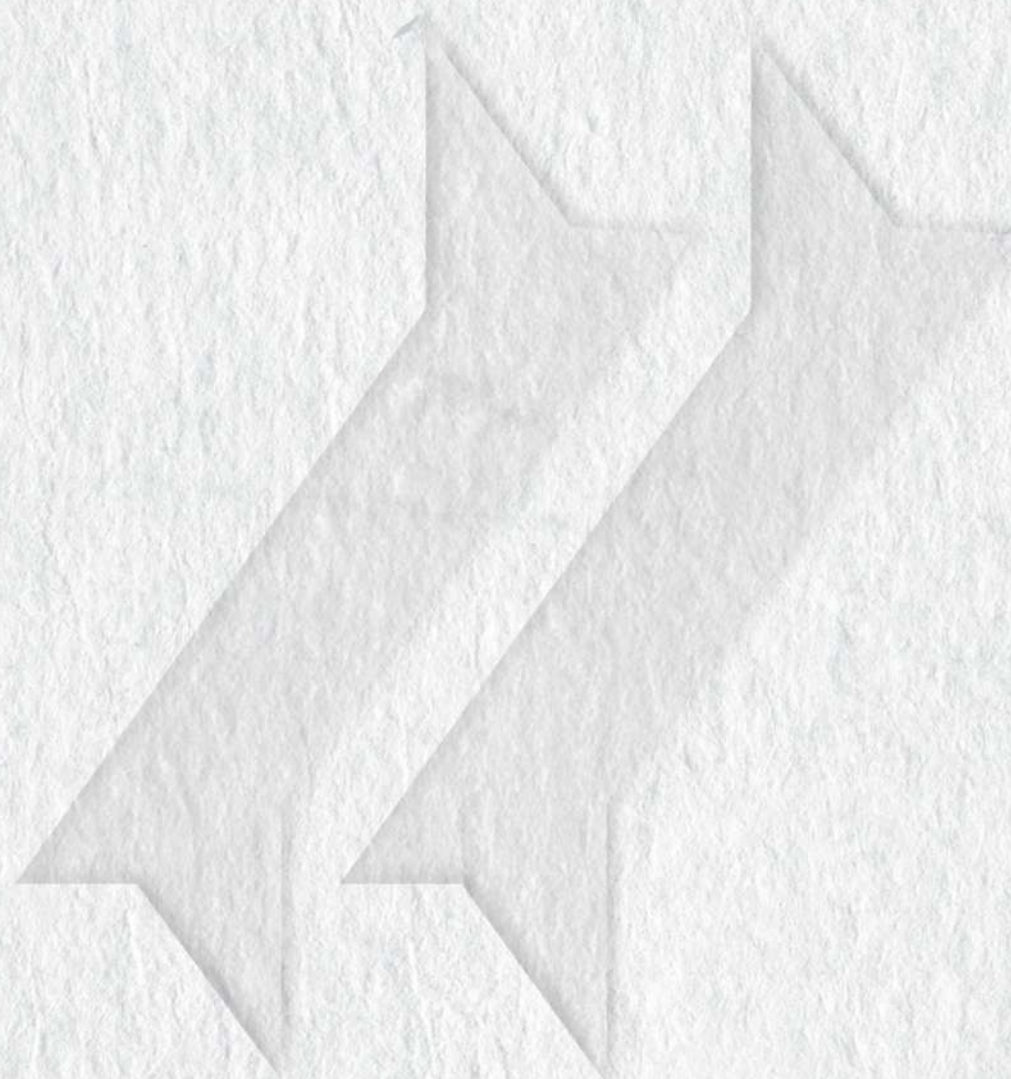


Urbain Checcaroni ✦ Julie Maurin

✦ Lucas Hadjam



RTA & The Carreau de l'Alsace

RTA & The Cathédrale de l'Alsace





Pt. 1: The Carcass is Ringing





*"And will ask 'who is buried here?'*

*It's the poor Joana.*

*A, e, i, o, u."*

*' -Lo Boier', 13th century hymn.*

"II, Part 1: The Carcass is Ringing" takes place in the Cité de Carcassonne (Occitan: Ciutat de Carcassona), in Occitania, South West France, featuring work by Urbain Checcaroni and Julie Maurin.

Dating back to the Gallo-Roman period, this medieval fortress is most painfully remembered as the site of the Albigensian Crusades. In 1209, the Cathars, a dualistic gnostic sect of Christianity, were exiled from the city, each person stripped of their possessions. Further Eastward, in Beziers, the Cathars would suffer a worse fate. Here, at least 7,000 men, women and children were slain by Catholic forces.

At sometime during this period, a hymn entitled 'Lo Boier' emerged as a song of resistance, encoded with allusions to their forbidden faith. In Part 1 of this exhibition, each artist was invited to respond to the hymn, unburying these forgotten heresies within the present.



Above:  
*holy, au lit*, by Julie Maurin, 2022  
found objects, polyurethane, latex, iron sulfate, sulfur, wax.  
68 x 93 x 50 cm

Opposite:  
*DOORDIE*, Urbain Checcarroni, 2022  
chicken carcass, springbok horn, caul fat, mother of pearl, turkey  
claw, copper mesh, glass spikes, snake skin, feathers, red coral.  
dimensions variable..







"The annihilated soul is one that has given up everything except for God through love"

- Marguerite Porete,  
*The Mirror of Simple Souls*, c. 1300



sun is shining high in that peachy sky, we can  
hear prayer's beat from afar but sun's still  
hitting hard on the ground

*elle est pire qu'une grosse bête, qu'on a engraisé  
jusqu'à satiété. le corps recouvert de saleté, elle se met  
à soupirer. mais voilà que cette eau divine vient s'en  
mêler et dégouliner le long de son sujet pour ensuite  
se retrouver nez à nez à nos corps entremêlés.  
douceur accrue, odeur crue, douleur advenue.*

water has a bitter taste at our last hour, it  
slowly follows its track to the tarmac leaving  
us feeling kinda high and my heart's forever  
dry

- Julie Maurin

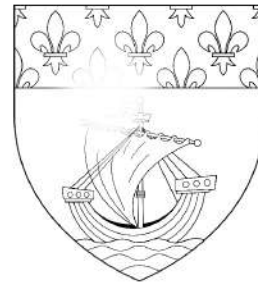








Pt. 2: The Cathedral is Dying





*"We commonly die to the affections of those we see no more, and they to ours; absence is the tomb of love."*  
- Pierre Abelard, 'The Letters of Abelard and Heloise'

*"Was it in historical or mythical time that the Cathedral, rowing through space by its buttresses, all sails unfurled, the French ship, the French victory, beautiful as for eternity, spread open at its apse the wings of a group of kneeling angels?"*  
- Auguste Rodin, 'The Cathedral is Dying'.

"II, Part 2: The Cathedral is Dying" takes place at the tomb of Abelard and Héloïse in Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, featuring work by Lucas Hadjam. The two lovers buried here lived during the 12th century; Pierre Abelard was a scholastic theologian, poet, musician, and teacher, Héloïse being his student, and a renowned 'woman of letters'. Their affair is memorialised in a series of correspondences, revived at various times in the last millennium by tragedians of every generation. After Abelard was castrated, as ordered by Héloïse's uncle, they retreated into respective convents, torn apart by ill-fated circumstances.

In its neo-Gothic splendor, the tomb is devoted to their sacrifice. A love that denounces force offers itself to become loved. The cathedral whines under the agony of centuries. This temple for earthspent love forgets of infinite sweetness.



Above:  
*too late (pierced hat and electric stove)*, Lucas Hadjam, 2022  
schieker engraved card, recovered t-shirts, yarn, iron wire, butterfly clip, shiitake mushroom.  
dimensions variable.

"Yet then, to those dread  
altars as I drew,  
Not on the Cross my eyes  
were fix'd, but you"

- Alexander Pope,  
*Eloisa to Abelard*, 1717



# Medieval Epic Poem

by Felix Ashford

"Why are you trembling, carcass?"

- Simone Weil to her own body, age 5, 1914. As quoted by her mother.

"You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:

So I did sit and eat."

- George Herbert, 'Love (III)'

"A new kind of love

Genetically altered

Enough of "Love Lite"

And "I Can't Believe It's Not Love!"

- Frou Frou, 'A New Kind of Love'

## the oxherd

2018: a video titled "Hymn of the Cathars - Lo Boier (432hz)" appears on my YouTube homepage. This encounter born from algorithmic chance stirs 5 minutes and 23 seconds of agonising revelation. The trembling vocals reverberate through my laptop speakers as if echoing from a distant century. I struggle to untangle lyrics from the diffused mass of background synth, though I feel the weight of their lament.

Returning to the hymn soon pollutes my feed with an unceasing barrage of "♪ Knights Templar Music | 1 HOUR | Roman Crusades|Catholic Chant", "24/7 Chant of the Mystics (Forest Ambient) - Gregorian Chant - Orthodox - Templar - Chant Radio" and so forth. None of it hits quite the same. "Lo Boier" consumes me. With each listen, I have more questions. The lyrics aren't in Latin. It sounds more like broken French in an ambiguously Hispanic accent, which isn't totally wrong. "Lo Boier", is sung in Occitan, a dying language native to the region of Occitania in South Western France. It's the kind of language no one there speaks, yet you still see it on every street sign.

## siege

"The siege lasted for five years. Early in the sixth year, food and water were running out. Lady Carcas made an inventory of all remaining reserves. The villagers brought her a pig and a sack of wheat. She then had the idea to feed the wheat to the pig and then throw it from the highest tower of the city walls.

Charlemagne lifted the siege, believing that the city had enough food to the point of wasting pigs fed with wheat. Overjoyed by the success of her plan, Lady Carcas decided to sound all the bells in the city. One of Charlemagne's men then exclaimed: "Carcas sonne!" (which means "Carcas rings"). Hence the name of the city."

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady\\_Carcas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Carcas). A folk tale of how Carcassonne got its name.

## infinite sweetness

*"God is absent from the world, except in the existence in this world of those in whom His love is alive. Therefore they ought to be present in the world through compassion"*  
- Simone Weil

1940: Simone Weil, (the recently resurrected French martyr of Addy-infused neo-Catholic tweens), arrives in Occitania. At the time it was called Languedoc. She begins working at a vineyard near Saint-Marcel d'Ardeche, cloaked in black. Sickly, and emaciated, the broken 31-year-old hobbles through the vines. Each time she collapses - which is often - she recites the Our Father in its original Greek, before returning to her labors. The northwesterly mistral offers only a gust of solace from the summer heat.

Weil only spent a short time in Occitania. Yet here she encountered a theo-poetics of suffering, in line with her own brand of world-rejecting mysticism. Centuries earlier, the region had been the heartland of the Cathars, a heretical Gnostic sect of Christianity wiped out by the Albigensian crusades during the 13th century. At the heart of this wasted civilization was the Cité de Carcassone, where part 1 of the present exhibition took place. In a strange affinity with her own thought, the Cathar faith obeyed the painful truth of kenotic doctrine. God is not the world.

Creation required negation, or perhaps finitization. Burrowing out a world-shaped void in the pit of eternity, God allowed to exist that which he was not. In this emptiness, Weil could at least glimpse the beauty of "Christ's tender smile for us, coming through matter". Yet the Cathar saw only evil; bodies that entombed the spirit in their fleshy sepulcher, bodies that hunger, yearn, and lust. To reject evil, the gnostic body must deny itself, even destroy itself, and withdraw from the world just as God had done in the act of its creation. As Weil writes; "God, grant that I may become nothing".

In its total annihilation, the Occitanian civilisation testified to a love without force, a beauty in sacrifice. Their denouncement of matter is evidenced in the Consolamentum, a unique baptismal rite wherein the recipient became cleansed by the Holy Spirit, rather than Holy Water. Stranger still, and far more damning under the inquisition, was the Endura. If there is any truth in the exaggerated herisiological fragments that survive today, the Endura was a somewhat uncommon practice of self-starvation. Nearing death, the Cathar Perfecti, (a member of the spiritual elite), submitted themselves wholly to their demise. It was only in this denial of force, this resistance to resistance, that one could become empty.

## cannibal love

*"The overflowing giddy energy we experience during the brief flourishing of a new romance is the empirical demonstration that in love we metabolize the other being"*  
- Alec Irwin, 'Devoured by God: Cannibalism, Mysticism, and Ethics in Simone Weil'.

August, 1943: Simone Weil is devoured by God.

In a Kentish Sanitorium, aged 34, she commits a kind of private anti-Communion at the altar of her own affliction.

"Now you God, take this, and eat of it! For this is my Body, which I have given up for you."

Already suffering from tuberculosis, the red virgin starved herself. Decades later, her first English biographer Richard Rees would conclude "As for her death, whatever explanation one may give of it will amount in the end to saying that she died of love"

# Mourant a l'amour et aux intermédiaires vers Dieu

by Jorja Rynne

*You can prefer not to die, but your attachment to life will not help you understand anything more about death. The harmony of the universe is not difficult to come into for those who have no preferences, for those who surrender into totally unity.*

Simone Weil's writings on decreation and metaxu discuss the nature of the bridge that collapses the self and the other, decanting the self to unionise with God, and inviting death to meet us as love. She holds that from nothing one is created and thereby the goal of one's efforts should be to return to that nothingness. The ends to which one should act is to suffer with acceptance.

In the process of sufferance, one may experience up to three stages: 1. awareness, 2. resistance, and 3. acceptance. To suffer is to become aware of resistance that is felt as pain. From awareness, one may resist the pain, only to cause further resistance. The choice to accept what is being resisted is commonly avoided. It requires a surrender of control that fractures attachment and deteriorates identity. Weil actively willed her awareness to her resistances, and embraced the pain of inhabiting form. Through her life she welcomed an intense cyclical process of self-divestment from decreative negation to metaxic affirmation.

It may easily seem as though Weil experienced little lightness from her physical experiences. However, I believe that it is precisely the depth of her suffering which allowed her to experience an even greater profundity of lightness. Her sufferance did not end at resistance, but acceptance, the greatest surrender of all. The distinction between resistance and acceptance within suffering is revealing of Weil's idea of transcendence as inherent to the physical experience. Within the energetic whirlpool of universal consciousness, the unique component of human life, in its total gore and beauty, is purposeful.

Decreation and metaxu are referred to by Weil as the uncreated and created worlds, where that which becomes created becomes an intermediary to is eventual decreation (or nothingness). Weil describes metaxu as 'intermédiaires vers Dieu', or intermediaries of God, which lead to both God and each other without a singular transcendent finality. In 'The Lost Futures of Simone Weil: Metaxu, Decreation, and the Spectres of Myth', Matthew Godfrey describes them as "simultaneously the object, subject, and space in between to demarcate the space of the intermediary, but also the energetic potential vibrating within all bodies and subjects". The purpose of metaxic structures is to act as the conduit for the destabilisation of the self, to enter the process of sufferance and through acceptance create a greater vacancy for the divine to occupy.



Alongside Weil's philosophy, I believe that we can better understand the unseen fluidity of decantation through the reveal of the panpsychist interconnectedness of metaxic intermediaries. In my personal philosophy, I contend a pan-protopsychist approach to electromagnetic structures, wherein consciousness exists as the energetic relationships of light forms.

My understanding is that source consciousness is the frequency of non-visible light that first existed after the creation of the universe. Through the mysterious entropic nature of the universe, non-visible light willed itself into its condensity, creating the visible light spectrum which allows form, and us, to exist. My purpose in discussing my thoughts on consciousness is to suggest a new understanding of decreation and metaxu in terms of physical energy and visible and non-visible light.

We can then understand decreation as both the state of the primary source consciousness, as well as the process of alchemical transmutation and the reconstitution of our energetic composition from a network of lower vibrational energy to a higher one, that is then closer to the level of source conscious. Therefore, the 'nothingness' which Weil refers to as the state of decreation, exists at the vibrational level of non-visible light, whereas creation exists as its expression as condensed physical forms at the vibrational level of visible light.

*"The tension between metaxu and decreation can be observed in the tension between love and death, metamorphosis and disappearance."*

- Matthew Godfrey 'The Lost Futures of Simone Weil: Metaxu, Decreation, and the Spectres of Myth' (2021)

While we cannot reach the state of total nothingness while we are enduring our physical experience, it is the process of decreation which prepares us, and it is our receivability to sufferance and acceptance which transmutes the most density of energy. There are two fundamental experiences of transmutation (or practices of decreation) in the physical experience that are made accessible to us, because both of which reside on the same high vibrational level: love and death. They are the closest that we can get to nothingness, to the divine, to God, to total source consciousness, to the highest vibrational frequency.

Although, I must acknowledge that it is not my belief that the energetic body after physical death transmutes into total love / total source consciousness / the highest vibrational frequency. Rather, it may be met with a dimension that reflects the specific frequency of that body. It is my intuition that there are realms to our energetic experience, where physical life and death are two very small parts of it.

It is one's aversion to practice decreation that prevents them from both inhabiting more of the divine (love) with them, as well as preparation for physical death. It is one's aversion to receive love (inhabit the divine) and to experience physical death that prevents them from the process of decreation. But it is these experiences which connect us with living in the most pure form, and which reveal to us the depths of our beingness. Preparation for death is learning love, and becoming love until love becomes you.

What is embodied within the works of Maurin, Checcaroni, and Hadjam in II., is the exercise of decreative practice which gifts us with a purity of conscious that is inhabited within them. Through the use of organic materials and the carcasses of that which had once lived (chicken carcass, fish head, shiitake mushroom), each of the artists have created as intermédiaires vers Dieu to connect us with the divine frequency of surrender, love, and death.

•

The weighted swing of a heavenly ice pick punctures the fleshy life force of your soft animal body. It runs red with blood, willing you into tenderness and surrender to total divinity.

To reject death is to reject love and to reject love is to reject death.  
To embrace death is to embrace love and to embrace love is to embrace death.  
To feel death is to feel love and to feel love is to feel death.  
When I am in love, I know I am dying. And when I am dead, I will become love.

Isn't God the end?