

## Em Rooney, oedipal capacity, 0-(w)hole, pt. 1 of 2

Can we aspire to Enlightenment without modernity? My hypothesis - which, like the previous ones, is too coarse - is that we are going to have to slow down, reorient and regulate the proliferation of monsters by representing their existence officially. Will a different democracy become necessary? A democracy extended to things?

-Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern

I don't take it as poetic extravagance when Latour evokes Monsters throughout WHNBM. Monsters are the hybrid entanglements that humans are constantly fusing, by making unwitting combinations of Nature and Culture, with a crossed out God on the side. Constantly occupied by human desire, the Hybrid-Monsters ignore worldly impacts, but the impacts keep coming. Newer Hybrid-Monsters are made to mitigate the initial impact, with the same present-tense thinking and lack of an object oriented democracy, and so the cycle continues, and unconsidered Hybrid-Monsters proliferate.

I distance myself from Latour in his urge to repair and 'regulate' Monsters, though. I agree in the principal of representing them officially in order to more consciously produce these Hybrid-Monsters. I wonder at the world-destructive possibilities, should Monsters be generated then unleashed to help in the further cracking and emptying the architectures, norms, laws which already regulate/stifle fluid movements and better dreams?

Entrance of Butterfly, or any number of insects, that zip in and out of our spaces.

Em Rooney's Hybrid-Monsters are still, but pulsing, with an egg-sack potentiality that seems as though it could unleash an unclear something. The forms are somewhat alien and mysterious, while clearly pulling from recognizable forms. oedipal capacity is part web, part protruding belly embellished with flotsam. A stripe of seaweed drapes across the white form, dancing and dripping its way delicately down in a drip of almost symmetry.



Em Rooney, oedipal capacity, 2022, steel, plastic, cardboard, silk, resin, seashells, wire

# Derosia

Zachary Rawe, Egged\_on, May 1, 2022

As a Hybrid-Monster oedipal capacity delights in her trappings, nude and of trash, skeletal and voluminous. The central (w)hole is obscured by the softly rounded hard steel which serves as a line that animates

Sigmund Freud developed the concept of Oedipus Complex to describe a child's sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex and a sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. Later, Carl Jung introduced Electra complex, which is the female equivalent of Oedipus complex. However, we often use Oedipus complex as a general term to describe both Oedipus and Electra complexes.

Symmetry is at play in the work as well,



Em Rooney, trouble every day, 2022, steel, indigo dyed rice paper, pigmented resin, mylar, stones, rhinestones, synthetic, whale boning, steel boning

Spring has sprung, and so there are ramps. Ramps, sometimes referred to as wild leeks are a leafy green that are foraged and is a clear harbinger of Spring. They started to appear last week, which means I can begin to look forward to brighter, fresher egg sandwiches since I'm always trying to eat local-ish. Not so much because of the environmental impact, which I suppose is there, but because I sincerely just like feeling part of the seasons, the tilt of the earth.

I also love making bagels, I do Claire Saffitz' recipe, and add lots of dried onion. I prefer an onion bagel over most. Basically, I wanted to make an onion forward egg sandwich, with past-tense onions and present-tense onions, and cream cheese. Personally, I don't care for sourdough bread, I like making foccacia and bagels. The bagels are nice because you can freeze them right away, and then pop them in the toaster as needed.

\*I'm also, primarily, making eggs with an emulsion blender now. I love the fluffy egg that isn't too buttery or decadent, since I tend to make all the other parts pretty rich. Oily ramps, cream cheese, etc. The eggs don't need to be more fatty.

## Em Rooney, oedipal capacity, Piles of Asymmetry, pt. 2 of 2

Pressed by a limit of words, 'contradiction' has become a stand in to describe a desire for a politics that makes room for a type of tension that holds conflicting desires at once. To be rude and thoughtful, loving and distant, here and not here, incorrect and around a cloud, to be deconstructive and reconstructive<sup>1</sup>.

oedipal capacity is both voluminous and empty, foggy and drippy, decadent and spare, bound and pressing outward, matter-of-fact and mysterious, delicate and stupidly wrapped up. I use stupid here not in a derogatory sense, but in reference to the delicate treatment of white material in relation to the less-controlled physicality apparent in the metal wrapping of green drips.

Once I misheard a poet say the phrase, 'with a heart full of owls.' The thought of a heart being full of a brooding hooting, distant by the grace of darkness. It was a reminder that poetry and/or mishearing can locate fresh descriptions that reframe understandings while providing unknown grounds to previously unprovoked future wants.



Em Rooney, One in a Wake, 2022, Steel, enamel, Mylar, epoxy resin, thread, acrylic paint, velvet, pewter



Em Rooney, Ecllosion Sequence, 2022, Steel, dyed paper, dyed papier-mâché, paint, resin

The works in Entrance of Butterfly flaunt their boundedness by not hiding the hard steel which presses, pins and provides a geometric hard line, contrasting the material engagements in Rooney's organic Hybrid-Monsters<sup>2</sup>. It's from that pinning where the flourishing takes place. Ecllosion Sequence flaps down in a fan of eventual gravity, a death-rattle swan song of folded-in and hidden decisions. One in a Wake accepts and perches in place as a cautionary signifier of ruffled potential flight. Oedipal Capacity lets its boundedness curl forward to create a line which emphasizes the piles of asymmetries at play in the work.

Asymmetries abound in all the work in the exhibition, but perhaps there isn't a better example than Oedipal Capacity, where you have the outlines of the left and right side of the works, but also the relation of volume to emptiness, the two web-bellies stacked

# Derosia

Zachary Rawe, Egged\_on, May 15, 2022

on top of each other, the dripping green stripes, intimate pleasure and trapping attractions. They are reminiscent of Ulrike Müller's candy-like minimalism, but then pushed out into of bodily and material extraneous, spilling, floating, flourishing, embodying too many asymmetries to grasp, both physical and linguistic.

Asymmetry as almost-matches, and not-quite mirroring, resisting the urge for unification or clarity in favor of seeing a match not meet up. Asymmetry is a violation of dualism, a disturbance of a mirrored binary.

I began with the floating thought around contradictions, as I tend to think of the term as holding opposites or opposing fantasies. Rooney's works in Entrance of Butterfly suggest that asymmetry might be a useful bedfellow to think alongside contradiction, as a pile of slight variations that mirror, almost fit, and wiggle around in unstable yet confident form.

\*While thinking around Michele Segre's work a few months ago, I wrote around my fleeting thoughts around the potential for a life-wish as opposed to a death-wish. I mentioned that, for starters, if a death-wish plays itself out through the assumption of life with a disregard that might land one in death, then a life-wish might start from death and move in the other direction, a hope for some kind of life (separate from these trying times).

Rooney's work, as a thought partner, might get to a second clustered thought around my life-wish thought. If a death-wish is in part a wreckless/unconscious acting out, then the life-wish might be a tender engagement with the wreckage, a semi-conscious working with the tendency, folding it into itself, and flourishing from bound to abound.