



# HOMAGE TO H.R. GIGER

FEATURING "STATIONS OF EMBODIMENT"

BY

VINCENT CASTIGLIA

CURATED BY

STEPHEN ROMANO

WITH WORDS BY

ROBERT COZZOLINO

CHRISTOPHER IAN LUTZ

MICHAEL BONESTEEL



H.R. Giger, *Hieroglyphics* (1978)

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FEATURING “STATIONS OF EMBODIMENT”  
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H.R. Giger, *ELP VIII* (1986)

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H.R. Giger, *Mask VI* (1985)

# CURATOR'S INTRODUCTION

BY STEPHEN ROMANO

THIS EXHIBITION IS VINCENT CASTIGLIA'S TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS OF OUR TIME - H.R. GIGER, WITH WHOM HE HAD A VERY CLOSE ARTISTIC RELATIONSHIP. THE EXHIBITION IS ENDORSED BY THE H.R. GIGER ESTATE.

THE ART OF H.R. GIGER (BORN HANS RUEDI GIGER IN SWITZERLAND IN 1940) HAS BEEN EMBLEMATIC OF THE ZEITGEIST OF OUR TIME SINCE THE SPRING OF 1979 WHEN RIDLEY SCOTT'S FILM, --A MASTERPIECE OF SCIENCE FICTION HORROR-- *ALIEN* WAS UNLEASHED UPON AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD. HOWEVER, GIGER'S ART WAS ALREADY WELL KNOWN THROUGH POSTERS AND THE UNDERGROUND MAGAZINE NETWORKS OF THE LATE 1960S. SINCE THAT TIME, GIGER'S ART HAS PROLIFERATED ONTO MUSEUM WALLS, ALBUM COVERS, FILMS, AND MUCH MORE.

THROUGH ITS PROLIFERATION INTO MAINSTREAM CULTURE, GIGER'S ART HAS LED TO INSTANT UNMISTAKABLE RECOGNITION FOR ITS STYLISTIC AND OTHER-WORLDLY AESTHETIC QUALITIES, MOST OFTEN EXPLORING THE DARKEST DEPTHS OF THE HUMAN PSYCHE.

GIGER'S ART WAS INSPIRED BY THE POST-WW1 SURREALIST MOVEMENT, WHICH PRECEDED HIM BY A FEW DECADES, AS WELL AS CONTEMPORANEOUS ARTISTS SUCH AS ERNST FUCHS, SALVADOR DALI, STANISLAW SZUKALSKI, AND AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE. THE SURREALISTS EXPLORED, IN THEIR MANIFESTO, THE PROLIFERATION OF THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND THROUGH ART. GIGER, HOWEVER, WENT EVEN FURTHER, AS HE EXPLORED THE DARK FUTURE OF HUMANITY AND COINED THE TERM "BIOMECHANICAL", AND THROUGH HIS ART, PROPHESED THE INEVITABLE COLD SYMBIOSIS OF MAN AND MACHINE, AND THE DREAMS OF THE FUTURE. GIGER PAINTED MAINLY WITH AN AIRBRUSH, A VERY EERIE AND DREAMY MEDIUM.

ON THE SUBJECT OF DREAMING, WHICH WAS CENTRAL TO THE SURREALISTS, GIGER HAS SAID: "AWAKENING IS USUALLY A BITTER THING, ESPECIALLY WHEN ONE TRIES HARD TO GET BACK TO AN EROTIC DREAM WHICH IS NOT OVER, BUT THIS SELDOM SUCCEEDS. EVERYONE DREAMS, MORE OR LESS, BUT FEW PEOPLE TRUST THEMSELVES TO RELATE OR PRESENT THEIR DREAMS, AS THEY ARE INHIBITED FROM MAKING PUBLIC THEIR PERVERSE THOUGHTS."

"WHAT SCARES ME MOST IS OVERPOPULATION, WITH ALL ITS HORRIFYING SIDE EFFECTS SUCH AS EPIDEMICS, MASS HYSTERIA, FAMINE, AND TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION. FOR ME, THE GREATEST CRIMINALS AGAINST MANKIND ARE THOSE WHO, WITH THE HELP OF RELIGION OR FALSE ETHICS, FORBID THE PILL, PREVENT ABORTIONS, AND HINDER OLD PEOPLE FROM DYING A REDEEMING DEATH."

HE ALSO SAID, "IF PEOPLE WANT TO INTERPRET MY WORK AS WARNINGS ABOUT TOO MUCH OVERPOPULATION, DISEASE, AND MECHANIZATION IN THE FUTURE, THEN THAT IS UP TO THEM".

H.R. GIGER PASSED AWAY IN MAY 2014, AT THE AGE OF 74. TO CLAIM THAT GIGER IS ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED AND INFLUENTIAL ARTISTS OF OUR TIME IS IN NO WAY OVERSTATING HIS LEGACY. HE IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW ARTISTS IN MODERN TIMES TO BE BESTOWED THE TITLE OF "THE MASTER".

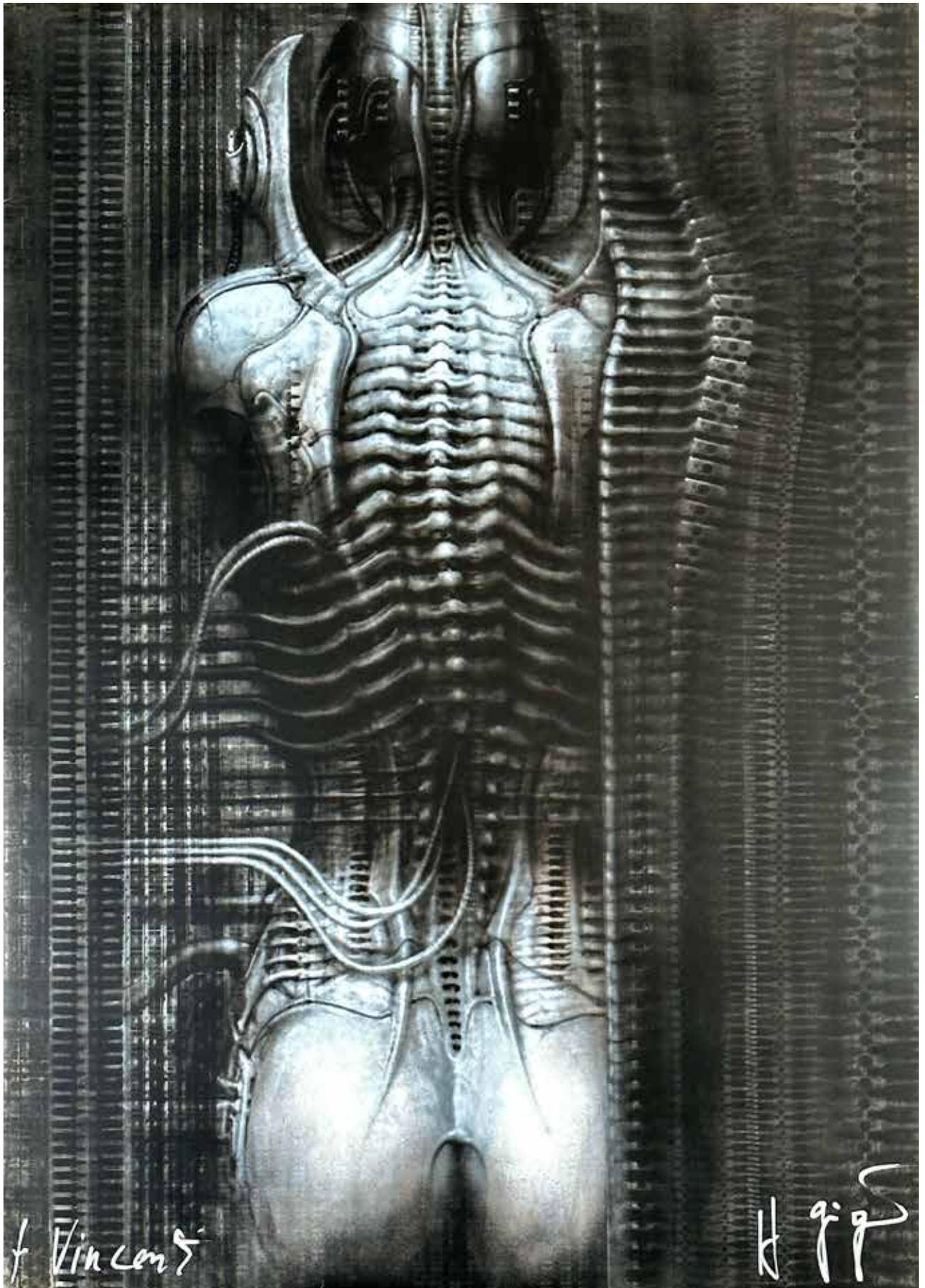
THE EXHIBITION'S ORGANIZER, VINCENT CASTIGLIA, IN WHOSE EPONYMOUS GALLERY IT IS MOUNTED, IS RENOWNED INTERNATIONALLY FOR HIS METICULOUSLY VISCERAL PAINTINGS DRAWN IN HUMAN BLOOD. THE ARTIST'S FIRST EXHIBITION WAS AT THE H.R. GIGER MUSEUM IN SWITZERLAND, TITLED "REMEDY FOR THE LIVING" WHICH OPENED ON NOVEMBER 1ST, 2008, AND RAN FOR SIX MONTHS. VINCENT WAS THE FIRST AMERICAN ARTIST TO RECEIVE A SOLO EXHIBITION INVITATION FROM THE H.R. GIGER MUSEUM.

VINCENT SAYS: "THE OPENING DAY OF "REMEDY FOR THE LIVING" WITH HR AT THE MUSEUM GALLERY, I CITE THAT AS THE BEST DAY AND EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE. GIGER WAS LIKE A GOD TO ME GROWING UP, AN ARTISTIC INSPIRATION OF THE HIGHEST ORDER. IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE. IN ADDITION TO BEING ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS OF OUR TIME, HE WAS LIKE A PROPHET. GIGER WAS JUST AN UNPARALLELED TALENT; HIS WORK WAS JUST SO FAR BEYOND ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN. HE MEDIATED INTO THIS WORLD A BODY OF WORK SINGULAR IN VISION AND EXECUTION, THE DEPTHS OF WHICH WE'RE ONLY BEGINNING TO SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF, THAT WILL NO DOUBT REVERBERATE THROUGH INFINITY."

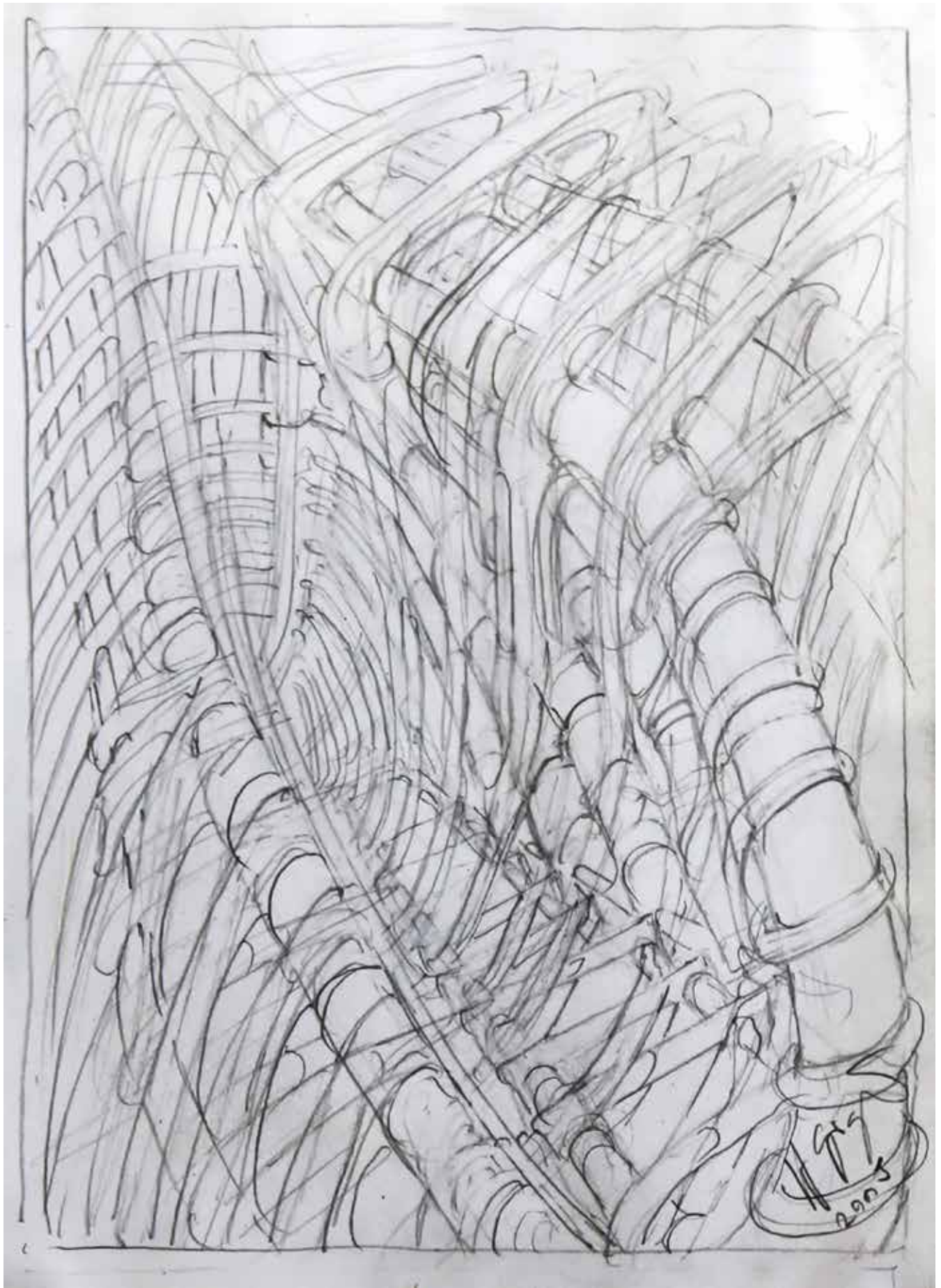
WHILE VINCENT CASTIGLIA'S ART MAKES STYLISTIC REFERENCES TO SURREALISM, IT IS NOT BORN OUT OF DREAMS OR FANTASY, BUT RATHER THE ARTIST'S OWN TRAUMA AND ORDEAL. IN THAT REGARD, AN UNDERSTANDING IS REQUIRED THAT THE STORY OF VINCENT'S LIFE IS INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED WITH HIS ART, MUCH LIKE OUTSIDER ARTISTS HENRY DARGER AND ADOLPH WOLFLI. THIS GIVES THE ART ITSELF A LEVEL OF AUTHENTICITY. YET, VINCENT'S ART, MUCH LIKE H.R. GIGER'S, IS SHAMANIC, IN THAT IT ATTEMPTS TO NOT ONLY PURGE THE ARTIST OF HIS TRAUMA, BUT ACTS AS A CATHARTIC EXPERIENCE FOR THE VIEWER, AS THEY MAY BRING THEIR OWN SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WORKS, AND THEREBY EXPERIENCE A SIMILAR HEALING EXPERIENCE. THIS, TO ME, IS THE NOBLEST ASPIRATION AN ARTIST CAN HAVE.

AS A CURATOR, I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT VINCENT CASTIGLIA'S ART IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT SETTINGS. WHAT IS ASTONISHING AND TRULY NOTABLE IS THAT PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE RESPOND TO IT EMPHATICALLY.

IT IS A TESTAMENT TO VINCENT'S ARTISTIC PRACTICE THAT IT BRINGS SO MUCH AWE AND ELATION TO A WORLD DEEPLY IN NEED OF HEALING. THIS IS THE ARTIST AS AN ALTRUIST, WITH UNSELFISH REGARD FOR AND DEVOTION TO THE WELFARE OF OTHERS, THAT BOTH VINCENT AND H.R. GIGER PERPETUATE IN THEIR ART.



H.R. Giger, *NYC Series VI, Torso* (1980)



H.R. Giger, *untitled* (2003)



# FORMATIVE VISCERA

BY ROBERT COZZOLINO

PATRICK AND AIMEE BUTLER, CURATOR OF PAINTINGS

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

BEFORE I KNEW ART, ART HISTORY, OR ARTISTS, THERE WAS *ALIEN* (1979). MY FATHER TOOK ME TO SEE THE FILM SOON AFTER IT CAME OUT. I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD. CHARITABLY, IF I SAW IT AFTER MY HALLOWEEN BIRTHDAY, I WAS NINE. THIS IS SOMETHING I CANNOT IMAGINE DOING TO MY OWN SONS. THERE WOULD BE WEEKS OF NIGHTMARES. LIGHTS ON, UNDERSIDES OF BEDS AND CLOSETS REPEATEDLY CHECKED AND RECHECKED. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A MAN WHO ALSO BROUGHT ME TO *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* (1978), *BLADE RUNNER* (1982), AND JOHN CARPENTER'S *THE THING* (1982) ON RELEASE. APPARENTLY, OOZING, AGONIZED BODY TRANSFORMATION AND WRITHING VISCERA LOOMED LARGE IN MY CHILDHOOD. WHY DID MY FATHER THINK AN R-RATED FILM ADVERTISED WITH THE PHRASE, "IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM," MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR ME? MAYBE MY OBSESSION WITH THE FIRST STAR WARS MOVIE LED HIM TO FIGURE ANY SPACE-THEMED FILM WAS UP MY ALLEY.

*ALIEN* REMAINS FOR ME THE ANTI-*STAR WARS* (*A NEW HOPE*). ITS VISION OF HUMANS IN DEEP SPACE IS BLEAK, TETHERED TO THE FILTHY BOTTOM LINE OF CORPORATE CAPITALISM, RESOURCE EXTRACTION, AND LABOR. SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION IS SINISTER, SECRETIVE, AND REVEALED TO BE RUTHLESS. ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER WORLDS AND OTHER BEINGS ARE NEITHER FAMILIAR NOR AWE-INSPIRING. THEY SEETHE WITH MENACE. THEIR SETTINGS ARE A COSMIC SEPULCHER. *ALIEN* IS (AMONG OTHER THINGS) A HAUNTED HOUSE AND SERIAL KILLER NOIR SET IN SPACE. THE FILM'S SUSPENSE GRIPPED ME TENSELY AND SHOOK MY BODY IN FRIGHT. IT ALSO UNLOCKED THINGS INSIDE OF ME AND ILLUMINATED CONNECTIONS. A CERTAIN TONE AND SYMBOLISM RESEMBLED MOMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH; SOUNDSCAPES FROM MY FATHER'S PRE-*WALL* PINK FLOYD 8-TRACK TAPES THAT THRILLED ME AND SENT ME TRAVELING AS I LAY IN THE BACKSEAT LOOKING OUT THROUGH THE REAR WINDOW AT THE NIGHT SKY. SOMEHOW, THIS TERRIFYING, GROTESQUE FILM REACHED ACROSS AND BRIDGED SOME OF THESE THINGS TO MY VERY YOUNG MIND. THIS WAS AMONG MY EARLIEST EXPOSURE TO CONTENT THAT FELT DANGEROUS, FORBIDDEN, PENETRATIVE. I TRIED TO ALIGN IT WITH THE WORLD I KNEW.

SUBMITTING TO *ALIEN* AT THIS MOMENT COINCIDED WITH TERRIBLE UPHEAVALS IN MY FAMILY'S LIFE. WE HAD LOST OUR HOME (THE FIRST OF TWO SUCH INCIDENTS) AND MOVED IN WITH MY FATHER'S PARENTS. MY MOTHER'S MENTAL ILLNESS WAS AN OMNIPRESENT HUM AND I WAS CLOSEST TO HER. AS A CHILD, I SPENT A LOT OF TIME LISTENING TO HER VISIONS, HER REVELATIONS, AND REGISTERING WHAT THEY MADE HER FEEL. THE NEW LIVING ARRANGEMENT WAS TENSE. AMONG MY EARLIEST MEMORIES OF EXISTENTIAL FEAR WAS FLEEING THE ANGRY ROAR OF MY INEBRIATED GRANDFATHER, RUNNING FASTER THAN I THOUGHT POSSIBLE, ALERT TO HIS GROWLS AS HE BURST THROUGH THE HOUSE CHASING ME FOR SOMETHING I CANNOT REMEMBER, SQUEEZING MYSELF UNDER A BED, QUIETING MY BREATHING AND CLOSING MY EYES. I FELT LIKE RIPLEY OR DALLAS RUNNING FROM THE XENOMORPH, LYING IN WAIT, LISTENING SHARPLY

FOR IT TO RETREAT AND TAKE OUT HIS ANGER ON OTHER PREY.

EARLY SENSATIONS AND IMAGES, ALIGNED EXPERIENCES, AND COINCIDENTAL ENCOUNTERS SHAPE US AND AFFECT WHAT WE WISH TO UNDERSTAND. THEY INSPIRE WHAT CATCHES OUR EYE, SPARKS OUR IMAGINATION, BECKONS US TO CONFRONT, QUESTION AND SPEAK TO, AND LEARN FROM. QUESTION AND SPEAK TO, AND LEARN FROM. THESE ARE CRITICAL QUESTIONS OF BIOGRAPHY THAT ART HISTORIANS, CRITICS, AND CURATORS SHOULD REGULARLY DISCUSS. IT DRIVES US TO SEEK CERTAIN IMAGES AND IDEAS, FORMING THE TASTE, BIASES, PLEASURE, AND REPULSION THAT LEAD US TO WRITE ABOUT, COLLECT, DISPLAY, AND VALUE CERTAIN ART. UNDERSTANDING WHERE THESE IMPULSES COME FROM AND WHAT THEY MEAN IS UNDERVALUED AND NOT OPENLY DISCUSSED IN THE ART WORLD. WE EXPECT, EVEN DEMAND TO KNOW THIS OF ARTISTS BUT NOT THOSE IN THE WHOLE ART ECOSYSTEM. GREATER EMPATHY AND AVENUES TO COMMUNITY MIGHT FORM IF WE SHARED THESE FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES AND PAUSED TO CONTEMPLATE WHY WE ARE DEVOTED TO SHARING ART WITH THE WORLD.

I DID NOT KNOW IT THEN, BUT I HAD HANS RUEDI GIGER (1940-2014) TO THANK FOR THE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS THAT *ALIEN* PRODUCED AND ALSO THE WAY IT SEEMED TO RELATE TO THE DISPARATE CAUSES OF DISRUPTION AND UNCERTAINTY IN MY DAILY LIFE. FILMS ARE COLLABORATIVE, AN ENSEMBLE AFFAIR, AND ALL OF THE ELEMENTS COALESCE PERFECTLY TO MY EYE IN *ALIEN*. BUT DIRECTOR RIDLEY SCOTT ASSERTED BOLDLY THAT GIGER'S IMAGINATION MADE THE FILM'S TONE, TEXTURE, AND AESTHETIC COME ALIVE. IF SCOTT HAD NOT ENCOUNTERED THE INCONGRUOUSLY ALLURING AND HORRIFYING PAINTINGS *NECRONOM IV* AND *NECRONOM V* (BOTH 1976) ALONG WITH OTHER BIO-MECHANICAL IMAGERY IN THE BOOK *GIGER'S NECRONOMICON* (1977), THERE WOULD BE NO *ALIEN* - NOT THE WAY IT SEEPED INTO ME OR THE WIDER CULTURE.

HOW COMFORTING AND SENSIBLE IT IS TO KNOW THAT DRAWING WAS HOW A YOUNG GIGER CHanneled HIS FEARS AND NIGHTMARES INTO SOMETHING HE COULD CONTROL AND SHAPE INTO A FORM IN ORDER TO GET THEM OUT OF HIS BODY. ONCE ON PAPER OR IN A SCULPTED SHAPE, THEY COULD LAY SEPARATE FROM HIM SO HE COULD STAND BACK AND SEE THAT IT WAS A THING OUTSIDE HIMSELF. THE CLARITY HELPED EXORCISE BUT ALSO LED HIM BACK TO UNDERSTANDING THESE DEMONS AS PART OF HIM - HE GENERATED THEM FROM THE MIX OF EMOTIONS AND EVENTS HE LIVED. HE GAVE FORM TO THE ANXIETY HE TASTED IN HIS HOUSE DURING WORLD WAR II.

THIS RELATES TO CURATORIAL WORK AND ART HISTORICAL WRITING. THROUGH IMAGINATIVE INTERPRETATION, THE BEST CURATORS AND ART WRITERS PUT THEMSELVES OUT THERE WITH VULNERABILITY AND CREATIVITY. THIS WORK HAS TO BE ANOTHER FORM OF ART, DRIVEN BY INSTINCT, CHANNELING, LEAPS OF FAITH, AND A COMMITMENT TO LIVED EXPERIENCE. AND IT HAS TO FOREGROUND CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION, A CLARITY OF VISION THAT HONORS ONE'S SUBJECT. I CANNOT CREDIT GIGER AND *ALIEN* FOR THE PATH THAT LED ME TO ART HISTORY AND CURATORIAL WORK - THAT WAS ONE FULL OF MEANDERINGS AND ENCOUNTERS TOO VARIED TO RECOUNT HERE. BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT SEEING IT SO YOUNG PREPARED ME TO LOOK DEEPLY AT IMAGERY THAT

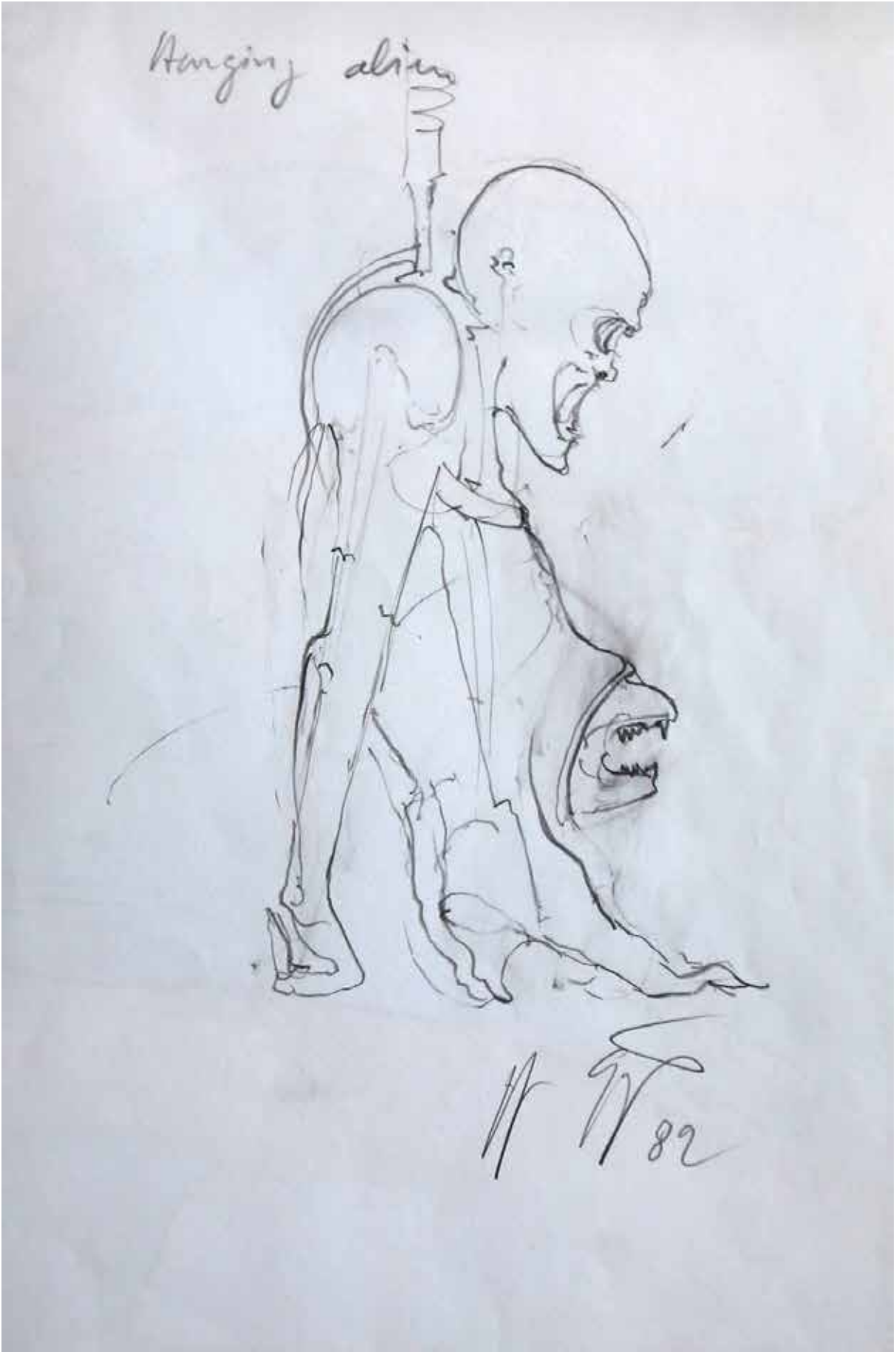
OTHERS TURNED AWAY FROM OR FOUND TOO DIFFICULT: IVAN ALBRIGHT, HYMAN BLOOM, GRISLY MARTYRIAL IMAGES IN 15TH AND 16TH CENTURY FLEMISH AND GERMAN PAINTING, SALVADOR DALÍ, OTTO DIX, MAX ERNST, LEONORE FINI, GREGORY GILLESPIE, LEON GOLUB, DOROTHEA TANNING, TRANCE DRAWINGS, AND MANY OTHER KINDS OF IMAGERY.

I WAS A KID AFTER ALL AND THE ONE *ALIEN* MERCHANDISE TIE-IN THAT I HAD WAS A PALE GREEN EGG, DECORATED WITH WISPY SWIRLS SUGGESTING THE EERIE NURSERY WHICH JOHN HURT'S CHARACTER EXPLORED BEFORE HE WAS ATTACKED BY THE FACEHUGGER/EGG LAYER. INSIDE WERE SEVENTY-FIVE PUZZLE PIECES, WHICH, WHEN PUT TOGETHER, FORMED A FULL-LENGTH IMAGE OF THE CREATURE FROM THE FILM. ONE MORNING I WOKE UP TO MY YOUNGER BROTHER IN TEARS, WAILING IN FEAR, POISED OVER THE COMPLETED PUZZLE. THAT ALONE WAS ENOUGH TO SCARE HIM FROM SLEEP. MY MOM MADE ME TAKE IT APART AND PUT IT BACK IN THE EGG.

BUT ONCE OUT AND RUNNING AMOK IN YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS, CAN IT REALLY BE PUT BACK IN THE EGG? NO WAY. HOW MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE GRAVITATED TO IN CULTURE WAS APPEALING, OR REPLICATED THAT THRILL, OF THE SENSATIONS IN THAT HYPERAESTHETIC SPACE NOIR? LIKE THE FACEHUGGER GIGER'S IMAGERY SNAKED DOWN INTO MY BODY AND GREW, PERHAPS IT BURST OUT IN THE FORM OF MY OWN CURATORIAL WORK AND THE IDEAS AND ARTISTS I CHAMPION AND TRY TO RELEASE INTO THE WORLD. THESE FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES ARE CRITICAL AND WE DO NOT PAUSE AND CONSIDER THE EARLY IMAGES THAT LEAD US TO MOVE TOWARD IDEAS AND IMAGES. LIKE ARTISTS, WE TOO HAVE THESE SPECTERS THAT HAUNT US, THESE GLOWING ORBS OF INSPIRATION THAT CONTINUE TO BURN DEEP WITHIN US AND LEAD US TO TELL YOU ABOUT WHAT THEY ILLUMINATE.



H.R. Giger, *Anima Mia*, signed museum poster (1980)



H.R. Giger, *Hanging Alien* (1982)

Alien surround spider



H.R. Giger 88

for my friend Vincent  
2.11.2008

41



H.R. Giger, *Future-Kill* (1986)

# THE IMPERMANENCE OF BEING

BY CHRISTOPHER IAN LUTZ

BONE IS STRUCTURE. IT FILLS SPACE WITHIN TIME. OUR IDENTITY ASSUMES A SENSE OF PERMANENCY BASED ON THE CONSTANCY OF OUR SKELETAL FRAMEWORK. WE LEAN AGAINST PERMANENCY AS A CRUTCH FOR IDENTITY. HOWEVER, BONE IS NOT EVERLASTING. BONE IS A LIVING TISSUE THAT GROWS, REGENERATES, AND DETERIORATES. THE CIRCULATION OF BLOOD WITHIN BONE TISSUE TRANSFORMS THE SKELETON OVER A LIFETIME. ONCE THE BODY DIES AND BLOOD CIRCULATION CEASES, THE BONES GRADUALLY WEAKEN AND BECOME BRITTLE, EVEN AFTER DEATH. WE VIEW NATURE AND THE UNIVERSE AS PERMANENT STRUCTURES OF EXISTENCE. BUT ALL FORMS THAT CIRCULATE IN SPACE AND TIME DEGENERATE. IT IS THE CIRCULATION OF TIME THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EXISTENCE. TOGETHER, CIRCULATION AND FORM, TIME AND SPACE, COMPOSE IDENTITY.

FORM AND FUNCTION ARE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF EXISTENCE, AND TO QUESTION WHETHER FORM PRECEDES FUNCTION IS TO INQUIRE INTO THE NATURE OF IDENTITY. THE INQUIRY IS NOT MERELY CONCERNED WITH AESTHETICS BUT IS A METAPHYSICAL ANALYSIS OF REALITY. THE NOTION OF AN OBJECTIVE REALITY ASSUMES A UNIVERSAL TRUTH BEYOND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, A GRAND NARRATIVE OF REALITY IS INHERENTLY FLAWED BY BEING CRAFTED FROM THE AUTHOR'S LIMITED AND SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION AND INTELLIGENCE. INDIVIDUALS, LIMITED IN THEIR COGNITIVE PROCESSES, CANNOT HELP BUT SEARCH FOR TRUTH THROUGH THEIR SUBJECTIVITY. FORTUNATELY, REALITY IS NOT A PREREQUISITE FOR UNDERSTANDING TRUTH. BY REJECTING THE UNIVERSAL, AN INDIVIDUAL CAN INVESTIGATE IDENTITY, SPACE, AND TIME THROUGH THE VIRTUAL.

THE ARTWORKS OF THIS EXHIBITION REJECT REALISM THROUGH THEIR FANTASTIC DEPICTIONS OF FORM AND NARRATIVE. YET, THEY ARE HYPERREAL IN THAT THEY PORTRAY FAMILIAR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS. BUT THESE REPRESENTATIONS ARE WITHOUT A REFERENT. THESE WORKS ARE ANATOMICAL STUDIES OF FORMS AND MEMORIES THAT DO NOT EXIST. THE FIGURES AND NARRATIVES ARE FAMILIAR BECAUSE THEY REFERENCE EMOTIONAL AND COGNITIVE EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE AUDIENCE. THE ARTISTS ARE NOT PURSUING THE RENDITION OF FORM OR FACTUAL HISTORY BUT THE MEANING OF FORM. IT IS NOT THE BONE THAT IS INTRIGUING, BUT THE IDEAS OF BALANCE, MOVEMENT, HARMONY, AND FUNCTION THAT ARE INHERENT IN THE SKELETAL AND CIRCULATORY SYSTEMS. THESE SAME IDEAS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE CREATIVE PROCESS BETWEEN AN ARTIST AND THEIR CREATION. THESE SAME IDEAS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND NATURE. THESE ARTWORKS DO NOT REJECT REALISM — THEY ARE REAL.

H.R. GIGER'S EXOSKELETAL FIGURES RESEMBLE MACHINES MORE THAN THEY DO LIVING CREATURES. THEIR RIGID BIOMECHANICAL ENGINEERING IS A PAINFUL HARMONY THAT CONTRASTS THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH THEY ARE DISPLAYED. IN CONTRAST, VINCENT CASTIGLIA'S MONOCHROMATIC BLOOD PAINTINGS ARE VISCERAL STUDIES OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SELFHOOD AND HUMANITY. IN BOTH GIGER'S AND CASTIGLIA'S WORKS, THE PHYSICAL DEPICTION

OF FORM IS IN TANDEM WITH THE FUNCTION OF CIRCULATION. THE VERY LINES OF GIGER'S FIGURES LEAD THE VIEWER'S EYES IN CIRCULAR PATHS. THIS CIRCULATION PLACES THE VIEWER WITHIN THE BODY OF THE FIGURE. FURTHERMORE, THE EXPOSITION OF THE SKELETAL SYSTEM REVEALS THE MECHANICS OF THE FIGURE'S RESPIRATORY SYSTEM. BY THIS EXTERNALIZATION, THE INNER WORLD OF GIGER IS PROJECTED INTO REAL SPACE. LIKEWISE, MANY FIGURES IN CASTIGLIA'S PAINTINGS REVEAL THE ORGANIC FOUNDATIONS BENEATH THE SKIN. AND SIMILARLY, CASTIGLIA PROJECTS THE INTERNAL INTO AN EXTERNAL PHYSICAL SPACE BY LITERALLY TRANSFERRING HIS BLOOD ONTO THE CANVAS. GIGER AND CASTIGLIA'S ARTWORKS RESOLVE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE AND OBJECTIVE REALITY BY FUNCTIONING AS BOTH THE QUERENT AND THE REVELATION. THE WORKS ALSO BECOME OBJECTIVE REALITIES THAT PROVIDE SUBJECTIVE REVELATIONS FOR THE VIEWER.

THIS IS AN EXHIBITION OF BLOOD AND BONE. YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK BENEATH YOUR FLESH TO UNDERSTAND THE GREATER MYSTERIES OF TIME, SPACE, AND IDENTITY. YOU ONLY HAVE TO STOP LEANING ON OBJECTIVE REALITY FOR YOUR SENSE OF SELF TO START TREMBLING. THE TRUTH IS NOT PERMANENT. TRUTH CIRCULATES THROUGH THE LIGHT AND THE DARK, THROUGH THE PHYSICAL AND THE MENTAL, EVER BEING PURSUED BY VISIONS OF SELF-REFLECTION AND INQUIRY.

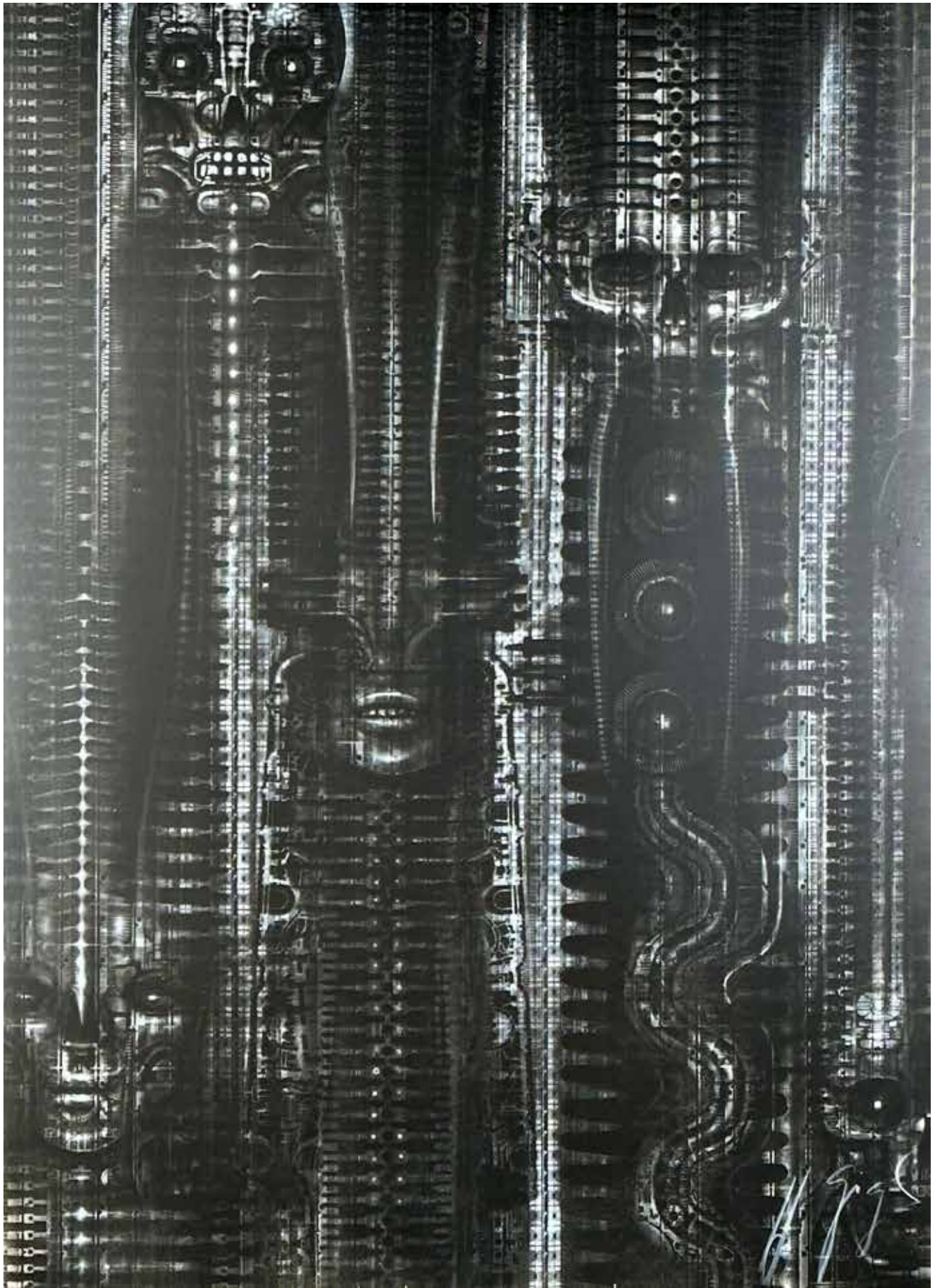


H.R. Giger, *ELP VII* (1986)

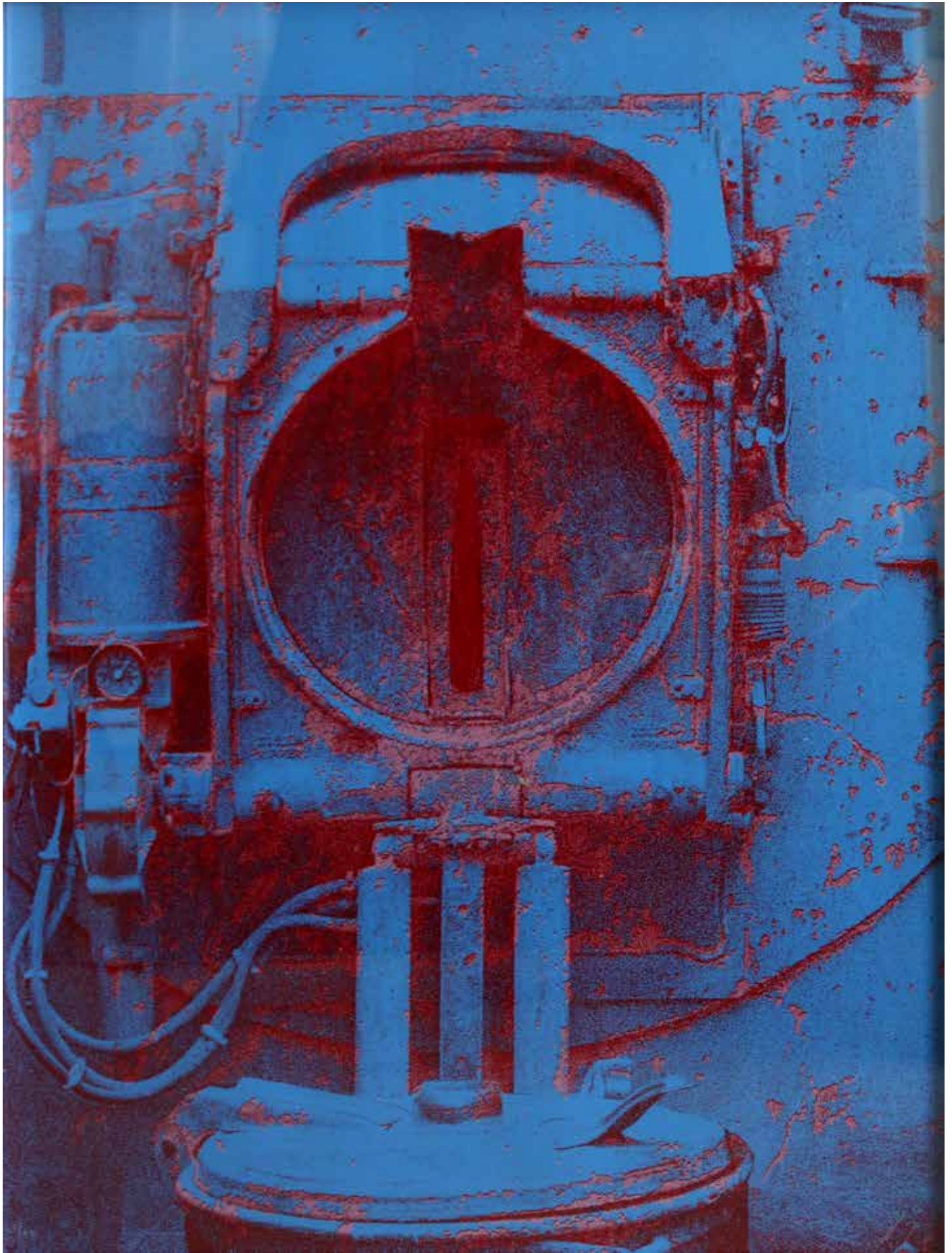




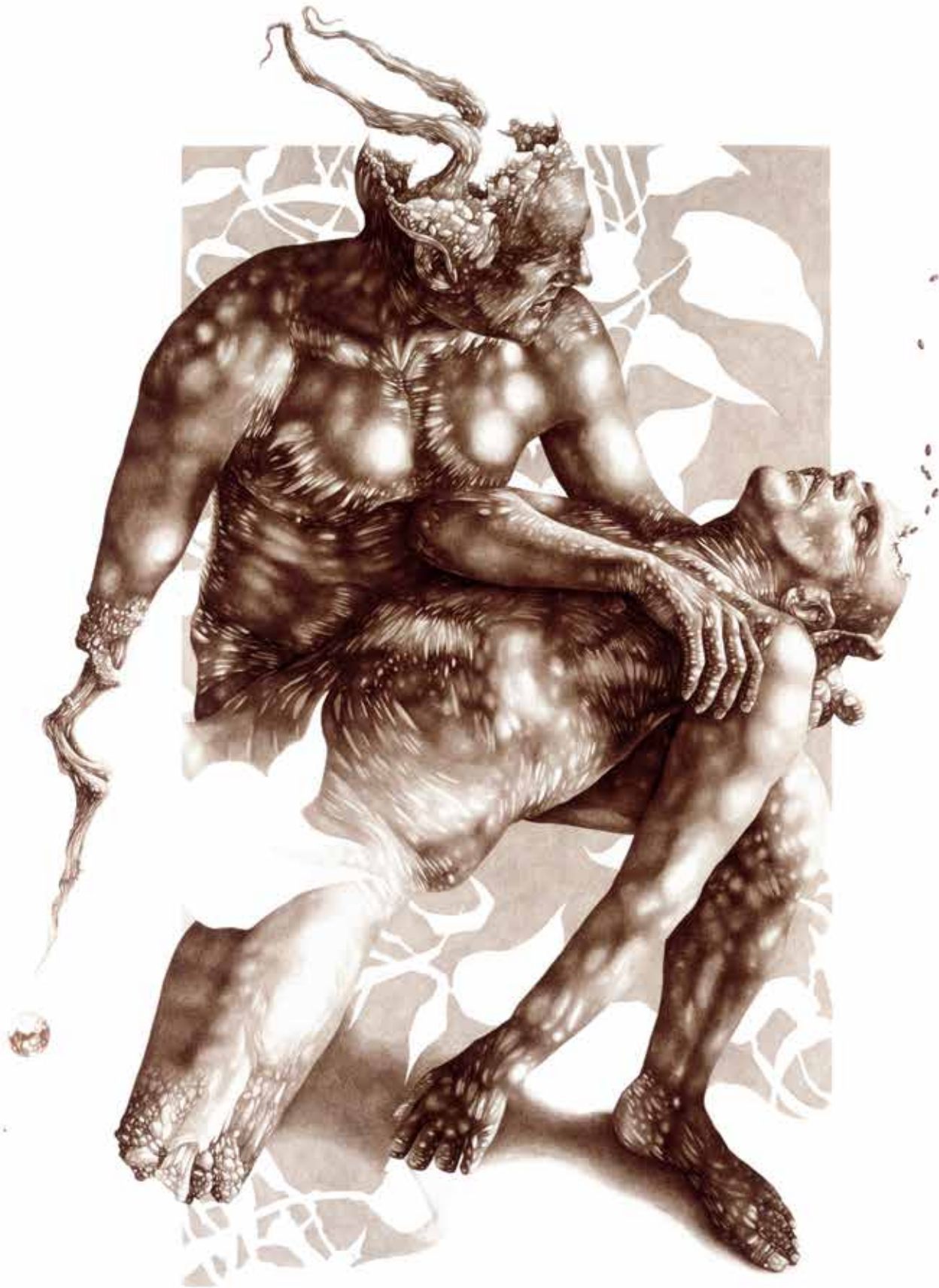
H.R. Giger, *Biomechanoid* (2010)



H.R. Giger, *NYC Series III* (1980)



H.R. Giger, *Passage 71* (1971)



Vincent Castiglia, *The Sleep* (2006)

# GLORIFIED BODIES AND THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN & HELL

BY MICHAEL BONESTEEL

“MESSIAH, OR SATAN, OR TEMPTER, WAS FORMERLY THOUGHT TO BE ONE OF THE ANTEDILUVIANS WHO ARE OUR ENERGIES.”

—WILLIAM BLAKE, *THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL* (1793)

WHEN VINCENT CASTIGLIA WAS ASKED TO NAME HIS BEST WORKS OF ART, HE OFFERED TWO POSSIBILITIES: *THE SLEEP* AND *FEEDING* (*EYES IN MAGAZINE*, INTERVIEW, 2012). IN *THE SLEEP*, AN UNCONSCIOUS MAN IS CRADLED IN THE ARMS OF A DAEMONIC OR SUPERNATURAL BEING. IN *FEEDING*, A WOMAN IN A WHEELCHAIR, SEEMINGLY ON THE EDGE OF DEATH, WITH THREE LIMBS AND PART OF HER TORSO EATEN AWAY, BREASTFEEDS A CHILD. BOTH WORKS ARE FRAUGHT WITH TENSION AND CONTAIN SYMBOLIC FIGURES ENGAGED IN DRAMATIC NARRATIVES. LIKE ALMOST ALL THE PEOPLE CASTIGLIA DEPICTS, THEY APPEAR TO BE IN THE PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATING OR DECOMPOSING.

IN AN EMAIL INTERVIEW, I ASKED CASTIGLIA TO ELABORATE: “*THE SLEEP* IS DEEPLY PERSONAL. THESE FIGURES REPRESENT THE ARCHETYPES OF MORTAL MAN ASLEEP (AND MAIMED, UNBEKNOWNST TO EVEN HIMSELF, IN HIS ‘SLUMBER’), AND THE HORNED FIGURE REPRESENTING THE ‘BLIND FORCE’ OF TYPHON, THE ‘DEVIL’ (REPRESENTED HERE AS AN OMINOUS BUT SOMEWHAT NEUTRAL CHARACTER). IT IS A SOCIO-SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD AND THE STATE OF MAN—ASLEEP IN THE ARMS OF A FORCE GREATER THAN HIMSELF BUT IN ESSENCE THAT FORCE IS HIS TRUE NATURE. I’M ITS POWER STRUCTURE, BEHIND ‘THE IRON CURTAIN’ (CULTURALLY, AND WITH THE AID OF ONLY FIVE SENSES OUT OF A FIELD FREQUENCY MAKING MOST OCCURRING PHENOMENA IMPOSSIBLE FOR HUMANS TO PERCEIVE, AND UNKNOWN TO IT, THE CONNOTATION HERE BEING, ‘WAKE UP!’). THE SEEDS SOAR UPWARD AND OUT OF THE SLEEPING MORTAL’S HEAD. THEY ARE FALLING UPWARD BECAUSE THE ‘PROPOSITION IS REVERSED’—IT’S UPSIDE DOWN—WHAT WE THINK IS REALITY MAY BE A 180-DEGREE DIFFERENCE FROM ITS ULTIMATE PRIMORDIAL ESSENCE. THAT’S WHAT INSPIRED THIS PIECE.”

THAT’S QUITE AN INSPIRATION. IF I UNDERSTAND HIM, CASTIGLIA HAS CREATED AN ALLEGORY IN WHICH HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IS BEING CARED FOR NOT BY A GUARDIAN ANGEL, AS WE MIGHT EXPECT IN A MORE CONVENTIONAL SCENARIO, BUT RATHER BY THE MALEVOLENT PRESENCE OF TYPHON, ONE OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY’S MOST MONSTROUS GODS AND THE EQUIVALENT FOR CHRISTIANITY’S DEVIL. YET CASTIGLIA DOES NOT CONSIDER TYPHON, OR THE DEVIL, A PURELY EVIL FORCE. AS HE NOTES, WHAT WE THINK IS REALITY MAY NOT BE. GOOD AND EVIL ARE HUMAN PERCEPTIONS AND ARE OFTEN RELATIVE. LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE, SUCH DUALITIES ARE LIKELY RESOLVED BY A DIALECTIC BEYOND OUR LIMITED SCOPE, AND FOR THAT REASON, CASTIGLIA’S PURVIEW IS PROBABLY NIETZSCHEAN—BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL—PERHAPS EVEN DYSTHEISTIC. HIS TYPHON FIGURE MAY BE CLOSER TO DEMIURGE THAN THE DEVIL.

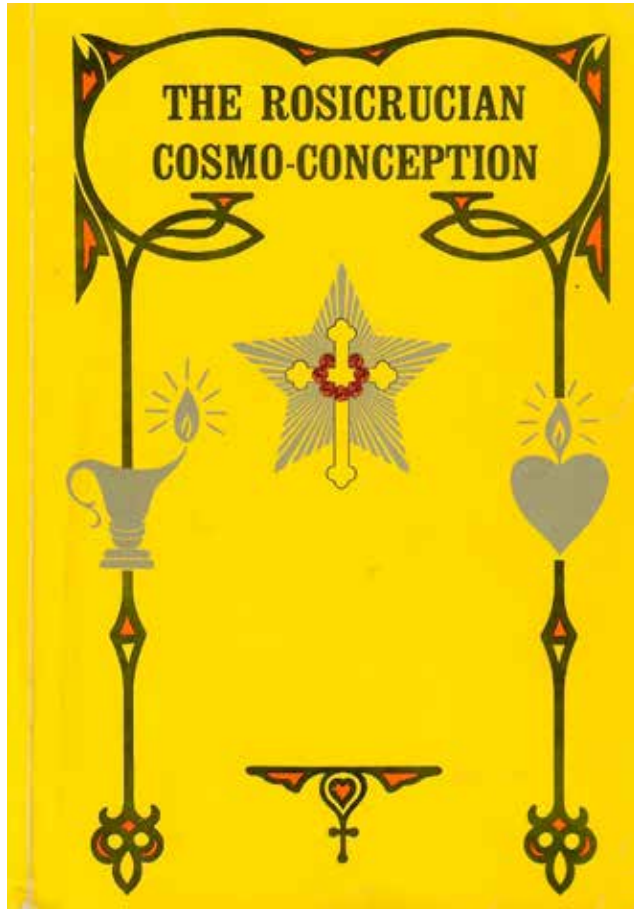
CASTIGLIA IS AN ARDENT STUDENT OF METAPHYSICAL SPECULATION AND HAS AN EXTENSIVE LIBRARY DEVOTED TO VARIOUS MYSTICAL, ARCANES, RELIGIOUS, SCIENTIFIC, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND LORE. THERE ARE ALCHEMICAL CYPHERS AND ROMAN NUMERALS IN VINCENT'S PAINTINGS THAT BETRAY AN INTEREST IN IMBUING THEM WITH DEEPER MEANINGS. "EACH PIECE IS A LITTLE MYSTERY WRAPPED UP IN THIS [GREATER] MYSTERY WE KNOW AS BIOLOGICAL, SENTIENT LIFE," HE EXPLAINED. "THIS HAS BEEN MY OWN VERSION OF ALCHEMY AS I SEE IT, TRANSMUTING MY LIFE'S ESSENCE, BIOLOGICALLY AND VISUALLY INTO VIRTUAL 'WINDOWS TO THE SOUL,' TRANSPARENTLY SHARING EXPERIENTIAL, EMOTIVE, AS WELL AS UNDERLYING METAPHYSICAL THREADS OF COMMONALITY THAT RUN THROUGH THE BODY OF WORK."

HIS FAVORITE WRITER IS MAX HEINDEL (1865-1919), ORIGINALLY A MEMBER, THEN A VICE PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, AND LATER THE FOUNDER OF THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP IN 1909. IN HIS BOOK, *THE ROSICRUCIAN COSMO-CONCEPTION* (1909), HEINDEL IDENTIFIES A GROUP OF ANGELS CALLED THE LUCIFER SPIRITS WHO WERE ANGELIC "STRAGGLERS," THAT IS, DEMI-GODS WHO HAD NOT ADVANCED AS FAR AS THE MORE EVOLVED ANGELS, BUT WHO WERE STILL FAR AHEAD OF THE MORE PRIMITIVE SOULS DESTINED TO BECOME HUMAN BEINGS. ACCORDING TO THE ROSICRUCIAN VERSION OF THE FALL, IT WAS A LUCIFER SPIRIT WHO OPENED THE EYES OF A FEMALE PROTO-HUMAN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PROCREATING LIFE ON HER OWN IN CONCERT WITH A MALE PROTO-HUMAN. THUS, FOR HUMANITY, THE EVOLUTIONARY CYCLE OF BIRTH, DEATH, AND REBIRTH (REINCARNATION) BEGAN AND LUCIFER'S PART IN THAT PROCESS WAS PIVOTAL. THE LUCIFER SPIRIT IN THIS MYTHOLOGY IS NOT THE DEVIL OR SATAN, AS PORTRAYED IN TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY, BUT RATHER, AS CASTIGLIA DESCRIBED HIM, A "SOMEWHAT NEUTRAL CHARACTER" WHO NEVERTHELESS PLAYED AND MAY CONTINUE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OPENING THE EYES OF HUMANKIND TO THE MYSTERIES THAT LIE BEYOND THE VEIL.

GOING BACK TO THE FIRST-CENTURY MYSTICAL SECT OF CHRISTIAN Gnostics, ONE DISCOVERS A VERY SIMILAR POINT OF VIEW IN THE "TESTIMONY OF TRUTH" DOCUMENT AMONG THE NAG HAMMADI PAPERS. HERE, THE GARDEN OF EDEN STORY IS TOLD THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SERPENT, THE SYMBOL OF DIVINE WISDOM, AND IT IS THE JEALOUS BULLY JEHOVAH WHO BANISHES ADAM AND EVE FOR WANTING TO BETTER THEMSELVES. IN FACT, THERE ARE VERY FEW TRULY DEMONIC BEINGS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT; IT WAS THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS WHO LATER EQUATED THE SERPENT WITH THE DRAGON, EVIL, AND SATAN. SINCE THEN, THE DEVIL HAS ASSUMED MANY FORMS, FROM MEPHISTOPHELES IN THE FAUST LEGEND TO BRAM STOKER'S COUNT DRACULA IN MODERN TIMES (IN ROMANIAN, "DRACULA" MEANS "SON OF DRACUL," WHICH TRANSLATES LITERALLY AS "SON OF THE DRAGON," OR SON OF THE DEVIL).

"THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE! THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE!"  
—BRAM STOKER, *DRACULA* (1897)

"TO DIE, TO BE REALLY DEAD, THAT MUST BE GLORIOUS!"  
—GARRETT FORT, SCREENPLAY FOR TOD BROWNING'S *DRACULA* (1931)



Max Heindel, *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (1909);  
Giger's *Necronomicon* (1977).



Vincent Castiglia, *Feeding* (2005)



OTHER ARTISTS HAVE INCORPORATED BODILY FLUIDS IN THEIR WORK, BUT TO MY KNOWLEDGE, CASTIGLIA IS THE ONLY ARTIST WHO MAKES PAINTINGS ENTIRELY FROM HIS OWN BLOOD AS THE SOLE MEDIUM. FAR FROM BEING A GIMMICK, THE USE OF BLOOD IS A CRUCIAL AGENT IN HIS EXPRESSION.

“I USE BLOOD, MY OWN BLOOD, AND THERE’S THIS QUICKENING THAT OCCURS FOR EACH OF THESE IMAGES, IT’S ALMOST LIKE THIS RITE OF PASSAGE, THE SPILLING OF BLOOD, AND THERE’S THIS PAIN INVOLVED, AND SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL IS FORGED. IT’S A JOURNAL, IT’S GOT ITS OWN LIFE FORCE, ITS OWN EMBODIMENT. THE DARKER IMAGERY, THE CONTEXT ISN’T MEANT TO BE DARK, IT’S ACTUALLY MEANT TO BE BEAUTIFUL, THESE ARE GLORIFIED BODIES. BECAUSE THEY ARE EITHER DEAD OR MEETING THEIR END AT THE TIME, THE WAY THESE THINGS ARE DRAWN, PAINTED, THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE MOST ECSTATIC CLIMAX TO WHICH LIFE IS BUILDING. THIS IS THE MOMENT OF DEATH WHEN WE CAN LEAVE THIS FLESH BEHIND.” (YRB: LIFESTYLE, ART, MUSIC, FASHION #55, SEPT/OCT 2005, P. 99)

THIS COMES PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO ARTIST IVAN ALBRIGHT’S TECHNICAL APPROACH OF LAVISHING HYPER-REALISTIC ATTENTION TO HIS COMPOSITIONS IN THE APPARENT HOPE THAT ONCE EVERY LAST DETAIL HAS BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR, A GREATER REALITY WILL EMERGE. “THE BODY IS OUR TOMB,” ALBRIGHT WROTE IN THE 1964 CATALOGUE FOR HIS CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE RETROSPECTIVE. “SHAKE THE DUST FROM OUR SOUL AND MAYBE THERE LIES THE ANSWER FOR WITHOUT THIS PLANETARY BODY, WITHOUT EYES THE LIGHT WOULD NOT HURT, WITHOUT FLESH THE PAIN WOULD NOT HURT, WITHOUT LEGS OUR MOTION MIGHT ACCELERATE, WITHOUT ENDLESS RESTRICTIONS OUR FREEDOM GREATER, OUR SLAVERY LESS, WITHOUT EXAMPLES ALL AROUND US OUR ORIGINALITY MIGHT BE DIFFERENT. WITHOUT A BODY WE MIGHT BE MEN.”

CASTIGLIA’S OTHER FAVORITE WORK, *FEEDING*, IS SIMILAR IN OUTLOOK TO *THE SLEEP*. HIS PORTRAIT OF A MOTHER AND CHILD REPRESENTS THE WORLD AND ITS OFFSPRING. IT’S NOT A PRETTY PICTURE, AND THE PROGNOSIS IS DIRE, BUT AGAIN THE ARTIST PRESSES US TO LOOK BEYOND THE OBVIOUS. THE BIGGEST INDICATION THAT THIS GRISLY SCENE IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE IS THE FACT THAT IT, LIKE *THE SLEEP*, IS FRAMED AGAINST A RATHER COMFORTING AND DECORATIVE BACKGROUND COMPOSED OF WHITE ABSTRACT SILHOUETTE PATTERNS SUGGESTING FLORA AND FAUNA. FURTHERMORE, THE MOTHER EXHIBITS SOMETHING THAT IS PREVALENT ON THE SURFACES OF MOST OF CASTIGLIA’S FIGURES—A PECULIAR DAPPLING OF REGULAR AND IRREGULAR PATCHES, SHARDS, AND SLIVERS OF LIGHT THAT BEND WITH THE FLEXION OF MUSCLES BENEATH THE SKIN AS IF THEY WERE BEING ILLUMINATED BY SOME SPECTRAL, PRETERNATURAL SPOTLIGHT. IT IS ANALOGOUS TO THE HALOS AND AURAS OF LIGHT EVER-PRESENT IN MEDIEVAL PORTRAITS OF SAINTS.

IF CASTIGLIA EVER CAME CLOSE TO HAVING A MENTOR, IT WOULD BE H.R. GIGER (1940-2014), THE SWISS VISIONARY ARTIST RENOWNED FOR HIS DESIGNS IN RIDLEY SCOTT’S 1979 SCI-FI HORROR FILM *ALIEN*. APTLY, CASTIGLIA WAS THE FIRST AMERICAN ARTIST TO RECEIVE A SOLO EXHIBITION AT THE H.R. GIGER MUSEUM GALLERY IN 2008.

"I'D GROWN UP WITH H.R. GIGER POSTERS ON MY WALL, HIS BOOK [*GIGER'S*] *NECRONOMICON* ALWAYS AROUND," CASTIGLIA EXPLAINED. "BUT THEN TO HAVE MET, KNOWN HIM, AND CALLED HIM A FRIEND WAS BEYOND MY CONCEPTION. EVERYTHING ABOUT GIGER'S WORK WAS AT ONCE ATTRACTIVE AND SPELLBINDING. ITS OTHER WORLDLY NATURE, THE FLAWLESSNESS OF ITS TECHNICAL EXECUTION, THE SUBLIME MATERIAL HE WAS MEDIATING INTO THIS WORLD VIA HIS CONSCIOUSNESS WAS NOTHING LIKE I'D EVER SEEN."

GIGER'S ART HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRAUMA OF BIRTH, ALIENATION IN THE MODERN WORLD, PSYCHIC ESCAPE THROUGH MIND-ALTERING DRUGS, AND THE SHADOW SIDE OF THE SPIRITUAL QUEST. HE BORROWED THE TERM "NECRONOMICON" FROM H.P. LOVECRAFT WHO REFERRED TO IT IN A GOOD NUMBER OF HIS COSMIC HORROR STORIES. LOVECRAFT DESCRIBED IT AS A HEFTY TOME OF FORBIDDEN ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE WRITTEN CIRCA 700 CE BY THE "MAD ARAB" ABDUL ALHAZRED WHO INTIMATED THAT HE COULD SUMMON THE GREAT "OLD ONES" WHO RESIDE IN A PARALLEL DIMENSION—THE GREAT OLD ONES WHO LIVED LONG BEFORE HUMANKIND WAS BORN AND WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE LONG AFTER WE'RE GONE. GIGER FIRST LEARNED ABOUT LOVECRAFT FROM HIS FRIEND SERGIUS GOLOWIN, A WRITER WHO DABBLED IN MYSTICISM AND THE OCCULT, AND WHO GAVE HIM A BOOK OF LOVECRAFT STORIES IN THE LATE 1960S. GIGER EXPLAINED THAT HE ENJOYED READING LOVECRAFT, BUT IT WAS GOLOWIN WHO SUGGESTED THE TITLE "*GIGER'S NECRONOMICON*" (1977) FOR GIGER'S EARLY BODY OF WORK.

IRONICALLY, LOVECRAFT WAS A CONFIRMED ATHEIST AND DERIDER OF ALL THINGS SPIRITUAL AND MEDIUMISTIC (I.E., CHANNELED), BUT WAS NEVERTHELESS FASCINATED BY THEOSOPHY'S POSTULATIONS OF HIGH PREHISTORIC CIVILIZATIONS SUCH AS ATLANTIS AND LEMURIA, AS WELL AS THE VAST GULFS OF TIME THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO THEM.

"THEOSOPHISTS HAVE GUESSED AT THE AWESOME GRANDEUR OF THE COSMIC CYCLE WHEREIN OUR WORLD AND HUMAN RACE FORM TRANSIENT INCIDENTS. THEY HAVE HINTED AT STRANGE SURVIVALS IN TERMS WHICH WOULD FREEZE THE BLOOD IF NOT MASKED BY BLAND OPTIMISM."

—H.P. LOVECRAFT, "THE CALL OF CTHULHU" (1926)

IN OTHER WRITINGS, LOVECRAFT MENTIONED *THE BOOK OF DZYZAN*, THE BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR, AND THE LORDS OF VENUS, ALL OF WHICH WERE WRITTEN ABOUT BY THEOSOPHY'S COFOUNDER, HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY, IN *ISIS UNVEILED* (1877) AND *THE SECRET DOCTRINE* (1888-1889). THE LORDS OF VENUS IS ALSO DISCUSSED IN *THE ROSICRUCIAN COSMO-CONCEPTION* BY FORMER THEOSOPHIST HEINDEL. IN A TELLING WAY, LOVECRAFT AND BLAVATSKY EPITOMIZE HOW TERMS SUCH AS "SUPERNATURAL" AND "OCCULT" HAVE VALID APPLICATIONS IN BOTH THE WORLD OF GOTHIC HORROR AS WELL AS THE REALM OF ESOTERIC SPIRITUALITY. (FOR A THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE LOVECRAFT/BLAVATSKY CONNECTION, SEE GREYIRISH'S EXCELLENT BLOG [HYPERLINK "HTTPS://DEEPCUTS.BLOG/2020/12/02/THE-BOOK-OF-DZYZAN-1888-BY-HELENA-BLAVATSKY/"](https://DEEPCUTS.BLOG/2020/12/02/THE-BOOK-OF-DZYZAN-1888-BY-HELENA-BLAVATSKY/) [HTTPS://DEEPCUTS.BLOG/2020/12/02/THE-BOOK-OF-DZYZAN-1888-BY-HELENA-BLAVATSKY/](https://DEEPCUTS.BLOG/2020/12/02/THE-BOOK-OF-DZYZAN-1888-BY-HELENA-BLAVATSKY/))



**The CALL of  
 CTHULHU**  
 by H.P.  
 LOVECRAFT

"The ring of worshippers moved in endless  
 bacchanale between the ring of bodies and  
 the ring of fire."

"Of such great powers or beings there may be conceivably a survival . . . a survival of a hugely remote period when . . . consciousness" was manifested, perhaps, in shapes and forms long since withdrawn before the tide of advancing humanity . . . forms of which poetry and legend alone have caught a flying memory and called them gods, monsters, mythical beings of all sorts and kinds. . . ."  
 —Algernon Blackwood.

**1. The Horror in Clay.**

**T**HE most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it

was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

Theosophists have guessed at the awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survivals in terms which would freeze the blood if not masked by a bland optimism.

Found among the papers of the late Francis Wayland Thurston, of Boston.

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H.R. Giger, *The Spell IV* (1977); H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu", *Weird Tales* (1928)

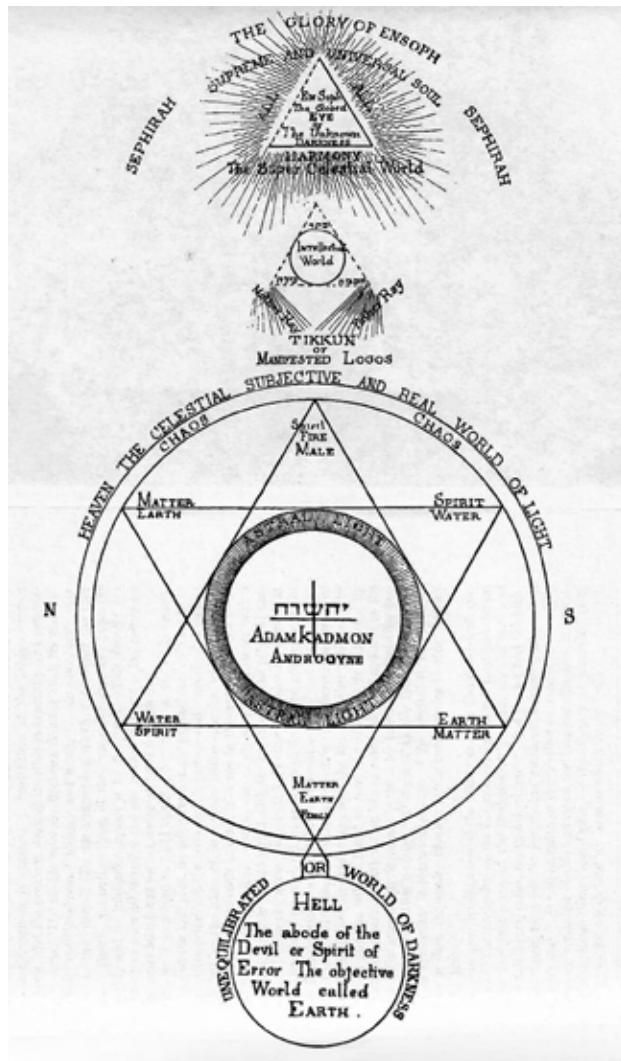
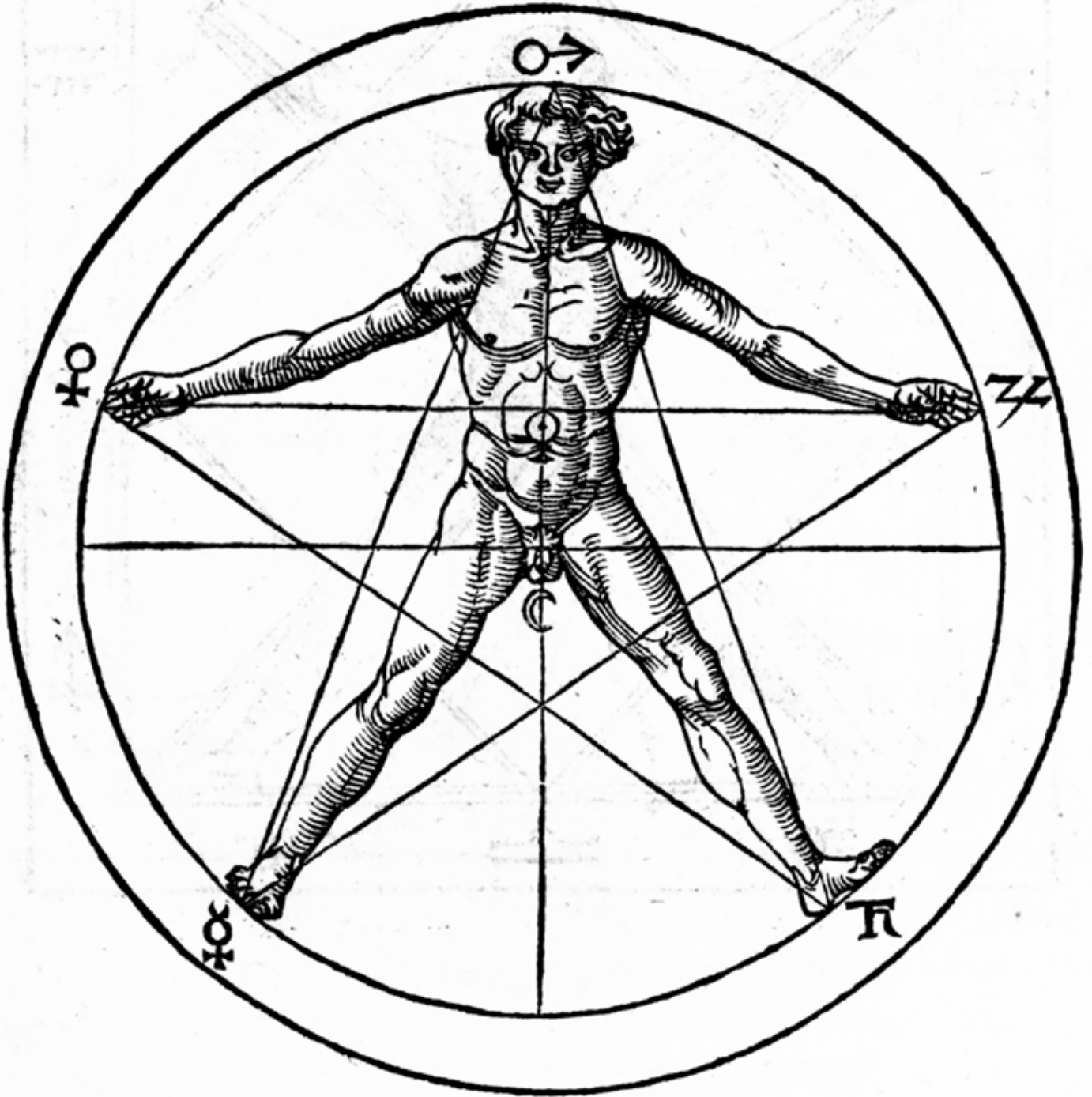


Diagram of the Chadeb-Jewish system from *Isis Unveiled* (1877) by H.P. Blavatsky;  
Baphomet goathead inverted pentagram

THE TEXT OF *GIGER'S NECRONOMICON* DETAILS HIS GROWING UP IN A SMALL SWISS VILLAGE AND HOW JEAN COCTEAU'S FILM *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* AWAKENED HIS ATTRACTION TO DREAMS AND FANTASY. THE COVER ILLUSTRATION FOR *GIGER'S NECRONOMICON* IS A DETAIL OF GIGER'S *THE SPELL IV* (1977) AND DEPICTS THE ENTITY BAPHOMET, WHICH HE LEARNED ABOUT THROUGH HIS READINGS OF ESOTERICISTS ÉLIPHAS LÉVI AND ALEISTER CROWLEY. BAPHOMET IS BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, HALF-HUMAN AND HALF-GOAT, GOOD AS WELL AS EVIL, AND REPRESENTS THE BALANCE AND EQUILIBRIUM OF OPPOSITES. CARMEN GIGER, THE ARTIST'S SECOND WIFE AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE GIGER MUSEUM IN SWITZERLAND REMARKED: "THE LIGHT AND DARK SNAKES HE USED IN HIS *SPELL* PAINTINGS ... WERE A MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCE TO THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE. *SPELL III* (1976) SYMBOLIZES OUR QUEST FOR ENLIGHTENMENT WITH BAPHOMET SYMBOLIZING HUMANITY'S POSITION BETWEEN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM AND THE DIVINE." ([HTTPS://WWW.ANOTHERMANMAG.COM/LIFE-CULTURE/10934/ALIEN-FILM-HR-GIGER-RIDLEY-SCOTT-ANNIVERSARY-ARTIST-CARMEN](https://www.anothermanmag.com/life-culture/10934/alien-film-hr-giger-ridley-scott-anniversary-artist-carmen))

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT *GIGER'S NECRONOMICON* HAS LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH LOVECRAFT'S *NECRONOMICON*. LOVECRAFT AVOIDED DESCRIBING HIS FICTITIOUS GRIMOIRE IN ANY DETAIL SO THAT HIS READERS COULD MORE EFFECTIVELY IMAGINE ITS TERRIFYING ASPECTS. AND WHILE THERE IS A SINISTER AND OTHERWORLDLY DARKNESS TO GIGER'S ART THAT LENDS ITSELF QUITE BEAUTIFULLY TO THE LOVECRAFTIAN MINDSET, THE THING THAT SEPARATES THEM—AND SEPARATES MOST CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF LOVECRAFT'S CONCEPTIONS FROM HIS ORIGINAL MYTHOPOEIA—IS THE INCORPORATION OF SEXUALITY. LOVECRAFT SCRUPULOUSLY CIRCUMVENTED SEX IN HIS STORIES. ANOTHER DIFFERENCE IS GIGER'S USE OF SYMBOLS LIKE BAPHOMET, SACRED GEOMETRY, AND OTHER VESTIGES OF HERMETIC ESOTERIC TRADITIONS. BARRING HIS USE OF A FEW AFOREMENTIONED THEOSOPHICAL IDEAS, LOVECRAFT ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH AN ENTIRELY NEW MYTHOLOGY OF HORROR/FANTASY THAT HAD NEVER BEEN REALIZED BEFORE. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE SUCCEEDED MAGNIFICENTLY.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT GIGER'S ARTWORK IS NOT ASTONISHINGLY ORIGINAL IN ITS OWN RIGHT. THE PROCEDURE HE DEvised HAS BEEN CALLED BIO-MECHANICAL, REFLECTING HIS UNIQUE MORPHING OF FLESH AND MACHINE. CORRESPONDINGLY, CASTIGLIA'S WORK COULD BE CALLED BIO-NECROTIC, REPRESENTING THE HYBRID OF FLESH AND DEATH. THE COMBINATION OF HUMAN AND MACHINE PARTS IN GIGER'S WORK POINT TO CYBORG-LIKE AMALGAMATIONS OF HUMAN AND ROBOTIC ELEMENTS, THEREFORE EVOKING THE WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION; CASTIGLIA'S COMBINATION OF HEALTHY HUMAN BODIES AND DECOMPOSING, WASTED-AWAY PHYSIQUES ELICITS THE REALM OF HORROR. GIGER'S AIRBRUSHED PAINTINGS ARE SLICK AND STYLIZED, WHILE CASTIGLIA'S WATERCOLOR-LIKE WASHES OF BLOOD ARE MORE CLASSICALLY REALISTIC. YET THEY COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER BECAUSE BOTH APPROACHES ARE ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY BECOMING SOMETHING ELSE, SOMETHING ELSE THAT IS STRANGE, MYSTERIOUS, AND FREQUENTLY FRIGHTENING. BUT IN BOTH CASES, THE BEINGS DEPICTED, HOWEVER MACABRE IN APPEARANCE, ARE NOT FEARFUL OR TRAGIC. THEY ARE CONFIDENT, SELF-CONTAINED, TRIUMPHANTLY ASSURED, AND EVEN HEROIC.



Pentagram and human body (Agrippa)

TOO OFTEN, AND WITH A CONCOMITANT AMOUNT OF HYPERBOLIC OBSEQUIOUSNESS, CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS HAVE BEEN COMPARED TO SHAMANS. IN MOST CASES, IT IS AN ABSURD COMPARISON, BUT IN THE 20TH CENTURY, PERHAPS A FEW ARTISTS COULD ALMOST BE SAID TO QUALIFY. MARCEL DUCHAMP WOULD BE ONE, UNQUESTIONABLY. THE LATE DUCHAMP SCHOLAR JACK BURNHAM ALSO MENTIONED INSTALLATION ARTIST DENNIS OPPENHEIM AS A CONTENDER. BURNHAM'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SHAMAN IS APPROPRIATE HERE:

“...THE SHAMAN IS REGARDED WITHIN HIS GROUP AS AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL, IF NOT MAGICAL, PERSON. BUT HE COMES BY THESE POWERS ONLY AFTER LONG PERIODS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SICKNESS FOLLOWED BY STAGES OF SELF-INDUCED CURE. THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A SHAMAN IS A TREACHEROUS ONE. IN SOME RESPECTS, THE SHAMAN'S ORDEAL RUNS PARALLEL TO THE RELIGIOUS-MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF UNDERGOING PSYCHIC 'DEATH' AND 'REBIRTH.' THERE ARE OFTEN REFERENCES TO THE FACT THAT THE SHAMAN BEGAN AS A MAN WITH CERTAIN SEVERE DISABILITIES. THE PROCESS OF COMPENSATING FOR PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES OR MENTAL INSTABILITIES IS NATURAL ENOUGH, BUT THERE IS OFTEN COMPULSIVENESS AND INTENSE OBSESSIVENESS ABOUT THE SHAMAN'S PREINITIATION ACTIVITIES THAT BORDERS ON THE DEMONIC. HE IS DRIVEN BY 'SPIRITS' THAT CARRY HIM DEEPER AND DEEPER TOWARDS THE ORIGINS OF HIS SICKNESS. OFTEN THE SHAMAN HAS NO WISH TO TAKE ON SUCH A CALLING, BUT HE HAS NO CHOICE.”

—JACK BURNHAM, *GREAT WESTERN SALT WORKS: ESSAYS ON THE MEANING OF POST-FORMALIST ART* (1974)

ANOTHER FRONT-RUNNER MIGHT BE THE LATE GERMAN AVANT-GARDE ARTIST JOSEPH BEUYS, WHO EXPRESSED THE FOLLOWING:

“IN REALITY THE SYMBOL OF CHRIST IS NOT THE CROSS BUT THE PENTAGRAM. THE PENTAGRAM, IN THE AREA OF GEOMETRIC FIGURES, IS THE ONLY FIGURE WHICH IS BOTH DYNAMIC AND CAN BE DRAWN WITH A LINE. ALL OTHER GEOMETRIC FIGURES ARE MORE ABSTRACT—FOR EXAMPLE, THE JEWISH SYMBOL, WHICH CONSISTS OF EQUILATERAL TRIANGLES PLACED INSIDE EACH OTHER, IS MORE STATIC, IT IS THE SYMBOL OF DIALECTIC—WHAT IS ABOVE IS ALSO BELOW; OR THE SYMBOL OF THE MICRO-COSM AND MACROCOSM; ALL HAVE DUALISTIC PRINCIPLES AND ARE OVERCOME BY THE PENTAGRAM. THUS, THE PENTAGRAM IS A SYMBOL OF THE DYNAMICS OF MOVEMENT, AND THUS THE SYMBOL OF CHRIST. FOR THIS REASON, ROSE CROSSES HAVE A PENTAGRAM IN THE FORM OF FIVE ROSES AROUND THE BLACK CROSS WHICH INDICATES THE EDGES OF THE PENTAGRAM. PERHAPS A FIGURE LIKE RUDOLPH STEINER, WHEN CONSIDERED IN A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL CONTEXT, CAN ACTUALLY ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ROSICRUCIANISM. I BELIEVE HE SAW HIMSELF AS ROSICRUCIAN.”

—JOSEPH BEUYS, *JOSEPH BEUYS: LIFE AND WORKS*, EDITED BY GÖTZ ADRIANI, WINFRIED KONNERTZ, KARIN THOMAS (1979)

STEINER, WHO FOUNDED HIS OWN ESOTERIC GROUP, WHICH HE DUBBED AN-

THROPOSOPHY, AND ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDER HEINDEL, WERE PREVIOUSLY BOTH HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH THEOSOPHICAL IDEAS BEFORE SPLINTERING OFF IN THEIR OWN DIRECTIONS. BEUYS' DISCUSSION OF THE PENTAGRAM REFERENCES STEINER'S, AND VIA ROSICRUCIANISM, HEINDEL'S ESOTERIC IDEAS AND IS RELEVANT IN THAT THE UPRIGHT PENTAGRAM CONTAINS A HUMAN FIGURE WITH FIVE APPENDAGES (TWO ARMS, TWO LEGS, AND A HEAD) WITHIN A FIVE-POINTED STAR REPRESENTING THE DOMINANCE OF SPIRIT OVER MATTER (HOLINESS); WHEREAS THE INVERTED PENTAGRAM CONTAINS THE HEAD OF A GOAT (TWO HORNS, TWO EARS, AND CHIN WHISKERS—LÉVI'S BAPHOMET SYMBOL)—AND REPRESENTS MATTER OVER SPIRIT (EVIL). LIKE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN FLIPPED OVER REPEATEDLY, THEY RESULT IN SOMETHING LIKE THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE YING-YANG SYMBOL ETERNALLY SHIFTING INTO ONE ANOTHER AND CREATING A DIALECTICAL BLUR, A RESOLUTION THAT TRANSCENDS DUALITIES: THESIS; ANTITHESIS; SYNTHESIS.

CAN CASTIGLIA AND GIGER BE SEEN AS CONTEMPORARY SHAMANS? ONE COULD ARGUE THAT CASTIGLIA'S TRAUMATIC AND ABUSIVE UPBRINGING, FOLLOWED BY YEARS OF DRUG ADDICTION, AND FINALLY HIS FINDING ART AS A MEANS OF REDEMPTION, HAS SURELY PRODUCED THE KIND OF ARCHETYPAL WOUNDED HEALER PREVALENT IN THE LITERATURE OF THE SO-CALLED SHAMANIC ARTIST. GIGER, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD BY ALL ACCOUNTS A PERFECTLY HAPPY CHILDHOOD. SO, WHERE DO GIGER'S DARK VISIONS COME FROM? HE CITES RECURRING NIGHTMARES AS A YOUNG BOY, AN UNSETTLING PROXIMITY TO NAZI GERMANY, AND GROWING UP UNDER THE IMMINENT THREAT OF NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION. TO BE HONEST, NO WESTERN ARTISTS, FROM DUCHAMP AND BEUYS TO CASTIGLIA AND GIGER, CAN CLAIM TO BE SHAMANIC SEERS IN THE SAME TRADITION AS THOSE OF INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES WORLDWIDE. YET, IN THEIR OWN WAY, EACH OF THESE ARTISTS POINTS TOWARD THE NEED TO EXPLORE THE DEEPER MEANING OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL IS AN ALCHEMICAL WEDDING IN WHICH ALL OPPOSITES, INCLUDING EARTHLY PERSONALITY AND THE HIGHER SELF, RESOLVE INTO THE ONENESS OF THE DIVINE ANDROGYNE, A COLLECTIVELY GLORIFIED BEING.

CONFINED BY OUR MATERIALISTIC AND DUALISTIC CULTURE, SUCH A CEREMONY IS FATED TO FAIL.  
BUT WE CAN STILL DREAM.  
WE CAN STILL MAKE ART.

WE CAN STILL SEARCH OUR INNER SELVES FOR SAMADHI ... SEEK THE GRAIL THAT SEEMS TO LIE JUST OUT OF REACH ... GLIMPSED WITHIN OUR HIGHEST IDEALS ... HIDDEN, FLOURISHING, AND ETERNAL BEYOND THE VICISSITUDES OF MORTAL LIFE.



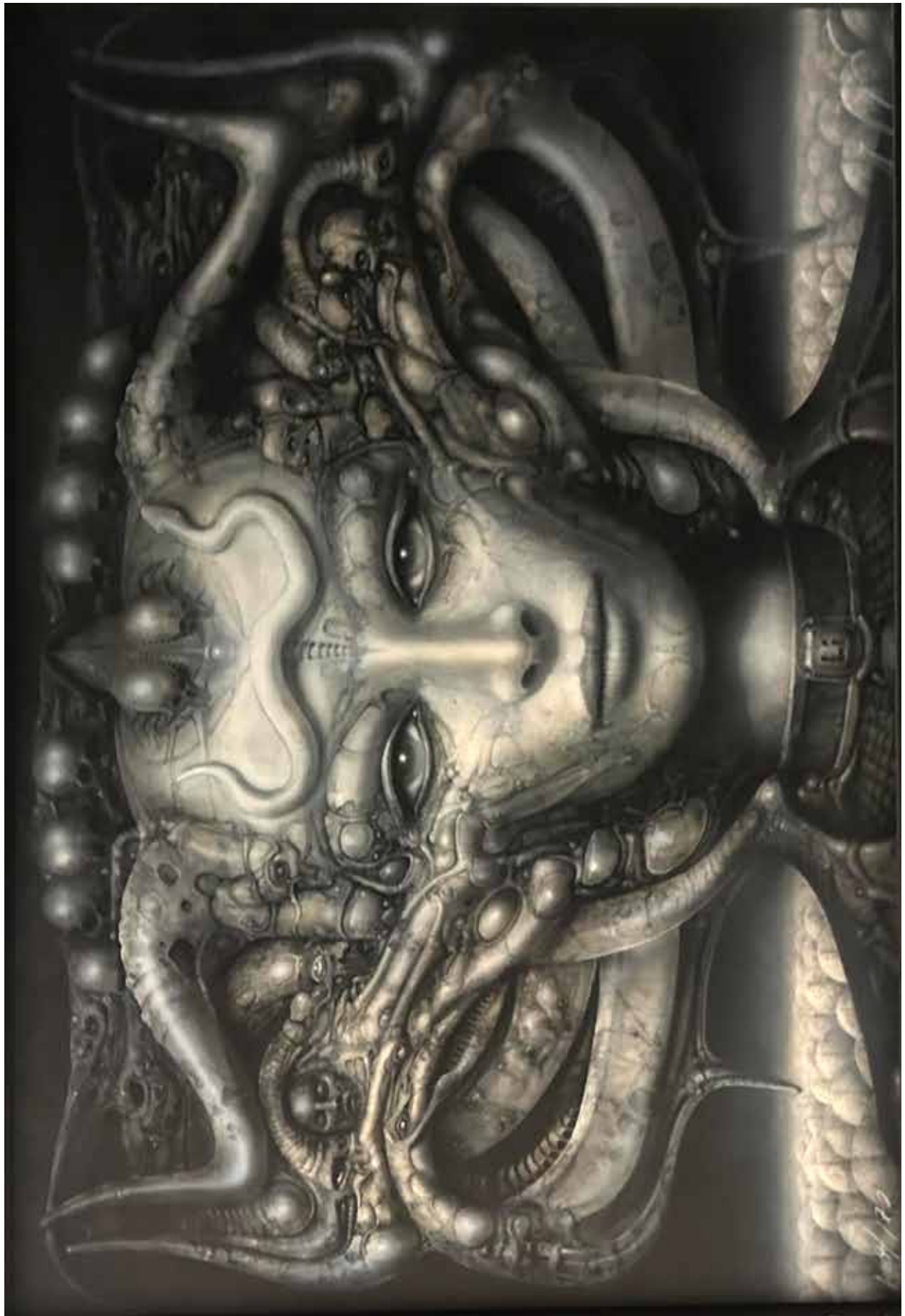
Alien surround spider



H.R. Giger, *Alien Surround Spider* (1982)



H.R. Giger, *Victory V (Satan)* (1983)



H.R. Giger, *Li I* (1973)



Vincent Castiglia, *The Acceptance of Death & Transmigration of Consciousness*, (YEAR)

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Vincent Castiglia, *Ray VII*, (YEAR)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS CATALOG IS PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION “HOMAGE TO H.R. GIGER” AT THE VINCENT CASTIGLIA GALLERY, DECEMBER 1 2022 - FEBRUARY 28 2023.

IN LOVING MEMORY, AND WITH THE GREATEST REVERENCE OF THE MASTER, HRG, HIS INEFFABLE GENIUS PERSONHOOD AND HUMANITY.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO MARCO WITZIG AND THE H.R. GIGER ESTATE / MUSEUM FOR THEIR INVALUABLE SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND ENDORSEMENT. THANK YOU DEAR FRIENDS CARMEN GIGER AND CURATOR STEPHEN ROMANO. THANK YOU TO THE WRITERS ROBERT COZZOLINO, CHRISTOPHER IAN LUTZ, AND MICHAEL BONESTEEL FOR THEIR AMAZING CONTRIBUTIONS. THANK YOU TO ALL THE PATRONS WHO’VE CONTRIBUTED WORKS. THANK YOU JEREMY WAGNER. THANK YOU TO THE COLLECTORS AND FRIENDS WHO’VE SUPPORTED ME THROUGH THE YEARS, SO MANY THANKS AND GRATITUDE TO ALL ...

VINCENT CASTIGLIA NOVEMBER 2022

I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE MY HEARTFELT THANKS TO JAMES KEVIN O’ROURKE, JAMES BRETT, ERIC BRECHER, TOM ISENBERG, JOSH STEBBINS, BORIS MARTINOV, CONNIE MCLACHLAN, STEVEN INTERMILL, JESSICA ANN HUNDLEY AND PAMELA GROSSMAN, PETER GILMORE, CHRIS STEIN AND BARBARA SICURANZA, AND AMIE ROMANO FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WRITERS OF THIS CATALOG, ROBERT COZZOLINO, CHRISTOPHER IAN LUTZ, AND MICHAEL BONESTEEL FOR THEIR ELOQUENT AND INSIGHTFUL ESSAYS THAT WILL LIVE ON IN PERPETUITY WITH THIS PUBLICATION. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK MARCO WITZIG OF THE ESTATE OF H.R. GIGER FOR HIS SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT, AS WELL AS THE H.R. GIGER MUSEUM IN GRUYÈRES, SWITZERLAND.

STEPHEN ROMANO NOVEMBER 2022

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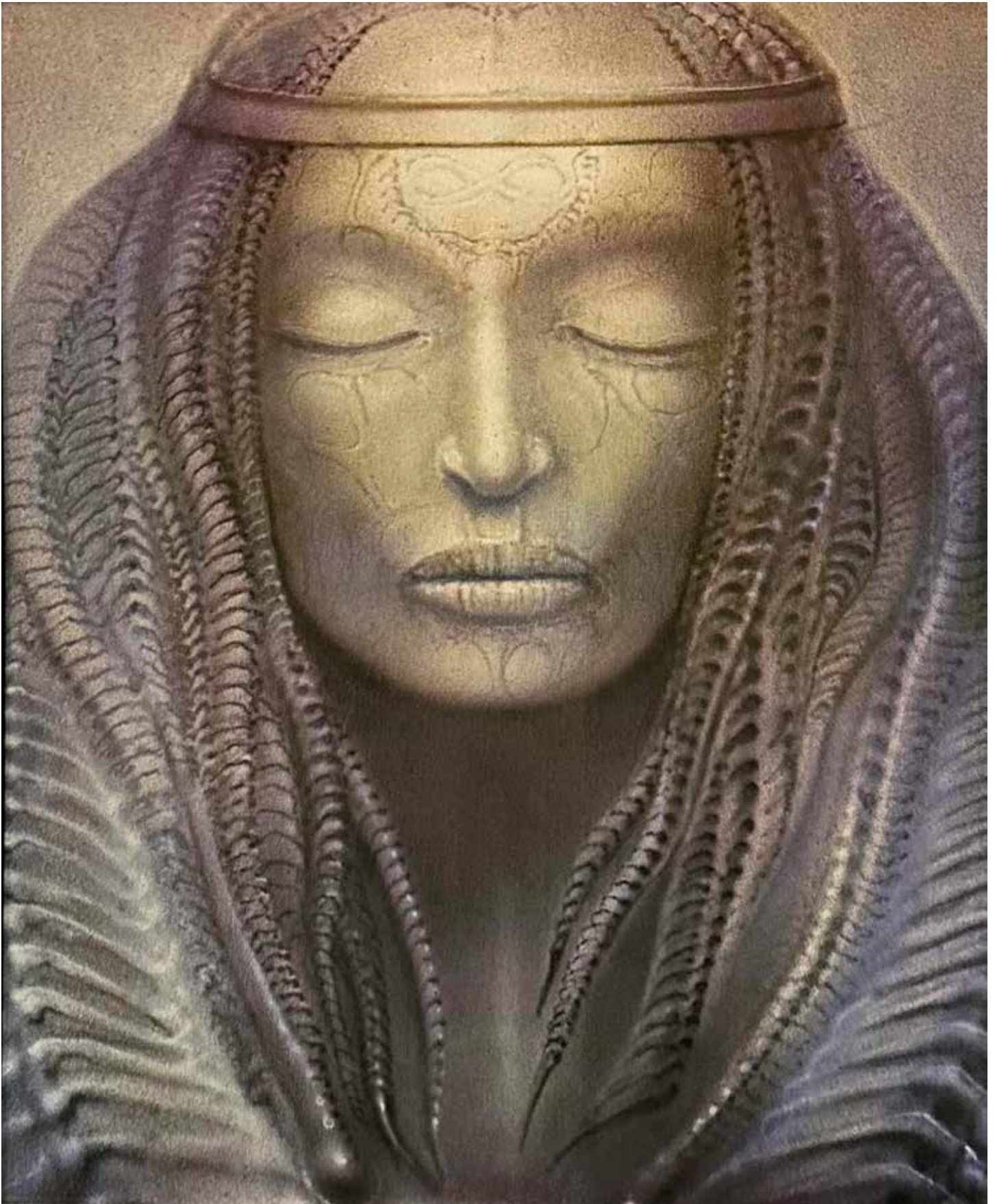
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VINCENT CASTIGLIA (BORN APRIL 8, 1982 IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK) IS AN AMERICAN PAINTER AND TATTOO ARTIST. HE PAINTS FIGURATIVE PAINTINGS WITH METAPHYSICAL AND OFTEN NIGHTMARISH SUBJECT MATTERS DEPICTING VARIOUS, UNCENSORED STATIONS OF THE HUMAN CONDITION, EXCLUSIVELY IN HUMAN BLOOD (IRON OXIDE) ON PAPER. CASTIGLIA TATTOOS EXCLUSIVELY IN BLACK AND GREY WITH A CONCENTRATION IN REALISM, RECEIVING NUMEROUS AWARDS AND BEING PUBLISHED BY COUNTLESS NEWS OUTLETS, ART, AND LIFESTYLE PUBLICATIONS INCLUDING VARIOUS TELEVISION APPEARANCES, INTERNATIONALLY AND DOMESTICALLY.



H.R. Giger and Vincent Castiglia (2008)



H.R. Giger, *Work Nr. 217 ELP I (Brain Salad Surgery)* (1973); back cover Vincent Castiglia, *As Gods* (2008)





