

**KONSTFACK UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS CRAFTS AND DESIGN
ÄDELLAB/METAL DEPARTMENT**

**NARRATIVES ON CORPORALITY: A SMALL,
PERSONAL COLLECTION**

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I am left undecided whether to have his ghost materialize, uncertain to what extent to acknowledge the intensity of the pain on his behalf, for that would mean I was collaborating in it, expressing what might for this circumstance be better left unsaid, indeed even impossible for me to say, for how many times does he have to speak his pain to remind himself that it is there, and what right have I to impose confession in favour of repression, to adjudicate the precise level of avowal necessary for health or for some other higher good. There I am. I am the age he was when he had his leg amputated. Eighteen years old. I am soon to leave home. He is letting me go, but coming back to me now, stamping across my consciousness with a chant of a line from Virgil.

DAVID WILLS

ABSTRACT

There is great truth to be found in the thought that whatever I do today, will never come close to what I will do tomorrow. It is within the simplicity of such thought that we foresee the build-up of the being through the body and experiences lived by the body.

The present work is an attempt at sharing a personal research over the topic of the body through a contemporary perspective. The body as performatic tool for the understanding and interconnection of art and life is the prerogative for the dialogue proposed here.

Through the study of some writers and artists, a personal language comes forward and presents a text to be read fully or partially: as a whole or as fragments.

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PROLOGUE (or, “before we start”)

Writing, creating, is intrinsically tied to an idea of time. It is time, like Roland Barthes said, that gives writings a safe meaning, that binds a chain of texts. Binding old writings to a new book, is questioning time and asking it to give answers to fragments from the past. Time, in its duplicity, exists as writing and as memory; time is a form in itself.¹

Time gives our existence a safe meaning: it articulates us, bridges us, allowing this chain to unravel in its manifold presence.

It is time that creates, and time that allows the meaning to arise. In this duplicity, the act of writing, the act of creating something, is continually dependent on the jolt of memory. It is only the memory of time, and through time, that will perform the act of susceptible creation.

In the realm of ideas, of inspiration, creation can be embraced and exist as reality. It is time that exists while the performance of making takes place and creation itself becomes the practice, a moment that begins and is already over, to then begin once more. The machine of “making”. Like a constant expulsion. I am constantly burning out ideas that come; I play with them, an interplay unfolds in materialization, and then it is gone, in the past. From the past to the past. The journey in between so present it allows me exhaustion.

The continued performance of creation is the dwelling place for a conscious and unconscious interplay of question and answer. It might be true that it is time that answers questions of fragments from the past, yet it is creation that instates the constant search that symbolizes the constant project of creation; and reality and desire interact enabling the practice/performance to take place.

When this interaction takes place, between desire and action/act, time is again an element, yet now it is the jolt forward, the possibility of performance, the moment towards the future.

In the dwelling place between myself, and my past, I find the possibility to exist.

¹BARTHES, Roland. “Critica e Verdade”, p.16, 2003.

INTRODUCTION

1. Dialogue

What is intended here is a dialogue; perhaps a dialogue with myself.

The possibility I foresee, is a trial at giving about some insight into a world of thoughts and a conjecture of words that ultimately converse over the immateriality of what comes out of me.

What I have come across, which has somewhat become a pattern, is the idea that we sometimes fall upon something that reveals truth. Whether this truth remains as absolute, whether it dissolves itself in the next second, does not matter. What matters is that at all times, some things have the power to unveil, and we are able to touch a sense of truth that expresses all. For what all is at that moment.

I have found some writers and their respective words, some artists and their respective creation, to give way into my thoughts and into my body, and allow an escalation of impulses that perform an expression. This expression can be the outcome of a subsequent thought, the revelation of a past feeling, the beginnings of a piece of writing or an object. What I mean to grasp here is a corporeal, sensorial dialogue that fluctuates between memory, words, investigation and action, creation.

What intrigues me at present is the idea of body and embodiment; body in/and art, body in/and life. The contemporary view of the body as in mergence with environment, material, and meaning is the backbone of this collection of writings. The subject lies in the idea of a body as expressive space and experience, where it can be considered subject and object simultaneously.

2. Spurt from the past

When David Wills, in his **Prosthesis**, narrates a memory of a father by a son (David himself, as the piece is narrated in first person), and debates over this father's pain, I am suddenly hit by attraction over these words...they permeate my past, they lure me into believing that here I have found beauty. The beauty that connects us to the past, usually a grotesque form of beauty since it is deformed by time and illusion, provides us with the possibility to overcome or understand. When I read Wills' words, I offer myself the chance to touch upon what I see from my past today; better yet, I offer myself the chance to touch upon what I am today. It is like a portrait that I had

never seen, and that suddenly shows up to illustrate a picture I could not fulfill myself, but one that I knew well; a picture that, at the same time, gives me the opportunity to see a better image of myself today.

3. Creation

What this creation revolves around is the idea of the body as arena for a multitude of narratives: physical, emotional, philosophical. This dialogue intends a series of propositions over the topic of my own body as experience worthy of expression. I am establishing bridges that manifest expressions that, through my symbolic past, or sensorial present, touch upon something latent within me. Latent because I read words, and express thoughts that “draw a picture” of a path that will ultimately result in a compilation comprising research, art and life.

4. What

Perhaps this dialogue will serve only the purpose of freeing myself from my own ghosts. The ghosts I talk about are those, like the pictures or images that we sometimes search consciously and other times not, yet the picture-image that inadvertently will show up, that must be explored in an attempt to push us forward.

The choice of bibliography was not planned, it merely arose from curious investigation over the topic of the body as space for interaction. I cannot say that a conscious bibliography is at hand, since I searched and came across books, catalogues and documents that indirectly were presented to me. Let us consider the possibility of prior dialogues, with teachers and colleagues as well as my own predilections over some topics or authors; that would be a more appropriate explanation of how the choice of books, magazines, documents, was made.

The prologue serves as inspiration on the idea of writing as creation and expression, bonding body and time as to enable past and present to shape future, therefore a simple yet deep metaphor to creation itself, where the body as memory and narrative comes to merge through past, enabling a present creation and future existence.

The first chapter was chosen as the opening line, carrying the thought of the post-modern body and the idea of presentification of the body; the second chapter deals with the performatic body; the third chapter brings about the body between subject and object: an example through the work of Eva Hesse; the fourth chapter is based on the writings of David Wills' “Prosthesis” and the

body as archive of memories; the fifth chapter deals with the body between performance and the self, as exemplified by the art of Orlan; finally, the sixth chapter, with the art of Lygia Clark, brings about the body as experience for the making of the oeuvre.

This choice of chapters and their respective subjects draws a personal view on what could give way to a narrative bordering the body as corporeal and sensorial arena, where art and life meet and expression takes place.

Within the scope of such work, I understand the possibility of invalidity due to a lack of, let us say, the formal requisites of an academic report; and leaning more towards an artistic-literary discourse, rather than a scientific one. In regards to that, my input resists and I sustain the quest I set out to pursue. This quest resumes itself in the search for thoughts that will never cease to challenge me, even if only for today. Understanding that a dissertation or thesis is a document submitted in support of candidature for a degree or professional qualification, presenting the author's research and findings, I believe myself to be fulfilling such requisite.

It would be unrealistic on my behalf, to extract from the writings I intend to put forward here, a structure of objective nature. I admittedly have no intention to push forward a theory, nor a conclusion that might perform miraculous philosophical debate. Therefore, my humble objective here is to present a personal research over the idea of the body in art and life, from the standpoint of a dialogue between me, and the world.

Chapter 1: Getting under the skin: the post-modern body and presentification of the body

The body is perceived as body in the slightest show of a limb, or in the representation of its wholeness; the presence of a body is felt whether or not one has engaged in physical interaction, the faintest of touches can arouse great sensation.

How we configure the body as a mode of comprehension and imagination is a continuous construction, susceptible of constant change and personal perception. As seen from a 20th Century perspective, the body and its modes of configuration merged into a single crucial understanding of the body as both whole and fragmented.² And according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “the medium that signifies the body, its representation, no longer is any different from the “raw material” of the body itself”.³

The “postmodern/posthuman” body gains a position of merge with surfaces, which enables its de-codification, its representation, presentation, and in the long run, its presentification. The sign, determined by the object, simultaneously represents the object. Pure icons equal presentification, the possibility of something that is originating, beginning, nascent. “With representation there is always some presentation. While referentiality is provided by the indexical element, imagination and signification can only be provided by icons. Any representation bears inside itself its face of reference, individuation and presentation as well as its face of imagination and presentification, faces which include many of the aspects that others have considered symptoms of a crisis of representation”.⁴

1960s artists brought art into their bodies; while 1990s extension artists flattened or extended their bodies, through digital means or extensions and prosthesis, respectively. This means that the presented body became the object, not of representation, but of the merge of body and environment, material and meaning.

In this presentification of the body, as served by one of its parts, it is “not necessarily behind faces that we expect the person to be revealed”.⁵ And so, alike Orlan, the face, the skin can be changed superficially, to engage in a discourse of a deeper nature. The skin no longer functions as the threshold, or confines, between an inside and an outside body; it becomes, in opposition, an association between self and other. It simultaneously becomes outside and inside.

Within the context of this “collapse” of inside and outside, our engagement with the body shows a clear liquidity, fluidity between exterior and interior; what can be considered “extended

2JONES, Meredith On Bernadette Wegenstein's “Getting Under the Skin: Body and Media Theory”.

3MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice In Bernadette Wegenstein's “Getting Under the Skin: Body and Media Theory”.

4SANTAELLA, NÓTH, Lucia & Winfried. “Comunicação e semiótica”.

5WEGENSTEIN, Bernadette. “Getting Under the Skin: Body and Media Theory”.

embodiment”, or else a “primordial mediation”.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty described phenomenology as a “method of describing the nature of our perceptual contact with the world”. He proceeds to say that the human body is “an expressive space which contributes to the significance of personal actions”. The body is also the origin of expressive movement, as is also a medium for perception of the world.

Existence is a condition that includes the co-existence of conscious beings and of non-conscious things. Bodily experience is an ambiguous mode of existence, because the idea of the body cannot be separated from the experience of the body, and because mind and body cannot be separated as subject and object. The mind and the body each have their own being, and the perceptions of the body influence what is perceived by the mind (and vice-versa).

Space may be defined as a form of external experience, rather than as a physical setting in which external objects are arranged.⁶ The advent of mergence, between what is considered outside and inside, an extended embodiment, can be considered a mutual perturbation between a body and its environment (not just the material world). A conditioned relationship between body and environment is established. This relationship is the resulting essence of perception, feeling and experience.

Body becomes more than corporeal manifestation, to engender concepts of materiality and discourse. Theorists in the fields of phenomenology and media theory “consider corporeal perception as an interplay between the perceiving and the perceived, and thus introduce the spectator as a corporeally involved perceiver rather than only as a decoding and signifying mind whose position, traditionally, was to interpret a pre-existing message”.⁷ To consider the experience of the environment and what engenders a given environment, is to consider the body as permeable and susceptible to mergence, to absorption, to amalgamation, to symbiosis.

Considering a given environment, a given experience as a medium, and therefore the body as result of an intermedial production of this environment; then an alteration of my own self, an alteration of the perception as an embodied process occurs.

“In his later works, “*Le visible et l'invisible*” (1964) Merleau-Ponty develops his thoughts on the ontology of seeing and of flesh, which contradicts hermetic concepts of subjectivity, Ego and presence. He articulates an understanding of inter-subjectivity as dramatically inter-corporeal. At this stage in his writings, seeing is not a subjective act, but an incidence of gaze, which enwraps the viewer, the visible and the other spectator. Merleau-Ponty puts forward the proposition that the familiar and the other, the visible and the invisible form a chiasmic intertwining of the self and the

⁶MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice. “Phenomenology of Perception”.

⁷“Intermediality in Theatre and Performance Art”

other, endlessly reversing and redefining them”.⁸ The body constantly redefined, establishes a relationship of strangeness, depending on which encounter is presented: body to body; body part to body; object body to body; visible and body; invisible and body, etc. Merleau-Ponty “does not understand the invisible as external to our world; but pursues the invisible within our world”.⁹

⁸“Intermediality in Theatre and Performance Art”

⁹“Intermediality in Theatre and Performance Art”

Chapter 2: the performatic body

Performative, live art, has foremost come to show us, since its beginnings, the interconnection that is possible between disciplines; revealing a nature so strong as to challenge ways of seeing, perceiving, and making art; a nature that strongly roots itself in the body. It becomes important to state that many forms of art, while maybe not apparently performative, have their origin in some performative action.

Performance, as in “autobiographical monologue” or “personal ritual”¹⁰, merge “the psychological with the perceptual, the conceptual with the practical, thought with action”¹¹; in this mergence lies a fundamental key to the idea brought about by performance, it being the concept of body and life as plausible arena for continuous performance. The borders between inside and outside, material and immaterial, personal and social, become mixed and a dialogue is spread open. Performance art also generates what is considered as the advent of the spectator of art as crucial element in the completion of an artwork. The idea of the spectator as performer is considered when this spectator is viewing art, reading a text, watching a film or play, and so on. We are constantly performing, exchanging and generating experience; experience that is an active engagement between the artist and the spectator.

“Sensory perception, behavioral psychology, emancipated sexuality, metaphor, and theatricalisation were elements that dealt with intellectual and emotional vibrancy of the real experienced, where physicality, connection to body, bring about therefore the body as integral material”¹². It is within these realms that the body reaches full expression and ability to become powered tool for the bridging of expanded planes of contact. The body, in confrontation with itself, reveals layers of meaning between art and life, artist and world.

The notion of the body in performative art is intrinsically tied to the idea of time. A work experienced in real time, active throughout a given moment, to be over in the next, provides us with the concept of embodied experience; a relation between art and life with no similar parallel, as well as a relation between body and environment revealing time as referential for its conception.

The body as object for and of art and life, reflects upon a “physical intelligence (that) deals with different understandings of bodies in time and space, and by the movement vocabulary that emerged from close contact with other bodies where a laboratory for visual and perceptual experiments, aesthetic and perceptual investigations, access to my own emotional history, come together in a medium that demands “presentness”- the audience's presence in real time, and content

10GOLDBERG, Roselee. “Performance Live Art Since the 60s”

11GOLDBERG, Roselee. “Performance Live Art Since the 60s”

12GOLDBERG, Roselee. “Performance Live Art Since the 60s”

that sharply reflects the present.”¹³It is in the possibility of this unequalled presentness of the performance that life breaks through, expressing layers of artistic, and personal experience.

This presentness offered/”demanded” by the performative body also aggregates the body as a measure of space, identity and narrative. The body as narrational object generates a notion of being, or of sense of the self transformed into aesthetic and artistic, contemplative matter. To performance artists, “it was important to relinquish the heavy mantle of high art, to declare that everyday life was not only material for art, but was itself art”.¹⁴

¹³GOLDBERG, Roselee. “Performance Live Art Since the 60s”

¹⁴GOLDBERG, Roselee. “Performance Live Art Since the 60s”

Chapter 3: violation of the regular: the body between subject and object: an example

Robert Smithson, when talking about Eva Hesse and her work, said that “She would work with essentially a regular shape and then violate that in some way”¹⁵. It is a beautiful way of understanding that creation can work like that. Ultimately we “take” things, experiences, memories, feelings, material, and break it, build on it, expand it, disintegrate it, we perform a ritual with it that generates our practice.

In Hesse's case, if we take Smithson's postulation as worthy, the violation of the regular shape is disregard, irreverence, disrespect, breaking of, offence, destruction, desecration, a failure to agree, sacrilege, transgression, profanity. In all cases, the meaning of violation is included and duly takes us to a place of understanding that Hesse's work produced a strangeness triggered from dissimulating something apparently/essentially regular.

It is important to see that, in any way, the act/the practice of creation represents, in its general and in its particular sense, a certain transgression. Perhaps it is that every single step we take, every moment that follows the next, signifies transgression. It is in the act of creating, though, that the limitless possibilities of action funnel themselves to generate a means of expression and a jolt towards liberation.

The actions set by our ways of existence, what our bodies and minds regulate us to be, and how this takes form in the environment we interact with, ultimately designate a series of limits and boundaries. When going beyond, when overstepping these limits and boundaries, one transgresses into violation. Usually, it is within our own felt confinements that one is able to transgress, or break free. It is in the proceeding, or following action of my performance, or of my practice, or purely of my routine, that I am able to step into this zone or this infinite.

Hesse's work, while spreading open, while dislocating the “essentially regular”, while transgressing the regular, touches upon the question of liberation. Smithson points out that a psychology of bondage is suitable to understand her practice, her control over the object; as if by enclosing/binding, she overcomes the object, “dominates it”. In another sense, Hesse's bondage can be understood as an act of bandaging, an act of covering, of providing support/protection. It becomes difficult to underline where liberation manifests itself, whether it is in the artist or in the objects of her production.

If we consider Hesse's production with a perspective on bondage, dominance over the submissive object perhaps represents a giving ritual; the giving of one to the other. We can see an

¹⁵Robert Smithson In “**Out of the Past**”: Lucy R.Lippard talks about Eva Hesse with Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson. ArtForum, 2008, p.237.

exploration of roles take form if we are to consider Hesse's act as bandage. In either sense, a deep ethos of mutuality is present, where exploration of emotions is brought forward; a power exchange is set.

What is beautiful to see, is how she articulates an interplay between “internal generation and external manifestation”, “biological organism” that constitutes her creation. Alive or dead, breathing or mummified...This tension is the assertion of a practice that gives way to something real. Something can be made real when it becomes a part of you; making it your own maybe parallels with the idea of dominance also...which sets us again into a questioning of the nature of values experienced by Hesse's production.

Chapter 4: I can relate to all this or “When the body dictates who I am”: the body as archive of memories, the phantom matter

Being able to touch upon memories to the depth of overcoming the simply conscious and attempting to reach the subconscious, requires entering harsh terrain. Initially through conscious images we make our way into the insides of our past.

Everything that one is to find, paradoxically already shows itself in our every movement and our very being. Actions and reactions, determined through the essence of what each of us are, express and exchange, giving way to experience generative of continuous experience.

Our bodies, therefore, are layered containers of everything that has once happened, everything that takes place now, and everything that will once be. Within this enacted narrative, the body produces experiences in itself and on others. This constant interplay interacts in an array of each individual's symbolic, imaginary and real, generating the material of life (and life itself).

Reaching back into the self, and the memories stored in the body, we are then able to walk, speak, listen, create,...this reaching back is a constant unveiling of the archive that is the body. Every movement is an unveiling, every action, every word. And it is through the unveiling that the self expresses and shows itself.

“There is a line from Virgil he keeps repeating. It is an incantation pressed into service to preempt the arrival of the spasm, an affirmation of mind over the random mayhem of phantom matter, as if it were already established that pain is matter, that phantom pain is situated in the flesh. (...) It is a chant or conjuration, to exhort or exorcise.”

“As long as I stand next to him I am drawn into the performance. By leaving I can forget his pain, forget his Virgil, until it comes back to me like a chilly haunting, like something one wakes up repeating in the early morning silence of receding dreams. Wanting to recite again what was once imprinted upon my memory like a rhyme from the nursery, wanting again the intimacy of a familiar quotation, I ask him for it.”

“Thus Virgil is always implicated in it, the memory of Latin verse overlaying or overlaid by a burst of phantom pain, such that it is now my way back, a long way back through a way of words, a way with words, to a moment where they are all in between us, and all he has between the nerve ends flailing like the hairs of some electric anemone threatening to spark on contact”.¹⁶

Through repetition the body begins to develop a sequence, a pattern of identification that will lead to a possibility of usage of whatever it is that has been, or is being repeated. Repetition itself is an enchantment, a chant that draws a mark, and comes back like a ghost.

¹⁶WILLS, David. “Prosthesis”, p.8

In this haunt-like mechanism, what is abstract, ethereal, incorporeal, intangible, mental, spiritual, achieves in the body the quality of matter. The flesh is imprinted with perceived experience. And in the receding, and advancing of repetition, the intimacy, the familiarity of a memory is established; and the body as an archive of memories, holds familiarity, intimacy, as a process of identification that creates a way back into such memories; triggering this body through something that affects it.

Chapter 5: performance and the self: a transcript from the art of Orlan

Beginning of transcript

“The skin disappoints.

Bursting the sack of skin does not necessarily ensure a good catch-

You don't obtain any more.

However, it does reveal the soul.

It is that which is torn, separated, cut to engender, in a word, the “natura”, or torn robe.

It is all the more overwhelming that man treats this skin so cheaply. Though it means so much to him, he will shed it at the slightest bidding. And even if he is not bidden, he wonders how to rid himself of it, for he wants to shed his skin.

Clearly the only thing he possesses weighs upon him.

It is superfluous since possession and being do not coincide.

Possessing it is the cause of misunderstanding in human relations.

I have an angel's skin, but I am a jackal; a crocodile skin, but I am a puppy; I have black skin, but I am a white; a woman's skin, but I am a man.

I never have the skin of what I really am.

There is no exception to the rule, because I am never what I have. Nothing new under the Sun or Moon.

King Solomon's words precede those of the satellite potentate. Nothing more to say, no comment. Haughty Harlequin eyes the audience with ridiculous scorn and pride. Amid the turbulent classes, some witty troublemaker rises and holds out his hand, pointing at Harlequin's coat. You say everywhere is like here. Would you have us believe that your cape is the same in the front, say, as at the rear? All he can do is remove his itchy coat. He stands up hesitantly and looks at his gaping coat tail”.

“What does she want?”

“What is her desire?”

“Now he is revealed, delivered, defenseless, to the intuition that Harlequin is a hermaphrodite”.

“By creating her own image, (she) is bursting in on the sacred, perhaps unbeknown to her, and revealing the processes of creations. In short, she is making an iconoclastic work: she is creating an

image to destroy it”.

-“Do you think that humans are capable of controlling technology and using it to improve or change?”

“So far, they have proved they are. I think there are big problems ahead. Genetic engineering could do great harm. A hammer can break things, but it can build things and make sculptures. It just depends how it's used. It's exactly the same with cosmetic surgery. You can look like a Barbie doll or some big star, or you can try to create your inner portrait. It depends how it's used. I think we have the resources...So I am optimistic. I think we can find positive solutions for anything. And for a woman, her body doesn't belong to her for long, so she has to preserve it and make it say what she wants without any peer pressure or the obligations of dominant ideologies. That's the field I work in and raise questions”.

-“For you, all these operations- apart from being performances and analyses- what are they for? What are you trying to do?”

“It must be exemplary, especially for a woman, to show her struggle with DNA, which determines her appearance. It's a problem today. The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor soaked by water, nor shrunk by the wind. A person puts on new garments, casts aside the old ones. Thus, the soul accepts new material bodies and casts aside the old ones which are no longer any use”.

End of transcript

What can be read above is an extract from a performance piece and interview by French artist Orlan, entitled “Carnal Art”.

Orlan talks about skin as a covering, a superficial covering that ensures a protection that can be broken, and to some extent, almost one that must be broken. The skin is the possession of man; his artifice to the outside world. His sacred castle, yet a sacredness thrust to mundane acts. It is only through this action, of entrusting his skin to the outside shedding of it, that man can begin to free himself. Yet it is only then, that man realizes that through the possession of himself, he cyclically will mislead himself, into believing that by shedding his skin, his being will be revealed.

It is hard to define the skin, our uttermost sensorial organ, as a superficial structure only housing something else, yet more profound, yet more true. Inner images, constructed by our minds

and souls (let us use the word “soul” to designate the irrationality of sensoriality), might, at most times, conflict heavily with our outside perceptual capacities. But it is only through our sensorial capacities that we can have a chance at bridging feelings of pleasure, acceptance, horror, disgust, and so on and so on...

To experiment with an object, to experience being touched, to cut yourself or be cut, to wear a heavy hat, or a light shirt...and then we can continue...to dress as a beggar, to wear diamonds, to be a beggar, or wear fake rocks...

What are we then? What will you have me believe: what do you yourself believe?

This sensory organ, this skin that we carry, that we shed, that we move into...will it tell you the truth, when what it experiences reaches your insides?

The art of Orlan, discoursing upon technology as a means to improve the world, touches upon something yet more latent: the capacity of man to change himself. If it is true that she searches for a constant inner portrait, it is also true that Orlan's inner portrait is a constant struggle to find herself as an image. What freedom lies behind the fact that the soul remains intact, and the skin shows itself unstoppably in collapse. A woman's body belongs to her, when Orlan says “not for long”, it generates thoughts on permanence and interaction with the world. The image of the body answers to a complex interaction of outer and inner world, it is our continuous stratum for the narrative of the being.

The dualism presented by Orlan's work, where a separation of mind from body bleeds also into the realm of gender division, shows her work as questioning what can be considered a sociology of embodiment. Historically debated has been the dualism of the rational and objective mind in relation to the body, and Orlan's work performs in the debate of man as mind and woman as body; the objective versus the subjective, the social versus the private; the mind as truth and the body as devious.

It is within contemporary art and its mergence with life that the body expands into a discourse equipped for social change and interaction, when female and male, body and mind can be addressed as open issues. It is within this frame that we find Orlan's work; the body as means for and of full expression and expansion.

Chapter 6: the body as experience for the making of the oeuvre: thinking the body through Lygia Clark

The body as a structure susceptible of expansion is catalyst of the multiple dimension of the being as emotional and historical developer. If one analyses a scar rooted into the flesh, one finds straight away that it becomes quite interesting to think it as: line? Drawing? Painting? Sculpture? This scar, though, tells a story, whether in silence or through a dialogue. When one analyses a movement in space, one can read it with the same set of questions. The physical memory of the being, its body, expresses a story told from infimal viewpoints. Scars, though, are also invisible; they can be mental. Yet over and over they are ever-present in the act, in the movement of the body, in its language of physical and linguistic expression.

The body as structure in constant build-up is keeping in as well as giving away. This uneven choreography is determining stratum for our existence as beings and as collective body. Lygia is continuously working with material-objectual sources that enable a reading and conform the idea of subjective and organic objects that in parallel dialogue with the human body; anachronic tales of a contemporary existence. She brings about and fuses the idea of body and materiality, and the space of art and the oeuvre becomes space of the world. It is with her work that we see, specifically, the beginnings of a participative art, where the artist is proposing something, and the participating spectator is constitutive part of the oeuvre. It is in Lygia's work that we see that “the object was no longer outside the body, but the body itself was the interest/object”¹⁷. It is in the realm of art and life that “sensorial objects”, “the home is the body” and “relational objects” take place; people are the objects of their own sensations and an archive of memories through the sensorial, having the experience, per se, as condition for the making of the oeuvre.

The objects, as they mobilize the corporeal memory of the receptor, summon the ghosts they have inscribed inside themselves and the process of creation doesn't stop with the destruction of the object. To create a stance where the power of certain materials can bring about a presentification of the body as source of visual, poetic, performatic, artistic articulation, means establishing rapports of reality effective into realistic narrative, in the realm of a projection with bodily, hence real, status and influence.

¹⁷ROLNIK, Suely. **Lygia Clark**.

TOWARDS AN/the END

Experiments on the realm of the body as narratorial source for effective realism constitutes the event of being, the expanded scenography of the being. The personal translocated into the public and furthermore, the ephemeral of an act into the history of the self, means an interplay of creative visual and invisible experience, activated through art and life.

Physical and mental restraints and expressions create an environmental painting, a phenomenological choreography that conforms us as individual body and collective bodies, culture, the social interaction. This interweaving between endogenous and exogenous activity is source for creation, materializing a contemporary struggle, the struggle of the event of being.

Consider the plausibility of a body as a living experience, the arena for heterogeneous subjectivity. Now move these experiences into space and time. Fuse and blur the borders that stagnate mind from body from environment and establish a dialogue within this unordered multitude. The ephemeral dialogue thereby is the surviving thread that constitutes the being as narrative. The discovery of the body is intrinsically tied to the framework of mental constructs, and vice versa.

The relationship between body, mind and building or, the direct environment, presents a mediator, an infusion, which is temporality. Temporality is narrative in essence and form. This ontological motor, the being, the existing corpus projected as aesthetic and physical existence, as forms of life, allows us a dimension of the being as both object and subject. Between a word and an act, narrative becomes a cognitive tool, where emotional and affective elements find translations, or better yet, mnesic transcendence through materials.

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