

BUILDINGS TASTE LONELY TO ME

ALEX SCHWEDER



CASE STUDY



OPPOSITE *My Precise Self* learnt to account for the existence of other selves within it.

TOP *My Precise Self* unlearnt rigidity

New York-based architect-turned-artist Alex Schweder's practice explores architecture through the senses and emotions that architects typically neglect: smell, taste, sweat, desire. Describing his work as 'performance architecture', Schweder's installations act as a 'prop for inhabitants to form and perform their identities'. In this brief idiosyncratic text, Schweder describes his inflatable piece *Sensefactory*, evoking a form of architecture that is dynamic, unstable and erotic.



TOP *My Detailing Self* drew in supple fluctuations.

BOTTOM *My Collaborative Self* learnt to use its other selves as scaffolding to satisfy its urge to rise up.



As with most understandings, spatial discoveries arrive through my body. Mediating them are buildings. Embedded in these structures are restrictions to the possibilities my sensing body contains/constrains. Restrictions that were assumed during their design. Stable, binary and hermetic, these idealised foistings are incommensurate with the lived experience of my fraught leaky corpora.

Pursing and pouting, animated by currents, inflatable spaces unlike assumptive buildings have offered a recognition that approximates my sense of flesh ... my desire for other peoples'... the foreignness of my own... the meanings stuffed into it... the seduction of its stink. Tossed in the roiling of inflatable space, I press against its occupants, subjectivities previously without permission, without possibility, the supplier of my selves. Drinkers of the milk I yearn to leak. Tiny drops sweating through my shirt... expanding in a stereo broadcast of my longing to nourish ... lacteal masculinity leaking out.

Developing each inflatable, in this way, has had the quality of learning a self with whom I have always lived but never met. They've been hairy and luminous, pliantly metallic, and transparent to an absence. Yet selves, I've experienced as my own, are anything but discreet. In their latest subjectival iteration, Sensefactory¹, the choreography of inflatables displacing one another mirrors this understanding. That is of their movement. Of that which insufflates form into them, of their substance, I am less sure. This conglomeration of eleven writhing sacs constrained by one that never disgorges, suggests that one's perceived containment in a rigidly stable singular self might instead be a subjectival flashing plucked from a fluctuating dynamic between selves that are many. In substance, this conglomeration makes, out of supple buildings, supple selves.

1 Exhibited at Munich's Muffathalle in 2019, Sensefactory was a 25 by 15 metre installation curated by Muffathalle's director Dietmar Lupher. I developed this work's pneumatic space to

combine with scents by Sissel Tolaas, sounds by FM Einheit, lights by Chris Salter, graphics by Erik Adigard, and Sofian Audrey's research into sensing technology.