Rivista Acappella – 13

HELLA GERLACH

COLLAGEN

Acappella, December 2025



3-19: A section of a collagen molecule triple helix. All of the broken lines indicate hydrogen bonds which link the three single coils together into a strong cable.

Collagen is the longest molecule that has ever been isolated; if one were as thick as a pencil, it would be a yard° long. If ever a molecule was designed to make netting and cable, this is it.

Amino acids are bound together in a triple helix forming an elastic structure that holds us together with a degree of pliancy, like a flexible filament woven through our skeletons and flesh. The word itself stems from the Greek for glue creation: *kolla*. The substance is generative (gen), healing, and strong. It constitutes our fascia, bones, hearts, joints, ligaments, and tendons. Extracted through an ancient process of boiling from animal skins, it can also serve to preserve and hold together various utensils or add tensile strength to objects that require flexibility and absorption.

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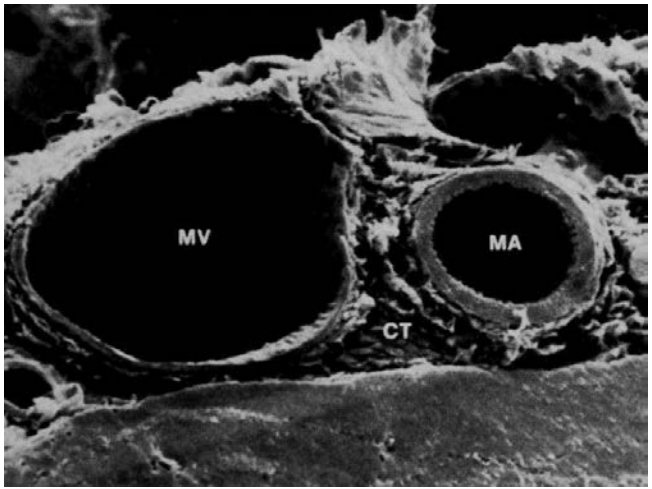
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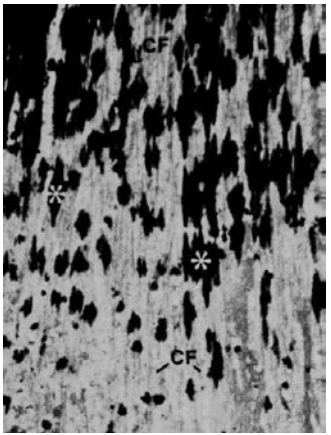
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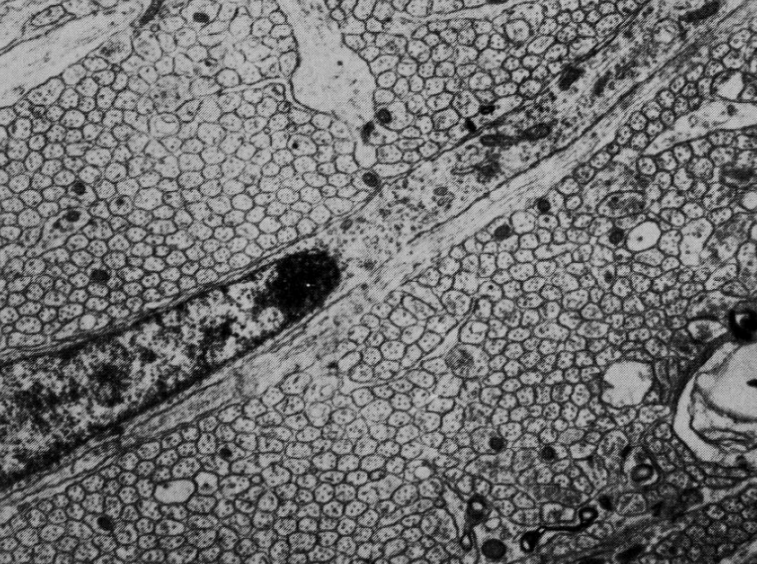


An axon following its glial partner as they grow. The nerve cell's nucleus is the large dark oblong shape. The glial cell is the grey band running from corner to corner diagonally, and the nerve's growing axon is next to it.



Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #4 (substantia)*, 2024 ☞
Wool, aluminium, steel, rubber cord
Variable dimensions



It's curious because when I first saw *Collagen*, all the works were still in the box. You could say they were dismantled, but to be more precise, it would be more accurate to describe them as "out of form."[1]



[1] excerpt from a conversation between the artist, Ernesto Tedeschi and Corrado Folinea

These are hybrid structures: fleshy and corporeal, and also sometimes carrying non-biological implants. Hovering ambivalently between body and technology, they offer both possibility and vulnerability. Their differently colored forms are comprised of folds and stringy interwoven skeins of wool, which the artist has processed into felt, sculpting them in a manner that resembles intestines, or inflated microscopic views of t issue. Some of t hese furry bodies are made of wool sheered from llamas in a community petting zoo, where animals and humans gather: the artist, her child, and Andor the llama; Schnitzel the cashmere sheep or Joseph, a Japanese Shiba Inu dog.



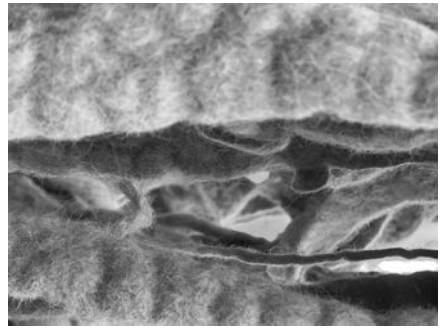




For the exogenously extended organisational complex functioning as an integrated homeostatic system unconsciously, we propose the term "Cyborg".
The cyborg deliberately incorporates exogenous components extending the self-regulatory control function of the organism in order to adapt to new environments.[1]

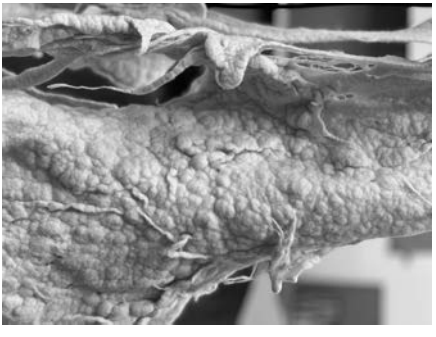
[1] "Cyborgs and Space"
By Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S.Kline
in *Astronautics* (September 1960) Massachusetts Institute of Technology
p. 26











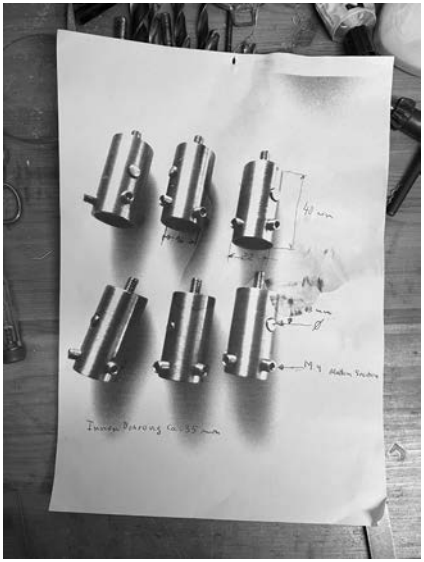
Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #1 configuration vibe (ahne)* 2024 ☞
Aluminium, wool, Wool, aluminum, carbon, conductive yarn, plastic, computing unit with wifi, motor, driver with controller, cable, rubber cord
123 x 74 x 82 cm

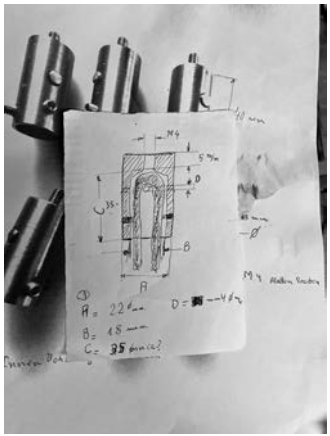


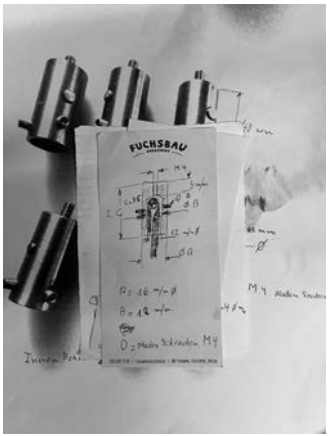
Contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs - creatures simultaneously animal and machine - who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. Modern medicine is also full of cyborgs, of couplings between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that was not generated in the history of sexuality.

By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation.[1]

[1] "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,"
by Donna Haraway
in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York 1991), pp.149-181.



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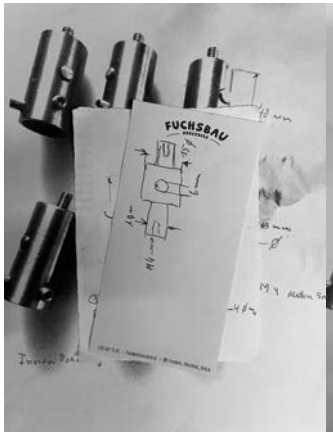
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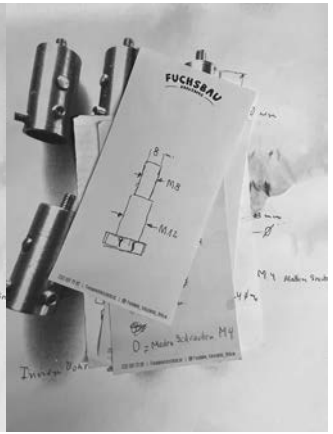
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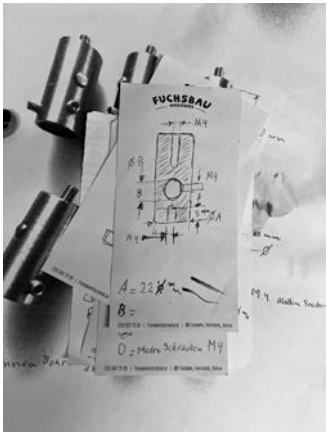
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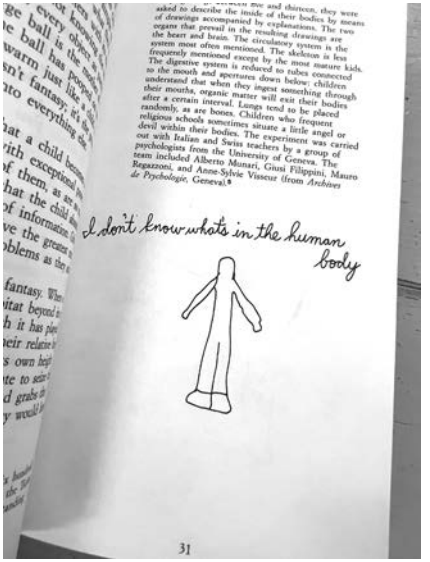
Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #8 digestive process (triple helix)* ☞
[detail] 2024
Wool, aluminum, rubber cord,
Variable dimensions

These objects may be abstract in their conceptual reach, but they are materially present and specific.

Heated and washed into form, dyed particular colors (like those of wooly llamas or friends' dogs), sculpted and shaped, they mingle with us in space.

Bodyworkers helping patients with their posture sometimes suggest imagining a string running from the feet on the ground, through the legs and spine, then out the top of the head toward the sky and stars.

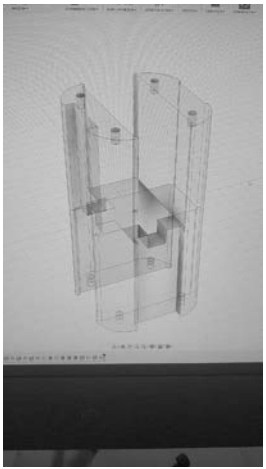




Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #10* 2025 ☞
Wool, aluminium, rubber cord
Variable dimensions

Like felted innards, appendages and bodily tissue, they sway and swing from metal fixtures and elastic bands. They move when we approach them, responding to our presence. These dangling tis-sues also move without us: spinning and twisting or even reacting to one another through smart-lear-ning implants and joints that teach them to dance together like a swirling helix. These are hybrid structures: fleshy and corporeal, and also sometimes carrying non-biological implants.





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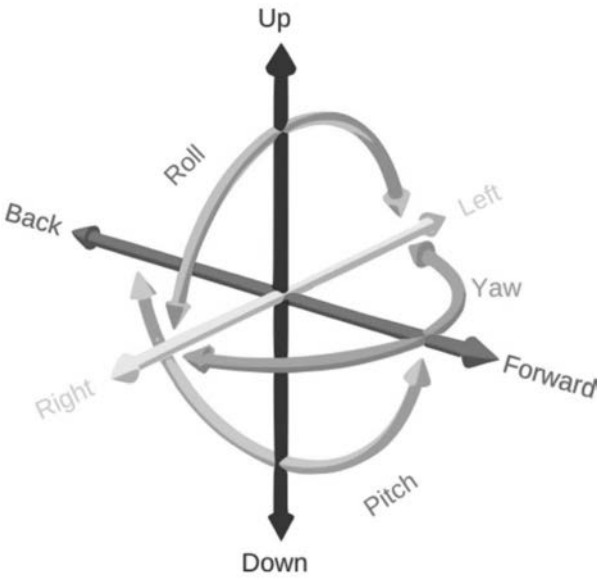
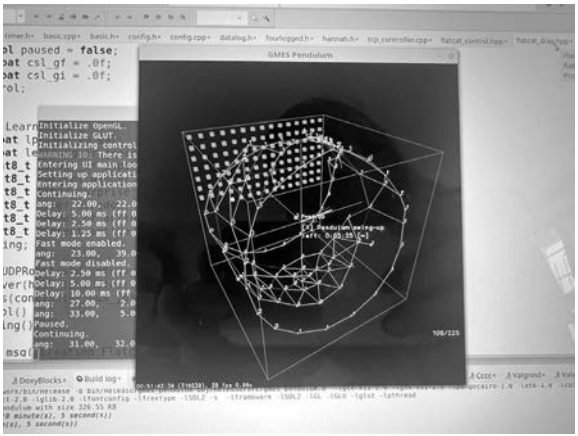


Die sechs Freiheitsgrade eines Körpers im freien Raum (mit den bei Fahrzeugen üblichen Bezeichnungen der Rotationsachsen): vor/zurück (*forward/back*), herauf/herunter (*up/down*), links/rechts (*left/right*), gieren (*yaw*), nicken (*pitch*), rollen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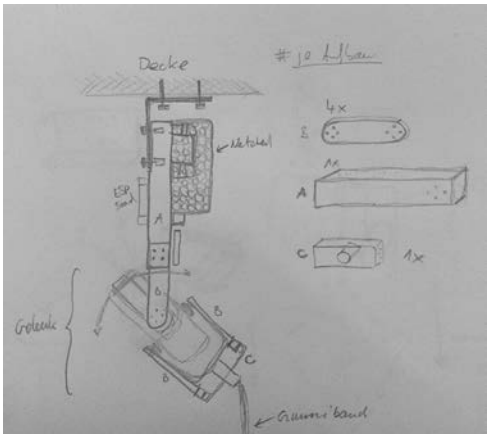
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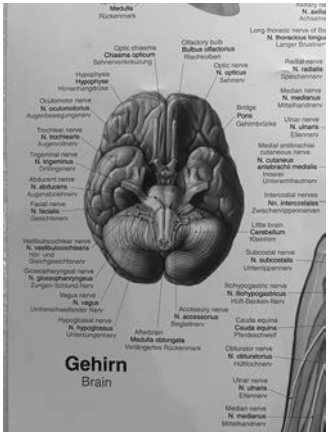
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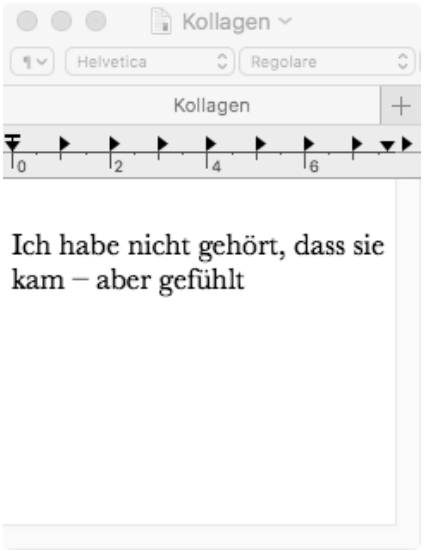
Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #7 conversation pendulum (cerebrella)* 2024-2025
Wool, aluminium, steel, robotic joint, plastic, computing unit with wifi, two smart servo motors,power supply, cable, rubber cord

These bodies can change and morph over time; they move and encourage us to think of how change might occur through touch, a sense that grows from haptic connections and tactile transfer. This bodywork is something the artist practices in her own daily life, using touch to communicate with her child who cannot speak, and with her mother, who has a cochlear implant. Touch reaches across generations, presence, and absence.




Kollagen
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Ich habe nicht gehört, dass sie kam – aber gefühlt


Collagen
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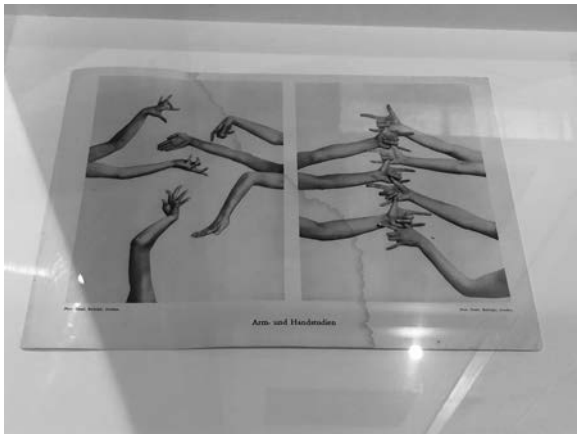
I didn't hear that she was coming – but I felt it.


Arm- und Handmodien









Hella Gerlach *Inside-out #2 textus conjunctivus* 2024
Wool, aluminum, spring steel, rubber cord
Variable dimensions

Rivista Acappella proposes
a second look – like the
name suggests –
to the scheduled exhibitions
of the Acappella gallery,
with the aim of expanding
the exhibition space.
The additional contents of
the *rivista* intend to offer
additional background infor-
mation, research papers,
texts, notes and thoughts on
the work on display.
The published material is
collected and processed
in collaboration with the
artist(s), Corrado Folinea
and Ernesto Tedeschi

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