

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

**ART BASEL | PARCOURS**

Museum der Kulturen Basel

Münsterpl. 20

June 12 — 18, 2023

**ALEX CARVER**

*A Desired Mesh*

In the process of a split-thickness skin graft, the donor site is harvested via a crude but exceptionally sharp electric blade which removes a thin rectangle of the epidermis. If the wound site exceeds the donor site in surface area, the donor material may undergo a process of expansion utilizing a tool known as a “mesher.” Here, the harvested skin is passed through a primitive tool which incises it precisely with a series of offset, parallel cuts. When the donor material is grafted onto the wound site, it is expanded into a lattice of “skin bridges,” which can cover a greater area. During the healing process, new vascular and cellular growth eventually repairs these gaps within the mesh.

In this series of paintings, Alex Carver uses source images drawn from Guy Marchant’s *Calendrier des bergers* (1493), and a later printed edition, *Compost et Kalendrier des Bergeres* (1499). Specifically, the images are of the *Danse Macabre* (*Dance of Death*), which depicts bodies in agony, processed as raw material by apparatus and demons alike.

Printed out images are cut meticulously by hand in the manner of a skin graft mesh, and then expanded and hinged to a gridded cutting mat with masking tape in the casual manner of an architectural sketch model. These crude paper sculptures are documented from both front and verso, producing six unique slit patterns for six large scale paintings, whereby three works are explicitly figurative, drawing directly from the source image, and three works become a kind of figural negative image.

These works are not meant to function as diptychs, but as an unresolved delamination of a singular image. They are cross-sections of painting’s membrane, at once purely symbolic and diagrammatic, yet simultaneously singular and agonizingly biological material – *flesh*.



*Phases of the Skin Graft Take (epithelialization)*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2128.23]



*Revascularization*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2127.23]



*The Skin Bridges (donor site)*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2130.23]



*Imbibition (graft passively absorbs oxygen  
from the wound site), 2023*  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2129.23]



*The Recipients (wound site)*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2126.23]



*Inosculation (a vascular network is established)*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
79 x 79 inches (200.7 x 200.7 cm)  
[AC2125.23]