

THOMAS FEUERSTEIN  
*WHOLE DEARTH CATALOG &  
GOOD ROTTEN GOODS*

Vienna

Nov 25 2023 – Feb 04 2024  
Opening Nov 24, 19:00

The exhibition *WHOLE DEARTH CATALOG & GOOD ROTTEN GOODS* gathers sculptures as an open and unfinished work, whose material composition transforms the non-finito of sculpture into a metabolic infinito. Feuerstein's sculptures are crafted from PHB (Polyhydroxybutyrate), for which bacteria function as actors by metabolizing fatty acids enriched in algae. The bacteria simultaneously functioning as "quarry" and "chisel", producing a new material, partially digesting it, and altering its form.

In contrast to modernist-linear production chains, leading from the assembly line through consumption to disposal, Thomas Feuerstein is referencing the metabolically organized cyclic "Ouroboros". In this he is citing the self-devouring mythical creature Ouroboros, that is a symbol of self-contained and recurrent transformation process of matter.

The exhibition title underscores this by playfully modifying the legendary *Whole Earth Catalog*, published as a counterculture magazine by Stewart Brand between 1968 and 1972. The Earth, its biosphere, atmosphere, and richness in resources and biological diversity become scarce. "Earth" transforms into "dearth". And "dearth" through its etymological connection to "dear" and "dearness", conveys a longing born from scarcity for what is most missed and needed: be it friendship or love, food, energy, or information, justice, happiness, or knowledge, resources, prosperity, or the future.

*WHOLE DEARTH CATALOG & GOOD ROTTEN GOODS* forms the fifth chapter of Thomas Feuerstein's *METABOLICA*-project, guiding us into a factory of life and narrating a history of change: from the industrial revolution to the present and future, from whaling to petrochemistry to utopian scenarios of biochemistry. Living organisms like algae and bacteria become collaborators in Feuerstein's work, leading to new aesthetics and artistic practice through scientifically developed processes. Chapters two and five will be on display at ZKM in Karlsruhe until February 2024, while the first chapter was exhibited at NOI Techpark in Bozen until November 2023, in collaboration with Museion Bozen.

Thomas Feuerstein (\*1968, AT) studied art history and philosophy, gaining his doctorate from Innsbruck University. As a theorizing media artist, he employs a method of "conceptual narration" that combines art, architecture, philosophy, and literature with economics, politics, and technology. Linking linguistic, visual, and material elements and exploring connections between fact and fiction are key aspects of his practice. He creates artworks based on neural networks, biotechnologies, and metabolic processes. Feuerstein has received commissions to conduct artistic research. Since 2020, he has been professor of artistic discourse at Innsbruck University. He contributes to exhibitions and conferences on art and science, and his works are included in public collections such as MAC Lyon, mumok Vienna, and ZKM. In 2019, he was awarded the Austrian Art Prize for Media Art. Thomas Feuerstein lives in Vienna.