TRANSGRESSION AND DEFORMATION

THE STAGGERING MOMENT BETWEEN
CHAOS AND ORDER

Lauren Kalman, Tongue Gilding, 2009
KHAOS: THE ABSENCE OF ORDER/FORM

The void state preceding the creation of the universe or cosmos in the Greek creation myths. Khaos is the initial gap created by the original separation of heaven and earth.
George Bataille's notion of l'informe defies the intrinsic value of form that requires the universe to take shape. That said, the universe resembles nothing and is nothing but formless. And form is the result of a futile attempt to understand the formless universe. Similar to the futility of making order out of chaos.
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Order implies restriction; from all possible materials, a limited selection has been made and from all possible relations a limited set has been used. So disorder by implication is unlimited, no pattern has been realized in it, but its potential for patterning is indefinite. This is why, though we seek to create order, we do not simply condemn disorder. We recognize that it is destructive to existing patterns; also that it has potentiality. It symbolises both danger and power.

Mary Douglas: Purity and Danger
TYRANNICAL ORDER & LIBERATED BODIES

La Borde Clinic
Felix Guattari & Gilles Deleuze
FEMINIST ART & UN-ROMANTICIZED BODY

Hannah Wilke, S.O.S Starification Object Series, 1974
THE FORMLESS BODY
Against Sexual and Objectified Body
Alice Neel, Self Portrait, 1980

Joan Semmel, Me Without Mirrors, 2005
THE FORMLESS BODY
Against Idealized form

Joel-Peter Witkin
Dian Arbus
This aesthetic form is basically a battle between chaos and order. The order of bodily perfection, and the chaos of materialistic body that is the subject of decay and imperfection.
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CHAORDIC PRINCIPLE:
a system of organization that blends characteristics of chaos and order, to establish a harmonious coexistence displaying characteristics of both, with neither chaotic nor ordered behavior dominating.
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“The carnival is the people’s second life, organized on the base of laughter... it is the world standing on its head.”

-Mikhail Bakhtin
“It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composit.”

- Julia Kristeva
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Gregory Crewdson, Untitled, 1998
“Horizontality is a desire to give up, to sleep. Verticality is an attempt to escape. Hanging and floating are states of ambivalence.”

- Louise Bourgeois
George Bataille introduced the notion of “l’informe”:

“A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks. Thus, Formless is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down into the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only formless, amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit.”

What Bataille means by Formlessness is that art should be brought down to earth, off of its pedestal where it has been standing since antiquity. For Bataille, creativity is in the process; it is supposed to be dirty, mixed up with ashes, mud and disgrace. The Formless, in a way, is abstract and indefinable – Bataille himself claims that a word has no definition. It is performative, rather than explanatory.