

LICHENS ARE THE WAY

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I want to become a lichen.

Why a lichen?

Lichens don't pretend to be individuals. Just like a hibiscus, a hummingbird or a human. They are made up of two partners, a fungus and an algae, because each part separately has found that helping each other is more profitable than competing with each other.

Lichens can withstand almost anything. We took them into space and pushed them out of the space module. After six months, we brought them back to Earth and they were still alive.

The lichens are longest surviving organisms on our planet. The best survival strategy is to take your time. There's a lichen in Antarctica that's 9,000 years old. And it's no bigger than a pizza.

And I want to experience how matter thinks.

#1: Lichen On The Wall In The Adjacent Yard Above The Window And Under The Window Sill (living organism)

I don't just want to learn what it is to be a lichen, but instead to actually experience it.. People want more all the time. Lichen represent a culture of abundance. Like them, I am satisfied with what I have. I find rather than buy the materials I use to make art. It's metal wine bottle caps and collars. I combine them in the same way that a lichen makes its body from what is offered by the wind, water, and earth. Thinking matter.

#2: Cladonia Sulphurina Lichen canvas, metal, 146 x 68 cm, 2023)

Here begins the journey into the microscopic world of lichens. Scale approx. 50:1. The shape of the body is not determined, as with all other living organisms, by a predetermined idea. A certain kind of cucumber, for example, will grow in the same way across the whole planet. The shape of each lichen is unique because it responds to the conditions of the place where it grows. That's another reason why I'm interested in lichens as a visual artist. Their shapes are innumerable. The red parts of the lichen „Cladonia sulphurina“ depicted here indicate that this species is ready for sexual reproduction.

#3: Body Of A Lichen (canvas, metal, 146 x 68 cm, 2023)

Scale approx. 1000:1. The body structure of lichens involve two separate organisms that have chosen to live together, because living together was preferable to living individually. We as humanity can learn from this. The golden silver parts of the image represent the fungus and the blue parts the alga. They pass on to each other the substance that the other needs. Lichens grow very slowly because both partners must be satisfied in order to for growth. Each partner is aware of the whole that transcends it, the whole of the lichen, which is beneficial to both partners. At the same time, however, each partner separately cares for himself. A picture of the balance of humanity.

#4: Types Of Lichen Body Layers (6 collages, paper, 40 x 42 cm, 2023)

Scale approx. 2000:1. These works are composed of labels found glued around the neck of wine bottle.. I found them, like a lichen, as modest, recycled matter which I can use grow.

Thinking through matter. All the irregular, ragged edges in the paper collages are just the result of thinking matter. They were created by rotating the glued seal and tearing it off, which happened just where it was most convenient for the glued paper seal. That's how matter thinks: in the simplest way. It is a path that cannot be accurately predicted. Only to make it, and by performing it, it is no longer possible to realize another way, another way of thinking. The thinking of matter is indeed irreversible. What is torn off is torn off.

I personally have not torn anything. I was just lichening together. All the tears are authentic, made by those who opened the wine bottles. There are no additional rips made in the composition of the works. On the contrary: the composition is subordinated to the found tears.

The collages model the cortexes. This is the solid part of the lichen. The mesh that gives the lichen its robustness. Its protective layer. The body. These collage-cortexes are an exploration of how the elements that make up the cortex can bind together. The collages always follow a simple rule, which is to extend the lines. We can find their kernel found in the original, elemental material. The lines that form the backbones of the collages can continue indefinitely to either side. This is another way of thinking of matter: exploiting its binding possibilities. These create structurally simple, yet diverse-in-form chains. The lines that we can see in the elementary material create an infinitely long idea by their interconnection. In this the series resembles itself. Where the infinitely long lines do not resemble themselves is in the simple idea they think.

There are holes in the collages, breaks in the rhythm, gaps. But that's okay, because the embodiment, the incarnation of each idea is not ideal. Only the idea is ideal. Every touch with matter creates "mistakes", "irregularities", "imperfections". And so it is with thought in general. An idea, spoken, written, represented, necessarily falls short of its uncreated, ideal antecedent. And perhaps, if thinking starts from matter, this ideal precursor of thought does not even exist. There is only thinking that is expressed in matter – sound, paper, metal, letter, etc. The thinking of thought may not even be possible.

Let's all be lichens!