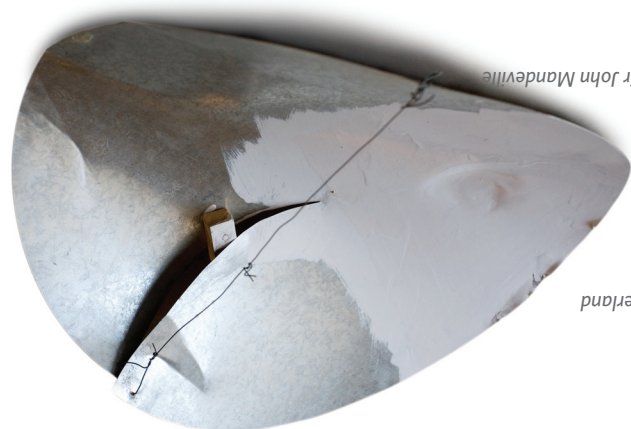


WHAT ARE THE SEALS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS? The seals are 160 copperplate engravings that originally appeared in the *Opus medico-chymicum* of Johann Daniel Mylius, a 3000 page alchemical text published in 1618. The circular engravings commemorate both real and imaginary alchemists through allegorical images. The hermetic symbolism and Latin mottos served both didactic and mnemonic functions for practitioners of the art. **DOES MACWITHEY SEE HIMSELF AS AN ALCHEMIST OR HIS ART AS A KIND OF ALCHEMY?** No. **THEN HOW DOES HE USE THE SEALS?** He begins by emptying them of their content and creating his own set of 160, roughly circular shapes. **FROM WHERE DOES HE DERIVE THESE SHAPES?** By tracing the outline of partially crumpled, 3½ inch, foil pie pans. **HMM. THEN WHAT?** These shapes, each assigned to a specific seal, become the basis of MacWithey's drawings. **SO THE DRAWINGS ARE MACWITHEY'S INTERPRETATIONS OF THE OF THE SEALS?** No. Nothing he does illustrates the seals. Think of each seal as a container for MacWithey's own explorations. **SO, IN OTHER WORDS, ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER?** Almost, but in MacWithey's case one thing leads to a dozen or more others. Do you know the idea of infinite regression? **ISN'T THAT A WAY OF QUESTIONING THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BY ASKING IF THE CREATOR CREATED EVERYTHING THEN WHO CREATED THE CREATOR?** I was thinking more like at a carnival where you stand between two mirrors and see yourself endlessly reflected front and back. If you could move along that line of reflections, you would still be in the midst of an infinite number of other images. **WHAT ATTRACTED MACWITHEY TO ALCHEMICAL SOURCES IN THE FIRST PLACE?** He once showed me one of his favorite alchemical texts. It was an annotated list of fifty different names for the Philosopher's Stone followed by an un-annotated list of seventy-four more. **HOW LONG HAS MACWITHEY BEEN WORKING WITH THIS MATERIAL?** The better part of ten years. **HOW MANY WORKS HAS HE MADE SO FAR?** In the neighborhood of two thousand completed works. **WILL MACWITHEY'S PROJECT EVER REACH A CONCLUSION?** I honestly can't say. **IS MACWITHEY OBSESSIVE?** No. **COMPULSIVE?** No. **DISORDERED?** I have never known him to be. **WHY DOES HE DO THIS?** Here I will quote. "That's what I always wanted to do, is to make things."



SELECTIONS FROM THE SEALS OF THE PHILLOSOPHERS



Look at that moon will you. Tsk...tsk...tsk. Potato weather, for sure. THORNTON WILDER Our Town

...it behoves a man who wants to see wonders sometimes to go out of his way. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*
 Bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronnonnerronntronnthunntrovarrhouna-wnskawntoohoohooordenenthurnuki! JAMES JOYCE *Finnegan's Wake*
 "Here it is," gasped the Professor in an agony of joy, "here it is — we have found it. Forward, my friends, into the interior of the Earth." JULES VERNE *Journey to the Center of the Earth*
 Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next. LEWIS CARROLL *Alice in Wonderland*



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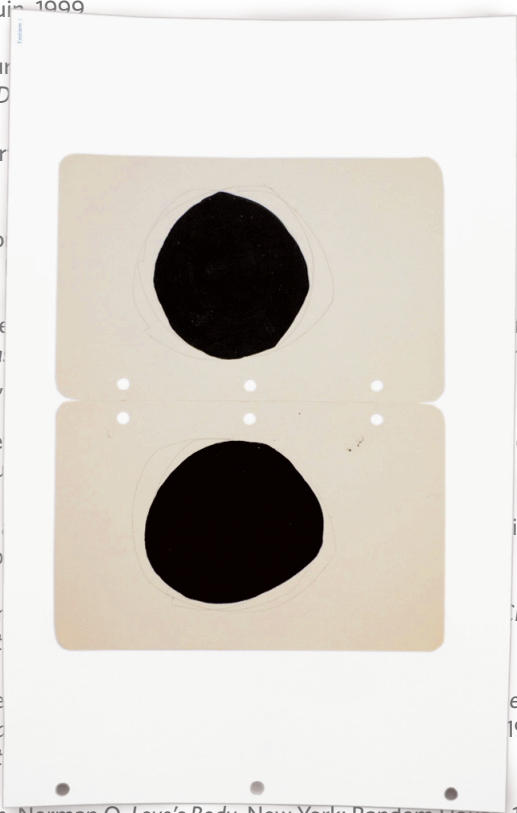
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Truth loves to hide. HERACLITUS

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