

Via the Body



## **Via the Body**

**A research on the expression of the human condition through body fragmentation – jewelry art as contemporary relics.**



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**A research on the expression of the human condition through body fragmentation – jewelry art as contemporary relics.**

Doctoral dissertation submitted to obtain the degree of Doctor in Fine Arts, at Hasselt University (UHasselt) and the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), to be defended by Hannah Joris.

Hasselt and Leuven, November 2013

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# Acknowledgments

## *(Fragments of gratitude: Chunks, bits and pieces)*

On 's'ouvre à quelqu'un pour dévoiler  
l'inavouable, on 'ouvre son cœur' pour que  
la vérité intime devienne l'espace même d'une  
entente élargie. Cela ne va pas sans difficultés  
bien sûr, car *ouvrir transgresse*.

– Georges Didi-Huberman

This artistic research has gone hand in hand with sharp concentration and lively discussions that would not have been possible without the grant I received from the UHasselt – MAD-Faculty (PXL). I am very grateful for having received the support that enabled me to remain curious, make mistakes and finally to revise and unravel the issues I am concerned with in my artistic research.

I would like to express my very great appreciation to the members of the jury, who kindly accepted to examine this research project: Berlinde De Bruyckere, Damian Skinner and professors Koenraad Van Cleempoel and Paul Vandebroek.

For having the courage to softly push and pull me through the relatively new 'great plains' of artistic research while granting me much independence, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors.

Bert, thank you for your trust during the very first and most insecure steps of this project: the first drafts, the revised proposal and your guidance throughout the whole period. I am very grateful for your regular meticulous readings of the texts during the final year and the conversations that followed, where our perspectives clashed and through which my ideas matured. Thank you for your feedback on presentations and the interest you took in the various projects and exhibitions I was involved in.

Barbara, in one of your publications, you wrote: "If the encounter between two people is always ephemeral, the encounter between two ways of thinking is equally fragile." From my first impressions via your publications, to the first contact made (I would never approach anyone like this again!) and our intense conversation of May 2012; it has been a fine and delicate path. But if something is regarded as fragile by two parties, I believe that mutual respect and curiosity are established. Thank you for your motivating presence and candid communication; I feel privileged to have been able to carry out research in your powerful, inspiring, intuitive 'present absence.' The value of your associations and insights is an immeasurable gift, which has taken me by surprise time and again throughout the whole project. It has touched me profoundly and I am sure it will continue to do so. Thank you for guiding me in this discovery of hidden vitality between words, images and beings.

6 Since I had the pleasure to be part of a college team, there are many colleagues who have contributed to this project in one way or another. Encounters have varied: from sunny encounters on gray days, to the efficient removal of rain-water from my workshop floor, to (surprisingly) serious discussions about and amidst rotting root vegetables...!

Stan, you will chuckle, but without your blunt arguments I truly never would have indulged in this research project. I am very grateful for your invaluable and most sincere support at all times.

I would like to thank Rob Cuyvers, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Arts UHasselt, for his faith in this project and the rides between Hasselt and Leuven on those occasions that Belgian public transport proved unreliable.

For thought-provoking discussions, constructive comments, humor, respect, trust and profound kindness, I am indebted to my (ex-) colleagues Katia Aerts & GameHub crew, Tom Lambeens, Peter De Cupere, Ivan Dobrev, Sofie Gielis, Lore Langendries, Bart Van Dijck and Ellen Schroven. Heartfelt thanks to all of you!

I should also thank two of my former 'masters.' Audi Pauwels, for introducing me to the possibility of undertaking a research in arts and his boundless curiosity in all jewelry. Thank you also for your encouragements during my first jewelry-teaching experiences. David Huycke, for crucial professional advice and perfect photos, which I gratefully inserted in this thesis.

For the fragile beginnings of the development of this research project and the careful reading of the proposal, I owe many thanks to Jan De Vuyst and Edith Doove of IvOK (now LUCA), and to Prof. Hilde Van Gelder (KU Leuven).

I would like to thank following people for their insightful advice and kind encouraging words during the vulnerable final phase: Mieke Bleyen (KU Leuven), Prof. Paul Vandenbroeck and Damian Skinner.

I would like to offer my special thanks to Kenneth Raymaekers, director of the Mode Museum Hasselt, for kindly having given me the opportunity to exhibit and defend the research project in his respected museum. I am particularly grateful for the assistance provided by his professional and kind crew.

There are many people who have greatly helped my work 'grow' the past years.

I would like to express my appreciation to Caroline Van Hoek (Gallery Caroline Van Hoek) for her expert feedback, professional insights, exhibitions and her faith in my artistic work. Your support is indispensable. I am very grateful to be part of the lively platform you have established and for the many people I have had the chance to meet and converse with in your gallery. In your manifesto, you wonder: "Do we still make time for things? Do [our things] still come with 'soul'?" I look forward to continue exploring these sensitivities with 'kindred spirits.' Thank you for your understanding and patience with the constraints entailed by this research project.

For professional experiences, captivating discussions, wit and faith in my work, I also owe my gratitude to my former professors, artists Karen Pontopidan (Head of Ädellab, Jewelry & Corpus Department, Konstfack, Stockholm)



& her fantastic crew, Ruudt Peters, and artists Hilde De Decker, Jorge Manilla, Estela Saez, Peter Vermandere, Herman Hermsen and Timothy Carson. I would also like to thank Evelien Bracke (Z33), Jeroen and Sara Redel, Steinbeisser & Katie Duck, WCC-BF (World Crafts Council, Mons) and the participants of the Zimmerhof Symposium 2012 (in particular Alena Alexandrova, Cristina Filipe, Liesbeth Den Besten, Christoph Zellweger and Bas Verheij) for exhibitions, stimulating discussions and constructive feedback.

For kindly sharing her expertise in the conservation of organic materials, I owe many thanks to conservator Frederika Huys.

I kindly thank artist Kristof Vrancken for several extraordinary photos of my work, presented here, and for a freezing, but fruitful collaboration for Silke Fleischer's ongoing project 'Jewellery Sessions.'

I would like to thank the many curious and genuinely supportive students whose paths I crossed at the MAD-Faculty the past years. In particular, I would like to thank Marie-José (fragments!), Marie, Marie-Paul, Claudia, Natalia, the jewelry graduates of 2010 and 2011, and the students who I had the pleasure to coach in 2011 and 2012. Thank you for your pleasant company, so much positive energy and understanding.

This thesis would be far grimmer, if it weren't for the professional expertise of graphic designer Ellen Bilterest. Ellen, thank you for having blessed this heavy manuscript with your structured, but sensitive aesthetic touch!

During the final, somewhat lonely weeks of writing and editing, I was very grateful for the wholehearted support of Charlotte Dumoncel d'Argence (Gallery Caroline Van Hoek) and the faithful Sissi-team. Thank you Charlotte, Jan and Florence for the many pleasant hours of archaeological illustration and for so much kindness and sunshine!

I would like to thank my friends—nearby and far away—for their loving support, caring insights, down-to-earth advice and for reawakening my affection for arts and jewelry when it (once again) seemed to be vanishing. Thank you for your patience, I apologize for my absence during the past weeks/months/years: Lisa, Dana, Silke, Tiina, Michael, Marie-Christine, Oliver, Jacek, Hedda, Jessy, Nathalie, Adam, Adisa, Matt, Jorien, Shannon, Joke, Sieber, Frida, Hanna, Roberta, Anke, Lieve, Colette, mamá y papá, and all those I here have forgotten to mention. Marleen, thank you for helping me look for energy in the uncompassionate. I can never sufficiently thank you for your endless and tender support: your sharp insights, honesty and openness. Evelien, thank you so much for being present at all times, in all situations. Your supportive and caring presence has been very meaningful to me.

Last but not least, I owe many thanks to my family, Anne-Françoise and Richard: fragile, but strong and always loving, always caring. Thank you for your presence at vernissages, your visits to exhibitions and your unfailing support at all moments. I would particularly like to thank my sister and my

8 grandmother for regularly 'checking up on me,' and my parents for the upbringing they have given me, which has greatly influenced this research. "*Be unto others as you would have them be unto you*" –thank you for having raised me along the simultaneously most natural and most challenging, but surely most valid human 'lifeline.' *It builds character*, undoubtedly, but thank you for helping me count my blessings, when I fail to do so on my own.

Finally, Simon, thank you for your presence, support, love, understanding and humor during all these years. Your input, detailed corrections, and honest feedback perhaps have not always been welcomed fairly. But I do thank you for challenging me when I felt confident, and for reassuring me when I felt insecure. Thank you for so much love and adventurous happiness together!

In words, between words and beyond words, thank you all!

Leuven, 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 2013.







*Study of a Torso (Fragmented)*

Hannah Joris

2012

Pencil on paper

29,5 x 20,3 cm



Vis donc, il le faut, en accusée. C'est toi la porte du diable; c'est toi qui as brisé le sceau de l'Arbre; c'est toi qui la première as déserté la loi divine; c'est toi qui as circonvenu celui auquel le diable n'a pas pu s'attaquer; c'est toi qui es venue à bout si aisément de l'homme, l'image de Dieu. C'est ton salaire, la mort, qui a valu la mort même au Fils de Dieu. Et tu as la pensée de couvrir d'ornements tes tuniques de peau ?

– Tertullian<sup>1</sup>

(...) all the rooms of my imagination were lined with soft human skin.

– Michelle Lovric<sup>2</sup>

We write from the marrow of our bones.

– Adrienne Rich<sup>3</sup>

**Fall**

Old English *fallan*, *feallan*, of Germanic origin; the noun is partly from the verb, partly from Old Norse *fall* 'downfall, sin.'

**Loss**

Old English *los* 'destruction,' of Germanic origin; related to Old Norse *los* 'breaking up of the ranks of an army' and loose; later probably a back-formation from *lost*, past participle of *lose*.

**Lost**

Old English *losian* 'perish, destroy,' also 'become unable to find,' from *los* 'loss.'

**Innocent**

Middle English: from Old French, or from Latin *innocent-* 'not harming,' from *in-* 'not' + *nocere* 'to hurt.'

**Suffer**

Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French *suffrir*, from Latin *sufferre*, from *sub-* 'from below' + *ferre* 'to bear.'

**Bear**

Old English *beran* 'to bear, bring; bring forth, produce; to endure, sustain; to wear,' from Proto-Germanic *\*beranan*, from Proto-Indo-European root *\*bher-* meaning both 'give birth' and 'carry a burden, bring.'



### **Harm**

Old English *hearm*, *hearmian*, of Germanic origin; related to German *Harm* and Old Norse *harmr* 'grief, sorrow.'

### **Fault**

Middle English *faut(e)* 'lack, failing,' from Old French, based on Latin *fallere* 'deceive.'

Late 13<sup>th</sup> century, *faute*, "deficiency," from O.Fr. *faute* (12<sup>th</sup> century) "opening, gap; failure, flaw, blemish; lack, deficiency," from Vulgar Latin *fallita* 'a short-coming, falling,' noun use of feminine past participle, from Latin *falsus* 'deceptive, feigned, spurious,' past participle of *fallere* 'deceive, disappoint' (see *fail*). Sense of 'physical defect' is from early 14<sup>th</sup> century; that of 'moral culpability' is first recorded late 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Imply**

Late Middle English: from Old French *emplier*, from Latin *implicare*, from *in-* 'in' + *plicare* 'to fold.' The original sense was [entwine, entangle]; in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the word also meant 'employ.'

### **Enfold**

Late Middle English (in the sense 'involve, entail, imply,' formerly also as *in-fold*): from *en-*, *in-* 'within' + *fold*.

### **Fragment**

Late Middle English: from French, or Latin *fragmentum*, from *frangere* 'to break.'



**In-between Overture and Closure.  
Introducing the body, the image,<sup>6</sup> the human.  
In Pieces.**

Contact images? Images that touch something and then someone. Images that cut to the quick of a question: touching to see or, on the contrary, touching to no longer see; seeing to no longer touch or, on the contrary, seeing to touch. Images that are too close. Adherent images. Image-obstacles, but obstacles that make things appear. Images coupled to each other, indeed even to the things of which they are the image. Contiguous images, images backing each other. Weighty images. Or very light images that surface and skim, graze us and touch us again. Caressing images. Groping or already palpable images. Images sculpted by developer, modeled by shadow, molded by light, carved by exposure time. Images that catch up with us, that manipulate us, perhaps. Images that can ruffle or chafe us. Images that grasp us. Penetrating, devouring images.  
Images that move our hand.

– Georges Didi-Huberman<sup>7</sup>

*Disiecta membra*: scattered fragments. This research merges the *image*, the *body*, the *human* and the *fragment* into its subject matter and has left both unspoken and spoken, intangible and tangible traces of each topic. This research rises and falls with the *image*: images gave birth to it and there are images that were born of this research. It approaches the *body*: there are pendants to be hung from our necks and there is skin to be touched. It absorbs the *human*: there are images that are shaped to the palms of our hands and there are traces of our fears and hopes in drawn lines and fixed stitches. This research embraces the *fragment*: there are cut roots and their wounds have been tended to.

But this research kneaded – and *needed* – the blend of image, body, human and fragment on another level too. As a so-called ‘practice-based research’ or ‘research in the arts,’ there was the need to bring two worlds together, which are in fact two sides of the same coin. In merging two worlds, there is always a balance to keep or seek for, before one world swallows the other or before one is trampled underfoot by the other.<sup>8</sup>

In my attempt to keep this balance but nevertheless push its limits and stretch its boundaries, I have been inspired by Visual Anthropology. This still

18 relatively young discipline created the possibility to approach my subject matter *via the body, the image, the human and the fragmented*. The field of Visual Anthropology cherishes a distinct interest in and dedicates special attention to the body, death, the senses, loss, suffering and the ‘restitution of honor’ of the image.<sup>9</sup> What I find stimulating for my research is this awareness of our multi-sensory relationship to the world and the “interest in the artifact as part of a social network of rituals and bodily interactions... joined with the study of the object in the context of its gendered, ethnographic and intercultural archetypes.”<sup>10</sup> This also implies that I will mainly be referencing works in which the image/object is approached in accordance with such diversity.

The framework of Visual Anthropology creates the possibility to think the artistic body of work – images – differently, in such a way that the sensory gains a crucial role and that the relationship between human and image comes to life. It creates new opportunities to think about and through images. Amongst the most inspiring, I find, are Hans Belting’s research of the link between death and the image, Barbara Baert’s sensitivity for the immanent role of loss and touch in arts, Paul Vandebroek’s bold but sensitive and deeply human plunge into the formless that overturns boundaries, and last but not least, Georges Didi-Huberman’s notion of the image as *image ouverte*, violently pulsating between opening and closure like our own bodies.<sup>11</sup>

In line with the spirit of Visual Anthropology I would like to introduce this thesis – a series of essays – as a series of ‘inflections.’<sup>12</sup> The contents of the research are echoed in its visual presence: its outline is bumpy; the reader falls from one fold into the next. From Deleuze we learn that we “go from inflection to inclusion just as we move... from ‘seeing’ to ‘reading.’”<sup>13</sup> Therefore it could be said that this body of text consists of separate ‘inclusions.’ Certain fragments – lines, curves, points – of the movement of endless inflections have been emphasized throughout the individual essays. This movement can be seen as the ‘fluctuation’ of skin, which is the ‘enfolder’ of a series of infoldings and outfoldings.<sup>14</sup> It is not clear where these in- and outfoldings begin or end. Nor can we be sure that they are able to contain at all.<sup>15</sup> But of one aspect we are sure: “The body can also write on the skin *from the inside* – the soul, the mind, and the passions rise to the surface.” And experiences leave their marks on the skin; “either they are harmless (and even beautiful) ornaments, or else they are marks of corruption and death.”<sup>16</sup>

These inflections open and close to the rhythm of Didi-Huberman’s *image ouverte*; they oscillate between the non-consoling and the consoling, between opening and closure.<sup>17</sup> My aim is to let the essays open up towards the reader, but also to let them close upon him/her and bring about within the reader an “*expérience intérieure*” as Didi-Huberman – inspired by Georges Bataille – would say.<sup>18</sup> I have sought to leave space – an *in-between*<sup>19</sup> – for the reader amidst the embracing inflections to enable him/her to move from inflection to inclusion, from infolding to unfolding and from opening to closure along the rhythm of his/her own heartbeat. In other words, the reader’s personal experiences, insights and desires will inflate and deflate the inflections. It has not been my intention to dictate the waves of this movement and therefore I must clarify two aspects.

Firstly, the openness of this *in-between* implies that I do not bring to an end the oscillation arising from the contents, which are echoed in the wrinkling skin and bring about flows through and in the reader. Overture and closure, consolation and non-consolation, alternate endlessly in this in-between. Secondly, this thesis must not – and cannot – be seen or read as an explanatory body of text written for the artistic body of work. Rather, the images<sup>20</sup> enhance the text, and vice versa. Both images and text create a suggestive framework for each other; the text creates a reflective framework for the artworks. Some images found their way into this thesis, amongst the written word. Others did not, by choice, by intuition and *gut feeling*, or by limitation of media.

I invite you to see and digest these essays as a dialogue.

The dialogue follows a path through the maker's thoughts, experiences and feelings. At times the conversation runs through my reactions and reflections upon them; and comes to rest or awakens with the image – from preliminary state into a – at times by decision – finished form. But the dialogue continues: between the image and the maker, and eventually between the image and the viewer/reader, the outside world and also between the viewer/reader, image and maker.

It has been said that artists are driven to create because of the awareness of a certain frustration within oneself.<sup>21</sup> However, I believe creating is driven by a sense of loss. In his book *L'image ouverte*, Georges Didi-Huberman delineates the Fall of mankind as a metaphor for loss. In doing so, he moreover clarifies the importance of creating images for mankind. According to Didi-Huberman, the image opens itself to us because we, as humans, have been created in God's image. But humans lost this unity at the Fall: we 'fell out with' God's image and lost our innocence. From this downfall came the loss of *ressemblance*; the similarity became a *dissemblance*.<sup>22</sup> From that moment, the history of images became a history of eternal longing for identification with the original – for the *before*: the desire to coincide with the invisible.<sup>23</sup> In Barbara Baert's words: "Artistry defines itself as a continually repeated striving for this reunification, and the work of art is the only hope for that proven restoration. In short, every artistic expression renews a pact with what was lost."<sup>24</sup>

And what does loss lead to other than *souffrance*? We suffer for what we have lost. And our images will pay for that loss. But they also will have to *make up* for it – *compensate* for it, *counterbalance* it and *redeem*. We will not suffer the consequences of all our losses alone.<sup>25</sup>

A sense of loss urges me to create. Disappointment in human nature holds a crucial position in my experience of loss. We are not innocent beings; we lost our innocence from the very beginning. Stronger still, *we destroyed* it. Therefore, I am convinced that creating is not a harmless action either. Our creations are far from being faultless. Making, '*putting on the world*' – this world, involves responsibility.<sup>26</sup> For that reason, my view on making is double, and consequently my approach to it also. Making implies dedication.<sup>27</sup> I can be dedicated to approach my creations with love, but also with malice. However, the latter is perhaps ill-defined. Rather, I shall say, I feel that my responsibility

20 is to 'strengthen' the images I make for the moment they are 'hurled' into our complex world amongst lost souls.

Indeed, making is a way to initiate a dialogue between maker, thoughts, materials, creations/images, viewer, feelings and the world. At times writing can improve or relieve the dialogue.

And what expresses loss and suffering better than the human *body*? Our bodies are "the most unavoidable basis, shared by every single human being."<sup>28</sup> If "[h]owever we construct it and whatever it stands for to us, body is what we've got," then it is rather evident that it is because of – thanks to – that body that we can relate to the world.<sup>29</sup> The body enables us to respond to images.<sup>30</sup> More specifically, and of fundamental importance to this research, is the fact that through the mediation of the body itself, the unbearable image is made bearable.<sup>31</sup> But also: the image one has of oneself is interwoven with the way one responds to the pictured body. When we think about the body we are influenced by our experience *of* the body.<sup>32</sup> The image plays a mediating role with respect to the bodily: there is an interaction with the viewer, the viewer's body, but also with the artifact *as* a body or body-part.<sup>33</sup>

Fragments fascinate me: I am attracted to their power to disrupt and put into question. But as a maker, creating images, and more specifically jewelry, I am particularly intrigued by their ability to soothe and their capacity to heal.<sup>34</sup>

And thus I hope that the following 'infoldings' – or *disiecta membra*, if you like – will give more insight into various fragments of the body of work.

[L'image] est bien trop vivante pour se soumettre  
à toute euthanasie théorique! (...) Saurons-nous  
preserver l'amour que seule mérite cette vivante  
fugitive?

– Marie-José Mondzain<sup>35</sup>

- 1 I. 1:2-3 in Tertullian. (1971). *La toilette de Femmes (De cultu feminarum)*, *Sources Chrétiennes 173*, Marie Turcan, ed. Paris: Le Cerf, pp43-45 -as referred to by Georges Didi-Huberman in *L'image ouverte*
- 2 Lovric, Michelle. (2010). *The Book of Human Skin*. London: Bloomsbury, p83.
- 3 Rich, Adrienne (1991). *An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems 1988–1991*. New York: Norton, p51. From *For a Friend in Travail*.
- 4 Harper, Douglas. (2001-2013). *Online Etymology Dictionary*, viewed 24th of November, 2013: [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com) and Jewel, Elizabeth J. & Frank Abate. (2005). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 5 *Disjecta membra*, also written *disiecta membra*, is Latin for 'scattered fragments' (also scattered limbs, members, or remains) and is used to refer to surviving fragments of ancient poetry, manuscripts and other literary or cultural objects, including even fragments of ancient pottery. It is derived from the phrase '*disjecti membra poetae*' ('limbs of a dismembered poet') used by the Roman poet Horace. See *Online Etymology Dictionary* and Simpson, John & Edmund Weiner, eds. (1989). *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 6 It is important here to note that with *image*, I refer to what both Hans Belting and William J.T. Mitchell would call a *picture*. "*The picture is the image with a medium*," writes Belting, and in Mitchell's words: "an image is what appears in a picture and what survives its destruction (...) the picture, then, is the image as it appears in a material support or a specific place." Since images exist both in 'internal' and 'external' representations, they are to be differentiated from media. In this introduction however, the use of the word *image* denotes the perceivable image. Moreover, in using the word *image*, I refer to both two-dimensional and three-dimensional images. In other words, *image* can here refer to, for example, objects, drawings, jewelry, sculpture, etc. For an account of the connections and differences between image, medium and picture, see Hans Belting's research of the question "What is an image?" in Belting, Hans. (2011). *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp1-13. And: Mitchell, William J.T. (2008). *Four Fundamental Concepts of the Image in Science*. In James Elkins, ed., *Visual Literacy*. New York: Routledge, p16ff, as quoted in Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2012b). *Das Medium als Mediator – Eine Materialtheorie für (Öl-)Bilder*. In *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 57(1), p71
- 7 Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999b). *Contact Images*. In *Tympalum. A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, 3(1522-7723). Los Angeles: University of Southern California, viewed 20th of June 2013: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympalum/3/>.
- 8 Cf. "If the encounter between two people is always ephemeral, the encounter between two ways of thinking is equally fragile." Baert, Barbara. (2009c). *Folds of thought, or The encounter in an intermediate space*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p9.
- 9 Translation of my own, due to the absence of a precise English translation for the Dutch word 'eerherstel.' Cf. Belting, 2011: p44: "Anthropology thus takes up the legacy of the kind of art history that was born in the nineteenth century out of a sense of loss, of a rupture with spiritual and artistic tradition." For the relation of the image to death specifically, see Belting, 2011: p84ff.
- 10 Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken. (2012). *A Sign of Health. New Perspectives in Iconology*. In Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken, eds., *New Perspectives in Iconology. Visual Studies and Anthropology*. Brussels: ASP, p8. See also: Baert, Barbara & Hilde Van Gelder. (2009). *Preface*. In Baert, Barbara, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, ppvii-viii; and Baert, 2009c: p10; "... a fascination with the pulsating nature of art. I'm interested in the multiple, visible, invisible, solitariness of an object and interplay of objects. This approach to art history is referred to as 'visual anthropology.'" See also Belting, 2011 (e.g. pp38-39, 44, 84) and Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les art visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, p30; "Un phénomène d'ordre anthropologique inspire tous ces mouvements. Dire que les images s'ouvrent et se ferment comme nos corps qui les regardent, c'est dire que les images sont créées par nous à notre image: non pas seulement à l'image de nos aspects, mais à celle de nos actes, de nos crises, de nos propres gestes d'ouverture." Didi-Huberman speaks of "les enjeux théoriques d'une telle anthropologie des images d'inspiration warburgienne" and

- refers to – amongst others – Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2002). *L'image survivante. Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg*. Paris: Minuit, and Freedberg, David. (1989). *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press. For a reconsideration of the definition of the image and various approaches to study images, see also Van den Berg, Dirk J. (2004). *What is an image and what is image power?* In *Image & Narrative – Mélanges/Miscellaneous*, IV(2:8), May, pp1-5, viewed the 28th of November, 2012: <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/issue08/dirkvandenberg.htm>. Finally, I would like to mention that in this regard Giorgio Agamben speaks of 'the nameless science': "The least unfaithful way to characterize Warburg's 'nameless science' may well be to insert it into the project of a future 'anthropology of Western culture' in which philology, ethnology, and history would converge with an 'iconology of the interval,' a study of the *Zwischenraum* in which the incessant symbolic work of social memory is carried out." Agamben, Giorgio. (1999). *Potentialities. Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p100.
- 11 Belting, 2011: p84ff; Baert, Barbara. (2012a). *Peçe ile yara arasındaki pakt veya ete giden patika (The pact between the veil and the wound or The pathway to the flesh)*. In Ilkay Baliç, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere: yara / the wound*. Beyoğlu: Arter, pp77-79, and Baert, Barbara. (2013). *An odour, a taste, a touch. Impossible to describe: Noli me tangere and the senses*. In Wietse De Boer and Christine Göttler, eds., *Religion and the senses in early modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, pp111-151; Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009a). *Zien we wel iets in een hemel in tegenlicht? (Can we see anything in a backlit heaven?)* and (2009b). *De energetica van een onkenlijk lichaam (The energetics of an unknowable body)*. Both in: Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, pp42-51; pp174-204; Didi-Huberman, 2007: pp25-63.
  - 12 Following Deleuze's analysis of inflections and inclusion: Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum, pp15-21, 24-29, 47.
  - 13 Ibid., p47.
  - 14 Inspired by Elkins's sensitive analysis of the skin. Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp39-42.
  - 15 Ibid., pp44-45.
  - 16 Ibid., pp46-47, 51. For an inquiry into the connections between the soul and the marked skin Elkins refers to Stafford, Barbara Maria. (1993). *Body criticism: Imaging the unseen in enlightenment art and medicine*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp315-318.
  - 17 Didi-Huberman, 2007: pp25-63. Marie-José Mondzain speaks of the image as arising from the pulsation between the real that captures us and the life that liberates us; Mondzain, Marie-José. (1995). *L'image naturelle*. Paris: Nouveau commerce, pp15-16. Excerpts available online: Mondzain, Marie-José. (2007). *L'image naturelle*, 10th of September, *Philopsis*, viewed 5th of June 2013: [http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf\\_image\\_naturelle\\_mondzain.pdf](http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf_image_naturelle_mondzain.pdf).
  - 18 Didi-Huberman, 2007: pp25-63.
  - 19 Cf. Barbara Baert on 'the intermediate space,' see Baert, 2009c: pp9-10. "The intermediate space is not a new idea. Aby Warburg (1877–1929) referred to the *Zwischenraum* in the arts, a locus where objects are approached as parts of a universal network. In essence that network is the secret of mankind itself – the fact that time and again man produces images and objects, compelled to do so by a force as strong as fear and love themselves." See Warburg, Aby. (2008). *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*. Martin Warnke & Claudia Brink, eds., Berlin: Akademie Verlag, pp3-6. In more recent texts, Baert speaks of 'the artistic interspace,' see Baert, 2012: pp77-79.
  - 20 See note 6. By using the word *image* I here refer to both two- and three-dimensional images, created by others or myself.
  - 21 Here, I am recalling jewelry artist and Adellab's (Konstfack's Jewelry + Corpus Department) head professor Karen Pontoppidan's opening line of her Artist Talk for the Master Course 'Research Through Practice,' Konstfack University College for Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, September 2007.
  - 22 Didi-Huberman, 2007: pp62, 224. And Baert, 2012: pp77.
  - 23 Baert, 2012: p81-83. And: Baert et al., 2012: p10.
  - 24 Baert, 2012: pp77-79.
  - 25 Cf. the image as a defense against the loss that is death, Belting, 2011: pp84ff. Cf. the role of relics as objects that need to serve us by providing what we demand of them: "healing, hope, and fascination." Baert, Barbara & Lise De Greef. (2009). *Het verheerlijkte lichaam. Over relieken, stoffelijkheid en de inwendigheid van het beeld (The glorified body: relics, materiality and the internalized image)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht*:



- macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tielt: Lannoo, p133.
- 26 A selection of references on this topic: Safranski, Rüdiger. (2005). *How much globalization can we bear?* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp1-5; Sennett, Richard. (2008). *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, pp1-5; Olivier, Laurent. (2011a). *Nos choses nous survivront longtemps après la fin*. Libération, 5th of August, viewed 19th of December 2011, <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/01012312836-les-choses-aussi-sont-des-etres>. Cf. the boundlessness of action that Hannah Arendt speaks of: "action and reaction among men never move in a closed circle." Unpredictability is inherent to all human actions and we will never be able to undo or control the processes we start through our actions. I quote Arendt: "Not even oblivion and confusion, which can cover up so efficiently the origin and the responsibility for every single deed, are able to undo a deed or prevent its consequences." This means we can become guilty of the unintended and unexpected consequences of our actions. Arendt continues: "Man's inability to rely upon himself or to have complete faith in himself (which is the same thing) is the price human beings pay for freedom." Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp190-191, 232-233, 244. She thoroughly researched this issue with the trial of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann: Arendt, Hannah. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin.
- 27 Sennett, 2008: pp20-21.
- 28 Vandenbroeck, 2009b: p175.
- 29 Bynum, Caroline Walker. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body*. New York: Zone Books, p19. And Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p46; Vandenbroeck, 2009b: pp176, 188. See also Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1964). *The Primacy of Perception: And other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, The Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p5; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge, pp82, 95, 205: "The body is the vehicle of being in the world."
- 30 Belting, 2011: pp3, 19.
- 31 Baert, 2012: p83.
- 32 Elkins, 1999: pvii.
- 33 Belting, 2011: pp3, 11, 17, 86ff, 126ff. And Baert et al., 2012, p8.
- 34 Though this fascination came about through mere intuition, I have been happy to come across reflections on this very topic in Most, Glenn W. (2009). *On fragments*. In William Tronzo, ed., *The fragment. An incomplete history*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, pp8-20.
- 35 Mondzain, 1995: pp15, 42.

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# Image Credits

## Introduction

### Cover

goat parchment, Hannah Joris, 2013

p 11 Hannah Joris, 2012

## Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment

### Cover

goat parchment, Hannah Joris, 2013

### Featured work

Hannah Joris, 2010-2013

- p 4 Artifact E129504 in National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC. Photograph, *Chip-pewa Necklace made from human fingers*, from United States National Archives, by Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, ca. 1871-1907. Online version available through the Archival Research Catalog (ARC identifier 523693) at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov), viewed 13th of June, 2012.
- p 5 Artifact E129504 in National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC. Chromolithograph by Sackett & Wilhelms Litho Co., New York in: Bourke, John G. (1892). *The Medicine-Men of the Apache*. In J.W. Powell, director, *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1887-'88*. Washington: Government Printing Office, p480, plate IV.
- p 6 Artifact E129504 in National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Washington DC. Photograph by NMNH scientific photographer Chip Clark. From Owsley, Douglas W., Karin S. Bruwelheide, Laurie E. Burgess & William T. Billeck. (2007). *Human Finger and Hand Bone Necklaces from the Plains and Great Basin*. In Richard J. Chacon & David H. Dye, eds., *The Taking and Displaying of Human Body Parts as Trophies by Amerindians*. New York: Springer, p150, Figure 6.15.
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- p 10 From the private collection of Truus and Joost Daalder. Photograph by Jeremy Daalder, in Daalder, Truus. (2009). *Ethnic Jewellery and Adornment: Australia, Oceania, Asia, Africa*. Adelaide: Ethnic Art Press, p76.
- p 11 Sint Quintinus Cathedral, Hasselt. © KIK-IRPA, in Sorber, Frieda, Fanny Van Cleven & Shirin Van Eenhooge. (2010). *Schedelreliëken van Herkenrode*. Hasselt: stad Hasselt, cover.
- p 12 Hannah Joris, 2011
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- p 42 (Left) Trésor d'Oignies, Sœurs de Notre-Dame, Namur. SPW, Patrimoine, photograph by Guy Focant, in: Bagnoli, Martina, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann & James Robinson, eds. (2010). *Treasures of Heaven. Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press, p198, cat. no.112.
- (Right) Image available online via Canadian ebay-seller, viewed 15th of June, 2013: <http://www.ebay.ca/itm/1850-60s-RARE-VICTORIAN-ANTIQUÉ-HAIR-CLASP-HANDS-MOURNING-RING-SIZE-approx-10-/380661187546>

- p43** (Left) Private collection of Truus and Joost Daalder. Photograph by Jeremy Daalder, in Daalder, 2009: p88.  
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- p45** Museum M, Leuven (Originally from the Leuven Beguinage Church). Photograph by Elisabeth Broekaert, in Gerard Rooijackers, ed. (2009). *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tielt: Lannoo, p164, fig.183.

## Lost Souls

### Cover

chamois leather, Hannah Joris, 2013

### Featured work

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<http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/midway/#CF000238%2017x22>
- p3** Food packaging from Delhaize Supermarket, Belgium, Hannah Joris, 2013
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- p29** Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt. Available online via *Wikimedia Commons*, 29th of May, 2007, viewed 31st of August, 2013: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CampinVeronica.jpg>
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- pp64-70** © Kristof Vrancken/ Z33 (Exhibition *The Wilde Things*, 12th of October 2013 – 19th of January 2014, z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt. Curated by Evelien Bracke).

## Sadness

### Cover

rawhide, Hannah Joris, 2013

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### Cutting/Peeling/Tearing

- p8** Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. Photograph by Studio Giacomelli, Venice in Bynum, Caroline W. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone Books, p110, fig. 3.10.
- p9** Cattedrale di Sant'Emidio, Capella del Sacramento Ascoli Piceno. In Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, p14, fig. VIII.
- pp 10-11** Manuscript BL MS Egerton 1821 in British Library, London-Wetherby. Available online via the library's website, n.d., viewed 18th of August, 2010: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/TourKnownC.asp>
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### Tracing/Impressing

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- p37** National Gallery, London. Baert, Barbara. (2012b). *Kleine iconologie van het weven. (Thread. On the origin of creation)*. Gent: Sint Joris, p32, fig.16.
- p38** Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library. Tab. 27 from Bidloo, Govert. (1685). *Anatomia humani corporis*. Amsterdam: Joannis à Someren et al., in Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p138, fig. 48.
- p39** Wellcome Library, London. Available online via the library's website, n.d., viewed 19th of June, 2013: <http://www.wellcomecollection.org/whats-on/exhibitions/skin/image-galleries/objects.aspx?view=an-écorché-figure>
- p40** Artifact AL 050 in National Museum of Ethnology, Lisbon. Photo by Dick Beaulieux in Frank Herremann, ed. (2000). *In the Presence of Spirits. African Art from the National Museum of Ethnology, Lisbon*. Gent: Snoek-Ducaju & Zoon, p46, cat. 26.
- p41** Hannah Joris, 2011-2013
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- p44** Private collection. Photograph: Hannah Joris, 2011.

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- pp 49-50** Hannah Joris, 2013



- p51** Hannah Joris, 2012-2013  
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- pp60-61** Wellcome Library, London. Available online via the library's website, n.d., viewed 19th of June, 2013: <http://www.wellcomecollection.org/whats-on/exhibitions/skin/image-galleries/marks.aspx?view=surgical-stitches-and-knots>; <http://www.wellcomecollection.org/whats-on/exhibitions/skin/image-galleries/marks.aspx?view=surgical-stitches>
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- p72** Figure KU Leuven AF8, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven. © Hugo Maertens/ KU Leuven, in Tollebeek, Jo & Eline van Assche, eds. (2010). *Mayombe. Rituele beelden uit Congo*. Tiel: Lannoo, p81, fig.8.
- p73** Figure UCL A68, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve. © Hugo Maertens/ UCL in Tollebeek & van Assche, 2010: p78, fig.6.
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**Graphic Design**

Ellen Bilterest

**Printing**

De Raaf, Leuven

**Outside cover**

Chamois leather, blackened iron fibula, Hannah Joris



## Via the Body

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# Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment

Featured works:

*World Bank (L'ironie d'une Sainte)*

2010

14 karat gold, sweet Asian potato

40 x 18 x 5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

and

*World Bank Cut-Off #1, #2, #3*

2010

14 karat gold, sweet Asian potato

14,5 x 4 x 4 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

**Loss, Longing, Guilt  
& The Fragment**





I turned my eyes back through every one  
Of the seven spheres and saw the globe  
which looked  
Such a miserable thing that I smiled.

– Dante<sup>1</sup>



*Necklace of human fingers, belonged to a  
Cheyenne medicine-man*

ca. 1876

Contains eight left-hand middle fingers of enemies,  
glass beads, projectile points and bacculite fossil.

National Museum of Natural History, Washington  
D.C.



*Chromolithograph of a necklace of human fingers,  
which belonged to a Cheyenne medicine-man*

*Necklace of human fingers*

1892

Chromolithograph

28,6 x 19 cm

Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution

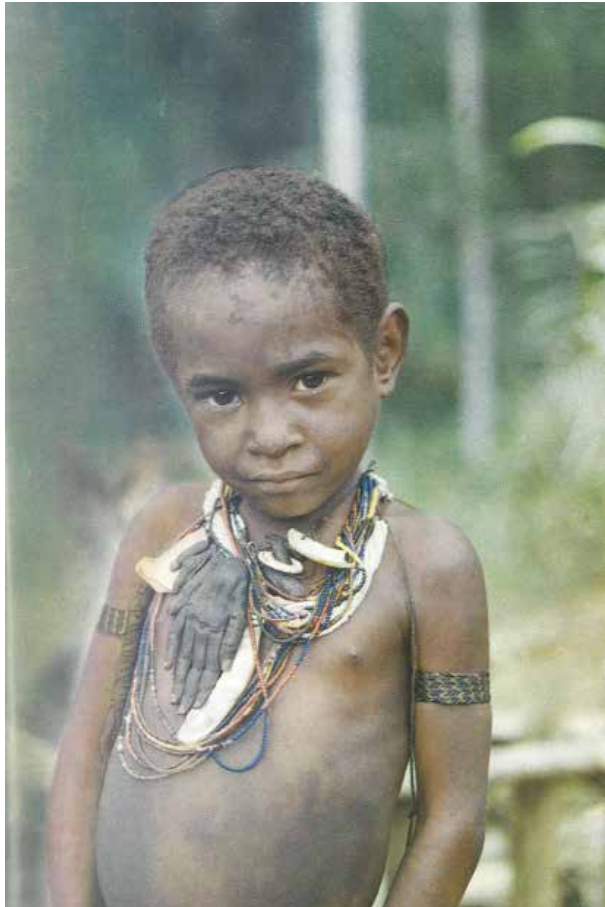


*Detail of stitching on the palmar surface of a finger*

*Necklace of human fingers, belonged to a Cheyenne  
medicine-man*

ca. 1876

Contains eight left-hand middle fingers of enemies,  
glass beads, projectile points and bacculite fossil  
National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C.



*Little Pygmy-girl with a smoked human hand  
as an amulet*  
ca. 1960, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea  
Necklace contains: smoked child's hand (of deceased  
brother) and smoked finger joints of relatives



*Woman wearing her husband's jawbone and bracelets made from pigs' noses*  
1934, Highland New Guinea  
Necklace contains human jawbone with teeth in place



*Skull from Jericho*

ca. 7000 BC

Human skull covered with a layer of plaster, painted  
Archaeological Museum, Damascus



*Human ancestral skull used both as a pillow and  
as an ornament*

19th century, Indonesia, Papua Province, Asmat  
Human bone and teeth, wood, plaited cane, string  
14 x 23 cm

From the collection of Truus and Joost Daalder





*Skull relic with painted eyes from Herkenrode*

14th-15th century

Human skull, silk, gold thread, freshwater pearls, linen

Sint Quintinuskathedraal Hasselt

Photo credits: Frieda Sorber – KIK-IRPA



*Ex-voto's*  
2011  
Agios Antonios cave, Crete



*Untitled (Pleurant)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,8 x 10 cm



*Study of a Torso (Torn)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil on paper  
29,5 x 20,3 cm



*Untitled (Transcending Animal, Falling Human)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011  
Pencil on paper  
21,0 x 14,8 cm



*Untitled (Flesh Awaiting)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,8 x 10 cm



*Study of a hand*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
Manioc (cassava)  
10,5 x 6 x 6 cm



*Study of a foot (bone)*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
White yam, iron  
19 x 7 x 4 cm





*Study of a foot (bone)*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
White yam, iron  
19 x 7 x 4 cm



*Study of a foot (fragment)*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
White yam  
6 x 8 x 4 cm



*Study of a foot (fragment)*

Hannah Joris

2010

White yam

6 x 8 x 4 cm



Loss undoubtedly forms an important part of the human condition. Mankind is marked by its regular encounters with loss. However, what can be understood as 'loss' differs. Perhaps loss, rather than death, outlines the main inevitability of human life. As death, loss is an aspect of life we are all confronted with, albeit at times a slower and somewhat softer confrontation. Loss is known to us through its regular (but nevertheless often unexpected) occurrence and exists in many different forms and intensities. Loss is not necessarily immediate or solely negative. Loss can be the change of a former state of being: a diminution or an extension of it. In this sense loss might just as well signify a certain gain. *One at the cost of the other.* Loss may be tangible or visible, and at times even repairable. But at times loss is an impalpable – *discarnate* – violent blow, its shock waves mesmerizing beyond description.<sup>2</sup> Or, as is often the case, it is 'merely' a slight sensation; an unease for which there are no words and few cures – and, if any exist at all, they will not last. *Wounds – vulnera – can burst; cures will have to be modified.* Loss can be understood and even shared amongst different people. The source of loss, however, need not be natural and unavoidable; it can be 'wholly' human and unnecessary.<sup>3</sup> Sensitive beings as we are, we can be surprisingly uncompassionate and soulless creatures. This discrepancy brings about a very alive notion of loss within the *vulnerable* human being.

*We make each other suffer.*

I will continue this text fragment with a deeper investigation into human loss. In particular the notion of loss as the dissolution of human innocence will be at stake here. At first sight, the loss of innocence leads us to that unstable moment in each human life, entailing the transition from childhood to adulthood.<sup>4</sup> But the loss of innocence cannot be reduced to one single event per human lifetime. Time after time, each individual is confronted with the loss of innocence; one never knows when the last confrontation takes place, but (for) always remembers the first encounter.

Despite the painful abundance of personal experiences with the loss of innocence, we must not overlook a more general form of it. The loss of human innocence is a kind of loss we human beings construct together – each and every one of us. In fact, the loss of innocence typifying our species encompasses a loss of unity that we have been carrying along with us since our very beginnings, as part of our roots.



### **Holy**

Old English *hālig* ‘*holy, consecrated, sacred, godly,*’ of Germanic origin; related to Dutch and German *heilig*, also to *whole*.

### **Whole**

Old English *hāl* ‘*entire, unhurt, healthy,*’ of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *heel* and German *heil* ‘*salvation, welfare,*’ also to *hail*. The spelling with *wh-* (reflecting a dialect pronunciation with *w-*) first appeared in the 15th century.

### **Heal**

Old English *hālan* ‘*cure; save; make whole, sound and well; restore to sound health,*’ of Germanic origin, literally ‘*to make whole,*’ related to Dutch *heelen* and German *heilen*, also to *whole*.

### **Vulnerable**

Early 17th century: from late Latin *vulnerabilis* ‘*wounding,*’ from Latin *vulnerare* ‘*to wound,*’ from *vulnus* ‘*wound,*’ perhaps related to *vellere* ‘*pluck, to tear.*’

### **Vulva**

1540s, from Latin *vulva*, earlier *volva* ‘*womb, female sexual organ,*’ literally ‘*wrapper,*’ from *volvere* ‘*to turn, twist, roll, revolve,*’ also ‘*turn over in the mind,*’ from Proto-Indo-European root \**wel-* ‘*to turn, revolve,*’ with derivatives referring to curved, enclosing objects.<sup>5</sup>





Eternally chained to a single little fragment of the whole, man himself develops into nothing but a fragment (...) he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of putting his stamp on humanity upon his own nature, he becomes merely the stamp of his occupation, of his specialized knowledge.

– Friedrich Schiller<sup>6</sup>

The rude society resembles the creatures that though cut into pieces will live; the highly civilized society is like a highly organized animal: a stab in a vital part, the suppression of a single function, is death.

– Henry George<sup>7</sup>

The Fall of Man immortalizes the very first loss of human innocence – those first scars that slivered our enveloping skin and affected our souls. The biblical myth of the Fall tells us that doubt, uncertainty and vulnerability were cast upon us at that very instance.<sup>8</sup> Guilt and shame were to follow. The expulsion from Paradise is the point at which our worrying once began; we, humans – “the transcending animal” – are torn between being a god who is able to see the whole and an animal that simultaneously *belongs* to the whole.<sup>9</sup> The fact that we can conceive the whole does not imply that we can handle it.<sup>10</sup> *We are never prepared.* As the child – and especially the young adult – stumbles upon a myriad of disappointments and disillusionments, both the awareness of our human brokenness in life and the accumulation of scars cannot cease to grow. The divide deepens; the wound stings as if it were fresh. *Tears drop incessantly; everywhere, at all times.* And the wound is continuously torn again. Every day, humanity loses a bit more innocence.

The losses we are confronted with are not only of natural origin; we create loss both emotionally and physically, to one another and through our creations. An element of violence and destruction is present in all construction, because we need to destroy nature in order to have materials. But the alliance between destruction and construction is more complex than this; they are counterparts in all realms.<sup>11</sup> Since we destruct and destroy through constructing, the question can be asked what role our ‘second nature’<sup>12</sup> – culture – then plays within the loss of innocence today? Perhaps our ‘second nature,’ or all that results from our consciousness, our knowledge, setting us apart from our ‘first nature,’ which is driven by fear<sup>13</sup> – can overtake our first nature and become self-destructive?<sup>14</sup>

The ancient Greek myth of Pandora confronts us with the harm we cause ourselves through our thirst for knowledge.<sup>15</sup> In opening her casket of new wonders, the goddess of invention “scattered pains and evils among men.”<sup>16</sup> Driven by curiosity, we push the boundaries of our knowledge and find ourselves in awe of the wonders we come across through the very potentials of

28 our knowledge. However, it seems that we are more capable of producing than imagining,<sup>17</sup> which nowadays results in many things appearing familiar without really being known to us.<sup>18</sup> The incalculability of the developments of contemporary knowledge and the consequences of this uncertainty for mankind are rather unsettling – “more knowledge can lead to less happiness.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, we find ourselves once again torn – *lost* – between two extremes – between “despair and triumph.”<sup>20</sup> As Safranski argues, about the moon landing in 1969, it “was probably the moment at which modern global consciousness was born, *the beginning of the fall from euphoria into panic.*”<sup>21</sup>

With regard to incalculability and uncertainty, we cannot, however, isolate our relation to material developments from our relations to life and to fellow human beings. All these relations are closely intertwined and are evidently shaped by religious, political, economical, scientific and philosophical influence. My aim here is neither to trace which aspects influenced each other nor to pursue the ambitious and overwhelming task of giving a broad overview of these particular issues.<sup>22</sup> Rather, I would like to investigate a particular form of loss that is connected to the relation between humans on the one hand, and between humans and the world on the other hand. This loss sets humans – *l’Homme* – apart from one another and therefore separates them from their very ‘*home*,’ which is the world. Needless to say, this form of loss is responsible for a great deal of human uncertainty. Let us look into this notion of ‘*loss of world*,’ alongside the ‘*loss of innocence*.’

There is something originally, inaugurally,  
profoundly wounded in the human relationship to  
the world.

– Jacques Lacan<sup>23</sup>

In her work *The Human Condition* (1958), Hannah Arendt sheds light on the different ways in which humans relate to the world and how modern developments in society have disturbed our relationship to the world. Arendt sees a growing emphasis on life itself at the expense of worldly life. In other words, the ultimate goal in life has increasingly become “bare life” itself as a “biological necessity” rather than social, politically engaged “qualified life.” Hence, pure survival, ever-increasing life expectancy and the healthy, enjoyable, consuming life have gained considerable importance in the course of the 20th century.<sup>24</sup>

It is this shift towards “life as the highest good”<sup>25</sup> that can be considered as the source of the troubled human relationship with the world – our *loss of world*, our *loss of the love of the world*.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand we find ourselves – both as consumers and producers – alienated from the world through a broken relationship with the material world. We produce in order to *consume* our products in the *life process* rather than to *use* them to build – *reify* – a *world*.<sup>27</sup> Whereas destruction is inherent to the former, it is only incidental to the latter.<sup>28</sup> It is in the usage of things that we develop respect for the maker and his/her creations.<sup>29</sup> But what must become of man as the maker of things, if everything he/she makes will be consumed – *devoured*? Conquered by an infinite process, durability and permanence fade away and make room for the object as “a mere by-product, a side-effect.”<sup>30</sup> The human capacity that suffers most from world alienation is the ability of making useful things that stabilize the qualified human life.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, we experience alienation from the world itself, from which we have taken distance by knowing more and consequently doubting even more, to eventually fall back upon ourselves.<sup>32</sup> The modern *loss of faith* did not help us forward in this respect: “(...) modern man at any rate did not gain this world when he lost the other world, and he did not gain life, strictly speaking, either; he was thrust back upon it, thrown into the closed inwardness of introspection (...).”<sup>33</sup> But there is more to world alienation than the distance between humans and their world.

Humans relate to one another through *speech and action*, through a shared concern for worldly interests. Literally then, we are speaking of “something which *inter-est*, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together.” A great deal of speech and action humans engage in, is concerned with this “objective in-between.”<sup>34</sup> Besides this “worldly in-between,” there is a second in-between, which is not tangible. It “consists of deeds and words and owes its origin exclusively to men’s acting and speaking directly to one another. (...) But for all its intangibility, this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common.”<sup>35</sup> Arendt argues that one must be willing to risk the disclosure inherent to speech and action.<sup>36</sup> For

30 any human being refraining from these capacities, is no longer human: “A life without speech and action (...) is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Arendt argues that “social ties” have an essential role in the establishing of our moral standards.<sup>38</sup> World-alienation is twofold; it concerns “the loss of nature and the loss of the human artifice in the widest sense [leaving] behind a society of men, who, without a common world which would at once relate and separate them, either live in desperate lonely separation or are pressed together in a mass.”<sup>39</sup> Mass society seems unable to bring people together, to relate and to separate them.<sup>40</sup> Most alarmingly then, it seems the world of human relations has fallen victim to the dominating focus on life as the highest good and the introspection into the self.<sup>41</sup> *Loss of us.*  
Loneliness.<sup>42</sup>





Today, in our globalizing society characterized by the loss of boundaries, guilt and uncertainty continue to multiply and strike more and more forcefully.<sup>43</sup> We are both *covered* (suffocated) and *uncovered* (bared) by the (wrong-) doings of our second nature...

Where are our roots, where is our *Heimat* and where lies our responsibility when temporal and spatial dimensions continue to expand, but many impressions and stimuli nevertheless remain distant to us?<sup>44</sup> Who are we now, when the relationship between the individual and society is in crisis?<sup>45</sup> What is the purpose of ‘us’ in this life, where do we go in this life, if we are lost in an abundance of (lost) things?<sup>46</sup> Whose fault is it, other than our own, that we find ourselves disconnected from our creations, our world and our-selves, each other?<sup>47</sup> How do we proceed, if in all this uncertainty we are still driven by fear and covered by shame?<sup>48</sup> Have we all become refugees?<sup>49</sup>

Uncertainty has always been a key actor in the human condition and always will be.<sup>50</sup> Our kind will forever oscillate between ‘beginnings’ and ‘endings,’ or as writer Anne Philippe has so aptly put it: “*Pas une seconde, depuis que la vie existe, le jeu de la joie et de la souffrance, de la naissance et de la mort ne s’était arrêté et il durerait aussi longtemps que le monde.*”<sup>51</sup> What interests me here though, is the particular *constructive* power that creation – material invention, things, objects, artworks – can have in this story of uncertainty. Since the *loss of unity* is echoed in the *loss of world*, and vice versa, we could consider the healing of this uncertainty as a quest for unity.<sup>52</sup> Although it is clear that matter is not solely responsible for the uncertainty and consequential destruction brought about, the power between matter, images, and humans/human relationships proves to be a powerful triangle to this day. *If we are able to bring about great losses, how is it then possible that we do not possess the necessary language or methods to deal with such losses?*<sup>53</sup> We need ways to deal with our losses.

More specifically, I wonder what role objects play, or can play, in this ‘dance’ – *danse macabre* – of life.

For, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, though we must die, we are not born onto this world and into this life in order to die, but in order to begin. “The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, ‘natural’ ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted. It is (...) the birth of new men and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born. Only the full experience of this capacity can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope (...).”<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Arendt sees the artist as the only remaining maker of things that are *not intended for “making a living.”*<sup>55</sup> *The durable things we make, can stabilize human life and help us restore our sameness.*<sup>56</sup>

And is this power of the new beginning not what continues to feed our dream of the whole – keeping both the dream and ‘us’ alive?

The game of man and of his own rotting is perpetuated in the most dismal of conditions without the one having the courage to confront the other. It seems that we will never find ourselves faced with the grandiose image of decomposition whose risk, which intervenes at every breath, is nonetheless the very meaning of a life that we prefer, we know not why, to the life of another whose breath may survive us. We know only the negative form of this image – soaps, toothbrushes and all the pharmaceutical products we accumulate in order to escape daily, with difficulty, from filth and death. Each day we make ourselves into the docile servants of these petty fabrications, the sole gods of modern man. This servitude continues in all places where a normal being might still go. We go to an art dealer like we'd go to a pharmacist, seeking well-displayed remedies for respectable illnesses.

– Georges Bataille<sup>57</sup>

Le respect de la puissance imaginable est incompatible avec la violation de la vie et de la liberté.

– Marie-José Mondzain<sup>58</sup>



## *The Fall – Dissemblance – Torn*

So, we are torn.  
Torn between Self and us.  
Torn between Self and world.  
Torn between head, hand and heart.  
Torn between desperation and celebration.

Where must we seek help and healing? I would suggest taking a step away from “life as the highest good” and moving towards life as a vibrant, ‘full-bodied’ human life; what is it that differentiates our human “qualified life” from being merely “life as a biological necessity?”<sup>60</sup> I would here like to build upon Hans Belting’s opinion that “[i]t is through the vast array of images to which humanity accords meaning, that the human being proves himself a cultural being, a being that cannot be described solely in biological terms.”<sup>61</sup> Art can be considered “a personal, even private, attempt to come to terms with the human condition via an ever desperate attempt to produce form and meaning.”<sup>62</sup>

So, we have fallen.  
Fallen from us to Self.  
Fallen from world to Self.  
Fallen from heart, hand to head.  
Fallen from celebration to desperation.

The Fall has guided us to the image – *our images*. Once created in God’s image, we humans lost this unity – our “*ressemblance à Dieu*” – the moment we lost our innocence. The euphonic cadence broke apart into a dissonance. The *resemblance* transformed into a *dissemblance*, leaving us no other option – *no other path to follow* – than to create images in the hope to retrieve the similarity – *the reunification with God’s image*.<sup>63</sup>

So, we remain torn.  
We, “a fallen image.”<sup>64</sup>

The moment we touch matter, we are doomed to dissimulation; but *simultaneously* we can only seek refuge in our very making of images – “*images dissemblables*.” We can do nothing but (struggle to) make *alienating, estranging* images in the hope – *desire* – to touch upon the invisible and unite with what we have lost.<sup>65</sup> To quote Barbara Baert on Didi-Huberman: “From that point [the Fall] onwards, the history of images became a history of the longing for identity with the original. Artistry defines itself as a continually repeated striving for this reunification, and the work of art is the only hope for that proven restoration. In short, every artistic expression renews a pact with what was lost.” It is “the shame of being human”<sup>66</sup> along with this interspace of loss that provides the energy to create and that drives us forwards.<sup>67</sup> And so the image opens up to us...<sup>68</sup>

## The Human Condition – Death – Loneliness

So, perhaps we are torn, but at least, covering our wound, there's a protecting scab...

Let us here carry on with this *ouverture* of the image.<sup>69</sup> In our hope to reunify with God's image, in our desire to see the invisible, the ungraspable; that is to say, in our yearning to counter our losses and in our craving to unify *through* the image and *towards* the image, we are also driven by the worldly loss that is death.

In his book *Bild-Anthropologie -Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (2001), Hans Belting lays out the dense and tight webbing – *gauze*<sup>70</sup> – in which death and the image are interwoven. Finding themselves powerless against the uncertainty surrounding death, humans have sought modes of defense against their loss – “the great absence that is death.” The “unbearable absence” arising from the death of a fellow human “was made good by the presence of images.”<sup>71</sup> For the moment a person dies, their body becomes an image, but one that doesn't last; the corpse is but a mute, fleeting image.<sup>72</sup> Through images we have been able to counter the passivity that death forces upon us; we can give the dead person an “*immortal body*” in the image – lending the dead *presence*. In other words, the image, as a durable “*symbolic body*,” complements the dissolving “*mortal body*.” The image draws its vitality from an absence and replaces it with “a substitute presence.”<sup>73</sup> Paradoxically then, the image makes *present* – visible – that which is *absent*;<sup>74</sup> it counteracts an *absence* by creating a *presence*: “The enigma that already surrounded the corpse would be shared now by the image: the paradoxical *absence* that speaks so loudly in the *presence* of the corpse would be heard now also in the *presence* of the image.”<sup>75</sup>

Death implies the loss of a fellow human being. World alienation, as we have seen, implies the loss of world, the loss of each other, the loss of inter-action and inter-est. A life without speech and action also implies death. Perhaps, seen the fact that we are in need of durable things through which we can connect, the bringing about of such a common ground encouraging (inter-) action indeed lies within the capacities of the image/object/artwork. For are all the losses mentioned above not be considered as ‘absences of life’ also, ‘deaths’ that might be somehow compensated for through images?<sup>76</sup> The “passive suffering of death”<sup>77</sup> is not our calling in this worldly life. Beginning, however is: promising, forgiving and the act of beginning again.<sup>78</sup> Imagery can prove to be one way – but not *the only way*<sup>79</sup> – to begin again, as a counteraction against this passive suffering and against the flight of time and the loss of space that we suffer in our bodies today.<sup>80</sup>

## ***Loss – Loneliness – Longing Absence – Presence – Guilt***

*A scab is a “protective crust that forms over a cut or wound during healing.”<sup>81</sup>*

During healing; in other words, the healing that images offer us entails a process.<sup>82</sup> Their comfort is not of definitive nor unconditional nature; it does not serve as medication. One does not simply take in the image when necessary, at prescribed intervals. We cannot charge the image with our losses, but then neglect its deep presence, and still expect it to cure our loneliness. It does not suffice to *disclose* our losses – *absences* – to matter and maker, and to produce and consume images. If we expect more from the image than its ‘mere’ presence – which we do, albeit it secretly<sup>83</sup> – then we are responsible for making its life *a life lived*, or rather *a living life*. Matter is not dead,<sup>84</sup> but as the human being, also the image – and therefore every object also – does not come to life until it is engaged in speech and action, in dialogue.<sup>85</sup> The more distance we allow – or rather, *create* – between our images and the real, the less they will be able to help us deal with reality. It is man who is the culprit; we are to be blamed for this failure, not the image.<sup>86</sup>

The moment we are not willing to invest ourselves into images, we can no longer expect them to comfort us – to *know*, to *remember* how to console us. The question then is rather whether we still know how to access – *get in touch* with – our images?<sup>87</sup>

It is perhaps but a matter of patience and will: the desire to dialogue, the determination to understand, the longing to see and the patience to go through a demanding process.<sup>88</sup> As for the powerful ability to begin again, the dialogue between human and image can draw energy from “those general human capacities which grow out of the human condition and are permanent, that is, which cannot be irretrievably lost so long as the human condition itself is not changed.”<sup>89</sup> All humans share certain abilities to interact with the image; but we need to make constructive use of these skills.<sup>90</sup>

Amongst the most powerful, are those skills over which we seem to have so little control: the senses.<sup>91</sup> And it is within the tension between our senses and the image that much knowledge is gained.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps we cannot reasonably grasp the many aspects of which the loss of world we suffer consists. But images – art, and the humanities in general – do have the power to help us learn the importance of limits and boundaries through the education of the senses. Thought and feeling are related, and we could in fact consider artworks as “thought things.”<sup>93</sup> Images – artworks – provide a demarcated space ‘in’ which we are able to learn and experience aspects of life both within and beyond our scope of understanding. In other words, by stimulating or educating the *senses* through images/artworks, one can get a better *feeling* upon values and facts: “In the enjoyment or production of art (...) man experiences a self-contained context that both demands and cultivates the human powers – senses,

38 understanding and feeling.”<sup>94</sup> Or as sociologist Georg Simmel has suggested: “The essential meaning of art lies in its being able to form an autonomous totality, a self-sufficient microcosm out of a fortuitous fragment of reality that is tied with a thousand threads to this reality.”<sup>95</sup> In making and encountering images/artworks we do not merely experience a transformation of the world, but a true transfiguration.<sup>96</sup> As Peter Venmans writes, inspired by Hannah Arendt: “Telling stories does not remove ‘world alienation,’ or undo the experience of brokenness, but it can give meaning to what would otherwise be unbearable.”<sup>97</sup>

*The covering scab can become the scar of a healed wound... (An embedded mark.)*

*But the scab can also be peeled away.*

*Or, worse still, the ongoing festering of a sore might prevent any scab from forming at all.*

*(By scratching our scars, we scar our scratches.)*

But what if our images are guilty?<sup>98</sup>

Guilty for their paradoxical emptiness, for being the presence of an absence. For making us take for granted a presence of something, which is not there at all. For pretending to be that which it is not.

Guilty also for making visible, being visible in the second and third dimension. For being *there*: graspable, tactile and sensory – sensuous even. For seducing us.

Guilty towards us, for the act they make us ‘indulge in.’ For tempting us to ‘get our hands dirty’ by imitating the act of creation, the act reserved for God.

“Guilt on our behalf too, for it is our child.”<sup>99</sup>

*But then, how can images be guilty for an absence? For their ‘nowhere’?<sup>100</sup>*

*Do images not already confess their guilt of ‘merely’ being an image?<sup>101</sup> Or is it their confession that confuses and even angers us? Have they not already suffered enough? Have we not caused them harm abundantly, needlessly?<sup>102</sup>*

*How can they be responsible for our desire to see, our desire to touch? Or our desire to “cut out their eyes” and “dismember” them?<sup>103</sup>*

*We are responsible for our children.*

*If our images are misused, if we find ourselves betrayed by them, “whose fault is that but our own?”<sup>104</sup>*

*We shall guide them – and thus ourselves – not to fall into guilt, but to take responsibility. To take responsibility for them, protect them. Acknowledge the real. Protect ourselves against ourselves.<sup>105</sup>*

## The Relief of the (Body) Fragment?

So we are torn.  
So we have fallen.  
So we remain torn.  
We are the fallen image.  
We are one great wound,<sup>106</sup> longing for a covering scab.

How must we console ourselves?  
Who could possibly understand our loss?

Our loss of world.  
Our loss of innocence.  
Our loss of us.  
Our loneliness.

Who could possibly engender the return of our love for the world?  
Which scab,  
Which cure,  
Who could we trust to restore our sameness?  
Who is able to reveal to the wound a new beginning?

In our suffering, in our need for the real,<sup>107</sup> in our longing for unification and in the image's power to make visible, to touch and merge, I believe the fragment holds – covers – a humble, but powerful position.<sup>108</sup> I here understand the fragment as anything of which a part has gone lost or anything that is the leftover part of something gone lost and thus bears traces of this loss or rupture. Moreover, I here do not make a distinction between fragments that were born fragmented and those that experienced the act of fragmentation after their birth. In other words, relevant for me here is *a notion of fragmentation through which we perceive the fragment as incomplete and having suffered a loss.*<sup>109</sup>

*'In sooth, the fragment soothes.'*

The obsolete noun 'sooth' – truth – and the verb 'to soothe' are etymologically linked to the Old English 'sōth,' meaning 'genuine, true,' which in turn is cognate with the Old English 'synn' – 'sin' – and Latin 'sontis' – *guilty*. Truth is related to guilt via the notion of 'to be truly the one (who is guilty).'<sup>110</sup> In what follows, we will look into the *soothing* role of the fragment in relation to our *guilt* and the *truths* of life we are confronted with – amongst which the losses we spoke of earlier.

### **For is the fragment not confessing its 'dissemblance'?**

In its incompleteness, the fragment reveals an absence. Even though it is the presence – the *embodiment* – of an absence, the fragment is not a substitute – *replacement* – for an absence. In this regard, I am tempted to insist it is presence *and* absence. As we 'behold' the fragment we see the absent and therefore we also see the whole and know the whole. The fragment becomes the whole – *presence*; it *presents* – and not *represents* – the whole.<sup>111</sup> We know the whole

– our world, our universe, our being – through fragments.<sup>112</sup> But in its precarious presence, the fragment is tied up with a palpable sense of absence in its tears: cuts, scars, piercings and stitches. It carries the visible traces<sup>113</sup> of (a) loss and has no choice, but to persist with its bare wounds, since it has no immune system of its own. Wounds cannot be hidden. *To us, however, the fragment is both wound and bandage.*

### **And is the fragment not strong for revealing this confession?**

Because, as we all know, the fragment *does* persist. It struggles through time and space, through generations of loving, careless, destructive hands. The fragment persists and resists; it withstands – *fights even* – many human atrocities. In all its endurance, the fragment can be considered ‘a tough survivor.’<sup>114</sup>

### **For is the fragment not honest?**

The fragment is tough also, for enduring its task of showing us bitter truths, for confronting us. It has nothing to hide – it simply cannot. It hushes – if we let it do so, but does not hush up. If any aspect of the fragment remains hidden, we are to be blamed for the lack of a willingness to see and feel. It is precisely in its clouded bruises and glaring wounds – *unfolding, revealing, disclosing*, that the fragment opens up to us and *uncovers* the truth – laying it *bare* for us to see and gaze at.<sup>115</sup>

In a world of “damaged life,”<sup>116</sup> “the whole is the untrue,”<sup>117</sup> giving way to the fragment the position of truth. And the fragment takes this position, opposing totality as if it were a reflection of the unstable totality of society.<sup>118</sup> How could the whole be the true in a world that is itself fragmented? And how then, could the work of art presenting totalities “in a world that is not itself totalized or able to be totalized” be truthful?<sup>119</sup> In our broken world – and I would say also, in our (increasing) breaking of the world<sup>120</sup> – the fragment is the true. In other words, one could go so far as to argue that “in the ‘damaged world’ the fragment is the more truthful form of the work of art.”<sup>121</sup>

### **And is the fragment not trustworthy for conveying its honesty?**

How then, could we not trust the fragment? How then, could we – even if only for an instant – consider it guilty? The fragment denies being ‘perfect’ through its fragmented state and therefore acknowledges its own – but also our – shortcomings and suffering.<sup>122</sup> I would like to believe that the fragment – no matter whether having become a fragment, or having been constructed as one – escapes from the guilt that images usually bear in the eyes of iconoclasts. For we are the ones who bruised it, are we not? The fragment is amongst us not in order to replace what is absent; it is absence, it is presence, and it does not aspire to be anything it is not. Because of its honesty, the fragment – or fragmented object – can be considered as a more truthful companion, with which we can identify ourselves more easily and honestly. For if we don’t trust the fragment, how could we then trust anything – with everything being caught in the cycle of constant decay and beginning?<sup>123</sup>

**For is the fragment not crying out for care?  
For being taken care of by a caretaker?**

Perhaps things closed and finished intimidate us. What is there for us to add to a perfect object “besides our own misunderstandings?”<sup>124</sup> Fragments are open – opened, openings, or *ouverts*, *ouvertures* as Didi-Huberman would say.<sup>125</sup> In their openness, they invite us to act and engage: to feel, think, fantasize and hope with them. But most importantly, I feel, is that the fragment – the fragmented object, text, image, artwork – presents itself as wounded, incomplete and “crying out for our help.”<sup>126</sup> Fragments *activate* us to bear with them and create with them our sameness, *in* and *through* our very sameness. The fragment somewhat resembles Georg Simmel’s view of the stranger: both known and unknown to us, both far and near to us. Because of this air of detachment, the stranger approaches his surroundings with a sense of objectivity and therefore “often receives the most surprising revelations and confidences, at times reminiscent of a confessional, about matters which are kept carefully hidden from everybody with whom one is close.”<sup>127</sup> The fragment gains our trust. It awakens more than a productive sense of curiosity: it arouses a binding “kind of piety” within us.<sup>128</sup> We ‘bend over backward,’ crawl, run, hold our breath, squeeze into time and space, and into our memory to (re) collect these fragments of ours – our relics. The mutual understanding of the “damaged life” that we experience in the dialogue with the fragment, brings about “a deeper, more mysterious urge, one that makes us want to render less incomplete the many imperfections of our own experience and to redeem to some degree the dominion that chance and disappointment have over our own lives.”<sup>129</sup>

**And is the fragment not comforting in confronting?  
In opening a new beginning to us?**

Because of their broken state, fragments reveal new possibilities to us. As the art critic Lucy Lippard has suggested: “Fragmentation need not connote explosion, disintegration. It is also a component of networks, stratification, the interweaving of many dissimilar threads, and de-emphasis on imposed meaning in favor of multiple interpretations.”<sup>130</sup> In their ‘opening,’ their brokenness that offers us the possibility to restore the disappointments we all experience in our lives, fragments perhaps can be considered as sacrifices.<sup>131</sup> Their incompleteness expresses “a vitality that can make us feel we must change our lives.”<sup>132</sup> It is the incompleteness of the fragment that “stimulates our imagination to try to complete it” and through which we engage in a creativity we otherwise would have neglected.<sup>133</sup> The fragment offers us the opportunity to learn about personal values through its vulnerable presence and its yearning absence. In our being touched by its lacking state, we come to the fragment’s rescue. Confronting it, we can come to realize that “our aspirations reach far beyond the limits that mortality and contingency assign us, and so in a deep sense our lives are ineluctably all fragments, *diseicta membra* of the lives we would wish for ourselves and those we love.” I believe we might then find relief and consolation “by the love that we can lavish upon other fragments.”<sup>134</sup> And this healing does not merely consist of being an engaged caretaker of wounded *things* – but an opening towards *the wounded*. The fragment



Victorian mourning ring, ca. 1850-1860.  
 Braided hair, gold centerpiece, 2 x 2 cm

is on this world to suggest “the sense that there was or is something more, just beyond it” while it simultaneously leads us a hand to seek closure – in the broadest sense of the term.<sup>135</sup> And the healing – closure – it offers us is beginning, the beginning again together we yearn for.

The fragment does not immediately show us “la ‘belle face’ des choses;” it is here to criticize. The fragment opens in order to make visible its “double face,” “*double fond*” – its ambiguity.<sup>136</sup> Ambiguous, since the disquieting peeks through the familiar, while we are led to healing by our inborn urge to console. Didi-Huberman states that in order to see, to look inside, one must *open and destroy*: “*pour ouvrir, il faut détruire.*”<sup>137</sup> So then: to see (*voir*) and to know (*savoir*) one must destroy. Not only must one destroy to be able to see, one must also suffer because opening supposes injury and cruelty – opening is never without difficulties, because opening transgresses.<sup>138</sup> And fragmenting is a form of destroying and (inflicting) suffering, it is opening. Opening towards us the formlessness of our beginnings – that unstable and uncertain unknown – the fragment at first seems to be a source of “non-consolation,” but in its disruption it can awaken desire – a desire to heal, to patch, to mend, to strengthen, to care, to unify.<sup>139</sup>

### And does the body fragment not enhance/intensify the qualities of the fragment?

(I here understand the body fragment in a general sense: the actual body fragment or fragmented body – as, for example, the use of hair, human bones and other human bodily remains in anatomical relics, mourning jewelry and the adornment of various Papua New Guinean cultures<sup>140</sup> – or an object/image resembling a body fragment or fragmented body – as is the case for many ex-voto’s<sup>141</sup> – but also forms which through their shape or matter remind of body fragments.<sup>142</sup>)

“*We are body. And as body, we die.*”<sup>143</sup>





The relationship between loss and the body is a close one – a *blood tie* – in which the loss of innocence, material loss, world loss, the loss of a loved one, the loss of identity and body fragmentation blend into an intense and complex amalgamation.

They have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair (...) they will even take away our name (...) Consider what value, what meaning is enclosed even in the smallest of our daily habits, in the hundred possessions which even the poorest beggar owns: a handkerchief, an old letter, the photo of a cherished person. These things are part of us, almost like limbs of our body (...) Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes (...) he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself.

I felt an imperious need to take possession of my body again, to re-establish a contact, by now broken for almost two years (...)

– Primo Levi<sup>144</sup>

Tu as déserté, tu m'as laissée. (...) Ma raison refusait ces mirages, mais mon cœur les cherchait. Tu étais absence et présence. (...) Je t'ai trop aimé pour accepter que ton corps disparaisse et proclamer que ton âme suffit et qu'elle vit. Et puis, comment faire pour les séparer, pour dire : ceci est son âme et ceci est son corps ? Ton sourire et ton regard, ta démarche et ta voix étaient-ils matière ou esprit ? L'un et l'autre, mais inséparables. Je joue parfois à un jeu horrible : quelle partie de toi aurait pu être arrachée ou mutilée sans que tu cesses d'être cet homme particulier que j'aimais ? Quel était le signe, ou était la limite ? Quand aurais-je dit : je ne te reconnais plus.

– Anne Philipe<sup>145</sup>

I began to speak to my hip, to thank it for the years of faithful service and to tell it that I would miss our animate association. (...) I began to weep over the loss of the hip, this part of me that had suffered the arthritis in so much silence, but which now wanted to speak. (...) And to pray over bones (...) brings the body into a living, emotional presence. Perhaps something of our own souls is permanently in our body, in each of its parts. To lose something of ourselves is to lose something of psyche, even of a memory that is embedded deep in every organ. I felt that the body had taken on a poetic and sacred sense that is usually hidden from us in our everyday lives. That was the body that I felt deeply was my identity.<sup>146</sup>

In seeing images of the body – body fragments – we are able to directly relate what we see to our own body, *via the body*. We have the capacity to feel what the pictured body feels: its movements, actions, sensations and even its feelings – its pleasure, fear, pain, calm and fragility.<sup>147</sup> From our own experience we know “the human body is not just the object of desire, but the site of suffering, pain and death.”<sup>148</sup> We know the feeling of a cut, a wound, a splinter, a bruise, as we also know the feeling of abuse and insult, violence and intimidation, relief and healing. And the fear for these losses is a constant underlying current of our being: “phantasies of dismemberment are a burden that all self-aware membered creatures bear and ... ‘lines of fragilization’ are drawn within the human body by all those who inhabit one.”<sup>149</sup> We recognize the many aspects of being in the way the body reveals itself; the body is expressive in the positions it takes.<sup>150</sup> This ability creates – and perhaps even stimulates – our *sameness*,<sup>151</sup> in the sense that “our natural body represents a collective body.”<sup>152</sup> Moreover, the image we have of ourselves is interwoven with the ways in which we perceive the pictured body.<sup>153</sup>

Thus, our capacity to identify with other human bodies enables us not only to identify with the pictured body, the pains it has undergone, and the pleasures it has indulged in, but also to see the absent person ‘behind,’ ‘around’ – ‘surrounding’ – the body fragment. We need but a piece, in order to see another individual, to know we are dealing with another human being.<sup>154</sup> We see what is absent. It is as Barbara Baert describes the relic bust: “The form and the impact of the bust seems to be ‘death-surpassing.’ The bust reveals a fascinating tension between individual and non-individual, between [en-souled] and soulless... The bust is a body, but is, at the same time, a limited, cut off *part* of the body. The bust appears to be able to move but is, at the same time, fixed and silent.”<sup>155</sup>



Relic Bust, 17th century, Museum M. Leuven.  
Wood, velvet, gold thread, 34 x 30 cm

She continues by quoting Ernst Gombrich: “The bust invokes a person’s vital powers, which it simultaneously kills with its materiality and fragmentariness.”<sup>156</sup> It is this duality, this ambiguity, this tension between absence and presence, the familiar and unfamiliar, inherent to the fragment and multiplied in the body fragment because of its direct body-relatedness, that, I believe, can prove productive and beneficial – more than we are aware of.

We cannot know his legendary head  
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso  
is still suffused with brilliance from inside,  
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,

gleams in all its power. Otherwise  
the curved breast could not dazzle you so, nor could  
a smile run through the placid hips and thighs  
to that dark center where procreation flared.

Otherwise this stone would seem defaced  
beneath the translucent cascade of the shoulders  
and would not glisten like a wild beast’s fur:

would not, from all the borders of itself,  
burst like a star: for here there is no place  
that does not see you. You must change your life.

– Rainer Maria Rilke<sup>157</sup>

*The body fragment is enfleshed loss* – it confronts us with our losses. On the one hand it reminds us of our own bodily pains. On the other hand it confronts us with losses beyond the borders of the body. Not only does it show an increasing brokenness with the world and with our bodies,<sup>158</sup> even more striking is that the body fragment offers a direct encounter to recognize the ways in which we hurt each other. It makes us ponder upon the destructive actions we inflict upon one another, our bodies, our souls and our objects.<sup>159</sup> Therefore I would say the body fragment in fact does not (only) reveal its own wounds; it reveals *our wounds – losses, of which many caused by our own wrongdoings*. Our wounds “identify and mark us.” And perhaps it is exactly in the wound that we are “most identifiable.” The body fragment then could be seen as the carrier of our wounds, which mark “where the soft spot of our being is, where we are most finite; but ... also where the hinge is located that marks the pivot of our history and our destiny.”<sup>160</sup>

Besides bearing wounds – traces of (a) loss, pain and suffering- body fragments can also strengthen and heighten our awareness towards different aspects of life.<sup>161</sup> The body fragment keeps the whole alive. It enables us to perceive the whole, to *sense* the absent. What is lost can be felt again in the encounter with the body fragment, and I would say in a more intimate way than is the case with other images/objects. Also – or *therefore* – the wounds of the body fragment initiate – *mark* – a sense of new beginning, just as an

experience of loss does. They can “bring us down to earth... or drop us deeper into depths of ourselves to ponder the strange relationship of strength and weakness, success and failure, good and evil.”<sup>162</sup>

Est-ce qu'elle ne gagne pas en force et en intensité ?  
Est-ce que le torse, les bras, les jambes n'en disent  
pas mieux ce qu'ils ont à dire, à savoir l'incurable  
tristesse qui a jeté ce vaincu de la vie, seul et  
désespéré, sur une grève déserte, écoutant, la mort  
dans l'âme, l'éternelle lamentation des flots ?<sup>163</sup>

Let me give a few examples of the body fragment as a *pars pro toto*, enabling us to see – *reach, feel, experience* – and get in touch with – *approach* – the whole through ‘only a part.’<sup>164</sup>

This notion of *pars pro toto* is probably most familiar to us through the medieval faith in redemption, which was believed possible through the overcoming of putrefaction and partition – either through the reunion of parts into a whole or through the claim that the part could *be* the whole *as* a part.<sup>165</sup> Anatomical relics, for example “are usually fragments, often tiny and widely dispersed fragments, of saints’ bodies in each of which the whole of the saintly ‘person,’ the vital force of that powerful soul, nonetheless, is said to persist.”<sup>166</sup> What especially interests me here is the relic’s power for unification *beyond itself*: the relic’s power to “contribute to the integrity of another body” or even the unifying of a community.<sup>167</sup> This is a form of binding through ‘objectivity,’ to recall Arendt.<sup>168</sup> Yet, another, perhaps more striking example, follows. The somatic quality of – especially women’s – piety in the Middle Ages, is related to an actual *becoming one* through the body.<sup>169</sup> For example ascetic suffering is union with the suffering Christ. Even the manipulation of the body – e.g. by driving knives, nails or nettles into the flesh – or the eating of Christ’s body in the eucharist can be described as union with the body of Jesus.<sup>170</sup> The *imitatio Christi* thus reaches beyond imitation to *becoming or being*. *Imitatio* becomes *fusion*.<sup>171</sup> *Stigmata*, Christ’s wounds, ‘wander’ off his body and nestle somatically onto others...<sup>172</sup> As MacKendrick concludes, “the original is neither absent nor simply represented, but re-present, in fullness, over and over again, again and yet not the same.”<sup>173</sup> Bynum proposes:

I find our capacity to tell such stories, to hide horror from ourselves while allowing it to peek through, profoundly comforting. The very implausibility of the restoration of pared fingernails and amputated limbs at the end of time underlines, for me, the despicableness of human beings, who in fact torture and mutilate their fellow human beings. Yet the implausible, even risible, doctrine of the resurrection of the body asserts that – if there is such a thing as redemption – it must redeem our experience of enduring and even inflicting such acts. If there is meaning to the history we tell and

the corruption (both moral and physical) we suffer, surely it is in (as well as in spite of) fragmentation. (...) And why not – whatever despair we may feel concerning resurrection, and reassemblage – find comic relief in the human determination to assert wholeness in that face of inevitable decay and fragmentation?

– Caroline Walker Bynum<sup>174</sup>

As Bynum has voiced, the faith in redemption through body fragments might seem somewhat humorous to us today, but nevertheless touches upon aspects of our being relevant to this day. Body fragments underline those aspects we must both *heal* and *heal from*. And, perhaps oddly, body fragments do embody healing.

Baert for example, suggests the power of both the navel and the umbilical cord stump as relics reminding of the unity between mother and child. These ‘body relics’ are particularly powerful for the foundling and its birth mother, being the only remaining presence of a lost unity. In all the absence the foundling experiences, the navel embodies the *roots* of the unity he/she cannot remember.<sup>175</sup>

There are contemporary examples of how the body fragment plays a significant role in closure. In his book *Disaster Archaeology* Anthropologist Richard A. Gould speaks of the crucial role of archaeology in the recovery (and at times also repatriation) of both human remains and personal belongings of victims of mass fatality. Having led the forensic recoveries at sites of disaster such as the World Trade Center in New York and ‘The Station’ Nightclub Fire scene in Rhode Island, Gould underlines “the need that people have to receive identified remains of a relative who was killed and to see and take possession of his or her personal belongings” in order “to begin to grieve.”<sup>176</sup> In his experience the emotional closure brought about through the careful recoveries at disaster scenes not only comforts the survivors and the family and friends of victims, but also brings peace to “members of the community not directly affected by the tragedy.”<sup>177</sup> I must however mention, that the physical remains are not always necessary to bring closure. For the victims’ friends and relatives, the very act of carrying out these careful recoveries through archaeological methods already proved crucial for bringing closure.<sup>178</sup>

Related to the process of memorialization and closure, folklorist Margaret Yocom has investigated several “spontaneous memorials” arising at sites of disaster such as The Pentagon. Her research shows how representations of body fragments – in particular “representations of heads, hearts, hands, thumbs and feet” – can become “resonant forms” evoking “both human presence and human loss.”<sup>179</sup> Following philosopher Avishai Margalit’s suggestion that in order to comprehend dramatic events, we need to “insert ourselves into the event,” Yocom argues that “[b]y sending replicas and tracings of the hands, thumbs, and feet, people surely meant to leave the most earnest token of their physical presence and their personal concern that they could.”<sup>180</sup> Moreover, she suggests the meaning visitors crave for are answered precisely by the ambiguity inherent to body fragments which brings about an experience of

complementarity between presence and absence, the finite and the infinite.<sup>181</sup> Yocom beautifully summarizes the power of the body fragment: “Among their many meanings, they represent the promise of bodily touch but not the embrace; the echo of footsteps, but not the arrival.”<sup>182</sup>

***‘Noli me frangere: Fragment me no further?’<sup>183</sup>***

If we need ways to communicate about our losses, deal with them and even heal them, then perhaps the (body) fragment offers a direct and accessible healing to most of us. If we ‘manage’ to achieve so much loss through material invention and if we perceive pain and loss bodily, perhaps then also healing can be found within matter and the body, without refraining from the social and without falling into ‘hollow materiality,’ consumption or “the body cult whose God is the body.”<sup>184</sup> Let us approach the (body) fragment beyond the ‘glitzy’ and ‘gruesome’ presence it has in our culture today.<sup>185</sup>

Besides its expression of disintegration, the fragment has the power to ‘open up to us’ a greater whole just like the work of art does. They guide us both to the totality directly surrounding us as well as to “a new kind of whole” which links to our reality in diverse ways.<sup>186</sup> But fragments can do more still – objects can bring healing precisely because they can convey meaning that is not verbally expressed.<sup>187</sup> Mourning and caring are intimately linked to one another, even etymologically. And in order to care – and to mourn – for what is lost, we have the need to remember what is lost.<sup>188</sup> But how can we remember and care for a loss as intangible as the loss of innocence and the loss of world?

You too were torn from my breast, cut from my  
womb. My heart cannot forget you.<sup>189</sup>

Building upon the etymological link between the wound – *vulnus* – and the *vulva*, I here suggest that the (body) fragment operates as a ‘fertile wound.’<sup>190</sup> Since, as we have seen above, the (body) fragment ‘presents’ itself as an invitation for healing. It asks – even begs – to be cherished, taken care of, patched up. *Does this not show in the dense layering enveloping many anatomical relics?*<sup>191</sup> Within the (body) fragment we are able to recognize our losses. Through the (body) fragment we are able to take care of our losses and retrieve the experience of wholeness.

According to philosopher John Dewey objects occupy a particular role in our desire for reunification since they themselves are often born of a passage from “the rhythm of loss of integration with the environment and the recovery of union.”<sup>192</sup> The very act of making is an encounter with “resistance and tension” in which the maker seeks the potentiality of the in-between moments in order to achieve union, even if only briefly. Therefore Dewey suggests “[d]esire for restoration of the union converts mere emotion into interest in objects as conditions of realization of harmony.”<sup>193</sup>

As remains and reminders of an energetic body,<sup>194</sup> the body fragment in the form of an object can be “imagined... as a counterpart... for the observer.”<sup>195</sup> In

50 our longing for unification, the (wearable) body fragment then offers itself as a counterpart enabling the potential to complement one another and unite. The wearable body fragment enfleshing a loss experienced within the wearer becomes a wearable relic,<sup>196</sup> a wearable *cura posterior* – a cure that makes our suffered losses bearable.

In the making of this opening – this wounded fragment – springs from our loss of innocence and our “shame of being human”<sup>197</sup>... In its opening up towards us, the wounded fragment *uncovers* the truth for us to relate to and *reveals* its wound for us to take care of. In doing so, we *counteract* the loss together, patching up one another. The fragment *reveals* and *relieves* our wounds.

Así ando yo  
Cantando aún mis penas  
Queriendo que me ames  
Para mi soledad  
(...)  
Y así amo yo  
Con rimas tan torcidas  
Buscando disonancias  
Pa' mi nueva canción  
– Lhasa<sup>198</sup>





## Endnotes

- 1 Canto 22, *Paradiso*, ca. 1308-1321, from: Alighieri, Dante. (1981). *The Divine Comedy*. Notes by David H. Higgins, C.H. Sisson, trans. London: Pan Books, p449.
- 2 Cf. "(...) when it comes to loss (...) I think one is hit by waves (...) One finds oneself fallen." Butler, Judith. (2006). *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, p21.
- 3 Besides 'le mal métaphysique,' the metaphysical evil that concerns our imperfections, Leibniz distinguishes 'le mal physique,' the physical evil we naturally suffer, versus 'le mal moral,' the moral evil, which we inflict upon each other. Leibniz, Gottfried W. (1952). *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, E.M. Huggard, trans. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. And: Venmans, Peter. (2006). *Een plaats voor het onoplosbare. Hannah Arendt over de gebrokenheid van de moderne mens. (A Place for the insoluble. Hannah Arendt on modern human brokenness)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, pp38 (English: p131).
- 4 Key references: van Gennep, Arnold. (1981). *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: Picard (quoted in Bynum, Caroline W. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone Books, p30, 307); Turner, Victor W. (1964). *Between and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites De Passage*. In *The Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society. Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, pp4-20.
- 5 Jewell, Elizabeth J. & Frank Abate. (2005). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. and Harper, Douglas. (2001-2013). *Online Etymology Dictionary*, viewed 17th of July, 2013: [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com).
- 6 Schiller, Friedrich. (1967). *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p35.
- 7 1883, in George, Henry. (1963). *Social Problems*. New York: Robert Schalkenbach, p4.
- 8 Safranski, Rüdiger. (2005). *How much globalization can we bear?* Cambridge: Polity Press, p17.
- 9 Ibid. pp1, 17. Also: Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp22-28, 139, 176, 262, 264.
- 10 Safranski, 2005: p22.
- 11 Arendt, 1998: p139. Cf. On the destructive aspect of photography in particular, see Belting, Hans. (2011). *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp146-151, 154-162. And towards the image: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, pp37, 54, 56. Cf. Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, Piet Coesens, Rosi Huhn, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Brian Massumi & Griselda Pollock. (2000). *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. Artworking 1985-1999*. Brussels/Gent-Amsterdam: Ludion/PSK, p11. Text originally published in Ettinger, Bracha L. (1993). *Matrix Halal(a)-Lapsus. Notes on Painting*. Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.
- 12 Safranski, 2005: pp1-5; Safranski speaks of our natural 'first nature' – "and animal that belongs to the whole" – versus our cultural 'second nature' – "the transcending animal" that is able to take distance from the whole and contemplate it.
- 13 Safranski, 2005: p2. And also (fear as the fear for pain): Arendt, 1998: pp309-310.
- 14 Safranski, 2005: p4. Arendt, 1998: pp132-133, 151 (specifically on tools, machines), 262, 289. On the unpredictability of actions in general, see note 17. On "the paradoxical vulnerability of modern technologies (and cities)" see pp198-209 of the chapter "Plagued by their own inventions": Yablon, Nick. (2009). *Untimely Ruins. An Archaeology of American Urban Modernity, 1819-1919*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press. Yablon refers to, amongst others: Tenner, Edward. (1997). *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*. New York: Vintage, pp6-8, 24 (with the term *revenge effect*, Tenner describes "how machines, once organized into complex systems or networks, generate unforeseeable and unintended problems," as quoted by Yablon, pp198-199); Heidegger, Martin. (1977). *The Question concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, New York: Harper & Row, p5 ("The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatened to slip from human control."); George, 1963: pp3-4 ("And when left stranded without the specialized skills of others and 'thrown back upon nature,' 'highly civilized man' finds himself 'helpless,'" as quoted by Yablon, p204.) Ulrich Beck speaks of the *risk society*

- as being a *catastrophe society*, warning us that “[a]long with the growing capacity of technological options ... grows the incalculability of their consequences.” See Beck, Ulrich. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications, pp22-23, 78-79. Laurent Olivier suggests the constant threat for such catastrophes paralyzes us, since there is no way for any of us to escape it. In fact, as suggested by Günther Anders, the very inconceivability of the dangers awaiting us might even render us fearless: “la perspective du désastre, par son énormité à proprement parler inconcevable, nous décharge de notre peur de la catastrophe, de la même manière que la surindustrialisation des processus de production et de consommation nous délivre de la responsabilité morale de nos actes.” As quoted in Olivier, Laurent. (2013). *Nous sommes à l’âge de la Dévastation*. In Jan Driessen, ed., *Destruction*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, pp31; Anders, Günther. (2007). *La menace nucléaire. Considérations radicales sur l’âge atomique*. Paris: Rocher, p49.
- 15 For a general account of the thirst for knowledge and the dangers it implies: Safranski, 2005: pp1-5; Sennett, Richard. (2008). *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, pp1-15. Cf. also Levi Bryant: “knowledge is power. (...) No, questions of knowledge are not innocent questions (...),” in Bryant, Levi R. (2011). *The Democracy of Objects*. Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, pp17-18.
  - 16 From Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (92-129): Hesiod. (1973). *Hesiod and Theognis*. Dorothea Wender, trans. London: Penguin, pp60-62.
  - 17 Safranski, 2005: pp4, 38. Cf. boundlessness and unpredictability of action (and consequently uncertainty as the decisive character of human affairs), see Arendt, 1998: pp190-191, 232-233, 238. Arendt refers to: Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*, No. 291, see Nietzsche, Friedrich W. (1967). *The Will to Power*. New York: Random House, p164. See also: George, 1963: p3: “When we try to think what knowledge and power progressive civilization may give to the men of the future, imagination fails.” See also Olivier, 2013: p32. Moreover, he here quotes Anders (2007: p50), who suggests that it is precisely because of our impossibility to foresee that we are powerful: “nous sommes tout-puissants parce que nous sommes impuissants.”
  - 18 Safranski, 2005: p38. See also note 44.
  - 19 Ibid. (on Oedipus), pp3, 60.
  - 20 Arendt describes Galileo’s discovery of the telescope as an event “revealing the secrets of the universe with the certainty of sense-perception” to which “both despair and triumph are inherent,” Arendt, 1998: pp257ff.
  - 21 Safranski, 2005: p5. Italics added.
  - 22 An excellent inquiry into these issues, their connections and the influence on our species can be found in Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition* (1958).
  - 23 Lacan Jacques. (1988). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II, The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*. Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., notes by John Forrester. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p167.
  - 24 Arendt, 1998. See specifically p126: “... we have almost succeeded in leveling all human activities to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance. Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of ‘making a living’...” Venmans, Peter. (2005). *De ontdekking van de wereld. Over Hannah Arendt*. Amsterdam/Antwerp: Atlas, pp100-105; Venmans, 2006: p41. Michel Foucault developed similar thoughts independent of Arendt’s, also observing the increase of “bare life” (zoe) and its overtaking of “qualified life” (bios); Foucault, Michel. (1997). *Il faut défendre la société. Cours au Collège de France, 1976*. Paris: Gallimard, as quoted in For further development of these notions and the relation of it to Michel Foucault’s *biopolitics*, see: Agamben, Giorgio. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
  - 25 Arendt, 1998: pp312-320.
  - 26 Ibid., pp115, 248-257, 265.
  - 27 Ibid., pp136ff, 144ff. Venmans, 2005: p102.
  - 28 Arendt, 1998: p138.
  - 29 Cf. Venmans, 2005: p102.
  - 30 Arendt, 1998: pp94, 297: “the scientist made only in order to know, not in order to produce things, and the product was a mere by-product, a side effect.”
  - 31 Ibid., p307.
  - 32 Ibid., pp115-116, 248ff. Arendt argues also that in laboring and pain we experience worldlessness, since the human body is here thrown back upon itself and concentrates on nothing but its own being alive.
  - 33 Arendt, 1998: p320.
  - 34 Ibid., p182.
  - 35 Ibid., p183.
  - 36 On the risk of disclosure, the uncertain consequences of action: Arendt, 1998: pp180, 230ff. Cf. Safranski, 2005: p64. See note 17.
  - 37 Arendt, 1998: p176.

- 38 "Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social ties are cut off. Moral standards are much easier kept in the texture of a society." Arendt, Hannah. (1994). *We Refugees*. In Marc Robinson, ed., *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*. Boston-London: Faber & Faber, p116. The text was originally published in 1943, in a small Jewish periodical, *The Menorah Journal* 31(1), pp69-77.
- 39 Arendt, Hannah. (1993). *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin, pp89-90.
- 40 Arendt, 1998: pp52-53, 59, 257. Cf. Safranski, 2005: p62: "(...) it is essential that a clearing be found, one which is neither completely inward (...) nor completely outward (...)."
- 41 Arendt, 1998; Venmans, 2006: p41.
- 42 Cf. "Isolation and loneliness are not the same. I can be isolated – that is in a situation in which I cannot act, because there is nobody who will act with me – without being lonely; and I can be lonely – that is in a situation in which I as a person feel myself deserted by all human companionship – without being isolated. (...) While isolation concerns only the political realm of life, loneliness concerns human life as a whole. (...) *What makes loneliness so unbearable is the loss of one's own self which can be realized in solitude, but confirmed in its identity only by the trusting and trustworthy company of my equals*. In this situation, man loses trust in himself as partner of his thoughts and that elementary confidence in the world which is necessary to make experiences at all. Self and world, capacity for thought and experience are lost at the same time." Italics added; Arendt, Hannah. (2004). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Schocken Books, pp613-614.
- 43 Safranski, 2005 (esp. pp32, 35, 47, 49). Cf. Belting, 2011: p39.
- 44 Safranski, 2005: pp12, 35-49ff: "We no longer mourn ideal places, but we are losing the real places that create identity," and "while our head is in the world, the world is also in our head" through which "we land in situations which make us uneasy that the extent of our familiarity with the global is becoming dramatically out of step with our capacity for action."
- 45 Safranski, 2005: p58ff.
- 46 See *Jungle and Clearing* in Safranski, 2005: pp51-56; Arendt, 1998: pp117, 126-127, 134, 151, 252-253; Sennett, 2008: p110; Olivier, Laurent. (2011a). *Les choses aussi sont des êtres. Libération*, 11th of January, viewed 19th of December 2011, <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/01012312836-les-choses-aussi-sont-des-etres>.
- 47 On images as our responsibility, see Mondzain, Marie-José. (1995). *L'image naturelle*. Paris: Nouveau commerce, 1995, p40. Excerpts available online: Mondzain, Marie-José. (2007). *L'image naturelle, Philopsis*, 10th of September, viewed 5th of June 2013: [http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf\\_image\\_naturelle\\_mondzain.pdf](http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf_image_naturelle_mondzain.pdf); Belting, 2011: pp14-15 – for the political and economical misuse of images, Belting here refers to: Augé, Marc. (1997). *La guerre des rêves. Exercices d'ethno-fiction*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, pp82ff, esp. 102ff. See also Baert, Barbara. (2005). *Omtrent erbarmen en verlangen. Beeld en genese in het werk van Berlinde De Bruyckere. (On compassion and longing. Image and genesis in Berlinde De Bruyckere's work)*. In Inge Braeckman, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere – Één (Berlinde De Bruyckere – One)*, Prato: Gli Ori, p9 and Baert, Barbara. (2006a). *Woord, huid, sluier. Omtrent beeld en monotheïsme. (Word, skin, veil. About image and monotheism)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, p100. Dirk J. Van den Berg argues that since human beings are not "passive recipients of optical stimuli but responsive subjects, [we] are responsible for our actions in the field of visibility." See: Van den Berg, Dirk J. (2004). *What is an image and what is image power?* In *Image & Narrative – Mélanges/Miscellaneous*, IV(2:8), May, p14, viewed the 28th of November, 2012: <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/issue08/dirkvandenbergh.htm>. On our responsibility for our actions, Arendt, 1998: pp184-186, 190-192, 208, 230-247 as quoted by: Herzog, Annabel. (2004). *Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility*. In *Studies in social and political thought*, 10, pp39-52; Safranski, 2005: pp13, 44-50; cf. Sennett, 2008: pp1-15, 208-209, 186-196 (esp. *Prologue and Conclusion*).
- 48 Still driven by fear, see Safranski, 2005. Cf. Arendt, 1998: p233: the unpredictability of action as bringing about guilt. On "the shame of being" versus our actions and responsibilities, see: Deleuze, Gilles. (1995). *Negotiations*. New York: Colombia University Press, pp171-174, and Deleuze, Gilles & Félix Guattari. (1994). *What is Philosophy?* London - New York: Verso, pp107-108, the authors here refer to Levi, Primo. (1988). *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Vintage International.
- 49 "The refugee is perhaps the only imaginable figure of the people in our day." See: Agamben, Giorgio. (1995). *We Refugees*. In *Symposium*, 49(2), Summer, pp114-119. Available online, viewed 21st of June

- 2013: <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/articles/we-refugees/>.
- 50 Cf. Arendt, 1998: pp232-233: "... men never have been and never will be able to undo or even to control reliably any of the processes they start through action."
- 51 Philippe, Anne. (1969). *Le Temps d'un Soupir*. Paris: Livre de Poche: p34.
- 52 Cf. Safranski, 2005: pp9, 16, 21, 66ff.
- 53 Wolin, Sheldon S. (2000). *Political Theory: From Vocation to Invocation*. In Jason A. Frank & John Tambornino, eds., *Vocations of Political Theory*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, pp3ff – as quoted in Samantha Hill's paper on the relation between political theory and loss: Hill, Samantha R. (2010). *Accounting for Loss: Hannah Arendt's 'We Refugees,'* paper prepared for the *American Political Science Association 2010 Annual Meeting*, Washington D.C., viewed 4th of April, 2013: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1642704](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1642704). See also: Koenot, Jan. (2009). *When the Body speaks louder than Words: The Image of the Body as a Figure of the Unknown*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p10.
- 54 Arendt, 1998: pp246-247. Also Safranski stresses the importance of individual action and our ability to begin again that is inherent to freedom: Safranski, 2005: pp44, 57-60.
- 55 Arendt, 1998: pp126-127, 323: "The only exception society is willing to grant is the artist (...). All serious activities (...) are called labor, and every activity which is not necessary for the life of the individual or for the life process of society is subsumed under playfulness." A similar view, of the artist as 'sole resister,' can be found in Gilles Deleuze's thinking: Deleuze, 1995: pp171-174 and 'R' *comme Résistance* from *L'abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*. An edited videotape consisting of an interview between Claire Parnet and Gilles Deleuze: Deleuze, Gilles, with Claire Parnet. (1996). *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*. Pierre-André Boutang, ed. Vidéo Éditions Montparnasse. Full English transcript, by Charles J. Stivale, available online, viewed 17th of June, 2013: <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABCs.html>; French transcript of 'R' *comme Résistance*, viewed 17th of June, 2013: <https://sites.google.com/site/deleuzemedia/b/abecedaire/abecedaire-R-Comme-resistance>. I quote Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: pp107-108: "[Art and philosophy] have resistance in common – their resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, and to the present."
- 56 Arendt, 1998: pp53, 137. Cf. the importance of making for one's relation to reality and to fellow beings; see Sennett, 2008 (esp. *Prologue and Conclusion* and pp50-51, 72-73, 165). See also parts *Lost Souls and Sadness*.
- 57 Bataille, Georges. (1930). *L'esprit moderne et le jeu des transpositions*. In *Documents*, 2(8), p490, as quoted Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999b). *Contact Images*. In *Tympanum. A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, 3(1522-7723). Los Angeles: University of Southern California, viewed 20th of June 2013: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/3/>.
- 58 Mondzain, 1995.
- 59 Safranski, 2005: p22: "... an ever-shifting mode of thought has lost itself in the dream of the whole, without ever being able to escape the fact that people differentiate themselves actively from one another and actively fight out their differences to the point of life-and-death struggle."
- 60 Arendt, 1998; Venmans, 2005: p100. See note 24.
- 61 Belting, 2011: p37. Concerning our "vast array of images," Belting here also warns for the possible consequences of globalization: "(...) when it comes to their images, human beings are fundamentally different ... from one culture to the next. (Note that for this reason globalization poses a threat to the diversity of collective images that have come into being)." On this issue, see also Vandebroek, Paul. (2000). *Azetta. Berber vrouwen en hun kunst*. Brussels/Gent: Ludion/Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, p10.
- 62 Verhaeghe, Paul & Julie De Ganck. (2012). *Beyond the Return of the Repressed: Louise Bourgeois's Chthonic Art*. In Philip Larratt-Smith, *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed. Psychoanalytic Writings*. London: Violette Editions, p123.
- 63 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp62, 224. See also Dekoninck, Ralph. (2009). *Body as Image, Image as Body: The Christian Roots of an Anthropology of Art*. In Baert, Barbara, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p58.
- 64 Dekoninck, 2009: p58: "Since Original Sin has shadowed or disfigured this original resemblance, man must be defined as a fallen image marked by dissimilarity as his body has become the nest of the sin."
- 65 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp62, 224. See also *L'art, exercice de la cruauté* in Bataille, Georges. (1988). *Œuvres complètes, Volume XI*. Paris: Gallimard, p483. Cf. on the longing to see what cannot be seen, to coincide with the invisible via the visible image: Baert, Barbara. (2012a). *Peçe ile yara arasındaki pakt veya ete giden patika*

- (*The pact between the veil and the wound or The pathway to the flesh*). In: *Berlinde De Bruyckere: Yara /The Wound*. Beyoğlu: Arter, pp81-83; Baert, Barbara. (2000). *The Gendered Visage: Facets of the Vera Icon*. In Paul Vandenbroeck, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual)*, p14; Baert, 2005: p7 and: Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken. (2012). *A Sign of Health. New Perspectives in Iconology*. In Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken, eds., *New Perspectives in Iconology. Visual Studies and Anthropology*. Brussels: ASP, p10. Cf. Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp246-248. On the role of the visible towards the invisible, see also part *Lost Souls*.
- 66 See notes 48 and 55; on the shame of being human as a drive to create art: Deleuze, 1995: pp171-174; Deleuze, 1996: 'R' *comme Résistance*; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: pp107-108. Cf. also De Kesel, Marc. (2009). *Het olijke lijden van de representatie*. In Marc Verminck, ed., *Onheil, pijn, bloed. Voorstellingen van lijden*. Brussel/Gent: A&S/ books – deBuren, pp194-195.
- 67 Baert, 2012a: pp77-79; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp62, 224; Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp246-248. Cf. also Edward Edinger's assertion that the clubfooted deity Hephaestus is an archetype for how we can creatively deal with loss and imperfection, bringing about creativity that "develops out of defect or out of need," Edinger, Edward F. (1994). *The Eternal Drama: The Inner Meaning of Greek Mythology*. Deborah A. Wesley, ed., Boston-London: Shambhala, p35 – as quoted by George Elder, in turn quoted by Dennis Patrick Slattery. See: Elder, George R. (1996). *The Body: An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism. Vol. 2. The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism*. Boston-London: Shambhala, p377. Slattery, Dennis P. (2000). *The Wounded Body: Remembering the Markings of Flesh*. Albany: SUNY Press, p16. Cf. also final sentence in *The Craftsman*: "The clubfooted Hephaestus, proud of his work if not of himself, is the most dignified person we can become," Sennett, 2008: p296.
- 68 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p62.
- 69 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62. See also part *Between Overture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure*.
- 70 For the notion of the image as a 'band-aid,' bandage, see: Baert, 2006a: p101.
- 71 Belting, 2011: pp84-90, 126, 130. See also Einstein, Carl. (1929). *Aphorismes méthodiques*. In *Documents*, 1(1), Paris, p32: "The image is a consolidation and defense against death," as quoted by Belting, 2011: p88. On this notion, see also Baert on the "first image": "(...) the image that enables us to lend a shape and color to emptiness and absence, the image that converts the vague trace of loss and absence into the shape of comfort and the color of a presence," Baert, 2005: p8.
- 72 Blanchot, Maurice. (1982). *The Space of Literature. (L'espace littéraire)*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp258ff – quoted by Belting, 2011: pp85, 130.
- 73 Belting, 2011: pp85-86, 93, 130.
- 74 Blanchot, 1982: pp258ff. "Maurice blanchot posed the metaphysical question what is it that we learn about death when we look at it. Paradoxically, we come to see something that is not there at all." As quoted in Belting, 2011: p85.
- 75 Belting, 2011: pp86, 93, 130. See also Mondzain, 1995.
- 76 Cf. Belting, 2011: p126: "The image was the chosen medium for making good the absence of life."
- 77 Belting, 2011: p130.
- 78 Arendt, 1998: pp9, 246-247.
- 79 Cf. De Maeyer, Jan. (2009). *The Space, the Wound, the Body, and the (Im)possibility of Religious Art*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p29: "But art is not the only way and we should not fall into the opposite camp of the iconoclasts by proclaiming the image as the one, true way."
- 80 Belting, 2011: pp44ff, 130. See also note 61.
- 81 Definition of 'scab' in the *New Oxford American Dictionary*.
- 82 The image as a process, the processual character of images in their unfolding to humans; the image as event – *événement*, and as *avènement* – coming, advent: see Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp30-32, 35, 291; Mondzain, 1995: p40; Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum: pp20, 22; Cache, Bernard. (1999). *Inflection as Gaze*. In Annette W. Balkema & Henk Slager, eds., *Territorial Investigations*. Amsterdam/ Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, pp26-27. See also Dekoninck, 2009: p58, referring to Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. (2009). *Icon of God: is Christian art possible without the figure?* In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp48-49. I quote Dekoninck: "the image as a flux, as something moving between a model and a beholder and circulating in the beholder's mind which in return interferes with the

- reality." This notion is also present in Belting's *Bild-Anthropologie*. See Belting, 2011: pp4-5, 9-10, 15-16. Dirk J. Van den Berg speaks of "picture-events;" and argues that pictures are "quasi-subjects" that "'look back' at us" and "'speak to us' when we genuinely engage in them." He argues that "we need dynamic, progressive and action-oriented concepts of the image, appreciating images in temporal and human terms as bodily events which involve ideologically shaped performative acts of the imagination that open picture categories to visual display rhetoric." See Van den Berg, 2004: pp13-14.
- 83** Cf. Belting, 2011: p14: "We want to do more *with* images than merely to play with them, for (in secret, perhaps) we do still believe in the image."
- 84** An excellent inquiry into this issue can be found in: Ingold, Timothy. (2007a). *Materials against Materiality*. Archaeological Dialogues 14(1): pp1-16. "But matter is also energy...", writes Vandenbroeck: Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009b). *De energetica van een onkenkelijk lichaam (The Energetics of an Unknowable Body)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: Power and Devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tilt: Lannoo, p175. See also *Matter* in the part *Lost Souls*.
- 85** Cf. Arendt, 1998: p176, and on 'rescuing art from deadness,' the need of reproducing the produced thing again and again in order for it to remain within the human world: pp139, 169. For the importance of transmission for the "survival of an image," see also Belting, 2011: pp38-39. On the necessity of our imagination to bring images to life, see Belting, 2011: pp4-5, 14-15, 20-21, 29, 40-41, 86-87, 130, 144-148, 156, 168. "[A]n image can't be anything but an image. Whatever its power, it is we who have endowed it with this power," Augé, 1997: p119 – as quoted by Belting, 2011: p57. On the necessity of a cooperative receptivity, a spectator showing "some openness or readiness," see: De Maeyer, 2009: pp28-30. He refers to: Moyaert, Paul. (2006). *De aanbidding van de gekruisigde. (The Adoration of the Crucified)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, pp78-85. See also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62, on engaging with images as exhausting laboring. On various parameters influencing the dialogue, such as the body and logocentric thinking, see Vandenbroeck, 2009b and Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009a). *Zien we wel iets in een hemel in tegenlicht? (Can we see anything in a backlit heaven?)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: Power and Devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tilt: Lannoo. See also part *Lost Souls*.
- 86** Belting, 2011: pp14-15, 126, 138.
- 87** On this issue, see Vandenbroeck, 2009a and part *Lost Souls*.
- 88** Cf. "We must listen to them tenderly and look at them with a mild heart. We must be patient, take our time, and then, we too will know," Baert, 2005: p9. On our willingness to gain from and through the image, see Didi-Huberman (esp. on the engagement as demanding), Belting and Vandenbroeck as cited in note 85.
- 89** Arendt, 1998: pp6, 323.
- 90** Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p50. Cf. Sennett, 2008. The goal Sennett sets in *The Craftsman* concerns the possibilities to make productive use of skills inherent to making as a means to improve social life as well. See part *Lost Souls*.
- 91** On the senses, see part *Lost Souls*.
- 92** Cf. Belting, 2011: pp9-10, 15, 46, 125: "images pervade our daily life to such an extent that they have become central to human experience. On the crucial role of the education of the senses for learning/ gaining knowledge, see Ingold, Tim. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment. Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge, (e.g. pp13-26). Cf. the term 'tacit knowledge,' addressed by Sennett in *The Craftsman*, 2008. Term coined by Michael Polanyi, see Polanyi, Michael. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. See also part *Lost Souls*.
- 93** Arendt, 1998: pp168-169.
- 94** Safranski, 2005: p66-67, in referring to Schiller, 1967: p35. The notion of images/artworks as bringing about knowledge (insight) through the senses can be found throughout a vast array of literature. I here give an overview of the sources I have consulted. For further elaboration on this topic, see part *Lost Souls*. Moyaert, 2006: pp78-85; and Dewey, John. (1980). *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books (Penguin Putnam); Arendt, 1998; Didi-Huberman, 2007a, 2006/2007b; Vandenbroeck, 2009a, 2009b; Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the Body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (p194, quoting Thomas McEvilley, "For it is we ourselves who are objectified in our images, high and low; it is we who are represented. One of the functions that representation performs is to create a place where insights into our mental and cultural condition – our dreams,

- our fears, our unspoken assumptions and fantasies- are made obtainable, precisely by being objectified." See McEville, Thomas. (1987). 'Who Told Thee That Thou Was't Naked?' In *Artforum*, 25, February, p105. On the role of making for being rooted in material reality, see Sennett, 2008.
- 95 Simmel, Georg. (2011). *The Philosophy of Money*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p537.
- 96 Arendt, 1998: p168.
- 97 Venmans, 2006: p43 (English, condensed:132). Arendt, 1998: pp168-169, 173.
- 98 Baert, 2006a: p100; De Kesel, 2009: pp193-195. See also: Mondzain, 1995 and Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp61-62, 224.
- 99 My translation of Baert, 2006a: p100: "Het beeld is kwetsbaar, en er wordt wel eens gezegd dat het schuld draagt. Schuld aan de zichtbaarheid, schuld aan de tweede dimensie, meer nog misschien aan de derde. *Schuld aan onszelf ook, want het is ons kind.*" (Italics added).
- 100 Mondzain, 1995.
- 101 Cf. De Kesel, 2009: pp193-195.
- 102 Cf. iconoclasm – the literature is vast. See Belting, 2011: pp5-6, 114; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp97-152; Mondzain, 1995; Baert, 2005: pp7, 9; Baert, 2006a: p101; De Kesel, 2009: pp191-203. See also Serres, Michel. (1990). *Distraction*. In Anne Pingeot, ed., *Le corps en morceaux*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, pp33ff.
- 103 Baert, 2005: p7. Cf. Didi-Huberman on the desire to open (images, objects): 2007a, pp60-62, referring to Baudelaire's *Morale du Joujou*: Baudelaire, Charles. (1975). *Morale du Joujou*. In *Œuvres complètes, I*, Claude Pichois, ed., Paris: Gallimard, p587. See also Elkins, 1999: pp127-128 and part *Sadness*.
- 104 See note 47.
- 105 Cf. Safranski, 2005: pp42-69 (esp. *The individual and the Immune System and Creating Space*). See also Arendt on unpredictability of action and "the responsibility for every single deed," Arendt, 1958: p233. See note 17.
- 106 In Greek mythology, the satyr Marsyas challenged (or was challenged by) Apollo to contest in flute playing. When he lost, he was flayed alive "so the skin all left his body" and turned "into one giant wound." (Ovid. (1973). *Metamorphoses* 6: 385-390, Rolfe Humphries, trans. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, p141.)
- 107 Belting, 2011: p14.
- 108 Alfredo González-Ruibal speaks of fragmentation (specifically ruins) as "a source of inspiration and a vehicle to better understand the world." He here refers to sociologist Georg Simmel and philosopher Walter Benjamin. See: González-Ruibal, Alfredo. (2013). *Embracing destruction*. In Jan Driessen, ed., *Destruction*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, pp39-40; Simmel, Georg. (2007). *The Philosophy of Landscape*. In *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(7-8), pp20-29; Benjamin, Walter. (1999). *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 109 For "elements of a definition" of the fragment, see: Lichtenstein, Jacqueline. (2009). *The Fragment: Elements of a Definition*. In William Tronzo, ed., *The Fragment. An Incomplete History*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, pp115-129.
- 110 Sooth: Old English *soð* 'truth,' noun use of *sop* 'genuine, true,' originally \**sonþ-*, from Proto-Germanic \**santhaz*, and thus cognate with Old English *synn* 'sin' and Latin *sontis* 'guilty' (truth is related to guilt via notion of 'to be truly the one (who is guilty)'). Soothe: Old English *soðian* 'show to be true,' from *soð* 'true' (see sooth). Sense of 'quiet, comfort, mollify' is first recorded 1690s, on notion of 'to assuage one by asserting that what he says is true.' See: *Online Etymology Dictionary* and *New Oxford American Dictionary*.
- 111 Lichtenstein, 2009: p124. On presence versus 'represence,' see Belting, 2011: pp6, 19-20, 85-87, 89, 93, 115, 126, 130; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: 184 "Sa 'représence,' si l'on peut dire, et non sa représentation." The notion of a *pars pro toto*: the part of a whole, which, as a part is the whole. See Bynum, 1992: pp11-14, 24-26, 280-285, 294-297. On the notion of the *pars pro toto* versus the navel and relics, see Baert, Barbara. (2009a). *Kleine iconologie van de navel*. (Navel. On the origin of things). Gent: Sint Joris, p40 (English: p64); Baert, Barbara. (2009b). *De Gapende Wonde of Het Onmogelijke Beeld van de Vondeling*. (*The Gaping Wound or the Impossible Image of the Foundling*). In Lieve Van Stappen, Barbara Baert & Marc Ruyters, *Moving Archives: vondelingen*. Brugge: Musea Brugge, pXI; Baert, Barbara. (2009c). *Folds of thought, or The encounter in an intermediate space*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p13; Baert, Barbara. (2009d). *Iconogenesis, or Navel*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds. *Folded Stones: Tied up Tree*. Leuven: Acco, pp5 and Baert, Barbara & Lise De Greef. (2009). *Het verheerlijkte lichaam. Over relieken, stoffelijkheid en de inwendigheid van het beeld* (*The glorified body: relics, materiality and the internalized*



- image). In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, pp131, 133.
- 112** Tronzo, William. (2009). *Introduction*. In William Tronzo, ed., *The Fragment. An Incomplete History*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, pp4-6: "almost everything that we know about the past, comes from fragments." In this regard, I would also like to note that for much of the knowledge we gain today, we also depend on fragments. On fragments of the body as peaking for the entire body, see Elkins, 1999: p188: "We picture the body in fragments – blood tests, biopsies, pap smears, and so forth – and we seldom contest the capacity of a fragment to speak for the entire body." This notion is also mentioned in Belting, 2011: p19. Belting attributes this quality to the externalized image, media – he here refers to McLuhan, Marshall. (1994). *Understanding media. The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- 113** Lichtenstein, 2009: p121: "whatever a fragment is – whether an incomplete part of a whole or a part of an incomplete whole – it is always a trace: a trace of the past."
- 114** Tronzo, 2009: p4. Tronzo here refers to introductory remarks made by Gail Feigenbaum at the symposium *The Fragment: An Incomplete History*, organized by the Getty Research Institute and held 18-20 May 2006 at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, and the Getty Villa, Malibu. The whole as more ephemeral than the fragment, the fragment as lasting longer, see also: Most, Glenn W. (2009). *On Fragments*. In William Tronzo, ed., *The Fragment. An Incomplete History*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, p18. On the notion of the fragment as not only a broken part, but also a *surviving* part, see: Lichtenstein, 2009: p119. On the fragment as resistant (to the whole), see: Balfour, Ian. (2009). *'The whole is the untrue.'* *On the necessity of the fragment (after Adorno)*. In William Tronzo, ed., *The fragment. An incomplete history*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, pp83-91. Ian Balfour here refers to Theodor Adorno: Adorno, Theodor W. (1997). *Aesthetic Theory*. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann, eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p45. And Adorno, Theodor W. (1998). *Beethoven: the philosophy of music*. Rolf Tiedemann, ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp182-183. See also Serres, 1990: pp34, 37: "fragmentation est une opération conservatrice. L'ensemble des morceaux sauve le solide. (...) plus ils rapetissent, mieux ils résistent. Rien de plus fort que la mort." And Nancy, Jean-Luc, with Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe. (1993 ). *Noli Me Frangere*. In Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p268: "the fragment is indestructible." Cf. inspired by Deleuze, Lise De Greef suggests that wounds also reveal a certain strength. See: Deleuze. Gilles. (1990). *The Logic of Sense*. Constantin V. Boundas, ed., New York: Columbia University Press, p149: "My misfortune is present in all events, but also a splendour and brightness which dry up misfortune and which bring about that the event, once willed, is actualized on its most contracted point, on the cutting edge of an operation." (De Greef, Lise. (2009). *The First Scar*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts.)
- 115** Specifically on the fragment as wounded: Most, 2009: p18. For the notion of the image as a wound opening up towards the viewer, see Didi-Huberman's *L'image ouverte*, 2007a (e.g. p49). Also on the vulnerability of the image and its 'unveiling,' see Baert 2005 and 2006a.
- 116** I here refer to the title of Theodor W. Adorno's 1951 book *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life (Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben)*: Adorno, Theodor W. (2005). *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. London: Verso.
- 117** Adorno, 2005: p50. I here however have used Balfour's adaptation ("The whole is the untrue") of Jephcott's translation ("The whole is the false") since Balfour's version "bring[s] out more directly the inversion" of Hegel's dictum "The whole is the true" ("Das Wahre ist das Ganze"): Hegel, Georg W.F. (1977). *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Clarendon, p11.
- 118** Cf. Balfour, 2009: pp84-85, referring to Adorno, 1997: p45 and 1998: pp182-183. For the notion of the fragmented human body in sculpture as a recognition of human fragilities and the natural human struggle between finitude and guilt, life and death, see Apostolos-Cappadona, 2009: pp48-49. Cf. Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of the broken tool. He suggests that it is only from the moment the tool breaks – that it brings about disturbance in its otherwise smooth functioning – that we truly 'see' the tool and become aware of it as "an entity that threatens to get in the way, to interfere." Stronger still, this rupture ("infrastructural failure") puts into question not only "'the equipmental totality' of the urban lifeworld but also its social totality" – as quoted by Yablon, 2009: pp203-204. Heidegger, Martin. (1962). *Being and Time*.

- New York: Harper & Row, pp91, 97-103, 106.
- 119** Balfour, 2009: p86, referring to Adorno, 1997: pp189-190 (note 10).
- 120** Lichtenstein, 2009: p128: "We live in an era of fragmentation and deconstruction." Specifically on fragmentation (in for example art) versus modernity and the modern experiences of the loss of wholeness, destruction, disintegration and alienation, see: Nochlin, Linda. (1994). *The body in pieces. The fragment as a metaphor of modernity*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp7ff, 23ff; Clair, Jean. (1987). *Le puits et le pendule*. In *Le Débat*, 44(2), p118; Olivier, Laurent. (2008). *Le sombre abîme du temps. Archéologie et mémoire*. Paris: Seuil, pp121-126; Garner, Stanton B. (2007). *The Gas Heart: Disfigurement and the Dada Body*. In *Modern Drama*, 50(4), Winter, pp501ff.
- 121** Balfour, 2009: p86. Cf. Roland Barthes: "A paradox: the fact, in its purity, is best defined by not being clean. Take an ordinary object: it is not its new, virgin state which best accounts for its essence, but its worn, lopsided, soiled, somewhat forsaken condition: the truth of things is best read in the cast-off." From Roland Barthes's essay *The Wisdom of Art*: Barthes, Roland. (1991). *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press: p180.
- 122** See also part *Sadness*.
- 123** Cf. Arendt, 1998: pp96-97, 246-247; Deleuze, 1993: p28.
- 124** Most, 2009: p18.
- 125** *L'image ouverte* by Didi-Huberman, 2007a.
- 126** Most, 2009: p18.
- 127** *The Stranger* in Simmel, Georg. (1971). *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Donald N. Levine, ed., Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, pp143-149.
- 128** Most, 2009: p18. On the 'incomplete' as arousing, see Sennett, 2008: pp43-44, 158-159, 194. For the fragment as stimulating the response of the beholder in literature: Harries, Elizabeth W. (1994). *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, pp44, 102. The notion of the fragment as an 'entrance' to another totality is also suggested by philosopher and poet Edmond Jabès: "The fragment, the exploded book, is our only access to the infinite (...) Only in fragments can we read the immeasurable totality." As quoted by Waldrop, Rosmarie. (2002). *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*. Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, p18.
- 129** Most, 2009: p18.
- 130** As quoted in Turner, Kay. (1999). *Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars*. New York: Thames & Hudson, p100. (Cf. "Fragmentation is more like direct communication than the traditionally unified approach in which superfluous literary transitions are introduced," in Lippard, Lucy. (1997). *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972....* Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, p6.
- 131** On the notion of fragmentation as sacrifice (versus renewal in modernity): Nochlin, 1994: pp12-15. Also Tronzo, 2009: p4.
- 132** Most, 2009: p12, referring to Rilke's *Archaic Torso of Apollo*: Rilke, Rainer Maria. (1984). *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*. Stephen Mitchell, ed. New York: Vintage, pp60-61.
- 133** Most, 2009: p12.
- 134** *Ibid.*, p18.
- 135** Balfour, 2009: p87, on the poem *Kubla Khan; or, A Vision in a Dream*, by the Romantic English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). On closure as the state of experiencing an emotional conclusion to a difficult life event see: Gould, Richard A. (2007). *Disaster Archaeology*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, p13: "Closure... is a universal human experience in which emotions surrounding uncertainties about the fate of a relative or friend lost in a disaster are resolved to some degree by identification of the victim through the use of physical evidence."
- 136** See Didi-Huberman on the violence of the image: Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p58.
- 137** Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p58. For the relation between construction and destruction, see part *Between Overture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure*. Nochlin has shown how the "omnipresence of the fragment ... in the visual representation of the French Revolution had something to do with "the fact that 'the French Revolution was caught in the throes of destroying one civilization before creating a new one.'" Nochlin, 1994: p10, quoting Kennedy, Emmet. (1989). *A Cultural History of the French Revolution*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press, p197. On the ambiguity of destruction (versus construction, and as both negative and positive) see also González-Ruibal, 2013: p44.
- 138** Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp46, 54: "Ouvrir suppose blessure et cruauté."
- 139** The image and aesthetic experience as oscillating between consolation and non-consolation: Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp58-62; or between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*: Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp112-141, 237-274. Ettinger, Bracha L. (1999). *Traumatic wit(h)*

ness-thing and matrixial co/in-habit(u)ating. In *Parallax*, 5(1). Leeds, pp93-94.

- On the formlessness of our beginnings, see: Vandebroek, 2000: pp112-141, 237-274 and 2013; Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1984). *The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)*. In *October*, 29, Summer, pp67-68, and Baert's interpretations of the formless in relation to the *iconogenesis* of both the vera icon and the Haemorrhoida: Baert, 2000 and Baert, Barbara & Emma Sidgwick. (2011). *Touching the Hem: The Thread between Garment and Blood in the Story of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5:24b-34parr)*. In *Textile: the journal of cloth and culture*, 9(3), pp308-351.
- 140** On anatomical relics, see for example: Baert & De Greef, 2009; Sorber, Frieda, Fanny Van Cleven & Shirin Van Eenhooge. (2010). *Schedelreliken van Herkenrode*. Hasselt: stad Hasselt; *De macht van de herinnering in van Os, Henk*. (2000). *De weg naar de hemel. Reliekverering in de Middeleeuwen*. Baarn: de Prom, pp55-100; Bagnoli, Martina, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann & James Robinson, eds. (2010). *Treasures of Heaven. Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press. For an art history of the human head and skull, see Wieczorek, Alfred & Wilfried Rosendahl. (2011). *Schädelkult: Kopf und Schädel in der Kulturgeschichte des Menschen*. Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner. On mourning jewelry (the use of hair), see for example: Holm, Christiane. (2004). *Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair*. In *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38(1), Fall, pp139-143. For adornment from Papua New Guinea (use of e.g. human skulls, jaw-bones, smoked finger-joints, particularly the Asmat and Anga people) a valuable reference is: Daalder, Truus. (2009). *Ethnic Jewellery and Adornment: Australia, Oceania, Asia, Africa* Adelaide: Ethnic Art Press, pp63, 67-68, 76, 88. See also: Bjerre, Jens. (1964). *Savage New Guinea*. London: Michael Joseph, pp159-161 (the use of complete smoked human hands as amulets), and Leahy, Michael J. (1994). *Explorations into Highland New Guinea*. 1930-1935. Douglas E. Jones, ed. Bathurst: Crawford House Press, pp157-158 (woman wearing her husband's jawbone). For an example of the use of human body parts (fingers, teeth) in North American cultures, see: Bourke, John G. (1892). *The Medicine-Men of the Apache*. In J.W. Powell, director, *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1887-'88*. Washington: Government Printing Office, pp480-489. See also Owsley, Douglas W., Karin S. Bruwelheide, Laurie E. Burgess & William T. Billeck. (2007). *Human Finger and Hand Bone Necklaces from the Plains and Great Basin*. In Richard J. Chacon & David H. Dye, eds., *The Taking and Displaying of Human Body Parts as Trophies by Amerindians*. New York: Springer, pp124-166.
- In his book *Foreign Bodies*, jewelry artist Christoph Zellweger shares a touching photograph of an Ecuadorian woman showing a bone of her father that she carefully keeps in a matchbox. This little bone is the only fragment remaining of her father since an El Niño-related flood washed away his grave. In Gaspar, Mònica, ed. (2007). *Christoph Zellweger: Foreign Bodies*. Barcelona: Actar, p134.
- 141** Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007b). *Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time*. In *L'Esprit Créateur*, 47(3), Fall, pp7-16. French version: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2006). *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*. Paris: Bayard.
- 142** Cf. Elkins, 1999: p149: "Contemporary work tends to disassemble the body so that it is no longer legible as a *body*, but rather functions as a series of references to the body...." For an overview of the 'body in pieces' in Western art history, see Pingeot, Anne, ed. (1990). *Le corps en morceaux*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux. For the particular case of the torso, see for example Brückle, Wolfgang & Kathrin Elvers-Švamberk, eds. (2001). *Von Rodin bis Baselitz. Der Torso in der Skulptur der Moderne*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz.
- 143** Bynum, 1992: pp19-20
- 144** Levi, Primo. (1987). *If This is a Man and The Truce*. London: Abacus, pp33, 278. The link between this passage of Primo Levi's *If This is a Man* and body fragmentation ("an interest in wholeness as an antidote to our status as incomplete, painfully and problematically fragmented beings") has been suggested by Charlotte Ross: Ross, Charlotte. (2010). *The 'Body' in Fragments: anxieties, fascination and the ideal of 'wholeness,'* paper presented at the conference *Thinking in fragments: Romanticism and beyond*, University of Birmingham (UK), 16-17th December, pp11-12, viewed 1st of December, 2011: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/lcahm/leopardi/fragments/leopardi/paper-ross.pdf>.
- 145** Philipe, 1969: pp51-52.
- 146** Slattery, 2000: pp4-5.
- 147** Elkins, 1999: pp22ff. See Elkins's definition of pain in relation to proprioception and empathy. See also part *Lost Souls*.
- 148** Nochlin, 1994: p18. See also Apostolos-Cappadona, 2009: pp38-39. Cf. also Bynum, 1992: p19: "... a duality in the Western tradition more profound even than gender: a tension between body

- as locus of pain and limitation, and body as locus not merely of pleasure but of personhood itself.”
- 149** Inspired by Lacan: Bowie, Malcolm. (1993). *Lacan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p29.
- 150** Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp84ff, esp. pp100-106.
- 151** Cf. Arendt, 1998: p309: “[British philosopher Jeremy] Bentham’s basic assumption that what all men have in common is not the world but the sameness of their own nature, which manifest itself in the sameness of calculation and the sameness of being affected by pain and pleasure (...).”
- 152** Belting, 2011: pp38-46.
- 153** Elkins, 1999: ppvii, 160-163, 194, 258; Belting, 2011: pp17, 72. In his article *Fractal bodies in the past and present*, Chris Fowler suggests “each of us struggles with numerous referent actions and images as we negotiate our identities through bodily conduct.” (He here refers to the work on performativity by Judith Butler: Butler, Judith. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, and Butler, Judith. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex.’* New York: Routledge.) More specifically, he here researches how the view of the body, and the relationship to it influence our ways of dealing with the world (vessels, spaces, etc.) and vice versa, how “bodies are understood in terms of the material worlds they inhabit.” Fowler argues “[t]o focus on fractal relations is not to remove the distinctiveness of different contexts, but to recognise a recurring technique in how relationships between body and world are understood. (...) a shared logic of composition for the body and the world ... allows ... to understand concepts of the body and the person by examining the treatment of media other than human bodies alongside treatment of those bodies,” pp49-50 in: Fowler, Chris. (2008). *Fractal bodies in past and present*. In Dušan Borić & John Robb, eds., *Past bodies: body-centered research in archaeology*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp47-57.
- 154** However, when speaking of the living body, it seems defined by unity, so observes Karmen MacKendrick. She suggests that the notion of unity is basic to identity; that “scatteredness... we do not call a body (...) any living body is undivided into components.” MacKendrick, Karmen. (2010). *The multipliable body*. In *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 1(1-2), pp109-110.
- 155** In the original translation the Dutch ‘bezielid’ was translated to ‘inspired,’ which I have here replaced by ‘ensouled.’ Baert & De Greef, 2009: p142. See also p131 – the authors here refer Belting, 2011: pp3, 6, 19-20, 84-87, 126, 130.
- 156** Gombrich, Ernst H. (1986). *Kunst und Illusion. Zur Psychologie der bildlichen Darstellung*. Stuttgart-Zürich: Belsler, pp81ff; (English translation) as quoted in Baert & De Greef, 2009: p142.
- 157** From *Archaic Torso of Apollo*, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), Rilke, 1984: pp60-61.
- 158** For the body fragment today as mirroring our shattered view of the body as body in pieces, imperfect and thus not as a unity, see: Nochlin, 1994: pp53-55. See also Apostolos-Cappadona, 2009: pp40, 48-49; Ammicht-Quinn, Regina. (2009). *Cult, culture and ambivalence: images and imaginations of the body in Christian traditions and contemporary lifestyles*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp72-75. See also: MacKendrick, 2010: pp108-109, 113.
- 159** Bynum, 1992: p24. With objects, I here refer to the whole of the world we have built.
- 160** Slattery, 2000: p15. See also note 112, reference to De Greef and Deleuze on the wound as a mark of both misfortune and splendour, marking a turning point for the individual bearing it. On scars as the manifestation of one’s inviduality, see Didi-Huberman, 2007b: pp10-11, and Scagliola, Daria. (1998). *De gevlekte huid*, In *Kunstschrift Huid*, 42(5), pp44-45.
- 161** Slattery, 2000: p16.
- 162** Elder, 1996: p377.
- 163** Castagnary, Jules. (1892). *Salon de 1869*. In *Salons 1857-70*. Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, pp385-286, as quoted in Pinget, Anne. (1990). *Introduction*. In Anne Pinget, ed., *Le corps en morceaux*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, p20.
- 164** Amongst others: Baert & De Greef, 2009: p131.
- 165** Bynum, 1992: p13.
- 166** MacKendrick, 2010: p110. Baert & De Greef, 2009: pp133ff. For this topic, see *Material Continuity, Personal Survival and the Resurrection of the Body: A Scholastic Discussion in its Medieval and Modern Contexts*, in Bynum, 1992: pp239-289.
- 167** MacKendrick, 2010: p110. For the unification of communities through their possession of a saint’s relic, MacKendrick refers to: Brown, Peter. (1981). *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp90-103. For the miraculous healing of another body, MacKendrick refers to the example of early pilgrims who left fragments

- of their own bodies "as a tribute to their own new and miraculous 'wholeness.'" For this see: Owens, Margaret E. (2005). *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, pp54-55.
- 168 Arendt, 1998: pp58, 93-96, 136-137, 182-183.
- 169 Bynum, 1992: p16.
- 170 Ibid. pp69, 125-126, 184.
- 171 Bynum, 1992: pp130-147.
- 172 MacKendrick, 2010: p112. The wounds are Christ's, wherever they may appear.
- 173 Ibid., p113.
- 174 Ibid., p24.
- 175 Baert, 2009b: ppXI-XIII. See also: Baert, 2009a: p35 (English: p62).
- 176 Gould, 2007: p13, also pp69, 167. For the importance of "personal, everyday items" as powerful links with the dead, see Hallam, Elizabeth & Jenny Hockney. (2001). *Death, Memory and Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg
- 177 Ibid., pp14-15, 67-68.
- 178 Ibid., pp8-9, and esp. 48-49.
- 179 Yocom, Margaret R. (2006). "We'll watch out for Liza and the Kids": *Spontaneous Memorials and Personal Response at the Pentagon, 2001*. In Jack Santino, ed., *Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, pp71-74.
- 180 Ibid., pp79, 83 – Yocom here refers to: Margalit, Avishai. (2002). *The Ethics of Memory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p53.
- 181 Yocom, 2006: pp82-83.
- 182 Ibid., p84.
- 183 I here refer to the text *Noli Me Frangere* by Nancy & Lacoue-Labarthe, 1993: pp266-278 -as quoted (and translated) in Innes, Randy N. (2009). *On the Limits of the Work of Art: The Fragment in Visual Culture*. PhD Dissertation, University of Rochester. Ann Arbor: ProQuest, pp1-7.
- 184 Ammicht-Quinn, 2009: pp72-75. On the potentials of the body, see part *Lost Souls*.
- 185 Bynum, Caroline Walker & Paula Gerson. (1997). *Body-part reliquaries and body parts in the Middle Ages*. In *Gesta*, 36(1), p3.
- 186 Simmel, 2011: p537. See also notes 94 and 128.
- 187 Cf. González-Ruibal, Alfredo. (2008). *Time to Destroy: An Archaeology of Supermodernity*. In *Current Anthropology*, 49(2), April, pp251, 274. See part *Lost Souls*.
- 188 Margalit, 2002: pp31 ("I believe in the law of conservation of obsolete meanings for the sake of philosophy. *To care* used to have a meaning now declared obsolete, namely, to mourn."), 33, 35 – as referred to by Yocom, 2006: p80.
- 189 de Clairvaux, Bernard. (1953). *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*. Bruno Scott James, trans. London: Burns & Oates, pp3, 7 -as quoted in Bynum, 1992: p160.
- 190 For the link between *vulnus* and *vulva*: see Baert, 2000: p36ff; Baert, 2009b: pXIII; Baert, 2009c: p21; Baert, 2012a: pp85-87. See also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p46. On the relation between vulva, mouth, vagina dentata, uterus, the 'nameless motif,' almond shape, rhombus and mandorla: Vandebroek, 2000: pp112-141, 197. For the parallel between Christ's wound and Mary's breast: Bynum, 1992: pp102-106, 133, 206-210, 213-215, 278-279.
- 191 Sorber et al., 2010.
- 192 Dewey, 1980: p15.
- 193 Ibid.
- 194 See Vandebroek's *De energetica van een onkennelijk lichaam (The Energetics of an Unknowable Body)*; Vandebroek, 2009b (esp. p175-177).
- 195 Elkins, 1999: pvii.
- 196 For an inquiry into 'wearable relics' (and wearable reliquaries), as I here call them, see Robinson, James. (2010). *From Altar to Amulet: Relics, Portability, and Devotion*. In Bagnoli, Martina, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann & James Robinson, eds., *Treasures of Heaven. Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press, pp111-116. Robinson here stresses the importance of physical proximity and physical interaction between wearer and, for example, portable reliquaries, ring reliquaries and pendant reliquaries. I quote Robinson: "It [a reliquary pendant in the British Museum] was designed for intimate inspection in the palm of the hand and required the physical interaction if the owner to release its spiritual value," p114. See also reliquary pouches (Dutch: reliekenbursa) and purse reliquaries, which are reliquaries that could be worn during processions. See: Bagnoli, Martina. (2010). *The Stuff of Heaven: Materials and Craftsmanship in medieval Reliquaries*. In Bagnoli, Martina, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann & James Robinson, eds., *Treasures of Heaven. Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press, p139. And also: van Os, 2000: pp73-77. Cf. Bynum, 1992: p271, "Canonists and theologians debated whether there could be private property in relics, and whether wearing them as talismans or displaying them 'naked' was acceptably devout. By the fourteenth century, however, *holy bones were owned and worn by the pious as*

*private devotional objects*; they were often exhibited in reliquaries that mimicked their shape," italics added. See also: *The Body* in den Besten, Liesbeth. (2012). *On Jewellery*. Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, pp125-140.

**197** Deleuze, 1996. See notes 48 and 66.

**198** Excerpts of the lyrics of the song *Por eso me quedo – That's why I stay (behind)*, from the 1997 album *La Llorona – The Weeping Woman* – by Lhasa (de Sela). My own translation of the Spanish lyrics given here:  
*And so I go on/ Still singing my sorrows/  
Wanting you to love me/ For my solitude/  
(...)/ And so I love/ With rhymes so distorted/  
Searching for dissonances/ For my new song.*



## Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment

### **23 The Loss of Human Innocence**

*The Fall – Loss of Unity – Torn*

*The Human Condition – Loss of World – Loneliness*

*Loss – Loneliness – Longing*

### **35 Longing for Unity, The Dream of the Whole**

*The Fall – Dissemblance – Torn*

*The Human Condition – Death – Loneliness*


*Loss – Loneliness – Longing / Absence – Presence – Guilt*

### **39 The Relief of the (Body) Fragment?**

### **52 Endnotes**



Lost Souls



Featured work:

*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart III)*

Hannah Joris

2013

Chamois leather, iron, steel, soapstone

14 x 8 x 5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

# **Lost Souls**

**The Object as a Mediator<sup>1</sup>  
Ending up in a *post cura posterior*<sup>2</sup> era?**



*Dead albatross young with plastic fragments in  
stomachs, photos taken on Midway Atoll islands  
Midway: Message from the Gyre  
Chris Jordan  
2009-current  
Photograph*



*Belgian food packaging, with label 'use me for closing'*  
2013



*Performance in collaboration with Katie Duck &  
Alfredo Genovesi - A Steinbeisser Event*  
*Traces of Casualty*  
Hannah Joris, Katie Duck & Alfredo Genovesi  
2012, Lloyd Hotel & Cultural Embassy, Amsterdam



*Performance in collaboration with Katie Duck &  
Alfredo Genovesi - A Steinbeisser Event  
Traces of Casualty*  
Hannah Joris, Katie Duck & Alfredo Genovesi  
2012, Lloyd Hotel & Cultural Embassy, Amsterdam



*Untitled (In the Flesh)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,8 x 10 cm





*Untitled (Mater Dolorosa)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,8 x 10 cm



## *A conversation*

I would like to begin with a conversation I recently had with art historian Damian Skinner in Stockholm in April 2012. As we were discussing the role of contemporary jewelry and discussing my research on fragments and relics versus contemporary jewelry, we came across the topic of the object as a mediator. Refreshing and blunt at the same time, Skinner remarked that his belief is that the problematic relationship people in Western contemporary society have with their objects greatly results from the fact that we can *associate* values and powers to objects, but do not *believe* in them per se. In other words, he said, if we would *accept* that objects *do* possess powers, or at least act like they do, then the discussion would become both less and more complex. In accepting this characteristic of objects and taking a look at our surroundings differently, we could move beyond the endless debates about whether objects actually have agency, or whether we give it to them, and instead the discussion would open up and help us to gain more insight in both objects themselves and our relationship to them.<sup>3</sup>

I believe this divergence between *associating* values and *believing* values is related to two stances coming together in one culture, and ultimately in one person – the individual within the culture. On the one hand, we relate to the world via our mind, and on the other hand via our senses, our feelings. We are, in fact, torn between these two different approaches.<sup>4</sup>



## A reflection

Originally, 'thing' meant a gathering of people, and a place where they would meet to resolve their affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Considering the pace at which objects are discarded nowadays, it seems that objects have never received such little thought in daily life, as is the case today; even though man has never produced as many objects and developed as much interest in theoretical reflections about the social position of artifacts as today.<sup>6</sup> What role do objects have in our lives? How do we think and feel about them, *through* them?

As Laurent Olivier points out, we have created the objects surrounding us, but our existence – our being – depends on those objects and is defined by them too. Both humans and objects are part of the material world, and construct their existence together.<sup>7</sup> However, seen the pace at which we – or more precisely our machines – produce objects, we find ourselves somehow dissociated from these 'things'.<sup>8</sup> How must we relate to things we have not made ourselves, and whose making we do not understand?<sup>9</sup> How must we relate to such 'foundling'-objects, objects without lineage?<sup>10</sup> I agree with Olivier that this indifference towards objects is a crucial emptiness in our contemporary society: we cannot live with things that were made without meaning, without the intention to transmit something. We are made of the world surrounding us: "(...) *prendre soin d'eux (...)* ça n'est rien d'autre que *prendre soin de nous*."<sup>11</sup>

Who 'am' I, without you? (...) I think I have lost 'you'  
only to discover that 'I' have gone missing as well.

– Judith Butler<sup>12</sup>

The start for taking care of ourselves might imply the recognition of not only the intelligible dimensions, but also of the least understandable dimensions of human beings.<sup>13</sup> Dimensions that seem to nearly escape the understanding of our senses. Contrary to medieval thinkers, modern thinkers no longer believe in a soul-body dualism.<sup>14</sup> However, on the whole, 'soul' has been banned from modern discussions. It seems as if our science is simply too limited to shed more light upon these abstract aspects of being human.<sup>15</sup> But at the same time, "while no one thinks that a self is only a body, recent discussion seems to find it difficult to account for identity without some sort of physical continuity. [There is] a deep conviction that the person is his or her body." This implies the importance of our bodies in questions of personal survival<sup>16</sup> and since many of our creations lead a longer life than we do, I believe this 'material continuity' also has an influence on our relationship to them.<sup>17</sup>

If we see ourselves as more than merely flesh and bones<sup>18</sup> – which I may hope we do – and if we do find ourselves attached hopelessly to certain *things*, then I imagine that apart from the fact that we are sharing our *materiality* with objects, we also connect in another manner. Do we not assume we have a soul? That we are perhaps embodied souls or ensouled bodies? Do we not cling onto our belongings as though many of them have a soul? But then what; if the relationship between the two seems at odd ends...? I see our globe as inhabited by *lost souls*: lost humans and their lost objects and both their lost souls... The reason why many of our objects nowadays die just as quickly as they are born, is because they have not received a soul. They simply do not have roots.<sup>19</sup>

The question is then: “*Saurons-nous préserver l’amour que seule mérite cette vivante fugitive?*”<sup>20</sup>

Why don't you answer  
 Why don't you come save me  
 Show me how to use  
 All these things  
 That you gave me  
 Turn me inside out  
 So my bones can save me  
 Turn me inside out

You've come this close  
 You can come even closer  
 The gunshots get louder  
 And the world spins faster  
 And things just get further  
 And further apart  
 The head from the hands  
 And the hands from the heart

– Lhasa

It's not that all toys, as soon as they leave the factory, automatically have a soul. Not at all. When they are just made they are only things, objects without individuality. But when a child begins to love them, *then*, and only then, does a part of the child's soul enter into the material and bring it to life. From that moment, no matter how broken or scruffy they may have got in the process, toys cannot be thrown away; that is why I go around collecting them from here, there and everywhere and hang them up in the trees, where they can go on living...

(...)

It was not until the day after [my father] died, when I went into his room to find some papers, that I saw a few of those objects which we call 'personal effects.' As soon as I clapped eyes on them, the floodgates of emotion opened and I was able to weep. That was where my father had hidden himself: ... in the hundred and one objects with which he had shared his lonely existence day by day.

(...)

It follows that even this kitchen has a soul, and not derived only from me, obviously. I often wonder who lived in this house in years gone by. A peasant? A tailor? A murderer? Only one's heart can give an answer.

I looked around me and had the impression that I was being watched by a thousand eyes as I prepared the coffee.

– Luciano De Crescenzo<sup>21</sup>





## ***A proposal***

*Drawing from my experience as a maker, I have learned that taking time for the senses to ‘take in’ and giving them freedom to make sense of incoming (and outgoing) signals, completely changes and enriches the experience of reading and relating to artworks and objects in general. While studying in Stockholm I was lucky to be able to follow a brief Art History course by art historian and painter Aurél Schiller during the last years of his teaching.<sup>22</sup> Even though the hours we had were few, we spent nearly all classes in different museums across Stockholm.<sup>23</sup> There, we paired up, chose an artwork, took a seat in front, around or amidst the work of art and discussed it; freely, openly, intuitively, at times naïvely, seriously, humorously, shamelessly... for hours on end.*

*I believe this very notion, of taking time, opening up the senses and ‘unlocking’ the embarrassed, rational mind and spirit, is the key – or at least a key – to letting in objects in our lives. Letting them become part of us, our lives, our spirits and our healing. If objects can be bearers of meaning, which they for sure already are or have been, then is this not a way of ‘letting happen’ what could? Or even should? For our own sake? For healing...*

In order to take a look into the different ways in which we relate to our surroundings – and therefore our creations too – I have chosen to subdivide this section into three parts.

The first part invites the reader to ‘take in’ the world differently. This part is largely based on the matrixial theory developed by Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger and further interpretations thereof by scholars such as art historian Paul Vandebroek. Apart from offering an insightful approach to relate to objects, the theory will also be used to question our ways of relating to the body, which in turn influences the way we relate to objects.

We will start the second part with a brief inquiry into the senses. Considering the relevance for the third part (on making), I will draw attention to the non-visual senses – with a focus on touch – without however neglecting the visual. We then continue by investigating matter, which is often responsible for arousing our senses. In this part we also explore contemporary notions/theories about the role of matter. We will end by an inquiry into matter that has taken form.

In the third part then, the role of making, and more precisely the role of the maker will be discussed. The way things are made has an influence on our relationship to them. Here, both a general notion about making as a more experiential stance will be investigated.

The issues discussed in the second and third part are discussed more detailed in other parts of this thesis.<sup>24</sup>

## Matrix

Late Middle English (in the sense womb): from Latin, 'breeding female,' later 'womb,' from *mater*, *matr-* 'mother.'

### Mother

Old English *mōdor*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *moeder* and German *Mutter*, from an Indo-European root shared by Latin *mater* and Greek *mētēr*.

## Matter

Middle English: via Old French from Latin *materia* 'timber, substance,' also 'subject of discourse,' from *mater* 'mother.'

### Substance

Middle English (denoting the essential nature of something): from Old French, from Latin *substantia* 'being, essence,' from *substant-* 'standing firm,' from the verb *substare*.

### Being

Old English *bēon*, an irregular and defective verb, whose full conjugation derives from several originally distinct verbs. The forms *am* and *is* are from an Indo-European root shared by Latin *sum* and *est*. The forms *was* and *were* are from an Indo-European root meaning 'remain.' The forms *be* and *been* are from an Indo-European root shared by Latin *fui* 'I was,' *fiō* 'I become' and Greek *phuein* 'bring forth, cause to grow.' The origin of *are* is uncertain.

### Timber

Old English in the sense 'a building,' also 'building material,' of Germanic origin; related to German *Zimmer* 'room,' from an Indo-European root meaning 'build.'

### Build

Old English *byldan*, from *bold*, *botl* 'dwelling,' of Germanic origin; related to *bower*.

### Bower

Old English *būr* 'dwelling, inner room,' of Germanic origin; related to German *Bauer* 'birdcage.'

## Making

Old English *macian*, from a base meaning 'fitting;' related to *match*.

### Match

Old English *gemæcca* 'mate, companion;' related to the base of *make*.

### Fit/Fitting

late Middle English: of unknown origin.<sup>25</sup>

The relationship between humans and their objects is *in pieces*. How can we resolve the problematic relationship we have with our objects? Where must we start in order to *piece it together* again? Where can we seek support to restore the relationship? Coming to mind are Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's matrixial theory, further interpretations thereof by Paul Vandembroeck and Idalie Vandamme and the writings of Caroline Walker Bynum. Perhaps a surprise, or perhaps not a surprise at all, we must 'simply' start looking *into* the objects and into the '*before*' of the objects instead of *thinking* and looking *beyond* them. *Feel* them.

See me  
Feel me  
Touch me  
Heal me<sup>26</sup>

## **Matrix**

Recognize the unperceived, the margins of the unconscious and the suspended memory of the Matrix. (...) The meeting takes place in a no-man's land – site of anguish, but also of wild hopes.

– Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger<sup>27</sup>

### **Matrix. Womb.**

I believe that in order to relate to our objects and our-selves in such a way as to take care of ourselves, our objects and our (partially common) souls, we will not only have to *recognize* different dimensions of human beings. Beyond this – in fact basic and natural – recognition follows the *acceptance* of both intelligible and less 'transparent' dimensions, and more still the acceptance of their differences. Intelligible dimensions versus more 'opaque' dimensions of human beings find their parallel in the way humans relate to the world.<sup>28</sup> All of us relate to the world with our body: via our mind and via our senses, our feelings. In order to understand the world, we constantly make distinctions and constructions.<sup>29</sup>

In distinguishing these different dimensions, Paul Vandembroeck uses the terms 'phallogocentric paradigm' and 'matrixial dimension'.<sup>30</sup>

The phallogocentric paradigm refers to a mainly Western way of relating to the world, which has gained influence since modernism.<sup>31</sup> When approaching the world in this way, we rationally relate to our surroundings via our mind, seeking transparency. In this context Vandembroeck speaks of the 'phallogocentric order' that is strongly embedded in our contemporary Western society and has led to a suspicious attitude towards all 'opaque' aspects of life,

18 which can hardly be put into words.<sup>32</sup>

The matrixial theory, which was developed by psychoanalyst and artist Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, takes the shared human fact of life in the womb – the *matrix* – as its point of departure.<sup>33</sup> By doing so, she introduces us to a not completely lost subsymbolic physicality that remains an essential, universal element in fantasy, thought and meaning.<sup>34</sup> Eluding language, the matrixial dimension enables human beings to empathize with their surroundings through “originary processes in the border-zone between psyche and ‘body.’”<sup>35</sup> According to Vandembroeck’s and Vandamme’s interpretations, this theory can also help us to perceive artworks, and in general the uncanny – das *Unheimliche* – differently.<sup>36</sup>

As is the case for the intertwining of control and freedom in various sectors of society, this intertwining and the tension in-between the phallogocentric and matrixial approach is simply a necessity. Or stronger still, the combination of the two can lead to a fruitful synergy.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps it is time to allow more of the ‘fuzzy’ and let our spontaneous intuition grow through its adolescence. Let us confront and wander through the struggle rather than avoiding or oppressing it; *we need to talk*.

In what follows I will try to illustrate my concerns, sorrows and hopes towards this issue.

Letting objects ‘in’ requires a mutual openness.<sup>38</sup> It demands the viewer, the ‘inter-actor’ to engage *with* the object and take a step away from another way of thinking: the rational thinking that has dominated the Western world since modernism and which Paul Vandembroeck has defined as the ‘phallo-logo-centric order’ and the ‘phallogocentric paradigm.’<sup>39</sup>

Here, it is important to understand that the phallo-logo-centric order has severely influenced our way of feeling, creating, seeing and interpreting. In this sense, we could even state that it has damaged us. The phallo-logo-centric order has numbed us: our senses, feelings and intuition lost their skills somehow, letting ratio take over and lead us in our ways of taking in (the) world.<sup>40</sup> Our science is too limited and certain aspects of life are not accessible to reason and can perhaps never be put into words. But “*nothing can remain immense if it can be measured (...)*.”<sup>41</sup> We have become partly blind for matrixial qualities in our culture.<sup>42</sup> Without “rampant growth,” Vandembroeck writes, “faith is dead.” And this does not simply refer to faith as in religion. Have we lost our understanding for objects?<sup>43</sup> Our faith in objects has suffered from control and logic. If we no longer experience our objects as connected to reality, then objects lose their authority while we lose the ability to get in touch with (ungraspable) aspects of the real that might be – or *are* – only accessible through our images and objects. For, as Hans Belting writes, “[i]mages ... find their true meaning in the fact that what they represent is absent *except* as an image. They manifest what is *not* there, what can only *appear*.”<sup>44</sup> I find the weakening of this connection between humans and images extremely unsettling. We must agree that body, soul and feelings stand far closer to us than we let them come to us. They are, and have always been, *part* of us. Therefore I believe the disconnection we experience between us and the world, and

between us and our objects is unnatural and should be solved. And it can be, *because we want our objects to be alive.*<sup>45</sup>

What interests me with Ettinger's concept of the *Matrix*, is that this model offers us a way to heal human brokenness. It comes *before* language and therefore eludes our rational logic.<sup>46</sup> This is exactly where the soul finds itself, and why it is so difficult to grasp.

Quoting Vandenbroeck, it can be said "there is a transitivity between beings, and even between beings and things, that is beyond understanding."<sup>47</sup> In relating to objects and in building a lasting, fruitful relationship with them, I believe we need an affinity for the matrixial. Needless to say, we will, on the way, encounter difficulties due to our binary-logic spirit.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, matrixial matter throws us into the 'unknown': it is ambiguous, paradoxical matter that is hard to grasp, but simultaneously intense in its capacity to heal.<sup>49</sup> The touching of the untouchable and the knowing of the unknowable was, long before the early modern period, the domain of the *fascinans* of mysticism. The latter implied a descent into the Void, breaking through the barrier of the unconscious and creating the possibility to be 'touched' by the Other – in and through the body.<sup>50</sup> The indefinable and vague frightens us. In other words, one could say it in fact confronts us with the fundamentals of our being, of our existence.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, this ungraspable and uncontrollable matter forms the roots of life and faith.<sup>52</sup>

And I think it is exactly these two aspects that frighten and even paralyze us: on the one hand, to be put in an unstable, unpredictable position and on the other hand, to be confronted with the core of who we are, have been and will become. At first glance, I admit, it is rather difficult to believe that such sensations and experiences could offer any healing at all... But when inhabiting an earth that is both *cruelle* and *maternelle*,<sup>53</sup> this is perhaps simply our challenge and task in life: to learn to live with this duality and find ways to 'extract' strength and healing from both aspects.

(...) I don't want to know  
wreckage, dreck and waste, but these are the  
materials  
and so are the slow lift of the moon's belly  
over wreckage, dreck, and waste, wild treefrogs  
calling in  
another season, light and music still pouring over  
our fissured, cracked terrain.

– Adrienne Rich<sup>54</sup>

Cultural traces of the matrixial can be found in, for example, the aesthetics of Berber textiles and cults of the Black Madonna.<sup>55</sup> Berber textiles show both spontaneous, diverse as also regular, strictly geometrical patterns. In their weaving we see a recurring central motif: a stain-like dark spot, a central hollowness, which vibrates outwards and which Vandenbroeck calls the



Knotted carpet, ca. 1950, Tatouine, Tunisia. 330 x 170 cm

‘nameless motif.’<sup>56</sup> These creations are parallel aesthetic responses to psychocorporal experiences, which take place in the border space between body and mind, between not-I and I-to-be. They have arisen from a sense of loss and longing, an absence, and the sublimation of it. In these creations the ungraspable and *unheimliche* dimensions of the real and the imaginary matrix have not been rejected.<sup>57</sup>

Within the cults of the Black Madonna seeming contraries are united: “their miracles combine lifegiving and fruitfulness with death and deathlike states.”<sup>58</sup> Also the Marian cult takes a crucial position in the handling and the aestheticization of unportrayable existential paradoxes.<sup>59</sup>

In this regard, we could also speak of what Paul Verhaeghe and Julie De Ganck have called ‘chthonic art’ in speaking of certain works of Louise Bourgeois: works of art that cannot be interpreted because they go beyond any narrative. I quote: “they are an almost desperate attempt to give form and representation to what is beyond interpretation. (...) they are first attempts to interpret what can never be fully represented.”<sup>60</sup>

These notions of creation are not discussed at length here, but seen their relevance in my research, I return to them in other sections of this thesis.

In the very beginning there was *not* the word; body and feeling came first.<sup>61</sup> Culture works unconsciously and in the first place via the body, which is the

fundament of being human.<sup>62</sup> In other words, each and every one of us possesses the key to this matrixial understanding. But our upbringing, culture and surroundings keep us from 'letting go.' Perhaps we feel a certain shame in unlocking the matrixial sense. Coming back to the very beginning of this discourse on our contemporary Western relationship to objects, I see the difficulty in our *acceptance* of vague meaning, ambiguous feelings and ungraspable souls directly relating to this shame – guilt? What for? So, for us, the challenge lies within the liberation of phallogocentric thinking and accepting of matrixial uncertainties.

I would like to conclude the reflection above with the conclusions of Vandamme and Vandembroeck on the matter: "Once attuned to such glimpses of the matrixial, beyond reason and dogma, our response to contemporary works of great ambiguity and intensity can also be a source of healing and wholeness."<sup>63</sup> And according to Vandembroeck, the emotionally loaded aesthetic form, specific to art, can reveal to us the sensitivity of a human being or a culture, even when they are unknown to us.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Mediatrix***

(..) your spirit's gaze informing your body, impatient  
 to mark what's possible, impatient to mark  
 what's lost, deliberately destroyed, can never any  
 way be returned,  
 your back arched against all icons, simulations, dead  
 letters  
 your woman's hands turning the wheel or working  
 with shears, torque wrench, knives, with salt  
 pork, onions, ink, and fire  
 your providing sensate hands, your hands of oak  
 and silk, of blackberry juice and drums  
 – I speak of them now.

– Adrienne Rich<sup>65</sup>

#### **Matrix. Womb. Body.**

Now that we have looked into the changes in our Western contemporary society in relation to our *approach* of the ungraspable, it is worthwhile examining the *role* of the body in relating to the world.

"However we construct it and whatever it stands for to us, body is what we've got." With this sentence, Caroline Walker Bynum makes her point clear in the introduction of her book *Fragmentation and Redemption*: no matter how we feel about our body, we will have to live with it.<sup>66</sup> We are 'in the world' because of it; the body is where we experience and interpret the world.<sup>67</sup> Of course, we, humans, are more than merely bodies. But, as stated earlier, we have difficulties grasping what lies beyond the perceivable. Since metaphors and analogies prove to be useful in grasping the transparent, both in language and in image,<sup>68</sup> I would here like to suggest – in Bynum's zeal – to start with

22 the human body as a means of exploring the ungraspable.

This is not an unexpected path to follow; our body is the locus of physical pain – a wound, a toothache – and our body also *lets* us experience emotional pain – deception, the loss of a dear one, love. Not only does this enable us to relate to the world, it also enables us to empathize with others, to feel sympathy. This creates a specific tension between humans when seeing other people and corporeal representations.<sup>69</sup>

For now, however, I would like to concentrate on experiencing the body; the role physicality can have and how the body has so far helped mankind in grasping those dark realms of our being. Although we will not separately discuss this, I would like to remark that “the body lends itself in at least three ways to aesthetic expression: as the (literal) carrier of a work of art, as an artistic medium, and as a conscious and/or preconscious pattern or model.”<sup>70</sup> These three forms of aesthetic expression involving the body will be present throughout the thesis – word and image, albeit at times implicitly.

I *must* have a body, it's a moral necessity, a 'requirement.' And in the first place, I must have a body because an obscure object lives in me [...] the depths of the mind are dark, and this dark nature is what explains and requires a body.

– Gilles Deleuze<sup>71</sup>

Our relationship to our own body – how we *deal* with it, how we *treat* it – influences our way(s) of relating to our surroundings and approaching objects. Similarly to the evolution – or shall I say ‘withering’ – of our relationship with the vague, we see a change in how we relate to our body. Vandenbroeck has suggested that our desire to grasp reality and to know the truth has gone hand in hand with a tendency to cleanse and control. This implies the doing away with the ungraspable and unsettling; in other words it implies taking distance of the body, which is the first place where we experience dirt, fear, fascination and “blurry visions.” Oddly enough, through time we see a change from one extreme into the other. From the experience of the body, its oddities and the desire for purification as a triumph, the experience evolved to become “a ‘modern’ pursuit of clarity” where there is no room for an unpredictable body. In this modern vision the body becomes a spotless organism, achieved through bodily cleanliness, which in turn produces “images of a hierarchically ordered body, directed by the head.” In what follows, we will see that it is exactly this despised body that provided order, both socially and divine.<sup>72</sup>

(...) remember  
that blessing and cursing are born as twins and  
separated at birth  
to meet again in mourning (...)

– Adrienne Rich<sup>73</sup>



### **Matrix. Womb. Body. The Word made flesh.**

As I mentioned earlier, the touching of the untouchable and the knowing of the unknowable was, long before the early modern period, the domain of the *fascinans* of mysticism. This implied a ‘fall’ into the unknown, diving into the unconscious and creating the possibility to be touched by the Other – in and through the body.<sup>74</sup> Yes, we are stuck with this body of ours. We are trapped in it, and through it we are caught in this world. Our relationship to the body is forever ambiguous: it is the locus of pain and decay, but also of desire, passion, fertility and mystical encounter. From medieval piety we can learn that perhaps there are more reasons to treat the body as an opportunity than an entrapment.<sup>75</sup>

The somatic quality of women’s piety in medieval religion has its roots in the doctrine of incarnation, which is Christianity’s basic truth, its essence.<sup>76</sup> This doctrine gave rise to their concern with physicality and their association of body with God: to them humanity was the ‘Word made flesh.’<sup>77</sup> The New Testament’s message could be read differently, as “a bodily-rooted and bodily-experienced message of salvation” rather than a message calling us to mistrust the body.<sup>78</sup> In other words, the humanation – *enfleshing* – of God is in fact the salvation of us all.<sup>79</sup> Also, these medieval women’s reading of Christ on the cross as “humanity” rather than victory or humility, touches upon the fundamental shared core of being human; what we all share with him “is the fact that we can be hurt. We suffer.”<sup>80</sup>

### **Matrix. Womb. Body. The Word made flesh. The female body.**

So, to medieval women humanity was essentially – *substantially* – physicality; “the flesh of the ‘Word made flesh.’” Though humanity is genderless, theologians and devotional writers associated Christ’s humanity – Christ’s fleshliness – with the female. The roots of this complex association of feminine and flesh can be ascribed to three different factors.<sup>81</sup>

Firstly, theologians were influenced by the long-standing analogy of “spirit is to flesh as male is to female.” This dichotomy of male/female can serve as a symbol for the dichotomies strong/weak, rational/irrational and soul/body. The division also led to, for example, the mystic Hildegard of Bingen’s statement that “man represents the divinity of the Son of God and woman his humanity.” Perhaps interesting to mention here, is that this analogy is also expressed in the medieval texts that state: “Christ married human nature as a man marries a woman.” This, in turn, lies behind the depiction of both *ecclesia* and *humanitas* as female. Moreover, the association of women with Christ’s humanity offered women a way of joining Christ and attaining God, explaining why there were more women mystics than men.<sup>82</sup>

A second reason for the association of feminine with flesh can be found in the theological doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Since Christ did not have a human father, his body came entirely from Mary and was associated with female flesh: “Mary was the source and container of Christ’s physicality; the flesh Christ put on was in some sense female, because it was his mother’s.”<sup>83</sup>

Let us move on to the third and last strand leading to this complex

association of flesh to female. This last strand is based on ancient physiological understandings of conception. According to Aristotelian theory, for example, it was the mother who provided the matter of the fetus and the father who gave its life, spirit or form.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, ancient biologists believed that the mother's blood fed the child in the womb. After birth, so they thought, the blood changed into milk, thus feeding the child outside the womb too. This implies that "blood was the basic bodily fluid and female blood was the fundamental support of human life."<sup>85</sup>

But Christ was not only enfleshed with flesh from a woman; his own flesh also did womanly things: it bled food – the Host – and it gave birth to new life. According to medieval medical theory, the shedding of blood cleansed the one who shed it. It regarded bleeding as feeding and the purging away of excess; leading to associations of Christ's bleeding on the cross, "which purges our sin in the Atonement and feeds our souls in the eucharist, with female bleeding and feeding."<sup>86</sup> Naturally, sharing these qualities with Christ, women related to Christ through his 'motherhood': his sacrificial death on the cross, generating redemption, as a mother giving birth; his love for the soul, as the unquestioning pity and tenderness of a mother for her child; his feeding of the soul with himself (his body and blood) in the eucharist as a mother nursing her baby.<sup>87</sup> In other words, to unite with Christ, women did not have to reverse what they were. On the contrary, since the woman's sense of herself as physical linked her to Christ "as in continuity with, rather than in contrast to, [her] own ordinary experience of physical and social vulnerability ...women reached God not by reversing what they were but by sinking more fully into it."<sup>88</sup> Through its femaleness, Christ's body becomes accessible to all humans; "this motherly body is all of us."<sup>89</sup> Thus, in order to reach God, women 'opened up' to their bodies. Characteristic ways for them to achieve union were, in fact and image, suffering (both self-inflicted as involuntary) and food (both eucharist and fasting).<sup>90</sup>

If "horrible pain, twisting of the body, bleeding – whether inflicted by God or by oneself – were not an effort to destroy the body, not a punishment of physicality" but "an effort to plumb the depths of Christ's humanity," what does this tell us about ourselves? And if we, today, read these medieval texts and images as the condemnation of, for example, sexual temptation, then what can we learn from it?

As Bynum writes, it may suggest that today there is a tendency to find sex more interesting than nurturing, suffering or salvation. But, I definitely agree with Bynum, and would like to emphasize here, that we are perhaps more literal-minded than artists and writers from the 15th and 16th centuries were.<sup>91</sup> Instead of projecting our contemporary dichotomies onto what we have inherited, medieval art and literature might have the capacity to inspire us to look for a symbolic richness that our own lives seem to lack.<sup>92</sup> Does this not bring us back to the matrixial theory? And does medieval art not show us how the body can be an opportunity, 'a beloved companion,' rather than an obstacle for the soul to thrive, to be lifted?<sup>93</sup> I quote Bynum: "If we want to turn from seeing body as sexual to seeing body as generative, if we want to find symbols

that give dignity and meaning to the suffering we cannot eliminate and yet fear so acutely, we can find support for doing so in the art and theology of the later Middle Ages.”<sup>94</sup>

I see here a link to Hannah Arendt’s concern of the growing focus on life as such, “life as the highest good” and the following aimless vitalism we get stuck in as economy tightens its grip on the world. To quote Arendt: “... we have almost succeeded in leveling all human activities to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance. Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of ‘making a living’...” So, rather than regarding life, and the body specifically, as just a ‘quantitative’ entity, we should regard them in their qualitative aspects. If we cannot step out of this world and take distance from life as such, then we will increasingly become alienated from the world.”<sup>95</sup>

However, I must mention that Arendt ascribes the roots of this tendency to consider life as the highest good not so much to science, but to Christian faith in the immortality of the individual human life. The Christian immortality of individual life resulted in “an enormously increased importance of life on earth. (...) Not the murderer, but he who had put an end to his own life was refused a Christian burial.” It is not necessary to further discuss this issue here, but I would like to emphasize my conviction that the Christian mystery of the Incarnation is nevertheless a useful guide to move beyond “life as the highest good.” Moreover, Arendt’s conclusion perhaps proves how, throughout history, mankind has preferred the aspect of the immortality of *individual* life to the *shared* human vulnerability, thereby neglecting compassion, expressed by the Incarnation through the Son of Man.<sup>96</sup>

An issue I will keep for later, but would already like to mention here, is that making – action – can play a particular role in our healing against alienation of the world. (What does this imply for the role of the artist?)

In concluding this train of thought, and in opening towards a new topic, I would like to suggest that the body has served, serves and can serve as a *mediatrix*, between the graspable and the opaque. Our bodies mediate between these two dimensions. The powerful energy between matter and spirit comes to life in the body: “exclude the body and spirituality dries out, becomes anemic.”<sup>97</sup>

### **Matrix. Womb. Body. The Word made flesh. The female body. Image.**

Now I would like to come closer to our starting point: humans and their objects – *images*. If the Incarnation, Christ’s humanity, and therefore his physicality and femaleness, reveal the power our bodies have to reach less graspable dimensions and to enforce empathy, then how can these aspects help us get closer to our objects? Or, how can these aspects guide us ‘through’ our objects differently and help us rediscover the qualities and support objects can offer us?

The doctrine of Incarnation has not only played an important role in medieval piety. It has been the cornerstone for the beginning of a long tradition of visualization in Christianity. We mustn’t forget that the possibility of making images, representing humans and *presenting* powers through images has relieved mankind. I therefore suggest we investigate how the Incarnation,



Christ's humanity and physicality, the human body and the female, specifically, have opened the path towards visibility. Even though many of the sources I will be referring to relate more directly towards two-dimensional images, they are helpful for three-dimensional imagery as well; for the process of visualization in general.

As mentioned earlier, the Incarnation led to a particular stance towards the body in Christianity. Contrary to Judaism and Islam, Christians saw in the Incarnation the argumentation *for* the legitimacy of the figurative image. In their interpretation, God had already humbled himself by taking on human flesh and blood. Through the Son of Man God made himself visible to offer salvation. If God 'bares' himself by taking on a human body – through *physicality* – then imagery that has come to life through the same analogy should be legitimate.<sup>98</sup> And thus we come a step closer to the ungraspable; "the process of becoming human itself ... of the indescribable that becomes describable."<sup>99</sup> Since Christ is the Son of God, he is both human and divine, this is his 'double nature.' And if the incarnation is the Word made flesh, then can we not consider making as an extension hereof? Since making is the very *act* of giving an idea or feeling form...<sup>100</sup>

After this first step towards 'grasping the ungraspable' – by virtue of the body – what are the following steps made throughout Christianity that can take us closer to 'less transparent dimensions' through objects?

From the legend of King Abgar of Edessa we learn that Christ's aura blinded the artist trying to make his portrait. Consequently, "out of compassion, Christ pressed his own face on a cloth, the *mandylion*."<sup>101</sup> This *acheiropoietos* – an image that is not made by human hands – is the imprint of a momentary revelation. In other words, the *mandylion* is, "the 'bearer' of the supernatural 'immediacy.'"<sup>102</sup> ('Immediacy' is also an issue I will come back to later on, for its relevance in making). What happens here is that the unbearable image of seeing Christ's aura is 'caught' and 'softened' by (the tangibility of) the cloth. Preserving the traces of the intangible Son of Man, the *acheiropoietos* creates "an iconic transition from divine mediation to human mediation."<sup>103</sup> And "[t]he epiphany of the divine visage ...is given in its describable incarnation as a gift to humanity."<sup>104</sup> In other words, image, incarnation and Salvation go hand in hand. The unbearable is made bearable through the Incarnation and, accordingly, through the image, which bridges the gap between the indescribable and the describable.<sup>105</sup> "As a consequence," Baert concludes, "the *mandylion* also signifies the iconophilic way: it permits us to see how the flesh authorizes access to the image of what was 'first' indescribable."<sup>106</sup>

But there is more at stake still. What about archaic notions of images? And what can be said of the role of the female in images? If the relationship between body and female is a particular one, and the relationship between body and image also, then what is the relationship between the female and the image?

Firstly – and this, in fact, takes us back to our very starting point, namely the soul of an object – I would like to clarify briefly the archaic idea of *praesentia* in the image. This idea implies the belief that the image contains the powers of the represented. As the word indicates, we are in fact confronted with presence or *represence* rather than representation; this is substitutional seeing.<sup>107</sup> This notion is the actual cause of iconoclasm: since the image is magical, it gives rise to fear and suspicion. Moreover, Islamic iconoclasm links the notion of hubris to inert material, of which the image is made. Since the human hand is unable to give life to the figurative image, it must be evil.<sup>108</sup>

However, the iconophile does not adore the image – the object – itself, but its subject. In other words, the image functions as a transitory medium: "the image is thus a *transitio*, the tunnel between the visible world and the invisible. The describability via the hand of the artist and the pushing through to the indescribable via the gaze can go together, just as the two natures of Christ also go together."<sup>109</sup> Consequently, the image can be regarded as an invitation and a gate that enables us to reach the invisible through the visible.<sup>110</sup> What I find important here, to take along with us in the thoughts following, is not simply the importance of the human body and the image with regard to achieving the invisible, but specifically the *physicality* of both. Further on, we will look more deeply into touch and making. I cannot sufficiently stress the importance of the *physical* work of art in this research. Essential to me, in imagery, is the presence of a *body*, of *stuff*, because matter holds – creates – the very possibility of touch. Something must have *body* to it, in order for us to have a grasp on it, hence my belief in the importance of objects in human life...

In speaking of 'stuff,' we have come to the perfect transition to speak of the

Female mediation plays an essential role in the Christian stance towards imagery. Let us once again return to the mystery of the Incarnation to gain a better understanding of the place of the feminine in the image. During Mary's conception, or the turning point between the invisible God and the God who humbles himself in the visibility of human flesh, Mary in fact is the "iconic interstice." As the bearer of the Son of God, she "makes possible the transition from absolute to partial veiling."<sup>112</sup> All images are derived from the belly of the *Theotokos*, the mother of God: "The matrix of Christian imagery lies in the womb where Jesus was made flesh. The feminine is not part of the figurative, which is exclusively patriarchal, but bears it, mediating between the invisible and the visible." Let me reformulate the latter, embedding it within the path we have followed so far: the feminine is thus not part of the describable, but she precedes it as *mediatrix* between the invisible and the visible.<sup>113</sup> This in-between state can be seen as typically female, we will return to it in what follows.<sup>114</sup>

Mary is not the only female 'image-bearer' known to Christian iconography. We will here look into Veronica, the bearer of the *vera icon*. A second mediatrix, the Haemorrhoida or the 'woman with an issue of blood'<sup>115</sup> will be useful for us only in the next part, entitled *Matter*, where we will explore the role of the senses with regard to graspable matter.

Veronica, the bearer of the *vera icon*, caught the blooded face of Christ on textile – on her kerchief. This imprinted kerchief – the *vera icon*, the *true image* – can be seen as an extension of herself, implying that *she*, literally, *bears* the image. It leads us to a chain of archaic connotations, relating to the fertile potential of the figurative.<sup>116</sup>

Baert remarks the significance of the textile support on which the primary image rests. The fact that the image of Christ is 'caught' in textile refers to the archaic role of women and their relationship to weaving. The image of the weaving process can be seen as an expression of the creation of the world. In the Old Testament (Psalm 139:13) we read "it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb."<sup>117</sup> Remembering the example of the Berbers earlier on in this text, we could say "the art of weaving testifies to a matriarchal magicalization and ritualization within the society."<sup>118</sup> Veronica is the bearer of the *vera icon*, but so is the weave. This leads us to Veronica's veil and to the very act of veiling and unveiling. The veil holds a particular position within the relationship between humans and their images: it interrupts the gaze. What I am mostly interested in here, is not so much the gaze of the human towards the image, but the reverse. This takes us to the apotropaic notion of the gaze as it is present in both the *mandylion* and the *vera icon*. The apotropaion wards off evil by 'looking back.'<sup>119</sup> It has been suggested that the essence of the female bearer of the image is the fact that she makes the image bearable.<sup>120</sup>

Another essential aspect present in the *vera icon* concerns the taking on of form from (regenerative) dark matter. The *vera icon* reveals "the process of becoming human in the 'liquid form' of bodily fluids. It is from this sensory aspect that femininity was distilled."<sup>121</sup> The life-giving aspect, the origin



of new life from nothingness, is one of “the greatest mysteries with which humankind has been preoccupied since ancient times” and it is essentially feminine.<sup>122</sup> Barbara Baert has investigated several cases of this transition from formlessness to form through which “the matrixial is expressed in an increasingly figurative, concrete way. This transition responds to our “desire to iconically grasp the unfathomable regenerative powers of the matrix or uterus, the impalpable “blackness” of her underground, but nevertheless life-bearing flows.”<sup>123</sup> For example, the terrifying gaze of Medusa – an *apotropaion* – can

30 be linked to the primal fear of the 'black hole,' which sucks in and results in an endless fall. Psychoanalysts typify the primal fear of immeasurable blackness, as fear of the creating womb. This inevitably leads us to the female sex, the uterus, which is the first principle. The womb is characterized by dark 'stuff,' inert matter – the generating *prima matrix*.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, prime matter is potency.<sup>125</sup> This reminds of the black Madonnas; “[b]lack functions as feminine potency (*Theotokos*), for the taking on of (masculine) form (Son of Man).”<sup>126</sup> Earlier on, we saw how the Berber textiles gave form to this ‘matrixial ur-principle’ in their weavings. The abstract ‘nameless motif’ – often a black or red vulvatic shape in the center, which we encountered in these works, can be seen as a ‘predecessor’ of what has become iconic in the *vera icon*.<sup>127</sup>

Before moving on to the next part, I would still like to speak of one last crucial aspect of the *vera icon*, there is also the crucial aspect of the substance leaving the trace of the face on the veil: red blood. The white cloth, stained by red blood, is not a neutral image; to women in particular it is a familiar image. It reminds of menstruation and giving birth, the unfruitful and the fruitful.<sup>128</sup> “In both its positive and negative aspects, [menstruation] represents carnal existence. Menstruation opens the way for the possibility of life in this world and is an apt symbol for the messy flux or mortal flow of life.”<sup>129</sup> Medieval physiological theory saw all bodily fluids as reducible to blood, and bleeding was considered to be purifying. Medieval viewers often saw a breast or a womb in Christ’s side, his wound. This implies that both in their writing and in their art, there was an association of side – wound – with pain and blood, and therefore with salvation. Not only was blood the basic bodily fluid; female blood was the fundamental support of human life.<sup>130</sup> “The blood of Christ is, as is the blood of birth and fruitfulness, the salvation of the following generation through pain and death. It is essentially regenerative.”<sup>131</sup>

## -trix

### **The Word made flesh? The flesh made word...**

But what happens when we subtract all of the above? What happens when the body is deleted? Or when female mediation is erased or impeded? What comes after the body, or what lies beyond representation? Does ‘the Word made flesh,’ become word once again?

Firstly, we have seen that acknowledging the body is crucial for a better understanding of and a *feel* for our images. “Organ. Organism. Organization.” With this series of words, Vandebroek takes the reader through his observations of how a religion rooted in the body became increasingly directed by the head, by reason. He deduces from the evolution that if the body is ‘expelled,’ faith does not become more pure. It simply “dries out.” Now, I believe – as Vandebroek insinuates – that this is not only the case within religion. It can be extended to other forms of faith as well; towards our relation to those



ungraspable dimensions of life we have been weaving through in our reflections. Body and spirit cannot be disconnected; in order to be touched in and through the body, we must experience the ‘dangerous body’ and accept its vulnerability, its openness, its dirt, its energy, its sensuality and its ability to (ex)change with its surroundings.<sup>132</sup>

Secondly there are the ‘double’ implications of the Incarnation of which we already spoke above. On the one hand the Incarnation as read by Christians gave rise to the legitimacy of the figurative image, which is not the case for other monotheistic religions, such as Islam and Judaism. Without Christ’s double nature and female mediatrices, or image-bearers – shock absorbers as it were – the (gaze of the) figurative image remains harmful; its veil cannot be safely lifted.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, and this might seem a paradox, according to Hannah Arendt, the same Incarnation, leading to a focus on the body and on the relevance of material continuity, has been the starting point of a strong Western concern for “life as the highest good.” In Arendt’s opinion, this concern for individual human life has led to an aimless vitalism; an increasing world alienation that is problematic for human relations.<sup>134</sup> This somehow takes us back to the previous issue; that we perhaps have the tendency to focus on the reason-ably graspable, rather than seeing the graspable as mediatrix, an in-between to achieve the ungraspable. Is this where human failure lies? Where our destructivity begins?

A third thought I would like to raise here, is more specifically related to the role of the body in reading images, using the body as a helpful means to understand – grasp – images. James Elkins opens the introduction of his book *Pictures of the Body. Pain and Metamorphosis*, with the sentence “[e]very picture is a picture of the body.” He continues by saying that “every work of visual art is a representation of the body” in the sense that “every representation is a record of embodied experience” and that “the creation of a form is to some degree also the creation of a body.”<sup>135</sup> But “every picture is a picture of the body” also in the sense that we have the tendency to look for bodies, because “we prefer to have bodies in front of us.” And even when we do not see bodies, we can detect echoes of bodies in what we see.<sup>136</sup> These analogies help us understand visual forms. But then, one wonders, what happens when this analogic seeing starts collapsing? In these cases – and they are rare – we simply fail to make sense of what we see. Elkins here gives the example of microscopical discoveries made during the enlightenment; there seemed no analogy whatsoever between the creatures that were found and the creatures that were known. This condition of ‘visual desperation’ in fact makes clear how strongly we depend on ‘the image of the body’ to understand other images.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, we can also fail to visualize the body, to create images of our body. Strong schematic representations of the body – such as in stick figures – speak of a desperate desire to express truths about the body. But, in their calculated simplifications, these representations are “a strong repression, a denial of what the body seems really to be.”<sup>138</sup> Pictures of the body reveal ways in which the body is experienced; how we see it and what our relationship is to it. But this notion can also be reversed: “The encounter with new ways of conceiving bodies takes place in large measure through the experience of new ways of

*making bodies...*” Every representation of the body is the result of a series of decisions concerning what is and what is not representable. And perhaps the unrepresentable originates from what is actually inconceivable? Though I will not explore these issues here, I would like to consider – if there is a continuum between the representable and the unrepresentable – what lies at the end of the line, far away from our imagery I have been defending. Elkins proposes that “language is the purpose that most forcefully evicts bodily meaning.” Language – in case it is a language we master, an alphabet we are familiar with – invites to be *read*, not to be *seen*. Consequently, when a body is used for a symbolic purpose, it enters “the realm of things that are not seen, but are *read*. [...] This is the end of the body, the place where the body fades and language begins.”<sup>139</sup>

In ending our pathway through the matrix, on the edge of moving on to matter and making, I would like to conclude by quoting Elkins: “*The body can never be fully theorized – and we hope to keep it that way.*”<sup>140</sup> Bear with me.

(...) it is only at the level of the unreachable,  
inexplicable, extra-rational, even delusional patterns  
of the image – fragile as the dust of a butterfly wing  
under handling and examination – that the image  
pulsates and declares its independence.

– Robert Morris<sup>141</sup>

## ***My Mediatrix***

Between my collection of unorganized boxes of  
found objects/materials and organized boxes  
of bought objects/materials,

Between my collection of books with many images/  
little text and books with a lot of text/few  
images,

Between my collection of skins and empty yam  
boxes,

Between the many, many hand carved bones and  
dried up root vegetables,

Between the endless amount of sentences I have  
carefully underlined and the unreadable  
remarks on the sides,

And the collection of objects and jewelry that ‘come  
out,’

Lies a large collection of drawings that – nearly –  
always ‘stays in.’

In the blurry photographs they ‘come out’  
cautiously.

As traces of immediacy: often directly from the  
body, painfully from the bleeding chest and  
trembling hand,

And sometimes via a detour in the shaken,

awakened mind.  
 Fragile, timid, quiet, brutal and hurt,  
 They have led me to the fragmented body/body  
 fragments,  
 The human brokenness, which I cannot let go.

I have been thinking about the word *mediatrix* and how it so perfectly draws together *mediator* and *matrix*.

Thinking through practice, my *mediatrix* would be drawing. It is my *in-between*; it is between the unspeakable, which emerges directly, intuitively, and the speakable, since it is pronounced, there is an articulation on paper, in form, and even in matter. Drawing happens between head, heart, hand and other stuff.

Just as material experiments, drawing matures thinking, intuition, feeling and therefore the making of things in general. “The tactile, the relational and the incomplete are physical experiences that occur in the act of drawing,” writes Sennett. The creative stimulation experienced in drawing reveals the close connection between head and hand that is absent in non-tangible simulations of drawing.<sup>142</sup> This difference in connection and contact is known to all of us through the discrepancy in typing on a keyboard and writing by hand. The latter involves a less disconnected process than the former. Writing by hand consists of a continuous movement: “my hand knows words as continuous, flowing gestures and not as sequences of discrete letters.” Because of the lack of direct contact in typing, the words “carry no trace of movement and feeling. They are cold and expressionless” and, consequently, the page ‘loses its voice.’<sup>143</sup> Both drawing and handwriting “re-awaken long-suppressed sensibilities and induce a greater sense of personal involvement, leading in turn to profound insight.” Perhaps this is why we have the reflex to trace a line around the formless stain?<sup>144</sup> Perhaps this is why Baert speaks of Berlinde De Bruyckere’s drawings as embodying “the first act of healing?”<sup>145</sup>

(...) by drawing, he discovered the pleasures of touch.

– Richard Sennett<sup>146</sup>

## Matter

(...) drawing our attention to what our predecessors  
already knew when they first coined the term  
'material' by extension from the Latin *mater*,  
meaning 'mother.'

– Tim Ingold<sup>147</sup>

Rather extensively, we have explored the role of the Incarnation, the body, the feminine, and the image. On the way, we have *touched* upon the importance of the visible and graspable in order to get in *touch* with the invisible and the ungraspable. The liminal path between these two dimensions is 'paved' by (fe-male) mediatrices, archaic connotations and dark matter within each human, which brings to mind human subconsciousness, intuition and *gut feeling*. In order to walk the path, one must open up towards these ephemeral dimensions and 'let in' – having our senses/bodies and materials/objects/images at hand.

In this part we will approach that blurry matter surrounding us, this material world we are part of, with a continuous emphasis on our bodies.

We will start by continuing the exploration of the senses. More specifically, we will look into the sense of touch. I focus on touch, because along with sight, it is the sense playing a crucial role in my work(s): during the conceiving of it, in the experiencing of it and in the understanding of it. Once again, I will gratefully use several art-historical examples in which touch is central to the interpretation of the image, in the communication of the (re)presented.

We continue with an inquiry into the role of materials in which we focus on how materials affect us and whether we consider them to be active or passive. This implies an exploration of the ways in which Western tradition has regarded matter and the alternative views that have developed by questioning the tradition.

Finally, we will briefly investigate matter that has already taken form: the role of objects and, more precisely the relation between objects and bodies, will be at stake here.

## *Senses*

Qu'est-il arrivé ? À la faveur de quel bruit, de quelle  
odeur, de quelle mystérieuse association de pensée  
t'es-tu glissé en moi ?

– Anne Philipe<sup>148</sup>

Throughout the part *Mater* the urgency of the senses has been brought to light. The senses emphasize that the body need not be "so much a hindrance to the

soul's ascent as the opportunity for it.<sup>149</sup> Being-in-body, living 'through' our senses, enables contact and therefore is crucial to acquire knowledge. The effect of experiencing to be 'switched on' by 'the other' is the 'turning on' of the bodily senses as is the case in medieval piety.<sup>150</sup> Now, when mutual openness is present and a cooperative receptivity is successful,<sup>151</sup> the interaction between a work of art or an object – approached via our senses – and the beholder (toucher, viewer, wearer) can also result in the gaining of knowledge, a better understanding of our own values and, ultimately, a soothing sensation, like the warm hand on the sore belly: relieving, but never fully curing.<sup>152</sup> Senses can help us achieve a better feeling – *sense* – of, and 'for,' the world.

There are two aspects about our notion of the senses I would like to put into question here. The first concerns the 'canonical list' counting five senses. According to James Elkins, this list can be extended to at least eight senses. Besides sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing, he distinguishes "gravity (independent of the five, since it does not require touch), heat (independent for the same reason: I do not need to make contact to feel temperature), and proprioception. It is the latter which is particularly important for us here. The sense of proprioception can be described as "the body's internal muscular and organic sense of itself. ... it denotes feeling that occurs in the body rather than bodily movements." Elkins compares this notion to his use of the term *pain*, with which he does not wish to indicate "unpleasantness of any sort." Rather, he uses *pain* to designate "the *general condition of being alive*, a state of sensation, a sensual monitoring of the body, a care or awareness of its health and its status, an attention to what are sometimes known as 'raw feels.'" In other words, "pain signifies that mode of awareness that listens to the body and is aware of its feeling."<sup>153</sup> Both the sense of proprioception and Elkins's use of the term *pain*, refer to sensing what occurs in the body without making use of one of the five senses from the 'canonical list.' These senses enable us to sense gestures and movements present in images, without the experience of actual body movement. But these senses can also engage us in the actions present in images. Our will to intervene in the image or our reflex to look away from certain images, are reactions possible through proprioception and 'pain.' Elkins suggests *pain* can be seen as "the delicate awareness of the thought of bodily motion, and it is enough to engage the body and alert me to the forces of the picture." Through these senses we experience a particular kind of sensitivity towards images; we can somehow 'engage' our bodies in experiencing and understanding images. Another term Elkins sees *pain* connected to is empathy: "an 'involuntary act of transference' that causes the viewer to think something is true of the object rather than of him- or herself."<sup>154</sup> Elkins concludes that the combination of proprioception with empathy, can help us understand how our bodies react not only to what affects them directly, but also why our bodies are affected – influenced – by the objects we see, and – I would like to add – make.

The second aspect encourages a more balanced embracing of all the senses. The matrixial theory, which we familiarized with earlier, reminds us of the importance of the non-visual senses. In their accuracy and immediacy through which they can communicate, they have nevertheless often been

overlooked by the sense of vision. Why consider vision as ‘the noblest of the senses’?<sup>155</sup> One might even doubt, that sight is possible without touch.<sup>156</sup> In extending Merleau-Ponty’s thesis of *Flesh*, Luce Irigaray argues that tactile sensations begin in the womb and that touch is the primary sense.<sup>157</sup> It has been suggested that “[a]ll the senses, including vision, can be regarded as extensions of the sense of touch – as specialisations of the skin.”<sup>158</sup> Touch can thus be considered “the first sense of knowing.”<sup>159</sup> Derrida attributes a particular power to touch; according to him a radical impact, such as death through the lack of touch or an excess of it, is not possible with other senses.<sup>160</sup> The powers of touch, taste and smell – “the mother of every memory,”<sup>161</sup> can immediately take us back in time and thus occupy an important role in our ‘taste’ for things. Hearing for example, invades the body; it “leaves the impression that it takes place within the person.”<sup>162</sup> Richard Sennett explains that touch involves the whole body: “touch delivers invasive, ‘unbounded’ data, whereas the eye supplies images that are contained in a frame.” Moreover, Sennett argues the brain receives more trustworthy information through touch than through sight. Touch can lead us to ‘grasp’ objects more accurately, through which we are able describe an object more precisely than if we were only to see it.<sup>163</sup>



Christ and the Haemorrhissa, ca. 520–26, Basilica of Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. Mosaic

With our first female bearer, in the previous part *Mater*, we have crossed a complex range of associations within the becoming of the image. I will now continue with the Haemorrhissa. This female mediatrix can help us explore the impact of touch and the moment between fluidity and solidification. The former refers to our relationship with objects, the manner in which we interact with them and, also, the maker’s intuition versus his or her choice of materials. The latter refers to key moments in the process of creation and will be discussed in the following part entitled *Maker/Making*.

The Haemorrhissa, or ‘the woman with an issue of blood,’ is a bleeding woman who, during Jesus’ requested cure of the daughter of Jairus, emerges out of the crowd and touches the hem of Jesus’ cloak in the hope to be cured of her bleedings. The moment she touches the clothes, her bleeding immediately stops and Jesus becomes instantly aware that “a power had gone forth from him” (Mark 5: 24b–34). Since the bleedings are referred to as a *fons* – a spring – in verse 29, they are of uterine origin.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps the Haemorrhissa is a woman suffering from irregular menstrual bleeding, which implies, according to

Leviticus, that she shall not be touched.<sup>165</sup> The case of the Haemorrhissa is clearly a miracle of healing through touch.<sup>166</sup>

Studies on the syntactic meaning and frequency of the word ‘touch’ in the Old and New Testament, have revealed that the Greek *haptein* is the verb that is generally used for denoting touching. But *haptein* also means ‘to approach,’ ‘to be in contact with something or someone’ or ‘to touch emotionally’ (and this both in a favorable and in a harmful sense).<sup>167</sup> And do images not *approach* us, too? Do they not, in the most intense moments *touch us*, instead of us touching them? *The beauty of (an) encounter.*

But the notion of prohibition of touch also exists: “Comparative research of the frequency and the contextual meaning of the verb *haptein* has shown a cultic meaning (Ex 29:37) or a taboo of touch (Leviticus and Numbers) between people, things and dead bodies. The word *haptein* is also used in the *Noli me tangere* phrase: *me mou haptou* (John 20:17).”<sup>168</sup>

Baert has put forward several explanations for the purpose of the prohibition of touch. In a first explanation, “*Noli me tangere* refers to the transformation of the belief in Christ as *a human being* into the belief of Christ as *God*.”<sup>169</sup> With this interpretation we see a clear correspondence between touching and non-touching, and the double nature of Christ concerning visibility. Because of the transformation of her belief, the Haemorrhissa can even be considered the starting point for the defense – *mediatrix* – of a Christian visual culture.<sup>170</sup> A second explanation relates to the gaining of knowledge via the senses. As for sight, also touch can lead to higher and forbidden knowledge: to the mystery of God himself.<sup>171</sup> There is something magical about touch, which manifests itself through the knowledge we derive from it. Many things we see, we perceive in a certain manner or recognize them through what we have learned from our tactile sense.<sup>172</sup> But also the traces – imprint – left by touch emit a particular power.<sup>173</sup>

Most importantly to me here though, is the possibility of healing through touch as we see in the case of the Haemorrhissa. In Matthew 14:36 we read: “And they besought him that they might touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched, were made whole.” As Baert stresses, the touching of the hem requires a humble, kneeling position; one must plead with the other.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps less literally, but I believe that in Vandebroek’s notion of humans and their (inherited) objects as discussed above, there is a hint towards this submissive approach. I quote Vandebroek: “... a deep receptivity can open the doors a few inches for which our Reason lacks the keys. (...) There is a transitivity between beings, and even between beings and things, that is beyond understanding. (...) Mutual openness is what is needed. Our eyes, or an approach involving other senses, and also our extra-sensory antennae, can reveal to us the deepest stirrings of the ‘other.’”<sup>175</sup> Maybe we need a dash more of patience, gratitude and respect for our objects and the influence they have on our lives. If we expect healing from our objects we will need to plead with them. (Toucher). A simple touch can prove a miracle, but only if the touch is truthful. (Touched). We will first have to gain insight in our ways and behavior towards what we have created before we can (expect) gain from our objects. (Reciprocal touching).<sup>176</sup>

38 The *momentum* of the Haemorrhoid's touch evades process, it is immediate: in the blink of an eye, the healing takes place, thus uniquely connecting the touch with the possibility of healing in a miraculous way. With the Haemorrhoid we see the transition between fluidity and petrification, between process and interruption.<sup>177</sup> This in-between-ness is particularly interesting for the maker working with matter. And for this reason, we will come back to the case of the Haemorrhoid in investigating making.<sup>178</sup> In the case of the Haemorrhoid, the hem symbolizes the interruption. Clothes contour the body and their borders "fragment and defragment the sensitive symbolic markers of the body, such as the feet, waist and neck."<sup>179</sup> Is it not precisely these places that are adorned by jewelry too? (And are these places, where the warm, damp skin and the soft, supple hem touch not sensual, erotic even?) In this rhythm of fragmentation and emphasis, the lower hem forms a border between the world and the individual, "between one's own body and the body of the other."<sup>180</sup> The hem can be symbolized as a liminal zone where the transfer of *dynamij* – transit power, 'potentiality' – takes place: it is the place where transfers and transpositions between 'I' and 'the other' take place.<sup>181</sup> Although we will look more closely at this further on, I believe it is important to already stress the importance of transition and potentiality in the process of making; be it on behalf of the maker, or still in the in-between-ness between his/her hands and the object or its matter. Moreover, this liminality can be related to the 'matrixial borderspace,' where limits become thresholds and which helps us make sense of certain aspects of our symbolic experiences.<sup>182</sup>

The notion that power is present in a holy person and can be tapped from him/her is very old.<sup>183</sup> The magic of touch, as we have learned from the case of the Haemorrhoid, lies in that brief moment of transition between the non-touch and touch and leads to healing, to making whole.<sup>184</sup> As an object maker, and more specifically jewelry maker, this notion is at the core of my artistic practice and desire: that through touch, healing is possible.

After this inquiry into the senses, let us look at what arouses a great deal of their activity: materials. Matter – material – existent in so many states, seems nearly as complex as a subject of study. The 'mind over matter' paradigm, which has heavily influenced the studying of images, objects and artworks, is well known and questioned in contemporary thought.<sup>185</sup> As a result of these trains of thought, there is a new and widened interest in materials and their distinctive role within communication and creation. I will here discuss those aspects that are the most relevant to my research, including the artistic body of work.

## ***Materials – Objects***

And behold, matter, the oldest thing [in creation], wishes to be born again and in this new beginning to be encompassed in forms.<sup>186</sup>



## Dematerialized, Swallowed = Some problems

In her article *Das Medium als Mediator – Eine Materialtheorie für (Öl-)Bilder*, Ann-Sophie Lehmann gives a clear account of how fields studying artworks, such as Art History, have held a rather dematerialized approach. She pleads, amongst other scholars, for a less dualistic stance between form and matter and between theory and practice.<sup>187</sup> Reflections that bring to the fore the importance of materials reject the approach of artworks as being primarily immaterial representations. How has this dematerialized approach caused harm to our view on materials? A dematerialized approach implies the assumption that ideas or designs are imposed onto materials and shape them into artworks. In other words, throughout history there has been the tendency to speak mostly of the intention, or the idea, (supposedly) preceding the work. Materials have been regarded as what enabled the embodiment – physicality – of the idea.<sup>188</sup> Stronger still, one could say that such a one-directional model considers materials as passive substance.<sup>189</sup> But materials are definitely not dead matter, they also have agency. “But matter is also energy...” argues Paul Vandebroek.<sup>190</sup>

In many disciplines that study the history and meaning of objects, objects are studied from the very moment of their existence.<sup>191</sup> In regarding objects this way “materials appear to vanish, swallowed up by the very objects to which they have given birth.”<sup>192</sup> Although I would not go so far as to say that the materials completely determine the form and character of the artwork through their material properties, let there be no doubt that their role is not a minor one. Materials as well as making itself have an impact on art, images and objects. Materials are to be considered amidst – in the middle of – the meaning of the artwork.<sup>193</sup>

But how must we then study materials? Or materiality? Because of this dematerialized approach, Lehmann argues, there is no coherent material theory at hand to help us study works of art.<sup>194</sup> The notion that the possibilities of a material will profoundly influence the forms of objects, foresees the theory of affordances developed by the psychologist James Gibson and contemporary theories about material agency.<sup>195</sup>

## Agency, Affordances, Intermediaries, Mediators = Some answers

Let us start with a useful comparison Lehmann develops throughout her article. In researching the influence of oil paint in oil paintings, she makes use of the terms ‘intermediaries’ and ‘mediators’ as defined in the Actor-Network Theory (ANT).<sup>196</sup> Particularly interesting about the ANT is that it insists on the existence of human *and* non-human agency, and in this manner, actively includes objects in social networks: “In addition to ‘determining’ and serving as a ‘backdrop for human action,’ things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on.”<sup>197</sup> An important concept embedded in this theory lies in the distinction made between ‘intermediaries’ and ‘mediators.’ Bruno Latour defines an intermediary as “what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs. For all practical purposes, an intermediary can be taken as a black box....” The input of mediators, however, does influence the context; they “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning

40 or the elements they are supposed to carry.”<sup>198</sup> In other words, an object can be an intermediary in one situation, but a mediator in the next, depending on the role it plays within the context.

The consideration of objects having agency, reminds of the theory of affordances developed by psychologist James Gibson. This theory speaks of the ‘action possibilities’ of objects: how objects – or materials, as Lehmann suggests – invite for certain actions; offer specific possibilities.<sup>199</sup> In thinking of our surroundings in terms of affordances, where possibilities approach us, anthropocentric thinking is challenged. Such a turn in thinking provides great new opportunities in studying objects, materials and artworks.<sup>200</sup> Lehmann believes that in order to do justice to the essential role of materials in images, the notion of materials as passive, and accordingly as ‘intermediaries’ will have to shift to materials as active and influential, as ‘full-blown mediators.’<sup>201</sup> In the example of oil paint then, we would consider the paint as a mediator rather than an intermediary; and as Lehmann demonstrates: in painting skin, does the paint, with its drying fluidity, itself not form a skin on the canvas? At times, in oil painting, the paint does not merely *represent* the characteristics of that which it embodies, but really *has* the qualities of the represented material. Because of this magical aspect of representation we tend to forget the medium, and look right through it, increasing the illusion of directness and the seeming immateriality of the image.<sup>202</sup> This directness reminds of the immediacy of touch and the immediacy of the becoming of the first image of Christ, but also of the immediacy every maker thrives on and strives for in his/her practice.

I would like to conclude with some thoughts on agency.<sup>203</sup> A first question would be: where is agency located exactly? Latour’s definition of agency in fact brings us back to our reflections concerning the concept of the Matrix with regard to objects: “agency ‘resides in the blind spot in which society and matter exchange their properties.’”<sup>204</sup> If images give the invisible visibility and if their agency lies in a ‘blind spot,’ it is no wonder one must make an effort to acknowledge and experience the power of objects. A second issue concerns where the line between human agency and non-human agency lies. “[W]hile agency and intentionality may not be properties of things,” writes archaeologist Lambros Malafouris, “they are not properties of humans either: they are the properties of *material engagement*, that is, of the *grey zone where brain, body and culture conflate*.”<sup>205</sup>

### **Metaphors, Materiality, Impenetrability = New problems**

I certainly defend a position in which the different actors of our social network are approached similarly. Humans, objects and materials are all inter-actors in one environment and therefore, in my opinion, must be regarded somewhat equally. This implies a less drastic split – or even the refusal thereof – between matter and idea, theory and practice. In her article *Showing Making: On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice*, Ann-Sophie Lehmann refers to phrases such as the book title *The social life of things* (Appadurai, 1986)<sup>206</sup> to demonstrate how “artifacts circulating within networks are often described using anthropomorphic metaphors.” Even though Lehmann states that such “metaphors

have been useful in overcoming subject-object dualisms by emphasizing the idea that things, too, possess agency,” she stresses that “things are not alive and it may seem naïve to take the metaphor so seriously.”<sup>207</sup> This somewhat reluctant stance towards material agency we also sense when Richard Sennett denotes anthropomorphism as a “kind of material consciousness [investing] inanimate things with human qualities.”<sup>208</sup> In his book *The Craftsman*, Sennett poses the following question: “Is our consciousness of things independent of the things themselves?”<sup>209</sup> Lehmann, in turn, reformulates the question: “where is the material consciousness located, in us or in the materials?” Sennett leaves the question unanswered and Lehmann states that “[t]o suppose a material consciousness is *in* materials, however, would imply something like a material spirit, some godly spark within matter that would return us to the alchemic science of the early modern period of a modern form of animism. That is clearly not a useful way of tackling the problem and probably the reason why Sennett does not pursue the topic.”<sup>210</sup> It is precisely this cold distance preserved between the object and its metaphorical equivalents that makes me shiver. Although I understand the difficulty a discussion pursuing a material spirit would imply, I find it a shame to simply push the idea aside and, in fact, sidestep the problem. Yes, it is clear that we can only speak of a ‘biological *analogy*’ since their lives are lived differently than those of living organisms. But have we not learned that life is more than the biological aspect to it? Do we not consider human agency to be more than our embodiment? I cannot help but to continue sensing an air of indifference towards objects as long as the detachment endures. Rather, I would argue that the very tendency – intuition – to liken things to bodies suggests only a microscopic split between our objects and our-selves. I am more in favor of a way of approaching material agency beyond agency as merely an idea or a metaphor, where a continuous awareness of the discrepancy between object and metaphor can still be felt between the lines.

### **Corporeal contact, Enclosures, Flux, Mater, Fetishist, Wind = New answers**

An insightful reflection upon this ‘enduring split’ can be found in Tim Ingold’s discussion article *Materials against Materiality*. Building upon Gibson’s theory of affordances, Ingold claims “objects and people, nature and culture are inseparable and shape each other in mutual processes of becoming.”<sup>211</sup> How could this not be the case, since we, just like objects, “swim in an ocean of materials”?<sup>212</sup> In fact, Ingold takes the studying of materials a step further. In his work he “seeks to overcome dichotomized thinking through aligning materials and makers, as well as nature and culture, thinking and doing within one domain.”<sup>213</sup> In doing so he sharply observes the many ways in which current studies of material culture seem to “get as far away from materials as possible” in order to understand materiality.<sup>214</sup> Thereby he not only criticizes “the excessive polarization of mind and matter” but also contemporary theories seeking to overcome this very polarization. According to Ingold contemporary theories too often result in a “slippage from materials to materiality.” One could wonder “[w]hat academic perversion leads us to speak not of *materials and their properties* but of *the materiality of objects*?”<sup>215</sup> What materiality actually means, remains vague and theories consist of too impenetrable language

and too incomprehensible concepts such as intentionality, sociality and the concept of (material) agency that we explored above. What about touch? What about getting our hands dirty? I follow Ingold's proposition that we can only "learn more about the material composition of the inhabited world by engaging quite directly with the stuff we want to understand."<sup>216</sup> Ironically, Ingold observes, in Colin Renfrew's 'material engagement theory'<sup>217</sup> the polarity between mind and matter lives on: "For the engagement of which he speaks does not bring the flesh and blood of human bodies into corporeal contact with materials of other kinds, whether organic or inorganic. Rather, it brings incorporeal minds into contact with a material world."<sup>218</sup> How can one speak of pottery, without ever having molded clay?

And as if the situation was not yet sufficiently complex, we can ask ourselves "What, then, is this material world?"<sup>219</sup> A strict division between natural objects and artifacts does not persist,<sup>220</sup> nor can it be said "all that is material resides in things."<sup>221</sup> Where lies the line between things touched and untouched by humans? Must things be transformed or merely removed in order to be considered as artifacts? Arendt observes that "[m]aterial is already a product of human hands which have removed it from its natural locations, either killing a life process, as in the case of the tree which must be destroyed in order to provide wood, or interrupting one of nature's slower processes, as in the case of iron, stone, or marble torn out of the womb of the earth."<sup>222</sup> And, Ingold asks "where (...) would we place all the diverse forms of animal, plant, fungal and bacterial life?" Not all that is designed, has been made, some things are grown... This then raises the disturbing question where we belong, if our bodies also belong to the material world. We are skin, bones and blood, as we also consist of a myriad of organisms. Consequently we can ask ourselves where the borders of our body are.<sup>223</sup>

Following these questions and concerns, Ingold gives an alternative view of our world. He invites the reader to imagine the world as the habitat of a burrowing animal like a mole. This would imply that our world would consist of "enclosures whose surfaces surround the medium instead of *detached objects* whose surfaces are surrounded by it."<sup>224</sup> Such a view binds all 'inhabitants' of the world in one surface or 'skin.' In looking at our world this way, objects ("the forms of things") arise from *within* rather than being impressed from without. With this image, Ingold in fact reverses our notions of 'construction' and 'detached objects.' 'Constructing' becomes 'hollowing out' and 'excavating,' while detached objects could be considered 'material absence.' This 'new world image' reminds very strongly of the image of the world that arises in Deleuze's book *Le Pli*, drawing on Leibniz's oeuvre. Here the world appears as "an infinite series of curvatures and inflections, and the entire world is enclosed in the soul from one point of view."<sup>225</sup> Deleuze clarifies the latter as Leibniz's denial of "a single and universal point of view." In such a view, individuals would be swallowed up, which does not do justice to the particularity of each soul.<sup>226</sup> Now, considering the thoughts concerning materials, objects and humans here, I greatly favor a 'pluralistic' worldview where *all* its inhabitants are treated as subjects – *with* souls.<sup>227</sup> This implies a great deal of actors all together moving towards the world, which, simultaneously is their very beginning.

In the light of our reflections, Deleuze's notion of a being-*for* the world rather than a being-*in* the world intrigues me. Deleuze explains that in order for the subject to be for the world, the world must be placed in the subject: "the soul is the expression of the world... but because the world is what the soul expresses." Being for expressing; being for expressing all that is enfolded along with them in this world. If the world is "an infinite series of curvatures and inflections" and if matter "offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness," then "each body contains a world pierced with irregular passages. (...) If the world is infinitely cavernous, if worlds exist in the tiniest bodies, it is because everywhere there can be found a 'spirit in matter.'"<sup>228</sup> In other words: the view of being-*for* the world rather than being-*in* the world implies the absolute intertwining of humans, their creations and the world. We are in the world, and the world can be found in each of us. There are two aspects of this view that I find greatly inspiring in relating to both 'formless' matter and matter that has taken on form (objects).

The first aspect is a continuation of the world image as described above. By seeing the endless movement of 'foldings' continue throughout the full network of actors, clear lines can no longer be drawn: "we go from fold to fold and not from point to point."<sup>229</sup> Is it not refreshing to see the lines melt, to feel the vapor of the fading hard edges and to sense contours becoming blurry? "With Leibniz," Deleuze explains, "the curvature of the universe is prolonged according to [...] the fluidity of matter, the elasticity of bodies and motivating spirit as a mechanism."<sup>230</sup> This leads us to the following aspect.

The second aspect concerns 'spirit matter': "Life is not only everywhere, but souls are everywhere in matter."<sup>231</sup> Matter triggers movement and action; it "inspires force in all things" and therefore Deleuze speaks of "the affinity of matter for life."<sup>232</sup> So perhaps, here, in this view, souls are not at all lost, "since sensitive or animal souls are already there, inseparable from organic bodies." Souls are 'at home' in their bodies and are dispersed throughout the whole body, in every single part of it.<sup>233</sup> There is thus no need for souls to wander about naked and lonely, as there is also no need for bodies (matter) to roam over this world without a soul, without a life force. "In relation to the many folds that it is capable of becoming, matter becomes a matter of expression."<sup>234</sup> Moreover, objects here take place in a continuum, which in turn affects the very 'character' of the object. Considering objects amongst the infinite folds of the world and the endless openings of matter, objects – or *objectiles*, in referring to Deleuze – themselves become somewhat like open volumes, rather than fixed, formed substances. In their unfolding, objects become events.<sup>235</sup>

Via Deleuze, I have made quite a detour, in order to continue with the state of fluctuation that slowly came drifting to the surface in the thoughts above.<sup>236</sup> This notion of movement, of becoming liquid and active, of sweating and absorbing, taking and giving, challenges the common notion of 'material things' as being solid, homogenous, passive and everlasting. The material world is in fact "a flux in which materials of the most diverse kinds – through processes of admixture and distillation, of coagulation and dispersal, and of evaporation and precipitation – undergo continual generation and transformation." This implies that the forms of things are not projected from without upon inert matter,

but are borne within this flow of materials, just as we humans are too.<sup>237</sup> At times materials may seem to be sleeping ‘the sleep of death,’ but they are merely hibernating, dormant, and can be awakened at any time – at the cost of their own life or those of the forms they express; no object lasts forever.<sup>238</sup> A sudden drop of temperature and baked clay will crack. A slightly increased level of humidity and dry organic matter will mold and swell. Materials decompose and ideas last. It is precisely for this reason, Sennett argues, that Western civilization has supposedly privileged mind over matter, head over hand.<sup>239</sup> I am tempted to say that the human desire for survival is reflected in this very longing for a graspable form of endurance. In our material preferences, I believe we are saying something about ourselves. We identify ourselves with matter.<sup>240</sup> We have great difficulties being at peace with vulnerable and perishable objects; we encounter a myriad of struggles in coming to terms with our own bodies.<sup>241</sup>

Let us elaborate on this notion of flux ‘enveloping’ the material world. With the flux of materials, we find ourselves between the very beginning of our quest for the graspable – form, matter, image – and that which will ‘wrap it up’: making, motion. *Mater – Matter – Making. Mother – substance, essence, being, cause to grow, inner room – fitting, matching.* Ingold reminds us of the core of materials, through the very root of the becoming of the word ‘material,’ which comes from the Latin *mater* – mother. “For beneath the skin of the form the substance remains alive, reconfiguring the surface as it matures,” writes Ingold.<sup>242</sup> The necessity of interchange between substances for humans (our bodies, our souls) is also part of the lives of materials, and therefore by extension, also part of the lives of objects. Objects, materials, humans are always ‘on the move.’<sup>243</sup> It is this flux of materials that has been hushed and ‘suffocated’ by ‘materiality.’ In an attempt to bring back life to the material world, so argues Ingold, the theory of agency has been developed. Although the expectations projected upon material agency have been high, the approach it entails remains distant. This distance becomes clear in Peter Pels’s distinction between *animist* and *fetishist*. Peter Pels calls the logic of material agency *animist*: “a way of saying that things are alive because they are animated by something foreign to them, a ‘soul’ or ... spirit made to reside *in* matter.”<sup>244</sup> In other words, in this perspective objects’ souls are additional; life has been bestowed upon the object. *The silence must be broken, the cold distance must be dissolved, and the open wound must be narrowed.* Luckily, refreshing and relieving, Pels offers another way of understanding the life of things. He proposes that the spirit enlivening objects is not *in* them, but *of* them. In this alternative logic, which Pels calls *fetishist*, we do not have to look beyond the objects’ substance, matter, in order to discover their heart, their soul. Material presence implies life.<sup>245</sup> I defend the view that objects need not be brought to life, since they are part of “the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist.”<sup>246</sup> Objects have been made by human hands, by a ‘charged’ body, and this bodily energy slips into every bodily working process.<sup>247</sup> There is no need to attribute life – a soul – to objects; they are not inert. Ingold explains that such a view where “things are in life rather than that life is in things” corresponds to “the actual ontological commitments of peoples often credited in the literature with an animistic cosmology.” And here, in speaking of objects as opposed to humans, I have fallen into my

own ‘trap’; “in their world there are no objects as such.” Since objects are made of matter, they are alive and active. This matter, these substances are part of infinite inflections and enclosures, surrounded by media that decompose and therefore make possible new life. Indeed, “when an organism dies, it does not really vanish, but folds in upon itself, abruptly involuting into the again newly dormant seed.”<sup>248</sup> Spirit – the soul – then, is not an additional element, but the regenerative power of these infinite flows and folds. These flows pulsate throughout our objects and our-selves; stronger still, they keep us alive. We are all part of the same transforming current.<sup>249</sup> We are no more or no less than our objects. And so, it can be said that materials do not *exist*, but *occur*. And how we feel about materials depends on our experience with them; these feelings are not fixed or essential, but processual and relational. This flow of transformations is the input for the infinite story of each material.<sup>250</sup> The qualities of materials “are part of that private view of the world which artists each have within them.”<sup>251</sup> Indeed as Sennett puts forward, while referring to Claude Lévi-Strauss, “symbolic value is inseparable from awareness of the material condition of an object; its creators thought the two together.”<sup>252</sup> (However, I would rather see *thought* replaced by *created*, *experienced*, *felt*.)

There is not one correct view on the material world: “... there is not, and can never be, one ‘correct’ or ‘right’ theoretical position which we may choose to study material forms...”<sup>253</sup> We might even wonder whether “thing theory” is even necessary at all; “Why not let things alone?”<sup>254</sup>

Perhaps we can compare spirit, soul, and the regenerative power of these infinite flows and folds to the workings of wind. Invisible as it is, but visible through its encounters with matter, wind can both cherish and destroy its ‘partner in dialogue.’<sup>255</sup> Surrounding all that is enfolded in the infinite inflections of our world, wind blows and creates an ongoing current. In its ‘tour de force,’ wind impregnates those things – *bodies* – it brushes against with its power. “Wind brings to life that which is ‘still,’”<sup>256</sup> thus bringing forth ensouled bodies or, in Aby Warburg’s words, ‘*Seelentierchen*,’ soul creatures.<sup>257</sup> By breathing, this vital energy is continuously refreshed. Wind flows through us, in and out,<sup>258</sup> emphasizing the flux which our bodies – we – are part of. The workings of wind bring to the fore the parallels between the world and its inhabitants, bodies. Enfolded by our skin, our bodies experience the wind entering and leaving us through the *infoldings* – invaginations – of our skin. The inconceivability of the skin lies precisely within these infoldings, through which boundaries disappear. Our skin, the enveloping condition of life, knows no end and no beginning; its infoldings can be seen as extensions of the world,<sup>259</sup> where the wind passes through as long as we live... Once it no longer passes through, the ‘folding in upon itself,’ the deflation of being takes place.<sup>260</sup> We must allow the wind to pass through in order to let live; we need to let the flux flow throughout our bodies and the bodies we create in order to live. The moment we no longer let the wind breathe, life ends.

As a maker, I do not believe materials are neutral intermediates. Materials play an active role in creation; when they are chosen for use, when they are

dealt with during creation and, once they have been given form, when they are ‘taken in.’ But perhaps I should reformulate this as follows: materials play an active role in creation; when they seduce us to choose them, when they invite us to touch them (and consume so much of our time and thoughts!) and, once they have taken form, when they beg us to be used and cared for.

As a maker, I would dare say that my respect for materials ascends to a level I cannot clearly comprehend myself. I do not ascribe the will of a material to its chemical and physical aspects only. (Is it an exercise in oneself? Is it silent listening? Is it a fearful awe for or perhaps a ‘deterministic trust’ in materials?)

No, material is not neutral matter; they lead a life on their own. Materials meant something long before they were captured for use and altered in form. Materials have meaning before we give it to them, before we put words to it. Their input is not neutral and brings about change and meaning, thus modifying, enhancing our thoughts. Through their specific qualities, we enjoy some *materials* but abhor others, or: through their specific *material* qualities, we enjoy some *objects* but abhor others.

To a maker, objects are not soulless. They are ensouled and I will do everything to underline their ensoulment. It is a give and take, a mutual process. The exchange of thoughts, feelings, happiness and disappointment. Dealing with objects can cause as much anger and disappointment as human nature does... Sometimes I find myself begging the material to cooperate and hoping its form, the object, will trust me and answer my prayers. By creating objects, a mirror appears. At times it is a joyful one; possibilities are plentiful and hope is abundant. At times – more often than not? – the mirror is a confronting one; with overwhelming doubts and more than enough sorrows. *More than enough is never too much*. As time passes, the joy of bringing to life seems to become more difficult to encounter. The downfalls are deeper, the passages rougher, the thresholds fiercer. Suffering side by side. Squeezing through the eye of the needle together. The object has become a necessity. A cherished, faithful, devoted intimate.

For a maker, the employing of the senses, or shall I even say, being directed by the senses, happens naturally throughout the process of making. In order to *sense* the possibilities ahead one has to get a *feel* for the material, and this requires involvement of the human body and its senses.<sup>261</sup> Touch, smell, sight and even hearing and taste, and the ‘extra’ senses of heat, gravity and proprioception put forward by Elkins are all indispensable throughout the – or at least my – working process. If human interaction is crucial for the quality of human life<sup>262</sup> and for gaining a better understanding of one another, then such is also the case for materials: “Interacting with [the material], thus, is a way to experience the material life of [the material].”<sup>263</sup> In his book *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett demonstrates how knowledge can be gained through touch and movement; “...motions, plus the hand’s varied ways of gripping and the sense of touch, affect how we think.”<sup>264</sup>

Therefore, after first exploring object as bodies, we will continue by investigating the role of making.



## *Object-as-Body* *Object-as-Counterpart*

They have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair (...) they will even take away our name (...) Consider what value, what meaning is enclosed even in the smallest of our daily habits, in the hundred possessions which even the poorest beggar owns: a handkerchief, an old letter, the photo of a cherished person. These things are part of us, almost like limbs of our body (...) Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes (...) he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself.

– Primo Levi<sup>265</sup>

If material presence implies life and if images/objects play an active role in our social networks and rituals, then it is quite natural to regard objects as *Seelentierchen*, as ensouled bodies, creatures in their own right. Needless to say, these (little) bodies influence our lives. I would here like to focus on the bodily aspect of three-dimensional objects, and more precisely of those objects fit to human scale, human handling.

Let us elaborate – *flesh out* – further James Elkins’s ‘analogic seeing.’ Above, I already mentioned that Elkins has suggested “the creation of a form is to some degree also the creation of a body.”<sup>266</sup> We continued our investigation by learning that the body plays a key role in understanding images: “... the impulse to see objects in and as bodies, and the complementary desire to see bodies in and as objects (...) ‘analogic’ seeing is one of our deepest ways of comprehending bodies.”<sup>267</sup> Although we often are not aware of how thinking analogically helps us make sense of visual forms, it is even a necessity “in order to come to terms with unusual objects.”<sup>268</sup> For example, it is because of analogic reasoning that we perceive Hieronymus Bosch’s little creatures *as* creatures; to see that each one “is one creature, that it has a mode of life, and that it is, in the most fundamental sense, a body.” Moreover, in perceiving other bodies, we can contrast them to our own. The image I have of myself is interwoven with my ways of responding to body representations. Therefore, Elkins suggests, the pictured body can be considered as a counterpart for the observer.<sup>269</sup> This notion of the represented body as a counterpart for humans has also come to me intuitively through making jewelry on the one hand, and by working with organic materials (parchment, potatoes) on the other hand. In other words, ‘the pictured body as our counterpart’ could be extended to ‘(body) images and (body related) objects as our counterparts.’ ‘Us and things,’ then becomes ‘things and us,’ or ‘us and us’... I would then be inclined to say that we should also *treat* our objects as our counterparts. Needless to say, this offers a

48 dynamic approach to jewelry – objects ‘whose’ homecoming is the placing on the human body.

If we consider objects as *Seelentierchen* and ensouled counterparts, it becomes clear that objects influence our lives. We can then speak of a mutual process of becoming, where the energy between things and humans is acknowledged as arising from both entities. Humans then no longer outbalance their objects; objects have become subjects too. This brings us back to our former discussion on the life residing in matter. I would here argue that the very tendency – intuition – to liken things to bodies suggests but a microscopic split between our objects and our-selves. In directly relating to objects as subjects we naturally overcome the duality between (humans as) ‘alive subjects’ and (objects and materials as) ‘dead matter.’

Our objects, our ensouled counterparts, are complementary companions in life. In a literal sense, we can then think of prostheses – objects that are truly extensions completing the body. Such objects put into question the boundaries of the body and prove that we tend to naturally incorporate objects into our bodies, extending and constructing the self.<sup>270</sup>

Here, however, I wish to speak of a notion of complementarity and completion as in companionship, as we experience between humans.<sup>271</sup> By seeing the object this way we naturally engage in a very different relationship. We are then involved in a relationship of mutual respect, trust, understanding, care and empathy, but also of worry. For, as in human relationships, the counterpart of attachment is loss and the counterpart of understanding is misunderstanding... But in the best of relationships, in the best of moments, in the best of human encounters, there are moments of becoming one. It is this merging into one that I understand as the power of the engagement between humans and the object-as-body, the object-as-counterpart.

In fact, the very roots of the object lie in this function of being a counterpart for humans. Images (objects) were born to make present a lost life; they make a physical absence present in a new embodiment. Therefore Hans Belting speaks of the image as rooted in a body analogy. In their primal function, images embody a real presence – they are *represence* rather than *representation*.<sup>272</sup> I quote Belting: “As the re-embodiment of the dead amidst the living, they presented a kind of reassuring symbolic certainty in that most uncertain of realms. (...) images needed to do more than merely represent an absent body; they had to possess a body of their own. (...) their primal function [is] a *real presence*, one that should be thought of as in symbiosis with the soul.”

With their presence, objects approach us, as we approach them too.<sup>273</sup> And we must approach them; images are only complete *when* the exterior manifestation is combined with mental representations as well.<sup>274</sup> In order to touch and to be touched, we must approach our objects and embrace an open attitude towards them. As in human relationships, the relationship between human and object-as-counterpart depends on this ‘cooperative receptivity.’<sup>275</sup> But how could we be cold towards the fellow beings that are our objects?

We are able to identify with objects, as we are also able to sympathize

with humans, through the combination of proprioception with empathy. We attribute human characteristics to objects and materials, meaning that we recognize ourselves *in* objects.<sup>276</sup> We live and understand the world through our objects.<sup>277</sup> Objects can arouse within us feelings of empathy and make us experience the whole, even if only for a moment.<sup>278</sup> In these moments we become each other's caretaker.<sup>279</sup> Regarding the object as such, one could say the relationship between the object-as-body and humans, is about dealing with life – the lives they are both fully engaged in.

But this notion can also be 'simplified,' in the sense that, everything we make is directly or indirectly related to our body. Objects bear the traces of our bodies and of the individual who created it – traces of his/her body, traces of his/her life. Objects can be images of our bodies, carrying the desires our bodies repress and the hopes they bear.<sup>280</sup> The way we construct the world then parallels the workings of the body.<sup>281</sup>

Perhaps seeing the object and the materials it consists of as body-related, is necessary for the maker in order to be able to express and create over and over again...

## Making / Maker

Waste. Waste. The watcher's eye put out, hand  
of the builder severed, brain of the maker  
starved  
those who could bind, join, reweave, cohere,  
replenish  
now at risk in this segregate republic  
locked away out of sight and hearing, out of mind,  
shunted aside  
those needed to teach, advise, persuade, weigh  
arguments  
those urgently needed for the work of perception  
work of the poet, the astronomer, the historian, the  
architect of new streets  
work of the speaker who also listens  
meticulous delicate work of reaching the heart of  
the desperate woman, the desperate man  
– never-to-be-finished, still unbegun work of repair-  
it cannot be done without them  
and where are they now?  
– Adrienne Rich<sup>282</sup>

From the preceding texts, we have learned that language is where the body ends. But the body is where language begins. Language developed from the activities of the hands. Bodily movement is the foundation of language; moreover, motion is the essence of making, of creation.<sup>283</sup>

Throughout our thoughts, reflections and doubts, along the paths we have followed above, the notion of flux – movement, creation, action, continuity – has been present. At times it was but a detail, or a possibility. But in the preceding text, while focusing on matter, the notion of motion became more prominent. Here, 'motion' is the heart of our subject of study 'making.'

What does it mean to make? What does one learn from making? What are the implications of creating? What does making involve? How does maker relate to object? Object to maker?

In the line of our thoughts on matter, this part on making intends to put into balance the study of objects by looking at their becoming. 'The making of' an object must be taken into account alongside its life after birth. Both production and consumption of the object define its character, its being. However, speaking of the role and implications of making implies far more, to me, than merely studying how an object has been made. Making – creating – transcends the purely technical. The making of objects also has an influence on the maker's becoming and being. The relationship between subject and object, which is, in fact the relationship between two subjects,<sup>284</sup> will intertwine our investigation here. This means that making is a dense net of both visible and graspable, invisible and ungraspable lines and threads. Seen this dense network and the many individual, personal nuances blowing throughout its

web, I have dedicated a separate essay to ‘the person as a maker,’ ‘the person/ maker towards the object’ and ‘the object as result of the maker’s character and life.’ For a more profound and personal account of these topics, I refer to the part *Sadness. Destruction and (the absence of) Empathy: The suffering of the condemned object.*

## ***Being Shown vs. Being Touched***

Besides the investigation of the use of objects, also the making of objects enhances our understanding of objects.<sup>285</sup> However, I am not convinced of the necessity of detailed analyses of the making process.<sup>286</sup>

There are two points I would like to make clear here. The first aspect being that in my understanding, making implies more than ‘getting one’s hands dirty’ or constructive material engagement. In my opinion, making is a dialogue engaging the whole of being human (of the human being, the maker):<sup>287</sup> the body is physically entangled with making, in action, and a full circle comes into being between these actions, the body, thoughts, materials, techniques, feelings, experiences, circumstantial and environmental influences.<sup>288</sup> This notion of making was already introduced by John Dewey at the beginning of the 20th century in *Art as Experience* (1934). In his view, ‘inner material’ and ‘outer material’ interact during making; thoughts, memories and emotions mingle with the physical matter the maker is engaged with.<sup>289</sup> Making is a “back and forth movement.”<sup>290</sup> “the physical process develops imagination, while imagination is conceived in terms of concrete material.”<sup>291</sup>

Even though scholars such as Ann-Sophie Lehmann and Richard Sennett roughly share this view, I have difficulties recognizing it within the propositions they put forward for studying and communicating making. Seen the complexity of the back and forth action in making, I doubt it can be captured. This brings us to the second point. I am not only concerned about the ways in which making is or can be studied and communicated, but I wonder for what reason and in how far making should even be made explicit at all.<sup>292</sup> Let us ponder more upon this second point.

The multi-layered process of which artistic making consists, includes a myriad of jumps; forwards, backwards, inwards and outwards, some are highlighted and exaggerated, others forgotten and erased. These jumps are ephemeral and escape the documentary or demonstrative. Indeed, as Lehmann voices: “the complexity of making challenges our most important analytical tool: written language and its essentially linear structure.”<sup>293</sup> Wondering whether making perhaps establishes knowledge that is beyond the human verbal capacity to explain, Sennett states that language is possibly *the* fundamental human limit and does not possess the adequate tools to communicate the movements of the human body. In this context, Sennett speaks of ‘dead denotation’,<sup>294</sup> verbs, for example, *name* rather than *explain*, *tell* rather than *show*. If “making is motion,”<sup>295</sup> but language strongly evicts

52 bodily meaning,<sup>296</sup> then communicating about making seems to be doomed to become a strenuous endeavor.

In order to surpass the limits of language, Sennett proposes the substitution of the word by the image.<sup>297</sup> (There is, however, not a single image in his book *The Craftsman*!) Also Lehmann sees visual representations of creative practice – be it still or moving images – as source material to study the complexity of making.<sup>298</sup> I agree with both Lehmann and Sennett that language is too limited to communicate fully about making – its implications, meanings, roles, its significance and its ‘matter.’ Being convinced of the importance of feeling and intuition in making, the visual communication of making might enrich our understanding of making to a certain extent, but perhaps does not make a sufficiently meaningful difference. If we wish to grow beyond “static and distanced aesthetic contemplation,”<sup>299</sup> mere instruction and documentation of making will not suffice. At least with regard to gaining access to a better understanding of ungraspable layers of objects, I believe the observing of the making process is in fact but a shift of focus in the countering of problems. Images, just like words, can be static and distant. As with language, the danger of employing images can be the *naming* rather than *explaining*, *telling* and *showing* rather than *touching*. Sennett, I believe, hints at the key aspect of getting across the core of making when saying that “the challenge is to make written instructions communicate – to create *expressive* instructions.”<sup>300</sup> My conviction is that in speaking of making the emphasis should lie on expression *rather than* instruction. Many objects are the result of more than skilled techniques. Therefore any communication about making must transcend the archival, instructional, participatory and display functions.<sup>301</sup> Communicating about making, if we really want to gain a deep understanding of our objects, is not about being able to reproduce the object or its detailed process of making. It is more about comprehending a dialogue, sympathizing with the complex range of elements of which making consists, such as maker, matter, techniques, objects, imagination, thoughts, associations, feelings, experiences, human impulses, etc. Is it possible to cherish and even enrich the very soul of making by exploring it? How can we embrace the complexity of making without strangling it?<sup>302</sup>

Here, I would like to put forward several vital aspects of studying making of which some were introduced by Sennett in *The Craftsman* and others by Lehmann. Afterwards, we will look into the act of making itself.

A first aspect concerns some thoughts on the communication of making via images instead of language. Rather than simply regarding the image as a means of showing making, another layer can be reached when looking into *how* the making is being shown in the image. Is the image blurry? Has it been altered? Perhaps the relation between the materiality of the image itself relates to the material process depicted.<sup>303</sup> What I find refreshing in this view is that it leaves the viewer a gap to fill in personally, leaving room for associations, and imagination. When making use of images for understanding making, we must accept their double nature; the image reveals, but also hides... Aspects of making can be left out, compressed or fragmented; what is shown

can be “employed to mystify rather than to clarify creation.”<sup>304</sup>

The second aspect builds upon this notion of identification between image/language and viewer/reader. An important part of understanding images and making lies in the identification with (the matter and maker engaged in) the process, actions, gestures and decisions taking place during making. I would here like to put forward the power of sympathy in identification. Sympathy enables us to identify with other people and thus helps us to understand them better. Sympathy binds people. But in order to sympathize with the other – their differences – and to enter in their life one must be able to *imagine* oneself as another.<sup>305</sup> Imagination, in turn, permits us to get outside of ourselves and “to gain entry to a foreign place;”<sup>306</sup> be it another person, object or the complex act of making. I am inclined to suggest that this imaginative work is more the result of feeling than of reasoning. It can come to us naturally, but only with the necessary patience and will of course. However, as we learnt earlier, proprioception, which can be regarded as a basis for sympathy, is naturally ‘embedded’ in humans.<sup>307</sup> Because of the sense of proprioception, metaphors can make apparent the symbolic value of certain actions. If, as in a rather humorous example given by Sennett, the right amount of stuffing in a turkey is described as “[the turkey] should not over-eat,” then our own physical revulsion immediately makes us grasp the idea – the *feeling* – conveyed.<sup>308</sup>

In summary, I am convinced that it is impossible to give a complete insight into making. Stronger still, I believe such an understanding of making is neither desirable nor necessary. By analyzing making, we run the risk to paralyze its soul. In studying making, we must accept the temporary and ungraspable, and find ways to keep the process alive, or to awaken it even.<sup>309</sup> Just like we must be at peace with the fact that objects are transitory, and that some are more ephemeral than others, so must we understand that also in making there are aspects we can impossibly conserve, let alone restore. Making largely consists of fleeting fragments, which are being held together by essential intervals, meaningful gaps... These openings and fragments simultaneously reveal and hide, and it is this ambivalence we mustn’t forget to acknowledge. Yes, making challenges language, and perhaps it is so for a particular reason: to ‘preserve’ its non-transparency and seek personal modes of identification, understanding and translation. I am not in favor of looking into making from a documentary, observational or instructional perspective. Such an approach only permits us to ‘go’ skin-deep into making. To get to the heart (of the matter) of making, literally looking at making has to be surpassed. *Nudging*, or *gradually touching* seems a more precise way to describe the attempt to get a better understanding of making. Patiently reading between the lines – pulling out and pushing in intuitions, associations and emotions – might insinuate more layers of the making process than ‘grabbing’ facts and words. In fact, making reminds of the hem: that borderspace where action takes place, where inner and outer materials flow into one another. Making also implies a liminal unit where the transfer of *dynamij* – transit power, ‘potentiality’ – takes place; during making transfers and transpositions between ‘I’ and ‘the other’ come about.<sup>310</sup>

**Nativity**

Rather than speaking of making as a logically describable and observable process, I would here like to create a place for viewing making as a process of growth, coming to life.

Describing artifacts with anthropomorphic metaphors has been helpful in overcoming subject-object dualisms. But according to Lehmann this biological analogy is also misleading, since “it suggests that things only really exist from the moment that they are ‘born.’” This is precisely the problem in many studies of objects; things are considered primarily as finished objects. Whereas organisms are the result of growing, Lehmann writes, artifacts come to being through making.<sup>311</sup> For makers, however, I am not sure whether the distinction between making and growing is so pronounced. Moreover, organisms’ lives start long before birth too. Does the mother not converse with the still to be born child? And is this dialogue not life-long; lasting in thoughts, objects, memories, smells, emotions, images, experiences, hopes, desires and other wanderings of the mind, heart and senses?

Making is indeed a “back and forth movement,”<sup>312</sup> a dialogue between the maker and its creations. Moments of immediacy and interruption succeed one another. This growth slowly comes into being in the action and energy that takes place – ‘immediately – between inner material and outer material, between that which at first can be localized with ‘maker’ and ‘matter at hand.’ Throughout the process of growth, inner and outer material start to mingle increasingly, and distinctions between maker and ‘made’ become both smaller and greater. On the one hand the maker identifies more and more with his/her creation; they merge with one another. On the other hand, the object becomes more subject over time, thus distinguishing itself from its maker in becoming an entity of its own. But, usually at least, maker and creation physically remain separate entities and most often there is a rupture, a moment of parting, of letting go of one another.

Following these thoughts, the maker could be considered a mother, patiently bringing into being his/her child. But this giving rise to life also implies the pains and virtues of giving birth and letting go. The process of making runs parallel to the course of life, in that sense that it is a journey of giving birth and then letting go of what we created and brought up. Hannah Arendt argues that action is intimately connected with birth and death, natality and mortality. The capacity of beginning something anew is a feeling – both feared and yearned for – familiar to the maker. And “in this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities.”<sup>313</sup> Moreover, all things we create, condition the human existence. In other words, the back and forth movement, the dialogue continues: while we make them and after their birth, images and objects condition us – their makers. Both the process of making and the results of this process – our creations – confront us with ourselves.<sup>314</sup>

In her article *The Gaping Wound or The impossible Image of the Foundling*,



Barbara Baert suggests a link between the creative process and procreation; “the birth of something out of nothing.” Throughout the text, the account of the relationship mother-child lets us feel a tinge of melancholy as appears from the iconographic type of the *Glykophilousa*. Here we see the infant Christ gently touching his mother.



Mosaic icon of the Virgin Glykophilousa, late 13th century, Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens. Mosaic: 107 x 73,5 cm

This comforting touch anticipates the painful split that lies ahead for both mother and child.<sup>315</sup> Considering the object as a child of the maker, this means that the object – and more specifically the jewel – actually has the potential to be a double counterpart; through touch, it cannot only comfort the *viewer/wearer*, but it has the capacity to console its *maker* also. Stronger still, maker and creation could then fuse in suffering, as the mother and child do.<sup>316</sup> Are maker and the created object then perhaps a particular kind of mother and child, as the foundling and the birth mother?

Because of their distorted separation, the birth mother feels a swirling black hole, while the foundling child senses “a dramatic dimension of loss and emptiness.” Does this “churning black hole”<sup>317</sup> not relate to the confused feeling of emptiness the maker experiences when letting go of his/her (handmade) object – releasing it into the world? And what is the object without a caretaker? What can the jewel possibly become without a wearing, bearing mother?

*But the foundling is not only left behind, it is also found.*<sup>318</sup>

*And the growing of the object in making also implies a process of growth for the maker: his/her knowledge, feelings and sensitivity evolve throughout making.*

*But malignant growth, threatening overgrowth also exists...*

*Then again, “it is only within the human world that nature’s cyclical movement manifests itself as growth and decay.”*<sup>319</sup>

## Acceptance, Pangs of Pleasure and Pain

Immediacy and interruption are firmly, but irregularly woven into the net of making. The pains of uncertain interruptions and the need of letting go, counter the pleasures of immediate communication and interaction, and vice versa. Playing its game of frustration and relief, making seems to be able to keep the maker believing and hoping.

We will here briefly look into these *pangs of pleasure and pain*, which the maker actually accepts (as a whole?).<sup>320</sup> In the next part we will then take a closer look at the coming into being of this acceptance – the nonetheless productive dialogue between pleasure and pain.

Making – and also that which it results in – lies within the realm of action.<sup>321</sup> In hands, heart and head we *experience* making. On the one hand, through the immediacy of the exchange between matter and body, we experience the intense pleasure of gaining knowledge through the senses.<sup>322</sup> We stumble upon difficulties but at times cross the threshold: suddenly *understanding* and/or unexpectedly seeing new perspectives lying in our hands.<sup>323</sup> In the motion of making, movement gives rise to rhythm, which, as Sennett proposes, can grow to achieve the character of a ritual.<sup>324</sup> In the rhythmic journey of working, making even has a lesson to teach us on the healing of inequalities.<sup>325</sup> We learn about ourselves.

On the other hand, matter and maker encounter an endless amount of interruptions; there are difficulties, too, arising from the intimate connection between matter and maker. There are times, we find ourselves incapable of trespassing boundaries we encounter in making. The maker finds himself/herself to be banging his/her head against a brick wall, going around in circles. Rather than discovering a pleasant surprise in one's hands, a horror is uncovered – *unveiled*, or the understanding one was hoping to bring to light appears to be but a weak mutation.<sup>326</sup> The maker can dwell upon the failures – *his/her* shortcomings – and experience suffocation in the 'web of making.'<sup>327</sup> The material exhilaration that arouses the mind might, then, just as well bring about *destructive* wonder and fear.<sup>328</sup> And what if the outcome serves nobody?<sup>329</sup> The responsibility of making might be overwhelming...

The maker's experience of making oscillates between pleasure and pain. This 'in limbo' of making reminds of the loss and uncertainty of which our being consists<sup>330</sup> and of the inherent ambiguity of images.<sup>331</sup> But how does the maker deal with this split? What benefits can this confusing experience bring about? Why trouble oneself with an endless journey 'along' pleasure and pain?

### Being One – Making Oneself – Becoming One

Through making, the maker experiences a process of personal growth him/herself.

We will here look into those notions of making that I – as a maker – experience as strengths – powers if you like – of making.

During our encounter with the mediatrix of the Haemorrhoida we investigated the immediacy of touch and the in-between-ness it encapsulates; the instant transition between fluidity and petrification, between process and

interruption.<sup>332</sup> This in-between-ness is particularly interesting for the maker working with matter. Petrification is coagulation and it is this solidification that turns living matter into relict, image and artifact.<sup>333</sup> Material transformations from malleable or oozy to solid, from soft or liquid to hard, from fresh to worn or decayed, from natural to processed or vice versa are all intrinsically linked to intuitive choices made throughout the creation of an image, and even more so for the creation of an object. Thus, this in-between-ness is an apt analogy for the making process, which is at times very fluid and immediate, but simultaneously filled with interruptions. “Comment *garder le contact*,” how must we maintain the contact?<sup>334</sup>

We are forever part of the material world and we cannot fully surpass that. However, for the maker it is a quest to *feel* matter and actions adequately. As the beholder seeks ways to identify with the image/artwork/object, so does the maker experience a journey of identification with matter:<sup>335</sup> with the material, the actions of which ‘the making of’ consists and finally with the image/object. How can a maker engage with matter? Where does this identification and directness/immediacy derive from? What do we gain from this engagement?



Old Time Letter Rack, 1894, John Frederick Peto, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
Oil on canvas, 76,52 x 63,5 cm

I will here build upon several views investigating the influence of matter/images on us – via our bodies and on our bodies – in order to gain a better understanding of the tensions taking place and the powers arising between matter and maker – *mater* – in the process of making. During making, in working with *stuff*, we go through certain actions with matter, taking along all experiences, hopes and fears in life. The whole of fragments comprising the maker – everything we are – influences the interactions between maker and matter beyond conscious decisions; the shape that the matter becomes is a result of these interactions.<sup>336</sup> It could be said then, that in making we are animating matter, “waking up its particles.”<sup>337</sup> Our actions – not neutral – change the meaning of the matter at hand – not neutral either. On the one hand (inter-)actions can make us forget the matter at hand, but on the other hand, in

(inter-) acting with matter our sensitivity to matter can be heightened. *I believe it is the amalgamation of these two states of (inter-) acting, or perhaps their discrepancy, which brings about a powerful tension in the act of making.*<sup>338</sup>

One way of considering action within making relates to Alfred Gell's view on the role of technology with regard to objects. He states that "the power of art objects stems from the technical processes they objectively embody."<sup>339</sup> I believe objects' powers stem from many other aspects involved in making as well, but technical aspects are definitely amongst them; or are at least those leaving the greatest visual marks distinguishable.<sup>340</sup> As Gell formulates when discussing John Frederik Peto's painting *Old Time Letter Rack*: "The magic exerted over the beholder by this picture is a reflection of the magic which is exerted inside the picture, the technical miracle which achieves the transubstantiation of oily pigments into cloth, metal, paper and feather."<sup>341</sup>

Not only in observing images or objects can we forget the medium and get touched by its directness.<sup>342</sup> Also when making images or objects, this immediacy, this evaporation into the other, being fully absorbed *into* 'an other,' spells a particular energy on the maker and therefore is 'complicit' in casting a pact – union – between the two. This loss of self-awareness can be described as the experience of "being as a thing;" or as Sennett so aptly formulates it, "[w]e have become the thing on which we are working."<sup>343</sup> It is this "engagement with 'stuff,'"<sup>344</sup> where we literally embrace our position amongst objects, which allows us an entrance to the in-between-ness we spoke of before. Being one with the material world in a constructive way enables us to exchange experiences with matter. In the intense dialogue between external and internal images, a new image arises.<sup>345</sup>

Another way of thinking of action within making leads us back to Elkins's notion of pain, where he speaks of the combination of proprioception and empathy. He suggests that the 'fusion' of these two abilities can help us understand how the matter we are interacting with affects our bodies.<sup>346</sup> Therefore I believe it can also help us comprehend why matter arouses certain reactions within us. Relating to the first, the second view concerns the embodied identification of which Lehmann speaks when investigating the role of showing making.<sup>347</sup> The mirror neurons of which she speaks, permit us "to extend our sense of touch beyond our physical being"<sup>348</sup> and therefore help us understand actions performed by others, also enabling us to sympathize with the matter/form/object at hand and with the actions that have been 'inflicted' upon it – by us, but afforded through its own properties. So, rather than '*forgetting*' the medium, we strongly *identify with it once the actions have been performed and once we imagine the roles being switched*. Perhaps here, also, we have become the thing on which we are working, but on the grounds of a reversal of roles – of two different entities – rather than the merging of two roles/entities into one. This identification – *empathizing* – with matter is necessary to experience the immediacy so vital and fruitful for making. We could here also speak of anthropomorphosis, a form of material arousal in which humans attribute human qualities to matter. According to Sennett, this way of identifying with matter has the purpose to "heighten our consciousness of the materials themselves and in this way to think about their value." As Sennett suggests, I also

believe that our material preferences have a social reflection: “The nature and virtue we are thinking of concerns ourselves.”<sup>349</sup> During material engagement, we question our values through our senses. In making, thinking and feeling are one.<sup>350</sup> In making, we are confronted with the state of the matter at hand; we can identify with its condition and influence it accordingly.

And by interacting with matter, we also literally experience the material life of the matter at hand.<sup>351</sup> In the immediacy of touch, we feel the materials and can react both directly and indirectly. We – object/matter and maker – *reflect* one another, and reflect *upon* one another.

Formulated differently, in the immediacy of making, one leaves traces of oneself, both literally and metaphorically. Images/objects can mirror the body<sup>352</sup> and the soul of the maker, who has left his/her ‘live imprints’ and ‘life impressions’ on the counterparts made. As the archaeologist Christopher Tilley has observed: “through making things people make themselves in the process.”<sup>353</sup> Taken literally, we could then speak of the *live* imprints the maker leaves on the object – the imprints of the maker become a *pars pro toto*.<sup>354</sup> Richard Sennett speaks of the intentional traces placed by makers on their creations as “a personal stamp of his or her presence.” But of course there are also less clear, unintentional personal marks that can be left behind on an object/image, such as fingerprints or footsteps, which then literally become counterparts of the maker’s body. Each material affords specific actions to which the maker reacts, resulting in particular traces and forms. And also these traces, making visible human presence and (inter-) action, express the maker’s silent voice: “I made this,’ ‘I am here, in this work,’ which is to say ‘I exist.’”<sup>355</sup> Metaphorically then, we can speak of *life* impressions; all the traces the maker carries, can find their way into the substance at hand, the matter of mind. These *life impressions* play a crucial role in the identification with materials. For, as we have seen above, in making, we are *making choices* and *selecting options* – *actions and substances*. In doing so, we are reflecting upon our own values. In making, we judge. Not only the result of making, but also the action itself is experienced.<sup>356</sup> Through interaction, empathy and identification we ‘put ourselves’ in matter and become part of it. It is in this sense, that we make ourselves when making objects/images and that the object/artwork can be seen as a mark, delineating the journey of the maker. And it is also in this way that the object becomes part of us.

Thus, the in-between *momentums* can serve as liminal zones, where not only potentiality *takes place*,<sup>357</sup> but also where new potentialities *can be found*. The immediate ‘back-and-forths’ between ‘I’ and the ‘other,’ or between two ever-evolving subjects, experiencing material life together and giving rise to transfers and transitions, indeed function as a ‘matrixial borderspace.’ One could say makers largely thrive on these moments, where limits become thresholds and provide a sudden insight into the purpose of our symbolic experiences and actions, which become apparent in the matter we shape with our hands.<sup>358</sup>

In this sense making to makers, means a kind of *inventio*. I here refer to not necessarily the discovery of something new, but more the finding of

60 something itself: “Something found by chance takes on the aura of a miracle – whether it’s a coin, the relic of a martyr or a baby is immaterial.”<sup>359</sup> The “magical impact of touch” thus ‘joins forces’ with “the magical charge” of finding.<sup>360</sup> It is this that I would like to understand as the ‘material exhilaration’ and ‘arousal by magic,’ which Sennett speaks of.<sup>361</sup> In other words, the thrill experienced is twofold: the discovery of potentialities within the material perceptibility (visibility, tactility) on the one hand, and on the other hand the bringing about of meaning and feeling through these wondrous, perceptible material findings. Therefore, besides empathy/identification, the crucial role of making in my opinion concerns reflection/insight; making is a process of thinking.<sup>362</sup> I would like to underline that with ‘thinking’ I do not only refer to thinking about the making itself – the material’s characteristics, the actions involved in making – but thinking as a movement of ideas and concerns, feelings and expressions which slowly comes about and gradually grows and matures throughout the very act of making.

### ***In search of Counterparts, In search of Mater***

The foundling, too, is without lineage. He is attached to nothing and can only survive in the capacity of a new beginning: a founding nodal point from which – hopefully – new branches emerge. Therefore the foundling exerts a strange and magical power of attraction on the finder.

– Barbara Baert<sup>363</sup>

#### **Prélude**

I speak of *making*, but what do we still make ourselves? Of what do we still experience ‘the making of’?

I speak of the *maker as mater*, but who can relate to her if we are surrounded by *stuff* we have had little or no contribution to and of which we don’t understand its coming into being? What still has the power, the permanence and the weight to be called our foundling?

I say the *foundling* – the maker’s child, the object – is found, but who *truly* finds it – embraces it?

I speak of *becoming one*, but also of the unavoidable disunity accompanying it...

We here seem to have come full circle. My worries concerning the relationship between humans and their creations opened up towards Bracha Lichtenberg Etinger’s concept of the *Matrix*. This theory enabled us to approach the issue *via the body* – our common denominator, thus allowing *every human* to interact with ‘things.’ We then continued building upon her matrixial theory; constructing and destructing the relationship between humans and their creations, without forgetting our origins, *mater*:

*Matrix – Mater*

*Matter – Mater*

*Maker – Mater*

But there is still a pair missing in our list.

*Finder – Mater*

*Finder*: beholder, caretaker, viewer, owner, wearer or consumer? A lucky finder?

### **Interlude**

*I have spoken of objects as lost souls.* Not receiving a soul goes from A to Z: from how we consider materials, to how we create (objects); from the reason for which we give (objects), to the reason why we acquire (objects); from the way that we inherit (objects), to the way that we conserve (objects) and, finally, to our ways of and reasons for parting with an object.<sup>364</sup>

*“Nous n’avons pas encore bien réalisé que c’est nous désormais qui sommes un problème pour nos choses.”*<sup>365</sup>

### **Act I**

Nowadays we are not the (active) maker of many things ourselves anymore. Needless to say, this creates a distance between humans and objects that disrupts our understanding of them, leading to a disconnection.<sup>366</sup> Directness, which is essential in action and dialogue, leads to direct action and direct dialogue, which is crucial for healthy human relationships.<sup>367</sup>

### **Act II**

The moment we no longer engage with other subjects, our lives are no longer human. The moment the intimate connection between hand and head is separated, both understanding and expression suffer.<sup>368</sup> The moment we would find ourselves “without things, we would stop talking. We would become as mute as things are alleged to be.”<sup>369</sup> To live, to be alive in this life, one must take initiative – we have to engage in speech and action.<sup>370</sup>

I write ‘*in search of*’ and not ‘*awaiting*.’ Being healed through objects requires establishing a relationship with them, which in turn depends on action. The less we engage with objects, the less healing we will encounter. The more energy we put *into them*, the more we seek proximity *to them* and the more patient we are *with them*, the more we will be able to gain *from our creations*.<sup>371</sup>

### **Act III**

Has mere functionality disturbed the relationship between humans and their creations? Is it the contemporary imbalance between time, place and communication that increases the deterioration of our intimate relationship with objects, and with each other?<sup>372</sup> If our contemporary images promise to liberate us from the real world via the virtual world they introduce us to, do they still play a role in our relation with the real?

I would like to address two issues here.

The first concerns “the mad beast of use.”<sup>373</sup> We live in a society oppressed by the measurable, the quantifiable.<sup>374</sup> We have to be careful, for “when utility

62 rules, adults lose something essential in the capacity to think; they lose the free curiosity that occurs in the open, felt-fingering space of play.”<sup>375</sup> And as if ‘measuring ourselves’ does not already create sufficient pressure in our lives, it seems we decide to evaluate our objects by the same measures. Our creations have to be functional, and if they aren’t functional, they at least have to make our lives seem more beautiful. *Is function the only truth we believe in? Are function and beauty the only gain we expect from objects? Are we only attracted to an object when it fulfills the purpose of being ‘functional’ or ‘embellishing’?* By regarding all our creations – all our making – as consumption goods, we neither give them nor ourselves the chance to enrich our lives.<sup>376</sup> We devour them before they get the chance to heal us; we do not let them speak. What is worse, and repulses me somehow, is that our consumer society has the tendency to address the object as a subject only when it needs something from people. When it turns out to be *useful – comes in handy* – to address the object accordingly. *Buy me! Use me! Try me!* Then, all of a sudden, we let the object speak with a human voice of its own. *But many of our creations strike back with the durability through which they outlive us.*<sup>377</sup>

(...) qui continueraient d’être. C’est la revanche des objets, pas de vie propre mais la vie dure. (...) Je tournais en rond dans l’appartement, encerclée par les objets, irritée par l’émoi dont ils étaient la cause dérisoire.

– Anne Philipe<sup>378</sup>

The second issue is not about the way we treat or create our creations, but about the link of images to the real; the kind of images we create. According to Belting many images today (TV, video, images of the virtual world) claim to “no longer refer to the real world; they promise instead to liberate us from it.” I quote Belting: “[t]he problem here is that pictures lose their authority the more they operate on a level of unreality that ignores our basic need for the real. We want to do more with images than merely to play with them, for (in secret, perhaps) we do still believe in the image. But the more the image serves a fiction, the more it loses its authority as symbol.”<sup>379</sup>

What has then become of the primal function of the image; its role to give us a new presence for an absence – a presence we had lost?<sup>380</sup>

If our creations should have any purpose, should it not be healing? Is it not healing – whether measurable or not?

## Postlude

*Objects and subjects, being lost souls, who needs who?*

*If the object is regarded as a foundling, then we are the ones who can find it; then it is the foundling who needs us.*

*But we are also torn. As humans we are searching for ways to patch up the ruptures that scarred us – at birth, through loss, and uncertainty.*

Creating can be a way to deal with loss:<sup>381</sup> “All sorrows can be borne if you put



*them into a story or tell a story about them.*<sup>382</sup> The creation has the power to become a *cura posterior*.<sup>383</sup> But in order to find, one must search. Searching, and therefore also finding, presupposes curiosity and awards it: for finding leads to the thrill of discovery, a feeling of luck, as the requital to an ambiguously desperate, but hopeful search.<sup>384</sup>

*A lucky finder?*

*The finder:* he/she who remains unsettled when not finding himself/herself in anything. For he/she finds himself/herself to be the maker of nothing that surrounds him/her, and looks for change... in search of counterparts.

*The finder:* he/she who finds in images/objects a fellow being, whom he/she wouldn't treat like an object either. He/She who finds out that images/objects are not simply *at our service*; they *can be of service*, if we engage with them fairly. If we do not, if we simply need them and use them, they remain *out of service*.

*The finder:* he/she who finds energy to act, interact and react directly *via the body* – which is to search hopefully and curiously, and to find tenderly and gratefully.

*Finders keepers, losers weepers...*<sup>385</sup>



*Photos taken for the exhibition 'The Wilde Things,'  
curated by Evelien Bracke, Z33, Hasselt, 2013-2014*

*Study of an organlimprint (Counterpart III)*

Hannah Joris

2013

Chamois leather, iron, steel, soapstone

14 x 8 x 5 cm

Photo credits: Kristof Vrancken/Z33 (The Wilde Things)

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Photos taken for the exhibition 'The Wilde Things,'  
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*Study of an organlimprint (Counterpart III and V)*

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2013

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- 1 The second part of the title has been inspired by the book *The object as mediator*. Holsbeke, Mireille. ed. (1996). *The object as mediator. (Het object als bemiddelaar)*. Antwerpen: Etnografisch Museum Antwerpen.
- 2 Hannah Arendt used the expression *cura posterior* – belated cure – in a letter to Herr Meier-Cronemeyer, in 1963, after she had followed the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and had written about it: “The writing was somehow a *cura posterior* for me” (“Das Schreiben war mir damals eine *cura posterior*,” italics added). See Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. (1982). *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p374 (and p526n142); Arendt, Hannah. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin. For the translation of *cura posterior* as ‘belated cure,’ see Yakira, Elhanan. (2010). *Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust: Three Essays on Denial, Forgetting, and the Delegitimation of Israel*. Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, p244.
- 3 I would like to thank Damian Skinner for having edited this summary of our conversation.
- 4 These two approaches define our human ‘being-in-the-world’-ness. Rüdiger Safranski states: “Man is a being who can relate to himself. ... He is torn between being a god who sees the whole and an animal that belongs to the whole.” On the one hand, because of ‘reason,’ we are ‘transcending animals’ since we are able to take distance and overlook the whole. But on the other hand, we are part of the animal world and are bound to remain part of it. Safranski, Rüdiger. (2005). *How much globalization can we bear?* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp1-2.
- 5 Ingold, Tim. (2007b). *Lines: A Brief History*. London: Routledge, pp24, 96, 120, 129, 162.
- 6 Olivier, Laurent. (2011a). *Les choses aussi sont des êtres*. *Libération*, 11th of January, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/01012312836-les-choses-aussi-sont-des-etres>. Cf. Arendt on the difference between use (reification) and consumption (destruction), Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp126-138, (167-174).  
An increasing interest in artifacts is reflected by a wide scope of literature on material culture. See, for example, Boivin, Nicole. (2008). *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The impact of Things on human Thought, Society and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp18-20;
- 7 Boradkar, Prasad. (2010). *Designing Things: a critical introduction to the culture of objects*. Oxford: Berg, pp1-7 (Boradkar, however, simultaneously mentions that “[t]he surge in scholarship in material culture also raises the questions of whether things can and should be theorized.”); Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2012a). *Showing Making: On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice*. In *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 5(1), p9-10; Knappett, Carl. (2005). *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp1-10; Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken. (2012). *A Sign of Health. New Perspectives in Iconology*. In Baert, Barbara, Ann-Sophie Lehmann & Jenke Van Den Akkerveken, eds., *New Perspectives in Iconology. Visual Studies and Anthropology*. Brussels: ASP, pp8-9. See below, *Matter*, specifically *Material/Objects*.
- 8 Olivier, 2011a; Boradkar, 2010: pp1-5, 228. Boradkar refers to, amongst others, Clarke, Adele. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, p63; Daston, Lorraine. (2004). *Speechless*. In Lorraine Daston, ed., *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*. New York: Zone Books, p9: “Without things, we would stop talking. We would become as mute as things are alleged to be. If things are ‘speechless,’ perhaps it is because they are drowned out by all the talk about them.” Also noteworthy in this context is that “[w]e live with images, we comprehend the world in images” and “images pervade our daily life to such an extent that they have become central to human experience.” See Belting, Hans. (2011). *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp9, 125. For an inquiry into this issue see below, *Matter*, specifically *Material/Objects*.
- 9 Cf. Arendt on abundance, see note 6 and also pp108-109. See also Olivier 2011a and Olivier, Laurent. (2011b). *Quelle chose s’est ouvert... Libération*, 25th of April, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/monde/01012333586-quelque-chose-s-est-ouvert>.
- 10 Sennett, Richard. (2008). *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, p7.
- 11 “The founding, too, is without lineage. He is attached to nothing and can only survive in the capacity of a new beginning (...),”

- Baert, Barbara. (2009b). *De Gapende Wonde of Het Onmogelijke Beeld van de Vondeling. (The Gaping Wound or the Impossible Image of the Foundling)*. In Lieve Van Stappen, Barbara Baert & Marc Ruyters, *Moving Archives: vondelingen*. Brugge: Musea Brugge, pXI (English: pVI). Cf. Belting, 2011: pp45-46: Belting here speaks of the loss of our living connection to the past, because of the disappearance of "retrospective continuity" that kept the past alive in the present. Moreover, we must be aware that the "technological stockpiles" we possess, such as databases, remain dead as long as there is not collective imagination to awaken them. See also Olivier, Laurent. (2011c). *Nos choses nous survivront longtemps après la fin. Libération*, 5th of August, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/terre/01012352728-nos-choses-nous-survivront-longtemps-apres-la-fin>.
- 11 Olivier, 2011a. See also Arendt, 1998: pp9, 94: "The objectivity of the world – its object- or thing-character – and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence. (...) They give rise to the familiarity of the world, its customs and habits of intercourse between men and things as well as between men and men."
  - 12 Butler, Judith. (2006). *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, p22.
  - 13 Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009b). *De energetica van een onkenlijk lichaam (The Energetics of an Unknowable Body)*. Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: Power and Devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p201.
  - 14 Since Plato, a mind-body dualism has dominated Western thought. In his *Phaedo*, Plato tears mind/soul and body apart by identifying true substances with immaterial 'eternal Forms' rather than with physical bodies, which are ephemeral. These Forms are what the intellect must grasp in the process of understanding. In his view, the soul is thus imprisoned in the body. In *De Anima* Aristotle argues that forms "are the natures and properties of things and exist embodied in those things." Although we here encounter a union of body and soul because the soul is the form of the body, Aristotle nevertheless argues that the soul is immaterial and differs from the bodily senses. Soul and body are thus not the same, and this dualism persisted, finding its modern version with, for example, Descartes. Moreover, this dualism has greatly affected the approaches of fields studying material culture, such as Art History, Anthropology and Archaeology. See note 185. See Robinson, Howard. (2012). *Dualism*, in Edward N. Zalta, (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), viewed 4th of April, 2013: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/dualism/>.
  - In this regard, Hannah Arendt speaks of a reversal that took place with Plato's thinking: "Not life after death, as in the Homeric Hades, but ordinary life on earth, is located in a 'cave,' in an underworld; the soul is not the shadow of the body, but the body the shadow of the soul; and the senseless, ghostlike motion ascribed by Homer to the lifeless existence of the soul after death in Hades is now ascribed to the senseless doings of men who do not leave the cave of human existence to behold the eternal ideas visible in the sky." See Arendt, 1998: pp291-292.
  - 15 Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009a). *Zien we wel iets in een hemel in tegenlicht? (Can we see anything in a backlit heaven?)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: Power and Devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p50. See also: Bynum, Caroline W. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone Books, p247. And: MacKendrick, Karmen. (2010). *The multipliable body*. In *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 1(1-2): pp109-110, "We tend to turn off rapidly in the presence of such words (...) that irksome 'spirit.'"
  - 16 Bynum, 1992: pp247, 296-297.
  - 17 We are, more often than not, survived by our creations. This implies both a strength and weakness. In reading Laurent Olivier I have encountered both aspects. On the one hand, creations we have inherited construct our memory. They do not only enrich our lives, they give meaning to it. On the other hand, of many things we produce nowadays, we have no clue how they will affect (us in) the future. And this brings about uncertainty and responsibility. With the traces we are now leaving, we are perhaps not making the earth more inhabitable than how we have received it. See Olivier, 2011c. Cf. Sennett, 2008: p15, "Objects do not inevitably decay from within like a human body." And also, on a more personal level, the particular meaning, value and power of objects belonging to those absent or deceased, is known to all of us.

- See Boivin, 2008: pp118-120 – Boivin here cites to Hallam, Elizabeth & Jenny Hockney. (2001). *Death, Memory and Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg. In literature: in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* a young man compulsively collects objects recording his troubled love story: Pamuk, Orhan. (2009). *The Museum of Innocence*. London: Faber and Faber.
- 18 Bynum, 1992: pp247, 297.
- 19 Olivier, 2011b and 2011c.
- 20 Mondzain, Marie-José. (1995). *L'image naturelle*. Paris: Nouveau commerce. Excerpts available online: Mondzain, Marie-José. (2007). *L'image naturelle, Philopsis* 10th of September, viewed 5th of June 2013: [http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf\\_image\\_naturelle\\_mondzain.pdf](http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf_image_naturelle_mondzain.pdf).
- 21 First quote: excerpts of the lyrics of the song *My name*, from the 2003 album *The Living Road* by Lhasa (de Sela). Second quote: De Crescenzo, Luciano. (1989). *The History of Greek Philosophy. Volume 1 – The Pre-Socratics*. London: Picador, pp30-33.
- 22 From 2006–2009, I studied at Ädellab, the department for Jewelry & Corpus at Konstfack University College for Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 23 Respectively *Medelhavsmuseet*, *Nationalmuseum* and *Moderna Museet*.
- 24 On the relationship between maker and creation, see part *Sadness. Destruction and (the absence of) empathy: The suffering of the condemned object*. On the meaning of certain actions and the use of particular materials in making, see part *Between Ouverture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure. Dissections: Six sections in action*. On the reasons to create, see part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 25 Jewell, Elizabeth J. & Frank Abate. (2005). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 26 The Who, 1969, excerpt of the lyrics of the song *See me, feel me* from the rock opera *Tommy*.
- 27 Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, Piet Coesens, Rosi Huhn, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Brian Massumi & Griselda Pollock. (2000). *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. Artworking 1985–1999*. Brussels/Gent-Amsterdam: Ludion/PSK, p36. Text originally published in Ettinger, Bracha L. (1993). *Matrix Halal(a)-Lapsus. Notes on Painting*. Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.
- 28 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p43. Cf. also Bynum, 1992, pp304-305 (note 24): "It is therefore not so much a plea for treating history with a sense of humor (...) as a suggestion that the human condition requires us, *both as historians and as human beings, to accept limitation, artifice, compromise and paradox in telling the story of the past,*" italics added. Cf. Arendt, 1998: p183: "an altogether different in-between [than the 'objective,' physical in-between] which consists of deeds and words and owes its origin exclusively to men's acting and speaking directly to one another. This second, subjective in-between is not tangible (...). But for all its intangibility it is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common. We call this reality the 'web' of human relationships, indicating by the metaphor its somewhat intangible quality."
- 29 Arendt, 1998: p176 ("all our definitions are distinctions"). Cf. Ann-Sophie Lehmann on Bruno Latour's concept of 'nature-culture,' in which the "dichotomy always remains visible ... and serves to remind us that we constantly make distinctions and constructions in order to understand the world. Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2009a). *Kneading, Wedging, Dabbing and Dragging. How Motions, Tools and Materials Make Art*. In Barbara Baert & Tree De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p46.
- 30 Vandenbroeck, 2009b: pp199-201.
- 31 Ibid., and Vandenbroeck, 2009a (pp46ff). See also note 14.
- 32 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: pp49-50; 2009b: pp178, 199-201. Moreover, this phallogocentric paradigm has affected Art History and our way of relating to other cultures. On this see: Belting, 2011: pp32-35 and Van den Berg, Dirk J. (2004). *What is an image and what is image power?* In *Image & Narrative -Mélanges/Miscellaneous*, IV(2:8), May, pp2-3, viewed the 28th of November, 2012: <http://www.imageandnarrative>. See also note 28.
- 33 Ettinger, Bracha L. (1995). *The Matrixial Gaze*. Leeds: Feminist Arts and Histories Network, and Ettinger, Bracha L. (2006). *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. Concerning Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's matrixial theory, I have mainly approached her theories through the articles (cited above) by Paul Vandenbroeck and Idalie Vandamme (which, in turn, is largely inspired by Vandenbroeck's writings); Vandamme, Idalie. (2006). *Helend vanuit de buik. Een matrixiaal alternatief voor de menselijke gebrokenheid. (Healing from the belly. A matrixial alternative to human brokenness)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, p21. Vandenbroeck also refers to a bibliographical list of Lichtenberg Ettinger's writings, available on: [www.metramorphosis.org.uk](http://www.metramorphosis.org.uk) and [www.egs](http://www.egs).

- edu. See also: Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2000). *Azetta. Berber vrouwen en hun kunst*. Brussels/Gent: Ludion/PSK, pp237-274. Further inspiring reading: Buci-Glucksman et al., 2000.
- 34 Vandamme, 2006: p131.
- 35 Vandenbroeck, 2009b: pp186, 188, 201; Vandamme, 2006: pp17, 131.
- 36 Vandenbroeck, 2009b: pp188, 192, 199; Vandamme, 2006: p16.
- 37 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: pp43-45.
- 38 Ibid., p50. See also Jan De Maeyer on "the condition of cooperative receptivity;" the necessity of the spectator showing openness or readiness towards the image and contemplation, in order to experience the potentials of images (objects, artworks), see: De Maeyer, Jan. (2009). *The Space, the Wound, the Body, and the (Im)possibility of Religious Art*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp28-30. De Maeyer refers to: Moyaert, Paul. (2006). *De aanbidding van de gekruisigde. (The Adoration of the Crucified)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, pp78-85. Cf. Ingold on the importance of astonishment for openness: Ingold, Timothy. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge, pp74-75.
- 39 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: pp49-50 and 2009b: p201; Vandamme, 2006: p18. For an inquiry into the problematic of magical things as a typically modern issue, see: Pels, Peter. (2010). *Magical Things: On Fetishes, Commodities, and Computers*. In Dan Hicks & Mary C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp613-633: "a modernist way of thinking argues that [magical] things ought not to move people, since authentic and rational human beings, instead of being controlled by things, are supposed to be in control of themselves."
- 40 Vandenbroeck, 2000: p246 and 2009b: p181: "The 'spiritual senses' had gone numb."
- 41 Arendt, 1998: p250, italics added.
- 42 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p50; Vandamme, 2006: p18.
- 43 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: pp43, 50.
- 44 Belting, 2011: pp130-131.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Vandamme, 2006: pp16, 23, 131.
- 47 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p50.
- 48 Ibid.; Vandamme, 2006: p18.
- 49 Vandamme, 2006: pp18, 131. Cf. Georges Didi-Huberman regards such ambiguity as inherent to the visual world in general and to images in particular. According to Didi-Huberman, images are meant to show us the *double fond* ('false bottom') of everything surrounding us. Images confront us with the (formless) disquieting and worrisome that resides just beneath the familiar. The workings of the image therefore oscillate between the consoling and the non-consoling. Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, pp54, 58. I would here also like to mention Richard Shusterman's observations concerning the meaning of pleasure and the aesthetic experience. Shusterman insists upon the "deeply transformative power of aesthetic experience" and emphasizes the importance to recognize the complexity of pleasure. "While ancient and medieval thinkers explored its rich variety and see its role in the most sublime, transformative religious experience," he writes, "today we simply assume that pleasure must be something banally light, easy, and self-indulgent – just pleasantness or fun." See Shusterman, Richard. (1998). *Interpretation, Pleasure, and Value in Aesthetic Experience*. In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56(1), Winter, p52.
- 50 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p46.
- 51 Vandamme, 2006: p18. Cf. Didi-Huberman on the workings of the image versus desire, death, the real and our own becoming; 2007a: pp36-37, 62.
- 52 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: pp43, 46.
- 53 Vandamme, 2006: p20. Cf. Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp54, 58: "...le monde visible en général; c'est un monde divisé, un monde fendu et sans cesse refendu. Monde ouvert au sens où il se soutient d'inapaisables conflits."
- 54 From *I. A dark woman, head bent, listening for something* in Rich, Adrienne. (1991). *An Atlas of the difficult world. Poems 1988-1991*. New York: Norton, p4.
- 55 Vandamme, 2006: p131.
- 56 Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp112-141.
- 57 Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp237-274; Vandamme, 2006: pp19, 131.
- 58 Vandamme, 2006: p131.
- 59 Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p48.
- 60 Verhaeghe, Paul & Julie De Ganck. (2012). *Beyond the Return of the Repressed: Louise Bourgeois's Chthonic Art*. In Philip Larratt-Smith, *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed. Psychoanalytic Writings*. London: Violette Editions, pp117, 122.

- 61 "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak," in: Berger, John. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin, p7.
- 62 Vandamme, 2006: p22.
- 63 Ibid., p19, 22, 131.
- 64 Vandebroek, 2009a: p50.
- 65 From XII. *What homage will be paid to a beauty built to last*, in Rich, 1991: p24.
- 66 Bynum, 1992: p19.
- 67 "[T]he things are the prolongation of my body and my body is the prolongation of the world, through it the world surrounds me," in Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1968). *The Visible and the Invisible*. Claude Lefort, ed. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p255. See also Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge, pp82, 95, 205; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1964). *The Primacy of Perception: And other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, The Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p5; Vandebroek, 2009a (pp46ff) and 2009b (e.g. pp176, 188). Stronger still, the world extends into the body and vice versa, see note 223.
- 68 Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the Body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp205-243 (*Analogic Seeing*); Sennett, 2008: 1137ff, 189-193 (*Instruction through Metaphors*).
- 69 On the role of the body versus the ungraspable, see, amongst others: Koenot, Jan. (2009). *When the Body speaks louder than Words: The Image of the Body as a Figure of the Unknown*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp3-24 (esp. pp14ff *The body in its relation to the unknown*); Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. (2009). *Icon of God: is Christian art possible without the figure?* In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp39-40ff, and Vandebroek, 2009a and 2009b. On the abilities of the body to identify with other bodies, directly via the senses or more indirectly, see: Elkins, 1999: ppvii-viii, 22-27 (pain, proprioception and empathy); Sennett, 2008: pp92ff, 185-186, 189-193 (sympathy, metaphors and anthropomorphism); Lehmann, 2012a: p14 (mirror-neurons). See below *Making/Maker*, specifically notes 308, 346-348.
- 70 Vandebroek, 2009b: p174.
- 71 Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum, p97.
- 72 Vandebroek, 2009a: p46.
- 73 From XI. *One night on Monterey bay the death-freeze of the century*: in Rich, 1991, p23.
- 74 Vandebroek, 2009a: p46.
- 75 Bynum, 1992: pp116, 194, 236, 258.
- 76 Ammicht-Quinn, Regina. (2009). *Cult, culture and ambivalence: images and imaginations of the body in Christian traditions and contemporary lifestyles*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, p79.
- 77 Bynum, 1992: pp177, 202.
- 78 Ammicht-Quinn, 2009: p79.
- 79 Bynum, 1992: p90.
- 80 Ibid., pp50, 92.
- 81 Ibid., pp98, 179.
- 82 Ibid., pp98, 172, 175, 178-179, 206-210.
- 83 Ibid., pp100-101, 172, 210-215.
- 84 Ibid., p100. Georges Didi-Huberman humorously speaks of the passive 'Madame Matter' that is subjected to the shapes 'Monsieur Form' eternally imposes upon her. Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2008). *Viscosities and Survivals Art History put to the test by the Material*. In Roberta Panzanelli, ed., *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*. Los Angeles, pp155. For Aristotelian embryology, Didi-Huberman refers to: Aristotle's *De generatione animalium* 2.1 and *Physica* 1.9: Aristotle. (1930). *The Works of Aristotle, Volume II*. William D. Ross, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp1.9.22-24. .
- 85 Ibid., pp87, 100-101, 114, 214-215. Bynum here refers to, amongst others: McLaughlin, Mary M. (2006). *Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries*. In Lloyd deMause, ed., *The History of Childhood*. Oxford- Lanham: Jason Aronson/Rowman & Littlefield, p115, and Pouchelle, Marie-Christine. (1983). *Corps et chirurgie à l'apogée du moyen âge: Savoir et imaginaire du corps chez Henri de Mondeville, chirurgien de Philippe le Bel*. Paris: Flammarion, pp263-266. For blood as regenerative, see note 129.
- 86 Bynum, 1992: pp100-101, 215.
- 87 Ibid., p158.
- 88 Ibid., p172.
- 89 Ibid., pp93, 96 – referring to Bernard of Clairvaux, sermon 9, pars. 5-6, and sermon 10, par. 3, on the Song of Songs, in de Clairvaux, Bernard. (1957). *Sancti Bernardi opera, Volume 1*. Jean Leclercq & Henri Rochais, eds. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, pp45-46, 49-50.
- 90 Bynum, 1992: p172.
- 91 Ibid., p92.

- 92 *Ibid.*, p116.
- 93 *Ibid.*, pp194, 237.
- 94 *Ibid.*, p117.
- 95 Arendt, 1998: pp126-127, 254, 312. I have found the following source very useful in reading Arendt (in Dutch only): Venmans, Peter. (2005). *De ontdekking van de wereld. Over Hannah Arendt*. Amsterdam/Antwerp: Atlas. For this part specifically: pp100-110.
- 96 Arendt, 1998: pp313-318.
- 97 Vandenbroeck, 2009: p47. Cf. Arendt on the consequences of hierarchically placing the mind above all else, through which we become imprisoned in our own minds: "With the disappearance of the sensually given world, the transcendent world disappears as well, and with it the possibility of transcending the material world in concept and thought." See Arendt, 1998: p288.
- 98 Baert, Barbara. (2006a). *Woord, huid, sluier. Omtrent beeld en monotheïsme. (Word, skin, veil. About image and monotheism)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, pp101, 134.
- 99 Baert, Barbara. (2000). *The Gendered Visage: Facets of the Vera Icon*. In Paul Vandenbroeck, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual)*, p29.
- 100 Baert, Barbara. (2009a). *Kleine iconologie van de navel. (Navel. On the origin of things)*. Gent: Sint Joris, p27 (English: p61).
- 101 Baert, 2000: p12. The legend of King Abgar of Edessa originated in the 6th century. It tells the story of a Syrian king who was a contemporary of Christ and had heard of the Messiah. One day, however, he becomes ill. Believing that a portrait of Christ could heal him, the king sends an artist named Ananias to Jerusalem, ordering him to make a portrait. But during the encounter the artist finds himself "blinded by the countenance, the aura, of Christ. Out of compassion, Christ pressed his own face on a cloth, the *mandylion*. The artist gave the cloth to Abgar, who by seeing the holy visage was cured." Baert here refers to: Desreumaux, Alain. (1993). *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus. Présentation et traduction du texte syriaque intégral de la doctrine d'Addaï (Apocryphes, I)*. Turnhout: Brepols, pp138-145.
- 102 Baert, 2000: p12.
- 103 *Ibid.*, p13.
- 104 *Ibid.*, p14 – Baert here refers to: Grabar, André. (1984). *L'icônoclasmé Byzantin. Le dossier archéologique*. Paris: Flammarion.
- 105 Baert, 2000: p38.
- 106 *Ibid.*, p29.
- 107 Baert, 2000: p14; 2006a: pp101-102; Belting, 2011: pp19, 88-89, 93ff, 130ff. See also Didi-Huberman on relics and transubstantiation, 2007a: p184; "Sa 'représence' ... et non sa représentation."
- 108 Baert as cited in note 106, and Baert, Barbara. (2005). *Omtrent erbarmen en verlangen. Beeld en genese in het werk van Berlinde De Bruyckere. (On compassion and longing. Image and genesis in Berlinde De Bruyckere's work)*. In Inge Braeckman, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere – Één (Berlinde De Bruyckere – One)*, Prato: Gli Ori, pp7, 9; See also Belting, 2011: pp111-114: "To accuse images of emptiness made sense only if they had previously been thought capable of life..." Cf. Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp97-152; Serres, Michel. (1990). *Distraction*. In Anne Pingeot, ed., *Le corps en morceaux*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, p35.
- 109 Baert, 2000: p14.
- 110 *Ibid.*, p17: Baert here speaks of "the opening of the image" and suggests the image is an 'iconophilic gate.' See also Baert, 2005: p7; 2006a: pp100-101 and Baert, Barbara. (2012a). *Peçe ile yara arasındaki pakt veya ete giden patika (The pact between the veil and the wound or The pathway to the flesh)*. In: *Berlinde De Bruyckere: yara / the wound*. Beyoğlu: Arter, pp77 (referring to Didi-Huberman's *L'image ouverte*: "(...) he describes the image as a dynamic emotion that opens to the viewer like a gateway"). See Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62, 224. Cf. also: Mondzain, 1995.
- 111 "The male was the form or quiddity of what we are as humans; what as particularly womanly was the unformed-ness, the stuff-ness or physicality, of our humanness. Such a notion identified woman with breaches in boundaries, with lack of shape or definition, with openings and exudings and spillings forth. But this conception also, we should note, put men and women on a continuum. All human beings were form and matter. Women were merely less of what men were more." Bynum, 1992: p109. See also pp214-215.
- 112 Baert, Barbara. (2012b). *Kleine iconologie van het weven. (Thread. On the origin of creation)*. Gent: Sint Joris, p24 (English: p61).
- 113 Baert, 2006a: p105 (English: p134).
- 114 Victor Turner frequently suggests that women are liminal. Liminality indicates "a moment of suspension of normal rules and roles, a crossing of boundaries and violating of norms, that enables us to understand those norms, even (or perhaps especially) where they conflict, and move on either to incorporate or reject them." Bynum

- extrapolates the concept of liminality to medieval women's religious attitudes. However, she remarks that this view, from the male position *at or towards* women, rather than *with* women, results in the overlooking of the continuity experienced (and described) by women themselves. Thus "one either has to see the woman's religious stance as permanently liminal or as never quite becoming so. (...) If one looks *with* rather than *at* women, women's lives are not liminal to women." Nevertheless, there is no doubt that aspects of women's ecstatic devotion during the thirteenth century – such as their "closeness to God" and "authorization to serve others ... through intimacy and direct inspiration *rather than* through office or worldly power" – were particularly stressed by men. Resulting in woman to be seen as 'liminal' to man, "both as symbol and as fact." See Bynum, 1992: pp30-33, 35, 47, 137. For Bynum's critique of Victor Turner's theory of liminality, see pp27-51. For the concept of liminality, Bynum refers to: van Gennepe, Arnold. (1981). *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: Picard; Turner, Victor. (1979). *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbolology*. New Delhi: Concept, (e.g. pp104-106); Turner, Victor. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, (e.g. pp99-105, 183, 200); Turner, Victor & Edith Turner. (1978). *Image and Pilgrimage: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press, (e.g. pp161, 236).
- 115 Mark 5: 24b-34; Matthew 9: 19-22; Luke 8: 42-48.
- 116 Baert, 2000: pp18-21.
- 117 For an inquiry into 'the weave as bearer' and the image of the weaving process as an expression of the creation of the world, see Baert, 2000: pp18-21; 2012b (*Thread. On the origin of creation*) and Baert, Barbara & Emma Sidgwick. (2011). *Touching the Hem: the thread between garment and blood in the story of the woman with the hemorrhage (Mark 5:24b-34parr)*. In *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture*, 9(3), p310. See also Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp92-96, 141. Both Baert and Vandenbroeck refer to Psalm 139, verse 13.
- 118 Baert, 2000: p18.
- 119 *Ibid.*, p22.
- 120 Baert, 2006a: p106 (English: p135).
- 121 *Ibid.*, 2000: pp17, 21, 29, 43. And also: Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p338.
- 122 Baert, 2000: pp37, 100. Cf. Bynum as quoted above, notes 81-90.
- 123 Baert, 2000: pp28-29. And: Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p335.
- 124 Baert, 2000: p26.
- 125 Bynum, 1992: p259 (on the discussion concerning material continuity and resurrection in the thirteenth century and "the elegant solution" provided by the theory of form as identity, which was adumbrated by Thomas Aquinas and articulated by John of Paris and Durandus).
- 126 Baert, 2000: p30.
- 127 *Ibid.*, pp26-28.
- 128 *Ibid.*, p35.
- 129 Delaney, Carol. (1988). *Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society*. In Thomas Buckley & Alma Gottlieb, eds., *Blood magic. The Anthropology of Menstruation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p77 – as quoted in Baert, 2000: p35, and Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p334.
- 130 Bynum, 1992: p87.
- 131 Baert, 2000: p35.
- 132 Vandenbroeck, 2009a (esp. pp46-47).
- 133 Baert, 2006a: pp100-107 (English translation, condensed: pp134-135) and Baert, 2012a: pp79-85.
- 134 Arendt, 1998: pp126-127, 254, 312-316.
- 135 Elkins, 1999: p1, and Elkins, James. (2009). *Introduction: Liquid Thoughts on the Body and Religion*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pxi.
- 136 Elkins, 1999: p1.
- 137 *Ibid.*, pp205-243.
- 138 *Ibid.*, pp245-248.
- 139 *Ibid.*, pp283-284.
- 140 *Ibid.*, pxii.
- 141 Morris, Robert. (2009). *Looking at Saying in W.J.T. Mitchell*. In *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 50(2-3), p236, as quoted in Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2012b). *Das Medium als Mediator – Eine Materialtheorie für (Öl-)Bilder*. In *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 57(1), p74.
- 142 Sennett, 2008: pp40-45. See also: Ingold, 2011: pp178ff.
- 143 Ingold, Tim. (2010). *In defence of handwriting*. In Robin Humphries & Bob Simpson, eds., *Writing Across Boundaries*, Department of Anthropology, Durham University, viewed the 3rd of April, 2013: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/writingacrossboundaries/writingonwriting/timingold/>. And Ingold, 2007b: pp24, 96, 120, 129, 162. Ingold refers to Rosemary Sassoon for the expressive power of the line of writing, which she considers "as sensitive and expressive as the line quality in a drawing, and as individual as the interpretation of colour and light and shade are to a painter," as quoted by Ingold, p129.

- Moreover, Sassoon suggests that writing affects the whole person; "when writing fails, it is experienced not as a failure of technology or a mechanical breakdown, but as a crisis of the whole person," as quoted by Ingold, p149. See Sassoon, Rosemary. (2000). *The Art and Science of Handwriting*. Bristol: Intellect, pp12, 103, 179.
- 144 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp241, 246. For an English translation, see: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1984). *The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)*. In *October*, 29, Summer, pp67, 72.
- 145 Baert, 2005: p8.
- 146 Sennett, 2008: pp119-146.
- 147 Ingold, Timothy. (2007). *Materials against Materiality*. In *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14(1): p11.
- 148 Philipe, 1969: p40.
- 149 Bynum, 1992: pp194, 237. (Cf. note 14, the soul as imprisoned in the body).
- 150 Ibid., 192.
- 151 De Maeyer, 2009: pp28-30; Vandenbroeck, 2009: p50. See note 38.
- 152 Many authors have addressed this notion. See, for example: Vandenbroeck, 2009a, 2009b; Bynum, 1992; Didi-Huberman, 2007a, and also (2007b). *Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time*. In *L'Esprit Créateur*, 47(3), Fall, pp7-16 (French: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2006). *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*. Paris: Bayard); Arendt, 1998: pp168-169, 173; Safranski, 2005: p66-67 – refers to Schiller, Friedrich. (1967). *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p35; Koent, 2009: pp10-13, 20 – refers to Lyotard, Jean-François. (2011). *Discourse, Figure*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp9, 13-25; Venmans, Peter. (2006). *Een plaats voor het onoplosbare. Hannah Arendt over de gebrokenheid van de moderne mens. (A Place for the insoluble. Hannah Arendt on modern human brokenness)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, p43 (English, condensed: p132); Moyaert, 2006: pp78-85, and Dewey, John. (1980). *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books (Penguin Putnam). On the role of making for gaining insight of values, see Sennett, 2008 (e.g. pp8, 268-269, 295-296).
- 153 Elkins, 1999: pp22-23.
- 154 Ibid., p24 – refers to Gauss, Charles E. (1973). *Empathy*. In Philip P. Wiener, ed., *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Volume II*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p86.
- 155 Cf. title of the first chapter in Jay, Martin. (1993). *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press: p21. The primacy of sight, characteristic of Western European modernity, is however questioned in contemporary philosophy, see Baert, Barbara. (2013). *An Odour. A Taste. A Touch. Impossible To Describe: Noli me tangere and the Sense*. In Wietse de Boer & Christine Göttler, eds., *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, pp126-127. Baert here refers to several authors who discuss the characteristic Western visual dominance over the other senses: Martin, 1993: p28; Derrida, Jacques. (1993). *Le toucher, Touch/to touch him*. In *Paragraph 16(2)*, pp122-157, and Vasseleu, Cathryn. (1998). *Textures of Light. Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*. London: Routledge, p7. In Vasseleu we read that according to Luce Irigaray, vision is privileged by men, whereas touch is preferred by women. See also Summers, David. (2003). *Representation*. In Robert S. Nelson & Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, p4. Referring to "the classical scheme" of sight according to Plato and Aristotle, Summers writes that in this scheme "sight was the highest, that is, the most mindlike of the senses, closest to the faculties of judgment and reason..."
- 156 Irigaray, Luce. (1993). *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p142. Irigaray even states that sight is impossible without a sense of touch.
- 157 Irigaray, 1993: pp136-137. (See also: Boothroyd, Dave. (2007). *The Touch of the Other on the Threshold of Sex; or The Skin between Levinas and Irigaray*. In Michael Syrotinski & Ian MacLachlan, eds., *Sensual Reading: New Approaches to Reading in its Relations to the Senses*. London: Associated University Presses, p47).
- 158 Pallasmaa, Juhani. (1996). *The Eyes of the Skin*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, p42. In this regard, see also Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (1998). *Vlees kleuren*, In *Kunstschrift Huid* 42(5), p10. Lehmann writes that the first and most intimate moments of contact with others, are experienced through touch and, more precisely, via the skin.
- 159 Springgay, Stephanie. (2007). *Intimacy in the Curriculum of Janine Antoni*. In Stephanie Springgay & Debra Freedman, eds., *Curriculum and the Cultural Body*. New York: Paul Lang, p199.
- 160 Derrida, Jacques. (2005). *On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p47.
- 161 "... that sense that is the mother of every memory, the sense of smell. Without need of taste, sight or hearing, a smell, however



- ephemeral, can arouse memories that for centuries have lain dormant in the mind. The comfortless paradox is, however, that though smell can unlock memory it cannot long retain the memory itself," Baert, 2009b: pXV (English: pX).
- 162** Wyschogrod, Edith. (1980). *Doing before Hearing. On the Primacy of Touch*. In François Laruelle, ed., *Textes pour Emmanuel Lévinas*. Paris: Éditions Jean-Michel Place, p193 – as quoted by Baert, 2013: pp128-129.
- 163** Sennett, 2008: pp150-154.
- 164** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p311.
- 165** Ibid. – referring to: Fonrobert, Charlotte. (2000). *Menstrual purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p130. And Metternich, Ulrike. (2000). 'Sie sagte ihm die ganze Wahrheit: Die Erzählung von der 'Blussflüssigen' feministisch gedeutet. Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, p78-131.
- 166** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p311.
- 167** Bieringer, Reimund. (2005). *Nader mij niet: De betekenis van mē mou haptou in Johannes 20:17*. In *HTS Teologische Studies/Theological Studies*, 61(1-2), pp19-43.
- 168** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p311 ('*Noli me tangere*,' Latin, literally 'do not touch me'). Baert & Sidgwick here refer to their research project *Mary Magdalene and the Touching of Jesus. An Intra- and Interdisciplinary Investigation of the Interpretation of John 20, 17* in the department of Art History and the faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Leuven (2004-2008). I here give only a selection of their references on touch, the senses and *Noli me tangere*: Bieringer, Reimund. (2006). *Noli me tangere and the New Testament*. In Barbara Baert, Reimund Bieringer, Karlijn Demasure & Sabine Van Den Eynde, eds., *Noli me tangere. Mary Magdalene: One Person, Many Images. Documenta Libraria 32*. Leuven: Peeters, pp16-28; Baert, Barbara & Liesbet Kusters (2007). *The Twilight Zone of the Noli me Tangere: Contributions to the history of the Motif in Western Europe (ca. 4000-ca. 1000)*. In *Louvain Studies*, 32(3), pp255-303.
- 169** Baert, 2013: pp113-114. Baert here refers to Augustine's (354–430) *Sermon 246 and Letter 120*: Augustine. (1993). *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Part III, Volume 7, Sermons, (230–272B) on the liturgical seasons*. Notes and trans. by Edmund Hill. Hyde Park: New City Press, pp102-106; Augustine. (2003). *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Part II, Volume 2, Letters 100-155 (Epistulae)*. Notes and trans. by Roland J. Teske, Boniface Ramsey, ed. Hyde Park: New City Press, pp129-140.
- 170** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p338.
- 171** Baert, 2013: p114.
- 172** "Irigaray goes so far as to say that sight is even impossible without a sense of touch: touch furnishes knowledge," *ibid.*, p125 n39. Baert refers to Irigaray, 1993.
- 173** See sources on *acheiropoietai* (as bearers of supernatural suddenness), petrification/casting/imprinting. E.g.: Baert, 2000: pp11-12, 27-28, and 2009a: p37 (English: p63); Baert, 2012b: p41 (English: p64, "Petrification is the opposite of fluidity. Petrifying is coagulating." And coagulation transforms what is alive into a relic, an image, an artifact.); Baert, Barbara & Lise De Greef. (2009). *Het verheerlijkte lichaam. Over relieken, stoffelijkheid en de inwendigheid van het beeld (The glorified body: relics, materiality and the internalized image)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, pp138-140; Belting, 2011: pp27 (e.g. death masks). See also Didi-Huberman, 2007b: p13; concerning *ex votos*, if they are directly moulded onto the suffering organ, they can be "devoted with greater precision and auratic intensity." On traces and imprints, see part *Between Ouverture and Coverture*.
- 174** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: pp316, 324.
- 175** Vandenbroeck, 2009a: p50. Cf. female mystics; Bynum, 1992: p192, "Women... are 'switched on' by 'the other,' heightened into an affectivity or sensuality that goes beyond the senses and our words for describing them." And Moyaert, 2006: pp78-85.
- 176** Cf. Baert, 2005: p9, "We must listen to [our sculptures] tenderly and look at them with a mild heart. We must be patient, take our time, and then, once, we too will know." Concerning the terms 'reciprocal touching,' 'toucher,' and 'touched,' I borrow them from Elkins's critique of "Merleau-Ponty's interest in skin as reciprocal touching." See Elkins, 1999: p56.
- 177** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p312.
- 178** See below *Making/Maker*.
- 179** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p323 – referring to: Vandenbroeck, 2009b: p198-199, and Warwick, Alexandra & Dani Cavallero. (2001). *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- 180** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p323.
- 181** Agamben, Giorgio. (1999). *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp177-184. And: Sidgwick, Emma. (2009). *Tactility*

- and potentiality in the motif of the *Haemorrhoids* (Mark 5:24-34par): a cultural anthropological exploration. In Paul Vandenbroeck, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual)*, pp135-159.
- 182** As suggested by Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p343 n43 (referring to: Ettinger, 2006). See also: Vandenbroeck, 2009b: 198.
- 183** Marcus, Joel. (2000). *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, p359 – as cited by Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p312.
- 184** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011 (pp218-320).
- 185** In Plato's thinking only the soul is real whereas the body is merely a shadow – the world of the senses is merely an illusion. But the visual, like the body, belongs to the world of the senses, meaning that also images are empty, false. Ideas, on the contrary are transcendental and real. This philosophy influenced the approach in fields researching material culture (such as Art History) towards their subject matter, giving rise to a hierarchy of the idea above material in the studying of artworks and artifacts. Ann-Sophie Lehmann writes: "Until today, in teaching as well as research, art works are often treated as immaterial representations, as signs and symbols, while materiality is considered of little importance to meaning." Amongst the first scholars to have analyzed artistic practice, were the philosopher John Dewey (1934, *Art as Experience*, as cited in note 152) and the art historian Henri Focillon (1934, *Vie des Formes*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. Electronic edition available online (31st of December, 2002), viewed 3rd of September, 2013: [http://noelpecout.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2011/10/Focillon\\_Vie\\_des\\_formes.pdf](http://noelpecout.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2011/10/Focillon_Vie_des_formes.pdf). Many scholars address the problematic nature of the mind over matter paradigm in the studying of material culture. See for example: Lehmann, 2009a: pp42-44 and 2012b: pp70-71; Boivin, 2008: pp13-15; Belting, 2011: pp109-115 ("Plato did not conceive his 'idea' in reference to art, but it would have a long afterlife in future evaluations of images as art.").
- 186** Medieval philosopher and poet Bernard Sylvesteris (12th century), as quoted in Ladner, Gerhart B. (1982). *Terms and Ideas of Renewal*. In Robert L. Benson & Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p6.
- 187** Lehmann, 2012b: pp70-71. See note 185.
- 188** The literature is vast. See for example: Ingold, 2007a: pp3, 5; Lehmann, 2009a: pp42-43. Belting, 2011: p115. See notes 185 and 187.
- 189** Lehmann, 2009a: pp42-43.
- 190** Vandenbroeck, 2009b: p175. Therefore the body is also 'loaded' in various ways. Vandenbroeck here refers to: Héritier, Françoise & Margarita Xanthakou, eds. (2004). *Corps et Affects*. Paris: Odile Jacob. He also gives the example of the blind and dumb Helen Keller (1880–1968), who as a child touched a pumpkin and laughed. "The concept of what was funny apparently came through the feeling of shape in a child who had not been informed by any 'normal' forms. In other words the form itself was 'loaded.'" Vandenbroeck, p201.
- 191** Lehmann, 2009a: pp44, 47.
- 192** Ingold, 2007a: p9.
- 193** Lehmann, 2012a: p10, and 2012b: pp75, 88 and 2009a: pp41-44 – refers to Focillon, 1934: p36.
- 194** Lehmann, 2012b: p72.
- 195** Lehmann, 2009a: p44.
- 196** The Actor-Network Theory (ANT) was developed through the work of scholars such as Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law in the late 1980's. It emerged within the field of sociology called 'science and technology studies' (STS), which researched "the status of modern technologies within their sociopolitical settings." STS aimed to research why certain technical innovations failed to survive and, in doing so, not only studied technical, but mainly social causes. What interests me here is that with ANT social and technical protagonists are regarded as equal actors within networks; "there is a symmetry between the human and the nonhuman, with agency distributed equally between them." For a concise explanation of the ANT, see Knappett, 2005: pp74-79.
- 197** Latour, Bruno. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p72.
- 198** *Ibid.*, p39.
- 199** Gibson, James J. (1977). *The Theory of Affordances*. In Robert Shaw & John Bransford, , eds., *Perceiving, Acting and Knowing: Toward an Ecological psychology*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, pp67-82.
- 200** Lehmann, 2012b: p83.
- 201** *Ibid.*, p80 – using Latour's term of "full-blown mediators": Latour, 2005: pp81, 108, 128, 173.
- 202** Lehmann, 2012b: pp83-84.
- 203** Even though notions of material agency existed before, Alfred Gell's final work *Art and Agency* [Gell, Alfred. (1998). *Art and Agency – An Anthropological*

- Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press] can be seen as having introduced a new beginning for material culture studies, such as Archaeology, Anthropology and Art History. In *Art and Agency*, Gell argues that art objects should be considered as social agents, equivalent of persons and thus acting as agents in social processes. In Gell's opinion there was the need for the anthropology of art to move on beyond its "narrow focus on symbolism and meaning." Since Gell's final work, agency has been used and further developed by many. As archaeologists Andrew Jones and Nicole Boivin write: "The concept of 'material agency,' and the attendant concept of materiality, has been widely adopted in the recent literature in archaeology and anthropology, yet its meaning has been widely misunderstood." The research of material agency is thus complex. My intention here is not to give a specialized overview, which would require far more knowledge and studying of the matter than is the purpose of my research project. My aim here is to introduce different concepts that have the potential to enable interaction and improve relations between humans and their creations. In my view, the notion of material agency has the potential to 'break the ice:' respecting our creations as active beings requires different sensitivities. I believe it is more productive, constructive and healthy for us to embrace our natural tendency to "adopt a similar attitude towards an object," than to ignore it or repress it. But I also believe we must not fall into excessively complex labyrinths of thought. In a society where the 'soul' is reluctantly spoken of, concepts such as material agency are a welcome support in the restoring of those powers that are so vividly present, but so painfully absent. For an overview of material agency, its history, developments and critiques, see: Jones, Andy M. & Nicole Boivin. (2010). *The malice of inanimate objects: material agency*. In Dan Hicks & Mary C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp333-351; and Boivin, 2008: pp138ff.
- 204** Latour, Bruno. (1999). *Pandora's Hope – Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p190 – as quoted in Knappett, Carl & Lambros Malafouris. (2008). *Material and Nonhuman Agency: An Introduction*. In Carl Knappett & Lambros Malafouris, eds., *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*. New York: Springer, pxi.
- 205** Malafouris, Lambros. (2008). *At the Potter's Wheel – An Argument for Material Agency*. In Carl Knappett & Lambros Malafouris, eds., *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*. New York: Springer, p22 – italics adapted. This view can be found amongst many scholars. See also: Boradkar, 2010: pp1-5 ("people and things configure each other"); Clarke, 2005: p63 ("the nonhuman and the human are coconstitutive – together [they] constitute the world and each other"); Jones & Boivin, 2010: p351 ("... the mutual relationship between human agency and material agency is critical. Causality does not lie with human agents (...) it is the reiterative quality of performance that produces agency and causality: agency is a matter of intra-acting, an enactment, it is not possessed by something or someone. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of either subjects or objects, as neither subjects nor objects pre-exist as fixed entities." Jones & Boivin here refer to Barad, Karen. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press, p214). See also notes 7 and 227.
- 206** Appadurai, Arjun, ed. (1986). *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 207** Lehmann, 2012a: p10.
- 208** Sennett, 2008: p135.
- 209** *Ibid.*, p119.
- 210** Lehmann, 2009a: p46.
- 211** *Ibid.* – referring to Ingold, 2007a.
- 212** Ingold, 2007a: p7.
- 213** Lehmann, 2009a: p46 – referring to Ingold, 2007a and Ingold, Timothy. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment. Essays in Liveliness, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.
- 214** Ingold, 2007a: p2.
- 215** *Ibid.*, pp3, 5, 7.
- 216** *Ibid.*, pp2-3.
- 217** For Renfrew's 'material engagement theory,' Ingold refers to: Renfrew, Colin. (2001). *Symbol before concept: material engagement and the early development of society*. In Ian Hodder, ed., *Archaeological Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp122-140.
- 218** Ingold, 2007a: p3.
- 219** *Ibid.*
- 220** Ingold, 2007a: pp3-6. See also: Boradkar, 2010: p2 – he here refers to Latour, Bruno (1993). *We have never been modern*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp49-50. See also: Knappett, 2005: pp12ff.
- 221** Ingold, 2007a: p5.
- 222** Arendt, 1998: p139

- 223 Ingold, 2007a: pp4, 6. The supposed boundaries of our bodies are questionable – see also: Elkins, 1999: pp44-45; Knappett, 2005: pp17ff, and MacKendrick, 2010: p113: “What is so unsettling to us in the newer contemplation and understanding of our bodily selves as colonies and compositions is, in large part, the connected questions of boundary and origin. We want to know where we begin and end, where our limits are; we want to be sure that those shed skin cells, those mites living in our eyelashes, don’t really count as us. That our bodily selves exist in this ill-bounded flux unsettles our sense of identity.”
- 224 Ingold, 2007a: p6 – here refers to Gibson, James J. (1979). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p34.
- 225 Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum, p24.
- 226 *Ibid.*, pp26, 27.
- 227 I here refer to Arendt’s notion of human plurality as a necessity for human action, which occurs *directly* between men: “the human condition of plurality ... the fact the men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world,” Arendt, 1998: p7. I here would like to include objects in our ‘plurality.’ For the notion of the object as subject, see: Thomas, Nicholas. (2001). *Introduction*. In Christopher Pinney & Nicholas Thomas, eds., *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*. Oxford: Berg, p5. And also: Latour, Bruno. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp47, 70. Michel Serres speaks of ‘quasi-objects’ and ‘quasi-subjects’: “This quasi-object is not an object, but it is one nevertheless, since it is not a subject, since it is in the world; it is also a quasi-subject, since it marks or designates a subject who, without it, would not be a subject.” See: Serres, Michel. (1982). *The Parasite*. London: John Hopkins University Press, p225. Dirk J. Van den Berg also speaks of images as ‘quasi-subjects,’ since they have the power to ‘look back at us,’ and ‘speak to us.’ See Van den Berg, 2004: p14.
- 228 Deleuze, 1993: pp5-7.
- 229 *Ibid.*, p17.
- 230 *Ibid.*, p5.
- 231 *Ibid.*, p12.
- 232 *Ibid.*, p4-7.
- 233 *Ibid.*, p11.
- 234 *Ibid.*, p41.
- 235 *Ibid.*, pp20, 22. On the objectile, see also: Cache, Bernard. (1999). *Inflection as Gaze*. In Annette W. Balkema & Henk Slager, eds., *Territorial Investigations*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, pp26-27. Very insightful is the blog of philosopher Levi Bryant (who coined the term object-oriented ontology), where a non-anthropocentric approach is followed in researching the object: <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/>. Concerning the object as an event specifically, see Bryant, Levi. (2008). *Objectile and Agere*. 21st of December, viewed 1st of February, 2013: <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2008/12/21/objectile-and-agere/>. Concerning the image as an event (*événement*) or a coming (*avènement*), processual in its unfolding to humans, see also: Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp30-32, 35, 291; Mondzain, 1995: p40. Dirk J. Van den Berg speaks of ‘picture-events’: Van den Berg, 2004: p14. See also note 82 in *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 236 Cf. Deleuze, 1993: p20: “... our current state of things, where fluctuation of the norm replaces the permanence of law; where the object assumes a place in a continuum by variation...”
- 237 Ingold, 2007a: p7.
- 238 *Ibid.*, p10. See also Arendt, 1998: pp136ff.
- 239 Sennett, 2008: p124.
- 240 *Ibid.*, pp138, 144.
- 241 See: Ammicht-Quinn, 2009: pp67-81. Also interesting to mention here, is that Georges Didi-Huberman (2008: p155) ascribes the degradation of the material wax – too strongly reminding us of the uneasy and the uncanny we experience in relation to our own bodies – as the reason why it received so little attention in art history. He poses the question: “But does the disappearance of an object exempt us from writing its history?”
- 242 Ingold, 2007a: p11.
- 243 *Ibid.*
- 244 Pels, Peter. (1998). *The spirit of matter: on fetish, rarity, fact, and fancy*. In Patricia Spyer, ed., *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*. London: Routledge, p94; original emphasis – as quoted in Ingold, 2007a: p11.
- 245 Ingold, 2007a: p12 – refers to Pels, 1998: pp94-95.
- 246 Ingold, 2007a: p12.
- 247 Vandebroek, 2009b: p175.
- 248 Deleuze, 1993: p9.
- 249 Ingold, 2007a: p12.
- 250 *Ibid.*, p14.
- 251 Pye, David. (1968). *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p47.
- 252 Sennett, 2008: p129. Sennett here refers to Lévi-Strauss’s famous culinary triangle: Lévi-Strauss, Claude. (1966). *The Culinary*

- Triangle*. In *New Society*, 22nd of December, pp937-940.
- 253 Tilley, Chris. (2006). *Introduction*. In Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler, Mike Rowlands & Patricia Spyer, eds., *Handbook of Material Culture*. London: Sage, p10.
- 254 Brown, Bill. (2001). *Thing Theory*. In *Critical Inquiry*, 28(1), *Things*, Autumn, pp1-22.
- 255 Baert, Barbara. (2012c). *Kleine iconologie van de wind. (Wind. On the origin of emotion)*. Gent: Sint Joris, pp5, 10 (English: p58).
- 256 *Ibid.*, pp5, 17 (English: pp58, 60).
- 257 *Ibid.*, p35 – see p50n47. Baert here refers to “the report of doctor Ludwig Binswanger in Kreuzlingen,” where Aby Warburg was hospitalized from 1821 to 1824: “The patient is preoccupied with a cult of moths and butterflies that fly into his room at night. He talks to them for hours at a time; he calls them *his little soul creatures* and tells them about his pain,” (italics added).
- 258 *Ibid.*, p5 (English: p58).
- 259 Elkins, 1999: pp39-45, 56.
- 260 Deleuze, 1993: p9: “And when an organism dies, it does not really vanish, but folds in upon itself (...)”
- 261 Lehmann, 2009a: p50.
- 262 Arendt, 1998: p176. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 263 Lehmann, 2009a: p50 – I have here replaced ‘clay’ by ‘the material.’
- 264 Sennett, 2008: pp10, 149.
- 265 Levi, Primo. (1987). *If This is a Man and The Truce*. London: Abacus, pp33 – as quoted in Ross, Charlotte. (2010). *The ‘Body’ in Fragments: anxieties, fascination and the ideal of ‘wholeness,’* paper presented at the conference *Thinking in fragments: Romanticism and beyond*. University of Birmingham (UK), 16-17th of December 2010, pp11-12, viewed 1st of December, 2011: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/lcahm/leopardi/fragments/leopardi/paper-ross.pdf>.
- 266 Elkins, 1999: p1, and 2009: pxi.
- 267 Elkins, 1999: p206.
- 268 *Ibid.*, pp238, 243.
- 269 *Ibid.*, ppvii, 219.
- 270 For a concise inquiry into the ‘fuzzy’ boundaries of our bodies and the incorporation of objects, see Knappett, 2005: pp17ff. See also Scarry, Elaine. (1985). *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp281ff. On jewelry as prostheses, see Gaspar, Mònica, ed. (2007). *Christoph Zellweger: Foreign Bodies*. Barcelona: Actar, especially Pietro Morandi’s contribution entitled *Jewellery as Prostheses. Body design in bio-political discourse*, pp42-59. See also *The Body in den Besten*, Liesbeth. (2012). *On Jewellery*. Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, pp125-140. See note 223.
- 271 Arendt, Hannah. (2004). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Schocken Books, pp613-614: “Isolation and loneliness are not the same. I can be isolated – that is in a situation in which I cannot act, because there is nobody who will act with me – without being lonely; and I can be lonely – that is in a situation in which I as a person feel myself deserted by all human companionship – without being isolated. (...) While isolation concerns only the political realm of life, loneliness concerns human life as a whole. (...) *What makes loneliness so unbearable is the loss of one’s own self which can be realized in solitude, but confirmed in its identity only by the trusting and trustworthy company of my equals*. In this situation, man loses trust in himself as partner of his thoughts and that elementary confidence in the world which is necessary to make experiences at all,” italics added. See also part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 272 Belting, 2011: pp3ff. On presence versus ‘represence,’ see Belting, 2011: pp6, 19-20, 85-87, 89, 93, 109, 115, 126, 130; and ‘represence’ versus ‘representation.’ Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p184. (See also note 107). See also Belting on the ‘counter-image,’ ‘counter-figure,’ counterpart (Vernant’s *l’équivalent*) and the relation between the image and death in general, 2011: pp46-47, 50-51, 88-124, 130.
- 273 The notion of images/objects as coming to us, rather than strictly the reverse scenario, can be found in Belting, 2011 and Didi-Huberman, 2007a. See also discussion above on objects as active agents in social networks.
- 274 Belting, 2011: pp5, 9, 15-16, 47; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p34.
- 275 De Maeyer, 2009: pp28-29. See notes 38 and 151. See also Didi-Huberman on the need of opening in order to access the image, 2007a: pp25-62.
- 276 On proprioception and empathy, see Elkins, 1999: pp23-26. See also note Sennett on anthropomorphism, 2008: pp 135-144, 192-193. See note 68 and below *Making/Maker*, specifically notes 308 and 322.
- 277 Belting, 2011: p9.
- 278 On empathy and experiencing the whole, see above, *Mater*. For the confrontation with the image as a fleeting experience, see Didi-Huberman’s *L’image ouverte*, 2007a (esp. pp25-62).
- 279 For an inquiry into the ‘personal’ relationship between human and object, maker and

- creation, see parts *Sadness; Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment, and Between Overture and Couverture.*
- 280** De Greef, Lise. (2009). *The First Scar*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, pp164-165. Cf. Vandenbroeck, 2009b; Elkins, 1999 and 2009: pxi; Belting, 2011 (p37: "The human being is the natural *locus of images*, a living organ for images, as it were."), and Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007b). *Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time*. In *L'Esprit Créateur*, 47(3), Fall, pp7-16. French version: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2006). *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*. Paris: Bayard.
- 281** Cf. Archaeologist Chris Fowler suggests the view of the body, and the relationship to it influence – and are reflected in – our ways of dealing with the world (vessels, spaces, etc.) and, vice versa, that "bodies are understood in terms of the material worlds they inhabit." Fowler argues "[t]o focus on fractal relations is (...) to recognise a recurring technique in how relationships between body and world are understood. (...) a shared logic of composition for the body and the world ... allows ... to understand concepts of the body and the person by examining the treatment of media other than human bodies alongside treatment of those bodies." Fowler, Chris. (2008). *Fractal bodies in past and present*. In Dušan Borić & John Robb, eds., *Past bodies: body-centered research in archaeology*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp49-50.
- 282** From *IV. Late summers, early autumns, you can see something that binds* in Rich, 1991: p11.
- 283** Sennett, 2008: p180; see also Adamson, Glenn. (2007). *Thinking through Craft*. Oxford: Berg, p4: "Craft only exists in motion."
- 284** On the object as subject, see note 227.
- 285** Lehmann, 2012a: p10, 2012b and 2009a: pp41-44, 54-55 – refers to Focillon, 1934: p36, and Dewey, 1980. See also Ingold, 2007a: p9: "studies of so-called material culture have focused overwhelmingly on processes of consumption rather than production."
- 286** Cf. note 309. See also Belting, 2011: pp36, 38: "Although a 'history of the image' is most readily studied via the history of media and imaging techniques through time, it would be a mistake, from an anthropological point of view, to seek images only within their production history. (...) the image can be approached as an anthropological concept, one that must assert itself today against notions of the images as an aesthetic or technical construct."
- 287** Philosopher Martin Buber speaks of art as an engagement involving the whole person: Buber, Martin. (1970). *I and Thou*. New York: Touchstone, p60. See also part *Sadness*.
- 288** In this context, Ann-Sophie Lehmann suggests that "the act of making establishes a temporary creative unit in which materials, tools, and maker interact. In this unit, action moves back and forth between these different agents and is not simply exerted by the human actor on the material." Lehmann, 2009a: p45.
- 289** Dewey, 1980: pp74-75.
- 290** Lehmann, 2012a: p11.
- 291** Dewey, 1980: p75.
- 292** Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp78-79.
- 293** Lehmann, 2012a: p11, and 2009a: p47.
- 294** Sennett, 2008: p183.
- 295** Lehmann, 2012a: p11.
- 296** Elkins, 1999: p283.
- 297** Sennett, 2008: pp95, 179.
- 298** Lehmann, 2012a (*Showing Making: On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice*).
- 299** *Ibid.*, p11.
- 300** Sennett, 2008: p179, italics added.
- 301** These are the functions Lehmann ascribes to the genre of *showing making*. Lehmann, 2012a: p9.
- 302** Cf. Lehmann, 2012a: p11; "[h]ow can theoretical descriptions like these, which beautifully capture the complexity of making without necessarily clarifying it, be particularized in detailed studies of creative practice?" See note 309.
- 303** Lehmann, 2012a, p12.
- 304** *Ibid.*, pp14-15.
- 305** Sennett, 2008: pp92-93, 186 – he here also refers to Adam Smith's 'Impartial Spectator' (1759), "a figure who judges others not by his own interests but rather by the impressions they make on him. It is this imaginative work of sympathy rather than reason that first enlightens us about people," Smith, Adam. (1967). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 306** Sennett, 2008: p189.
- 307** Elkins, 1999: p23.
- 308** Sennett, 2008: pp190-192. For a similar notion, but then specifically related to the ability to feel the actions performed by another see: Calvo-Merino, Beatriz et al. (2006). *Seeing or Doing? Influence of Visual and Motor Familiarity in Action Observation*. In *Current Biology*, 16: pp1905-1910, as quoted in Lehmann, 2012a: p14. Lehmann also speaks of the "hand in the brain;" "we can also 'feel' the pen in the hand of someone else when we observe writing."

Recent neurological research confirms that the physical experience of an action we merely perceive visually is a hard-wired neuronal part of perception. The existence of so-called mirror-neurons shows that observing a familiar act triggers the same neurons that would fire if we were to perform the act ourselves."

- 309** We here touch upon the fundamentals of a larger issue at stake within the research of arts. I would here like to clarify that I am aware of the value of an analytic approach regarding arts research, but in my opinion analysis should not become the dogma one must follow in order to engage in artistic research. I believe it is relevant to differentiate between the need of analysis in relation to artistic research in the form of teaching on the one hand, and in the form of a research in the arts on the other hand. They are siblings, but require another kind of explicitness. For one sibling explaining may be a more effective way to learn than for the other, for whom sharing appears to be the more fruitful way. Concerning research in arts, I may hope to speak of a research that has emancipated from a process of documentation and *description* into the undertaking of an investigation – *immersion* – and an exercise in *circumscription*. In other words, in our dangerous attempt – as suggests Vandenbroeck – to somehow ‘reconstruct’ and communicate through language about artworks and artistic research, one must attempt to ‘keep alive’ all layers present – of which some will most probably always remain absently present to us. As Paul Vandenbroeck has argued, we must accept that artistic expression can escape any reflexive discourse. It may be elusive and reject the verbal – preceding “language and any culturally determined imagination.” Stronger still, it may lie in “a zone that is already ‘entered’ in the pre-natal state and that *requires no language in order to give birth to meaning*,” (italics adapted). See: Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2013b). *The ‘Nameless Motif’: On the Cross-Cultural Iconography of an energetic Form*. In Paul Vandenbroeck, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual 2010)*, pp173-177.  
Cf. Baert, 2009c: p10. Baert here speaks of Aby Warburg’s Mnemosyne project, in which he dreamt of reconstructing “image archetypes and recurring themes in man’s history by disregarding cultural borders and making no distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art.” Mnemosyne is the goddess of memory and the mother of the muses. I quote Baert: “I see it as the repeating task of arts research to gently wake the fragile Mnemosyne.” And see also Jean-François
- Lyotard: “Power lies with the eye. To transform the unconscious into discourse is to bypass the dynamics, to become complicit with the whole of Western *ratio* that kills art at the same time as the dream.” In Lyotard, 2011: p9.
- 310** See note 181.
- 311** Lehmann, 2012a: p10.
- 312** *Ibid.*, p11.
- 313** Arendt, 1998: p9; see also: Sennett, 2008: p5.
- 314** Cf. Belting, 2011: p47: “It is the individual and collective images in the imagination that constitute the ‘Self.’” For making as a confrontation with oneself, see Sennett (2008) and the following sections (*Acceptance, Pangs of Pleasure and Pain*) and (*Being One – Making Oneself – Becoming One*), and part *Sadness*. For the results of making (images, objects, artworks) as confronting, see above (e.g. note 49) and part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 315** Baert, 2009b: pVII (English: pIV).
- 316** *Ibid.* ppVII-IX (English: pIV).
- 317** Baert, 2009b: pIX (English: pIV). Or in Anne Philipe’s words: “...l’image... qui me vient à l’esprit quand j’essaie de rendre sensible ton absence, c’est comme une faute primordiale, un mal cosmique qui entraînerait un déséquilibre dans les forces d’attraction du monde,” 1969: p101.
- 318** Baert, 2009b: pIX (English: pVI).
- 319** Arendt, 1998: p97.
- 320** In the context of making, but with regard to the acceptance of human limits specifically and the commitment to truthfulness (the willingness to commit error), see Sennett, 2008: pp102-106, 160.
- 321** Lehmann, 2009a: pp54-55 – Lehmann here refers to Dewey, 1980: p47 and Gell, 1998.
- 322** On the role of the education of the senses for learning/gaining knowledge, see Ingold, 2000 (e.g. pp13-26). Cf. ‘tacit knowledge’ – knowledge that can hardly be shared via language, knowledge gained tacitly – was introduced by Michael Polanyi. See Polanyi, Michael. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 323** On converting boundaries into borders, see Sennett, 2008: pp227-231 and for a note on the experience of surprise and wonder in making, see also p211. For understanding/ insights arising from making, see pp44, 289.
- 324** *Ibid.*, pp174-177. For the role of motion in making, see Lehmann, 2009a.
- 325** Sennett, 2008: 162-171.
- 326** Cf. Paul Valéry: “*Créateur créé*. Qui vient d’achever un long ouvrage, le voit former enfin un être qu’il n’avait pas voulu, qu’il n’a pas conçu, précisément puisqu’il l’a

- enfanté, et ressent cette terrible humiliation de se sentir devenir le fils de son œuvre, de lui emprunter des traits irrécusables, une ressemblance, des manies, une borne, un miroir; et ce qu'il a de pire dans le miroir, s'y voir limité, tel et tel." Valéry, Paul. (1943). *Tel Quel*. Paris: Gallimard, p149 – as quoted in Arendt, 1998: p212n43.
- 327** Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp96-97.
- 328** Cf. *Ibid.*, pp122-123, and versus destruction, see Sennett's *Prologue* (pp1-15) and *conclusion* (pp286-296).
- 329** Cf. *Ibid.*, pp65-74 (*The Master Alone*).
- 330** See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 331** See note 49: Didi-Huberman on the image as endlessly fluctuating between the non-consoling and the consoling. See also Belting on the ambiguity/paradox of presence and absence inherent to the image (2011: pp16-21, 84-86, 130). See also parts *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment and Between Ouverture and Couverture*.
- 332** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p312.
- 333** My own translation of: Baert, 2012b: p41 (English: p64).
- 334** Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p165.
- 335** Sennett, 2008: pp135-144.
- 336** Cf. Lehmann, 2009a: p53 (specifically for the material clay).
- 337** Potter Cindy Clarke, as quoted by Lehmann, 2009a: p50.
- 338** (Is this discrepancy related to the impossible union between seeing and touching? And the split between acting and interacting? Empathizing with *an-other*, versus identifying and *becoming* the other? And is there really a gap between the two? See also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp157ff.)
- 339** I here quote the complete sentence: "The power of art objects stems from the technical processes they objectively embody: the *technology of enchantment* is founded on the *enchantment of technology*." See Gell, Alfred. (1992). *The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology*. In Jeremy Coote & Anthony Shelton, eds., *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, Oxford: Clarendon, p44.
- 340** For a more detailed inquiry into the implications of techniques (actions), see the part *Between Ouverture and Couverture*. In these investigations, I take a closer look at the influence of these specific actions on the object.
- 341** Gell, 1992: p49.
- 342** Lehmann, 2012b: p84. See also Belting, 2011: p21; "(...) media are tacitly accepted if they are noticed at all."
- 343** Sennett, 2008: p174. For "being as a thing," Sennett refers to Merleau-Ponty (2012). Within this context, the philosopher Michael Polanyi speaks of 'focal awareness.' Polanyi, Michael. (1962). *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p55.
- 344** Lehmann, 2009a: p43.
- 345** Cf. Belting on internal (endogenous, mental) images/representation and external (exogenous) pictures/representation, see Belting, 2011: pp15, 38, 49-50.
- 346** Elkins, 1999: p24.
- 347** Lehmann, 2012a: p12.
- 348** *Ibid.*, p14. On mirror neurons, Lehmann refers to Calvo-Merino et al., 2006 and Freedberg, David & Vittorio Gallese. (2007). *Motion, Emotion and Empathy in Esthetic Experience. Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 11(5), pp197-203.
- 349** Sennett, 2008: pp137, 144.
- 350** Cf. *Ibid.*, p7.
- 351** Cf. Lehmann, 2009a: p50: "Interacting with clay, thus is a way to experience the material life of clay."
- 352** *Ibid.*, p51.
- 353** Tilley, Christopher. (2001). *Ethnography and Material Culture*. In Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland & Lyn Lofland, eds., *Handbook of Ethnography*, London: Thousand Oaks, p260.
- 354** See Baert on imprints: Baert, Barbara. (2009c). *Folds of thought, or The encounter in an intermediate space*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, pp9-23; and Baert, Barbara. (2009d). *Iconogenesis, or Navel*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds. *Folded Stones: Tied up Tree*. Leuven: Acco, pp5-12. On imprints, see part *Between Ouverture and Couverture*.
- 355** Sennett, 2008: p130.
- 356** Cf. Sennett's prologue to *The Craftsman*, 2008: pp1-15.
- 357** See note 181.
- 358** Cf. Ettinger, 2006. See above (e.g. note 181).
- 359** Baert, 2009b: pIX (English: pVI): "The finding of something has a magical charge [...] In Classical and Christian cultural history the finding, the so-called *inventio*, is an event related to founding legends. Moses was the founding who led the Chosen People to the Promised Land. Romulus and Remus were foundlings who founded Rome." See also Arendt, 1998: pp177-178; "It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started and which cannot be expected from whatever may have appeared before."



- This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and in all origins. (...) the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him..."
- 360** Baert, 2009b: pIX (English: pVI); Baert, 2011: p309. During the Middle Ages the sense of touch was particularly relevant for the goldsmith; it was endowed with magical properties. See: Sennett, 2008: p61.
- 361** Sennett, 2008: pp123-125.
- 362** Already on the first page, third line, in the Acknowledgments of his book *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett states that 'making is thinking.' Further reflection on this aspect can be found on especially pp1-15, 40, 44-45, 50-51, 88-89, 144, 286-296. Also: Dewey, 1980. See also Lehmann for an overview of scholars who have worked on this subject, 2009a: p44-46.
- 363** Baert, 2009b: pXI (English: pVI).
- 364** Cf. Rooijackers, Gerard. (2009). *Slagschaduw en onder een Mechelse hemel in Tegenlicht (Shadows under a backlit heaven in Mechelen)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p240: "The fact that these objects no longer exist, is, all things considered, just as revealing as the fact that other artefacts still exist." Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp8, 110: "being able so easily to dispose of things desensitizes us to the actual objects we hold in hand." Also relevant here: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce," in Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels. (1977). *The German Ideology*, C. J. Arthur, ed. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p42. Arendt, 1998: p179; "In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities (...). This disclosure of 'who' (...) is implicit in everything somebody says and does."
- 365** Olivier Olivier, Laurent. (2013). *Nous sommes à l'âge de la Dévastation*. In Jan Riessen, ed., *Destruction*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, pp35.
- 366** Sennett, 2008: p7.
- 367** Arendt, 1998: pp176, 180-183.
- 368** Sennett, 2008 (esp. pp9, 20).
- 369** Daston, 2004: p9
- 370** Arendt, 1998: pp176, 180, 230ff.
- 371** Cf. Baert, 2005: p9; Vandebroek, 2009a: p50.
- 372** On this, see Arendt, 1998. See above and part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 373** "Traquer la bête folle de l'usage" (Breton's italics), in: Breton, André. (1965). *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*. Paris: Gallimard, p279. English translation as quoted in Kelly, Julia. (2007). *Art, Ethnography and the life of objects: Paris, c.1925-1935*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p125.
- 374** For a critical inquiry into the effects of meritocracy and quantification on identity and social relations, see Verhaeghe, Paul. (2011). *De effecten van een neoliberale meritocratie op identiteit en interspersoonlijke verhoudingen*. In *Oikos*, 56(1), pp4-22. For the effects on human relations to the(ir) body, see Ammicht-Quinn, 2009. Ammicht-Quinn here focuses on the central role the body has in both the life of the individual and the society today. She observes "this body-project has one goal: perfection – specifically, a perfect design. (...) In this ongoing functional design project the living, mortal, fallible human body seems to be hardly tolerable." Ammicht-Quinn concludes: "The body cult whose god is the body, that you worship and to whom you sacrifice, easily shifts into body contempt or body hate because the body will never succeed in maintaining the standards of a normative aesthetic and, being fallible and mortal never will achieve the desired standards of functionality. Thus, the body cult finally declares the body itself as handicap." (Who are we now, if the individual is at odds with his/her body?)
- 375** Sennett: 270-271 – refers to Huizinga, Johan. (1998). *Homo Ludens*, London: Routledge.
- 376** On the need to emancipate from sheer necessity, see Arendt, 1998: pp126-135, 136ff, 174: "We need not ... decide whether man or a god should be the measure of all things; what is certain is that the measure can neither be the driving necessity of biological life and labor nor the utilitarian instrumentalism of fabrication and usage." See also part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 377** Cf. Arendt, 1958: p137. See note 17.
- 378** Philipe, 1969: pp30, 123.
- 379** Belting, 2011: pp14-15, 20, 56-57.
- 380** *Ibid.*, p115 (also pp84-90, 126, 130).
- 381** Baert, 2012a: pp77-79; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp62, 224; Vandebroek, 2000: pp246-248, and Belting, 2011: pp84ff. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 382** Author Isak Dinesen (pseudonym of Karen Blixen) – as quoted in Arendt, 1998: p175.
- 383** See note 2.
- 384** Finding could then be regarded as leading to second 'inventio,' after the first experience of it via making. For this, see note 359. But

the pleasure of finding – being able to find – presupposes openness. On this see note 38. Specifically on the role of astonishment versus openness: Ingold, 2011: pp74-75.

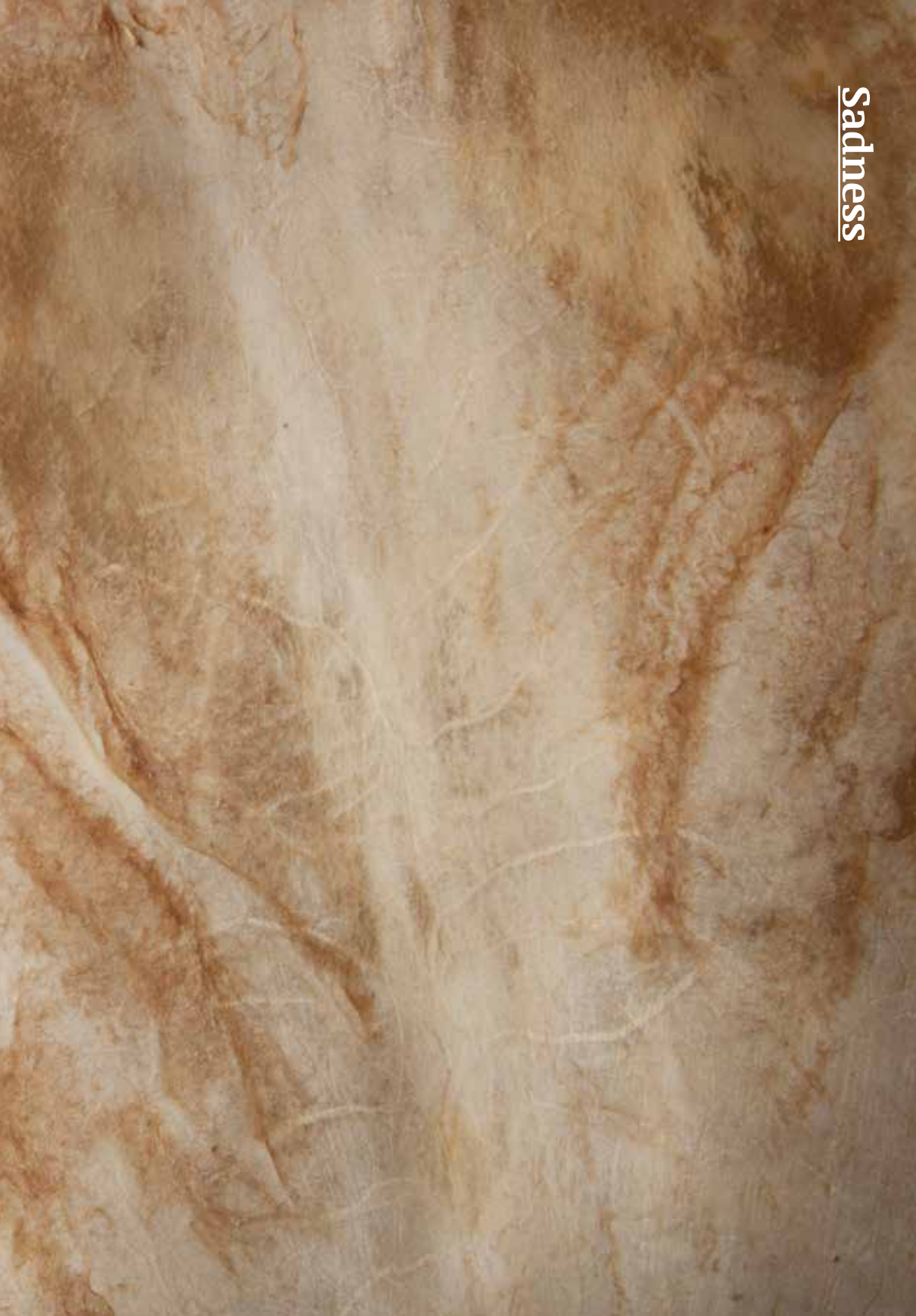
- 385** “finders keepers ( losers weepers): *informal* used, often humorously, to assert that whoever finds something by chance is entitled to keep it,” *New Oxford American Dictionary*.




## **Lost Souls**

- 9**      **Talking / Taking / Accepting**  
*A conversation*
- 11**     **Talking about / Taking care of / Accepting difference**  
*A reflection*
- 15**     **Talk about things / Take care / Accept difference**  
*A proposal*
- 17**     **Mater**  
*Matrix*  
*Mediatrix*  
*-trix*  
*My Mediatrix*
- 34**     **Matter**  
*Senses*  
*Materials – Objects*  
*Object-as-Body / Object-as-Counterpart*
- 50**     **Making / Maker**  
*Being Shown vs. Being Touched*  
*Maker as Mater*  
*In search of Counterparts, In search of Mater*
- 71**     **Endnotes**

Sadness





Featured work:

*Cura Posterior V (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

21 x 5 x 3,2 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

# **Sadness**

**Destruction and (the Absence of) Empathy:  
The Suffering of the Condemned Object**





La plupart des marmots veulent surtout *voir l'âme*, les uns au bout de quelque temps d'exercice, les autres *tout de suite*. C'est la plus ou moins rapide invasion de ce désir qui fait la plus ou moins grande longévité du joujou. Je ne me sens pas le courage de blâmer cette manie enfantine: c'est une première tendance métaphysique. Quand ce désir s'est fiché dans la moelle cérébrale de l'enfant, il remplit ses doigts et ses ongles d'une agilité et d'une force singulières. L'enfant tourne, retourne son joujou, il le gratte, il le secoue, le cogne contre les murs, le jette par terre. De temps en temps il lui fait recommencer ses mouvements mécaniques, quelquefois en sens inverse. La vie merveilleuse s'arrête. (...) Mais *où est l'âme*? C'est ici que commencent l'hébètement et la tristesse. Il y en a d'autres qui cassent tout de suite le joujou à peine mis dans leurs mains, à peine examiné; et quant à ceux-là, j'avoue que j'ignore le sentiment mystérieux qui les fait agir. Sont-ils pris d'une colère superstitieuse contre ces menus objets qui imitent l'humanité, ou bien leur font-ils subir une espèce d'épreuve maçonnique avant de les introduire dans la vie enfantine? – *'Puzzling question !'*

– Charles Baudelaire<sup>1</sup>



*Untitled (Mater/Flux)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
28 x 20,8 cm



*Work in progress*  
Hannah Joris  
2011-2012  
White yams



*Untitled (L'ironie d'une Sainte)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011-2012  
White yams  
± 60 x 50 x 20 cm



*A collaboration between Kristof Vrancken & Hannah Joris for the exhibition This is where they met, Munich 2013, part of Silke Fleischer's ongoing Jewellery Sessions project*

*Putrescine [featuring the pendant *Untitled* (Cura Posterior III)]*

Kristof Vrancken, Hannah Joris  
2013

Photocredit: Kristof Vrancken



## **Object & Subject:**

### ***Making, or The engagement between two beings***

In this essay I would like to take time and space to reflect upon aspects of making which are also introduced and considered in the part *Lost Souls*. But it is here, that I will take the freedom to give a personal account of the issues at stake. I will therefore draw on my general experience as a maker, which has grown, deformed and reformed – forever fragmented – throughout the years.

The role of matter – of stuff – is essential in making. The fact that matter is physical and sensory however does not imply that making is transparent. In my opinion, making can be seen as the complex relationship between two subjects, rather than an unambiguous, transparent relationship between a superior, active subject (maker) and an inferior, passive object (the creation). I will concentrate on the making of three-dimensional objects, and more precisely objects suiting the scale of the human body. *Those objects we can hold in our hands and press against our chest.*<sup>2</sup>

The general experience of the maker is ‘fed’ by the whole of being human (of the human being, the maker),<sup>3</sup> which consists of an endless amount of experiences: actions, memories, relationships, engagements, impressions, encounters, reflections, reactions, desires, energies, hopes, skills, tastes, preferences, sensations, feelings, words, objects, images,<sup>4</sup> organisms, materials, ... gains and losses. The whole of these inputs and experiences, alongside the material’s characteristics become the common ground of maker and creation, creating a constant interplay with mutual influences.<sup>5</sup> Since matter is energy and the body of the maker is “affectively ‘loaded,’ ‘charged,’ ‘cathetic,’” the *dynamic* act of making – a “bodily ‘working process’” – provides a transition of this *cathexis*,<sup>6</sup> *dynamij* or transit power.<sup>7</sup> It is because of this growing bond – the multiplying ties between both maker and creation – that they not only grow towards each other, but that the object also becomes a more independent subject, an entity of its own.<sup>8</sup>

The rise of the (a) second subject induces not only a particular bond, but a specific tension also. The position of the maker is shaken to its foundations, confronting the maker with his/her values, which consequently come into question. The power of the maker becomes reluctant, but the reluctance can be a source of candid actions and reactions.<sup>9</sup> Because of material affordances<sup>10</sup> and the gradually growing relationship between maker and creation, the matter and form of the object (subject) provide the maker with matter-of-fact responses.<sup>11</sup> Through the time passing and the exchanges taking place, the engagement grows and trust is founded.<sup>12</sup>

In what follows, I will explore the ambivalent nature of creating as experienced by the maker. We will look into, respectively, making as an exhausting process, what drives humans to create, the fluctuation of pleasure and pain inherent to making and the tension between destruction and construction.

## Handkerchief & Chamois

In my experience making is strongly linked to loss, fragmentation, tracing, containment, transparency, enfolding and notions of fatigue, saturation and suffocation. Regardless of its outcome and without the intention to arouse any form of self-pity, I see the whole of making as a *via dolorosa*. Making consists of spasmodic motion, oscillating between sensations of intense pleasure and alleviation, and intense pain and tension. This seems hardly surprising though, when considering that the dynamic nature of the visual oscillates between construction and destruction,<sup>13</sup> and bearing in mind the contractions of the womb – the symbol of creation *par excellence*.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps making itself – as a process, *life* and *live* experience – is as a simple ‘hanky’ or ‘shammy’ – a handkerchief or chamois. The handkerchief and chamois remind of “the skin-as-map-principle,” bearing traces of (a) life.<sup>15</sup>

Skins, textiles and membranes function both as borders and as thresholds: they are simultaneously resistant and porous, and they absorb and exude.<sup>16</sup> In this process of taking in and letting go, the handkerchief and chamois as physical things are however subordinated to their purpose or their function as absorbing matter. The handkerchief, as a web, and the chamois, as a skin, absorb from one side and let fluids shine through to the other side – a passage takes place. The worn surfaces bear the symptoms of age, fatigue and exhaustion – without resistance there is no relieving and revealing passage.<sup>17</sup> As an end product they become a whole of smudged traces. Through time the endless task of absorbing, rubbing and wringing out excess fluids causes spots and holes to appear. A pathway from one side of the sheet to the other comes into being. The chamois becomes softer and suppler, spotted and stained. The growing holes can be mended or perhaps the owner will not be able to resist the seduction of the appearing tears, along which both the handkerchief and chamois can be torn in a straight line; quickly, sharply and definitely. *Relief, alleviation*. Perhaps, at a certain moment, the absorbing net has enough of catching tears, making transparent, holding leftovers, and clearing and cleaning human traces. Or maybe the endless movement of enfolding and uncovering, containing and releasing, inflating and deflating, absorbing and drying out, and being removed from one dimension to the other, simply fatigues. The elasticity is strained and the flexibility has become exhausted: the making infolds upon itself.<sup>18</sup> It sheds its final tear and breathes its last sigh.

Perhaps more than anything, somewhat paradoxical then, these notions of fatigue and ‘enough is enough’ (human limits? unavoidable lessons of life?) are at the core of making along with endless movement.<sup>19</sup>



I would not dare say one creates out of frustration, anger or sorrow. However, I am convinced that the love of creating handmade objects can go hand in hand with the very condemnation of one's own creations as a kind of reflective, vengeful – but therefore not necessarily unforgiving – response towards life. But the very origins of making, I believe, are rooted in loss; loss is the point of departure for the maker.<sup>20</sup> Loss – the loss of faith, rather than frustration; the loss of trust and innocence, rather than anger; and the loss of hope, rather than sorrow; the loss of certainty, rather than doubt. Making might be the last constructive test of faith, trust and hope; its outcomes might be the ultimate traces of the maker's slinking faith, vanishing trust and fading hope. Every (trace of) making, might be the last.

But not only making is rooted in loss, also humanity – being human – and the human condition are rooted in loss.<sup>21</sup> From the very beginning we are confronted with loss; our growth and our arrival in this life, on this world, simultaneously resonate new life and loss.<sup>22</sup> *Loss as change, loss as memory, loss as liberation, loss as void, loss as new life, loss as separation, loss as lack, loss as disappointment, loss as partner, loss as expression.* Loss can strike us physically, emotionally, symbolically; personally, indirectly; gradually or suddenly. Yet, *we create loss.* Loss accumulates, accumulation creates loss;<sup>23</sup> *accumulated loss.* In our attempts to surpass the limitations of the world – those binding human experiences of loss – we lose strengthening ties between one another and undergo “loss of the world.”<sup>24</sup> But we cannot and should not infold upon ourselves; resigning from action is renouncing human life.<sup>25</sup> Losing grasp of a sense of reality and self, we must go in search of new ways to connect and to judge, to feel and to experience each other.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, as humans, we have the capacity to create and begin again, once more and over again.<sup>27</sup> Creating common ground is the way forward.<sup>28</sup> Loss, perhaps paradoxically, stimulates creation in that sense that separation can bring about curiosity. Uncertain and unstable experiences can trigger a desire to explore beyond the known boundaries.<sup>29</sup>

It is in this cadence of creation and loss, of bringing to life and taking of life, that making is to be situated. Making can be considered as the oscillation between loss and gain that both maker and creation, subject and object, experience throughout the course of (their) making.



### *The joy of making? (Making as tempering)*

To temper is to soften or moderate (to *temper justice with mercy*), but it can also mean the exact opposite: to harden or toughen something (*tempering steel; a body tempered by lifting weights*).<sup>30</sup>

Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.

Immanuel Kant, 1724–1804.

*Making: there is good news and there is bad news.* Usually one starts with the bad news, to then end on a positive note. However, I will do the opposite, since in my experience of making a ‘happy end’ is seldom the outcome -it is simply not how I perceive reality and the role of making.

In making, one creates a journey for oneself. By making, the maker constructs both a pathway to follow and one to complete. Having such a personal ‘lifeline,’ the maker finds himself/herself prodded to look ahead, nudged into (re) action and in doing so he/she can count on the creations that mark the path behind him/her. The creation functions as a supportive marker, or in Sennett’s words “like a buoy at sea,”<sup>31</sup> and at times it can even signify a turning point in the life of the maker. The journey of making is a life’s journey – it is *alive* and it is *live*. This, to me, is the most crucial aspect about making. It is stimulating to feel this ‘social current’ flow throughout Sennett’s *The Craftsman*. The red line throughout the following thoughts is based on aspects of making with a “social reflection” that Sennett raises in his book.<sup>32</sup>

#### **Good news: making tempers.**

In my experience, where drawing – physically, with matter on matter, directly via the body – and creating objects – once again: physically, with matter on/in/through matter, and directly via the body – are at the core of my *contact* with making, immediacy is essential. It is not only fundamental in the bodily and mental/spiritual experience of making, between the material at hand and myself (the whole of being human), but also within the created itself. For example, certain materials allow to be interacted with far more immediately than others, requiring few tools or basic tools, or even none at all. I am thinking of materials such as soft clay, malleable wax, prepared skins, etc. ...<sup>33</sup> Some materials also give rise to specific processes without the input of a maker, which is the case for naturally quickly decaying materials such as root vegetables. The experience of such immediacy, familiar to our sense of touch, brings about particular transitions<sup>34</sup> and transformations.

The directness of the dialogue between matter and maker<sup>35</sup> – the directness of touch – is a “grey zone”<sup>36</sup> consisting of *and* bringing about potentialities.<sup>37</sup>

It is *in* and *because of* directness that invisible aspects of being human and of human understanding become visible.<sup>38</sup> *Dialogue can only be direct.* Through the immediacy of the encounter between two ever-evolving subjects, between bodily energy and substantial energy,<sup>39</sup> and matter and feeling, expression comes about before understanding. The immediacy is a requirement for the insight into the purpose of our symbolic experiences and actions, which become apparent in the material transformations we intuitively generate with our hands.<sup>40</sup> The immediacy of making proves fertile ground for *indulging* in understanding, since it is through the engagement in action that we can bring about meaning to human life.<sup>41</sup>

*Dialogues are not static and no dialogue is ever the same.* Throughout the engagement between maker and matter, the dialogue between the two evolves as the common ground becomes firmer through the multiplying experiences it is rooted in. *Dialogue is mutual, and subjects change.* In the rhythm of making, between matter and maker, repetition and limitations, identification and differentiation, skill, experience and the guidance of affordances, the dialogue can merge the two subjects into one. The distinction between internal and external images becomes blurry for the maker and he/she experiences “being as a thing.”<sup>42</sup> Making, originating from play,<sup>43</sup> also parallels it. Just as one can lose oneself in play, one can also experience this absorption in making when imagination, self and matter blend. It is this becoming one with matter – we are ‘but’ matter ourselves<sup>44</sup> – which creates a particular thrill. In this flow of energy and through the joy of the sensory, we become exhilarated by the material potentials and the metamorphoses taking place within the matter<sup>45</sup> and within ourselves. The merging between thing and maker can go further than a state of mind and material dialogue. I suggest there is also a merging in feeling and faith; the “inner life”<sup>46</sup> of the maker and ‘spirit of matter,’<sup>47</sup> unite in the “grey zone” I spoke of earlier.<sup>48</sup> In this union curiosity is answered by surprise, as engagement is answered by the finding of a counterpart that one can take care of.

The wonder of finding by chance gives rise to a particular energy<sup>49</sup> and unlocks an irrational faith in making.<sup>50</sup> The maker is rewarded for his/her engagement with matter and commitment to making,<sup>51</sup> or shall I say his/her *faith* in matter and making. The reward of wonder is both material and immaterial. On the one hand material potentialities are discovered and shared with the maker, and on the other hand these material possibilities result in meaning and feeling. The object, the actions, tools and materials involved in making reflect ideas and concerns, feelings and expressions, which have matured throughout the very act of making. The possibility to communicate via matter, via objects, gives the maker a meaningful purpose to continue the dialogue with matter. There is undoubtedly truth in the pagan Roman belief “that the work of one’s hands can reveal much about the soul”<sup>52</sup> and in Immanuel Kant’s observation that “[t]he hand is the window on to the mind.”<sup>53</sup> *The maker is revealed through both what he/she does and does not make.*<sup>54</sup> The material reality and tacit knowledge can awaken self-consciousness and awareness within the maker, driving him/her to take a critical attitude towards his/her making. In other words, the affinity with the tangible, which derives from

making, can serve as an anchor in material reality.<sup>55</sup> According to Richard Sennett, seeing possibilities within material life has the potential to help us find solutions in social life. The human capabilities that come to the surface in making are also valuable in the building of human relationships.<sup>56</sup> *But one must be inclined to see the solutions and one must be willing to build constructive human relationships.*

I am convinced that engagement with matter enables our ability to judge values in a way that language cannot.<sup>57</sup> More specifically, the engagement with images and the handling of objects can lead to the discovery of truths by judging through the senses. In other words, both making and the confrontation with images and objects have lessons on life to teach us. In making, one is helped to cope with uncertainties and to come to terms with limitations of oneself, with the shortcomings of being human. Since making involves failure and self-criticism it can encourage the maker to engage actively in reflecting on one's limits.<sup>58</sup> It can stimulate the maker to struggle and be resistant to failure. This can help one relieve tensions by realizing that "daring to fail evinces a certain strength."<sup>59</sup> We could then speak of "salutary failure," since "failure can temper [us]; it can teach a fundamental modesty even if that virtue is gained at great pain. (...) God disciplines humanity through showing us what we cannot do."<sup>60</sup> Making and the identification with the individuality of a handmade object, can give human imperfection a constructive place in life.<sup>61</sup> Here, as in the liminality of the matrixial borderspace, between visible/graspable and invisible/ungraspable, limits become thresholds for symbolic experiences: the "liminal zone between problem finding and problem solving" helps us learn from ambiguity.<sup>62</sup>

Not only does making prove helpful on a personal level, making also has a lesson to teach us on social cooperation. In making, our body naturally finds a balance between the different body-parts and between the body, tools and matter at hand. Inequalities between the different elements are reconciled by giving the weaker partners a helping hand.<sup>63</sup> In my view, this reconciling of inequalities is doubled for the object-maker. On the one hand there is a bodily reconciliation, and on the other hand there is the object, which throughout the process of making and destructing, can become the maker's counterpart, and vice versa.<sup>64</sup> Void was their beginning, loss their common ground and uncertainty their mutual partner. In doubt they shaped one another, and in trust they bonded.

### **Bad news: making tempers.**

If making parallels play, then the 'body of rules' to be followed – the discipline, is countered by both the freedom and need to create and experiment.<sup>65</sup> But to truly understand the rules and, by extension, the game, one must undergo experience. In this regard, Sennett speaks of "the willingness to experiment through error" and "the commitment to truthfulness." One has to be willing to commit error and to recognize one's mistakes.<sup>66</sup> Growing in making, as in life, happens through trial and error. Even though making teaches one about the acceptance of human limits, the effect of making can also be the emphasis

16 of personal failure.<sup>67</sup> In making, we are confronted with loss, limits, fear and irrational hope. Material possibilities and their expressive potentialities can also be at odds with pleasure; pain might be the most memorable amongst the various experiences of making.

In the maker's quest for truth – whether material, technical, formal, disciplinary, personal, ethical, social, relational, human- the discovery of new truths inevitably brings about new loss. The faith in making is constantly put to the test by the failures the maker comes across, the anxiety material abundance results in and the uncertainties arising from the reverse side of the constructive human: that self-destructive Self, present in each and every one of us. No matter how hard we try to overcome it, the self-destructive, in my view, is present in nearly everything we do. The fear for the self-destructive is one of the permanent human losses dealt with in making. *For, in fact, every creation has the potential to harm the maker.* There are various ways in which making proves to be related to the self-destructive. Richard Sennett gives a comprehensive and thought-provoking overview of the relationship between self-inflicted harm and material invention in his book *The Craftsman*. He speaks of the dangers of making related to the thirst for knowledge as suggested in the Greek myth of Pandora and sets out to defend the constructive abilities of material invention. Sennett argues that “thinking and feeling are contained with the process of making” and can help us counter the destructive.<sup>68</sup> I both agree and disagree.

In the spontaneous commitment of making, the maker might take the responsibility and ‘ode of truthfulness’ so seriously, that he/she loses the pleasure of making. By pushing the limits of the engagement and honesty, one not only loses oneself in making, but also loses the very joy in making. *The moment I started looking for a confronting and healing bond between maker and object, and object and viewer/beholder wearer, I destroyed a certain beauty, pleasure and innocence in the act of making.* Has all the healing that making had to offer us vanished? In how far then, is pleasure an essential aspect of making?<sup>69</sup>

If we look at the material and technical aspects of making, they too might show us the less bright side of making. Truthfully choosing materials and techniques, the maker does not always find ways to reflect upon values or to accept his/her own imperfections. Acknowledging or even emphasizing the truthfulness of materials, though honest,<sup>70</sup> might also refer to a pessimistic or critical identification depending on the nature of the material. *What does it mean to identify with the fragmented, the sewn, the cut or the decaying?*<sup>71</sup> If personal traces of the maker on the object testify his/her presence, then the fragmented can be seen as an underlining of the maker's shortcomings: “I exist”<sup>72</sup> becomes “I am faulty” or “I cannot accept.” In the object, the maker persists in the destructive course of life. *Is making then voluntary repentance, for the wrongdoings of mankind, for the sin of material creation?*

In my opinion, making is bittersweet. At times it is a slow and silent destruction of oneself or of fragments of oneself. Making is neither pain nor pleasure; but perhaps it is painful pleasure rather than pleasurable pain. In other words, making is tempering: both in the sense of tempering as softening, as in the sense of tempering as hardening. The maker finds himself/herself

caught between the belief in making as healing on the one hand and making as harming on the other hand. “Befriending [this] ambiguity,” learning to work with this resistance is part of making.<sup>73</sup> *And so the handkerchief-chamois of making continues: absorbing, erasing, rejecting, contracting, unwinding and tracing until the rhythm becomes too tiresome. It can shed tears, but it cannot undo its wrinkles and stains.*

“To do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin,” writes Hannah Arendt, “and the story that an act starts is composed of its consequent deeds and sufferings.” Even though we are not the authors or producers of our own life story, we are its actor and sufferer. But as makers, we are the producers of our objects, and as users, we are the authors of the object’s life story.<sup>74</sup> In what follows, I will investigate the maker’s responsibility as producer and the object’s role as actor-sufferer.





### ***Care, Condemnation & Culpability (Counteracting the Counterpart)***

*As though the object has not suffered enough.*

If making indeed parallels play, then – bearing in mind Baudelaire’s *Le morale du joujou* – making also involves destruction and deception. According to Georges Didi-Huberman, the tension between opening and closing, between construction and destruction, is inherent to the realm of images. In order to access the image, it is even necessary to take part in this dynamic process of the image. It is however a fine line, between the destruction ending in loss and destruction resulting in gain.<sup>76</sup> It might then seem somehow out of place to speak of destruction in the line of making. Or perhaps it is even insensitive to consider harm alongside my view of the maker and the created as the relationship between mother and child.<sup>77</sup> However, the maker and his/her creations have a history of destruction,<sup>78</sup> as do images and mankind.<sup>79</sup> It can even be said that an “element of destruction and violence is present in all fabrication, and *homo faber*, the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature.”<sup>80</sup>

Could the very creation of fragments, the fragmenting of one’s carefully crafted creations, provide another perspective on the pact between the maker and his/her work?

The maker whispers to its creation: *What you are, whole, we were. What we are, fragmented, you will become.*<sup>81</sup>

Created intimately by its maker, but also wounded by that same maker, the fragmented object suffers a radical transition. Fragmenting one’s creations might be considered as an initiation for the created to enter the world beyond the hands of the maker.<sup>82</sup> Through the deliberate act of perfecting by delicately and compassionately wounding the self-made, handmade object, the maker prepares his/her counterpart for the confrontation with reality.<sup>83</sup> Fragmenting then becomes an attempt to arm the object against the bitter truths it will inevitably encounter (amongst which, the careless, unengaged consumer?). *Is this the strength of the fragmented? Will it be hurt less, if it received an injection of uncertainty the moment it was born and never knew the ‘perfect state’? Or will it merely be hurt differently; will the pain be of a different intensity? Is fragmentation – the fragmented state – then just a variation of ‘true life’?*<sup>84</sup> *Can one ever be prepared for ‘real life’?*<sup>85</sup>

Thus, the fragmentation of an object by its maker could be considered as a sign of care and affection. It is an anticipated act of care, protection and empathy for what will come. The worried mother feels and fights the loosening control over the child. *It is impossible to protect your creations from all you have experienced and will experience yourself.* In this sense, the act of fragmenting

– of lovingly and controllably bruising – is a way of preparing for the split that will follow between maker and creation: the loss of both the physical bond and the control over the making process. Every trace the maker leaves might be the final interaction.

*What is the best or ‘healthiest’ for the ‘novice in life’: protecting it from or confronting it with harsh reality? “Qu’il ne souffre pas, qu’il ne sache pas...”*<sup>86</sup> The maker is torn between hiding and revealing the truth to the object, just as images linger between these actions in communicating with us.<sup>87</sup> The maker deconstructs his/her objects as a matter of protecting, but also of projecting. After all, anticipated protection can be regarded as a sign of the maker’s personal loss of faith in a ‘better real,’ or stronger still, as predestined condemnation of the course of life awaiting the object. *With every hurt object – and thus hurt body – I create, I also confirm my personal disbelief in improvement.* This stance towards life and the destiny of one’s own creations reflects an ambiguous approach towards creative action itself. *To me the very act of making implies responsibility, it requires honesty and it involves truth.* Making is not an innocent action.<sup>88</sup> *We are responsible for everything we ‘put on this earth.’*<sup>89</sup> We cannot foresee the fate of all new beginnings; the consequences of our making may be beneficial, but they can be harmful as well. The responsibility lies on our shoulders, and ours only. This awareness brings about a sense of guilt within the maker. *Destructing one’s objects is also a way of punishing oneself for the sin of making.*<sup>90</sup>

Des faiseurs d’idoles ont été admis dans les ordres sacrés de l’Église. Ô crime ! Les juifs n’ont trempé qu’une fois leurs mains dans le sang du Sauveur. Eux, ils déchirent son corps tous les jours. Ô mains sacrilèges qu’il faudrait couper ! À ces impies de savoir maintenant si c’est par figure qu’il a été dit : ‘Si votre main est pour vous un sujet de scandale, coupez-la.’ Et quelles mains méritent plus d’être coupées que celles qui chaque jour scandalisent le corps de Jésus-Christ ?

– Tertullian<sup>91</sup>

Probably it makes good sense for humans to be in search of counterparts and most likely the maker has his/her reasons for creating companions/complements. *But what if that which has been put on earth does not want to be in this life? Does not want to be amongst humans and make choices?* For the maker knows, that sooner or later, the object will be hurt. Eventually also, the maker’s attempts to protect the object will be proven vain. Since the maker is largely responsible for the existence of the object, creation is accompanied with culpability. Or vice versa as Gilles Deleuze, inspired by Primo Levi, suggests: that the shame of being human (“la honte d’être un homme”) is a motive for creating...<sup>92</sup>

*Perhaps the attempts to protect the object were more an attempt to protect the self? Or were they an effort to cry out the force of the unintended destructive consequences of material creation, human self-destruction and one’s fear for both?*<sup>93</sup> *Maybe injecting objects with uncertainty (‘self,’ in a sense) is a way for the*

*maker to evade future blame?* Surely, the maker has his/her own share in the damage the object experiences. The creator made the object and fragmented it, for better or for worse... In how far is the maker to be blamed? To which extent is he/she complicit in the wrongdoings the object gets involved in? Marie-José Mondzain writes: "Je réponds haut et clair: (...) l'image n'est coupable de rien."<sup>94</sup> The image is not guilty, but we are. Hurting 'the other' – the deliberate 'weakening' of the object, through fragmentation or the use of vulnerable matter –, whether intended or unintended, might be 'even less innocent' then. The destructing of another subject even when rooted within the best intentions, most honest feelings and true experiences, might be only a few steps away from making the other suffer in order to enhance the other's understanding, endure life together and ease the pain of the self. *But understanding cannot be imposed.* Moreover, by fragmenting we do not give the object a chance; we do not allow it the freedom to experience a carefree life. We imprison the object: through its bruised condition it is forever caught up into a wretched state of being.<sup>95</sup> Does this destruction then demonstrate – besides a loss of hope – a lack of tolerance and empathy from the maker's side?<sup>96</sup> Are we seeking to differentiate ourselves from the object for the sake of self-preservation?<sup>97</sup> Are we sacrificing the object for our own healing?<sup>98</sup> Or stronger still, does fragmentation reflect a revenge on life, to be shared with the counterpart – the object as witness?<sup>99</sup> Or does the alliance between making and deconstructing prove the contrary: a sparkle of hope; faith in the relationship between human and object and belief in improvement *thanks to* the object? And is this then perhaps a valid reason for creating, for 'putting on this earth'; for 'filling up' the accumulated emptiness left behind by the many losses in life? What right do we have to create (*fel-low-sufferers*); what gives us the right to create (*partners in misfortune*)?

More often than not, we take a right before it has been granted. And also in creating, this tendency shows. As we incessantly fill up the folds of the world, not giving it a chance to develop wrinkles, one could wonder whether 'righteous making' is even a possibility.<sup>100</sup> On the one hand, seen from a self-centered, vengeful and negatively destructive point of view, the maker turns into an arrogant god, a ruthless decision-maker. This view reminds of the iconoclastic criticism of imagery; who do we think we are, what strengths do we claim to have in putting ourselves in the position of a god, a creator of life?<sup>101</sup> If the maker's view on life is a hopeless one, how dare he/she give birth to objects to partake in his/her misery? On the other hand, this negative view takes a turn if we think of the care one can put into making and the affective and sensible reasons for which the maker decides to fragment his/her creations. Even though faulty at times, the maker then can 'at least' be considered a responsible 'god' (father, mother, guardian), who takes upon himself/herself the duty of caring and guiding the sorrowful, but persistent existence of the fragmented object.<sup>102</sup> The maker chooses to be confronted with this call and to share this confrontation with others *through* his/her creations. The maker provides himself/herself with a counterpart, but instinctively engages in a lifelong caretaking commitment, no matter which direction the child's decisions and experiences take him/her. *The maker does not take responsibility; the maker has the responsibility, he/she is responsible.*<sup>103</sup>

And the creation made of organic matter whispers to its maker: *What you are, we were. What we are, you will become.*

I would conclude that the maker's strong notion of loss, scars his/her creations with doubt; uncertainty is cast upon them all. The maker feels that mankind wanders the earth for creating new beginnings and not merely for awaiting death.<sup>104</sup> But the maker bewails the unavoidability of the encounter with loss in human life in every object he/she bears; in every new life he/she brings about. The maker believes in action; he/she acts and interacts through making and tries hard to bring about new energy, hope and protection through the making of objects and the caring fragmentation, piercing and stitching of these 'newborns.' But the maker is aware that preparatory pain is not a guarantee for a trouble-free life and that destructing the immaculate does not destroy the dream of the whole; the desire for the faultless lives on.<sup>105</sup>

The maker experiences doubt in making, but also 'imports' it from his/her personal life experience – through human relations, the course of mortal life and the events and changes (mutations?) in contemporary society. The maker feels the daunting role of doubt, the spell it casts upon us and senses the importance of counteracting. The maker is caught up in a pulse between awareness and un-decidedness, of which the fragments are the outcome. Awareness of the necessity of confrontation, responsibility and unavoidability, in combination with the lingering between end and beginning, hope and the loss thereof, are the trembling rhythm of making... Hopeful and hopeless at the same time, making entails doubt and ambivalence.<sup>106</sup> *My hope as a maker is that although bruised – because bruised – the fragmented objects can at least count on empathy (with them and with us, through them) and help us judge, compassionately, in life.*

Now is your hour to draw your breath, but oh,  
How can I let you go  
Yet hold you so.

– Marvyn Peake<sup>107</sup>



- 1 From *Morale du joujou*, 1853: "The overriding desire of most little brats, on the other hand, is to get at and see the soul of their toys, either at the end of a certain period of use, or on occasion straightaway. On the more or less swift invasion of this desire depends the lifetime of the toy. I cannot find it in me to blame this infantile mania: it is the first metaphysical stirring. When this desire has planted itself in the child's cerebral marrow, it fills his fingers and nails with an extraordinary agility and strength. He twists and turns the toy, scratches it, shakes it, bangs it against the wall, hurls it on the ground. From time to time he forces it to continue its mechanical motions, sometimes in the opposite direction. Its marvelous life comes to a stop. (...) But where is its soul? This moment marks the beginnings of stupor and melancholy.  
There are other children who must instantly break any toy that is placed in their hands, almost without inspecting it; as to these, I confess I do not understand the mysterious motive which causes their action. Are they seized by a superstitious furor against these tiny objects which imitate humanity, or are they perhaps forcing them to undergo some Masonic initiation before introducing them into nursery life? - 'Puzzling question!' " French original: Baudelaire, Charles. (1853). *Œuvres complètes, I*. Claude Pichois, ed. Paris: Gallimard, p587, as quoted in Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, p60; English translation in Baudelaire, Charles, Rainer Maria Rilke & Heinrich von Kleist. (1994). *Essays on Dolls*. Idris Parry & Paul Keegan, eds. London: Penguin/Syrens, p24. Excerpt available online, viewed 13th of May, 2013: <http://gv.pl/index.php/main/szkola/lalki/pdf/ baudelaire.pdf>
- 2 The 'human scale' of objects might shed more light upon the reasons why much of contemporary jewelry seems trapped within a particular scope of measurements, ranging between the palm of a hand to the joining of two hand palms. The fact that jewelry concerns body-related objects naturally influences the scale of the objects. But also, as James Gibson has demonstrated with his theory of affordances, the size of an object influences the actions humans perform with it. If the jewel is often regarded as an object to cherish, protecting and comforting the wearer rather than adorning him/her, then this shift of function will influence input and expectations of the jewel, which in turn will affect its physical appearance. Adornment then becomes more an act of establishing a close bond between a human body and an object, between wearer and jewel, while simultaneously confronting the viewer with a particular message. Let me formulate this differently; if the maker desires a dialogue between two subjects, through a wearer and an object, or between three subjects – if a viewer/observer/beholder is added to the duo – then the 'human scaling' of the object can enhance the dialogue, the actions and the confrontation happening between jewel, wearer and viewer. Cf. Gibson, James J. (1977). *The Theory of Affordances*. In Robert Shaw & John Bransford, eds., *Perceiving, Acting and Knowing: Toward an Ecological psychology*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, pp67-82.
- 3 Philosopher Martin Buber speaks of art as an engagement involving the whole person: "Not a figment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands the soul's creative power. What is required is a deed that man does with his whole being," in Buber, Martin. (1970). *I and Thou*. New York: Touchstone, p60.
- 4 I here speak of both endogenous and exogenous images: "Endogenous images, however, react to exogenous images, which tend to dominate the ongoing back-and-forth. Images do not exist only on the wall (or on the TV), nor do they exist only in our heads. They cannot be extricated from a continuous process of interactions, and that process has left its traces in the history of artifacts." See Belting, Hans. (2011). *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp4-5, 15-16.
- 5 Cf. Dewey, John. (1980). *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books (Penguin Putnam), pp74-75, as quoted by Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2009a). *Kneading, Wedging, Dabbing and Dragging. How Motions, Tools and Materials Make Art*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p45; and Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2012a). *Showing Making: On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice*. In *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 5(1), p11.
- 6 Cathexis, in psychoanalysis, refers to the concentration of mental energy on one particular person, idea, or object (especially to an unhealthy degree), Jewell, Elizabeth J. & Frank Abate. (2005). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. The noun is used by Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009b). *De energetica*

- van een onkenneijk lichaam (*The Energetics of an Unknowable Body*). In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: Power and Devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p175. Vandebroek here refers to: Hérítier, Françoise & Margarita Xanthakou, eds. (2004). *Corps et Affects*. Paris: Odile Jacob. Vandebroek also gives the example of the blind and dumb Helen Keller (1880–1968), who as a child touched a pumpkin and laughed. “The concept of what was funny apparently came through the feeling of shape in a child who had not been informed by any ‘normal’ forms. In other words the form itself was ‘loaded,’” 2009b: p201.
- 7 Baert, Barbara & Emma Sidgwick. (2011). *Touching the Hem: The Thread between Garment and Blood in the Story of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5:24b-34parr)*. In *Textile: the journal of cloth and culture*, 9(3), p323; Baert & Sidgwick here refer to: Agamben, Giorgio. (1999). *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp177-184, and Sidgwick, Emma. (2009). *Tactility and potentiality in the motif of the haemorrhoids (Mark 5:24-34parr): a cultural anthropological exploration*. In Paul Vandebroek, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual)*, pp135-159.
  - 8 A selection of references: Thomas, Nicholas. (2001). *Introduction*. In Christopher Pinney & Nicholas Thomas, eds., *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*. Oxford: Berg, p5. And also: Jones, Andy M. & Nicole Boivin. (2010). *The malice of inanimate objects: material agency*. In Dan Hicks & Mary C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p351; Latour, Bruno. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp47, 70. See also Michel Serres: “[the] quasi-object is not an object, but it is one nevertheless, since it is not a subject, since it is in the world; it is also a quasi-subject, since it marks or designates a subject who, without it, would not be a subject.” In: Serres, Michel. (1982). *The Parasite*. London: John Hopkins University Press, p225. Dirk J. Van den Berg also speaks of images as “quasi-subjects,” since they have the power to ‘look back at us,’ and ‘speak to us.’ See Van den Berg, Dirk J. (2004). *What is an image and what is image power?* In *Image & Narrative -Mélanges/Miscellaneous*, IV(2:8), May, p14, viewed the 28th of November, 2012: <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/issue08/dirkvandenberg.htm>
  - 9 Cf. Sennett, Richard. (2008). *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, pp11, 37-38, 50-51, 94-97, 159-160, and Dewey, 1980: p15: “Since the artist cares in a peculiar way for the phase of experience in which union is achieved, he does not shun moments of resistance and tension. He rather cultivates them, not for their own sake but because of their potentialities, bringing to living consciousness an experience that is unified and total.”
  - 10 On the term ‘affordance’: Gibson, 1977: pp67-82.
  - 11 Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp40-41, 50-51. See part *Lost Souls (Matter and Making/Maker)*.
  - 12 Cf. on loyalty and the commitment to truthfulness of the maker, Sennett 2008: pp159-160, 266.
  - 13 Overture in Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62. On the aesthetic experience as torn between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, see also Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger and Paul Vandebroek: Ettinger, Bracha L. (1999). *Traumatic wit(h)ness-thing and matrixial co/in-habit(u)ating*. In *Parallax*, 5(1). Leeds, pp93-94; Vandebroek, Paul. (2000). *Azetta. Berbevrouwen en hun kunst*. Brussels/Gent: Ludion/Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, pp112-141. See also part *Between Overture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure*.
  - 14 Cf. Baert, Barbara. (2009d). *Iconogenesis, or Navel*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds. *Folded Stones: Tied up Tree*. Leuven: Acco, pp10-11. Vandebroek, 2000: pp112-141.
  - 15 Scagliola, Daria. (1998). *De gevlekte huid*, *Kunstschrift Huid*, 42(5), p44. Cf. “the hand carries a visual map of life,” Hallam, Elizabeth. (2002). *The eye and the hand: memory, identity and clairvoyants’ narratives in England*. In Jan Campbell & Janet Harbord, eds., *Temporalities, Autobiography and Everyday Life*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p181. As quoted by Ingold, Tim. (2007b). *Lines: A brief history*. London: Routledge, p45. He continues speaking of the “the intimate relation between the pattern of creaselines and the habitual gestures of the hand” as “another means, apart from writing and drawing, by which gestures leave their trace, enfolding into the hand the very ways of life that it points or carries out in the person’s manoeuvring through the world,” p47.
  - 16 On borders and boundaries, see Sennett, 2008: pp227-229. The skin as ‘open’ boundary: Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the Body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp38-39, 44-45. On textile (veil, cloth) as border and

- threshold, see part *Between Ouverture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure (Covering Wrapping)*.
- 17 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp35, 46, 54, 56. During making, the subject – the maker, the making process, or here the chamois/kerchief as metaphor for the whole of making – itself becomes the symptom, rather than simply imitating it. Cf. *ibid.*, p170: “L’invention du stigmaté, de ce point de vue, consisterait à faire du sujet lui-même la trace, la marque, l’impression – et non le miroir – du divin: son ‘vestige,’ sa plaie vivante.”
- 18 “And when an organism dies, it does not really vanish, but folds in upon itself (...),” from Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum, p9.
- 19 Cf. Sennett, 2008: p180, and Adamson, Glenn. (2007). *Thinking through Craft*. Oxford: Berg, p4: “Craft only exists in motion.”
- 20 See part *Sadness and Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*. Didi-Huberman, 2007: pp62, 224. And: Baert, Barbara. (2012a). *Peçe ile yara arasındaki pakt veya ete giden patika (The pact between the veil and the wound or The pathway to the flesh)*. In: *Berlinde De Bruyckere: yara / the wound*. Beyoğlu: Arter, p79; Baert, Barbara. (2005). *Omtrent erbarmen en verlangen. Beeld en genese in het werk van Berlinde De Bruyckere. (On compassion and longing. Image and genesis in Berlinde De Bruyckere’s work)*. In Inge Braeckman, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere – Één (Berlinde De Bruyckere – One)*. In: Gli Ori, pp7-9. See also Belting on the relation of the image and absence/death, Belting, 2011: pp84-85, 126, 130; Vandenbroeck speaks of the human notion of an absence that gives rise to the paradoxical feeling of an emptiness that cannot be filled and fullness that forces us to create: Vandenbroeck, 2000: p246.
- 21 For an inquiry into loss, see part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 22 See: Baert, Barbara. (2009b). *De Gapende Wonde of Het Onmogelijke Beeld van de Vondeling. (The Gaping Wound or the Impossible Image of the Foundling)*. In Lieve Van Stappen, Barbara Baert & Marc Ruyters, *Moving Archives: vondelingen*. Brugge: Musea Brugge, pVII (English: pIV).
- 23 See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*. Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, (pp126, 136ff, 144ff, 257); Safranski, Rüdiger. (2005). *How much globalization can we bear?* Cambridge: Polity Press, (pp1-5, 22); Sennett, 2008: pp1-15; Olivier, Laurent. (2011a). *Les choses sont aussi des êtres. Libération*, 11th of January, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/01012312836-les-choses-aussi-sont-des-etres>; Olivier, Laurent. (2011b). *Quelque chose s’est ouvert...* *Libération*, 25th of April, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/monde/01012333586-quelque-chose-s-est-ouvert>; Olivier, Laurent. (2011c). *Nos choses nous survivront longtemps après la fin. Libération*, 5th of August, viewed 19th of December 2011: <http://www.liberation.fr/terre/01012352728-nos-choses-nous-survivent-longtemps-apres-la-fin>. On the creation of images and (the increasing of) loss, particularly in the case of photography, see Belting, 2011: pp14-15, 146-151, 154-162. Cf. Didi-Huberman, 2007a; specifically pp61-62, 224. In this context, as being seduced by the image while it is a direct link to death and damnation, Didi-Huberman refers to *L’art, exercice de la cruauté* in Bataille, Georges. (1988). In *Œuvres Complètes, Volume XI*, Paris: Gallimard, pp483, 486.
- 24 Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp115, 248-257, 265; Hannah. (1968). *Men in Dark Times*. New York, San Diego and London: Harcourt, Brace and World, pp4, 13-14. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 25 Deleuze, 1993: p9. And: Arendt, 1998: p176: “This appearance [through speech and action]... is an initiative from which no human can refrain from and still be human... A life without speech and action (...) is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men.”
- 26 For an inquiry into ways to experience images differently, see part *Lost Souls*.
- 27 Arendt, 1998: pp96-97, esp. 247.
- 28 Arendt, 1998: pp182-183, 320; Arendt, Hannah. (1961). *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: The Viking Press, pp89-90. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 29 Sennett, 2008: pp158-159. See note 9.
- 30 *New Oxford American Dictionary*, and Lindberg, Christine A. & Rick Moody. (2008). *Oxford American Writer’s Thesaurus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 31 Sennett, 2008: pp72-73: “Art plays a particular role in this life voyage, at least for artists. The work of art become [sic] like a buoy at sea, marking out the journey.”
- 32 Sennett, 2008: p165.
- 33 Cf. Didi-Huberman on the privileges of soft materials: Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2006). *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*.



- Paris: Bayard, p34; Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007b). *Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time*. In *L'Esprit Créateur*, 47(3), Fall: pp8-9; Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999d). *Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles*. In Monika von Düring, Georges Didi-Huberman & Marta Poggesi, *Encyclopaedia Anatomica: A Complete Collection of Anatomical Waxes*. London–Köln: Taschen, pp64-66.
- 34 Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p312.
- 35 On the engagement between matter and maker as a dialogue: Sennett, 2008: pp9, 51, 12, 179, 258, 261, 272. See also Dewey, 1980: pp74-75 and Lehmann, 2009a and Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2009b). *Spiral Wedging, Spiral Thinking. How Material Makes Art*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds. *Folded Stones: Tied up Tree*. Leuven: Acco, pp49-59.
- 36 Malafouris, Lambros. (2010). *At the Potter's Wheel – An Argument for Material Agency*. In Carl Knappett & Lambros Malafouris, Eds., *Material Agency – Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*. New York: Springer, p22.
- 37 See note 6.
- 38 For a more extensive investigation on this topic see part *Lost Souls*.
- 39 Substantial in the sense of the substance's energy rather than the human's.
- 40 Ettinger, Bracha L. (2006). *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
- 41 Arendt, 1998: pp176, 180-183, 230ff. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 42 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge (p184); Sennett, 2008: p174: "(...) we are now absorbed in something, no longer self-aware, even of our bodily self. We have become the thing on which we are working." Sennett also refers to: Polanyi, Michael. (1962). *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p55.
- 43 Sennett, 2008: pp269-274.
- 44 Ingold, Timothy. (2007a). *Materials against Materiality*. In *Archaeological Dialogues*, 14(1): p7; Ingold, Timothy. (2011). *Being Alive. Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge, p24: "Like all other creatures, human beings do not exist on the 'other side' of materiality, but swim in an ocean of materials." Cf. also Bynum, Caroline W. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone Books, p19. "However we construct it and whatever it stands for to us, body is what we've got."
- 45 Sennett, 2008: pp122.
- 46 Cf. Belting, 2011: p70, in investigating the role of the face in the portrait: "The inner life, expressed in the gaze, was given a corporeal dimension in the metaphor of the eye as the 'window of the soul.'"
- 47 Pels, Peter. (1998). *The spirit of matter: on fetish, rarity, fact, and fancy*. In Patricia Spyer, ed., *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, London: Routledge, pp94-95.
- 48 See note 36.
- 49 Cf. Baert, 2009b: pVI: "The finding of something has a magical charge [...] In Classical and Christian cultural history the finding, the so-called *inventio*, is an event related to founding legends. Moses was the founding who led the Chosen People to the Promised Land. Romulus and Remus were foundlings who founded Rome."
- 50 On our faith in making, and the implications thereof, see Sennett, 2008: pp1-15; Safranski, Rüdiger. (2005). *How much globalization can we bear?* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp1-5. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 51 On making and dedication/commitment/engagement: Sennett, 2008: pp20-21, 114, 160, 177, 294.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp8, 55.
- 53 As quoted by Tallos, Raymond. (2003). *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry in Human Being*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p4.
- 54 Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp8, 268, and Arendt, 1998: p179; "In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities (...) This disclosure of 'who' (...) is implicit in everything somebody says and does." And: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce," in Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels. (1977). *The German Ideology*, C. J. Arthur, ed. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p42
- 55 Sennett, 2008: pp11, 50-51. The term 'tacit knowledge' was originally coined by Michael Polanyi, see Polanyi, Michael. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. See also part *Lost Souls*.
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp 288ff; "But who we are arises directly from what our bodies can do. Social consequences are built into the structure and the functioning of the human body, as in the workings of the human hand. I argue no more and no less than that the capacities our bodies have to shape physical things are the same capacities we draw on in social relations."

- 57 See part *Lost Souls (Mater)*. See also Sennett, 2008: p95.
- 58 Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp38, 50-51, 83ff.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p96.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p97. Inspired by Denis Diderot and Michel de Montaigne.
- 61 *Ibid.*, pp81-105.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp48, 165-171. See also part *Lost Souls*.
- 63 *Ibid.*, pp162-171.
- 64 See parts *Lost Souls (Object-as-Body/Object-as-Counterpart)* and *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 65 Cf. Sennett, 2008: 269.
- 66 Sennett, 2008: pp159-160.
- 67 Cf. Sennett, 2008: p97: "The desire to do something well is a personal litmus test; inadequate personal performance hurts in a different way than inequalities of inherited social position or the externals of wealth: it is about you."
- 68 See *Prologue and Conclusion* in Sennett, 2008: pp1-15, pp286-296, and pp82-83, 109-110; see also Safranski, 2005: pp1-5, 63-69.
- 69 "As an artist (...) one incurs a powerful moral commitment that the artist is often the clearest in recognizing," Berleant, Arnold. (2005). *Aesthetics and Environment. Variations on a theme*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p141. Also Buber speaks of art as an engagement "that man does with his whole being;" a deed that "involves a sacrifice and a risk." Buber continues: "[W]hoever commits himself may not hold back part of himself; and the work ... is imperious: if I do not serve it properly, it breaks, or it breaks me." Buber, 1970: pp60-61, as quoted in Berleant, 2005: p141. On pleasure and making: Lehmann, 2009a: p53; Sennett, 2008: p175.
- 70 Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp69, 144.
- 71 For an inquiry into this issue, see the part *Between Overture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure*.
- 72 Cf. Sennett, 2008: p130.
- 73 *Ibid.*, pp214ff.
- 74 Arendt, 1998: p190. (On the subject as actor and sufferer, but not as author of his life, and on the boundlessness of our actions, see pp184-192).
- 75 For the notion of the act of sculpturing as an act of healing, of recovery, and the retrieving of images from the zone between destruction and restoration, see: Baert, 2005: p8.
- 76 Didi-Huberman, 2007a : pp25, 35, 37, 46, 54, 58, 60-61 ; "(...) le monde visible en général: c'est un monde divisé, un monde fendu et sans cesse refendu. Monde ouvert au sens où il se soutient d'impaisables conflits. (...) C'est que l'image véhicule à la fois les puissances de la consolation et les rigueurs de l'inconsolable." See also Van den Berg, Dirk J. (2004). *What is an image and what is image power?* In *Image & Narrative -Mélanges/Miscellaneous*, IV (2:8), May, pp10-11, viewed the 28th of November, 2012: <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/issue08/dirkvandenbergh.htm>. I quote Van den Berg: "images that empower and disempower, images that conceal and reveal, images that identify and stereotype, images that blind people and that make people see, images that console and images that damn."  
On the aesthetic experience as torn between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, see note 13. Cf. on the dangers of implementing violence not only for construction, but also for destruction (undoing what one has made), Arendt, 1998: p238.
- 77 See part *Lost Souls (Maker as Mater)*.
- 78 Even though this issue is addressed frequently, a key reference on the topic seems inexistent. See however: Berleant, 2005: p141. (Cf. also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p91)
- 79 On iconoclasm, the literature is vast: see Belting, 2011: pp5-6, 114; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp97-152; Baert, 2005: pp7, 9 and Baert, Barbara. (2006a). *Woord, huid, sluiert. Omtrent beeld en monotheïsme. (Word, skin, veil. About image an monotheism)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, p101; De Kesel, Marc. (2009). *Het olijke lijden van de representatie*. In Marc Verminck, ed., *Onheil, pijn, bloed. Voorstellingen van lijden*. Brussel/Gent: A&S/ books – deBuren, pp191-203. (See also notes 90 and 101.)
- 80 Arendt, 1998: p139. 161. Cf. Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62. On the destructive nature of photography specifically, see Belting, 2011: pp159-162; "The photograph seizes mastery over its object. It rapes the world in order to transform it into a picture."
- 81 One of the pair of paintings titled *Los geoglificos de las Postrimenás (Hieroglyph of our last days)*, by painter Juan de Valdés Leal (1622–1690), features a catalogue of vanitas symbols and corruption. "The painting illustrates the thirteenth-century legend of the 'Three living and the Three Dead,' in which three riders come upon three corpses, one freshly dead, another decomposing, and the third a skeleton. One of them says to the Three living: 'What you are, we were; what we are, you will become.'" As quoted by

- Elkins, 1999: p124, referring to: van Marle, Raimund. (1932). *Iconographie de l'art profane au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance et la décoration des demeures, Volume II*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, pp383-384.
- 82** Even though I will not dwell upon it here, I would like to mention that mutilation and scarification are initiation rituals – rites de passage – in many cultures. The literature is vast: Eliade, Mircea. (1975). *Rites and Symbols of Initiations and the Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*. New York: Harper and Row; Turner, Victor. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Harmondsworth: Penguin; van Gennep, Arnold. (1981). *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: Picard.
- 83** Fragmentation then becomes the embodiment of “vulnerable devotion,” Rooijackers, Gerard. (2009). *Slagschaduw onder een Mechelse hemel in Tegenlicht (Shadows under a backlit heaven in Mechelen)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p249 (my translation). On the separation of artist-creator and his/her artwork versus destruction, see: Winnington, G. Peter. (2006). *The Voice of the Heart. The Working of Mervyn Peake's Imagination*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp146-147: “This is the predicament of the artist-creator: having finished up a work of art from the depths of his subconscious, he holds it in his hands and knows that once it is finished he cannot keep it, however much he may love it. The moment it draws its first breath, like a newborn infant, it is separate and he must let it go – or destroy it.”
- 84** See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & the Fragment* for an inquiry into these issues.
- 85** Boundlessness and unpredictability of action (and consequently uncertainty as the decisive character of human affairs), see Arendt, 1998: pp190-191, 232-233. Arendt refers to: Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht*, No. 291, see Nietzsche, Friedrich W. (1967). *The Will to Power*. New York: Random House, p164. See also part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 86** Philipe, Anne. (1969). *Le Temps d'un Soupir*. Paris: Livre de Poche, p132 (and p93: “Et s'ils m'avaient caché la vérité, si j'avais été innocente comme toi? Non, ils on bien fait. Entre l'ignorance et la connaissance, je choisirai toujours cette dernière.”) Cf. “Without the terrible things that he learned, he could have had a better life,” Safranski on Oedipus. For the fragile connection between knowledge and happiness, see Safranski, 2005: pp1-5, 25-62; Sennett, 2008: pp1-15. Versus images: Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62.
- 87** Lehmann, 2012a: pp14-15. See also notes 13 and 76.
- 88** Cf. Sennett, 2008: p293: “The man-made material object is not a neutral fact; it is a source of unease because it is man-made.” And p295: “The craftsman's skills, if natural, are never innocent.”
- 89** For a more extensive elaboration on the matter, see: Sennett, 2008: pp1-15, 208-209, 186-196 (esp. *Prologue and Conclusion*); Safranski, 2005: pp13, 44, 49; cf. responsibility versus our actions, Arendt, 1998: pp184-186, 190-192, 208, 230-247 as quoted by: Herzog, Annabel. (2004). *Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility*. In *Studies in social and political thought*, 10, pp39-52. On images as our responsibility, see Belting, 2011: pp14-15 – he here refers to: Augé, Marc. (1997). *La guerre des rêves. Exercices d'ethno-fiction*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, pp82ff, esp. 102ff; Mondzain, Marie-José. (1995). *L'image naturelle*. Paris: Nouveau commerce, 1995, p40. Excerpts available online: Mondzain, Marie-José. (2007). *L'image naturelle, Philopsis*, 10th of September, viewed 5th of June 2013: [http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf/image\\_naturelle\\_mondzain.pdf](http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf/image_naturelle_mondzain.pdf); cf. Baert, 2005: p9 and Baert, 2006a: p100.
- 90** The sin of making as the sin for imitating the creative act reserved for God, and related to our original sin: see Didi-Huberman, 2007a: 61-61, 97-152, 224; Baert, 2005: p101; Dekoninck, Ralph. (2009). *Body as Image, Image as Body: The Christian Roots of an Anthropology of Art*. In Baert, Barbara, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp58-61; Belting, 2011: p114; “Judaism saw in such human practices an intrusion into the sphere of the Creator-God and strictly prohibited image-making (...). No one should force God to animate human artifacts, and without animation they were nothing more than dead matter.” (See notes 79 and 101).
- 91** (Ca. 160-225 AD). VII, 3 in Tertullian. (1852). *De l'Idolâtrie (De idolatria), Œuvres Complètes II*, Antoine-Eugène de Genoude, ed. and trans. Paris: Vivès, p224 as quoted by Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p110.
- 92** See ‘R’ comme Résistance from *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*. An edited videotape consisting of an interview between Claire Parnet and Gilles Deleuze: Deleuze, Gilles, with Claire Parnet. (1996). *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*. Pierre-André Boutang, ed. Vidéo Éditions Montparnasse. Full English transcript, by Charles J. Stivale, available online, viewed 17th of June, 2013: <http://>

- www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABCs.html; French transcript of 'R' comme Résistance, viewed 17th of June, 2013: <https://sites.google.com/site/deleuzemedialb/abecedaire/abecedaire-R-Comme-resistance>. See also Deleuze, Gilles. (1995). *Negotiations*. New York: Colombia University Press, pp171-174, and Deleuze, Gilles & Félix Guattari. (1994). *What is Philosophy?* London– New York: Verso, pp107-108.
- 93 Fear of self-destructive material invention, see Sennett, 2008: pp1-15, 55. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 94 Mondzain, 1995: p11.
- 95 Here, I am not only thinking of objects, but also of drawings. More specifically, are human representations – whether three-dimensional or two-dimensional – not forever caught into the position they have been created – 'drawn' – or put into? Bodies, human, forever caught up into unpleasant, torn positions, forever entangled, wretched or perpetually wrenching themselves free, these human bodies remain frozen and doomed until the end of time. Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp100-101.
- 96 Ibid., p132: I would prefer to think that there was some awareness on the artist's part that the 'Wound-Man' convention was illogical and that he might have felt some empathy with the figure he was drawing."
- 97 Cf. Safranski, 2005: p18: "Man only really enjoys what sets him apart from others. (...) Plato called *thymos* the passionate craving for difference (...) The thymotic passion carries man beyond mere self-preservation to the pursuit of self-enhancement." On the role of the image in this process of differentiation and redemption, see: De Kesel, 2009: pp197-200.
- 98 The notion of fragmentation as sacrifice, see Nochlin, Linda. (1994). *The body in pieces. The fragment as a metaphor of modernity*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp13-15. Cf. also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp60-61 (inspired by Baudelaire's *Morale du Joujou*).
- 99 Kelly, Julia. (2007). *Art, Ethnography and the life of objects: Paris, c.1925-1935*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p86.
- 100 I here paraphrase my former professor Karen Pontoppidan, who during my MA-education (2007-2009, Konstfack, Sweden) emphasized the importance of questioning the need of making in a consumer-society, where '(material) things' are 'catapulted' towards us in great number and at high speed. See *Jungle and Clearing* in Safranski, 2005: pp51-56; Arendt, 1998: pp126-127, 134, 151, 252-253; Sennett, 2008: p110; Olivier, 2011a.
- 101 Baert, 2006a: p101; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp97-152. Cf. Arendt, 1998: p144; "(...) every thing produced by human hands can be destroyed by them, and no use object is so urgently needed in the life process that its maker cannot survive and afford its destruction. *Homo faber* is indeed a lord and master (...) Alone with his image of the future product, *homo faber* is free to produce, and again facing alone the work of his hands, he is free to destroy." Arendt also remarks that the experience of violence in creating is "the most elemental experience of human strength," *ibid.*, p140. (See notes 79 and 90).
- 102 See contributions from William Tronzo, Glenn W. Most, Ian Balfour and Jacqueline Lichtenstein in: William Tronzo, ed., (2009). *The Fragment. An Incomplete History*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute. See part *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment*.
- 103 On making and commitment/engagement/ dedication, see note 51.
- 104 Arendt, 1998: pp246-247, and p97; "It is only within the human world that nature's cyclical movement manifests itself as growth and decay."
- 105 Cf. "Iconoclasm (...) only succeeds in destroying the medium or medium-support of an image; i.e., its tangible and material or technical aspect. It leaves untouched the image itself, for the image remains with the viewer (...)," Belting, 2011: pp5, 6, 16.
- 106 Cf. Sennett, 2008: p293: "... ambivalence about man-made physical experience."
- 107 Excerpt from poem *On Fishing Up a Marble Head*: Peake, Mervyn. (1965). *Poems and Drawings*. Keepsake Press, as quoted in Winnington, 2006: p146.



## Sadness

9 **Object & Subject**

*Making, or The engagement between two beings*

10 **Handkerchief & Chamois**

11 **Roots & Loss**

13 **Pleasure & Pain**

*The joy of making? (Making as tempering)*

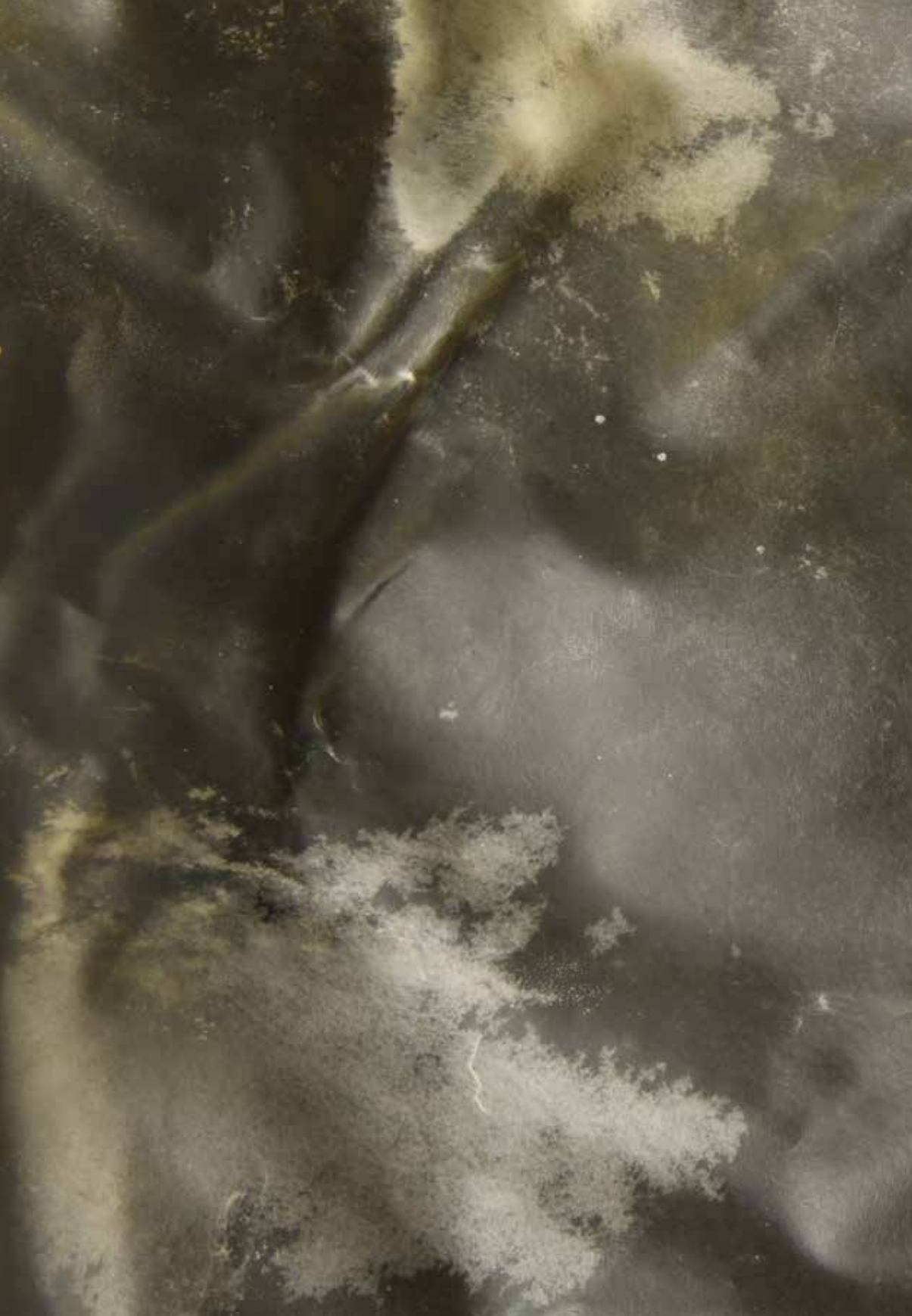
19 **Destruction & Empathy**

*Care, Condemnation & Culpability (Counteracting the Counterpart)*

24 **Endnotes**

Between Overture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure







# **Between Ouverture and Couverture, Disclosure and Closure<sup>1</sup>**

**Dissections: Six sections in action.**



See and destroy, discover and be destroyed,  
in the same movement.

– Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger<sup>2</sup>



## **Giving life, Taking life – Bringing to life, Coming to life**

“It can be argued that pictures of dissections are the clearest example of the desire to see through or into anything, whether it is a body, or – by metaphorical extension – an idea,” writes James Elkins in *Cut Flesh*, the third chapter of his book *Pictures of the Body. Pain & Metamorphosis*. Elkins considers dissection as “one of the most apt metaphors for the experience of intense, directed thinking or seeing.” Notions of piercing through, of penetration are inherent to seeing, but the very roots of these notions are to be found in “the fundamental desire (or fear) of seeing through the skin.” Elkins remarks that many methods used by artists to *construct* bodies find their parallel in the ways doctors disassemble – *deconstruct* – bodies.<sup>3</sup>

The following six actions all deal with this peculiar – or *uncanny*, to use a more sophisticated term – union between construction and deconstruction. Through these actions we will investigate the pulsating character of the image (object, artwork), which can be considered as an energetic movement between opening and closing, between disclosing and concealing. According to Georges Didi-Huberman, we face images as ‘strange things’ (*étranges choses*) that open and close themselves to our senses (*sens*). He here uses the word *sense* in both meanings of the word: as referring to *sensations*, that which we can perceive with our senses, but also in the sense of *meaning*, what is understood by the intellect. In this regard, Didi-Huberman speaks of a disquieting strangeness (*inquiétante étrangeté*) inherent to images.<sup>4</sup> We have no choice but to open if we want to see inside. Opening may imply the fatiguing and confronting actions of tearing, bruising, pushing and pulling. If we really want to see the world, we will have to live and deal with this contradiction.<sup>5</sup> This endless oscillation echoes the pulsation we experience in our own bodies: the throbbing and freezing of our blood, the pain and pleasure of being human – being body and soul, the thrill and fear of being conscious beings...<sup>6</sup> For this reason I will let the body slip and slide throughout the actions investigated here.

I am here concerned with the need of opening in order to see and know, which goes hand in hand with the need of closing – *couverture*, covering – in order to bear what has been opened and to care for it.<sup>7</sup> *It is about creating, bringing to life, building a world to call ours.*<sup>8</sup> It is about giving new form to old matter. It is about the intimate role between construction and destruction, where one cannot proceed without the other. Making choices always involves elimination. Giving form does too.

My intention is to let this vicious circle between opening and closing shine through in the sequence of the six actions below. Three types of ‘nodes’ mark the path flowing through these six actions, namely: *tears*, *folds* and *knots*. The path starts with opening caused through rupturing *tears* – to be understood in both senses of the word. From there, the path winds towards closure. At first, this closure only occurs slowly and temporarily, through softly healing *folds*, to then be succeeded by increasingly tense forms of bandaging, such as

6 in fastening *knots*. Finally, the path forms a loop, ending in *tears* – patches of tears, stitches mending the scattered tears we left off with, which both swell and disappear in the folds and knots covering them.

### **In one's hands, giving one's life**

If images close and open as our bodies do, this implies that images not only resemble us, but also behave like us – act like us. The image does not simply imitate our body; it makes visible the changes we go through. Therefore the image, in its opening and closing, can be considered an action, an event, and a process of alteration in which the body takes part and through which it is even set into motion.<sup>9</sup> In this view, image and movement are inseparable, which, in my opinion, makes way for a 'lively' approach to the discussions of actions I am confronted with in my work. My focus here is on those actions recurring in my own work.

All actions have implications.<sup>10</sup> Setting something into motion brings about change.

In this part, which consists of six sections, I will investigate the expressiveness of actions in making. My conviction is that actions are not neutral. Our actions have meaning. Richard Sennett has argued that technique has an immediate link to expression even though "[it] has a bad name; it can seem soulless."<sup>11</sup>

I have chosen to speak of *actions* rather than – but not necessarily as opposed to – *techniques*. Action, to me at least, relates more directly and generally to human life and interaction with our surroundings.<sup>12</sup> I here understand action as the immediate reactions to those surroundings. These reactions mostly imply inborn, intuitive – *visceral* – reflexes rather than the individual skills acquired through the progressive and methodological learning processes of techniques. I am aware of the fact that the developing of techniques is far more complex than I may make it appear here, but I will not dwell upon the topic here.<sup>13</sup> I believe our approach to making is related to the way in which we approach our surroundings, and vice versa.<sup>14</sup> Or shall I say, our actions in making are correlated to the way we feel *comfortable* to approach the world, to touch objects, interact with others and mold ourselves.

*In order to stop the bleeding, we dab the wound.*

*In order to see the inside, we cut open.*

*In order to hide the scar, we cover.*

*In order to know what lies below, we lift up.*

*In order to protect, we hide and wrap.*

*In order to breathe, we undo.*

Moreover, to be sincere, many actions in my own making require less skill than empathy, more empathy than skill – or even empathy *rather than* skill. Skill is present, but has developed through empathy and patience: cutting, tearing, tracing, impressing, wrapping, twisting, wringing, stitching, patching up and piercing are all actions known to us through life experience.<sup>15</sup> The tools I reach for enable direct action and intimate contact between maker and matter: cutter (utility knife), needle, saw, pin, container (pot), file, brush, hook and hammer are present in our lives as though they have always been part

of it. The materials I use relate to the human body. Some remind of pleasant experiences of warmth, shelter and understanding (skins, wax), while other materials evoke unpleasant experiences of pain, fear and uncertainty (iron pins and needles, surgical thread). Some materials are experienced as part of the body itself (skin), other materials are preferably kept at a safe distance from the body (pins), whereas some may be part of the body – *incorporated* – for a short moment in time (potatoes, threads).

To me this directness – immediacy – that the actions, tools and materials<sup>16</sup> above allow is essential. And perhaps their directness to me, not only as a maker, but also as a human being, is why I prefer to speak of ‘action’ rather than technique. Perhaps it is then not even necessary to mention that the Dutch translation of ‘to act’ is ‘handelen’ – ‘handling,’ manipulating; all words whose origin lies in *manus*, the hand...<sup>17</sup>

(...) des statues. De temps en temps, fascinés  
par de belles idées, nous nous acharnons sur  
elles, les décharnons, écorchons, décortiquons,  
déchiquetons.

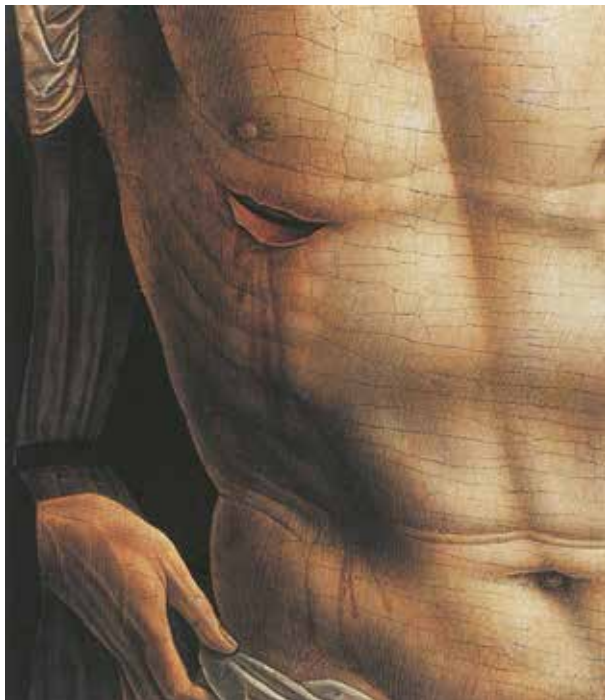
– Michel Serres<sup>18</sup>

## Cutting/Peeling/Tearing



*The Savior*  
Quirizio da Murano  
fl. 1460-1478  
Tempera and oil on panel  
87 x 114 cm  
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

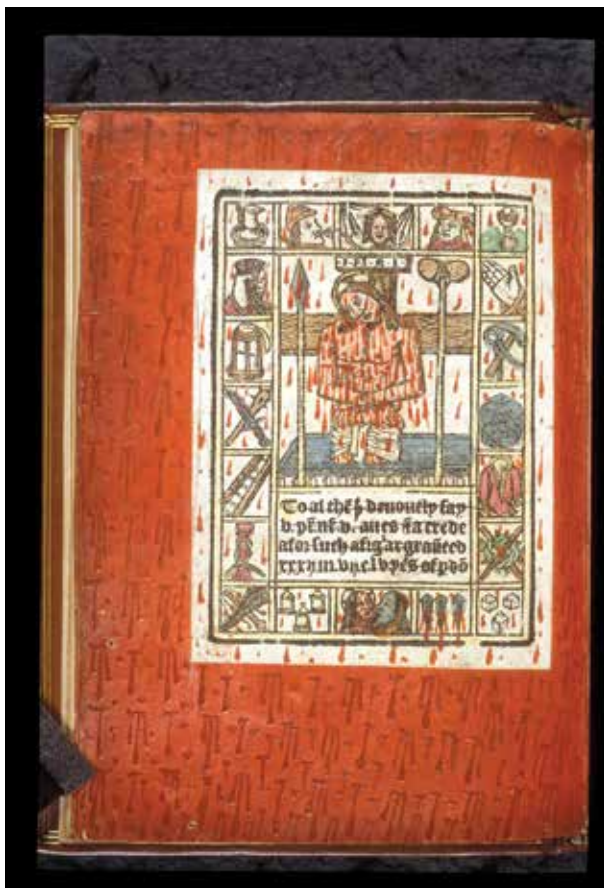




*Detail of Lamentation over the Dead Christ*  
Carlo Crivelli  
1473  
Tempera on panel  
Cattedrale di Sant'Emidio, Capella del  
Sacramento, Ascoli Piceno



*Drops of blood, Egerton Manuscript*  
ca. 1490  
British Library



*Man of Sorrows surrounded by instruments of the  
 Passion, Egerton Manuscript*  
 ca. 1490  
 British Library



*Untitled (vera icon)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil on paper  
29,5 x 20,3 cm



*Untitled (Vulnus)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011  
Pencil on paper  
29,6 x 21 cm



*Study of a hand*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
Manioc (cassava)  
10,5 x 6 x 6 cm



*Off the Sedes (Stigmata)*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
Manioc (cassava), flax thread, iron  
44 x 6 x 5,5 cm



*Study of a foot (fragment)*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
White yam  
7 x 6,5 x 2,5 cm





*Cura I (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2012

White yam, catgut, iron

59 x 12,5 x 7 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Study of a foot (bone) II*  
Hannah Joris  
2010  
White yam  
9 x 5 x 3,5 cm

## *The Weeping Flesh*

This first action concerns my first – and often also last – step to matter.

*Tears.*

*(Loss, sadness, guilt, empathy, longing, suffering, lost souls.)*

In our need for healing, we desire to be mended and search for cures. I consider both body and matter as steady bases offering powerful possibilities. More specifically, amongst those potentials of body and matter, I see images, objects and artworks as occupying a soothing role. But how can we access body and matter?

Healing presupposes the presence of a wound, preferably a fresh one, which is clean and open, ready to be treated and closed. For the wound must be cleansed before every closure, otherwise it cannot be cared for. But also the protective bandage and the cleansing cloth must be refreshed. And at times, to be truly healed, the wound must be cut deeper. It must be investigated profoundly and cleansed thoroughly.

*Tears.*

### **Past Skin**

Our bodies are enfolded by skin. Skin protects us and enables us to experience our surroundings. It is via the skin that we get in touch with others. Our first and most intimate contacts are established in moments of touching. Both pleasurable and painful contact is experienced through the touching of skin. Skin is the ‘contact maker’ par excellence.<sup>19</sup>

Even though the skin forms a border between ‘I’ and the world, we cannot speak of any sharp boundaries of the skin itself. The boundaries of the skin we perceive are ephemeral; the skin does not end at the orifices of the body, it simply *infolds*.<sup>20</sup> Our skin does not fully exclude ‘I’ from its surroundings. A quote from Elkins’s book can make this point clear: “A vagina is not only a pocket within a body ... but also an extension of the world, a small cul-de-sac of the world outside the body.” It is in this context that James Elkins speaks of the skin’s “impending tragedy of failed containment.”<sup>21</sup> At these openings of the body, where the skin makes an awkward turn inwards or outwards, we experience our uneasiness with dissection. We have great difficulties coming to terms with the opened body.<sup>22</sup> That uncomfortable back and forth while stealing glances of the opened body, where fascination and fear accompany one another, also takes place when we are confronted with the wounded body. What should remain closed suddenly opens up to us; what seemed to be safely contained in the enfoldings of our skin suddenly pours out, uncontrollably.<sup>23</sup> The body starts to weep.<sup>24</sup>

*Tears.*

### **Wound and Vulva: The pleasures of the Flesh**

The touching of skin involves the experience of both painful and pleasant stimuli. Along with their ability to nauseate us, the openings of the skin have the ability to create a beneficial expression too.

A great deal of the pleasure of making, for me, lies within the pleasure of dealing with matter – flesh. Making enables the pleasure to feel, to sense – to smell, to touch, to taste, to hear, to see – and therefore to experience the coming to life out of the formless. This parallel experience of becoming, of growing and exchanging with the creation, gives us the possibility to experience the bodily sensations beyond one's own body and empowers us to manipulate flesh other than our own...

*The potential to cut off to discover.*

*The possibility to peel away to form anew.*

*The choice to tear apart to recover.*

It is no mystery, this close friendship between the haunting and the exciting opening that our vulnerable bodies are capable of. Etymologically the words 'wound' – *vulnus* – and 'vulva' are related.<sup>25</sup> This close link is visible in diverse images,<sup>26</sup> as in representations of Christ's side wound. Scholars such as Caroline Walker Bynum have demonstrated the parallels between the wound of Christ and the breast of Mary.<sup>27</sup> What the body weeps from its openings does not necessarily have to be regarded as a repulsive loss of fluids. According to Bynum's reading, in medieval religion all bodily fluids were regarded as related to blood and bleeding was seen as cleansing.<sup>28</sup> Thus the blood shed from Christ's wound could be seen as the nourishing milk of Mary's breast. In medieval religion, the 'humanation' of God was often understood as 'enfleshing'<sup>29</sup> and "this humanity was, above all, Christ's physicality, his corporality, his being-in-the-body-ness; Christ's humanity was Christ's body and blood."<sup>30</sup> The vulnerable body – our suffering – is what makes us human and unites us. The fact that Christ's flesh too was vulnerable and did womanly things, such as bleeding, feeding and giving birth, led to the opportunity – particularly for women – to identify with Christ through one's flesh.<sup>31</sup> Flesh and blood gain in connotations with salvation rather than damnation. Plunging into Christ's side wound then becomes a journey into the procreating womb rather than the damaging wound.<sup>32</sup>

*Tears of joy.*

### **The joy of rotting**

Despite the continuous opening and closing inherent to the image, the opened flesh *in* the image remains visibly and tangibly torn. As a maker I experience a discrepancy between what is *drawn* torn and what is *made* torn. More specifically I would here like to briefly address the use of organic matter in my work.

In working with organic matter – root vegetables, animal skins – the sensation of the living skin and flesh is never far away. Treating such materials – cutting, peeling and tearing them – one truly comes to discover the sensuality not only of skin and flesh, but stronger still, the seductiveness of their vulnerability. Just below the smooth, translucent appearance of the skin lies the tender – *tearful* – flesh, and just 'beyond the veil' of both lies their natural ability to disintegrate. I would dare speak of *the delicious delicacy of the organic*:<sup>33</sup> with a will of its own, organic matter intrigues us by making us witness degradation on a small scale. Or in Didi-Huberman's words, we could say organic matter "possesses a *viscosity*, a sort of *activity* and intrinsic force, which is a force of metamorphism."<sup>34</sup> We are able to imagine how its life will

proceed, for it is living matter with roots closer to those of our own, with a relation to time echoing the (life-) time we know, delineating a cycle of endless beginning and end. Interacting with organic matter nevertheless remains an encounter with unpredictable behavior; the organic resists full capture.<sup>35</sup> The parchment suddenly starts to split into fine layers, the potato dries out and wrinkles, or merely shrinks and molds, bringing about new life and stimulating all our senses. I consider this material behavior a relief, enabling the maker to renounce from certain decisions. But to me working with organic matter is also fueled by the desire to grasp – to understand, to make some sense of – the human condition: to be confronted with it through the non-human and through what can be held in our hands. Organic matter demands to be handled with care; it is fragile, it is sensitive and is always ‘receptive’ to its surroundings. Organic matter is reactive and prone to change just like the human body is. Because of its lability and ability to ‘resemble excessively,’ it is insistent; the organic is vulgar and pushes us towards discomfort and crisis.<sup>36</sup> *Organic matter is resistant, insistent and persistent.* I believe it has a lesson to teach us, which is, perhaps to “be on friendly terms with yourself, even with your body”<sup>37</sup> and to gain better understanding of our own actions – of the things we inflict upon each other.<sup>38</sup>

### **Guilt and Guidance**

But of course, in slicing, in cutting, in wounding, in letting perish, there is always hesitation. *Tears of sorrow.* Opening implies hard work, labor, in the sense that it is a process which unfolds fertility – the labor of giving birth (*tears of joy*) – and which imposes exhaustion and destruction – the labor of agony (*tears of sorrow*).<sup>39</sup> Opening, says Georges Didi-Huberman, is ruining and making thrive (*déflorer et faire fleurir*).<sup>40</sup> In opening, we are confronted with the disquieting that hides just behind the familiar. The opening of images thus follows a cruel logic: we must look inside in order to understand and we must open in order to look inside, but in order to open, we must destruct. And in our act of opening, of destructing, we destroy – desire alternates with destruction.<sup>41</sup> In cutting the object, I have perhaps destroyed (part of) its soul? Has the object become a sacrifice for my desire to see and understand?

*Coupable* – cut-able and culpable:<sup>42</sup> actions of fragmenting find themselves either in company of or followed by a feeling of guilt. If we have wounded something, are we then not responsible for seeing to its wounds also?<sup>43</sup> If the pulsating tension inherent to the image intrigues us and if we want to continue the journey of opening and closing, we will have to make the pulsation possible. Opening is only possible there where we find closure, and vice versa.<sup>44</sup> If we drive the opening too far, too deep, the danger exists that we might kill what lies below the skin and resides in the depths of the flesh. Perhaps that is why wounds resemble the open mouth, crying out their pain and calling for help.<sup>45</sup> The tearing object lying in our hands becomes one great wound and cries out to us: “*Why do you tear me from myself?*”<sup>46</sup>

I cannot accept my objects to suffer in such a raw state. The cuts stare at me as the naked, screaming wounds of the sacrificed body.<sup>47</sup> If the object steps forward to be my bandage, I must patch it in order to rescue it.<sup>48</sup>

## Tracing/Impressing



*Wax phallic ex-voto*  
ca. 1875  
Wax  
British Museum, London



*Hannah's Sunrise School handprint, imprint  
of the artist's hand*

1989

Plaster and pigment

Ø 15 cm



*Untitled (B5/9)*

Hannah Joris

2007

Pencil and India ink on paper

28 x 21 cm





*Study of a figure IV*  
Hannah Joris  
2011  
Pencil on paper  
21 x 29,7 cm



*'Handje Hannah,' photogram of the artist's hand*  
Terry Stewart  
1988  
Photogram



*Study of an organ/imprint I*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Chamois leather, soapstone  
12 x 8 x 5 cm



*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart IV)*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Chamois leather, iron, thread, soapstone  
12,5 x 6,5 x 5 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart V)*

Hannah Joris

2013

Chamois leather, iron, steel, thread, soapstone

15 x 5,5 x 4 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart II)*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Chamois leather, iron, steel, soapstone, wax  
12 x 7 x 4 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

## *Absence, Presence, Imprints*

J'aurais voulu que chaque empreinte reste inscrite sur mon corps, que chaque caresse empêche la pourriture de s'emparer du tien. (...) je reste longtemps à fixer (...) les objets que tu aimais toucher, je cherche ton empreinte, je te tire de l'ombre et peu à peu tu reviens.

– Anne Philipe<sup>49</sup>

We all bear scars and cicatrices on our bodies. Cicatrices are the marks of both opening and closing, and of action / contact. The actions of tracing and impressing linger between opening and closure in the sense that they do not imply the opening of a body as is the case with cutting, tearing or peeling, and that they do not involve the closing taking place when an opening is stitched, wrapped or knotted. This second action moves between *tears*, *folds* and *knots*: between the opening of a body and the closing (in) of a longing.

In what follows, I use the words *imprint* and *mark* to denote physical indications of the existence of something.<sup>50</sup>

*Traces* and *impressions* are marks that have captured signs of life.<sup>51</sup> As I will be considering them here, traces are two-dimensional and exist in both physical and abstract form, whereas impressions are three-dimensional and consist of an emptiness left behind in matter. As *pars pro toto* traces and impressions both unsettle and heal. They unsettle, because they underline the absence of life in their incomplete presence, but marks also heal by providing us the presence of an absent life.<sup>52</sup> It is for the hesitation and balance that these marks embody, that I see traces and impressions, and the actions of tracing and impressing as lingering between opening and closure.

### **The first scar<sup>53</sup>**

There is one imprint all humans know and even own. It is the scar of our first wound, the first mark of action, which balances in the center of all human bodies: the navel.<sup>54</sup> It is the proof of human rupture, and only the beginnings of it. Simultaneously the navel is the evidence of the healing of a cut, of a rupture. Yes, the scar remains visible, touchable and uncanny, but it has closed. Beautifully so even. As the leftover token of our birth, it is both trace and impression, as it is also neither of the two. It is a trace, for it is part of the smooth surface of our skin, enfolded in it and delineating the contours of what was the umbilical cord. It is beyond the trace, because it is three-dimensional and is not formless. It is an impression, for it is the physical imprint of bodily contact. But it is not yet the impression, because it is not the imprint of an individual life, but a mark of a momentary connection between two individuals.

Moreover, as an imprint, the navel takes an insecure position in time; “the navel is a tear in time.”<sup>55</sup> On the one hand it reminds of a connection that lasted for a period of months, but on the other hand, as a scar, it captures the

32 moment of rupture between mother and child.<sup>56</sup> As an imprint, the navel hesitates between trace and loss, relic and absence. It has the power to simultaneously evoke an absence and to embody what is lost.<sup>57</sup> The navel is a “closed opening” and endlessly lingers between opening and closure: it is the binding knot between our inside and our outside.<sup>58</sup> As our first scar, the navel is also the ultimate mark of the connection between birth and death.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout its healing process the navel develops from a cut – a *tear* – into *folds* to eventually become and remain a *knot* in the center of our body throughout our entire life.

### **The triumph of solidification: from scar to cicatrice**

Closure – literally and metaphorically – is possible because of solidification; whether it be the healing of the bodily scar, or the capturing of the off-the-body, body-related imprint left by a human. The proof of life, the direct memory of an existence now lost is frozen through solidification.

More often than not, traces and impressions are left by coincidence, in the midst of action. This coincidental solidification of a moment of contact gives rise to a lively nature, which, in turn, enhances the power of traces and impressions as evidence of an individual life.<sup>60</sup> These marks of life have been given to us, even if they came into being as a ‘side-effect’ of an act of creation by human hands. We did not have to create a new presence to receive these marks, but received them alongside a process (of action).<sup>61</sup> These marks are the result of “direct duplication, by contact with the ductile material;” they have been invented corporeally – and not ideally.<sup>62</sup> The traces and impressions solidification brings forth are authentic; they recall the presence – the reality, the existence – of a body, of human life – a living individual. In this regard, we can speak of imprints as embodiments of “present absence.”<sup>63</sup> Traces and impressions are *acheiropoietoi*: they skip human mediation – they skip the intervention of human hands. Fluids – blood, sweat, tears – are directly solidified onto a veil; body-parts – hands, feet, fingers – are immediately cast in fluid matter. The direct contact – the directly molded body-part, the directly traced fluid – makes these marks powerful bearers of a life once lived.<sup>64</sup> But traces and impressions also owe their aura of magic to the fact that they are often found by coincidence.<sup>65</sup>

The “realism by contact” brought about in the solidification of the fluid, vanishing matter signifies a triumph of our desire for a “faithful reproduction.”<sup>66</sup> The relief of seeing a wound heal well is similar to the delight of being able to fix a proof of life. There is a childish, but deeply human satisfaction in the ability to capture immediate marks of life in visible and graspable form. In our struggle with the deterioration of life, we seek ways to capture life, in order *not* to have to let go, for the sake of keeping – *keepsake*. Since we understand the vulnerability of organic matter all too well, an experience of restitution seems to go hand in hand with the solidification of these substances. To see the root vegetable’s deterioration process halt halfway and to see the parchment’s folds stay in place give the illusion of freezing life.

The scar does not only remind of the wound it originates from, which in turn arose from a destructive action – the cutting, peeling, tearing of



skin. Gilles Deleuze reminds us that every scar is somewhat miraculous – *impressive*, since it treats and heals the wound.<sup>67</sup> In other words, every cicatrice – as the imprint of the successfully healed wound and scar – deserves to be honored.<sup>68</sup> Our skin is the locus of a life’s narrative and has therefore been compared to a palimpsest and to parchment.<sup>69</sup> Skin bears the traces of experiences, telling us about the wounds we have suffered, the depth of these injuries and the ways in which they have healed.<sup>70</sup> These traces thus express the pain we have borne, the suffering we have endured, but also the courage and strength we have.<sup>71</sup> It can be said that imprints not only mark our skin, but our whole person: for “should we not accept that (...) a subject is individualised by *the features of his malady* no less than by *the features of his face?*”<sup>72</sup>

### Tracing leftovers (from present absence to absent presence)

*Tracing*, as I understand it here, is about delineating, drawing, following, emphasizing, connecting and, in doing so, discovering and grasping. Tracing is a first step to understanding; it is subtle and always tentative. Tracing not only brings about traces, but also *presupposes* traces for us to be able to trace.

*Traces*, as I will be considering them here, are two-dimensional. We know traces in both physical and abstract form. Physically perceivable traces can be seen and touched. Symptoms, stains and spots are present as formless stains resulting either from bodily fluids or from fluids that covered a body and were wiped off by that body. Abstract traces concern visibly inexistent stains; they are impressions of life.

Many traces, however, are not even the result of direct human action. Organic matter, for example, bears traces of the life it led before it became ‘material’: the knots of twigs on branches, healed wounds on animal skin, brown spots where the apple has absorbed a shock... Such traces remind of the natural traces our skin bears; of some traces we will never know when they came to us, others remind us of the vulnerability of our lives whereas some traces merely come and go... Nevertheless, it is the latter category that might haunt us the most, *tearing* apart our certainty. With their game of appearing, disappearing and reappearing, symptoms throw us into the troublesome nature of the visible. We are wary of symptoms, since a mark of a particular life might as well signify a mark of death to *our* life.<sup>73</sup>

Spots, smudges, stains and splashes arouse our curiosity. What lies beneath this two-dimensional evidence? What does it indicate? Where does the shape begin; does it end or does it trespass on the three-dimensional? Spots, smudges, stains and splashes awaken a desire to see and to grasp – delineate – what it is that we see.<sup>74</sup>

If the power of the trace stems from the immediacy of contact, then the first impulse to grasp the formless trace that is the stain – smudge, spot, splash – also requires immediacy. We draw out our pencil, pen or brush and let our hand follow the motion of the barely visible contours and its enfoldings in the hope to define and understand the undefined. The formless stain craves to be healed in form: “*Parfois, je me sens avancer, je suis bien en moi-même, mais, tout d’un coup, il ne reste rien, ni colonne vertébrale, ni chair, un acide a*

34 *tout dilué, le fil est coupé, je suis une petite tache informe où quelques nerfs se contractent en vain.*<sup>75</sup> But “in that very place where figuration abolishes itself – as in this stain – it also generates itself.”<sup>76</sup> Tracing is also catching before the fleeting trace disappears – catching the imprint of a firm grip on my skin, the mark of the ring I am wearing. *Present absence.*

But what must we make of the tracing of invisible stains? I would suggest that drawing always involves tracing in some sort, whether it be the *retracing* of a visible stain or trace, or the *recovering* and *uncovering* of feelings, thoughts, experiences and impressions. Tracing is tracking – following – and tracking down: uncovering, bringing to light. In other words, tracing concerns the enfleshing of *leftovers* living in our minds and souls. Tracing enables to move beyond the scattered *tears*, into the fluid *folds* of the line with which we become entangled in our search to still the desire to identify what it is that we see. We thus trace *being into seeing*, making visible ‘*life impressions*’ and ‘*live imprints*.’<sup>77</sup> *Absent presence.* If we then put our hands *into* matter rather than *onto* matter, it is also possible to trace and impress – compress – *being into touching*, making graspable *live imprints* and *life impressions*. Having moved from the *visible* trace to the act of tracing, we now return to the mark in its *graspable* form – the imprint, the impression, to then continue with the act of impressing. *Present absence.*

### **Impressions, expressions (back to present absence)**

*Impressing*, as I understand it here, is about pressing inwards and outwards, and, in doing so, removing excess in order to come to essence. Impressing is about pushing aside matter to make space for the self.

*Impressions*, as I will be considering them here, are three-dimensional and consist of an emptiness left behind in matter. They are the negative form out of which the positive form can be recreated by filling the emptiness they embody.

In my view impressing is a more violent action than tracing. This violence is reflected in the impression: it is not the softly edged fingerprint, its leaking ink, or the faint bloodstain. It is the result of three-dimensional pressure, moving substance inwards, outwards, and aside. The movement of the impression, pierces through the two-dimensional surface, folds it, crumples it, forcing it to become three-dimensional. It therefore balances very sharply between opening and closure: giving a very strong sensation of thereness, of presence of ‘I was here,’ but simultaneously of ‘I am no longer here’... Did the ‘I’ – the self, the ‘life’ – want to sink in the substance more deeply? Or did it want to find its way out, pass *through* it? Is the pushing impression an attempt to hide – bury oneself in matter, bury a life – or to break free – escape *out* of matter?<sup>78</sup>

Since I here understand impressions as three-dimensional physical imprints of an existence, impressions become true counterparts of the being who left the imprint behind. They demarcate the space and matter that once surrounded the body. But impressions also offer themselves as counterparts for all other bodies, because they are permanent invitations for a unifying act. Impressions bring about the urge to make contact: we feel the desire to place the hand in the impression of another hand and to touch the inverted wrinkles. In this

sense, impressions can become more than a commemorative imprint. Unlike the trace, the impression holds the possibility to make a surrounding contact – around our hand, around its fingers – or, if we make a cast of the impression, we even gain the possibility to wrap our hands around the original form again. The impression is a mold; it is the cradle out of which we can recreate what we have lost.

According to Georges Didi-Huberman “[t]he mould or matrix (*matrice*, another meaning of the word is womb) indicates the place where the similarity (...) is formed, is established.”<sup>79</sup> If we think about human creations, human hands could be considered as the matrix, the casting mold, the birthplace, the womb.<sup>80</sup> Soft materials such as clay and wax enable the maker to move from womb to womb: to give the formless a new form in his/her hands and simultaneously leave behind a new womb embodied in the very impressions of his/her hands.<sup>81</sup> But also skins make such creation possible. Skins, just like wax and clay are caught in the “indecision between form and the formless.”<sup>82</sup> After absorbing liquids, skins lend themselves to ‘soak up’ forms as well. Their elasticity enables the step from two-dimensional to three-dimensional form. We can knead the skins, fold them and wring out the excess fluid. And if we then stop the pressing and impressing, if we then open our hands after having let the skin weep, vague impressions of the maker’s hands remain visible and graspable. The forms might resemble organs, or knots, or giant navels, seen the endless enfoldings of which they consist.<sup>83</sup> But most importantly, the interaction of bodily existence remains present. The *impression expresses* the action, the happening of forming in human hands, and perhaps becomes the most intimate object-as-body/object-as-counterpart<sup>84</sup> we are able to create. Lise De Greef compares such impressions to ex-votos and considers them as “image-bodies, bodies that reference, that resemble our own body. They are not complete bodies but only fragments: a hand, a foot, a navel. (...) The origin of this image lies in the body, and our human body leaves traces in the image-body.”<sup>85</sup> Impressions – body counterparts, image-bodies – “reference our own skin” and “remin[d] us of and confron[t] us with our own creation.”

The comparison with the ex-voto can be extended still. The votive image, which the ex-voto is, embodies the hope to be healed: it “incorporates the hope of overcoming the suffering, the pain, the disease.”<sup>86</sup> Stronger still: the ex-voto is often shaped from wax, which is formless matter that allows *reforming* according to changing desires. In other words, the formless lump of matter used to *impress* our body never tires from the task to *express* our bodily hopes. Whether it is a lump of wax or treated skins, “it adapts itself plastically to misfortunes and to prayers.”<sup>87</sup>

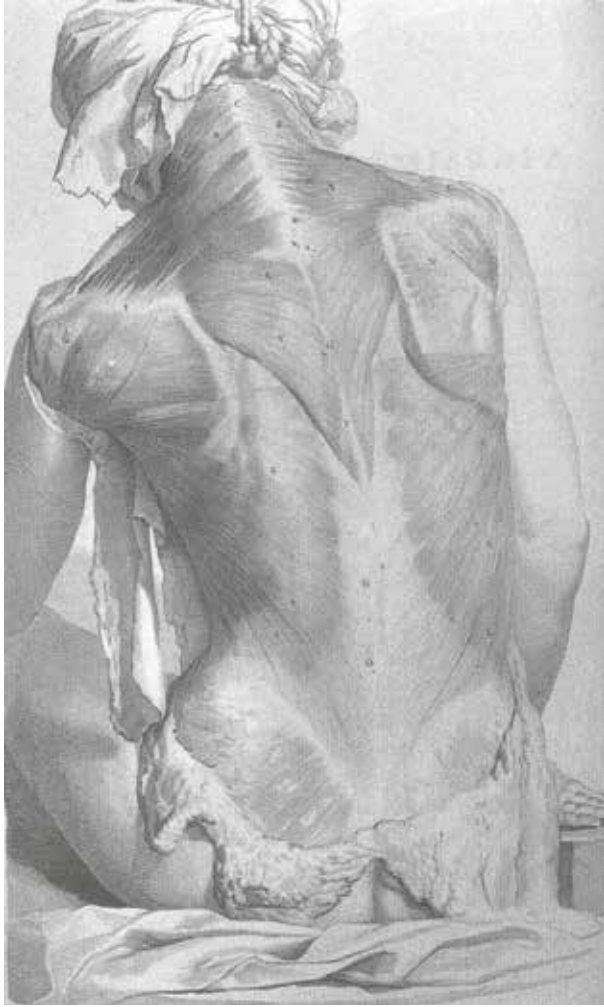
## Covering/Wrapping



*Group of wrapped bone relics from Herkenrode*  
14th-15th century  
Sint Quintinuskathedraal, Hasselt  
Photo credits: Frieda Sorber – KIK-IRPA



*Saint Veronica with the Sudarium*  
Anonymous master  
ca. 1420  
Oil on walnut  
44,2 x 33,7 cm  
National Gallery, London



*Engraving of a flayed female back showing  
superficial muscles of the back, Anatomia  
humani corporis*

Gerard de Lairese  
1685

Department of Special Collections, University of  
Chicago Library



*An écorché figure*  
Charles Landseer  
1813  
Red chalk and pencil drawing  
Life-size  
Wellcome Library, London



*Nkisi*

Yombe people, Zaire province, Angola.  
Wood, cloth, string, leather, pigment,  
power substances

H: 28 cm

National Museum of Ethnology, Lisbon





*Untitled (Cura Posterior II)*

Hannah Joris

2011

Wooden root, parchment, iron, steel, nylon,  
catgut, gold leaf

24,3 x 6,2 x 4 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior V (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*  
*Untitled (Cura Posterior III)*  
*Cura Posterior IV (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon, India ink  
21 x 5 x 3,2 cm; 22 x 3,5 x 3,5 cm; 19,5 x 7 x 3,5 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek  
Photo credit: David Huycke



*Cura Posterior IX*

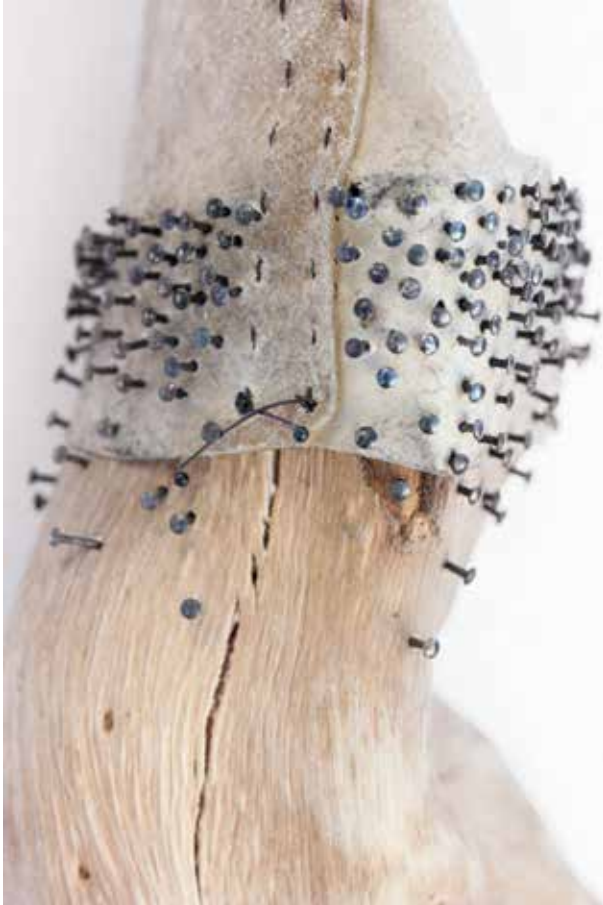
Hannah Joris

2012

White yams, chamois leather, iron, horse hair,  
flax thread

54 x 18 x 5,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Untitled (Cura Posterior I)*

Hannah Joris

2011

Wooden root, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

24,3 x 6,2 x 4 cm

private collection

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

### *Reveal – Relieve – Veil – Velum*

The moment the skin is bruised and sliced – opened – then how do we tend to it?

The moment we find a trace of a beloved one's presence now gone, then how do we treasure this remnant? How do we *prove – ensure, secure* – the wounded object/body/image that we truly cherish it, *need* it and will care for it?

The image revealed itself to us; we saw its horrific and yet extraordinary – impressive – inners. We opened the object, devoured it and enjoyed its bittersweet taste. Seeing into it, through its skin, we drifted away... To return and come to see we are not alone in our need for being looked after...

We carefully care for our wounds and those of our children. Our disconnection between maker and creation – between mother and child, father and child – is abrupt and never carefree. However, the leftovers of the connection are cautiously treated. *We dab and bandage the tears; we pat them dry.* The skin has opened, the cut umbilical cord reveals an abrupt ending; we feel it would better be covered – covered from the open air, protected against a violent gesture or a harmful bacteria. But mostly, we feel the openings ought to be covered to protect our eyes. The first closing – before the suturing, knotting and stapling – consists of a simple covering: the cloth is unfolded and softly laid upon the opened skin.

We are involved in a nasty game with the image: first we destroy it, devour it with our eyes, and now, with its own openings, through its own wounds, the image stares at us. Its penetrating gaze begs us to close what shortly before had convincingly seduced us to be opened.<sup>88</sup> *Oh, Pandora...*

I will investigate this double reflex of ours; our reflex to slightly lift the veil to peep under what is covered on the one hand, and the reflex to immediately cover what is torn and opened up on the other hand.<sup>89</sup>

#### **Unveil, reveal**

By peeling away the skin, the inside of the body is revealed. It is by indulging in the destructive actions of cutting and tearing, that we manage to follow part of the image's pulsation between opening and closing. We need to tear the skin – the membrane, the *velum*;<sup>90</sup> we need to tear the veil to see the true image.<sup>91</sup>

However, in order to receive the image in the first place, it was necessary to have a veil as mediator between the invisible and the visible. It was the veil – the protective skin – that absorbed the shocking intensity of the invisible and ungraspable – the image of the Son of God. The *vera icon* and the *mandylion*, both an acheiropoieta, have been captured on cloth. It is on the veil that the powerful gaze of the ungraspable was caught; it is in this second skin that the gaze was able to embed itself. The veil made the gaze bearable to our hungry and humble eyes, evolving from veiling to unveiling and revealing.<sup>92</sup> There is a clear link between the process of weaving threads, from which the *veil* is born, and the creation of the world, into which we – beings wrapped in *velum*<sup>93</sup> – are born, still connected to the human thread of life that is the umbilical cord.<sup>94</sup> Our

46 skin thus plays a similar role as that of the veil, protecting our eyes from what we desire to know, but cannot bear to see – the *inconceivable*, the *unimaginable*.

If we tear the veil, if we dissect the body – which we must in order to get a glimpse of the inside and gain a better understanding of the contents – then of course the power the veil has absorbed, threatens to leak again. In this opening we experience the crying mouth of the wound, the dark gaze of the hole, which was blurred and softened by the veil. It is therefore, as mentioned at the beginning of this part on actions, that the image entraps us in a rhythm between opening and closing. We here, once again, are in need of finding a balance between veiling and unveiling. We need a veil that absorbs partially, but not fully: a veil that enables us to see the relieving face of the Son, without seeing the overwhelming face of God.<sup>95</sup> For if we see beyond this balanced veil, the longing to see and to heal might be killed.<sup>96</sup> Or, on a bodily level “[t]he consequences of *not* avoiding the viscera are dire: to really see the inside of the body is to risk falling in love with the heady proximity of death, with the incomprehensible tangle of unnamable vessels and chunks of fat, and with the seductive textures of the smooth, sensitive membranes – more delicate than ordinary skin, more sensitive and vulnerable, and above all more redolent of the most intense pain.”<sup>97</sup>

To a certain extent, what is too strong for us to accept, understand and grasp, must remain hidden. Its presence – its existence – may be *suggested*, but should not be directly shown. We cannot bear the idea of a walking *écorché*: “The skinned body is less a body even than a skeleton, which we find easier to re clothe in flesh [than a skinned body].”<sup>98</sup> Veil and embodiment go hand in hand, we need the skin.<sup>99</sup> The too intrusive opening forces us to seek a new skin.

Where might we find a new bandage for our image as bandage? How can we create a new bandage for our old bandage? How do we counteract peeling? How do we protect ourselves from the piercing glance of the opened image?

### **Cover, recover**

Unveiling is making visible and vulnerable the intimate; it reveals what has been residing under a protective cover. Stronger still, it is about emphasizing what suddenly comes pushing through the opening of the veil, through the pierced skin out of the depths of the flesh.<sup>100</sup> There is no way to cease looking; our gaze is sucked into these dark openings. Their “bottomless gaze” possesses the ambivalent power of the eye: it is both malevolent and benevolent, sucking in and warding off. The intangible black void these tears embody, evoke both fear and fascination within us, since we feel they incarnate the very threshold “through which creative power escapes and returns.”<sup>101</sup>

We now thus find ourselves in company of more ‘torn-ness’; we had found ourselves a bandage with the image, but now it is our turn to find a bandage for the image. We would not want to lose what houses inside the skin, nor would we want to get burns by being exposed to the powerful gaze. We need to cover the cut in order to have the image among us for longer, and for *longing*. Covering the wound is about protecting what lies on both sides of the torn skin: the contents of the flesh on the one hand and ourselves on the other hand, as the receivers of the image as bandage. Covering concerns the balance

between consoling and non-consoling.

I believe the act of covering is an intimate act. The skin tones and the pure whiteness of bandages insist upon cautious gestures and mark a spot that is to be respected and requires additional care. The weeping flesh is honored; in the hope that the skin – the body, the image, the object – will once again do its self-repairing act.<sup>102</sup> Covering, and particularly the covering of what is broken or torn, is a way to express gratitude, respect and concern. The wrappings of relics, for example, implicitly reveal the value of what is inside, still recognizably present, but no longer visible.<sup>103</sup> But many relics are also placed within reliquaries, “completely or partially deprived of their naked visibility, as if their visible presence would be altogether too puissant for man to bear.” We feel which objects occupy “a transit zone: the border between the visible and the invisible world” for us.<sup>104</sup> Protecting these items, covering their intimate zones, is a way to honor their power. If we cover the complete object, we accentuate the shape lying below and make visible the essence of the form. The folds of the wrapping guide our gaze, pulling it outward towards the protrusions and pushing it inwards towards the depressions of the underlying form. Our gaze remains attracted to the wounded object, but sways softly rather than uncontrollably from one fold to the next.<sup>105</sup> In this rhythm we are able to recover from the violent throbbing of opening. The continuous folds of the wrapping express endless movement comparable to the wrinkles of our skin, particularly the wrinkles at those places of the body where movement takes place: the fine lines at the bending joints of the fingers, the smiling or frowning folds at the edge of the mouth and eyes, the folds of repulsion when we pull up our nose... Our bodies write on the skin from the inside, implying that the wrinkles the skin brings forth mirror the soul.<sup>106</sup> The life of the tender skin is fixed in wrinkles; we are able to gain insight into what lies behind the skin: below its surface and in its past. The soaked parchment absorbs flexibility and gains movement, which it captures in its folds once it has dried. The wrinkles of the skin are in fact “soul movements.”<sup>107</sup>

If we look at the movement of the folds of our clothing, they appear to be particularly lively at the edges of the body.<sup>108</sup> If we then imagine covering not the whole body – object, image – but only its wounds, we are actually retracing the wounds. By only enveloping the wound, we indicate the exact place in which the image (object, body) has opened itself to us. We acknowledge the wound as the “symbolic edge” where energy is exchanged between the visible and the invisible, from one side of the skin to the other.<sup>109</sup> While tracing, we rediscover the initial unveiling and healing we experienced in the opening of the image. In some cases however, the covering is accentuating: emphasizing the wound, *drawing* attention to it.<sup>110</sup> We find ourselves face to face with yet another opening and we relapse into our position of voyeur... desiring to see what lies beyond the skin surrounding the wound.

*The fold is not yet the knot...*

## Twisting/Wringing/Wrenching

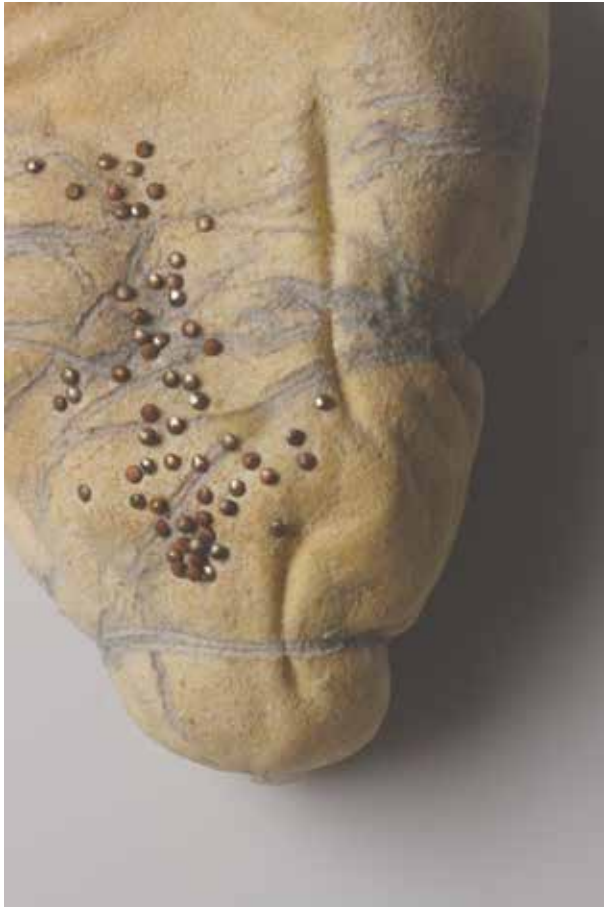


*Untitled (Phere-Nike's Wound)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,7 x 10,5 cm





*Untitled (Cerrada)*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
21 x 14,7 cm



*Study of an organ/imprint II*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Chamois leather, soapstone, steel  
12 x 7 x 4 cm



*Cura Posterior VIII (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2012

White yam, catgut, iron

21,5 x 3 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior IV (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon, India ink

19,5 x 7 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Untitled (Cura Posterior III)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

22 x 3,5 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura I (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2012

White yam, catgut, iron

59 x 12,5 x 7 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart II)*  
Hannah Joris  
2013  
Chamois leather, iron, steel, soapstone, wax  
12 x 7 x 4 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior VII (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2012

White yam, catgut, iron

50 x 15 x 7 cm



## *Torsion, contortion, distortion*

*The fold is not the knot.*

Intense folding can lead to a knot, and folds flow from a knot. But a fold is not a knot.

Soft folds take our gaze by the hand in order to cautiously discover the openings of the image (object, body). Our gaze follows the lines of the fold, but we still enjoy the freedom to shift the gaze towards distant points of the image. A well-fastened knot however captures: it does not let loose what it holds physically nor does it let loose our gaze. The knot seals and conceals.

The knot does not give itself many alternatives either. In its motion of twisting and turning it endlessly spins around, inwards and outwards.<sup>111</sup> The knot not only fixes its folds, its entire movement orbits the knot's center. Nevertheless, this fastening, this restriction of movement, is precisely what gives rise to a very dynamic friction. The struggle to break away, to take on another form, another position. In short, the struggle to undo the knot and emerge from the clench of its restrictive boundaries.

But we must not forget that the knot also connects. It connects one end to the other, it connects end to beginning.

### **Concealing & Connecting**

Twisting, wringing and wrenching are actions that compress matter; the nature of these actions is to *press* closure upon substance – to compress substance *into* closure. We squeeze and stretch materials to enhance their plasticity, engage in movement and achieve expression.<sup>112</sup> The wringing and wrenching of skin urges it to twist and turn in new directions, forcing the skin to take on a form of its own, rather than following the outlines of another body. The material results of these strenuous actions have absorbed the power that was necessary for their creation. Torsion creates tension: knots are charged with energy.<sup>113</sup>

The twisting, knotting and cutting of the umbilical cord is a secure way to physically bind the first human wound and to physically separate mother and child.<sup>114</sup> The intertwining and cutting of wire is an effective way to forcefully bind together some people while physically separating them from others.<sup>115</sup> Not only do the actions of twisting, wringing and wrenching bind physically, they also bind symbolically. The knotting and cutting of the umbilical cord leaves an ambiguous scar. On the one hand, the navel refers to the connection between different generations that is established in the umbilical cord.<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, the navel refers to the child's birth into a life that inevitably leads to death. Unknowing, the child is thrown into a life marked by a fixed beginning and an awaiting end. "The navel," writes Baert, "is the place thought of as ... the point of vanishing into nothing, into the void, into death. (...) [it is] the only sign on the body that refers so irrevocably and cruelly to the cycle of birth and death."<sup>117</sup>

As a closure, however, the knot or wrinkled mass brought about through wringing creates the possibility to start a life anew. A firm border is

58 established from which it is possible to move on – forwards – and to let the healing begin. The skin that has been twisted, covering the naked flesh, seals the wound, enabling us to carefully touch and look again at the image (object, body) we have at hand without shivering and without hurting it.

### Excess & Escape

Not all bodies experience these knotted boundaries as constructive bindings. To find oneself being forced into a particular position, enclosed within a protective skin, might imply entrapment.<sup>118</sup> The external twisting, wringing and wrenching then seeps through the skin and infiltrates the body; it *represses*, *oppresses*, *suppresses* and *depresses*. The oppression felt within, tries to escape by the very twisting, wringing and wrenching of the skin firstly,<sup>119</sup> and ultimately of the whole body. The twisting and turning body is battling itself: it struggles with its contents and at first twitches the lips and frowns. But the body can be more expressive than the face:<sup>120</sup> its torso, dangling limbs and folding joints are the basic ingredients for a rich “catalogue of expressions.”<sup>121</sup> The different body parts find themselves at odds with one another and with what they contain. It seems that the writhed body expresses “both bodily and spiritual discomfort,” as if it were unable to find harmony with(in) the condition of the body and is “plagued by guilt or bad conscience.”<sup>122</sup> Does the sin hidden within the body unavoidably find its way out? Do the flesh and bones, which have immersed in sin, therefore nudge the skin? Does the skin wrinkle because of the fluid feelings and flesh it contains? The wrenched body simply does not know what to do with itself, where to go, how to find a way out of the continuum between disclosing and enclosing. Contortion of the body, consisting of the distortion of flesh wrapped in deformed skin, is “a matter of discontent, excessive unease, and pain, and its formal vocabulary will remain in place as long as the human anatomy remains constant. (...) [It] is a universal sign for unease.”<sup>123</sup>

(...) when soul is disturbed, body is disturbed (...)

– Caroline Walker Bynum<sup>124</sup>

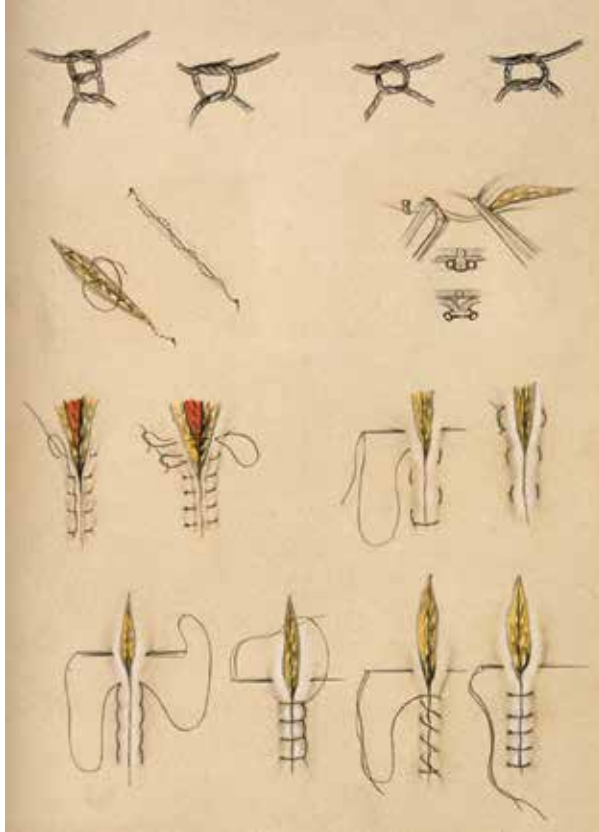
*Soaking, rinsing and wringing out skin. Moving from a smooth surface, to softly fold it, continue enfolding it, more tightly, into a knot almost, and then end with the heavily wrinkled skin, which sheds its last tears in the palms of our hands.*

By wringing something out, liquid is forced out. If we wring out a chamois or a cloth, we do so to remove excess fluids. In medieval asceticism, the bleeding of the flesh and the tearing of the eyes were considered to be cleansing, setting free the dirt and sins accumulated in the body.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, “all human exudings (...) were seen as bleedings” and blood was “the basic fluid and female blood was the fundamental support of human life.”<sup>126</sup> From *exuding* we move back to *including*. Tightly binding one’s flesh with twisted ropes was a common ascetic practice of medieval women to *exceed* the limits of the body.<sup>127</sup> Making the body suffer by binding it firmly and closing it from the surroundings by neither ingesting nor excreting, was a way to plumb the depths of the

body, and by extension, of humanity.<sup>128</sup> Since it is the fertile flesh that women share with Christ, such ascetic practices created the possibility for women to achieve physical union with him. From *exuding* we then move back to *including*. Our suffering, the fact that we can be hurt, is what *binds* us.<sup>129</sup> However, as if I have not yet twisted and turned our considerations here enough, it must be mentioned that some ascetic practices required truly opening the body...<sup>130</sup>

Do the actions of twisting, turning, wrenching, wringing and writhing attempt to establish a border, a separation, while remaining connected with the other, the surroundings? *The translucent skin? Parchment, dried or soaked?*<sup>131</sup>

## Stitching Away/Suturing/Sewing



*Diagram illustrating various surgical  
stitches and knots  
early 20th century  
Wellcome Library, London*



*Diagram illustrating various surgical stitches*  
early 20th century  
Wellcome Library, London



*Untitled (Ouverture)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil on paper  
28 x 20,7 cm



*Untitled (Hungback)*  
Hannah Joris  
2011  
Pencil on paper  
21 x 29,5 cm



*Untitled (Patched)*

Hannah Joris

2012

Pencil on paper

28,2 x 21 cm





*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart V)*

Hannah Joris

2013

Chamois leather, iron, steel, thread, soapstone

15 x 5,5 x 4 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Untitled (Cura Posterior III)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

22 x 3,5 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Untitled (Cura Posterior III)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

22 x 3,5 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior V (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon

21 x 5 x 3,2 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek

## *The Need of Mending the Cut-off Wound*

Has the pen or pencil dipped so deep in the blood of  
the human race as the needle?<sup>132</sup>

A cover can be lifted and the loose knot can be untied. If we drench the skin that was wrung into a knot-shape it can also be undone. Once the skin is soaked its folds will flatten, the tension will fade and the torsion will untwist. Whatever the skin was covering, is now naked. Whatever it was hiding inside has now been revealed. Whatever it held onto, now slips away... *From closure to exposure.*

The knot provides the possibility to secure the closure of the covering. Similar to the knot, also the stitch – the seam – has the ability to secure the cover protecting the wound. However, in order to secure closure, the stitch must perforate the skin. Since it has the habit of concealing, the stitch secretly – for guilt is at stake here – pierces the skin, doing on a small scale what it must undo on a large scale, namely, opening.

### **Closing in the wake of opening**

The stitch requires something that pierces and pulls – a needle – and a substance that binds – thread, or hair for that matter. The act of stitching consists of the union of needle and thread in the rhythmic weaving in and out of soft matter. Before considering the implications of the needle pushing through the skin, let us first focus on the binding thread.

Stitching, as I understand it here, parallels the impact of the knot: it closes and binds, and secures the cover. Therefore I will focus on the role of stitching for closure, to bring together again the separated skin on both sides of the wound. When the body opens, we see to it that the wound and our eyes cannot exchange too many glances. We bandage the wound; we force it to hold its breath. We rinse it thoroughly, preventing the wound to let in as much dirt as it spilled over us. After carefully selecting a stitch from our vast collection of skillful sutures, we sew up the wound, impeding the tear to expand over the whole body.<sup>133</sup> Mending an object implies the closing of a body. However, because of my own practice, the sewing I will focus on here concerns the joining of bits of skin that cover a fragmented piece: the stitching of the cover surrounding the wound at the edge of an oblong body. It is about protecting the wound and only the wound, not the entire body. Stitching then becomes the sealing of an embrace: the sealing of the enfolding gesture the cover makes around the bruised edge of the body or the sealing of the inclusive motion the tubular wrung knot insists upon. Besides sealing the closure and the opening, the stitch also accentuates the locus of the wound and, in doing so, warns us to approach it with care.

The relation between the edges of the body and stitching is a particular one. If we consider the clothing covering our bodies – our second skin, we come to notice that hems are present at the extremities: the limbs (hands and

feet) and the neck (where torso and head connect). All edges – borders – and therefore also the hem, are vulnerable areas; they are the first to be rounded off or, more violently, cut off. “As a locus,” writes Baert, “the hem frames a time that is felt as a wound, an opening, and a cut in the fabric.”<sup>134</sup> Lifting the hem “implies revealing a vulnerable part of the body,” bringing about erotic feelings as well as feelings of shame.<sup>135</sup>

But edges also embody zones of transition, between inside and outside, between ‘I’ and ‘the other.’<sup>136</sup> Edges are places of contact that establish unity between two separate entities. In the biblical story of the Haemorrhissa – the woman with an issue of blood, it is the touching of Christ’s hem that heals her.<sup>137</sup> The hem then becomes both a symbol and an image for completeness, referring to “the place of (pro)creation itself: the womb.”<sup>138</sup> I believe that the stitch emphasizes the importance of connection; only what is worthwhile is stitched. Excessive stitching means there is something to be saved and cherished.<sup>139</sup> Stitching can reconnect what has been slit and it can correct what is tearing. It can connect skin to skin, skin to thread, thread to needle and therefore skin to needle. Ultimately then, stitching can connect body to body. The place where the object was wounded is sewn up and now bears a needle: it becomes the place of connection to the human body. As in knotting and twisting, stitching not only connects different body parts, but entire bodies.

The stitch consists of a thread. As a physical line,<sup>140</sup> the thread flows from one side of the skin to the other and from one skin to another. Even though both the movement and the pattern it makes might be cyclic, the thread has a beginning and an end to it. These ends matter, for if we do not fasten them, the seam loosens and the skin will tear again along its original cut. We do not want to imagine what would happen if the umbilical cord were not to be tidily cut off, firmly knot and tucked in, but to be left dangling freely... To secure the stitch and the seam, we must repeat the same stitch several times or knot the thread firmly. We can then still choose to either leave the ends or cut them completely. Regardless of the type of thread used – whether it is a soft natural thread, hard wire, brittle hair or resilient synthetic thread – its ends are new edges, reaching out into the world. Perhaps that is why some cultures experience the touching of textile ends as being in contact with points of energy, comparing “the cutting and tying off of their creation with the cutting of the umbilical cord.”<sup>141</sup>

### **Opening in the wake of closing**

Stitching openings can also be painful and dangerous; if we close the orifices of the body, life is hardly imaginable, let alone possible.<sup>142</sup>

Stitching hurts. When we are involved in a physically demanding action and feel sudden sharp pains in the side of the body, we speak of having ‘stitches in our side.’<sup>143</sup> In the action of suturing the needle pierces through the skin and into the flesh to then move outwards again from the *flesh side* to the *hair side*.<sup>144</sup> The movement demands concentration and caution; by jerking the thread or wrenching the needle, we threaten to tear the skin. By piercing the needle through the skin, we make small incisions that always run the risk to be enlarged by the thread they hold. Any pulling of the thread, whether by

intentional or accidental force, will cause the microscopic holes to become gaping wounds, merging into the mother wound. Likewise, if we find ourselves absorbed in the act of excessive stitching, unable to stop, the surface becomes smudged with stitches and tears. The stitches and the holes making possible their existence, take over the skin, thus severely wounding it and transforming the skin into a whole of piercings – one great hole, one giant wound.<sup>145</sup>

## Piercing/Stabbing/Penetrating



*Pfula Nkombe figure*

before 1909, Yombe, Congo

Wood, metal, mirror, pigments, shell, raffia fibers,  
textile, feathers, other mixed media

58,5 x 25 x 16 cm

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven





*Mungundu figure*  
before 1909, Yombe, Congo  
Wood, mirror, metal, textile, fibers, pigments  
95 x 38 x 24 cm  
Université Catholique de Louvain



*Untitled (Pinned Pleurant)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
Pencil and India ink on paper  
14,5 x 10 cm



*Untitled (The Stranger)*

Hannah Joris

2012

Pencil on paper

28,2 x 21 cm



*Cura II (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2012

White yam, catgut, iron

55 x 10 x 6,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura I (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
White yam, catgut, iron  
59 x 12,5 x 7 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior IV (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*

Hannah Joris

2011

White yam, parchment, iron, steel, nylon, India ink

19,5 x 7 x 3,5 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Cura Posterior VI (Ni Dieu, ni maître)*  
Hannah Joris  
2012  
White yam, catgut, iron  
59 x 12,5 x 7 cm  
Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



*Study of an organ/imprint (Counterpart I)*

Hannah Joris

2013

Chamois leather, iron, steel, thread, soapstone, wax

14 x 6 x 4 cm

Courtesy Gallery Caroline Van Hoek



## *A Pinned-down Story*

We have cut open images, we have pierced our skin and that of others and we have destroyed the objects once made by caring hands. By preventing one disaster, we accelerate another. Human insight tends to run late. First we look for solutions in line with the world we have been given: we patch wounds with skin substitutes such as leather and parchment and fasten them with animal cords such as catgut and horsehair.<sup>146</sup> But we are increasingly out of step with the world we received and created. Our interventions increase in quantity and impact. Our fixation with securing drives us to create ever more drastic bandages for our wounds. And so, after indulging in the guilty pleasure of slitting the skin, we sought to close it. We tried to undo our mistake by, respectively, meticulously cleansing the wound, pressing its sides together, gently covering it, to then continue in a more violent nature by knotting and stitching it. We are driven to despair: nothing appears to last, no closure is permanent.

### **Severing & Persevering**

By driving nails through the skin and into the flesh, we force a passage from out-of-the-body to into-the-body. The piercing brought about by stabbing pins into a body is more violent than the piercing occurring while stitching. Whereas the puncturing of the skin in sewing is simply necessary in order to achieve closure, the piercing of a pin into the flesh is often about the perforating act itself. Pushing a pin into a body implies severing the skin and flesh, but the pin can only sink into the flesh as deep as its length allows it to. The act of piercing ends far more abruptly than the cutting, impressing, enfolding, knotting or stitching of a body. In piercing we encounter resistance; we experience our limits and are confronted with our natural reactions to counter resistance.<sup>147</sup>

Stubbornly, we push the nail harder, so hard that it leaves red impressions of its head on our fingertips, or causes the palms of our hands to bleed. We curse and beg the pin to plow a way through; to create an entrance into the body and remain firmly enclosed by the flesh it has driven apart. We need to experience the life gushing within our bodies; we must access our *caro radicalis*<sup>148</sup> in order to achieve sensations of union and understand our condition and that of our images.<sup>149</sup> Our perseverance is answered by pain, and whether it is ecstatic or erotic, one might wonder whether the importance of piercing then lies in its strength of reminding us of our limits and countering our actions of desperation rather than multiplying our possibilities to repair our mistakes. In the very mending of our wounds then lies the reminder we should not have wounded in the first place...

The more effectively the body resists our piercing of it, the more attempts we will have to make.<sup>150</sup> Density: the body's smooth skin then gradually transforms into a rough, spotted landscape. The body becomes heavy, carrying the burden of all our attempts. If we don't recognize any limits, the body will eventually crack.

**Pin / plug / pacifier**

Piercing a body creates the possibility for bodily fluids to seep out of the skin containing them. The body suddenly feels the urge to cry: it sheds tears and blood. Seeing the object crack in our hands, and feeling the painful impressions in our own hands, we feel sudden remorse. *Our eyes start to tear, we cry, we weep.* Our guilty flesh cleanses itself through it tears, which in turn have the power to bring about confession. We can trace the moments of remorse and confession by moving from pin to pin. *Monologue extérieur.*<sup>151</sup>

Pushing a pin into a body severs the skin and the flesh it conceals, but in doing so, the pin also attaches the skin to the flesh. The flesh wraps itself around the pin, embedding it in its cycle of renewal and deterioration. Thrusting pins into organic material when it is still soft and juicy enables a strong attachment: the flesh dries and shrinks around the pin, creating a steady connection between both materials.

Pins thus simultaneously open and close the flesh. They function as plugs, ceasing the weeping of the flesh, forcing the body to stop shedding tears and pacifying the subject.<sup>152</sup> *Hush now, wound.*

Piercing your fragments  
Sculpting your fragments.  
As sculpting you,  
Seeking proximity.  
Creating your repentance  
Forcing respect  
and creating forgiveness.

You're a pinned down story.



## Introduction

- 1 Closure as in the common meaning of the word as “an act or process of closing something” (Jewell, Elizabeth J. & Frank Abate. (2005). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.), but also as used in psychology for the experience of an emotional conclusion to a difficult event in life: “Closure (...) is a universal human experience in which emotions surrounding uncertainties about the fate of a relative or friend lost in a disaster are resolved to some degree by identification of the victim through the use of physical evidence.” Gould, Richard A. (2007). *Disaster Archaeology*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, p13.  
*Ouverture*, inspired by Georges Didi-Huberman’s reflections on the image as a pulsation between closing – *fermeture* – and opening – *ouverture* – and the entitling of his introduction as *Ouverture*. Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007a). *L’image ouverte. Motifs de l’incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard. See pp25-62.
- 2 As quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, Piet Coesens, Rosi Huhn, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Brian Massumi & Griselda Pollock. (2000). *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. Artworking 1985-1999*. Brussels/Gent-Amsterdam: Ludion/PSK, p11. Text originally published in Ettinger, Bracha L. (1993). *Matrix Halal(a)-Lapsus. Notes on Painting*. Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.
- 3 Elkins, James. (1999). *Pictures of the Body. Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp127-128.
- 4 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p25. On the aesthetic experience as torn between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, see also Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger and Paul Vandenbroeck: Ettinger, Bracha L. (1999). *Traumatic wit(h) ness-thing and matrixial co/in-habit(u) ating*. In *Parallax*, 5(1). Leeds, pp93-94; Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2000). *Azetta. Berbervrouwen en hun kunst*. Brussels/Gent: Ludion/Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, pp112-141.
- 5 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp37, 42, 46, 56, 58.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp25ff. See also part *Lost Souls*. Vandenbroeck, Paul. (2009b). *De energetica van een onkenlijk lichaam (The energetics of an unknowable body)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, pp174-204; Rooijackers, Gerard. (2009). *Slagschaduwven onder een Mechelse hemel in Tegenlicht (Shadows under a backlit heaven in Mechelen)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, p247. Rooijackers refers to Merckx, Marianne. (1998). *Een alledaags geheim. De sacraliteit van het bestaan*. In Marianne Merckx, Anne-Claire Mulder & Leo Oosterveen, eds., *Bedacht zijn op het onbedachte. Over het alledaagse en het godelijke in theologisch perspectief*. Zoetermeer: Meinema, pp50-54.
- 7 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp42, 46, 61-62, 224; Elkins, 1999: pp111-112, 132-134; Baert, Barbara. (2006a). *Woord, huid, sluier. Omtrent beeld en monotheïsme. (Word, skin, veil. About image an monotheism)*. In Rolf Quaghebeur & Idalie Vandamme, eds., *mens. Verhaal van een wonde. (mankind: Story of a Wound)*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, pp105-107 (English: pp134-135); Baert, Barbara. (2000). *The Gendered Visage: Facets of the Vera Icon*. In Paul Vandenbroeck, ed., *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum Annual)*, pp18-23.
- 8 Cf. Arendt on reification and the role of creation for our ability to relate to one another and to the world: Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: pp95, 139-144, 168-169.
- 9 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp30-32, 35. On the image as “*évènement*, strict *avènement*” see also Mondzain, Marie-José. (1995). *L’image naturelle*. Paris: Nouveau commerce, 1995, p40. Excerpts available online, Mondzain, Marie-José. (2007). *L’image naturelle, Philopsis*, 10th of September, viewed 5th of June 2013: [http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf\\_image\\_naturelle\\_mondzain.pdf](http://www.philopsis.fr/IMG/pdf_image_naturelle_mondzain.pdf).
- 10 Arendt, 1998: pp188-192, 230-236, 244.
- 11 Sennett, Richard. (2008). *The Craftsman*. London: Penguin, p149. See also: Gell, Alfred. (1992). *The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology*. In Jeremy Coote & Anthony Shelton, eds., *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp40-66. Gell writes: “The power of art objects stems from the technical processes

- they objectively embody: the technology of enchantment is founded on the enchantment of technology," (p44).
- 12 Cf. Arendt on importance of action in and for human life: Arendt, 1998: pp175-184, 230ff. Cf. Jean Arp on embroidery: "Embroidery is more natural than oil painting..." From: Arp, Jean. (1974). *Jean (Hans) Arp: Collected French Writings*. Marcel Jean, ed., London: Calder and Boyars, p232, as quoted by Parker, Rozsika (1984). *The Subversive Stitch. Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. London: The Women's Press, p191. Cf. "the threading, twisting and knotting of fibres were among the most ancient of human arts, from which all else was derived, including both building and textiles. Even before they were building houses with walls (...) they were weaving enclosures (...) and even before they were weaving cloth, they were sewing and stitching nets and corselets." Semper, Gottfried. (1989). *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp218-219, 231, 254, as quoted by Ingold, Tim. (2007b). *Lines: A brief history*. London: Routledge, p42.
- 13 Belting, Hans. (2011). *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp1-13. Belting warns us for the losses we risk in approaching images as "mere artifacts of technology." As Belting suggests, "we need an anthropological perspective to ground the double nature of images," and I believe that here an inquiry into actions rather than techniques will help us forward in this regard. *Ibid.*, pp15-17, 36, 38-39.
- 14 Cf. Sennett, 2008: pp6-9, 288-291, 295-296. And: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce," in Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels. (1977). *The German Ideology*, C. J. Arthur, ed. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p42. See also Arendt, 1998: p179; "In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities (...) This disclosure of 'who' (...) is implicit in everything somebody says and does."
- 15 Cf. Barbara Baert on the work of Berlinde De Bruyckere "They [the sculptures, injured bodies] have been invited by the artist to be looked after (...) We must listen to them tenderly and look at them with a mild heart. We must be patient, take our time, and then, once, we too will know. (...) And Berlinde De Bruyckere whispers to the sculptures: "I will heal you, stitch up your wounds, bandage you, revive you, support you, mould you, knead you, draw you, cover you. Longing." Baert, Barbara. (2005). *Omtrent erbarmen en verlangen. Beeld en genese in het werk van Berlinde De Bruyckere*. (On compassion and longing. Image and genesis in Berlinde De Bruyckere's work). In Inge Braeckman, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere - Een (Berlinde De Bruyckere - One)*, Prato: Gli Ori, pp8-9. In Rooijakker's vein, I would like to believe that such spontaneous, human actions lead to objects that "embody vulnerable devotion," Rooijakkers, 2009: p249 (my translation).
- 16 Cf. Georges Didi-Huberman's inquiry into the nearly exclusive use of 'humble materials' (wax, papier mâché, clay, softwood, silver leaf) in ex-votos. Didi-Huberman writes that wax as "a material endowed with plasticity signifies that it is spontaneously devoted to the fabrication of images." Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2007b). *Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time*. In *L'Esprit Créateur*, 4(3), Fall, p8. And (French): Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2006). *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*. Paris: Bayard, p34.
- 17 Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2001a). *De hand als hoofd zaak*, In *Kunstschrift De Hand* 45(4), p3.
- 18 Serres, Michel. (1990). *Distraction*. In Anne Pingeot, ed., *Le corps en morceaux*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, p33.

### Cutting/Peeling/Tearing

- 19 Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (1998). *Vlees kleuren*, In *Kunstschrift Huid* 42(5), p10. "[S]kin is the principal component of our identity, both hiding and betraying our inner selves," in: Ash, Caroline. (2010). *Skin Overlooked (Exhibition Wellcome Collection London)*. In *Science* 13th of August 2010, 329(5993), pp760-761, viewed 7th of November, 2010: <https://www.sciencemag.org/content/329/5993/760.short?related-urls=yes&legid=sci;329/5993/760-a>.
- 20 Elkins, 1999: pp36-45, 61. See also Lupton, Ellen. (2002). *Skin: Surface, Substance + Design*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, p29: "[The skin] lacks definitive boundaries, flowing continuously from the exposed surfaces of the body to its internal cavities." For the distinction between boundary and border – the border as both a connection and separation, versus the boundary as separation only – see Sennett, 2008: pp228-231.

- 21 Elkins, 1999: pp44-45. See also Ash, 2010: p761.
- 22 Ibid., pp134.
- 23 Cf. Elkins on Francis Bacon's paintings: Ibid., pp44-45 and p124: "... a corrupted skin is enough to show that the body is decomposing." With the opening of the body through the wound, towards the flesh, we are reminded of Bataille's concept of the formless (*l'informe*). From the domain of the (human) eye and logos, we move towards the (animal) mouth and its capacity to chew and devour. (English) *Formless* in Bataille, Georges. (1985). *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Allan Stoekl, ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p31. (French) *Informe* in Bataille, Georges. (1970). *Œuvres complètes, Volume I*. Paris: Gallimard, p217; Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp50, 52, 332-333; Mengoni, Angela. (2009). *De wonde. Een theoretisch object om het lichaam te denken*. In Marc Verminck, ed., *Onheil, pijn, bloed. Voorstellingen van lijden*. Gent: A&S/books, pp79-81. See also note 26.
- 24 To weep can signify both 'to shed tears' and 'to exude liquid,' for example: "*she rubbed one of the sores, making it weep.*" *New Oxford American Dictionary*.
- 25 For the link between *vulnus* and *vulva*: see Baert; Baert, 2000: pp36ff.; Baert, Barbara. (2009b). *De Gapende Wonde of Het Onmogelijke Beeld van de Vondeling. (The Gaping Wound or the Impossible Image of the Foundling)*. In Lieve van Stappen, Barbara Baert & Marc Ruyters, *Moving Archives: vondelingen*. Brugge: Musea Brugge, pXIII; Baert, Barbara. (2009c). *Folds of thought, or The encounter in an intermediate space*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p21; Baert, Barbara. (2012a). *Peçe ile yara arasındaki pakt veya ete giden patika (The pact between the veil and the wound or The pathway to the flesh)*. In Ilkay Baliç, ed., *Berlinde De Bruyckere: yara / the wound*. Beyoğlu: Arter, pp85-87. See also Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p46.
- 26 Cf. Vandenbroeck on the relation between vulva, mouth, vagina dentata, uterus, the 'nameless motif,' almond shape, rhombus and mandorla: Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp112-141, 197.
- 27 Bynum, Caroline W. (1992). *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone Books, pp102-106, 133, 206-210, 213-215, 278-279.
- 28 Ibid., p87.
- 29 Ibid., p90.
- 30 Ibid., p129.
- 31 Ibid. (See for example: pp102, 116, 135, 146, 150, 178-179, 204-205).
- 32 Ibid., p278.
- 33 Cf. Elkins, 1999: p149. "The consequences of not avoiding the viscera are dire: to really see the inside of the body is to risk falling in love with the heady proximity of death, with the incomprehensible tangle of unnamable vessels and chunks of fat, and with the seductive textures of the smooth, sensitive membranes – more delicate than ordinary skin, more sensitive and vulnerable, and above all more redolent of the most intense pain."
- 34 Didi-Huberman, Georges. (2008). *Viscosities and Survivals Art History put to the test by the Material*. In Roberta Panzanelli, ed., *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*. Los Angeles, p155. He here also refers to Sartre, Jean-Paul. (1943). *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*. Paris: Gallimard, pp698-703.
- 35 Cf. Didi-Huberman on the resistance of devotional images to any perceptible evolution as related to their "organic vulgarity." Didi-Huberman, 2007b: p7; Didi-Huberman, 2006: p8.
- 36 Didi-Huberman, 2007b: pp7, 9; 2008: p155. Cf. in Didi-Huberman's discourse of the *trompe l'oeil* as "reeking of the real, of the rotten," he observes that in such images "tactile emotion is no longer identified with a passing illusion. It is insistent, and condemns us to a much fouler anxiety." Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999b). *Contact Images*. In *Tympanum. A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, 3(1522-7723). Los Angeles: University of Southern California, viewed 20th of June 2013: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/3/>.
- 37 Safranski p. 59-60 – however used within a different context.
- 38 Cf. Elkins, 1999: p258: "The encounter with new ways of conceiving bodies takes place in large measure through the experience of new ways of making bodies (...)." See also Belting, 2011: pp9, 17, 72. Cf. on art as lending visibility to aspects of the body that have been eliminated on other moralistic levels, see: Ammicht-Quinn, Regina. (2009). *Cult, culture and ambivalence: images and imaginations of the body in Christian traditions and contemporary lifestyles*. In Barbara Baert, ed., *Fluid Flesh. The body, religion and the visual arts*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp67-71.
- 39 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p37. Cf. Nadejje Laneyrie-Dagen addresses the pulling of one's hair and tearing of one's clothing as expressions of despair and extreme pain, see

- Laneyrie-Dagen, Nadeije. (2006). *L'invention du corps*. Paris: Flammarion, pp64-68.
- 40 Ibid., p47.
- 41 Ibid., p58, 60-62.
- 42 The French word *coupable*, in its broadest sense, unites *cutting* and *guilt*: *couper* means to *cut* and *coupable* means *guilty*. For this association I have been inspired by Didi-Huberman's description of Georges Bataille as 'the thinker par excellence of the *coupable*.' (My translation of "... Georges Bataille – le penseur par excellence du mot *coupable*, mot à prendre dans tous les sens..."). Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p61.
- 43 See also parts *Loss, Longing, Guilt & The Fragment* and *Sadness. Destruction and (the absence of) Empathy: The suffering of the condemned object*.
- 44 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p35. Cf. also Didi-Huberman: "The only things that appear are those things which are first able to dissimulate themselves. Things already grasped in their aspect or peacefully resembling themselves never appear." Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999a). *The Paradox of the Phasmid*. In *Tympanum. A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, 3(1522-7723). Los Angeles: University of Southern Californi, viewed 20th of June, 2013: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/3/>.
- 45 On the screaming wound ("*plaie criante*") see Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p50, 52. On the wound as opening up towards the devouring domain of the mouth, see Mengoni, 2009: pp79-81, 93-95; in turn inspired by Bataille, 1970: p217 and Krauss, Rosalind & Yve-Alain Bois. (1997). *Formless. A User's guide*. New York: Zone. On the relation between seeing and eating – the need of the mouth for the eye in order to incorporate the visible, see Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp333-340. In turn inspired by Bataille's *Le Coupable* in Bataille, Georges. (1973). *Œuvres complètes, Volume V*. Paris: Gallimard, p296; *Histoire de l'œil* in Bataille, 1970: pp9-78; *Œil* in *ibid.*, pp187-189. See also note 23.
- 46 Italics added, as quoted in Belting, 2011: p140. In Greek mythology, the satyr Marsyas challenged (or was challenged by) Apollo to contest in flute playing. When he lost, he was flayed alive "so the skin all left his body." (Ovid. (1973). *Metamorphoses* 6: 385-390. Rolfe Humphries, trans. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, p141.) He turned "into one giant wound" and shouted out to Apollo: "Why do you tear me from myself?" (*Quid me mihi detrahis*: Metamorphosis 6.385, as quoted in Belting.)
- 47 See note 23.
- 48 For the notion of the image as a 'band-aid,' bandage, see: Baert, 2006a: p101. On the human tendency to close the opened body, see Elkins, 1999: pp11-112, 134: "To keep the inside hidden is to stave off death. When a body is opened accidentally, we do everything possible to keep it closed. (...) It is nearly impossible to come to terms with the inside of the body."

### Tracing/Impressing

- 49 Philippe, Anne. (1969). *Le Temps d'un Soupir*. Paris: Livre de Poche, pp9, 104.
- 50 Cf. "[T]he imprint transmits physically – and not only optically – the semblance of the 'imprinted' object or being." From *La ressemblance par contact. Archéologie, anachronisme, et modernité de l'empreinte* by Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1997). *L'empreinte*. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, p38 – as quoted by Geimer, Peter. (2007). *Image as Trace: Speculations about an Undead Paradigm*. In *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 18(1), Duke University Press, p10.
- 51 Ingold speaks of the trace as "any enduring mark left in or on a solid surface by a continuous movement" and suggests most traces are either additive or reductive. I here will attribute the term *trace* to the former and *impression* to the latter. See Ingold, 2007b: p43.
- 52 See Baert on the navel as a physical residuum, relic, *pars pro toto*: Baert, Barbara. (2009a). *Kleine iconologie van de navel*. (*Navel. On the origin of things*). Gent: Sint Joris, p40 (English: p64); Baert, 2009b: ppXII-XIII (English: pVIII); Baert, Barbara. (2009d). *Iconogenesis, or Navel*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds. *Folded Stones: Tied up Tree*. Leuven: Acco, pp5, 9. On the double nature of the imprint: Didi-Huberman, 2007b: pp7-14. Didi-Huberman mentions that Schlosser (1911) already noted "that moulding techniques could support the antithetical values of truth and deception." von Schlosser, Julius. (1997). *Histoire du portrait en cire*. Paris: Macula, pp9, 29, 72. On the association of the index with death, eeriness and uncanniness, because of the hollowness, emptiness inherent to it: Doane, Mary Ann. (2007). *Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction*. In *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 18(1), pp2, 5; specifically on the navel as sign that refers to cycle of birth and death, see Baert, 2009a: pp5, 9, 24, 30, 33 (English: pp58, 60-62), 2009c: p19 and

- Baert, Barbara. (2012b). *Kleine iconologie van het weven. (Thread. On the origin of creation)*. Gent: Sint Joris, p10. On indices as bearers of not only pain and accident, but also of comfort and hope: De Greef, Lise. (2009). *The First Scar*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p165.
- 53 *The First Scar* is the title of an article by Lise De Greef. She suggests "our own navel essentially is (...) the scar of our first wound, our first scar." De Greef, 2009: p157, in turn inspired by Bronfen, Elisabeth. (1998). *Das verknottete Subjekt. Hysterie in der Moderne*. Berlin: Volk und Welt.
- 54 Baert, 2009a: p47 (English: p65).
- 55 *Ibid.*, p12 (English: p59).
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp20, 30, 33 (English: pp60-62). Baert, 2009d: pp9, 11.
- 57 Baert, 2009a: pp5, 35 (English: pp58, 62); 2009c: p12; 2009d: pp5, 9.
- 58 Baert, 2009a: p47 (English: p65).
- 59 *Ibid.*, 2009a: pp5, 9, 24, 30, 33 (English: pp58, 60-62); Baert, 2009c: p19; 2012b:p10.
- 60 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp241-242; cf. Sennett, 2008: p130.
- 61 Cf. Baert, 2009c, p12: "Clay makes possible a 'present absence' even without having to represent." Baert here speaks of the 'shaping force of the imprint,' quoting Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999c). *Ähnlichkeit und Berührung. Archäologie, Anachronismus und Modernität des Abdrucks*. Köln: DuMont, p32, and Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1984). *The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)*. In *October*, 29, Summer, pp67-68. (French: Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p241); Baert, 2009a: p38.
- 62 Didi-Huberman, Georges. (1999d). *Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles*. In Monika von Düring, Georges Didi-Huberman & Marta Poggesi, *Encyclopaedia Anatomica: A Complete Collection of Anatomical Waxes*. London – Köln: Taschen, pp69-70.
- 63 Baert, 2009a: p38 (English: p63) and 2009c: p12.
- 64 "Petrification is the opposite of fluidity. Petrifying is coagulating." And coagulation transforms what is alive into a relic, an image, an artifact. Baert, 2012b: p41 (English: p64). Ann-Sophie Lehmann describes the fingerprint as a special fossil because it embodies a direct and physical link between past and present; it is the only tangible evidence that what is now the past was once the present. Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2001b). *Natte vinger werk*, In *Kunstschrift De Hand*, 45(4), p19. On acheiropoietai, images that are not made by human hands and therefore possess a particular power (such as the *vera icon*), see: Baert, 2000: pp11-12, 27-28, and 2009a: p37 (English: p63); Baert, Barbara & Lise De Greef. (2009). *Het verheerlijkte lichaam. Over relieken, stoffelijkheid en de inwendigheid van het beeld (The glorified body: relics, materiality and the internalized image)*. In Gerard Rooijackers, ed., *De hemel in tegenlicht: macht en devotie in het aartsbisdom Mechelen (Backlit Heaven: power and devotion in the archdiocese Mechelen)*. Tiel: Lannoo, pp138-140; Belting, 2011: pp27 (e.g. death masks). See also Didi-Huberman, 2007b: p13; concerning ex votos, they are often produced according to "an imitation of the protocols of the imprint, the suffering organ being, if possible, directly moulded in order to be devoted with greater precision and auratic intensity."
- 65 Baert, 2009b: pIX (English: pVI).
- 66 Didi-Huberman, 1999d: p71; Belting, 2011: p27.
- 67 Deleuze. Gilles. (1990). *The Logic of Sense*. Constantin V. Boundas, ed., New York: Columbia University Press, p149: "My misfortune is present in all events, but also a splendour and brightness which dry up misfortune and which bring about that the event, once willed, is actualized on its most contracted point, on the cutting edge of an operation." (See: De Greef, 2009: p161).
- 68 Cf. De Greef, 2009: pp161-164.
- 69 Elkins, 1999: p52: "There is always the temptation to understand the skin as a parchment (...)." On "the skin as a narrative" De Greef (2009: p162) refers to: Anzieu, Didier. (1996). *Das Haut-Ich*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, p139; as cited in Göhlsdorf, Novina. (2007). *Narben Tragen*. In Eugen Blume, Annemarie Hürlimann, Thomas Schnalke & Daniel Tyradellis, eds., *Schmerz: Kunst + Wissenschaft*. Köln: DuMont, pp237, 240: "Das Haut-Ich ist das originäre Pergament, das wie ein Palimpsest die durchgestrichenen, weggekratzen und dann überschriebenen Entwürfe einer 'ursprünglichen' präverbalen Schrift aus Hautspuren konserviert."
- 70 De Greef, 2009: pp161-162: "The scar tells not only something about the course of the wound and the way it has healed, but also about the depth of the injury, the depth of the experience." De Greef here refers to Göhlsdorf (2007) and to Claudia Benthien who speaks of the skin as a 'cultural projection screen;' Benthien, Claudia. (1999). *Haut: Literaturgeschichte, Körperbilder, Grenzdiskurse*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, pp17-18.
- 71 In her article *The Spotted Skin*, Daria Scagliola speaks of the Pruisian tradition



- called 'Inzisur' (also known as: academic fencing, Mensur). In this traditional fight between two men, the participants test their courage and strength by receiving sword strokes in their face, without moving from their standpoint. The scars left behind by this act can be seen as permanent signs of one's courage. Scagliola, Daria. (1998). *De gevlekte huid*, In *Kunstschrift Huid*, 42(5), p45. Many cultures have scarification rituals marking significant life transitions (*rites de passage*), such as adolescence and marriage. The literature is vast: Eliade, Mircea. (1975). *Rites and Symbols of Initiations and the Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*. New York: Harper and Row; Turner, Victor. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Harmondsworth: Penguin; van Gennep, Arnold. (1981). *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: Picard.
- 72 Didi-Huberman, 2007b: pp10-11: "(...) should we not accept that a hypertrophic testicle represents its donor no less than a meticulously imitated wart on a face? That a subject is individualised by *the features of his malady* no less than by the *features of his face*?" And also Ash, 2010: pp760-761: "(...) the scarring resulting from wounding, allergy, infection, or inherited disorders can leave profound marks on the inner person as well as the outer."
- 73 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp31, 54; Elkins, 1999: p51.
- 74 Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p235 (English: Didi-Huberman, 1984: p63). Cf. Baert, 2000: p41. Cf. Vandebroek on the impossibility to satisfy the longing to see and the temporary relief experienced in the aesthetic experience: 2000: p248, versus the nameless motif: pp112-141. For the former, Vandebroek refers to: Ettinger, Bracha L. (1996). *Metamorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace*. In John Welchman, *Rethinking borders*. London: Macmillan, p143.
- 75 Quote from Philipe, 1969: p113. Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp240-241, 246 (1984: pp67, 72). Cf. Baert, Barbara & Emma Sidgwick. (2011). *Touching the Hem: The Thread between Garment and Blood in the Story of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5:24b-34parr)*. In *Textile: the journal of cloth and culture*, 9(3), p325; "As an abstract form, a body that is more amorphous, a stain, [the Haemorrhossa] seems to embody the formlessness of flux itself (...). She is crawling formless matter that seeks to become whole and healed in form." Baert & Sidgwick here refer to: Demyttenaere, Albert. (1990). *The Cloth and the Stain*. In Werner Affeldt, ed., *Fraue in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Lebensbedingungen, Lebensnormen, Lebensformen*. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, pp141-66.
- 76 Didi-Huberman, 1984: p67 (Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p241). See also Vandebroek, Paul. (2013a). *Exhibition brochure ύλη (hyle) - de naamloze vorm*, 16th of June – 13th of October 2013, p1, and Vandebroek, 2000: pp112-141, 237-274.
- 77 See part *Lost Souls*, pp44-45. Images/objects mirror the body and the soul of the maker, who leaves his/her 'live imprints' and 'life impressions' on the counterparts made. Literally, we can speak of 'live imprints' when the maker leaves physical traces of his/her body on the image/object. Metaphorically, we can speak of 'life impressions' as the life experiences that marked the maker, and in turn mark each creation made by him/her.
- 78 Elkins, 1999: pp102-103; "(...) figures are wrapped, wound about and confined, by their own skins. (...) But in the end, the adversary is the skin itself, the emblem of mortality and decay, the 'filthy sack' of medieval theologians. Sometimes the body presses against the skin, as if trying to escape."
- 79 Didi-Huberman, 1999c: p31, as quoted by De Greef, 2009: p156.
- 80 Cf. De Greef, 2009: p157
- 81 Cf. Didi-Huberman on the privileges of soft materials: 2006: p34 (2007b: pp8-9).
- 82 Didi-Huberman, 1999d: p66. On skin as formless: Connor, Steven. (2004). *The Book of Skin*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p29. See also Didi-Huberman, 2008: pp145-155.
- 83 Baert, 2009d: p11 – inspired by Deleuze, 1993: pp5-6, 17, 23-29.
- 84 See part *Lost Souls*.
- 85 De Greef, 2009: p164-165.
- 86 Ibid., p164.
- 87 Didi-Huberman, 2007b: p9.

### Covering/Wrapping

- 88 Cf. Didi-Huberman, 2007a; specifically pp61-62, 224. In this context, as being seduced by the image while it is a direct link to death and damnation, Didi-Huberman refers to Bataille's *L'art, exercice de la cruauté*: Bataille, Georges. (1988). *Œuvres Complètes, Volume XI*, Paris Gallimard, pp483, 486.
- 89 Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp111-112, 132-134. See also: De Greef, 2009: p158; "If a body is wounded, that wound is seen to, sewn up or salvaged, so that the crack narrows."

- 90 Latin for veil, *New Oxford American Dictionary*. On the flesh of Christ – his visage – as the cloth protecting and constituting the temple, see Kessler, Herbert L. (1990-1991). *Through the Temple Veil. The Holy Image in Judaism and Christianity*. In *Kairos. Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie*, 32/33, pp53-77, as quoted by Baert, 2000: p19. For the relation between flesh and veil: Baert, 2012b: pp21-24 (English: pp60-61) and 2000: pp18, 19, 21: "Paul calls the flesh of the Son of Man the 'veil' (Hebrews 10, 19-22)."
- 91 *Ouverture* in Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp25-62. Specifically on opening as unveiling, see pp42, 46: "En ce sens, il n'y a pas d'image sans le geste de son ouverture. Parce qu'ouvrir équivaut alors à dévoiler. C'est l'acte d'écarter ce qui, jusque-là, empêchait de voir (...)."
- 92 Baert, 2006a: pp105-107 (English translation, condensed: pp134-135) and 2000: pp13-14, 18-21.
- 93 On the notion of humans as being wrapped in skin, see Elkins, 1999: pp36-39, 100-102. Ellen Lupton speaks of "the body's natural envelope," Lupton, 2002: p29.
- 94 Baert, 2000: pp18-19, 43.
- 95 *Ibid.* p19. The ambiguous gaze, as both harmful and curing, see also Vandebroek, 2000: pp119ff, 252ff.
- 96 Cf. Referring to the iconophile Gregory of Nyssa's (335-394) interpretation of Exodus 33, 20. See: Baert, 2000: p23. I quote Baert: "Moses asked God for a revelation, and God answered that no man could see Him and live. Does the sight of God kill? Gregory removes the paradox: the sight of God kills the 'longing' to see Him." See also Baert, 2006a: p101 (English: p134) and Baert, Barbara. (2013). *An odour, a taste, a touch. Impossible to describe: Noli me tangere and the senses*. In Wietse De Boer and Christine Göttler, eds., *Religion and the senses in early modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, pp125: "[touch] remains impossible in this life – there will always be a *Noli me tangere* zone as there always will be a veil. The 'face to face' can only be reached in death (...)."
- 97 Elkins, 1999: p148.
- 98 Connor, 2004: p29.
- 99 Baert, 2006a: p101 (English: p134).
- 100 Baert, 2012a: pp77-83; Baert & Sidgwick. 2011: p333.
- 101 Baert, 2000: pp22-29; 2006a: pp106-107; 2009a: p47 (English: p65). On "the incomprehensible black" – the "black hole" or the "unbounded black," as both consuming and generating, see: *Ibid.*, pp25-27, 30, 32; Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: pp335-336; Vandebroek, 2000: pp112-141.
- 102 Skin as a self-repairing material, see: Lupton, 2002: p29.
- 103 Mondelaers, Karolien. *Voorwoord*, and Sorber, Frieda. *De Reliekenschat van Herkenrode*, p7, in Sorber, Frieda, Fanny Van Cleven & Shirin Van Eenhooge. (2010). *Schedelreliken van Herkenrode*. Hasselt: stad Hasselt. See also Baert & De Greef, 2009: pp133, 14. See also examples of nkisi densely packed in textile, note 150.
- 104 Baert, 2009c: p14; Baert & De Greef, 2009: p146.
- 105 Deleuze, 1993, p26: "*The world is the infinite curve that touches at an infinity of points an infinity of curves (...)*." (See note 83).
- 106 Elkins, 1999: pp46-47.
- 107 Baert, Barbara. (2012c). *Kleine iconologie van de wind. (Wind. On the origin of emotion)*. Gent: Sint Joris, pp32, 35 (English: pp62-63).
- 108 *Ibid.*, p27 (English: p62) – Baert here refers to: Warburg, Aby M. (1998). *Gesammelte Schriften, Volume I*. Horst Bredekamp & Manfred Diers, eds. Berlin: Studienausgabe, p10.
- 109 Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: pp323-333.
- 110 Cf. Lut Pil on the navel "as an opening that inevitably elicits a voyeuristic look," Pil, Lut. (2009). *The Kneading of an Anatomy*. In Barbara Baert & Trees De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p66.

## Twisting/Wringing/Wrenching

- 111 Baert, 2009a: p5; 2009c: p16.
- 112 Cf. Elkins, 1999: p69 (on the importance of motion in Grünewald's conception of skin). On working with matter as "waking up its particles," see Clarke, Cindy. (2008) *www.howtomakepottery.com*, as quoted in Lehmann, Ann-Sophie. (2009b). *Kneading, Wedging, Dabbing and Dragging. How Motions, Tools and Materials Make Art*. In Barbara Baert & Tree De Mits, eds., *Folded Stones: Tied Up Tree*. S.n.: Institute for practice-based research in the arts, p50. In my experience, the flexibility and elasticity of parchment is also enhanced by soaking, scraping and wringing/stretching it before use. On the effects of soaking and scraping on parchment: Karbowska-Berent, Joanna & Alicja Strzelczyk. (2000). *The role of streptomycetes in the biodeterioration of historic parchment*. Torun: Wydawnictwo

- Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika, pp12-13, 20-21, 28; Goddijn, Peter, Peter Hallebeek & Wim Smit. (1987). *Richtlijnen voor het conserveren van leren en perkamenten boekbanden*. 's Gravenhage: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, p32.
- 113** Knots, in their cultural and natural diversity, are often considered to be charged with magic and are covered with bits of cloth. See Baert, 2009c: pp13, 18; Vandenbroeck, 2000: p93ff – he refers to Eliade, Mircea. (1947). *Le 'dieu lieur' et le symbolisme des nœuds*. In *Reveu de l'Histoire des Religions*, 134(1-3), pp26-27.
- 114** Suggestion of the navel as the first scar of our first wound: see note 53.
- 115** Cf. "In its dangerous meaning, the knot does not connect, but *prevents a passage, a development*." My translation of Plantade, Nedjima. (1988). *La guerre des femmes. Magie et amour en Algérie*. Paris: La boîte à documents, pp78-79, as quoted in Vandenbroeck, 2000: p93.
- 116** Baert, 2009a: p24 (English: p61).
- 117** Baert, 2009c: p17.
- 118** The skin as confining envelope of the body, see: Elkins, 1999: p101. See also note 93.
- 119** *Ibid.*, p102: "Sometimes the body presses against the skin, as if trying to escape."
- 120** *Ibid.*, pp73, 104.
- 121** *Ibid.*, p105.
- 122** *Ibid.*, p101.
- 123** *Ibid.*, pp103-104. Concerning the twisting and turning of the body, Elkins speaks of contrapposto. For an investigation into the expressions of it in relation to art history, see: *Ibid.*, pp100-106.
- 124** Bynum, 1992: p234.
- 125** For bleeding as cleansing, see *Ibid.*, pp87, 100, 215. Bynum gives many references (see nn21, 50, 99), I here only give the reference used in all pages cited: Laqueur, Thomas. (1986). *Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology*. In *Representations*, 14, Spring, pp1-41. For tearing, crying as cleansing, see Baert, Barbara. (2006b). *De tranen van Maria Magdalena*. In *Streven*, 73(4), pp333, 335.
- 126** Bynum, 1992: pp87, 100, 114, 215 (and n99), see also previous note (125). For blood as regenerative, see also Baert, 2000: pp35-36; Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p334. Both articles refer to: Both articles refer to: Delaney, Carol. (1988). *Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society*. In Thomas Buckley & Alma Gottlieb, eds., *Blood magic. The Anthropology of Menstruation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p77.
- 127** Bynum, 1992: p132.
- 128** *Ibid.*, pp50, 116, 130-133, 186-187, 194-195.
- 129** *Ibid.*, p92.
- 130** *Ibid.* pp34-35, 60, 69, 72-73, 130-132, 154-155, 186, 272, such as "thrusting nettles into one's breasts" and "binding one's flesh tightly with twisted ropes;" *La férocité mimétique* and *L'image ouverte* in Didi-Huberman, 2007a: pp265-285 and pp287-350.
- 131** One of the many qualities of the material parchment is its translucency. However, the translucency decreases when the material is soaked or stretched. See: Goddijn et al., 1987: p32; Karbowska-Berent & Strzelczyk, 2000: p28; Clarkson, Christopher. (1992). *Rediscovering parchment: The nature of the beast*. In Helen Shenton, ed., *Vellum and Parchment*. London: Institute of Paper Conservation, p5; Fuchs, Robert. (1991). *Des widerspenstigen Zähmung – Pergament in Geschichte und Struktur*. In Peter Rück, ed., *Pergament. Geschichte, Struktur, Restaurierung, Herstellung*. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, p265; Kite, Marion & Roy Thomson. (2006). *Conservation of leather and related materials*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann (Elsevier), p205.

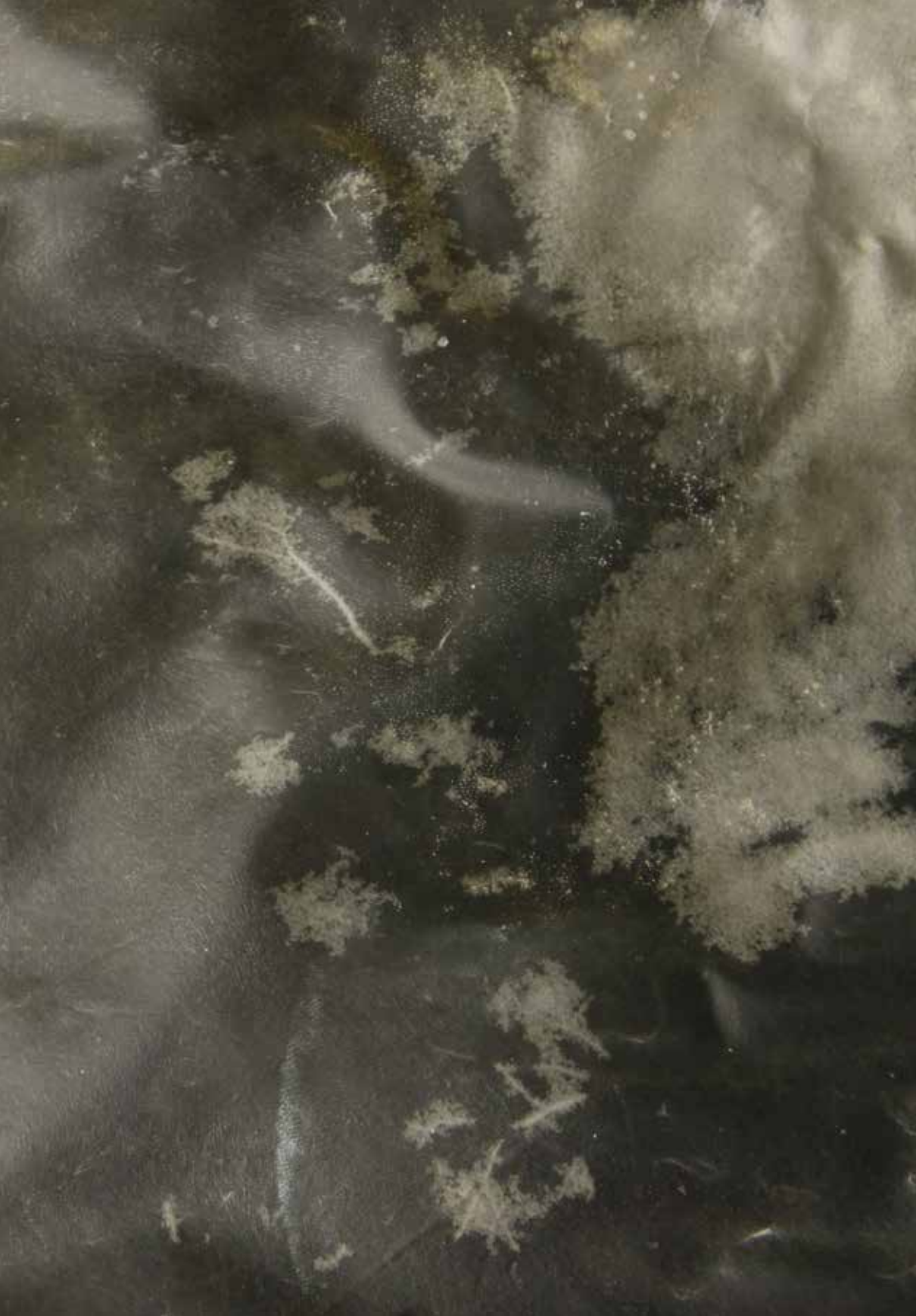
### Stitching Away / Suturing / Sewing

- 132** Schreiner, Olive. (1982). *From Man to Man*. London: Virago Press, chapter IX, as quoted in Parker, 1984: Foreword.
- 133** Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp111-112, 132-134. See also: De Greef, 2009: p158.
- 134** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p333.
- 135** *Ibid.*, 2011: p333; referring to Nahum 3:5.
- 136** Cf. Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p323; Baert, 2012c: pp25, 27 (English: p62). Baert refers to: Vandenbroeck, 2009b: pp198-200 (English: pp197-199) and Warwick, Alexandra & Dani Cavallaro. (2001). *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, pp72-88.
- 137** Mark 5:24b-34, Luke 8:42-48, and Matthew 9:19-22 (see Baert & Sidgwick, 2011).
- 138** Baert & Sidgwick, 2011: p333. See also: Baert, 2012b: pp25-30 (English: pp62-62). Cf. also Vandenbroeck, 2000: pp13, 17: weaving, knotting as connecting and paralleling birth.
- 139** Cf. examples of relics consisting of wrapped, patched up and stitched bones in Sorber et al., 2010.

- 140** On lines versus threads and traces, see Ingold, 2007b: pp2-4, 41-45, 50-53, 56-65, 111, 129.
- 141** Vandenbroeck, 2000: p93. As quoted by: Baert, 2009c: p15 and 2009d: p11. See also Baert on the Haemorrhoids, 2012c: pp25-30 (English: pp62-63).
- 142** Cf. Bynum "forms of miraculous body closure:" 1992: pp186-187 and also cf. Elkins, 1999: pp38-39.
- 143** *New Oxford American Dictionary*.
- 144** I here refer to the terms used to describe the different sides of parchment, Kite & Thomson, 2006: pp198, 202.
- 145** Or, alternatively, the abundance of stitches creates a new surface: "If many lines are joined closely together like threads in a cloth, they will create a surface." Alberti, Leon Battista. (1972). *De Pictura*. (*On Painting*). Martin Kemp, ed., Cecil Grayson, trans. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp37-38, as quoted in Ingold, 2007b: p38 (see also pp52ff). And also: "In essence (...) the stitch is a knot through whose iteration – as in knitting and crocheting – an unbroken surface can be formed from a continuous line of yarn." See Semper, 1989: p219, as quoted in Ingold, 2007b: p62.

### Piercing / Stabbing / Penetrating

- 146** Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp114-115: "The history of bandages involves sutures, knots, staples, pins, bolts, clamps, and other devices, all intended to make an airtight closure. Older suturing methods include the use of skin substitutes (leather patches, parchment), tied in place with animal cords (catgut, horsehair, silk) and secured with animal paste (fish glue, bone size). A wound is a deficit of skin; hence, the cure was an excess of skin."
- 147** On working with resistance: Sennett, 2008: pp214-238.
- 148** *A core of flesh*: Bynum, 1992: p259: "By the early thirteenth century most thinkers held that each person possessed a *caro radicalis* (a core of flesh) formed both from matter passed on by parent or parents to child and from the matter that comes from food."
- 149** Bynum, 1992: p184: "Medieval people... manipulated their own bodies for religious goals. [They] engaged in what modern people call self-torture... driving knives, ails or nettles into their flesh... Understood sometimes as chastening of sexual urges or as punishment for sin, such acts were more frequently described as a union with the body of Jesus. (...) The ecstatic, even erotic, overtones of such union are often quite clear." Cf. Elkins, 1999: pp126-127: "A picture of a dissected body can also be experienced as a literal version of a common trait of seeing, in that the mind's desire to analyze and the eye's desire to pierce and separate are kindred motions, and they are both embodied in cut flesh. (...) Analytic thought often borrows those visual metaphors, but ultimately perspective, piercing, and penetrating may all depend on the fundamental desire (or fear) of seeing through the skin." Cf. also Didi-Huberman, 2007a (e.g. pp31, 32).
- 150** Several Congolese tribes made 'severe' use of nails on so called 'nail fetishes' – 'nkisi.' These sculptures, being houses for spirits, were often loaded with nails, blades and other iron objects (Raymaekers, p22-23).
- The more 'effective' a sculpture was, the denser the concentration of iron objects jammed into it. There are also examples of nkisi densely packed in textile, mirror and iron attributes. As stated by Wyatt McGaffey (p48) in *In the presence of Spirits*: "[...] both are unusually endowed with a dense texture of significant attributes which deliberately intensify the visual interest of the sculptural form. Though anyone seeing one of these figures in a ritual context could not know in detail what the attribute meant, he or she would be impressed by the sense that complex powers were mobilized in it." Not only do we find nail fetishes in Africa, also in Europe there are several examples of this ritual practice (Rooijackers, p39). McGaffey, Wyatt. (2000). *The Kongo Peoples*. In Frank Herreman, ed., *In the Presence of Spirits*. Gent: Snoek-Ducaju & Zoon, pp35-54; Raymaekers, Jan. (2010). *Een wereld in verandering*. In Jo Tollebeek & Eline van Assche, eds., *Mayombe. Rituele beelden uit Congo*. Tielt: Lannoo, pp19-27; Rooijackers, Gerard. (1996). *Cultueze circuits in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden. Makelaars tussen hemel en aarde (Cult circuits in the Southern Netherlands. Mediators between heaven and earth)*. In Mireille Holsbeke, ed., *Het object als bemiddelaar (The object as mediator)*. Antwerpen: Enografisch Museum Antwerpen, pp19-47.
- 151** Baert, 2006b: pp333-334.
- 152** Didi-Huberman, 2007a: p269: "Les clous bouchent les plaies."





**Between Ouverture and Couverture,  
Disclosure and Closure**

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