

# Delicate Matter: Two Conservation Case Studies on the Work of Paul Thek

Eleonora Nagy, with an introduction by Carol Mancusi-Ungaro

## INTRODUCTION

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From a conservator's journal:

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Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
Washington, D.C.

I am behind the scenes at the Hirshhorn museum in the conservation studio, examining Thek's *Fishman* as it lies supine on an examination table. I see fish all over a thin man's body. The body is relaxed other than the arms that encircle the head. The "skin" is dark brown, broken, and dried out instead of supple; parts of the feet are crumbling. The fish are flattened forms instead of rounded ones. Clearly, they are dead. One fish looks like a limp glove that lies languidly over the face of the man, almost like a poultice or a cosmetic mask. The feeling engendered is definitely one of stillness, alidity, lifelessness, death; there remains no suggestion of motion.

It is tempting to craft an immediate opinion about the object based upon these observations. However, that conclusion could be erroneous because the current appearance of *Fishman* has changed markedly from the original effect. In 1969, the fish were full and fat, not thin and flat. The latex was light in color and supple, not brown, discolored, and desiccated. It may very well have appeared as if the figure were floating in water, the artist having instantly caught a fleeting position rather than the stillness and finality of a death mask. The fresh materials in this case did "make the man."

What remains true to this day is the artist's hand—his decision making and his manipulation of material for visual effect. The look may not be what it once was in terms of physical properties, but it is in terms of the artist's relationship to the materials. He was cavalier—a piece of one cast here, a piece of another cast there. Precision and attention

to detail were not part of his methodology, but the conceit of fish passing over a human body was. Indeed, the incongruity of fish scales and human skin on top of one another in an almost equal lateral plane remains.

Much has changed; much has deprived this work of art of its original vitality in response to the passage of time and the irreparable aging of the material. However, the artist is still here: the way he worked; the way he thought; the way he conceived of an idea. Our challenge is to look beyond the degradation of the materials to the indestructible imagination of the artist that defies the passage of time.

## PAUL THEK: TWO CONSERVATION CASE STUDIES

*Eleonora Nagy*

An intimate bond exists between the artist and the conservator, one forged often despite the remove of time. The two may work decades apart, but through familiarity with working techniques and materials, the conservator can, in a unique way, step into the artist's mind, tracing entire sequences of his creative and decision-making processes and enhancing our understanding of his choices, both deliberate and unconscious.

As with any sound investigative process, we start from what we know, and in the case of Paul Thek, we know that the message he so often means to convey concerns the fragility of life; the fragility of his works *is* his aesthetics. Preserving this fragility is thus crucial to any conservator's evaluation of the work of artists such as Thek, because the conservator's purpose is not to revive the artwork to a pristine appearance but to ensure that it will survive in a manner sufficiently suited to the artist's intent, so future generations will have the same chance to reexamine and reevaluate the artist's process for themselves.

Today, we have sophisticated, scientifically based tools available to analyze materials and allow us to identify and anticipate problems that might impact preservation, which can give us a chance to prolong the life of the artwork. But

the central question remains the same, and that is when to touch a work at all, or leave it alone. Actual repairs, often referred to as “treatment,” are the most invasive preservation measures, a last resort after it has been determined that preventive measures are insufficient for the work’s safety.

The tenuous materiality of Thek’s work is, ironically, one of the aspects that gives it an enduring relevance, reflecting the artist’s preoccupation with death and mortality. As he pondered the subject, his work underwent a development from the physical, finite aspect of death toward a more spiritual, symbolic, and meditative resolution. Among his surviving three-dimensional works, the so-called “Meat Pieces” of the mid-1960s and the four versions of *Fishman* (1968–71) are exemplary in demonstrating this process. In the following we will explore Thek’s working methods and materials from a conservator’s point of view. It is hoped that offering a new materials-based angle, in addition to aesthetic and historical aspects of these works, will promote a more comprehensive understanding of the artist and his art. Additionally, discussions on treatment options and preventive care may aid in extending their longevity for future generations.

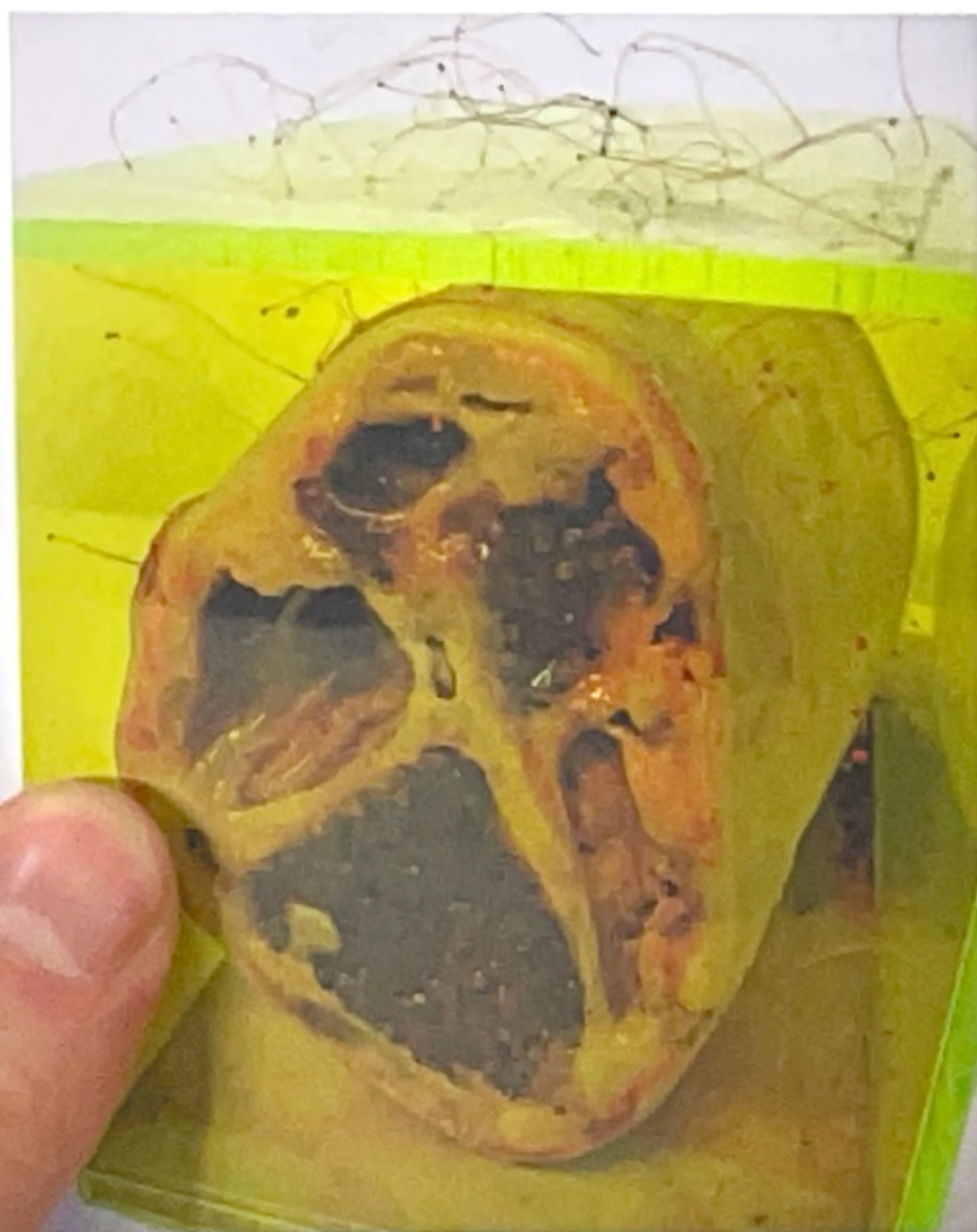
#### UNTITLED (1966)

This object (fig. 49), one of Thek’s *Technological Reliquaries* (1964–67), is a convincing replica of stringy fresh flesh, possibly a fragmented limb, encased in a Plexiglas box. The two ends of the meat expose flesh, with blood and bodily

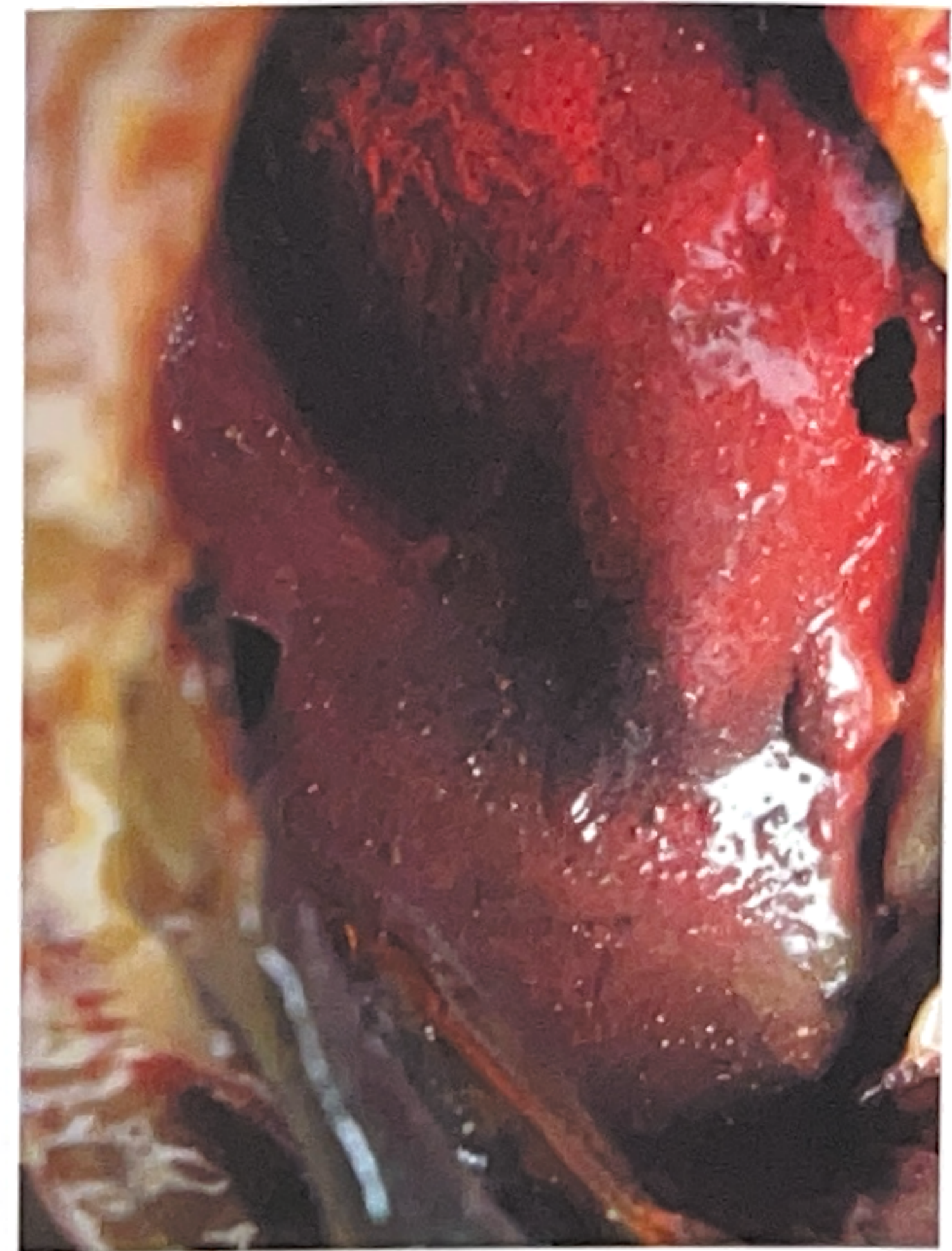
fluids oozing out at one end. Yellowish “fat” and “skin” areas on the remaining surface are covered with “hair.” The striking contrast between the handmade, “mortal,” and “perishable” meat and its inorganic, perfectly manufactured and permanently sealed container is deliberate. Thek consciously provokes emotional shock and sensual insult: “My work is insulting to our sense of the humane, insulting to art history in terms of subject matter, the way some of the abstractionists insulted art history in a formal, plastic way.”<sup>1</sup>

The Plexiglas box would become one of the defining characteristics of Thek’s “Meat Pieces,” but its use seemed to evolve out of practical concerns. “At first the physical vulnerability necessitated the cases; now the cases have grown to need the wax,” Thek said.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the earliest known image of this artwork, taken a few months after its completion, is on the poster for Thek’s 1966 Pace Gallery exhibition and lacks the vitrine. An image two years later of Thek posing with *Untitled at documenta 4*, however, shows the vitrine on.<sup>3</sup> Thek would say of his vitrines, “I do not know if the cases hold out the viewer or hold in the wax-flesh. Maybe it’s the same thing. It’s almost impossible to tell what’s inside unless the viewer has his nose to the glass.”<sup>4</sup>

The fluorescent green Plexiglas not only added a bizarre and surrealistic effect (fig. 304), it made the meat inside appear more genuinely raw, fresh, and oozing. Taking it off results in a less realistic meat replica: The ordinary materials and paint are more perceptible, and the colors of the



Figs. 304–06. Details of *Untitled* (1966), 2009. Wax, paint, polyester resin, nylon monofilament, wire, plaster, plywood, melamine laminate, and rhodium-plated bronze, 14 x 15 1/6 x 7 1/2 in. (35.6 x 38.3 x 19.1 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 93.14



Figs. 307 and 308. Details of *Untitled* (1966), 2009.

flesh lose their full deceiving power. The purposeful, calculated effect of the Plexiglas is vital to the work's ability to shock the viewer.<sup>5</sup>

Thek constructed the meat inside the case from successive layers of beeswax. While beeswax is typically used as an intermediate medium in the classical artistic process and was not a popular material among sculptors of the mid-1960s, both Thek and Joseph Beuys employed it as a final medium.<sup>6</sup> The first layer on top of the structural core is clear wax, followed by a red layer, then a yellow one.<sup>7</sup> As in gilding, the red layer optically "warms" the semitranslucent yellow wax above and gives it depth and a more realistic look. Faint vertical brushstrokes on the uppermost yellow "skin" layer indicate that it may have been prepared as a sheet, brushed warm on a flat surface then wrapped around the bulk of the meat (see fig. 306, top left corner of the image).<sup>8</sup>

The red "flesh" ends and "blood" are made of beeswax mixed, while warm from a hot plate, with commercial artist's oil paints, directly from the tube.<sup>9</sup> Red "blood" in the cavity of the meat was finished in successive spray application in various hues of red (beeswax/oil medium) (fig. 308). Spray application of fluorescent Day-Glo paint, uneven by design in order to enhance the realistic raw meat effect, is the most characteristic technique and medium on the yellow outermost surfaces of the meat, which includes the entire surface of the yellowish skin and the wax-coated plywood base.<sup>10</sup> Red lines on the edges of the "fat" are painted by brush in red Day-Glo paint (fig. 307). Thek further

achieves his hyper-realistic effect through the use of three different final finishes for the object. Fluorescent Day-Glo paint is sprayed, mostly on yellow surfaces, while a thick brush application of what turned out to be, upon analysis, a glossy, clear polyester resin covers the red meat areas, completing their fresh, raw, juicy effect.<sup>11</sup> Thek creates contrast between the skin and the red meat by leaving the minor bony surface areas matte.

Like the contrast between the wax meat and the Plexiglas vitrine, Thek employs another level of contrast on the meat itself. Modeled in traditional matter (beeswax), the meat is finished with the most current artist's materials of the time: polyester resin and Day-Glo paint. Ultraviolet illumination of the meat confirms that the very bright areas are thinly sprayed with Day-Glo, while the dull, matte surface of the red "cut end" is coated with thick brushstrokes of polyester (fig. 305). What the viewer experiences here is, actually, natural versus synthetic, both in appearance and in fact.

Thek pushes his anatomical trompe l'oeil even further by using plastic-coated wires to imitate red blood vessels and strings to create the stringy effects of the meat. The globular texture of meat and fat was achieved with a variety of glass or plastic beads, with or without holes.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the rough texture with finer granulates seen in the proximity of the beads was created by mixing fine purified white sand (quartz) or similar substance into the paint. "Hairs" appear to be growing not only out of the skin but out of the base and top of the vitrine as well. These Thek

made from nylon monofilament, the ends of each melted directly on a hot plate, creating a half-globe shape that gave better adhesion to the red Day-Glo paint into which he dipped them. The monofilaments must have been pushed into the wax surface of the meat or base while warm, in order to create the round protrusions at the root of the stems.

The optical illusion that Thek creates of the hairs actually growing out of the vitrine is so effective that it first had to be questioned whether it was even feasible for conservators to remove the box to inspect the meat inside (fig. 313). Once each hair had been examined individually to establish the fact that none “grows through” the Plexiglas and therefore would not suffer damage by opening, it was decided to remove the vitrine.

Impact damage on the side of the meat (fig. 306) indicated that it might have been loose in the vitrine, subjecting it to hitting the side of the enclosure and possibly causing additional damage when handled or during transport. It is also possible that the damage may have occurred during Thek’s lifetime before he added the vitrine and he may have ignored it. In addition, severe cracking and lifting on the “fat” and “skin” surfaces seemed in need of stabilization (fig. 311). An area of possible mold growth in the vitrine had been a concern for years (fig. 312).

External examination of the closed vitrine and use of ultraviolet illumination on the bottom indicated that the only accessible bolt holding the meat is original and untouched.<sup>13</sup> No other means of attachment of the heavy meat section can be determined. During transportation, the considerable weight of the meat, secured only on one end of its bulk, could cause the meat to swing around its bolt, thereby damaging the object. Known examples of other poorly secured meat pieces support this concern.<sup>14</sup> However, after removing the vitrine, the meat was found secure and not loose on its base. Using a right angle, it was also determined that at the site of the impact, the meat did not touch the wall of the vitrine.

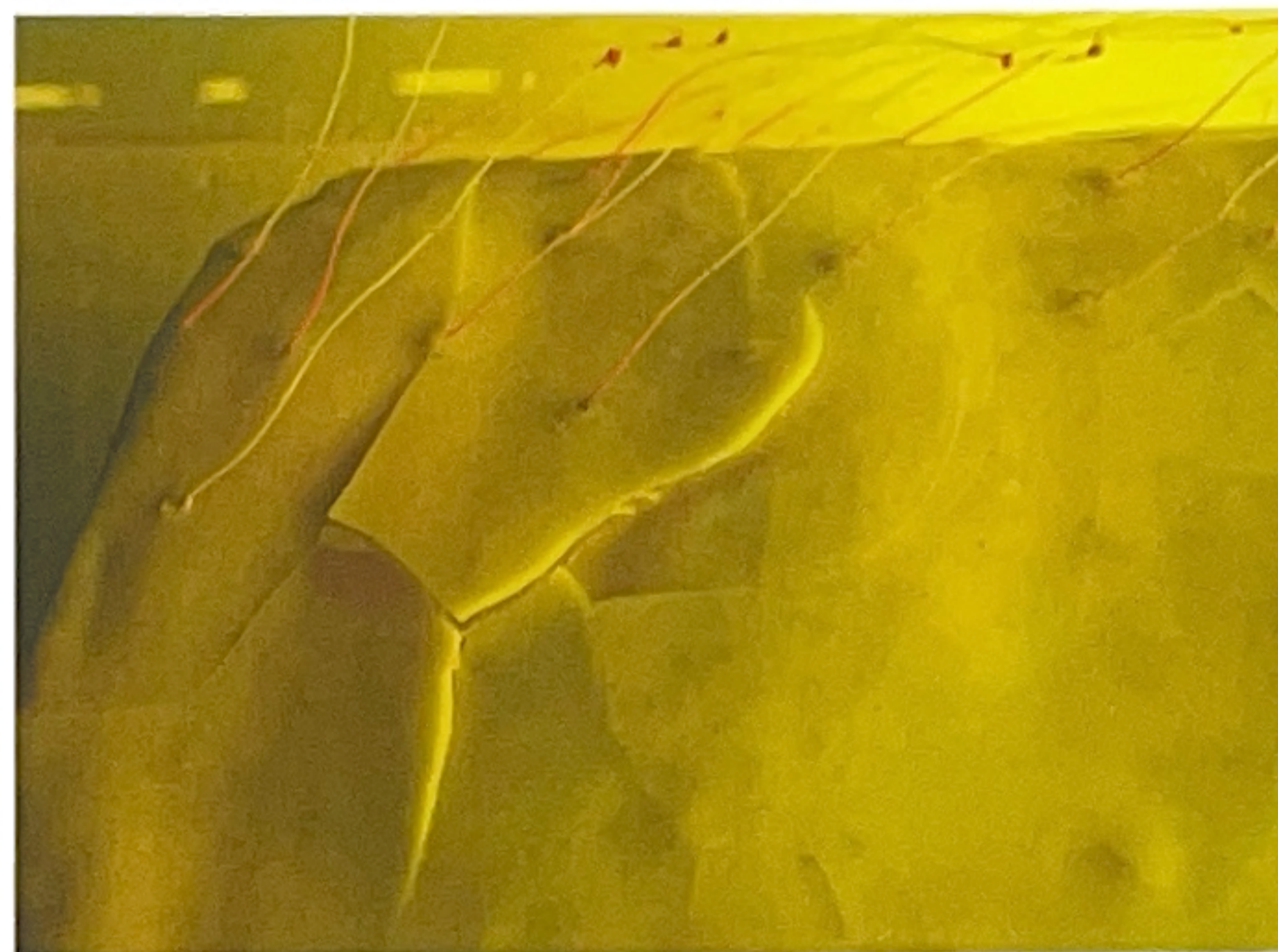
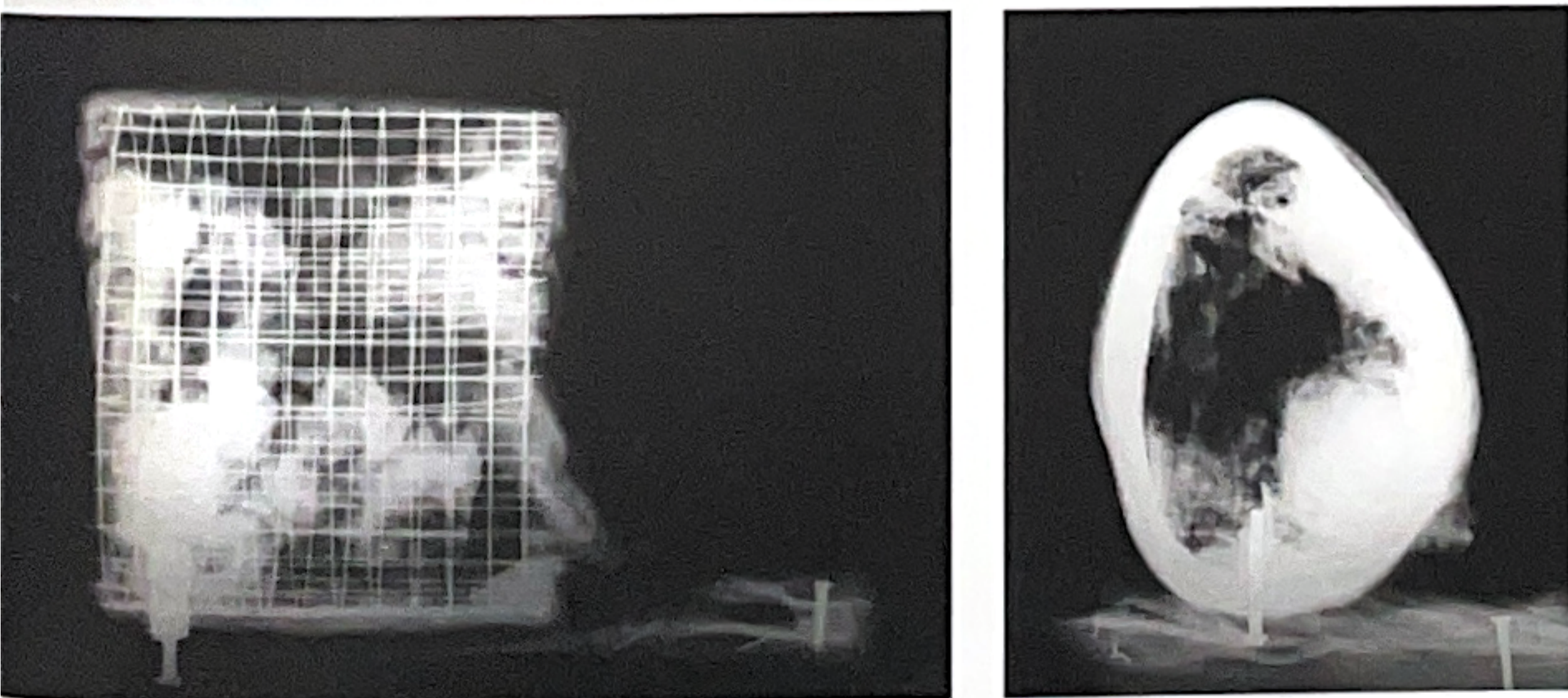


Fig. 311

To get a better understanding both of how the meat is secured and also its construction, which may help to determine underlying preservation concerns, X-ray images were made (figs. 309 and 310). Two X-rays, from the side and the end of the sculpture, indicated a wire-mesh core on top of plaster.<sup>15</sup> Although a plaster core was anticipated, the white, randomly located, amorphous blobs of plaster seen on the images came as a surprise. Some other works by Thek, such as the foot in the Kolumba museum in Cologne, are known to have an even, thin, hollow plaster shell cast as a core. The amorphous and discontinuous shape of the plaster within the body of the meat suggested the use of a foam core (possibly Styrofoam). Density of foams is very low compared to that of the plaster, and therefore foam, even if present, would not be visible on X-ray images that have been adjusted to the density of plaster. Since X-ray films provide a direct, life-size image, one can easily approximate the wire mesh being about one-quarter inch or less below the surface. In addition to the visible single bolt in the metal case that secures the meat at the bottom (fig. 309), the X-rays revealed a flat-head screw imbedded in the plywood from the top. This screw secures the oozing section of the object and must have been placed in the plywood in preparation for the oozing part to be built on.<sup>16</sup>

Dubious white “growths” on sections of the meat, visible to the naked eye, have raised concerns about possible mold growth in the vitrine, a reasonable suspicion for the enclosed microclimates that a permanently sealed vitrine may create (fig. 312). However, a millimeter-sized sample, collected for identification, was easily lifted with a surgical scalpel, raising doubt that it was a natural mold-type growth; furthermore, when the sample was inspected under



Figs. 309 and 310

magnification, microscopic plantlike growth, typical of mold, was not observed, and no smell was detected.

The next two hypotheses for the white encrustation were either that it is an intentional design element created by Thek, or it is a migration or salt formation from the wax and paint. Thek's assistant has indicated that a conscious faux-mold effect would not be unexpected from Thek, while salt formation on other "Meat Pieces" has been reported.<sup>17</sup>

Instrumental analysis proved the white crystalline substance to be Palmitic acid,<sup>18</sup> a chemical compound present in beeswax and oil paints that may have migrated to the surface of the wax over time. The permanently closed vitrine may have slowed the natural evaporation of Palmitic acid from the beeswax into the atmosphere, explaining why it had crystallized. Since it has been determined that the white exudate is not yet another feature made by Thek to shock the art-loving public, it is a candidate for removal.

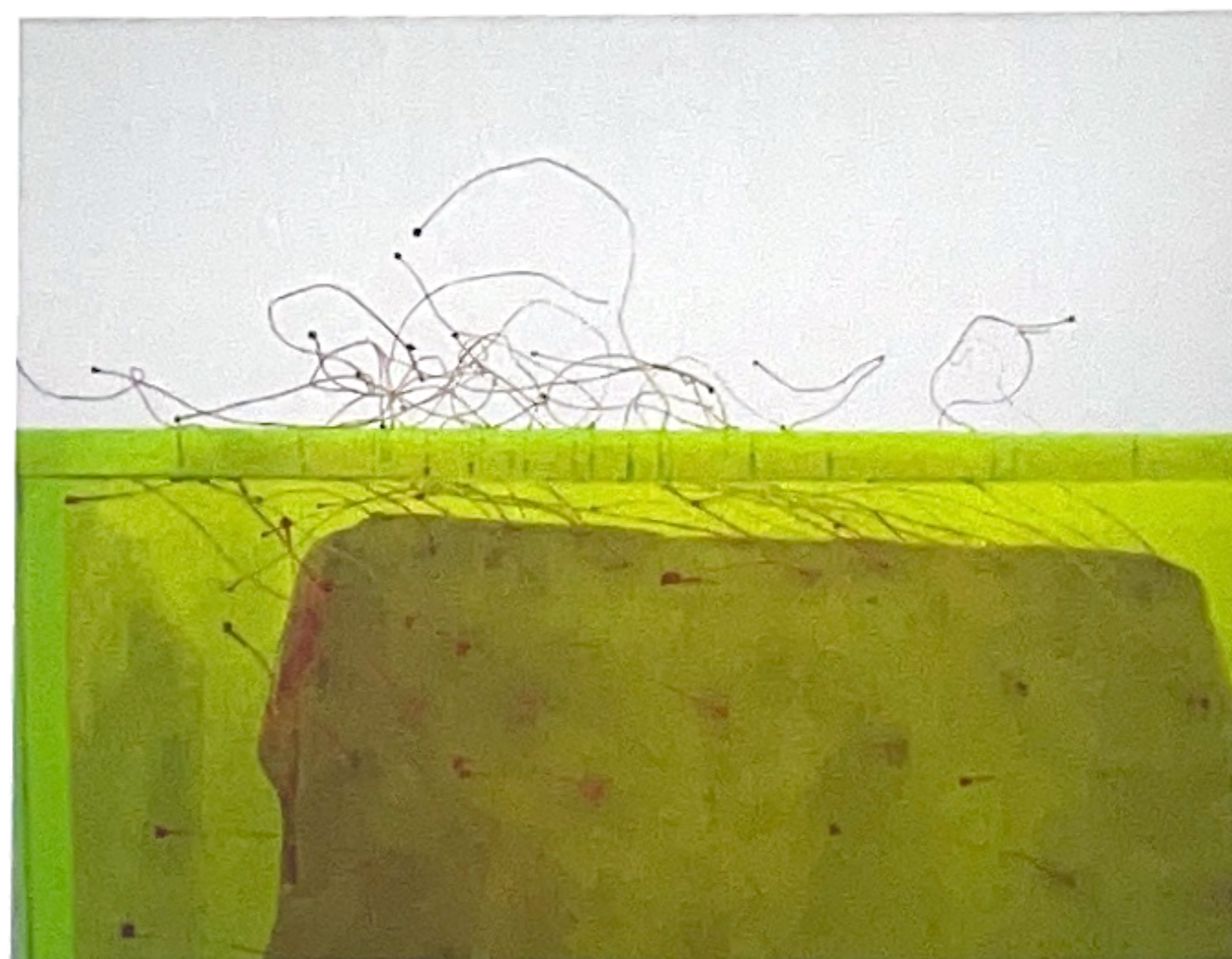
Thek's use of Day-Glo paint, which was relatively new on the art supply market in the mid-1960s, raises concerns about the work's exposure to light. As its name implies, Day-Glo paint is a daylight fluorescent paint that "not only absorbs colors the way a conventional one does, it also takes in the absorptions that are occurring at higher energies and converts them to luminescent light whose emission wavelength, the perceived color and the conventional color overlap. . . . Fluorescent color appears to be literally making its own light, because the eye cannot justify the amount of color being produced with its light source; that is, the color glows."<sup>19</sup>

The high luminosity of Day-Glo paint is crucial to the striking effect of the wax meat in *Untitled*, yet by itself, the effect of the paint is beyond realistic, almost unnatural.

This may have been another factor in Thek's decision to cover the meat with tinted Plexiglas: The Plexi mutes the luminosity of the paint, and although the impact is slight, it mellows the colors just enough to achieve Thek's intended visual effect of a real slab of raw flesh.

This aesthetic decision had another important consequence as well, although Thek was likely not aware of it at the time. Day-Glo paints tend to lose their fluorescent effect when exposed to prolonged daylight and ultraviolet light.<sup>20</sup> The tinted Plexiglas used for *Untitled* actually provides a moderate degree of ultraviolet protection; by introducing the vitrine, Thek significantly (and possibly unwittingly) contributed to the preservation of his work. However, not all the Day-Glo-painted elements are contained inside the box. Examination of the monofilament "hairs" provide an excellent example of Day-Glo paint both in a preserved and damaged state within one object: The hairs seen outside the vitrine are faded, with none of the luminosity of those inside the vitrine (fig. 313). Examination of the hairs under ultraviolet light further confirmed this observation.

Extensive cracking and lifting of the yellow "skin" areas of *Untitled* undoubtedly require stabilization, yet the current, considerably damaged state of this "Meat Piece" does not mute the shocking initial reaction to the work that Thek originally intended. The same can be said for the blunt impact on the side of the meat, which, as mentioned earlier, may in fact have occurred while the work was still in Thek's care. Therefore, to preserve the original visual impact of this artwork, no additional aesthetic repair is deemed necessary. Accepting the age and normal natural decay of Thek's works is a prerequisite to retaining the concept of fragility in his art.



Figs. 312 and 313. Details of *Untitled* (1966), 2009.

### FISHMAN IN EXCELSIS TABLE (1970–71)

Made as the last and most complete version of four variations of a cast from the artist's body, *Fishman in Excelsis Table* (fig. 120) is undoubtedly the principal and most complex surviving three-dimensional work in Thek's oeuvre.<sup>21</sup> The piece is a Christ-like self-portrait, a "flying figure being held aloft by the fishes," according to Thek.<sup>22</sup> Hanging from the ceiling, viewed from the bottom only, the installation creates a dislocating sensation; a man drowning and floating, death and resurrection at once.

Comparison of all four *Fishman* works shows that they were each cast in the same 16-section negative piece-mold, and that this mold was created from at least two separate casts of Thek's body.<sup>23</sup> The join lines that show the sections, each of which consists of a top and bottom half, follow the same pattern on all four casts. The fact that certain piece-molds share the same identifying characteristics, such as socks on the left calf and the top half of the left foot, long johns on the right thigh and lower leg, and a long-sleeve shirt on the right arm, prove that the negative mold used for the four casts is identical. The curious dress code of this otherwise naked figure also indicates that this single negative mold must have been assembled from at least two separate casts from the artist's body. For example, the top half of the left foot is in a sock, while the sole of the very same foot is bare (fig. 315). Similarly, the right arm is dressed in a shirtsleeve on the back and naked on the front, while the bottom half, buttock, and right thigh is in long johns with the top of the same thigh naked. It becomes clear that Thek made at least one cast each clothed and unclothed and, for some reason, ended up pairing the bottom halves of some negatives with the top halves of others.

The fish were cast in latex separately. It appears that Thek used two types of fish, one smaller than the other and with a smoother body, but that both were cast in halves.<sup>24</sup> The completed fish were adhered to the body using the same latex as for the casting. Runoff marks on the body of *Fishman in Excelsis* indicate the generous use of latex for this purpose. Each figure received a different arrangement and number of fish. Since the casts of the figures are identical, it is the unique configuration of fish on each that provides the best means of distinguishing the four figures. Of the four casts, *Fishman in Excelsis* is the only one to receive on its surface pink paint and blobs of faux meat. Thek was not known to keep precise records and had no collaborator doing so for him. Therefore, identification of individual *Fishman* works becomes an important tool in tracing the exhibition history of different casts during Thek's lifetime. It is also a good example of the

unique contribution made by conservation approaches to research in art history.<sup>25</sup>

Fish applied to the back of *Fishman in Excelsis* indicate that Thek must have completed the figure with its fish first, as he did with the other three *Fishman* works, and only later did he conceive of suspending it under the table. There would seem to be almost no other plausible explanation for the fish on the back, since, with the addition of the table, they are entirely hidden from the viewer. The plywood-topped, white-painted utility table suggests that Thek salvaged it for the artwork; paint residues on it that appear similar to the paints of *Fishman in Excelsis* hint that it may even have been Thek's own working table. The table hangs by four metal cables, secured to the table's apron. The cables are a later addition to relieve stress on the original, less durable white ropes that can still be seen on the work.<sup>26</sup>

There is a gap of approximately one foot between the figure and the table, necessary to achieve Thek's intended effect of a floating *Fishman* (fig. 314).<sup>27</sup> Loosely tucked into this void is a collection of found and handmade items—fish, feathers, seaweed, wire mesh, strings, nets, wood, dowels, electrical cords, Styrofoam, and fabric—which surround, invade, and dangle about the body. An excellent



Fig. 314. Detail of *Fishman in Excelsis Table* (1970–71), 2009. Kolumba, Cologne



Fig. 315. Detail of *Fishman in Excelsis Table* (1970–71), 2009.

example of Thek's momentary impetus in the creative process is the single safety pin holding up a large white sheet. Typically for Thek, this is a permanent means of execution.

Thek's life experience cannot be described as orderly or deliberately precalculated. Disarray and unattended structural aspects of his art resonate with this uncertainty and random chance in life. The latex body is held in place by three thin aluminum bands (fig. 312), secured by one nail at each end. Wax blobs similar to Thek's "Meat Pieces" hang off loose nets surrounding the body (figs. 314 and 315). Palm prints of the artist, made when the wax mass was still warm, hang on sets of double electric wires that surround the figure, creating a systematic motif that is in strong association with the cable meat pieces. Black hair from a brush on the face of *Fishman in Excelsis* shows that wax was also painted directly on the figure, while large chunks of wax were modeled to the torso. Based on the direct correlation of appearance and execution techniques of the work's wax components to *Untitled* (1966), one can surmise without instrumental analysis that the constituents of these wax blobs are the same as those that were verified for the "Meat Piece": beeswax, oil paint from the tube, thick polyester coat, and perhaps Day-Glo, which extend the same conservation concerns expressed for *Untitled* (1966) to *Fishman in Excelsis*.

It is clear that by 1968, Thek was proficient in using wax, the medium in which he had created his various "Meat Pieces" and also his celebrated "Hippie," the life-size cast of himself that was the centerpiece of his 1967 tableau, *The Tomb*. His decision to switch to latex for his casts of *Fishman* is significant.<sup>28</sup> As it seems Thek wanted a figure that was conducive to being suspended somehow, he no doubt found the lightness of latex appealing, though he could also have used fiberglass, polyester, or some combination of these or similar materials, which are also lightweight. However, latex itself is not the longest lasting artist material, and while it is impossible to know whether the properties of its aging were a consideration for Thek, by selecting this natural rubber as a medium, the artist introduced a factor of natural aging into his *Fishman* casts. Within a generation, there can be a perceptible change in the condition of latex; akin to the lifespan of a human, perhaps Thek's philosophical pondering about mortality is expressed here on a material level.

Examined close up, the color of the latex indicates that the rubber of *Fishman in Excelsis* is in good condition; however, darkened brownish areas, especially at the extremities, indicate brittleness (fig. 316). Likewise, rapid color change within small areas, such as on the left hand or the fish attached to it, also suggests brittleness. Reasons for such color alteration in latex are numerous, ranging from improper mixing of the latex before casting to excessive handling of the particular area.<sup>29</sup>

Compared to other latex casts of *Fishman*, one can argue that the latex cast of *Fishman in Excelsis* is in the best condition. With the exception of the finger, the latex of this figure is intact, and it is more supple and skinlike than the one in the Hirshhorn's collection. The hues of the latex indicate some pliability retained in the substrate, while the Hirshhorn's cast exhibits tears in the darkened, dried latex, suggesting a mummy rather than a live figure. The *Fishman* in the collection of the Kunstmuseum Luzern is reportedly in the frailest condition, while the Kolumba's *Fishman* sustained a lateral deformation.<sup>30</sup>

The risk posed by transportation of *Fishman in Excelsis* and many other works by Thek is one of the reasons why a major retrospective for this American artist in the United States has been so long in coming, and time has only exacerbated the intentional fragility of Thek's original work.<sup>31</sup> Yet it is clear from Thek's own career that although he produced work that was not the most conducive to transport, he wanted his art to be seen by a wide public. Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as Donald Judd, who created permanent installations and denounced the frequent travel of art in general, Thek considered multiple venues and

simultaneous exhibitions in both Europe and the United States. The collective travel history of the *Fishman* casts suggests that for Thek, aiming for maximum public exposure was more important than the retention of the perfect condition of his art. Two of the casts crossed the Atlantic, while the one in the collection of the Kunstmuseum Luzern completed a round-trip from Europe to the United States and back, traveling extensively during Thek's lifetime. As for the "Meat Pieces," most were made in New York, but a good number traveled overseas and are now in European collections. Some of these works suffered minor damage during transport, but this must be weighed against the greater recognition Thek enjoys in Europe along with the artist's oft-expressed desire for more recognition in his own country.<sup>32</sup>

For Thek, perishable life directly translates into the fragile materiality of his art. Such inherent fragility contradicts his desire for utmost public exposure, which requires frequent transport of his works. While both aspects of this conundrum must be respected and carefully weighed, conservators attempt to strike a fine balance by limiting transportation and display of such fragile works, but permitting their inclusion in exhibitions of key importance to the artist or public.



Fig. 316. Detail of *Fishman in Excelsis Table* (1970–71), 2009.

#### NOTES

1. Gene Swenson, "Beneath the Skin: Interview with Paul Thek," *Artnews* 65, no. 2 (April 1966): 35.
2. Ibid. According to the artist Neil Jenney, who also assisted Thek with his work, Thek used a commercial fabricator to construct his bases and vitrines. His source for the Plexiglas was Canal Street in Manhattan, a commercial center for plastics, which was a few minutes walking distance from his studio on the Lower East Side. It is likely that he had the vitrines executed in the same area as well. Jenney, recorded interview with the author, October 19, 2009, conservation files, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
3. By 1966, other "Meat Pieces" and similar objects are with vitrine, such as *Untitled* (Two Tube Meat Piece) (1964), *Birthday Cake* (1964), *Pyramid* (Self-Portrait) (1966–67), *Untitled* (Self-Portrait) (1967), and *Warrior's Arm* (1967).
4. Swenson, 35.
5. Other works that include yellow-green vitrines from the same period can be seen on pages 66–71 in this volume.
6. The last sculptor well known for working in beeswax as a final medium was the Italian sculptor Medardo Rosso (1858–1928). Jasper Johns and Brice Marden used encaustic techniques for two-dimensional artworks.
7. Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy analysis indicated that the media for samples from all three layers are excellent matches with beeswax, while further gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC/MS) analysis confirmed the presence of beeswax in these samples. The clear/white wax was directly comparable to the beeswax standard, while chromatographs of red and yellow wax samples were comparable to beeswax standards but also contained higher amounts of unsaturated C<sub>12</sub> fatty acids. Melting temperatures for all waxes used in *Untitled* are as follows: 54.1–56°C (129.4–132.8°F) (yellow); 58.6–60.6°C (137.5–141.1°F) (clear); 64.3–65.4°C (147.7–149.7°F) (red). (Narayan Khandekar, Lynn Lee, and Erin Mysak, "Paul Thek: *Untitled* [1966]," unpublished analytical report from Harvard Art Museum dated October 23, 2009, conservation files, Whitney Museum of American Art.) There was no evidence of paraffin, carnauba wax, or synthetic oils despite the fact that both Neil Jenney and Thek's friend and gallerist Michael Nickel specifically referred to Thek's use of paraffin (Jenney, recorded interview with the author, and Michael Nickel, interview with the author, February 2009, conservation files, Whitney Museum of American Art).
8. Jenney, recorded interview with the author.
9. Ibid. Thek also used a hot plate to shred the wax. Jenney has stated that "all colors in wax are oil paints."
10. Ibid. Thek's use of Day-Glo paint was also indicated by Raman spectrum (Khandekar, Lee, and Mysak) and confirmed by the author using UV illumination. Day-Glo use by artists has been too little researched to recognize Thek as one of the pioneers of its use; one can only affirm that Thek was systematically using it by 1966, especially for his three-dimensional works. The colors he used most frequently were bright orange-red and green-yellow. Fluorescence of similar colors and on comparable surfaces of other works has been reported but not analyzed, among them *Hippopotamus Poison* (inspection by the author with Michael Duffy at the Museum of Modern Art, October 21, 2009), *Meat Piece with Warhol Brillo Box* (1965) (inspection by the author with Sally Malenka at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, January 12, 2010), *Meat Piece with Butterflies*, *Pyramid* (Self-Portrait), *Untitled* (Self-Portrait), and *Warrior's Arm* (Christine Adolphs, "Die Werkreihe der 'Technological Reliquaries' der Kunstlers Paul Thek, 1933–1988," *Diplomarbeit*, August 27, 2001, 53 [red