of form.

Causality

Experimenting with emergence means, inevitably, to touch upon the ancient questions of causality. How does form come into being? Stretching as far back as the dialogue on aesthetics, the debate on causality brings forth the inquiry into two grand paradigms: *Telos* (from the Greek τέλος for “end”, “purpose”, or “goal”) expressed in the concept of final cause; and material necessity embedded in the concept of efficient cause (Thomson 1945). In the evolution of the latter one, necessity projects along history into the critical quest of the modern scientific method and up to the mechanistic view of the universe, aiming to explain all existing forms as the result of a concatenation of efficient and predictable causes. Causation clearly resides in the non-negotiable past of observed phenomena and can be deduced, as in the case of billiard balls rolling on a green table, or in that of an impassive mechanical clock.

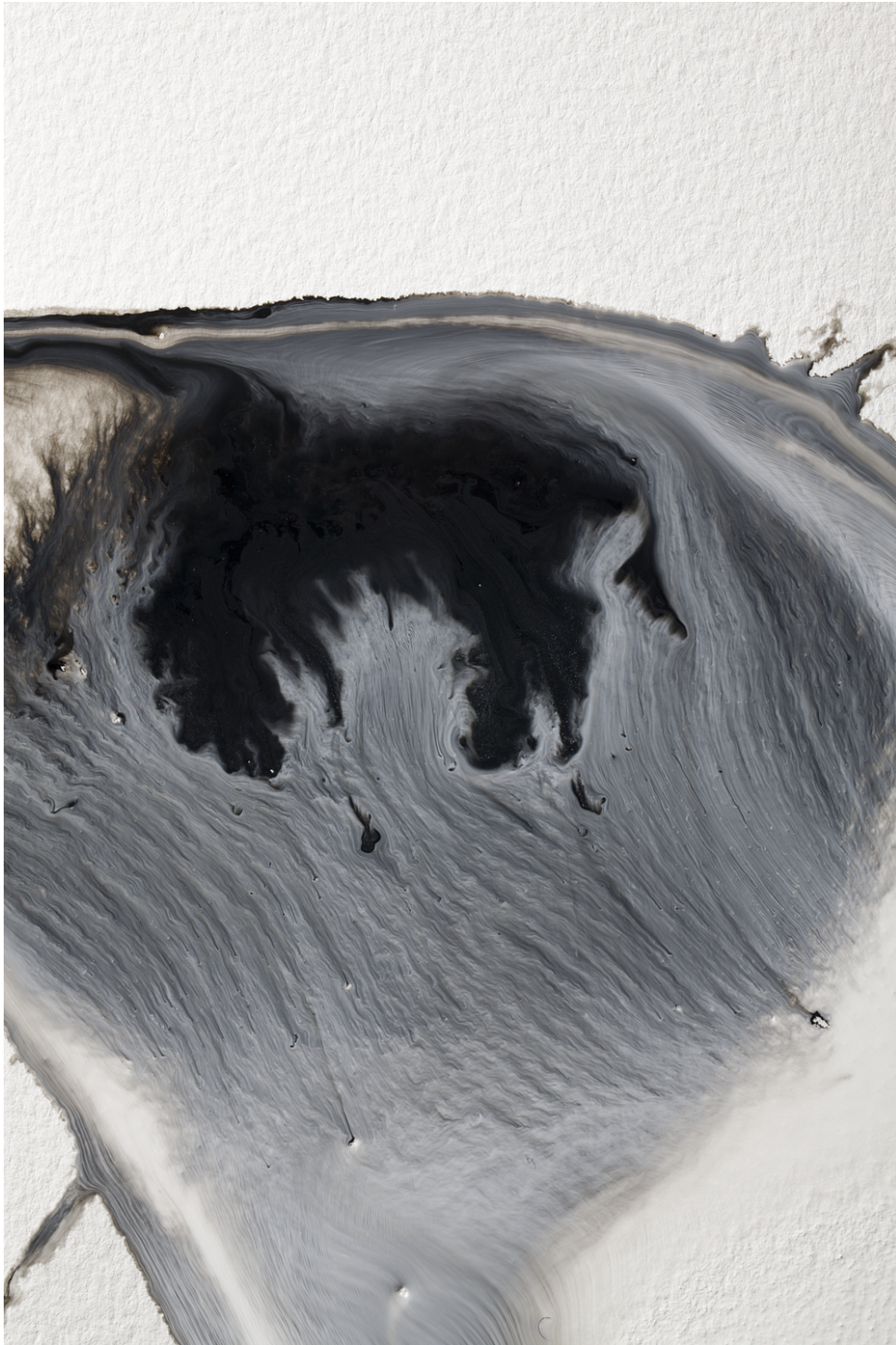


Figure 3 - Impossible Creature - manifest 3

The final cause on the other hand, driven by *telos*, lends us the idea of form emerging “for the sake of” a becoming, within organic and recursive processes that need to self-sustain themselves. The causality of form extends into the anticipated evolution of something, residing within the future stages of a process and its components as much as in the past ones (Jacobs 1986); as in the case of the initial stages of development of an organism, whose embryo shape-shifts through inexplicable forms to serve the future aptitude of the mature life-form; or in the case of human action and organization, whose logic is assumed to hold an aim extending above and beyond the fulfillment of material immediacy.



Figure 4 - Impossible Creature - manifest 4

Open-endedness

For the artist that enters such a dialogue, the riddle in exploring the creative generation of form boils down to a critical core issue: how open is this world around us - in us? As humans, we ultimately find our significance in intersecting both time (history) and pure potentiality, electing ourselves to be heroes of a privileged open-ended edge, so that a genuinely new element may have the option to emerge and affect our history (De Landa 1998). We assume, by now, that the final cause in terms of purpose, vision, direction, commitment, intention and design, plays a critical role in our human mode of interaction with the world, a role to which we are entitled.

We also generically deny, though, all and any generative property of interest related to substrata and physicality, at most when coming to describe them. We do not consider nature or matter as counterparts populated as well by final causes. On the contrary we expect them to respond passively to the necessity of predictable cause and effect and be imbued by our own *Telos*.

Yet how profoundly different the view when we come to interact with them, when what is demanded of us is to radically blend into a reactive substrata, whether it be matter, nature or technology (Kepes 1956). How astonishingly non submissive is the world of

substrata, when we find ourselves connected, wired, embodied, in love or simply absorbed in the depth of a creative process.

Can any sharp cut be made then, while form emerges somehow, between active and passive, organic and inorganic, subject and substrata, vision and necessity? Opposite and complementary emotions bring about those ephemeral and fertile edges, where one is engrossed to search for the sudden emergence of mind-evoking shapes along the iteration of shifting borderlines.



Figure 5 - Impossible Creature - manifest 5

Aesthetics

At such moments, aesthetics is exposed as an emergent property - the chaotically coherent organization of form, surprisingly composed in a fashion that stirs our being into presence. It emerged not by an external vision imposed upon inert matter, nor solely by the efficiency of material randomness, but by stemming powerfully from the deep structure of the process that renders the complex sensible.



Figure 6 - Impossible Creature - manifest 6

Artist and substrata

While far from equilibrium, matter is active and pregnant with potentialities (Nicolis & Prigogine 1989). The artist is immersed in a dynamic universe where he lends himself to the chaotic process of sense-making, without the old habit of ignoring nature or substrata, but rather using it as a vector, participating in the genesis of the image. While absorbed he navigates through an ad-hoc vision and real time intuition.

For the artist Aesthetics is a direction to the creative pulse, a direction which unfolds in non-linear fashion via concepts such as simultaneity, spontaneous co-emergence, accuracy, or the simultaneity of knowing and action.

The artist becomes a function of Aesthetics as a complex verb, combining the "sudden" (intuition), the "gradual" (aggregation) and the "edge of chaos" into a fertile event.

I wish my art as a passageway, a corridor into the dynamic ambivalent line between self and other, between intimate and alien, between certainty and the unknown; to mark through aesthetics the possibility of transition towards a new perspective. (Doria 2012)



Figure 7 - Impossible Creature - manifest 7

The works: *Painting as Multitude*

Painting as a Multitude is the technique I am using to explore the moods and tides of emergence. The creative process, through which the image emerges, does not have one point of end (convergence) but multiple entrances and endings. The rigid hierarchy of representation between process and form, in which the final product takes the front stage, is broken in favor of nesting dynamics where process and form become both part of a dynamic feedback loop.

I usually begin with a small work on paper, using liquid materials (colors) such as ink, glass paints and acrylic. When working out a composition and laying out these materials, I take account of the chaotic process. In the process, the paints do not merge entirely but maintain their disparate identities, while the chemical interaction between the colors creates forms and processes, which generate images that retain fractal qualities.

Technology is incorporated into the works through two main techniques. The first involves the use of a 3D scanner on the painting, to extract a high-resolution digital image. The out coming image provides the basis for a process of selection, to capture (through a manipulation of scales) a series of other images, that lie locked in the base painting. The images extracted are then finally blown up and printed on various mediums.

The second technique involves the usage of a digital camera during the painting process, the camera exposes and briefly captures the images in the making that subsequently unfold into a resting point in time. These images (that are usually lost without trace) take form while the painting process is taking place, in various areas of the work, as a result of the interaction between the different materials. Both techniques are rendered through a close artistic collaboration with a photographer and image designer.

At the end of the process, the work comes out as a multitude, a series of images that are both a plural form of the base state of the painting and also independent images of their own accord.

I discovered that the work gains edge by opening itself to a network of extensions. Through technology, media and collaborative interaction, the act of painting grows into an increasingly more exposed creative process, which aims to release the fixed constraints of the one single perspective, into a multitude of moments, images and scales, captured in dynamic evolution.

It is as if a new cosmology becomes visible and a multitude of images bounces to presence. From micro to macro and vice versa, with each iteration it gets clearer that the particular image on paper is but the skin of a bubble of life, lusciously liquefying into richness.



Figure 8 - Impossible Creature - manifest 8

In front of my eyes, painting opens a vertical gaze into the genesis of form. For brief instants, causality is exposed in whirls of interconnected subtleties, history not yet on its path to be interpreted, as a fine line that grows tangible, where the inevitable meets vision and where generation is fertile.

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About the Authors

J.D Doria, Born 1961, interdisciplinary artist, lives and works in TLV. His maturing into painting coagulates a background in Cinema and Stage Art, with a love for writing, combined with years of study and experimental research into territories of human thought and aesthetic experience, and on the overall a Dadaist approach to life. My recent work reflects a growing interest in a radical "reading" of Aesthetic.

Sayfan G. Borghini, Graduated as a doctor in Physics in Rome in 1997. Her interests in the last ten years are focused on complex systems at the intersection of technological, cultural and artistic forces. She is currently a lecturer in the Master Course in Integrated Design, at H.I.T. in Israel, where she is also collaborating on curatorial projects.