

**Margot
Samel**



Justin Fitzpatrick
Mitochondrial Abba

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Recently I have been reading about the dawn of multicellularity, and the different theories surrounding it, specifically Lynn Margulis' Endosymbiosis theory.

In looking at this subject I was thinking about where the locus of identity would sit in a multicellular organism. A single-celled organism is alive, has individual sentience, and its own will. When it evolves from a single-cell to a multi-cellular organism, how does this singular 'I' become a 'we', and how does this 'we' resemble an 'I' to itself? How does my body, as a complex network of different cell groups have a sense of unity when it is in fact a community?

As I was thinking about this subject, I was learning bass and playing along to ABBA videos slowed down half-speed on YouTube, which became a surreal and moving experience in itself. In the music video for *SOS*, the faces of the band members are filmed reflected in a distorting mirror, their faces stretching and dividing like mitotic cells as Agnetha and Anna-Frid sing a song written by Bjorn, presumably about the end of Agnetha and Bjorn's relationship.

The name and logo for the band fascinated me: a letter for each band member (Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny, Anna-Frid), the inverted B in the logo ABBA, the almost genetic mirroring of the AB pairs, and the 2 romantic couples that formed the band. I enjoyed the idea of ABBA as a multicellular organism, composed of cells or organelles that were the individual band members.

These paintings and sculptures are loosely motivated by the merging of these two subjects: ABBA and the origin of multicellular life. I have also used the motifs of the waiter and of the lemon, both recurring images in my work. In this context, the waiters represent the mitochondria that live inside every cell in our body, and produce energy for our bodies using the citric acid cycle, an 8-step circular chemical reaction that powers all life on earth. Here I enjoyed the idea of bitterness of the lemon, especially when it concerned a kind of class relationship that occurs inside every eukaryotic cell.

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Some of the paintings are painted over older paintings, and I am endeavouring in the process of making the work to allow the vestiges of the old paintings to be rehoused in the composition or the detail of a new painting, in a mutualistic relation of past and present, just as the pluralism of our phylogeny is recapitulated in every cell of our body.

- Justin Fitzpatrick

Justin Fitzpatrick (b. 1985, Dublin, Ireland) lives and works in Montargis, France. He holds an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London, UK. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Angiosperm Telephone*, Galerie Sultana, Paris, France (2022); *Alpha Salad*, The Tetley, Leeds, UK (2022); *Omega Salad*, Seventeen, London, UK (2020); *URIZEN*, Galerie Sultana, Paris, France (2019); *A Pulsation of the Artery*, Foxy Production, New York, US (2019); *Underworld*, Kunstverein Kevin Space, Vienna, Austria (2018); *F-R-O-N-T-I-S-P-I-E-C-E*, Seventeen, London, UK (2017); *Uranus*, Galerie Sultana, Paris, France (2017); and *Animal Mundi*, Barbican Arts Trust, London, UK (2016). Selected group exhibitions include: *To be a giant and keep quiet about it*, Margot Samel, New York, NY (2022); *Works on Paper on Fridges*, Harkawik, New York, NY (2022); *Motor Ideal*, Maison Populaire, Paris, France (2021); *Fly, Robin, Fly*, Mecenes du Sud, Montpellier, France (2021); *Our Vampires*, Sperling, Munich, Germany (2021); *La Clinique du Queer*, La Maison Populaire, Montreuil, France (2020); *Mâscaras (Masks)*, Galeria Municipal do Porto, Porto, Portugal (2020); *When the Sick Rule the World* (curated by Fanny Hauser and Viktor Neumann), *ALTEFABRIK, Rapperswill, Switzerland (2020); *Le Combat de Carnaval et Carême*, Rodolphe Janssen Brussels, Belgium (2020); *(Un)Real Life*, Galería Nueva, Madrid, Spain (2020); *Salon de Peinture*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Belgium (2019); *Figure in a Landscape*, Foxy Production, New York, NY (2018); *Room Raiders*, curated by Than Hussein Clark, Mathew Gallery, New York, NY (2018); *Whisky et Tabou*, Musée Estrine, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France (2017); *Amazing girls / It's complicated*, Kunstverein Kevin Space, Vienna, Austria (2017); *Streams of Warm Impermanence*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK (2016); and *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, ICA, London, UK (2015). Fitzpatrick has an upcoming solo exhibition at Seventeen, London in November 2023.

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Installation view, *Mitochondrial Abba*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
Coordinated Cellular Activity, 2023
Oil on linen
70 7/8 x 35 3/8 in | 180 x 90 cm

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Installation view, *Coordinated Cellular Activity*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
*Self portrait as a eukaryotic cell
with flagellar motor and platform
shoe, 2023*
Wood, polyurethane, epoxy resin,
aluminum, steel, leather, cotton
69 x 57 x 21 in | 175 x 144 x 54 cm

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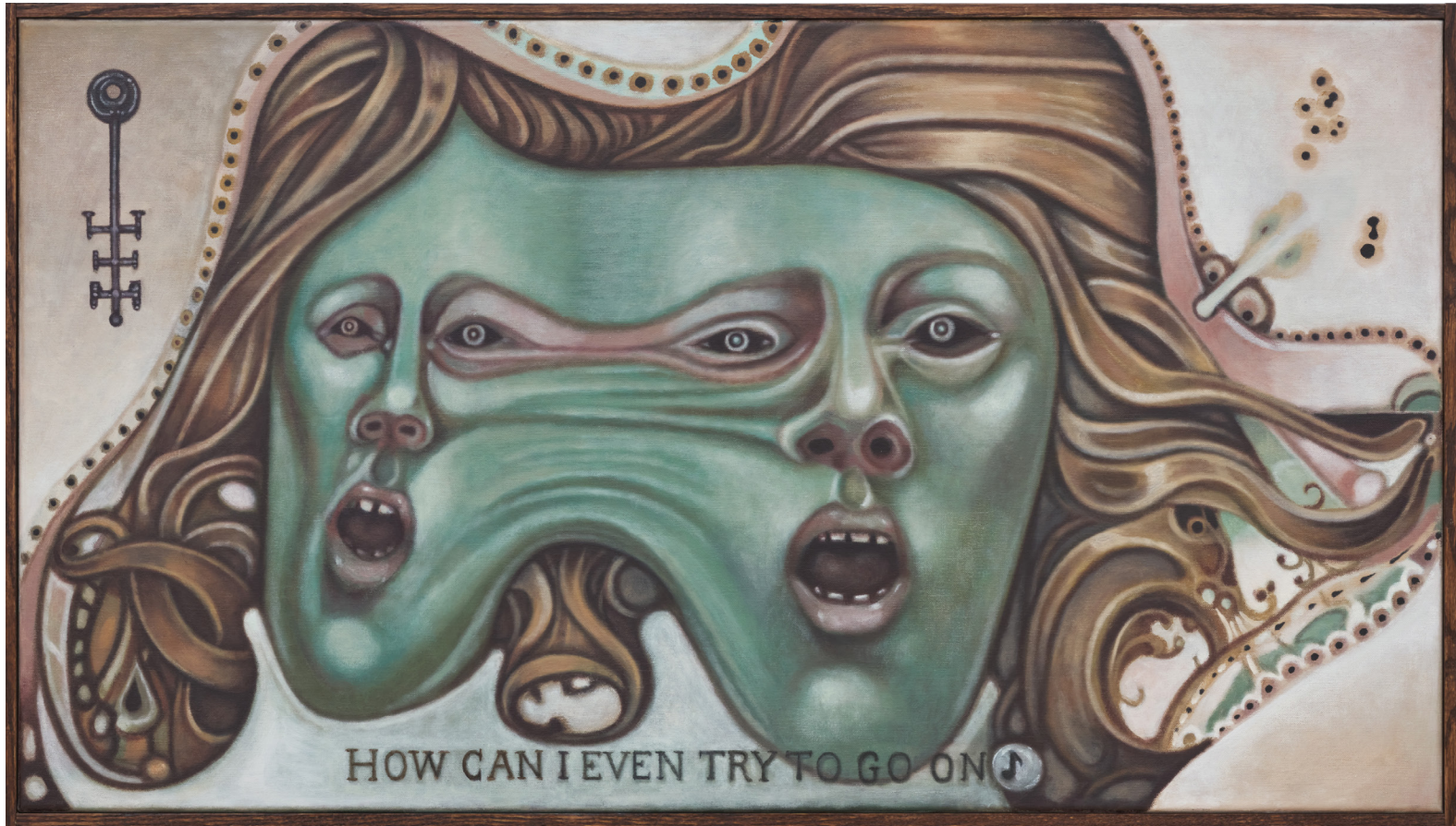
Detail, *Self portrait as a eukaryotic cell with flagellar motor and platform shoe*, 2023

Margot Samel



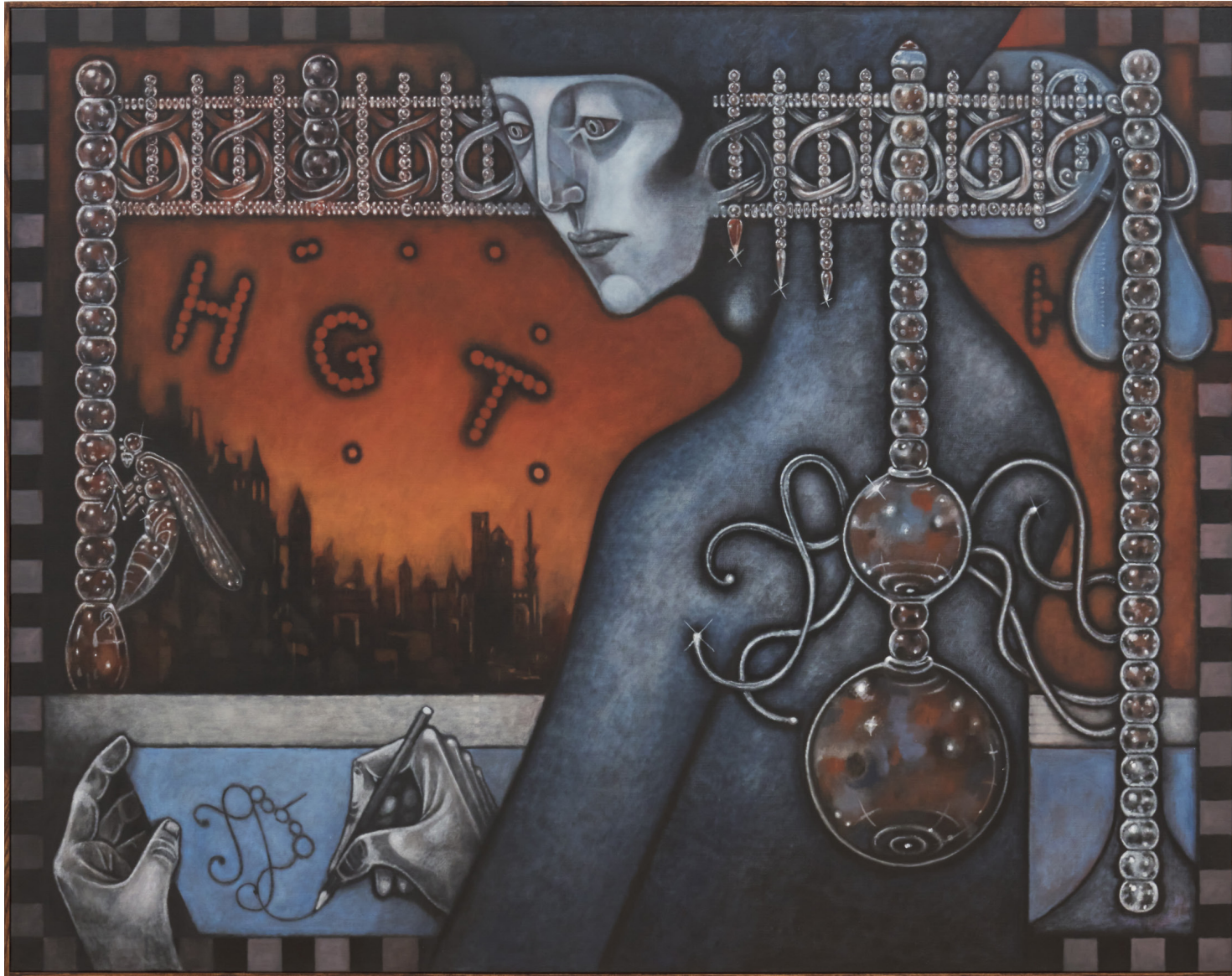
Detail, *Self portrait as a eukaryotic cell with flagellar motor and platform shoe*, 2023

Margot Samel



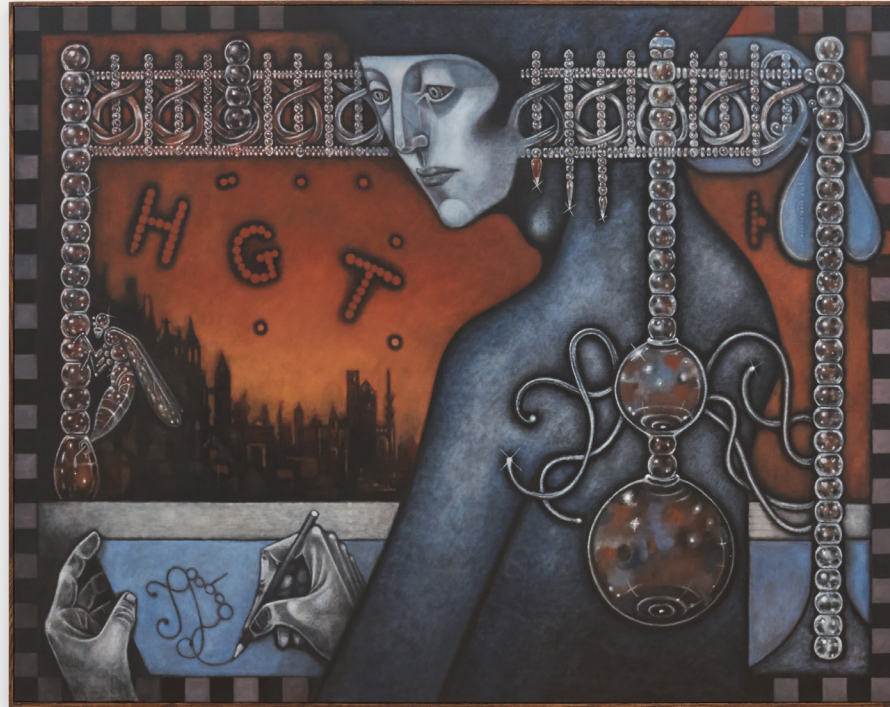
Justin Fitzpatrick
Mitochondrial Abba: Agnetha, 2023
Oil on canvas
19 3/4 x 35 3/8 in | 50 x 90 cm

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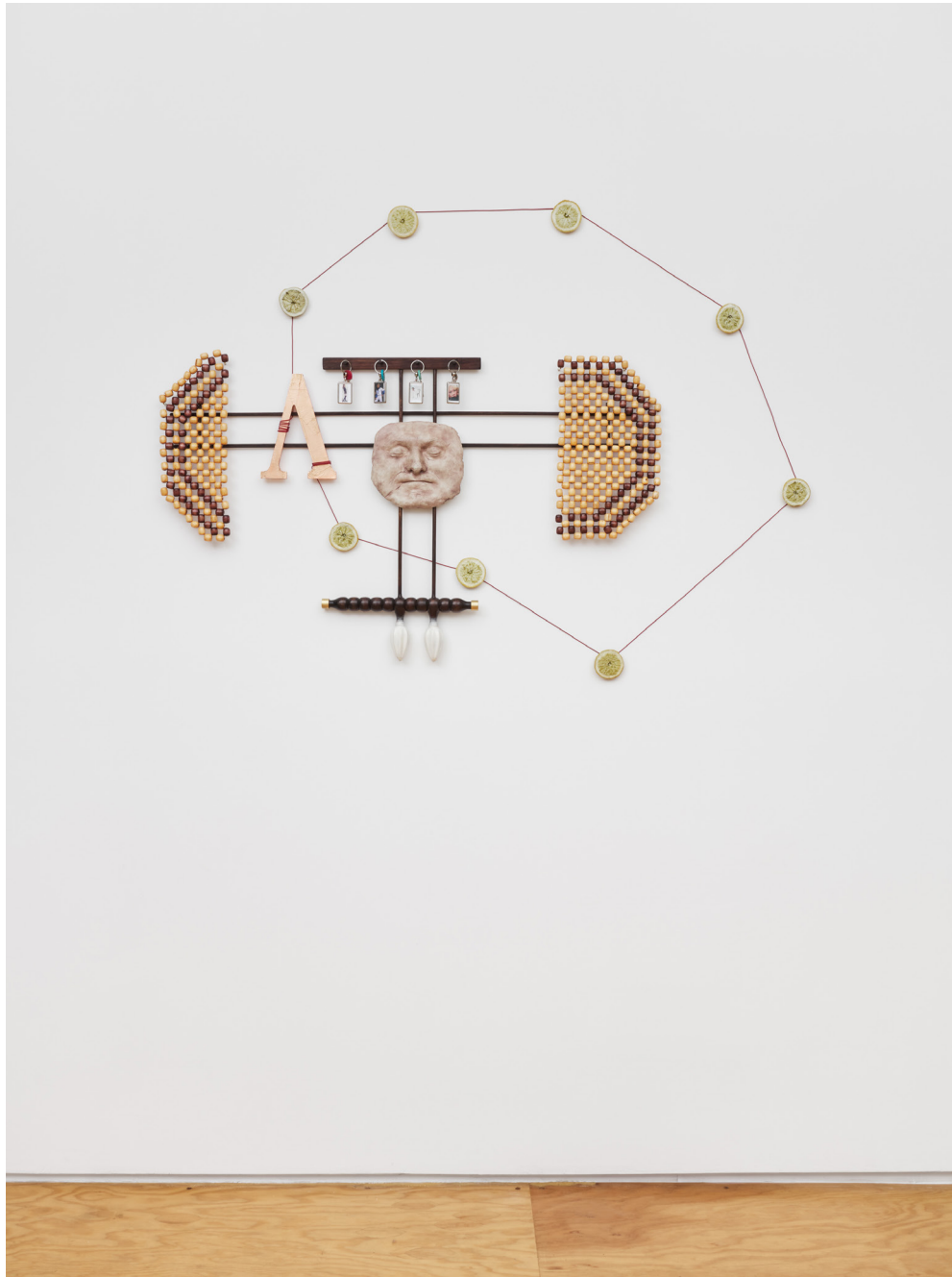
Justin Fitzpatrick
*Horizontal Gene Transfer: Portrait of
Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, 2023*
Oil on canvas
55 1/8 x 70 7/8 in | 140 x 180 cm

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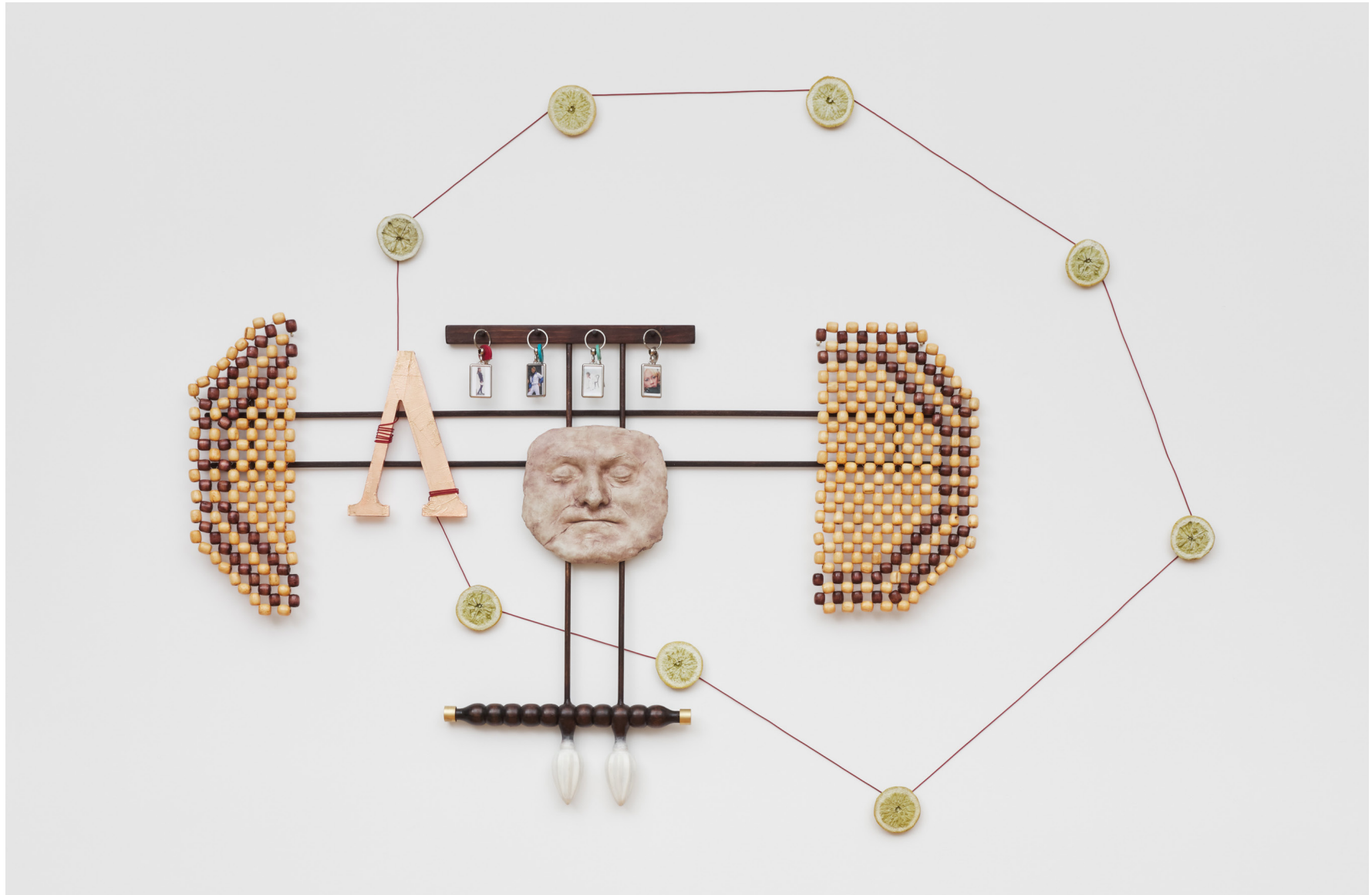
Installation view, *Horizontal Gene Transfer: Portrait of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
Self-portrait as a respiring cell, 2023
Wood, polyurethane, epoxy resin,
aluminum, steel, leather, cotton
36 x 53 x 1 1/2 in | 91.4 x 134.6 x 3.8 cm

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Alternative view, Justin Fitzpatrick, *Self-portrait as a respiring cell*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
*The movement of mitochondrial
DNA to the nucleus, 2023*
Oil on canvas
55 1/8 x 43 1/4 in | 140 x 110 cm

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Installation view, *The movement of mitochondrial DNA to the nucleus*, 2023

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Detail, *Mitochondrial Abba*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
Free Radical Detector, 2023
Oil on canvas
43 1/4 x 15 3/4 in | 110 x 40 cm

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Installation view, *Free Radical Detector*, 2023

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Detail, *Mitochondrial Abba*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
Mitochondrial Abba: Björn, 2023
Oil on canvas
19 3/4 x 35 3/8 in | 50 x 90 cm

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Justin Fitzpatrick
Senescence: Free Radicals, 2023
Oil on canvas
19 3/4 x 15 3/4 in | 50 x 40 cm

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Detail, *Mitochondrial Abba*, 2023

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Justin Fitzpatrick
*Monnaie Vivante (Citric Acid
Cycle)*, 2023
Oil on canvas
70 7/8 x 35 3/8 in | 180 x 90 cm

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Installation view, *Monnaie Vivante (Citric Acid Cycle)*, 2023

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Detail, *Mitochondrial Abba*, 2023