

Transubstantiation: Bread & Wine/Body & Blood

The intersection of art, religion, and science offers an unending list of questions to answer and answers to question. This fascinating trilogy continues to inspire us to ask questions that run parallel, violently collide, or fluidly intermingle. Making this work is my way of contributing to this dialogue.

As defined in the Encyclopedia of Catholicism, “The Eucharist is the sacramental celebration of the Paschal Mystery (i.e., Christ’s dying and rising for humankind) in a context of praise and thanks for all that God has done and continues to do.” It is during this celebration that the transubstantiation of bread and wine into Christ’s body and blood is said to take place. This is an amazing and mysterious concept to consider, both intellectually and spiritually. A human sacrifice remembered, a visceral body and blood ritual repeatedly enacted.

All of the works in this series were derived from holy wafers that were saturated in wine. However, as detailed as these images are, they do not provide any true evidence or proof to substantiate whether or not a miraculous transubstantiation has taken place. But why do we need, or at least strongly desire to have the spiritual aspects of our lives undeniably confirmed? Relying on our faith alone is rarely enough. We want proof, or to be even more specific, visual proof. The photographic and digital processes used to capture these images--like science, art, and religion--do not always provide reliable information. Its vision, like ours, is limited. Seeing is not always believing, just as believing should not always require seeing.

This work will not definitively answer any questions of faith. Not knowing their source, one might assume that these images are a series of celestial (heavenly) bodies, extreme magnification of cells, and raw, bloody flesh. Obviously, by making these images of holy wafers saturated in wine, I have not turned them into the body and blood of Christ, nor am I making any such claim. However, a dramatic transformation has taken place. These substances have become something other than what they once were. These are objects for contemplation. They will not provide any undeniable proof, but if given time, they just might help us to answer that which they initially had refused to reveal.

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