

OLGA AST. RECONSTRUCTION OF ADAM

"To create man was a quaint and original idea, but to add the sheep was tautology?" Mark Twain

"As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities." Charles Darwin

If we take Darwin's theory of evolution at face value, we must first acknowledge that the processes that he described cannot yet be at their end, and that we may be as different from our future descendants as we are from our one-celled ancestors. We must then ask ourselves whether the course of evolution as we see it today has always been the only possible path. Have other probabilities existed? Do they still?

The most obvious example of this lies in the sexes. There are many organisms that have only one gender, and are able to reproduce asexually. Yet all highly organized species have developed two distinct genders, as well as various accompanying mating mechanisms and rituals. Of course, these have fascinated humans since the beginning of time. In one of our earliest foundation myths, Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve sets up the ultimate question about the two-gender system – is it necessary?

Though we have no way of telling whether the Biblical text is based in fact, it is nonetheless an interesting subject to explore. Some Biblical scholars have long contended that a vague allusion in the first few lines of the Old Testament suggests that Adam – the first human – was created as an omni-sexed being, both woman and man. It was only when Adam petitioned God to create Eve that his nature was split in two, and humankind was thus partitioned into distinct genders.

Today, these genders are losing their incontestable, absolute qualities. Modern scientific advancements – from artificial conception to sex-change operations and cloning – are transforming existing cultural and sexual realities from unconditional to relative. Though we did not succeed in creating a Homunculus in the Middle Ages, we now stand on the brink of creating and replicating humans without any recourse to reproduction or gender interaction.

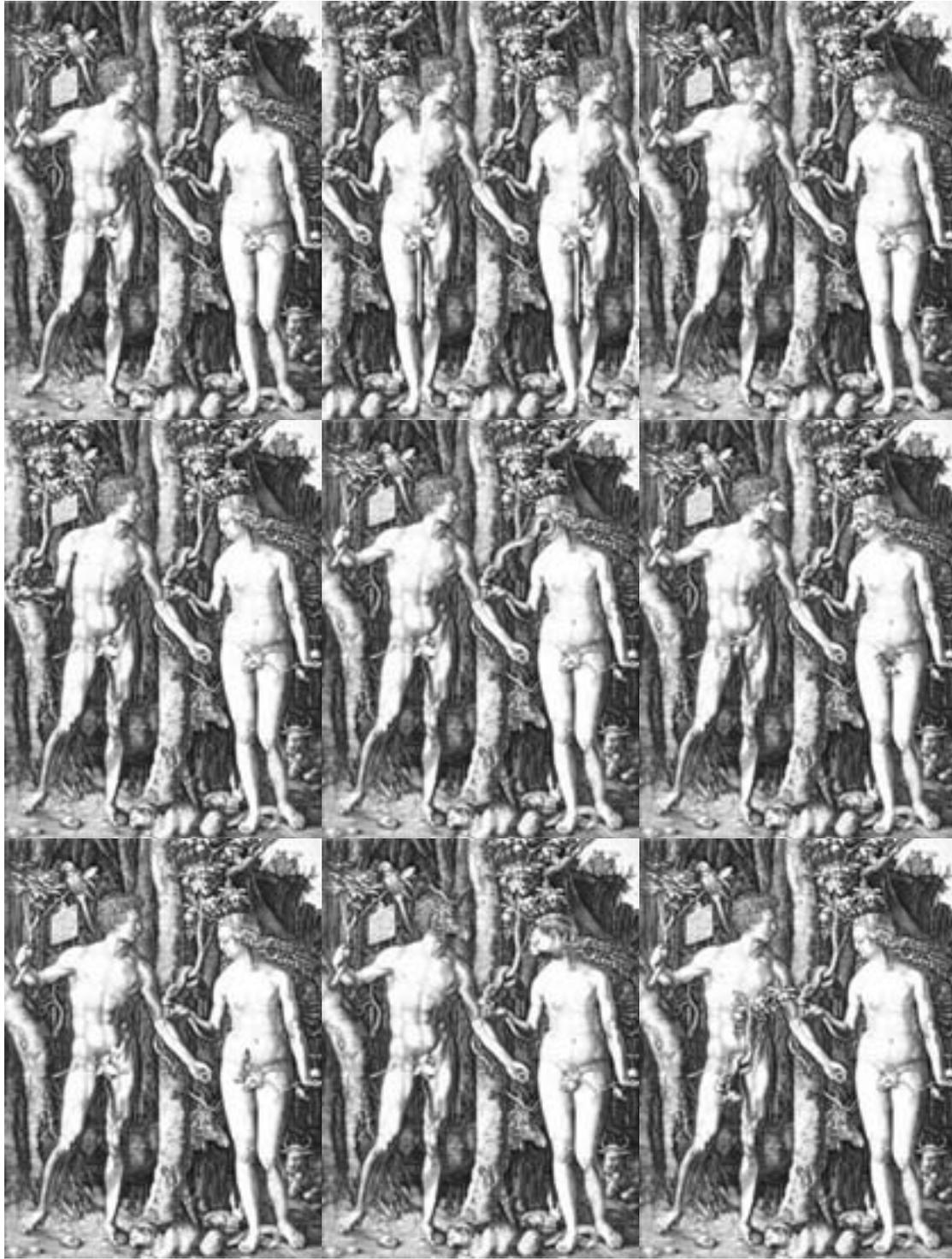
As an artist, I seek to address the visual aspects of this problem. I propose to rebuild the original Adam, and give a modern form to a mythical ancient body that may well have occurred along our evolutionary path, or may still in our future. Now more than ever, finding the vessel for a being that can embody both sexes has a great cultural significance. The project, which will culminate in the unveiling of a new body, can be the basis of a deeper argument about our current social realities – those of the loss of definite, necessary gender differences.

The *Reconstruction of Adam* is a project started in early 1990s and aimed at discovering the shape of an omni-sexual human being, modeled after the Biblical myth of the first human, Adam. It is an attempt to understand and illustrate the mechanism of the original man who lived in the proverbial Paradise. It is also an attempt to make sense of this notion in our modern world, where scientific advancements are in the process of making gender differences all but obsolete.

As the main part of this project, I propose to create a probable vessel aimed at demonstrating a vision of Adam as he may have appeared either in a distant reality, or at the very least, in the imagination of an ancient people. I will also invite collaboration between the artistic and scientific communities to create a series of works that will aim to broaden the dialogue about recent scientific developments that have a direct bearing on gender and sexuality, and their ramifications for our society and culture.

I believe that a solution to these questions can only be found in-between previously divergent disciplines – art, science, religion and technology. Therefore, I cannot attempt to complete this project myself, but invite other artists, scientists, IT professionals, and any other interested parties to try and shape this being. In bridging the gap between the arts and the sciences, we can hope to attain a clearer vision of the future.

Selected Images from Olga Ast's Installation "The Fall Of Man"
Low resolution



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