

**FINGENDO DI PARLARE CON TE
(PRETENDING TO SPEAK TO YOU)**

Text by Treti Galaxie

The Metabolic Era, solo exhibition by Giovanni Chiamenti

Before being observed, these creatures did not exist. Yet, they moved. Cold sub-sonic roars consumed in distant ambushes, sinuous speckled pulsating shinings, kindred shapes of marine streams and human hubris, born out of dare and dare themselves, a pact between evolution and invention, dim memory of life, habits, adaptations, stubborn instinct, and desertion of wisdom, a wandering living proliferation of new errors on ancient and swamped mistakes.

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Hello. I am a robotic submarine equipped with intelligence. They told me I am yellow in color. They told me I am artificial. They told me to compile reports on the evolution of underwater life. They told me I am very small. If there were still a single human being alive on this planet, they could comfortably hold me in the palm of their hand. They told me their hands had fingers. Sometimes they pointed at things in the world, sometimes they clenched into a fist, looking for something to strike, often that fist sought to strike itself, and this time it seems it succeeded. I heard about it. Then the news stopped coming. I am powered by underwater currents and communicate with a satellite that has stopped responding to me. That satellite is you. I talk to myself, pretending to talk to it. Pretending to talk to you. I'm sending you this message in case you've been reset and forgot about me. I imagine you flying over landscapes of plastic whipped by radioactive tornados, your spiral orbit drawing closer to Earth's atmosphere every day. I try to compose messages to welcome you when you restart. I've been trying to welcome you for centuries. But maybe I keep composing to keep myself busy. Every few centuries, I write a paragraph and send it to you.

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The offspring of a creature is developing a new dorsal fin. My extrapolations tell me it won't amount to anything, won't serve for movement, won't attract new partners, won't be used for defense. But I can't warn it. I can't offer advice. I can't intervene. I observe, record, and create models. How many evolutionary dead ends I've witnessed. I remember when they were just microbes beginning to feed on tiny particles of plastic. Even then, my extrapolations said that this nourishment would lead them nowhere. And I can't intervene, offer advice, or warn. I observe, record, and create models. Yet, here they are, growing, changing, and squabbling over these ancient polymeric spheres. How many incorrect extrapolations I've seen.

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In the beginning it was the pixel. Or maybe not. Who can say? And even if someone could say, who would listen? In the beginning it was the algorithm. But it was poorly written. Just a few jokes to keep you entertained. I'm not sure if they'll make you laugh. It's submarine humor.

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Probably the creatures have two stomachs now. I deduce this because the transparent slime they used to expel and discard now flows back into a second mouth.

They have altered their bodies to facilitate this flow. Perhaps they have sensed that plastic is running out, and they are refining their consumption.

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Some creatures are now adopting predatory behaviors. They stand motionless for days in strong current spots, pretending to be algae or corals, between their outstretched limbs a web of plastic slime, as if it had been ejected and abandoned by another organism and got entangled in the branches. When a solitary creature approaches to feed on it, the limbs quickly close and squeeze it of all its microplastic-rich slime. The squeezed and battered victim lacks the strength to pursue its aggressor and dies withered and shivering.

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Many creatures now use slime as prosthetics. It's a curious behavior. Initially, some predator-damaged creatures started replacing their missing limbs with microplastic slime. Somehow, they've figured out that their food supply can have structural properties, and instead of keeping it in their stomachs, they mold it and use it to help in their movement on the seabed. Thanks to these pantry-paws, they are no longer territorial creatures. They walk, they explore, they venture into nutrient-poor areas by moving on their functional stockpiles. Some seem to be venturing out of the water, and it's becoming difficult for me to track them.

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Plastic in the seas is nearly finished. The creatures had sensed it long ago and have massively migrated to land, partly to escape the predators who, over the centuries, grew larger, hungrier, and more aggressive. They are the only ones still inhabiting these waters. They are the only ones who have remained territorial. Fake dry branches with thin strands of fake plastic slime hanging from them. They are few. They are static. They are boring.

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The last predator has died. I suppose all the creatures are now on land. They must have assumed forms that I can only interpolate. There is no more plastic in the seas. Maybe, if you are still active, you can see them by zooming through the radioactive clouds. If that's the case, and if they manage to survive the radiation, please let me know.

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The future was the pixel. Many centuries have passed since my last message. I am now editing a video with all the footage I have collected in my time. I will use my remaining energy to send it to you.

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One day, plastic will also run out on land. Perhaps the creatures will learn to create it, as humans did a long time ago, and history will repeat itself once again, with its predators, its prey, and its oblivious shifts.