

Tim Burton's Cadavre Exquis

November 22-December 6, 2010



Tim Burton. (American, b. 1958)
Untitled (The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy and Other Stories).
1998. Pen, ink, and watercolor on paper 11 x 14" (27.9 x 35.6 cm)
Private collection. © 2010 Tim Burton

¹ Stainboy, using his obvious expertise, was called in to investigate mysterious glowing goo on the gallery floor. ² He felt his heart pounding hard against his ribs. As he bent down, he saw his own reflection on the surface of the puddle. ³ Withholding his breath, he lightly poked the surface of the puddle. The surface shifted strangely, slowly spinning into action. ⁴ Stainboy took a step back as the goo continued to spin faster and faster. A sharp cold wind whipped round the room. ⁵ The chandelier swung, the art on the walls shook against the walls, and the goo began to take form. ⁶ Slowly beginning to encircle Stainboy, the gelatinous mountain of goo looked almost familiar. ⁷ Stainboy's eyes narrowed as he tentatively lifted his hand towards the goo, allowing it to hover inches from the surface. ⁸ Suddenly the goo sprang up, covering his hand. Stainboy tried to pull away but the harder he fought, the stronger it got. ⁹ The goo pulled him closer and closer. He suddenly realized why the goo looked strangely familiar. ¹⁰ But how did the goo end up on the gallery floor? And more importantly, why? ¹¹ It clung tightly to him; he could feel the chill of the gelatinous goo creep up his arm. True to his nature he did not panic. ¹² A plan was what he needed. Stainboy had always been the curious type, but right now, he had no desire to wait and see. ¹³ As the goo continued to engulf his body, Stainboy noticed the chandelier, now swinging furiously. Could he reach it? ¹⁴ Stainboy reached up as high as his arm would allow, the goo keeping him just inches out of reach of the chandelier. ¹⁵ It was like his arm was shorter than it had ever been in his whole life. His finger tips scraping the cold metal chandelier. ¹⁶ Untying his cape, he tried one desperate attempt and blew into the goo-ed fabric to make himself a balloon to stand on. ¹⁷ Standing on the balloon he grabbed the chandelier and started to swing with all his might. ¹⁸ He thrust his body back and forth, squirming and kicking his legs frantically to loosen the goo's grip. ¹⁹ The violent swings caused small pieces of the ceiling to fall down on the goo, causing a strange reaction. ²⁰ The goo changed colour and started to pulsate. Stainboy looked down at his feet as the goo released its grip and ²¹ began to bubble. The air got dense and hot. Stainboy closed his eyes and held on to the chandelier as hard as he could. ²² But, fate conspired against him. There was a groan of metal as, nail by nail, the chandelier lost its hold on the ceiling. ²³ As the goo roared with anger, Stainboy prepared himself for his demise. He gasped for what he thought was his last breath when ²⁴ out of nowhere, his fall was broken. Stainboy opened his eyes. What just happened? And who had just saved him? ²⁵ His vision blurred from the goo, Stainboy rubbed his eyes and a face came into focus. He heard a girlish giggle. ²⁶ As his vision cleared, Stainboy started to realize that his rescuer wasn't actually a girl, despite the laugh. ²⁷ Looking up, he found himself in the arms of a robot. Its feet in the goo and completely unfazed. The goo had all but given up. ²⁸ He

thanked the robot and decided not to mention the girlish giggle for fear of provoking the robot and getting squished ²⁹ by its enormous iron hands. Little did he know the robot could not hear. It smiled at him, and Stainboy started wondering why ³⁰ it had bothered to save his life. However, before he could do anything, the robot turned towards him and ³¹ with a sudden clunk, a door slid open on the robot's chest. Stainboy stared at the dark open space with trepidation. ³² From deep within the robot he could hear the clink of softly grinding gears. Stainboy looked closer and thought he saw ³³ something shining. He took a step closer to the open door when suddenly he was sucked hard into the open space of the robot. ³⁴ He must have passed out, for when he came to he was hanging upside down in a laboratory. To his dismay, he realized he was not ³⁵ the only one around. There were dozens, maybe hundreds, of rusty corpses hanging there. The sight was frightening. ³⁶ He could see movement in the far corner of the room but could not make out what or who it was, he could only hear the sound of ³⁷ rotating gears. Something was moving towards him. Stainboy's heart started beating faster ³⁸ and he could hear a distinctive girlish giggle breaking the painful silence of the laboratory. He turned and realized in fear ³⁹ that the room was full of robots. ⁴⁰ He tried to break free from the shackles, as a twisted, little old man in a lab coat was now just a few feet away from him. ⁴¹ The man's lab coat was stained with dried splotches of goo. Stainboy pulled on the chains with all his strength, but he ⁴² only managed to make a loud clanking noise that echoed throughout the lab. ⁴³ He continued to struggle as the old man inched closer and closer, the goo on his lab coat beginning to glow. Stainboy tried to ⁴⁴ clear his mind and focus, instinctively relying on his training for extricating himself from tight situations. ⁴⁵ The old man whipped his head around and stared at Stainboy. He brushed the dried goo off his coat, adjusted his glasses and ⁴⁶ reached into the breast pocket of his lab coat. After a moment's pause he pulled out a voluminous syringe, full of glowing goo. ⁴⁷ He wiped the syringe off on his trousers. An eerie grin crossed his face as he squirted the goo. A test run. ⁴⁸ Suddenly, a robot grabbed Stainboy so fast that he couldn't ⁴⁹ see where he was being taken. The robot eventually came to a stop and released Stainboy. Could this truly be happening? ⁵⁰ He saw very narrow stairs, and realized he was in the underground of the gallery. The walls had goo all over ⁵¹ them. Stainboy stood and looked at the robot: it was the same one that had brought him here, goo still covering its tracks. ⁵² This was the second time this robot had saved his life. Careful not to speak, Stainboy gestured towards the stairs ⁵³ trying to tell the robot to bring him back upstairs. But the robot couldn't move anymore, something was ⁵⁴ wrong. The robot stood motionless before sparks flew from its antenna and then slumped forwards as if it was switched off. ⁵⁵ Stainboy stood and stared. He moved towards the robot and reached out his hand to touch him. Just inches away, the robot ⁵⁶ with its last spark of power, motioned that something was behind Stainboy. Syringe in-hand, ⁵⁷ the little man in the goo-stained lab coat stood before him. ⁵⁸ Panic washed over Stainboy as he saw the old man's smile widen and his grip tighten on the syringe ⁵⁹, his eyes looking like punctuated ping-pong balls. This was the culmination of his two greatest fears. Needles, and ⁶⁰ death itself. The robot couldn't save him now. It was up to Stainboy. As the old man grimaced with his yellowed teeth, ⁶¹ a maniacal girlish giggle roared from behind. ⁶² Stainboy swiftly kicked the scientist in the groin. The scientist bent over in pain and the syringe plunged into his leg. ⁶³ Stainboy darted for the stairs. Looking back, the scientist was struggling to get up, goo flowing from his eyes. Stainboy turned ⁶⁴ back to the direction of the gallery, however, when he reached the top of the stairs he looked back to see the robot sprawled on ⁶⁵ the landing, the merest hint of life flickering in its eyes. Stainboy was conflicted — run or save the one who had saved him. ⁶⁶ Feeling morally bound, he headed downstairs to face-off with his enemy, save his new friend and end this gooeey nightmare. ⁶⁷ He used all his courage, and ran back downstairs. Stainboy got to the robot as the mad scientist had ⁶⁸ succumbed to death's sweet embrace. Relinquished of their master's cruel hand the other robots giggled with joy and began ⁶⁹ to reassemble their rusty corpses. Seeing that his hero was in good hands, Stainboy made his way back to the gallery. ⁷⁰ Conquering the final step, he scanned the artwork on the walls and caught a glimpse of the goo. ⁷¹ Still unsure why the original goo had seemed so familiar,

Stainboy's feet trudged a path through the gallery's ⁷² collection of art. Then he had a thought. Could the answer lay in the actual artworks themselves? ⁷³ He examined each painting closely, searching for anything that was somewhat recognizable. He then approached a piece of artwork ⁷⁴ hanging in a lonely corner of the gallery. As Stainboy approached, he knew the importance of the painting at once. It depicted ⁷⁵ something so astonishing that Stainboy had to take two steps back and a deep breath. Could it really be? ⁷⁶ He'd never known his father before, but there in the painting, stood his mother, right next to the scientist. Stainboy now knew ⁷⁷ that his genetic disposition was the result of one of his father's crazy experiments. However, he was filled with doubt too ⁷⁸ about the purpose of the goo his father had created. Was it evil or a cure to his abnormalities? Had his father brought him ⁷⁹ here with the intention of helping him? The harder he tried to think, the more confused he became with the whole ordeal. ⁸⁰ Once more the goo started to spin and the wind picked up in the gallery. ⁸¹ He knew it could all end here. But he wanted answers. He needed to know the truth. Breathing hard, Stainboy stepped towards the goo ⁸² and started to eat it. Knowing now that he was half made of goo, he knew it wouldn't kill him like it did his father. It was the ⁸³ key to his power, and his heroic obligation to stop it from harming anyone else. As he ate the goo, a luminescent green glow ⁸⁴ formed around him. He could feel his stains dissipating. It was curing him. No wonder his father was trying to ⁸⁵ inject the goo into his body. Stainboy watched with amazement as each stain slowly disappeared, leaving his body clean and dry. ⁸⁶ He blinked a few times and sighed. The stains were gone and so was the feeling of being an outsider. He was normal. Finally. ⁸⁷ A lonely puddle of stain sat below Stainboy's feet. He peered down at the murky entity which had driven his very existence. ⁸⁸ From this day he became known as Stainlessboy. The one who solved the case of the mysterious glowing goo on the gallery floor.

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3 Laetitia tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
4 Brian Mc Elroy tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
5 Catherine Faas tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
6 MyOwnNutshell tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
7 rynn tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
8 Eric Striffler tweeted on Nov. 22nd, 2010
9 Keith Pierce tweeted on Nov. 23rd, 2010
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