As long as you love me

Marlon Berger

The work begins with a question: what happens when separation between self and other, purity and impurity, is no longer maintained?
"To each ego its object, to each superego its abject."
With this definition, Julia Kristeva describes the role of the abject in Powers of Horror (1980). Subject and object, known as two antipodes "pushing each other away" but staying inseparable. The threatening of this border, hence the threatening of the subject itself, is what Kristeva defines as "abject." When the boundaries between self and other begin to blur, the subject reacts through repulsion, creating an illusion of a stable "I" through expelling the impure, the other, the abject. In this work, that act of expulsion is inverted: through the slow, collective layering of wax — a material both natural and artificial — the abject is not rejected, but embraced. Historically, this abjection has substituted the sacred rituals once marking the limits of human and the other. Rituals, taboos, and the handling of bodily fluids or corpses marked the limits of the human and the transcendent. As these sacred contexts dissolved, abjection lost its ritual meaning — yet continued to structure our sense of self through disgust and Horror. The installation responds to this loss by reintroducing ritual as a communal, creative gesture — turning abjection from repulsion into connection.

Recent developments in technology and society have led to an increased interest in the metaphysics of identity. Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto, for example, presents the "cyborg" as a hybrid identity — both human and machine. This adds to Kristeva's theory by shifting from bodily to cybernetic boundary transgression.

In the age of digital networks, the boundaries of self are no longer defined by bodily or ritual expulsion but by the constant negotiation of data, visibility, and algorithmic representation. Much like a phone becomes part of a body, and thus radically blurs the border of identity through interconnectivity. This could be seen as a form of digital abjection — the dissolution of subjectivity not through repulsion, but through networked extensions. Moreover, this form of abjection is not to be expelled anymore; in fact, the opposite is the case: cyborg identities and technologies have transformed not to be expelled, but to be desired and absorbed.

In contrast to digital abjection, which disperses identity through invisible networks, this installation re-materializes that dissolution — giving it tactile, bodily form. The boundaries of self soften, not through violent transgression, but through peaceful coexistence. By reintroducing the ritual, the installation proposes the performative act of producing abjection as a meaningful way of collective identity and Memory.