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[ BEYOND FLESH ]

Archive & Documents
Abstract

Where is the being when its parts are missing? Who or what have we become when we no longer recognize our parts, and if those parts are someone else are we then becoming two?

we have chosen to investigate jewelries and adornments as tools to extended body parts. and question the meaning and role of the self through adornments and materials that comes from other begins bodies.

Jewelry can be a material embodiment of one self, a way of to express position in life, religious devotion, a reminder of an important memory, express political and social position.

As well as an medium to connect traces of history which most of western society refuses to deal with.

To us it can also be a tool to extend beyond the self with ”someone else”
As humans dresses and introjects different personas depending on the context.
In this text there is no I, only different levels of we, as we are never alone and we work with and for you.

When we speak I speak with you, when I mourn I mourn for you with you and without you.
You are never here in flesh because you are beyond it.

But in our vanity, you are always present, from your body to our body and maybe to your body.
Introduction

Social Anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss writes in Totemism that it is a natural way for children to introject aspects and behavior from front figures such as a mother or father. By doing so the child “completes” its own persona by building its surroundings and worldview on important “totemic figures”.

In similar ways a person can create a super ego to deal with a current threat.

Such behavior has according to Strauss been observed within North and South American tribes where their micro society and beliefs is build around totems. Where animal heads functions to resemble different positions within the tribe. And where different herbs and animals is projected to resemble different qualities within a society.

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1 Claude, Levi Strauss, Totemism 1963 P. 1
According to Strauss it would be impossible to talk about totemism without talking about fetishism and idolatry as well.

A human being or living thing can act upon a subject, from the standpoint of the idol, totem or fetish, the object itself is a rather harmless thing until a living being loads it with fantasies and meaning.

When our position is questioned on behalf of our appearance we feel alienated. It’s a natural respond from us as we have been told that we, you and me are the same. Even if we do not feel, act or respond the same way towards different subjects. We do not know anything about our past just that we are here and have to act and react.

When we introject and absorb you to our own body and persona, we do it as a defense mechanism against our reality our actions and projected responsibilities. it is our way to deal with the current threat, to avoid feeling dehumanized or displaced.

We extend ourself with you.

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[ Wearable Totem ]
Washed Goat leather, waxed linen thread, cotton thread, vintage chair, soil

Beads has frequently been enlisted as symbolic repositories of sacred knowledge, been deemed to have curative powers, served as fee of passage to the afterlife, and been the medium of exchange and trade.

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2 In the Language Of Psychoanalysis (NY: Norton, 1973)
From the 19th century, Europeans exchanged glass beads for beaver pelts in North America, for spices in Indonesia and gold for ivory and slaves in Africa.³

Hunt
When we hunt we hunt for nameless things, materials with lost context. Bones without flesh, blood without a vein, hair without a scalp.

³ Louise Sherr Doublin, *The History of Beads Concise Edition*, Thames and Hudson 30 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QP P7
Things that embodies an awkwardness once they reappear in places they don't belong to. By putting these components together as adornments we formalize a body extension.

Joseph Beuys, an artist from the fluxus movement, whose work can be associated with post war and shamanism. In his piece, ”Fat Chair” the viewer faces a large piece of animal fat on an old chair, these two components formalize a ”fat chair”4
The fat on the other hand related to an early accident in Beys life where they had to wrap his body in animal fat to keep him warm and stay alive. Beuys then ”loads” the material with his own story and relation to it. The fat is by nature a material that will decompose like a body does after it’s death. The same will happen to our relics if they get in contact with soil, and maybe that is the way it should be.

4 Walkerart, Materials, Walker Art Center department of education and community programs, with research by Florence Peterson
As stated by social anthropologist Terrence S. Turner,\(^5\)
Hair is as much alive as it is dead. It grows outwards to the world. Once its off the body it’s dead once it is rebound with the body it’s alive once again.

We project feelings and personas towards dead material, we will never know whose hair this is and if the person who donated it’s hair is dead, is this material then a remain? But worn on a body the material becomes alive once again.

In relation to our craftsmanship we found a group of women in Våmhus, Dalarna.\(^6\)
They title themselves as “Härkullor”. Their craftsmanship has its origins back to the 1600, where they spun their lost ones hair to small adornments, as sorrow objects. The concept of wearing the objects makes them less dead.
During Sweden’s rough economic times, they spread themselves to the rest of Europe in order to sell their goods.

A couple of years back we went to Gunther Von Hagen’s, Body Worlds.
We remember how we were standing in between a woman split in half, her ”plasticized” body created a wall between us and we couldn't feel anything but apathy.

It was like the plastic barrier together with the room and house ( Tom Tits Experiments ) dehumanized her into an object. We were unable to project and feel a personal connection towards her.

In comparison to Louise Bourgeois work we feel a direct pain and the atmosphere she creates can make one very uncomfortable, maybe because Bourgeois’ project and loads her own personal history to the material and object the same way Beuys does.
She ”extend” herself by the use of her old clothes in the shape of an army of heads.

\(^5\) Terrence S. Turner The social skin 1995 P 488
Is it a way of duplicating herself or is it pointing towards the ”woman as a trophy” aspect.

As it seems the idea of adornment is maybe as much a personal relation to one self as much as it is a mirror or reflection of one self towards the world. Human wants to be seen, wants to be noticed by appearance.

Through our hands we re-contextualize these lost human-materials, made to be adorned by another human. From body, to body we can extend life beyond death.
According to the Swedish law of Griftefrid (grave right)\textsuperscript{7} it is illegal to move, touch, or threat remains and tombs harmful. These law does however not cover the use of ”foreign” bones. As there is no restricted or banned trade.

If the bones during it’s life time didn't inhabit Swedish earth they have no grave right here. To us it seems like a crime against the natural order. The material has been prevented by a system to contribute to the earth again.

"By the sweat of your brow\textsuperscript{6}

you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,  

since from it you were taken;
for dust you are”
and to dust you will return”

Final words

It is said that we count the human civilization from the point we buried our ancestors as we then had learned that everything is perishable.

Our documents is a proof that these knowledge is forgotten.

\textsuperscript{7} Brotsbalken 16 kap. 10§ Lagen om Griftefrid

\textsuperscript{6}Genesis 3:19New International Version (NIV
The relics aren't dead, nor are they dying, they are just less alive. But we pray that these relics will continue to live on through someone else.

As you continue to live inside me.

We hope that our work will open up a wider discourse on how these sort of materials should or could be treated in the future.

Should these materials be locked up inside a dusty museum, or should they be returned to the earth, without telling anything about their history. As their history is valuable for the future to understand its past post-colonial history and how it is reproduced in our time.

Printed Sources

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Louise Sherr Doublin, *The History of Beads Concise Edition*, Thames and Hudson 30 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QP P.7

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Photographies:

By the artist