

RAINRAIN

Jordan Homstad

All That Surrounds Is Black

November 7 — December 14, 2024

We've all been there. Alone in the darkness, sinking in the swirling sea of data, adrift in the depth of psyche. The screen in front of our face glows like candles casting spells – there seems to be no way out, only the pull to drift further. Until we dissolve, become part of it. Until we transform.

Jordan Homstad's solo show, *All That Surrounds Is Black*, begins right there — at that shared moment of profound loneliness — leading us into the alchemical process of transformation. By mixing methods of archiving, collaging, and painting, their works compel us to confront both the void of a cyber landscape and the richness of machinic subjectivity, of becoming something new.

The new series evokes a deeply networked yet isolated psycho-landscape. Having been immersed in digital spaces for years, Homstad positions us like anglerfish, dangling a light to navigate the dark ocean. *Portal-01* and *Portal-02*, perhaps the least figurative works in the show, bring forth that emotional state. They layer images and 'feel-bad' memes on top of one another, resulting in either blinding light, as in *Portal-01*, or complete obscurity, as in *Portal-02*, mirroring the shifting moods we experience in the virtual sphere—between fear and euphoria, depression and joy, emptiness and fullness, loneliness and longing. The question, then, is not what distinguishes the virtual from the physical, but rather how we engage with such a psycho-landscape, and what we are becoming in this intensely knotted body-machine hybridity.

Collage is essential to Homstad's practice. Over the years, they have built an archive of digital images from diverse sources, such as video games, cyberpunk novels, surgical photography, and more. The figurative works always emerge from this vast collection, transforming disparate digital sources into tangible convergence. Homstad never creates any entities out of their own imagination, but instead only synthesizes and layers the collected sources. Their 'self' seems to be distributed across these visual-semiotic materials, which have accompanied them in the dark, composing their existence throughout the years.

In this way, Homstad's creative process embodies what Félix Guattari described as machinic heterogenesis, where machines are not only physical but also incorporate desires, media, socio-semiotic systems, and networks. These sectors, both human and nonhuman, are continuously intra-active in producing new subjectivities.

The *Lure* series could be seen as small specimens generated from this machinic process. Displayed like small portraits often hung in one's bedroom, the anglerfish-inspired creatures are mixed with metallic vertebrae and biological membranes. The slippery, luring texture further extends and evolves in the larger *Construction* and *Midnight Zone* series, where the viewer is pulled into a more intense phase of chaosmosis—where dissolution and interconnection, ruin and rebirth coexist in the same moment. The figures on the smooth surfaces evoke a strange sense of nostalgia that's hard to look away from. They remind us of scenes from 90s sci-fi, anime, or old-school pop clashing with surrealist-rendered pornography.

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It's oddly chaotic and serene at once. You see organic forms, such as bulbous craniums or arachnid legs, fused with mechanical panels and wires. In some areas, floral combustions burn over the glossy, cold skin. Memories, fragments of dreams, the enduring lust and pain mesh with gigantic bodies of flaming flesh and decimated metal, forming a transient collective that grants our desires an affirmative force to pierce through the darkest void.

The artist's method of combining different painting techniques shows how the medium itself acts as part of the becoming. From the fluidity of airbrush to the viscosity of oil paint, they create a multilayered assemblage, much like how different systems interact in machinic heterogenesis. Each medium represents a different kind of impact: airbrush for smooth, computer-sculpted surfaces; goopy oil paint for viscera; and matte Flashe paint for flat, graphic elements. These mediums do not function in isolation but react with each other on the canvas, turning virtual motifs into corporeal modes of connection.

Homstad's paintings show us that it's not the depiction of a robot or the use of advanced software that makes one posthuman, but the process behind it—the shift from an individualistic mind to the broader human-machinic continuum, imbued with feelings and care. And there is always beauty in the messiness of existence, in the endless lonely night.

Text by Chiarina Chen

About the Artist

Jordan Homstad (b. 2000) is a painter working at the intersection of collage, virtual space, sexuality, and human connection. Currently based in New York City, their work has been shown at Anna Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery, New York City; A Space Gallery, Brooklyn; A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn; The Hole, New York City; Collaborations (with scroll.nyc), Copenhagen; the 25E Gallery, New York City; the Midwest Art Fair (with Nightclub), Chicago; the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Minneapolis; Nightclub, Minneapolis; and Waiting Room, Minneapolis. Homstad published the essay "Writing the Unfamiliar Landscape: Analyzing the Calligraphy of C. C. Wang and Its Connections to New York City Graffiti" in the book "C. C. Wang: Lines of Abstraction" (eds. Wen-shing Chou and Daniel M. Greenberg, 2023), as well as their first artist book, "A Glossary of Hyperhumanity" (2023). Homstad holds an MFA in Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design and a BFA in Studio Art and Art History from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

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