

In a montage some things gain meaning while others seem even more lost in the line up. Why is that?

The painting features a male figure in half-profile, gazing to the left. The face is composed of fish and plucked poultry. The figure wears a black cap. The fur lined coat is half open. The torso underneath the coat is formed of books and manuscripts. The chest consists of a black folder from which white pages protrude, forming a collar. The lower chest is delineated by two books featuring the inscription INSERNIA and BARTHO respectively. The tail of a trout makes the chin and the mouth is that of a fish. One cheek is a chicken thigh. The nose is made of the rump of an entire plucked chicken, whose wings also form the eye brows while the eye of the chicken doubles as the eye of the man. The chicken's black legs make up the moustache. The cheek is constructed using the leg of a larger poultry whose wing forms the man's temple.¹

At McCarren Pool in Brooklyn, there is a sign mounted to the brick wall outside the locker rooms. The sign's background is the classical dark green seen in all New York city parks and recreational areas. It features the white line drawing of the head of a figure with short stubby hair holding its nose. To the right of the drawing is the white logo of New York City department of health. On top of the drawing in red letters the sign reads "NO BREATH-HOLDING CONTESTS" in large capitalized letters. Underneath the drawing inside a white rectangle the following sentence is written: "Taking deep breaths, one after the other, before swimming underwater can be deadly!" And yet another segment of text, in even smaller type, is printed below the white rectangle, stating: "Prolonged or repetitive breath-holding can be deadly. No intentional hyperventilation or underwater competitive breath-holding." NYC Health Code, §165.41

The central shape of the *Tragedy Tub* is derived from the mouth of an ancient Greek tragedy mask. Its sculptural form as a pool like object translates the outcry into three dimensional space, creating depth in the most basic way and thereby becoming a container. The upper surface of the object is made of bitumen roofing patches and a coat of aluminum reflective roof coating lacquer typical for New York's tenement roof landscape. The silver appearance of the lacquer comes from aluminum flakes mixed into a tar-based solvent, making it reflective, and helping to cool the surface of the roof.

In the novel *2666* by Roberto Bolaño, the literary figure of a German writer and poet named after the Renaissance painter Arcimboldo disappears somewhere in the desert of northern Mexico.

Arcimboldo's paintings have an encyclopedic and almost idiotically simple approach, which time

makes divine.

1 Translated from German Wikipedia entry for The Jurist by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, 1566

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