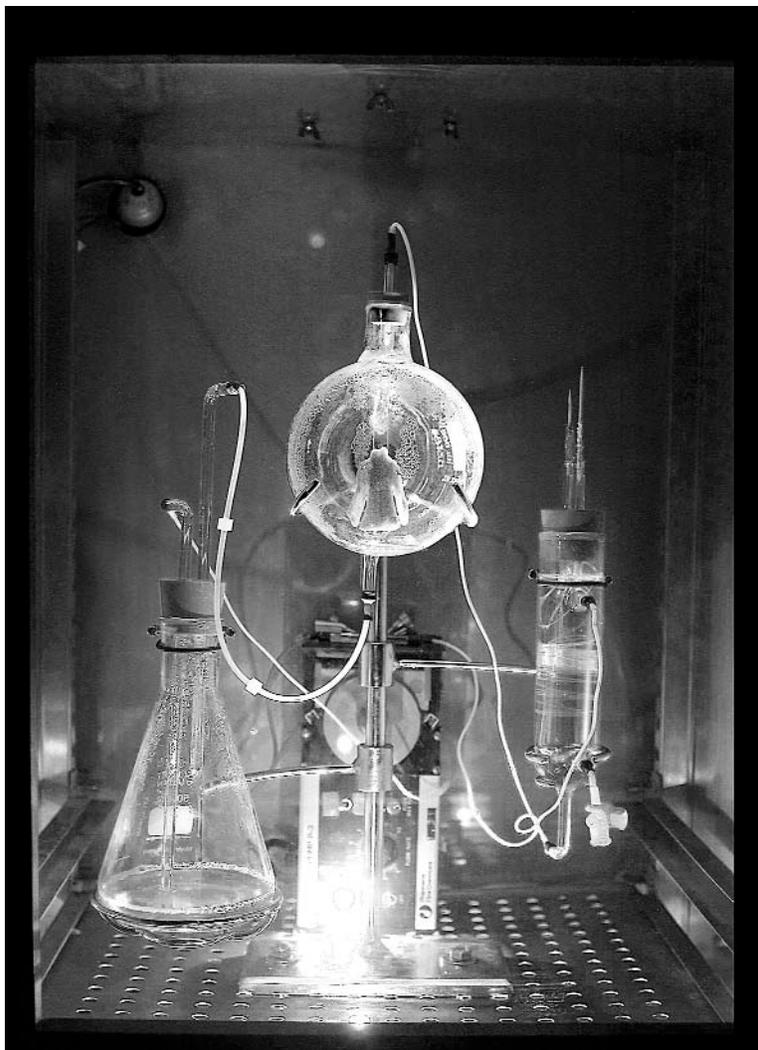


Michelangelo's Passion

THE SOURCE: "Loving Strokes" by James Fenton, in *Times Literary Supplement*, April 9, 2010.



***Victimless Leather*, a tiny jacket "grown" from mouse stem cells, "deconstruct[s] our cultural meaning of clothes as a second skin by materializing it and displaying it," its creators explain.**

his experiments with *E. coli* or other bacteria cause harm or suffering, they are also "introducing important questions into the public consciousness." He admits, "My art is ethically suspect. . . . My friend sat down with me and said, 'Well, you know, you say you're critiquing it and then you're actually doing it.' And I was like, 'You might be kind of right.'"

The first major bioart exhibition was held in 2000 in New York's Hell's

Kitchen neighborhood. Eduardo Kac, a Brazilian artist credited with naming the genre, had a piece on display in which he translated a verse from the Bible into Morse code, then used the resulting dots and dashes to write DNA code. Which verse? Genesis 1:28, in which God commands that man "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

ART HISTORIANS HAVE LONG speculated whether a set of drawings Michelangelo Buonarroti made for his friend and patron Tommaso de'Cavalieri in 1532 reveal a not-so-secret love. In one of the drawings, "Ganymede," an eagle's talons grip a young man around the shins as it bears him aloft. "To many," James Fenton writes, "this looks like buggery—buggery, to be sure, of an exceedingly unusual kind . . . but buggery nevertheless." Also fueling the gossip are a number of passionate love sonnets the artist wrote to the young nobleman. "The artist protests a chaste love," Fenton says, "but he does so with a passion that, for a modern sensibility, can only with difficulty be conceived as chaste." At the time Michelangelo presented the drawings, he would have been 57; Tommaso may have been as young as 12, though he was more likely at least in his teens.

During his life, Michelangelo (1475–1564) fastidiously guarded access to his drawings. "*Non mostra cosa alchuna ad alchuno*," his agent wrote to the Marquis of Mantua: He doesn't show anything to anybody." Rival artists often sought out such sketches for clues about techniques they could appropriate—indeed, 50 sketches

were stolen from Michelangelo's workshop in 1529. The artist burned all drawings still in his possession shortly before his death.

But the drawings Michelangelo presented to intimates, such as the ones given to Tommaso, were very different from working sketches. Fully finished, these works were presented, according to Giorgio Vasari, Michelangelo's contemporary and early biographer, to teach the young man how to draw. (At the least they sparked in Tommaso a collecting interest: He eventually amassed an impressive body of works by Giotto, Donatello, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci.) Their content, however, at

least to modern eyes, is blatantly sensual, even improper, though it seems clear—if the emotionally tortured texts of some of Michelangelo's sonnets are taken as evidence—that the pictures don't represent reality. Michelangelo is thought to have been homosexual, but he publicly expressed aversion to coitus, and advised others “not to indulge in it, or at least as little as possible.”

But did Michelangelo have any qualms about his relationship with Tommaso? The two remained lifelong friends, even as the younger man married, had children, and became a widower, and Tommaso was with Michelangelo when he died. Fenton speculates that

Michelangelo “would have been horrified” by the innuendoes about his relationship with Tommaso, “not least by the equanimity with which we say this kind of thing.”

Fenton, a poet and critic, believes that the very publicness of the courtship belies the possibility that it had a physical component. Michelangelo knew he “was acting nobly and openly, not as a sodomite in a dark alley.” To modern scholars, Fenton says, “the experience of the desire is crucial to the diagnosis; whether we act on such desires is almost irrelevant. But this kind of thinking was quite foreign to Michelangelo.”

OTHER NATIONS

Enterprising Apparatchiks

THE SOURCE: “Beyond Corruption: An Assessment of Russian Law Enforcement's Fight Against Human Trafficking” by Lauren A. McCarthy, in *Demokratizatsiya*, Winter 2010.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION monitors estimate that 10,000 people are trafficked out of Russia for sex work every year, while thousands more—most hailing from impoverished parts of the former Soviet empire—are trafficked into the country to toil at Russian construction sites, textile factories, and agricultural concerns. As with other social problems, the Russian legislature has been slow to respond: There wasn't a law on the

books criminalizing human trafficking until December 2003. Of the 350 cases of human trafficking registered with the authorities through 2007, only 10 have made it to the courts.

Those familiar with post-Soviet Russia's struggles with poverty and graft would likely attribute these disheartening statistics to corruption. But Lauren A. McCarthy, a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, contends that the explanation is more complicated.

Exhibit A: Russia's byzantine criminal justice system. During the investigation and prosecution of human traffickers, a case may pass

through four departments in various federal ministries, and “no link in the chain really has any incentive to follow a case through.” Add to that the fact that Russian law enforcement officials are a cautious breed, immured in a Soviet-style hierarchy that penalizes those who work on cases that don't advance. Officials are particularly reluctant to apply the new human trafficking law, as they fear they will get tripped up by its complicated provisions and harm their careers.

Trafficking is a particularly difficult and resource-intensive charge to pursue. One federal anti-trafficking official told McCarthy that his unit could investigate 10 cases of prostitution in the time it would take to investigate one case of trafficking. Like law enforcement personnel throughout the world, “the majority of Russian law enforcement are honest and hard-