

What this work is about

Living Systems · Genesis and Inheritance sub-series · read against four discourses

Premise

Living Systems is a body of paintings, sculpture, and dimensional textile organized around two named sub-series · Genesis (the origin object) and Inheritance (the rupture) · with the Origin and Pareidolia and Thread groups holding the middle. The work emerged from a specific biographical fact · a pituitary macroadenoma diagnosed during the artist's reproductive years · but the work does not stay there. Its cerulean fields, cobalt fields, gold inlays, and immobilization-mesh substrates open onto questions the contemporary moment is already asking, in language the contemporary moment is already using. This document maps four of those questions and the work's specific contribution to each.

1. Distributed cognition and the body as system

Contemporary cognitive science has spent two decades dismantling the notion of mind as a centralized executive in the skull. From Andy Clark's extended-mind thesis to Lisa Feldman Barrett's construction of emotion, the working model of the human is closer to a federation than a monarchy. The body is not the container of the self; the body is the self, distributed across organs, microbiota, signaling cascades, and exchanges with environment.

Living Systems opens with the Genesis sub-series, anchored by Genesis (2026), the first work in the body and now held in studio as its origin object. Genesis is a small, dense field of hand-carved spheres bound by gold filament and sealed under resin, with a 24k gold leaf border. It establishes the series grammar before the larger paintings exist: a body, a binding tissue, a value held in spite of cost.

Living Systems takes this proposition as a formal challenge. Eye Sea All I, the keystone sculpture, refuses to locate intelligence at any single point. Its gold inlays scatter across a mesh substrate that was, in its previous life, a clinical instrument used to fix the head in place. The work inverts the device's logic: where the mesh once held the artist still so a machine could deliver radiation to a precise location, the finished sculpture distributes attention deliberately and refuses any single focal point. The viewer's eye is asked to move the way a nervous system moves · across, around, between.

2. Matriarchal intelligence and inheritance after reproduction

The work's keystone takes its name from J2, the orca matriarch known to researchers as Granny, who led her pod for an estimated century after her own reproductive years ended. She is one of three species in which post-reproductive females remain central to group survival; humans are another. The grandmother hypothesis in evolutionary biology proposes that this prolonged post-fertility lifespan is not a glitch but a selection · matriarchs are kept alive because what they know is needed.

Living Systems sits inside a cultural moment in which menopause is moving from medical silence into public discourse, but most of that discourse remains framed by loss · of estrogen, of fertility, of youth. The work proposes a different frame: that inheritance is the transmission of traits that survive forward, not the transmission of wounds. Faceless Self Portrait, which refuses the conventional self-portrait demand for a recognizable face, asks who the matriarch is when she is no longer reproductive and no longer young. The Origin series · Inheritance, Mass, Drift, Release · names the four motions through which traits travel.

The Inheritance sub-series of Living Systems opens at Hamptons 2026 with Origin / Inheritance I, the body's first public statement of rupture. Encaustic spheres, 24k gold leaf, gold thread, and acrylic ink on cradled birch · a silver hero sphere is held by satellites in a cobalt field, and a single gold thread traces the line of descent to a signed cobalt-and-gold sphere in the corner. The thesis is rupture, not refusal · the new generation observes, accepts, and breaks the patterns it is given, though it is often misunderstood for doing so. Inheritance, as a sub-series, names the act of seeing clearly what one chooses to carry forward.

3. Medical humanities and reclaimed clinical material

The medical humanities have become one of the most fertile interdisciplinary fields of the past decade, asking how illness, treatment, and the clinic should be represented and what art can do that medicine cannot. Artists from Christina Sharpe to Carolyn Lazard have made work that does not illustrate illness but instead converts clinical material · records, devices, language · into objects that hold complexity.

Living Systems contributes to this conversation through its substrate decision. The immobilization mesh embedded in Eye Sea All I, Origin / Inheritance I, and the three Origin paintings is the artist's own · the actual device that fixed her head still through her treatment. Its presence in the work is neither symbolic nor metaphorical. It is the literal object, taken out of the clinic and given a second life in which it holds gold rather than holding a head. The work argues that clinical experience does not need to be translated to become art; it needs to be transposed. The same material, asked a different question, gives a different answer.

4. Post-human identity and the matriline as commons

Post-human discourse · from Donna Haraway's cyborg through Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subject · has insisted that the bounded individual self is a cultural artifact and not a biological fact. We are constituted by exchanges: with microbiota that outnumber our own cells, with kin networks that share traits across generations, with the species and ecosystems whose survival is entangled with our own.

Living Systems takes the matriline as a specific instance of this proposition. The matriline is a commons · a body of inherited material held collectively across generations of women, transmitted vertically through mothers and grandmothers, and operating regardless of any individual's reproductive status. Pareidolia in Blue, the largest painting in the series, names the cognitive habit by which the brain organizes ambiguous fields into recognizable figures · faces in clouds, animals in shadows. The work proposes that the matriline is the same operation at the scale of generations: a tendency to recognize, across the noise of inheritance, the traits that have already worked.

What the work proposes

Living Systems is not autobiography illustrated. It is a proposition about how survival, intelligence, and inheritance operate when the body is read as a system rather than a unit. The biographical fact of the artist's illness is the entry point but not the subject. The subject is what the body keeps.