

## Linenfold

Linenfold is a style of relief carving imitating folded linen or parchment. Originally from Flanders, the style became widespread across Northern Europe in the 14th to 16th centuries. The name was applied to the decorative style by antiquarian connoisseurs in the early 19th century; the contemporary name was *lignum undulatum* meaning "wavy wood". Wood panelling or wainscoting, was almost always made from oak. Oak trees provide strong, straight timber; Medullary rays (pale flecks) give the timber an extra strength making it suitable for carving. Medullary rays are essential for the radial conduction of the water, minerals and other organic substances from the centre to the periphery of the tree.

The perpendicular lines of linenfold echoed the stone tracery work used in gothic architecture. During the Gothic period linenfold panelling clad the innermost chambers and hallways of important buildings, it was used as insulation and also to signify wealth and importance. The most significant and well used rooms would have been clad in linenfold. The sleeping quarters of the affluent would almost certainly be subject to the 'wavy wooden' walls. For a woman at this time important meetings and engagements would be held in her chambers/sleeping quarters rather than in public or shared spaces. She would hold council and issue assignments from within the folded walls. In large households of nobility, Hallways were places of discrete conference; where passing people could confide and trade words despite differences in class or gender. Linenfold was witness to this clandestine culture of oppression and sexism.

At this time furniture was manufactured to be moveable or semi-movable. Noble landowners would move entire house holds, furniture and all, between their lands and each other's lands to enforce status and build relationships. Chests, presses, settles and chairs were joined using a framing technique. The frames held panels that would often have been carved with linenfold as well as finer carvings.

From the 14th century Land owners rights had slowly declined, finally resulting in their legal abolition in England with the Tenures Abolition Act 1660. Wealth and land were redistributed; taken from lords and given to the commons. It was around the time of the abolition that linenfold started to become popular with masses, this signified the power transfer from the nobility (tenants in chief, lords, barons and knights who were vassals of the King) to the farmers and people who lived on the land.

During the gothic revival of the 18th century linenfold was again adopted and brought into the innermost rooms of high profile buildings. The rebuild of the Palace of Westminster/ Houses of Parliament saw large amounts of linenfold carved into the ubiquitous panels of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The folded wood or parchment seems appropriate for the ministerial bureaucracy which has flourished from the abolition of 1660 until today.

# SPECTRACIDE

An Exhibition by Hannah Regel and Esme Toler

You purchase an anti-age serum online which hypnotises the cells in your face so that they get caught in a temporal loop and forget their natural trajectories. The side effects you experience are dizziness and intestinal heat, like a burning.

A cow does not stop lactating and becomes sick. She incorporates imperial architectures into her gut, which churns the nauseous non-time of capitalist production into butter and cream. Lashings of butter and cream!

Our house of infinite rooms is the sick cow's stomach on fire. Tripe walls burnished by bilious flames, carved into stiff pleats, or cream peaks, folded as the linenfold panels of parliamentary anatomy. A bureaucratic tripe!

With cells coded to permanent productivity, the sick cow, haemorrhaging milk, feels dizziness and intestinal heat. We suckle on her feverishly, our convulsing industrial wet-nurse. Full of bitter milk we climb into her stomachs and she leaks the bitter into us. Her gut is a crucible carved with the insignia of empire (swelling hellhole).

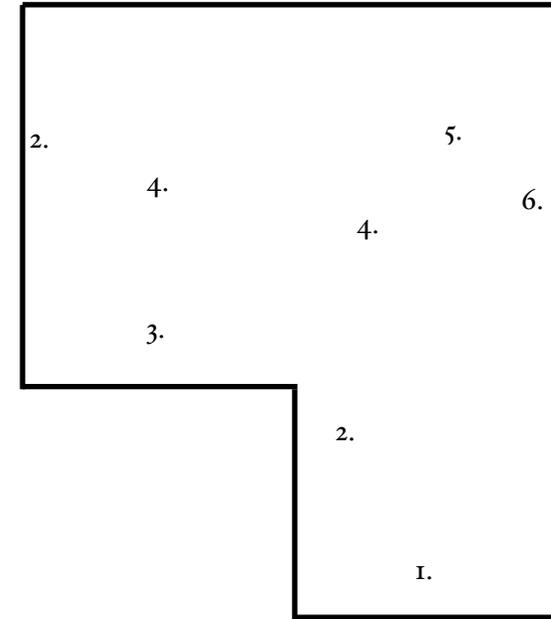
The sick cow can't see danger but she registers it in heat. Her belly turmoil mirrors a wider struggle: an intestine war which tears apart the body politic so that organic unity can never be remembered.

She hosts the battle in her gut. A bitter leak through split gutter. Imperial fish slipping in the silvery acid cream.

The fat on our tongues oxidises, turns rancid and sharp, as a lance that shoots down the throats of the men. It tastes like a pitchfork with nails. The men vomit themselves up, and the ancient anatomies of government are metabolised back into her body, our house.

Every gurgle of her gut is a war cry booming through the house, her cells forcing through walls, splattering onto the pavement a crowd of floorboards, ribs collapsed in shooting pain. Collected weapons.

Text by Bronte Dow



1. Esme Toler; *Twelve to Twenty Four Hours*; earthenware ceramic
2. Esme Toler; *It Had Three Thinly Curved Legs*; walnut and poplar
3. Esme Toler; *Write it, read it, buy it and wear it*; oak
4. Hannah Regel; *What Transpires in the Field of a Body that is the Base of Her* (lamp); unfired terracotta, baby powder, light fixtures, wood varnish
5. Hannah Regel; *Cold With Joy, No Joy*; aluminium, synthetic hair
6. Esme Toler; Early 18th century linenfold; oak

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