

ENTROPIC IMAGINARIUM, May 2026

The English word *animal* creates a category. Everything not human, not plant, compressed into a single undifferentiated mass of other — flattened, available, beneath consideration. The word *nature* does the same work at a larger scale: a domain that is out there, separate, the backdrop against which human activity occurs. These are not neutral descriptions. They are instructions. They tell us what can be used, what can be lost, what does not require mourning. The Dodo was an animal. Its extinction was the consequence of a worldview that the word encodes.

Most of the world's languages never built these categories. In Ojibwe, rivers and animals take the same grammatical form as persons — they are animate beings, not objects. The Lakota *Mitákuye Oyás'íŋ* — all my relations — extends kinship to everything living and non-living. The Buddhist concept of *sattva* places every being capable of suffering inside the same circle of moral concern. The Daoist *ziran* does not name a separate domain called nature; it describes a quality of being — that which unfolds of itself, spontaneously, without human intervention. These traditions arrived at the same understanding through different paths: the boundary between human and other-than-human life is not a fact. It is a choice, made in language, with consequences that are now visible at geological scale.

The *Entropic Imaginarium* is a twenty-five-year investigation of how to undo that choice — not through argument, which operates too late, but through encounter, which arrives before the categories have time to organise.

The methodology began accidentally. In 2007, during a residency at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, a strip of color negative film was discarded into a compost pile. The microbes consumed the emulsion entirely, leaving only clear celluloid. The discovery — that biological agents could process photographic film with their own logic of decay, oxidation, and time — became the foundation of a practice I call *photography-based biological imaging*. The resulting objects are not photographs in the conventional sense. They are time-encoded surfaces, retrieved rather than taken, grown rather than made — co-productions between human intention and non-human process, proof in material form that the boundary between artifact and nature does not hold.

The investigation began in 2001 in Mauritius. *The Dodo and Mauritius Island: Imaginary Encounters* returned life-sized, anatomically researched reconstructions of the extinct dodo to the actual landscapes the species had inhabited, and photographed them on location. The work established the questions the practice continues to ask: what does it mean to encounter what is no longer present, and what role does the artist play in making that encounter possible? The dodo was not a category. It was a specific other-than-human person with its own form, its own presence, its own claim on the world.

The work insists on that specificity — on grief as the appropriate response to its absence, rather than the mild regret that attaches to the loss of a specimen.

*World of Disappearing, The Collective Memory of Wild Things* (2020–) begins in the particular silence of natural history museum dioramas — rooms where mounted skins and fur are held in permanent mid-gesture, perpetually alive in the moment before disappearing. Natural history collections were built on a specific belief: that holding the appearance of a thing is the same as holding the thing itself. But what gets preserved in a diorama is not only the animal. It is the cultural moment of its making — the aesthetic choices, the narrative framing, the story a society tells about what it is losing, and the category system that made the losing possible. By photographing these scenes and then subjecting the negatives to biological processing with earth, the work introduces the logic of transformation into the act of preservation. The resulting *image memory objects* carry both the museum's impulse to immortalize and the material world's insistence on change. They do not document a species. They document the mythology of its disappearance — and make that mythology visible as physical fact.

*Shape of Infinity* (2024) extends the same logic into relief sculpture. This work investigates the threshold between biology and symbolic human language, using the Fibonacci sequence as a bridge between abstract numerical concepts and tangible natural phenomena. Biological treatment with soil/earth, both during the process and used as medium for the final piece, serves as both material record and conceptual bridge—the very medium that facilitated the biological decay now becomes the sculptural element that grounds the mathematical abstractions in earthly reality. The piece begins with an 8×10 color negative photograph of blue sky as both literal and metaphorical canvas—representing the infinite expanse where mathematical laws govern everything from cloud formation to atmospheric physics. Through a process of biological intervention, the mathematical sequence undergoes transformation and organic decay.

*A Question of Butterflyness* moves the inquiry into participatory installation at human scale. Two mating swallowtail sculptures (12 × 14 × 14 ft, polymer clay over aluminium, with actual butterfly specimens permanently enclosed in their heads and compound eyes constructed from macroscopic photographs of real butterfly eyes) are paired with wearable butterfly flight suits in which the viewer inhabits the biological form and looks through compound eyes toward a partner. Two versions of the suit — one 90% biological / 10% mechanical, one 20% biological / 80% mechanical — frame the threshold at which something stops being an animal and becomes a machine. The knowledge this produces cannot be argued into existence. It arrives through the body, which is where the old categories also live. The person inside the suit, looking through a butterfly's eyes at another person inside another suit, is not being told that the boundary between human and other-than-human life is permeable. They are permeable.

*A Grammar of Unknowing, Nightmare Before Tuesday* (2025–2026) is the most personal application of the method. Photography-based biological imaging is applied to an adult skeleton from the American Museum of Natural History collection, reconfigured into child proportions, then subjected to 48–120 hours of biological transformation. The series confronts premature knowledge, digital harm to children, and the neurological violence of hyper-novelty. Its origin is a Finnish forensic pathology textbook — *Oikeuslääketiede*, 1961 — encountered at age twelve. The method becomes thematically essential: damage that accumulates rather than strikes, that works from within, that leaves the form recognizable while something underneath has already gone.

*Biomorphic Alphabet: 108 Zeros and 108 Ones* (2024–) names the project's ultimate ambition directly. Two hundred and sixteen biomorphic symbols comprise a binary language designed to remain machine-unreadable while staying human-legible — a biological CAPTCHA for an epoch in which the boundary between perception and processing has become the most contested territory in image-making. If the problem begins in language — if the categories *nature, animal, human, machine* are doing damage at the level of grammar — then the most radical response is to propose a new grammar. One that is biological in form, relational in logic, and resistant by design to the categorical flattening that made the losses possible.

Across all of these bodies of work, the practice maintains a single sustained argument: that the threshold between animal, machine, and human is the most urgent territory available to contemporary art, and that the image — when allowed to participate in its own becoming — can place the viewer in a condition where new knowledge appears before the old categories arrive to prevent it. The *Entropic Imaginarium* is not a record of what has been lost. It is an attempt to reprogram, at the level of perception, the language that made losing thinkable.

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