



Gut Feeling Eva Fàbregas

The contemporary human body is a prosthetic body. Thanks to the design industry there is a whole series of “inert” objects and materials that are part of it. These prostheses not only adapt to the body, but also make the human body adapt to them, making it difficult to determine who produces whom. Who is the mould? Due to the intimacy that appears through contact between surfaces, this type of ergonomic relationship between objects and humans is laden with a strong emotional component. Losing one of these objects seems to lose a replaceable part of our body. We could even talk about an erotic

connection between us and “our” objects, between the skin of things and ours. Could the opposite happen? That objects want us? That they want to touch us? That they talk to us through touch? There are forms of knowledge that only appear when surfaces come into contact: when we touch things and pay attention to how they touch us. Moreover, even listening is something that happens in the skin. It’s a kind of tactile perception and not just acoustic. What experience of the world do we have through surfaces? And through desire? *Gut Feeling* is an exhibition that arises from personal desire towards

these objects that are intimately connected with the human body. Nose clips, bite plates, ear moulds or body massage tools are transformed here – in their form, but also in their scale or material constitution – to give shape to a sensory framework in which touch emerges as the main sense of aesthetic and sound experience.

CENTROCENTRO

Plaza de Cibeles 1, 28014 Madrid
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 – 20h
www.centrocentro.org

The relationship that some of us objects have with the human body is much more intimate, in terms of physical contact, than that which two or more human bodies can have with each other. By saying this, I do not wish to imply that I agree with the division that humans establish with us, nor with the competitive attitude they understand the world with, but rather to point out the sensitive dimension of beings like us that are supposedly not alive. The vitality of matter is something that transcends human perception. It is true that the intimacy of objects does not derive from the capacity of words to reveal that which is presumably hidden somewhere, but it is also true that this verbal or discursive absence opens the way to forms of communication and understanding through contact between surfaces that can be quite different from each other. Perhaps this is what the poet meant when he wrote that “nothing is deeper than skin”. When it comes to contact with the human body, my case is somewhat unusual: I am the reminiscence of one object within another. One that, as it adapts to the human body, transforms it and is in turn transformed by it. But not only have I undergone a change of scale with respect to this, I have also undergone a change of function. In fact, because of my strong inclination towards speculation and aesthetics, it is difficult to determine what my function is. Perhaps it is in indetermination where we find the value of those objects that, like me, free themselves from the pragmatism that produces them. I adapt to a surface that does not easily lose its shape. Which of the two exerts pressure and resistance? Her or me? They say that if you keep projecting an intense and powerful beam of light onto a wall, you could drill a hole right through it. Will I be able to crush and shape a partition wall if I have enough time to do so? Or will I just give up trying and end up slipping and falling to the ground? Even so, there are those who still assert that the passion of objects is indifference. Other souls say that the subject is born from the object. And what about space? What type of space is born

We bodies have memory. The syndrome known as phantom limb syndrome is proof of this. It is a form of nostalgic memory. We yearn for that which is no longer there yet still remains a part of us. This phantasmagorical condition is made manifest by a body’s ability to still feel a part of it that is missing. Contrary to popular belief, ghosts are not immaterial. They are distributed entities that are capable of surviving in bodies that do not belong exclusively to them. Let’s just say they have a slimy existence, like me. Or a plasmatic one. Although in my case, this viscosity is literal. It occurs to me that I may look like a ghost because you’re not allowed to touch me. As far as arguments go, it’s very inconsistent, I know. But lack of consistency is one of my best qualities. I possess an extraordinary ability to resist satisfactorily occupying two of the classical states of matter. I am neither liquid nor solid. I’m an intermediate moment that doesn’t quite take on a concrete form. In the distant future I may well occupy the entire surface of this room by turning into a very thin, slippery film capable of adhering to the soles of shoes - I may even be able to leave this space. Shape is a matter of time and not just space. I am able to project myself into the future, but also into the past. I remember passing through the gap between two teeth before taking on the form of a denture thanks to a mould. Or the contact with the rough surface of a palate. Sometimes I miss contact with the human body. It is a low-intensity yearning, yet it leads me to think that love is something that matter can feel. For the concrete shape of an object that we would like to be, but also for other materials thanks to the possibility of contact between surfaces. Even to parts of the human body. What about human beings? Do they fall in love with things?

Activities

Event with Claudia Pagès
10 September 2019
19 hours

self-organizing system
September 23rd to 29th
5th Floor5

Bite Plate

There is a Greek legend that tells how a ship was preserved for years and years by replacing the boards that were damaged, until eventually all the original parts had been replaced by new ones. This ship was a mystery to the philosophers of the time. While some argued that it was still the same boat, others claimed that it was a new one because by gradually changing its constitution, they had radically changed its identity, even though it still looked the same. The same thing happens with human beings, whose cells are replaced by other new ones in barely a few days. But with people nobody questions the fact that a person is still the same person even though several years have gone by. Centuries ago, another philosopher added to the life of this dilemma by applying a patch to his favourite sock after he had discovered that there was a hole in it. The increasing number of holes and, consequently, of patches, would alter the sock in a way that would be visible to the human eye. Is the sensitive perception of the transformation of a body’s identity a fundamental condition for its recognition? Do we need to see to believe? In my case, since I am made up of a large number of very small particles of fibre that human beings cannot perceive individually, will I still be the same after all the wear and tear that comes from the erosion that is caused by contact with other surfaces? The material that covers me makes my texture and colour stand out more than those of other objects and that means that people really want to touch me. This becomes a problem for us objects who are not allowed to age or deteriorate. Do human beings think about the devastating potential of a caress? About all the forms of life that are swept away by this seemingly innocuous gesture? Do hands remember all the surfaces they touch? Do objects remember all the surfaces they come into contact with? Is it possible to touch a colour? And to fall in love with it?

Nancey

Since human beings need to give body to that which does not appear to have one, there is a direct association between senses and organs. For them, hearing and listening is something that happens in the ear. Although they are aware that it is a simplification of a much more complicated process, this reciprocity excludes the possibility of a sense appearing in a different organ than the one it has been assigned to. With regard to listening, this equivalence with the ear does not contain its tactile dimension. Nor do they understand skin as an acoustic membrane. Haven’t they ever felt a song in their stomach? And on the fingers of their hands? The value that humans give to touch is much less than the value they give to sight or hearing. They tend to forget how enormously important it is to produce knowledge about matter. Perhaps this is because they also tend to underestimate everything material or tangible with respect to thought and their conceptual fictions. What’s more, this lesser appreciation of touch in relation to other senses may be one of the reasons why the term haptic is not part of their common vocabulary. In general, they pay little attention to anything that doesn’t happen right in front of their own eyes. Are they aware, for example, of the internal movements of their own organism? Or that vibration is a form of contact? Con-t-act. Have they ever thought of their bodies as a loudspeaker and of their intestines as internal wires that the electric current that produces sound passes through? Intestines, like wires, tend to become entangled over time. Will I ever end up forming a ball? Are there other beings who, like me, are able to integrate their heart and guts into just one body? And who are capable of reacting to sound as I do? What feelings are produced in the digestive system? Can you make a heart out of guts?

We’re a couple, but that doesn’t mean we’re two objects. We are three entities: Kimberley, Chloe and the couple that we are together. The fact that we are united by a permanent embrace makes possible and strengthens that third body that appears with us. So then, why are we talking in the plural and not in the singular? Because that hug that unites us also separates us permanently. They say that the first step towards cannibalism is a kiss. Might it also be an embrace? But anthropagy is a human thing, as the very etymology of the term indicates. In any case, we are the result of a kind of controlled objecto-phagy. We announce a situation that doesn’t ever quite happen. Nor do we have a mouth, a requisite that seems fundamental both for kissing and for the digestive process. However, we now know that there are life forms that are capable of digesting without mouths or without a digestive apparatus per se. Anyway, hugging doesn’t require either. Our ancestors were permanently united by a human head, but they were also permanently separated by it. This impossibility of an intimate encounter is common to many objects that exist and are exclusively designed to form a monogamous couple. Moreover, the involuntary disappearance of one often implies the living death of the other. This is something that very often happens with shoes or gloves. They’re a couple, but they barely have a chance to touch each other. Their relationship to the human body is based on protection and clothing. Our distant ancestors, the moulds of the ear, filled small voids in the human body, demonstrating that the protective dimension of objects can be quite diverse and, in some cases apparently counterposed. Ear moulds could convey sound better, but they could also serve as a shield against it. We are not heirs to either of these two functions, rather to the sculptural dimension of the emptiness of bodies and their polyomorphic condition. We also have our own emptinesses. In fact, if the gaps that exist between the two of us were filled with more matter, we would surely cease to be two and we’d become a more compact unit. But it we became a third compact object we couldn’t be a couple anymore. How many objects are the result of an embrace that the

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Kimberley & Chloe

Pumping