

ANDERS KRISÁR:
INSIDE-OUT
BY ARNAUD GERSPACHER

Untitled (2012) come out at you with closed fists clenched tightly. The casting is meticulous: the skin, like parchment paper, is tight over the knuckles while loose and detached between fingers. You feel every pore and crinkle. This is an inward, closed force. Yet veins and capillaries float to the surface, blood once pumped against the alginate[1] in imperceptible exposure during casting, and there is the sense that at any moment these hands can only relax again. This lends them an outward, open force as well. They are an uncanny mix of momentum and inertia, vitality and embalming—much like photography, the artist's other preferred medium. This is no coincidence, for Anders Krisár's sculptural work shows that photography has always been a form of casting with light, and that casting with alginate or plaster has its own play of positive/negative.

This observation would be academic if not for the revelation it offers: there has never been only *one* negative, but *two*. The negative of the alginate would not impress without the negative of the hands—flesh, force, and blood—that pushes back against the cast from beneath its outermost edges. Neither this inside of the body nor the volume of the alginate is captured in the work, yet they both make these hands possible. They become equivalent forces in perfect tension, as they would in all forms of casting and photography—plaster and life, plasma and light. All is inside (or outside, but this opposition starts to dissolve) separated by an infinitesimal limit of skin that becomes perceptible only as the positive for an object, which in turn attests to the rapport between our bodies and the world. “The world is spacing, a tension of place, where bodies are not in space, but space in bodies.”[2] Much of Krisár's work concerns this turning inside-out, which is not merely a play of form. It has profound implications for how we understand individuality and the ecology that sustains you.

Untitled invites neither touch nor embrace (you would come up against a wall anyway). They seem to offer you a choice and hold a secret, and if these hands relaxed they would give it away: two chess pawns, one black, one white. These are his mother's hands. During the casting she held the chess pieces with the instruction not to show *anyone* which pawn was in which hand. Only she holds the secret—that is, if she remembers, or if one witness or one memory could ever count as proof. The blood has coursed through irreversibly, the muscles held the pawns hidden, and these bodily forces were recorded from inside and out in the work. But of course, while the pawns were in her living hands during casting, they are not there now. The very process of creation makes this impossible. The signs of force and pressure on the alginate are the only verifiable testimony that these hands—the ones before you in the gallery—have nothing to show besides the infinitesimal membrane of their surface. Was it black or white pawn in right hand or left? These hands now hide the hidden, which strictly speaking is impossible, since you can only hide what has the possibility of being revealed. What is left is the trace of tracelessness, a pure erasure beyond reach or recovery.

Can we even say the chess pieces themselves were cast? And if not, what of the blood, bone, and flesh equally held closed and away from the alginate's touch? Time and space become strange. Unlocatability and unverifiable randomness make them Schrödinger's pawns—both black and white, both living and dead—in hands that will never open to resolve their paradox. Like the current development surrounding the Higgs boson, which begs the question *what does it mean to think an event that happened before thinking itself*, these hands hold a secret site beyond thought and direct observation—the casting could be recreated, with all the same conditions, yet we would still never know whether it was black or white pawn in right hand or left at the moment of creation.

The analogy is not only with physics. History is in these hands and all the dark spots we can never recover that nevertheless continue to leave their impression on the present and future (what Jacques Derrida called

hauntology). Then there are the secrets that make you tremble. It is with good reason that Ingmar Bergman's *Det sjunde inseglet* (*The Seventh Seal*, 1957) opens with the symbolism of chess. Playing for his life, the knight holds out two pawns for Death to choose sides—the same outward motion as *Untitled*. As fate has it, he chooses black. What if Krisár's unobservable and unverifiable pawns present a similar situation? What if they allude to a hidden mechanism in her body—or in *your* body—that might light up or just as easily go dark beyond control? Or the thoughtless parts of our bodies, those cells that may eventually go rogue without prediction? Things that always makes us tremble for our future and the unforeseeable.

Ms. Universe (2012) also plays with the illogic of turning inside-out. The artist constructed and fitted a suit for his wife, which now rests on the floor reversed as clothing for the room, the gallery, the world, and beyond. From the perspective of the garment, the outside becomes the inside. But then, what has become of the inside? What is the void and remainder left over? Can we still call it the inside? Or, like the double negative in casting a human body (or photographing one), should we not say that the inside of our body is also always the outside and the outside in? Oxygen, water, and nutrients come in and fill out the bodily form that presses skin against plaster, absorbs and deflects light, or delineates the cut of fabric. The outside informs and the inside exposes. In the end, there is only spacing and separation, volumes and demarcations. Krisár's delicate torsos with skin impressed or latticed, or whole bodies cleft in two that somehow remain one, attest to the buoyancy of space that both surrounds and holds you up, inside and out. They remind you that there is no individual, pure and simple. *Untitled* (2011–12), a seated boy serenely spliced in half and reversed from himself, points to this thought. We only get ahold of ourselves *from the outside*. The hands I use to caress someone are the same ones I use to rub my eyes or hold my head in contemplation—and they both come to and from the outside. *Untitled* is the literalization of our being-with-ourselves and being-with-others, which are indelibly linked. This also means there can be no such ecology as pure outside. Wombs and umbilical cords are always traded in for life-giving systems of other kinds. Isolationism is disavowal. All is folded, all is affected.

In defending human projection and transference, Peter Sloterdijk says the following: “The limits of my capacity for transference are the limits of my world.”[3] This is another way of saying that the inside never stays in and that the outside is always inscribed. Our senses are a form of arché-casting that delimits the spaces we inhabit (idiomatic English speaks of *casting a glance* or *casting a light on*). The furthest reaches of what we can see, hear, touch, smell, and understand is the inside of our outside, which we develop in cranial darkrooms. *Janus* (2012) gives off this impression: An expressionless face framed within a fiberboard box—and it should be stressed that the frame is the size of a standard 4 x 5 negative—which morphs between a positive image and a negative one, depending on your distance. This also means that it morphs between a boy's face looking out from his box-as-body (when positive), making the viewer and room his outside, and a face looking in (when negative), making the viewer and room his inside and the box not a body, but another outside for which we have no access, unless he were to open his eyes, which would then become our eyes, too. The limits of his world are the limits of yours. He sees and feels for you and you for him, in radical empathy—an impossible instance of being in the same place at the same time, of getting under someone's skin, of being both same and other. Once more, this is not unlike what still makes photography so magical: you see what someone else saw, through their eyes and in light of their being-there (this happens with music even more quickly, since sound permeates performer and audience almost simultaneously).

We can never fully get under someone's skin, but Krisár's work—with all its impossible reversals and temporalities; improbable splicing of bodies in space; and fragile, sometimes painful beauty—has the ability to get under ours.

[1] In making Untitled (2012), Krisár used first alginate (a casting material made of algae which creates a perfect print) and then plaster over the alginate as a shell for the (rather soft) alginate. The original cast is then made with plaster in the alginate/plaster mould. For work where the texture of the skin is less important the skin is cast with plaster only.

[2] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 27.

[3] Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Spheres I*, trans. Weiland Hoban (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 13.