

PERFORMING THE BODY: A CORPOREAL SITE

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BY

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ABSTRACT

PERFORMING THE BODY: A CORPOREAL SITE

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This thesis documents a process through which the body was realized as it exceeds its formal unity and becomes integrated with the space. It includes works of art produced during the process. Concepts of vision and figure are contemplated in relation with body and space. Arte Povera and artists associated with the movement are studied within the framework of 'site-specificity' and 'performance'. Assimilation into space is exemplified through phenomena. Islamic ornamentation is studied in accordance with the concepts of 'gaze' and 'screen'. A work of art is proposed as a conclusion of the process.

Keywords: Body, space, performance, site.

ÖZET

BEDENİN İCRASI: TENSEL BİR MEKAN

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Bu tez, bedenin biçimsel bütünlüğünü aşarak mekanla entegre hale gelişle belirlendiği bir süreci belgeliyor. Bu süreç içinde üretilen sanat yapıtları teze dahil edilmiştir. Görüş ve figür kavramları beden ve mekan ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Arte Povera ve akımla ilişkili sanatçılar, 'mekana-özgünlük' ve 'performans' bağlamında çalışılmıştır. Boşluk içinde asimile olma durumu çeşitli fenomenlerle örneklendirilmiştir. 'Nazar' ve 'perde' kavramları eşliğinde İslam süsleme sanatı çalışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak bir sanat yapıtı önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beden, boşluk, performans, mekan.

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This thesis marks the conclusion of a period of my life, which started with a feeling that there had to be a way to share my senses and opinions to prevent them move towards an unhealthy edge. Having reached the end of the process, now I feel that I am much more aware and sensitive towards the circulations and dynamics in my relation with the world.

There were very few situations in my life, when thanking somebody was just not enough and of no use. I felt this with my parents, my brother Emrah and my beloved partner Evren. I knew that they would be with me despite all the weird and annoying things I did throughout this process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis serves as an organized documentation of a research process, through which the body was realized in its corporeal aspects by means of art. It includes works of art, which I produced during my studies. It's not possible and would be incorrect to say that the artworks are the consequences of the theoretical studies performed in this thesis. Neither would assuming that the theory serves as a clarification of the art created. They operated simultaneously but on different levels. Regarding the linearity of the text, I decided to present them together.

The main objective of this research is to realize the body as it exceeds its formal unity and becomes integrated with the space.

The term 'body' designates a physical organization incorporating 'life'. However, the term 'life' is not used merely in a biological sense. Throughout the research, biologically dead organisms and even inorganic materials will be presented in terms of their potential to evoke the sense of life by means of art.

Corporeality refers to the physical, material qualities of the body. It excludes connotations such as the mind, spirit, intellect or any usage of the term other than its materiality. The meaning of the word shall not evoke death. Conversely, I believe that it's life, which is apparent even in the death of a body. Corporeality of the body is, in a way, similar to the plasticity of an artwork.

The body is not an object. It may appear as a unity. However, to work on it, is to get involved in the space of the body. The body is not a subject either. The subject is a continuous effort to organize the space and the body, which tends to assimilate into the space. The subject perceives unities, figures. The body has nerves. The body is a corporeal space capable of sensing.¹ It even senses itself. Unlike perception, sensation does not require a transition from the outside, the world to the inside, the subject. The body is the unification of the sensed and the sensing. When a body senses another body, it wills to become the other. Nothing of the body is incapable of sensing except the brain. The membrane of

¹ Sensation can be considered as the penetration of borders whereas 'Gestalt' is the construction of them.

the brain is sensing but not the brain. Even the bones are sensing. The skin is not a border. It senses.

Beginning from the 60's, performance has been practiced as an art form in which the artists incorporate themselves into their work. However, this incorporation does not necessarily mean that performance concentrates on the body. On the other hand, it is possible to say that working on and with the body is necessarily performative if it is not performance. Body is a lived space. A site. It always exceeds the formal definitions and is continuously re-defined by its exteriority. It requires to be worked site-specifically².

The word 'site' is defined as an area, place or piece of land where something happens or is located³. Site-specific art in general, defines itself through its relation with the position it occupies. To understand the body as the site of a performance is to realize its corporeality beyond the formal, figural and subject oriented conventions.

² The term 'site-specific' is derived from Nick Kaye. In his book 'Site-specific Art', Kaye defines the relation between the visual arts and performativity. Site specificity will be covered under the 'Performance' chapter of this thesis.

³ This definition is derived from the 'Encarta World English Dictionary' © 1999

To work with the body, one only needs to realize what is already there without adding anything. This had been the motive of 'Arte Povera'. Performing the body is making it 'available' as the artist Vito Acconci would say. The death of the body is not a proper death at all. Dennis Oppenheim makes a dead body 'sound' as the coldness of the death sets in the body. Guiseppe Penone's trees are already performing with their branches and leaves examining the void around them. In *Medium*⁴, the movement of an ant is realized as an expansion into a huge space.

Our sense of our own body is very different than the appearance of it. An imaginary body, the 'Body-phantom'⁵, which is capable of extending, bending, transforming itself, escorts us in our daily life. Every tool, vehicle, prosthetic device we use is an extension of our body. We expand in space as our body incorporates them.

In the case of 'Psychasthenia', a schizophrenic disorder, this expansion does not end. The body is replaced by the space as the psychotic fails to locate his/her position in the room. Identity is generally defined as the distinction of a being from its environment. In

⁴ Medium is a work I performed in 2000.

⁵ A detailed explanation of 'Body-phantom' is given in chapter 5: 'Body and Space'. This chapter concentrates on theories by Elizabeth Grosz and Roger Caillois. The work entitled '*Hibernation*' is also included in this chapter.

psychasthenia, the feeling of identity is severely damaged. The identity disintegrates as the body becomes with the space.

The loss of the notion of identity can be observed in the case of mimicry or camouflage in nature. Some insects have a 'deadly' instinct to become another body through mimicry, while others assimilate into the space through camouflage. In *'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia'*, Roger Caillois claims that mimicry and camouflage is not necessarily functioning for the sake of the survival of the species, as they are more related to the perception of space by the organism (Grosz: 189,90).

Jacques Lacan's theory of 'Gaze' is crucial in understanding the perception of body and space as he thinks that our relation to things is constituted by the way of vision. However, the gaze is not the existence of a seeing eye but rather a spatial relation between bodies that takes place before the immediate construction of a subject-object model, a symbolic order.

I think that in some cases such as the body of Acrobat Octopus, the 'ocellus' on fish, the ornamentation of the dome of Alhambra and the 'musenna' calligraphy, the formation of the subject-object model is delayed. They

continuously screen an alluring image as if they are aware of their visibility. The visibility is compensated by something given to be seen. This is similar to what Lacan names the 'screen'. They are meant to face the viewer, to return the gaze. When the usage of this screen (as an act, gesture) becomes more visible than the image on it, what is behind -the body so to say- appears through the screen. This appearance is not visual but rather actual. There is a performance behind the screen.

When thought in its relations with the space and other bodies, the body and the sensation/realization of it, becomes a theme that is difficult to grasp through a form. 'Performance' and 'site' appear as terms referring to the possibility of such a body.

2. VISION AND BODY

The world is made of the same stuff as
the body.

(Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*)

According to Merleau-Ponty, with the introduction of perspective, the simultaneousness of the objects is lost. In the classical painting tradition of the west, the painted canvas is the organization of the objects in a hierarchy depending on the eye. They try to overcome each other to seduce the eye of the viewer. This linear categorization of the objects in perspective is actually nothing more than the desire to establish a hegemony of the eye over the visible world. Perspective constitutes the painting as a window, which places the viewer in front and at the same time outside the world. However in reality, the eye never has such a position or a privilege. It is rather placed within the objects, not opposing to them. Unlike this representative behavior, a mimetic relation does not constitute the objects as an exteriority but acts within them. Instead of representing a window-image of the world, mimesis is a desire to become the world and to remove the separation between the eye and the world. Instead of looking like beings to

speaking for them, mimesis is being lost within to become the other (Sartre: 15,9).

The body is a lived entity. Vision is attached to the body and movement. In vision there is the trace of body. Seeing and moving are continuities.

Everything I see is in principle within my reach, at least within reach of my sight, and is marked upon the map of the 'I can.' Each of the two maps is complete. The visible world and the world of my motor projects are each total parts of the same Being (Merleau-Ponty: 291).

Seeing is not an intellectual activity. It's a continuity of the whole body of neural, digestive, reproductive, motor, reflexive, muscular, respiratory systems... The body in this sense is not to be looked at but lived. It can be sensed or realized. And the organ for this is not the eye but the matter of the body itself. The body can only be sensed with the body. "There is a human body when, between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a blending of some sort takes place" (Merleau-Ponty: 292).

3. BODY SENSED BY THE BODY

3.1. The Figure and the Body

If I make a stone exactly like a river stone, nobody notices the difference. If instead I make a head, it becomes significant. There is a human incapacity to understand something that is just not like us.

(Guiseppe Penone)

It's of course not possible to create a sensual work of art ignoring its representational quality. Moreover, it can be said that perception is necessarily related to a figure and a background. Being a painter dealing with the body itself, rather than a narrative or representation "Bacon himself raises problems concerning the inevitable preservation of a practical figuration at the very moment when the Figure asserts its intention to break with the figurative" (Deleuze: 24). In becoming the body, the figure tends to break with the figurative and Bacon wants to preserve the figure. There are two forces here. One is the figure becoming the body of the canvas and thus an abstraction, and the other is the necessity to keep it as a figuration. Bacon's paintings are like a struggle

between the two. In his conversations with David Sylvester, Bacon mentions the nervous system as his paintings make a neural sense instead of following a perceptual model based on the intellect (Sylvester: 42). In this sense, it's possible to understand the state of the body in Bacon's paintings. It's intentionally suspended in an unstable position between the two ends. One-step more, and we would not perceive the body as the body of a figure. We would start looking at it as an abstract piece or like a surgeon observing the wound. "...Figurative painting and abstract painting: they pass through the head, they do not act directly upon the nervous system, they do not attain the sensation, they do not extract the figure" (Deleuze: 24). Avoiding the mental side effects of perception, Bacon is achieving a bodily relation with the viewer. As if the body in the painting and the body in front of it are made of the same material.

3.2 *Animal Garden (Otocyon Megalotis)* (2003)

'*Animal Garden*'⁶ or as I lately decided to name it '*Otocyon Megalotis*', is an outcome of two experiences

⁶ A direct translation of the Turkish words 'Hayvanat Bahçesi' which meaning 'Zoo' in English. The restricted and 'planted' character of

related to observing animals. One is a visit to the zoo. In some cells, the animals are absent. This absence haunts me. The other is related to watching documentaries for long hours in TV channels devoted to animals. The screen becomes a landscape.

The absence of life is a theme, which is also related to the site of the installation. The piece was installed in an old building, which was formerly used as a prison, in Toptafl›, ‹stanbul. The building was still being renovated at the time of the exhibition. It was still possible to find traces of life especially in the 'unclean' parts. The installation is in some sense, a projection on the building.

The installation is based on an analogy of the viewing space and the living space. The analogy is to be realized by the viewer's experience of the space created in the installation.

I recorded the narrative and ambient sound in a documentary broadcast on TV about foxes and jackals living in Kalahari Desert. When used without the video, the narration and music in the documentary resembles

a garden is intended by the word 'garden'. Therefore I didn't name it 'Zoo'.

childhood stories about animals. The 'reality' effect is replaced by a soft fiction. On the other hand the absence of the video is emphasized by the sound effects.

A still image depicting a jackal drinking water from a puddle is projected with a slide-projector on a broken TV case filled with a mixture of water and milk. The opaqueness of the liquid allows the image to appear on the surface. Any interruption of the liquid causes the image to 'move'.

I placed the sound source under a nest, which I made using the materials found in the derelict rooms of the building. These rooms carried the traces of homeless people or stray animals. The bed-like structure of the nest worked together with the maternal sound of the narrator. The broken TV case was also found in the building. I turned the case upside down and used the broken glass tube -which forms the screen of the TV- as a cup. Filled with the liquid, this object literally absorbed the projected image of the jackal drinking water.

The materiality of the elements used in this installation exceeds their representative quality. Not only the image, but also the sound is a projection. They overlap; cover

the structure of the habitat. The representations are projected on the actual traces of life. There are traces. But the animal is absent.



Fig.1. The location of installation in Toptafl>.



Fig.2. '*Otocyon Megalotis*', the installation.



Fig.3. The broken TV case used in the installation.



Fig.4. The projected image.

4. PERFORMANCE

4.1. Site Specificity and Arte Povera

The site is a place where a piece
should be but isn't.

Robert Smithson, *Towards the
Development of an Air Terminal*

Kaye proposes that the meanings of utterances, actions and events are effected by their 'situation'. Therefore, a 'site-specific work' defines itself through properties, qualities or meanings produced in specific relationships between an 'object' or 'event' and a position it occupies. In this sense, site-specific practices are identified with the *performance* of the place (1,3).

The site-specific relations in Minimalism were restricted within the gallery space. The practices of land art, earth art and conceptual art used the gallery's mapped space to refer to the exteriority of it. "Typically incorporating a mapping or documentation of places and events, these practices reflected upon and revised the impulse of earlier environmental art, happening performance, and Fluxus presentations" (Kaye: 91).

The significance of Italy in art history is primarily related to Renaissance where the ideas on vision, perspective and form had gained an utmost importance. It's ironic and also logical that in 1967 a movement of anti-form, Arte Povera (Poor Art) was established in the same geography.

The movement was first defined by the critic Germano Celant after the exhibition named *Arte Povera* in 1967. Being also the curator of this exhibition, one month later he published a manifesto, 'Arte povera: appunti per una guerriglia' ('Arte povera: notes for a guerilla war'). Among the artists are Michelangelo Pistoletto, Piero Gilardi, Mario Merz, Jannis Kounellis, Gilberto Zorio, Giovanni Anselmo, Giuseppe Penone, Alighiero Boetti, and Luciano Fabro. Celant also included works by Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Douglas Heubler, Dennis Oppenheim, Michael Heizer, Eva Hesse, Richard Serra and Richard Long (Kaye: 141).

The major tendency in Arte Povera was towards the usage of the materials not to create forms but to reveal their performative aspect through process-based activities and experience. "...a poor art as opposed to a complex one, an art that does not add ideas or things to the world but

that discovers what's already there" (Bakargiev quoted in Kaye: 142).

In this context, the early work of artists such as Zorio, Anselmo, and Penone directly challenged the conventional opposition between 'physical things' and the 'abstract order' of the artwork, opening the sculpture to forces and events participated by the presence of materials, to 'natural' or organic processes identified with particular locations as well as to exchanges between material processes, the environment and the body. As this implies, in foregrounding the properties of 'matter', such work tends toward a 'dedifferentiation' between the materials and forms of art and, subsequently, between the work and its environment. Here, too, the relationship between the object and its context reaches, through sculpture, toward performance (Kaye: 142).

The reading of 'performative' in visual arts, presented in Kaye's *'Site-specific Art'* makes it possible to think not only of the performance of the artist but of the performance of the body. The body as the material and the site, performs in process and in relation with its environment.

4.1.1. Vito Acconci and Dennis Oppenheim

According to Kaye, Dennis Oppenheim and Vito Acconci address "...the work's relationship to its site through a construction of the performing body itself as means, material and place" (151).

In a performance dated 1974, Oppenheim uses a dead German shepherd dog. "The dog's body, placed on an electric organ, plays a continuous chord that gradually changes as rigor mortis sets in, and as the body slowly shifts."
(Heiss: 91)

The body is realized with a medium. What is visible is not what is realized. But the body is realized by what is visible, or 'heard' in this case. "Indeed, in these performances, the body reveals a place always in process and always in excess of the work through which it might be seen" (Kaye: 163).



Fig.5. *'Untitled Performance'*, Oppenheim, 1974.

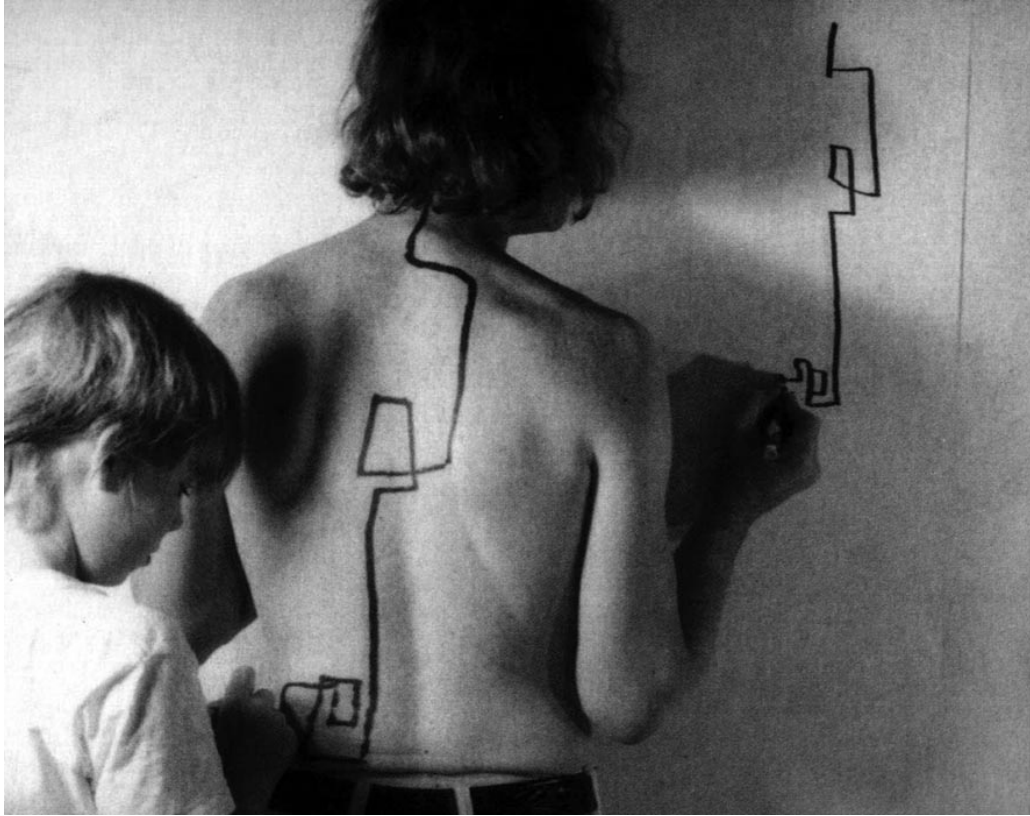


Fig.6. *'Two Stage Transfer Drawing (Advancing to a Future State, Eric to Dennis Oppenheim)'*, Oppenheim, 1971.

'Two Stage Transfer Drawing' (1971) is a performance where Oppenheim and his son Eric 'draw' through each other's senses and memory systems.

As I run a marker along Erik's back, he attempts to duplicate my movement on the wall. My activity stimulates a kinetic response from his memory system. I am...drawing through him. Because Erik is my offspring, and we share similar biological ingredients, his back...can be seen as an immature version of my own... In a sense, I make contact with a past state (Oppenheim quoted in Heiss: 72).

Their action exemplifies the usage of the body as a material. It's this material aspect of the body, the corporeality of it, which is realized through the work.

Acconci's pieces produced in 1970 such as *Shadow Play*, *Rubbing Piece*, *Trademarks*, *See-Through*, *Hand and Mouth* and Oppenheim's *Leafed Hand*, again in 1970, seem to play a game of subject-object. Oppenheim himself states that he is

...Creating a system that allows the artist to become the material, to consider himself the sole vehicle of art, the distributor, initiator and receiver simultaneously. ...Understanding the body as both subject and object permits one to think in terms of an entirely different surface. It creates a shift in direction from the creation of solid matter to the pursuit of an internal or surface change. With this economy of output one can oscillate from the position of instigator to victim" (Sharp quoted in Kaye: 159).

In actions such as *Arm and Asphalt* (1969), Oppenheim reveals his interest in land as an analogous surface to skin. "Here, in acting out a direct physical exchange with a site or material in which his body is scarred or marked, Oppenheim would correlate a specific body surface to an exterior location" (Kaye: 157). The way Oppenheim photographs his works is also parallel to his perception of body and land.

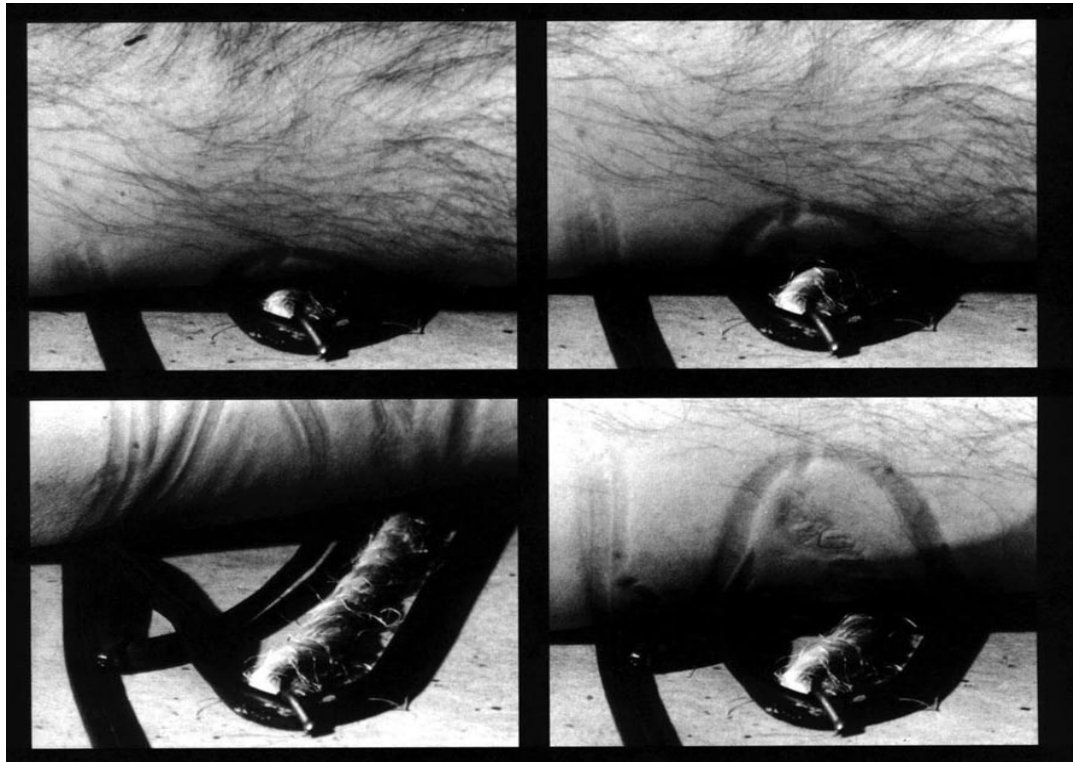


Fig.7. *'Arm and Wire'* by Oppenheim, 1969.

In a series of auto-referential actions in 1970, Acconci forces his body to extreme and impossible situations. Trapping his body, biting himself, trying to swallow his hand, rubbing his arm to produce a sore, Acconci attacks the barriers of his own body. Even though the finality of these actions is not achievable, their practice renders the limits of the body visible. He uses his body as the material and the place of these actions.

One thing I learned through working with the body is that you can't think of it in terms of an object. I'm not interested in body as a sculptural thing at all. The body is not just there in

relation to other things and to other physical spaces. The body is there in relation to memory, to all kinds of learning processes. There are all sorts of interconnections and connotations (Acconci, quoted in Nesmer quoted in Kaye: 160).

Working with the body beyond the formal relations as a performing material, Acconci states that "Performing the body means making the body available - completing the body - bringing the body about ..." (Acconci quoted in Kaye: 162). In these performances Acconci uses his body to realize its flexible and transitive barriers. "It is finally this realization of the body as a disordered, undisciplined site, a site of multiple, complex meanings, always in excess of the body-as-object, which both Acconci and Oppenheim attempt to act out through their entries into performance" (Kaye: 162).



Fig.8. '*Leafed Hand*' by Oppenheim, 1970.

4.1.2. Guiseppe Penone

Penone's works indicate his direct and unsaturated relation with nature and the bodies in nature. This relation involves his own body to a great extend. He deals with his own body just as he deals with other living/non-living forms.

To make a sculpture the sculptor must lie down, slipping to the ground slowly and smoothly, without falling. Finally, when he has achieved horizontality, he must concentrate his attention and efforts on his body, which, pressed against the ground, allows him to see and feel with his form the forms of the earth. He can then spread his arms to take in the freshness of the ground and achieve the degree of calm necessary for the completion of the sculpture. At this point, stillness becomes his most obvious and active condition. Every movement, thought, or will to action is superfluous and undesirable in his state of calm, slow sinking, which is devoid of laborious convulsions and words and from artificial motions that would only divert him from the position successfully attained. The sculptor sinks... and the horizon line comes closer to his eyes. When he feels his head finally light, the coldness of the ground cuts him in half and reveals, with clarity and precision, the point that separates the part of his body that belongs to the void of the sky from that which is in the solid of the earth. It is then that the sculpture happens. (Penone, quoted in Bakargiev: 266)

Penone's art is the realization of bodies in a process, which is defined relative to human qualities. When he involves his own body to a work, he is using it as a human scale through which the work becomes sensible. It's the human material used in a unity with other materials

rendering visible/sensible the natural phenomena that are not, otherwise.

Because it was based on 'participatory' thought, the relationship between being and environment was not based on abstract logic, but on feeling and perception understood as genuine 'bodily fusions' with nature as a whole. ... The process, therefore, cannot be viewed from outside, through a superior method, but must be experienced dialectically from within (Celant, quoted in Bakargiev: 268).

In *Maritime Alps* (1968), *Potatoes* (1977), and *Breaths* (1978) the objects or plant bodies carry the traces of the artist not in terms of the creator but as a body whose relation leaves an imprint, modifies the form, defines the scale of the exhibited object. He uses living materials such as trees or potatoes in these works. The growths of the plants are modified by various molds, which were cast from the artist's body.



Fig.9. 'Maritime Alps' by Penone, 1968.



Fig.10. 'Potatoes' by Penone, 1977.

Penone's art is a process through which a very strong sense of aliveness is generated. In doing this he seems to have two departures/arrivals: man and nature.

The artist's actual intervention consists in effecting an inversion: given that nature, in certain exceptional cases, breathes life into phenomena which appear to be manmade, that is, which seem anthropomorphic, the artist inverts this process by creating anthropomorphic structures

which are camouflaged as natural phenomena (Verzotti, quoted in Bakargiev 1999: 268).

To put it in other words, in the first case he imposes human characteristics to the living materials, which is basically anthropomorphism (*Maritime Alps* 1968, *Potatoes* 1977, *Four Landscapes* 1985), whereas in the second one he creates accurate forms of nature through the very process of sculpting which can also be read as an anthropomorphic behavior in the opposite sense (*Twelve-Metre Tree* 1970, *To Be a River* 1981, *Munster Well* 1987). The nature is performing.

Nick Kaye observes Penone's work in the context of site-specificity. He states that:

Here, the form of the work arises out of the response of organic processes to a specific intervention. Indeed, here, the tree acts out a living process which Penone's intervention invests with an anthropomorphism, as the tree's growth is articulated in relation to the properties and faculties of a sentient viewer (Kaye: 149).

Penone uses a formal anthropomorphism to render the actions of the tree/potato visible. Such as growing potatoes with mouths and ears...

On the other hand there is another 'anthropological dimension' in his works, which depends on the already

existing sensibility of the bodies. The performance of the tree itself...

The Tree, as it builds vertically, continuously searches for equilibrium and carries out, in the number of its branches and the weight and distribution of its leaves, the same analysis of the void as the tightrope walker with his outstretched arms (Penone, quoted in Celant, quoted in Kaye: 150).

It's Penone to say that the sculpture's purpose is "to find the form within the material, not to use the material to find the form." (Penone, quoted in Kaye: 150). His work *'Twelve Metre Tree'* perfectly exemplifies the idea of revealing the performance of the tree by finding the form within the material. Penone describes the process:

For the past twenty days I've worked all day, every day, just like a carpenter, in an abandoned warehouse near Garesio, my home town. Coincidentally, or perhaps symptomatically, the place is an old sawmill - ideal for working on wood. I've been trying to obtain from a beam, originally 11 m. long, 22 cm wide and 10 cm thick, the form of the tree that's fossilized inside of it. Of course everything made of wood was once a tree; I could have begun equally well from a door or a table leg. In this case I chose a beam because I wanted something of imposing size. To give it back the appearance of the tree it was at a precise moment of its plant life, the first thing I had to do was to distinguish the top from the bottom. This I did on the basis of the growth rings, which correspond to the two layers - one harder, the other softer - present in all wood. The bottom is the part with the widest hard layer. Next I started

digging, and now all I really have to do to recover the form of the tree is to continue to follow the harder layer. By doing this, I not only obtain a shape, I also follow the growth of the tree to the moment at which a human hand or, who knows, a natural event, brought it to a halt. It'll take me about a month to complete this task, and it will take whoever sees the finished work an instant to perceive it; nevertheless, the whole process is a long one. In a way, I see what I'm doing as a movie sequence that's filmed in reverse, then fast-forwarded through the projector. I've taken photographs to document the three basic phrases of the work: the original beam, the moment at which the incomplete tree becomes visible within the beam, and the tree in its original/final form. These photographs become a fundamental explicative support; they replace all this talking we are doing. Photographs or words are somehow indispensable, as the work lies in the process. What most intrigues me, a constant concern of my poetic vision, is the relationship between the real time of growth and the personal time of 'flaying'. The curiosity of discovering a new tree, and hence a new story, every time, and the stimulus in this sense that comes to me from the imaginative quality of every door, table, window, or board - all of which contain the image of a tree - explain the motivation and urgency of my recourse to this kind of operation, which is not repetition, but a new adventure every time (Penone, quoted in Bakargiev: 266).

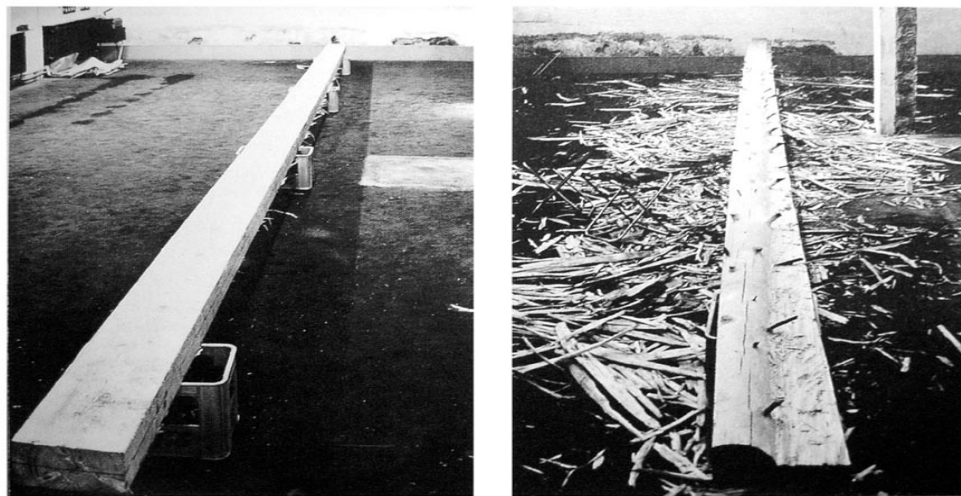


Fig.11. *'Twelve Meter Tree'* by Penone, 1970.

Penone completed forty trees created by the same method in 1980. An installation of these trees held in Amsterdam was titled as '*Repeat the Woodland*'. The repetition suggested in the name of the work is the repetition of the natural form not of the labor of 'flaying'.

When Penone mentions the imaginative quality of every door, table, window, or board, he is actually emphasizing the fact that the work exceeds its formal limits. It happens in all the wood not particularly in this one just as the 11 meter section of this tree refers to the behavior of the whole tree. This could possibly be a reason for naming it *Twelve Meter Tree*. Using Kaye's terms, the realization of the tree's action of growing is an exemplar of the 'anthropological dimension' of Penone's works since it's actually the performance of the site.

In this focus upon material properties, the site-specific work occurs as *interventions* into unfolding complexes of inter-related biological, organic, and inorganic processes, which have implications for the material, space, time and 'body' of the work. Here the 'anthropological dimension' of site-specific sculpture is realized not simply in *forms*, but in the *performance of the site itself*: in interventions into the energy, actions and processes which materials precipitate and in those processes and exchanges which express material affinities between the body, the object and the environment it defines and is defined by. In this process based work, Penone suggests, 'every moment can be final', and yet each moment, and

material form, retains a memory and trace of the process of which it is a part (Kaye: 150).

Another work by Penone, departing from the idea of repeating natural forms is "*To be a River*" (1981).

It's difficult to understand the work of human being if this work is integrated into nature: if I make a stone exactly like a river stone, nobody notices the difference. If instead I make a head, it becomes significant. There is a human incapacity to understand something that is just not like us (Penone, quoted in Celant, quoted in Kaye: 148).



Fig.12. '*To Be A River*' by Penone, 1981.

Penone overcomes this incapacity by making a copy of a river stone. For this installation he chooses a river stone and carves a replica of it from another one, which is similar in color and texture. The difference is unrecognizable. Again in this work Penone's motivation is to mimic the river's action by carving the stone. During the installation, the river stone and the carved stone are exhibited together. As the name of the work suggests, the form of the stone is actually an outcome of the river's and at the same time Penone's performance.

In the beginning of 70's, Penone started working on his own body. Through methods of casting and projection, he tried to transfer his body to space. His first attempt was to create a book titled *"To Unroll One's Own Skin"* (1971). The book consisted of images of his skin pressed against the glass and photographed. By this method, Penone mapped all his body.

Similar to these photographs, he also used transparent adhesive tape to cast sections of his body. He used these tapes to project the texture and imprints of his body to the walls of his gallery. Then he transferred the texture to the walls using a copying pencil. For Penone, the importance of this technique was that, when he was transferring the imprints, the force he applied to the

walls with the pencil was a repetition of the force he applied to his skin with the tapes.

In 1972 Penone took plaster casts of his body parts. He also took photographs of the same parts after the casting. He projected the photographs on the plaster models to create a unity of form and image, which looked photo-realistic. During the process of casting, pieces of hair stuck on the plaster and were torn out from his body. When the images were projected on the plaster models, the pieces of hair remaining on them were restored in the image.

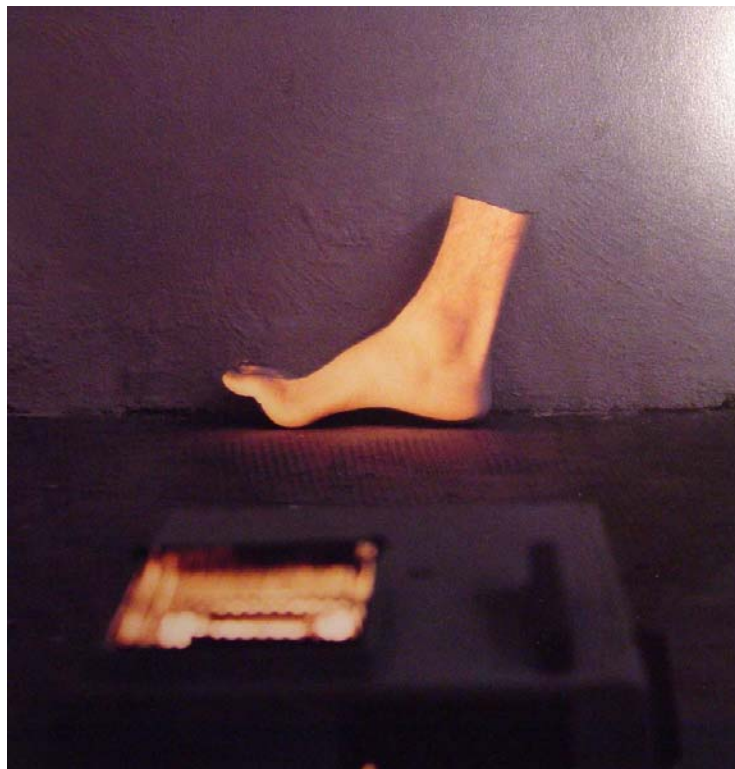


Fig.13. '*Foot*' by Penone, 1972.

4.2. *Medium* (2000)

The work was performed in a 1m x 2m x 3.5m cabinet embedded in the gallery wall. The large side of the cabinet was made of glass and it was facing towards the exhibition area where the viewers were located. I put an ant inside the cabinet. The ant walked on the ground and I projected its route on the window using a marker.

Every element in this performance (except the ant's performance) is a medium, on which something is projected. The glass is a screen through which the viewer can see. This sight is interrupted with the marking of the complex body of line. As the line develops, the screen becomes opaque, overlapping the action behind and detaching the viewer from the figure. My body, the human body is a medium in the same way as the glass is. In comparison to the ant's body, it's a visible figure, which is actually not the source of the movement. It's a projector. During the performance I totally ignored every interruption/action coming from the viewer behind the glass. I moved only when the ant moved. I moved like a continuation of the ant's body for a period of 3 hours without even looking at what I was drawing. Only when it was realized that there was an ant touring inside, I lost my position as a figure in the eyes of the beholder.

In *Medium*, the body is defined as a movement. The movement is more sensible than the body of the ant. The ant's movement is amplified through its relation with space and through another body.

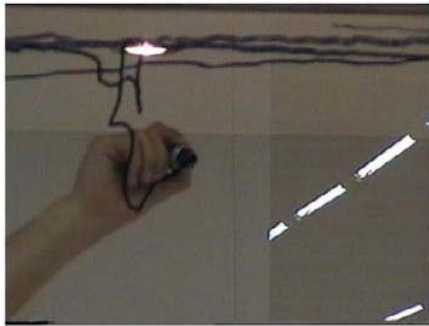


Fig.14. Stills from '*Medium*', 2000, İstanbul.

5. BODY AND SPACE

5.1. Living Spaces

The body is defined spatially. The spatial relation of the body and its periphery creates different states of being and appearances. The appearance or the visible body is an outcome of spatial relations and the distinction between the body and environment defines what Elizabeth Grosz calls as 'identity'. Grosz's perception of the body is not a biological one. Apart from our biological existence, our perception of our own bodies and its exteriorities, the organization of our space creates an imaginary body. A body phantom...

The body phantom is the condition of the subject's capacity not only to adapt to but also to become integrated with various objects, instruments, tools, and machines. It's the condition of the body's inherent openness and pliability to and in its social context. As Paul Schilder, one of the pioneers of the body-image, has made clear, it's the capacity to integrate or internalize otherwise apparently external objects into one's own corporeal activities. This enables the blind person to feel through a cane and the driver of a car, or even a pilot, to accurately judge distances relative to the car or plane, no matter how large. It's the condition that enables us to acquire and use prosthetic devices in place of our sense

organs, and it is the condition of our capacity in sensual experiences to bodily incorporate the objects of our desire through sustained intimate contact (Grosz: 187).

The idea of body phantom enables us to think of the body as a pliable, ever changing organization. According to its relation with the so called exteriority, it extends, contracts, flows, shifts... In short, body becomes with the space.

Depending on Roger Caillois' paper "Mimicry and Legendary Psychastenia" (1984) Grosz takes into account two extreme and analogous situations where the body and its environment are 'confused'.

The first instance is mimicry, where the body of the organism exteriorizes itself through imitation of another specific body, or by willing to 'become' another body. In some cases, it's still possible to assume that the organism is somehow cheating or making believe by adopting some characteristics of another organism or an environmental object. But there are also other cases of mimicry, where the organism does not have an original state of being. It's definitive by this otherness. No single photograph of the Acrobat Octopus can define the animal and it's not possible to say that the animal is imitating another creature. With its ever changing form,

color, texture and movement, the animal does not look like anything. Not even itself. A signifier without a signified..

According to Grosz as she depends on Caillois, mimicry is not necessarily an act of camouflage or a protection system for the sake of the survival of the species. It's more related to the perception and representation of space by the organism.

We are thus dealing with a luxury and even a dangerous luxury, for there are cases in which mimicry causes the creature to go from bad to worse: geometer-moth caterpillars simulate shoots of shrubbery so well that gardeners cut them with their pruning shears. The case of phyllia is even sadder: they browse among themselves, taking each other for real leaves, in such a way that one might accept the idea of a sort of collective masochism leading to mutual homophagy, the simulation of the leaf being provocation in this kind of totem feast. (Caillois, quoted in Grosz: 190)

If identity is considered as the distinction of the body from its surroundings, this state of being lacks it (even for the price of death).

The second instance is of psychasthenia, where the psychotics fail to locate their body in space. The sense of individuality is lost as the distinction of the body and space is blurred. In a constant awareness of their body, the subjects' senses are inverted. They "...may look

at themselves from the outside, as others would; they may hear the voices of others inside their own heads. They are captivated and replaced, not by another subject but by space itself" (Grosz: 192).

I know where I am, but I do not feel as though I'm at the spot where I find myself." To these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space, dark space where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is the 'convulsive possession' (Caillois, quoted in Grosz: 192-3).

This type of psychosis can be associated with the fear of darkness. Without a visual reference to map the space and to distinguish the body from the space, darkness engulfs the body as if it has a substance and threatens the identity.

Caillois thinks that the experience is not unique to schizophrenia. He asserts that the tactile aspect of mimesis is always a threat for 'normal' people, too. He mentions the sense of tactility in the experience of darkness, and suggests that dark space is sensed as 'full', which constitutes a threat for the sense of 'I' as separate from the environment, whereas light conveys a sense of emptiness of one's environment, which affirms the identity of the 'I' (Caillois, quoted in Sarikartal: 101).

Psychosis and mimicry may seem to be extreme examples in nature. Yet they remain as a reliable model of sensing the space with the body. Or maybe sensing the body with the space: the distinction between the two is blurred.

Psychosis is the human analog of mimicry in the insect world (which may thus be considered to be a kind of natural psychosis?): both represent what Caillois describes as 'a depersonalization by assimilation to space'. The psychotic and the insect renounce their right to occupy a perspective point, abandoning themselves to being located, for themselves, as others -from the point of view of others. The primacy of the subject's own perspective is replaced by the gaze of another for whom the subject is merely a point in space, not the focal point organizing space (Grosz: 193).

5.2. *Hibernation* (2001)

Hibernation was the first project, which forced me to think about the body as a spatial entity. *Introjection-Projection* can be considered as the continuation of it.

The installation has two elements. One is a video projection on the wall of the gallery, and the other is a pair of construction gloves holding a pair of gardening tools like a claw. The video projects the sequence of a human body burying itself within the earth in a hole. The edges of the image fade into the wall it is projected on. The bottom edge touches the ground so that the gloves

placed on the ground cast a shadow on the image while the image is also cast on the gloves.

There is a special importance of the production of this work since it reveals a process through which I tried to realize the body behind the figure.

I felt the need to do something with the earth. Smell, eat, hug, dig holes in which my limbs would fit, feel the weight, something physical. The project began with a vision in my memory. I remembered my encounter with an animal, which was sleeping inside a hole within the earth. I don't know what kind of an animal it was. I only saw a part of it, its back. The back is more like a surface than a body part. It was covered with hair. The surface was moving up and down because it was breathing. As a consequence of this memory, without thinking much, I buried myself in a hillside using two gardening tools. I used them just like claws. As the hole got bigger, the cavity started to have a form resembling my own body. I was excited imagining possible relations of my body with the hole. Was it big enough, would my feet fit in there? I often stared at the hole for a long time. It was like I was not alone and I was dealing with another body. I realized for the first time, how big I was... Then the exchange took place. I entered the hole. The earth

covered my body leaving my arm and back out (as an object of sight).



Fig.15. The gloves used in '*Hibernation*'.



Fig.16. Stills from an early version of '*Hibernation*'.

I was satisfied with the experience but I still wanted to see what was visible from the surface. I expected it to look like that animal. I repeated this action a few times more when a camera was recording. After watching these recordings, it appeared to me that the image of the body, which was partially visible through the earth, was more effective than the action of burying oneself. The body parts were not recognizable and they inevitably evoked a desire to recover or to identify. Some images had a potential to work in this manner, so I used them. But the rest was a documentation of a personal experience.

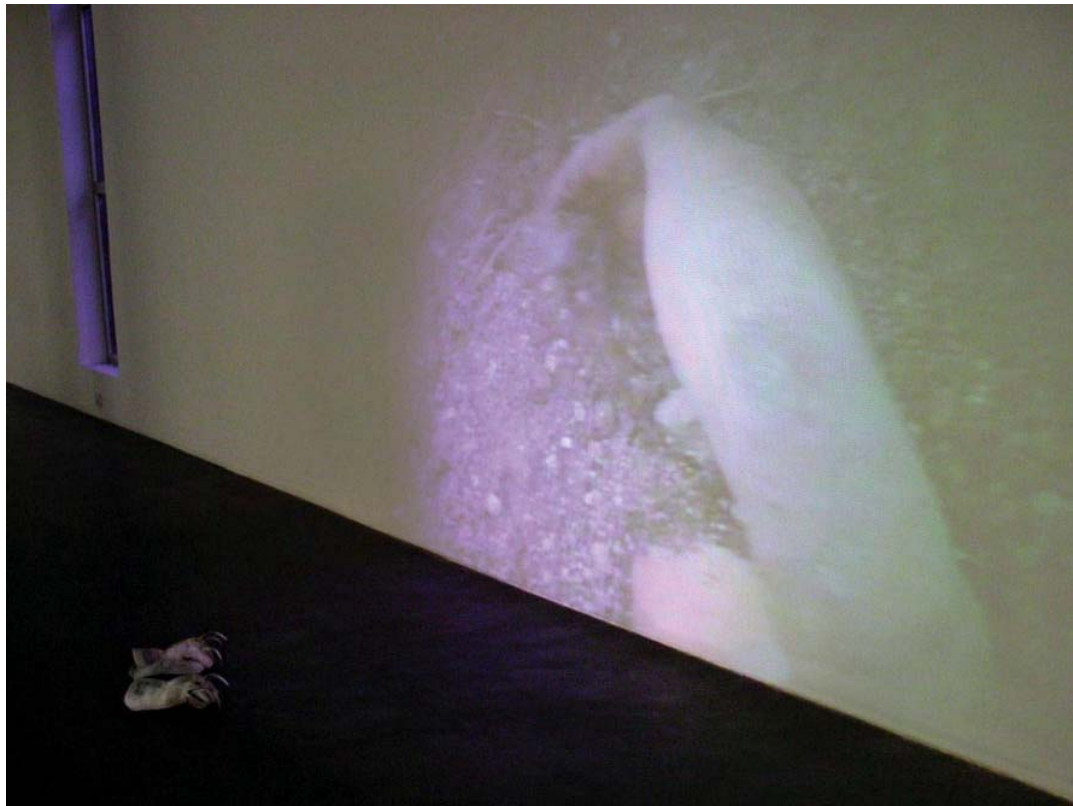


Fig.17. '*Hibernation*', 2001, İstanbul.

6. THE SURFACE: THE SCREEN OR THE SKIN

Body and space seem to be separated by a barrier. This surface in between is a skin in the biological sense and a screen in the psychological sense. Nevertheless, this state of in-betweenness characterizes both of them. The skin is the outer edge, which limits and separates the body from the outside. On the other hand it's a surface of sense, which makes the world outside possible. Similarly the screen is the separation of gazes in the Lacanian theory. At the same time, it enables the practice of vision.

The surface of the body operates in both directions. The skin is a screen. When we touch with it, what is it that we are feeling? The touched or the touching? Can it not be that we are feeling our own skin, the difference in it as it touches something? It senses as much as it is sensed. It's a subject as much as it's an object. It's a 'subjectile' in Derrida's terms.

'Subjectile', the word or the thing can take place of the subject or of the object - being neither one nor the other. ... Between the beneath and the above, that is at once a support and a surface, ...A sort of skin with holes or pores. ...between beneath and above (support and surface), before and behind, here and over there, on this side and on that, back

and forth, the border of a textile, paper, veil or canvas, but between what and what? For can we enter, by perforation or deflowering, into what has no other consistency apart from that of the between, at least unless we lend it another one? ...Neither object nor subject, neither screen or projectile, the subjectile can become all that, stabilizing itself in a certain form or moving about in another (Derrida: 154-69).

6.1. Islamic Ornamentation

From the rational point of view, the body is a functioning organization and anything not contributing to the function is excessive. Following this logic in architecture and visual arts, it's possible to say that decoration and specifically ornamentation of the bodies is an excessive effort.

Grabar, in his book *Mediation of Ornament*, defines decoration as "anything applied to a structure or an object that is not necessary to the stability, use, or understanding of that object." (Grabar 1992: xxiii-xxiv) Since this wide definition includes anything from color to texture, ornamentation has its own. "...Ornament is that aspect of decoration, which appears not to have another purpose but to enhance its carrier." (Grabar: 5)

According to Grabar, ornament exists in every artistic tradition but its most engaging and best-known examples

belong to the arts of Muslim culture. The special importance given to ornamentation in Islamic art cannot be explained by any kind of prohibition of the usage of figural representation. As Terry Allen suggests, there are examples of figural representations especially in the area of secular life. With the birth of Islam, "...figural art did not vanish from the Islamic world but was turned to a different purpose than it had been in the Antiquity. What disappeared was not figural representation but the use of figural representation to show human actions and states of mind - in the Islamic era these were the domain of poetry." (Allen: 33)

The arguments about aniconism and figural representation are not very important in the sense that ornamentation is the primary aspect of Islamic art. The body, the form is a secondary thing compared to the ornamentation it stands for. It's possible to say that the ornamentation is the body itself.

In the Maghrib, architectural ornament can even go one step further, Thus in the case of the Alcazar at Seville, the Alhambra at Granada or Ubbad Mosque in Tlemcen, the stucco tracery of the walls serves not only as a camouflage, but actually seems to transform the structural supports into a weightless curtain of a textile or lace work (Baer: 2).

Baer uses the words 'camouflage' and 'transform', both of which are related to the body. This is a body that expands itself beyond a definite form.

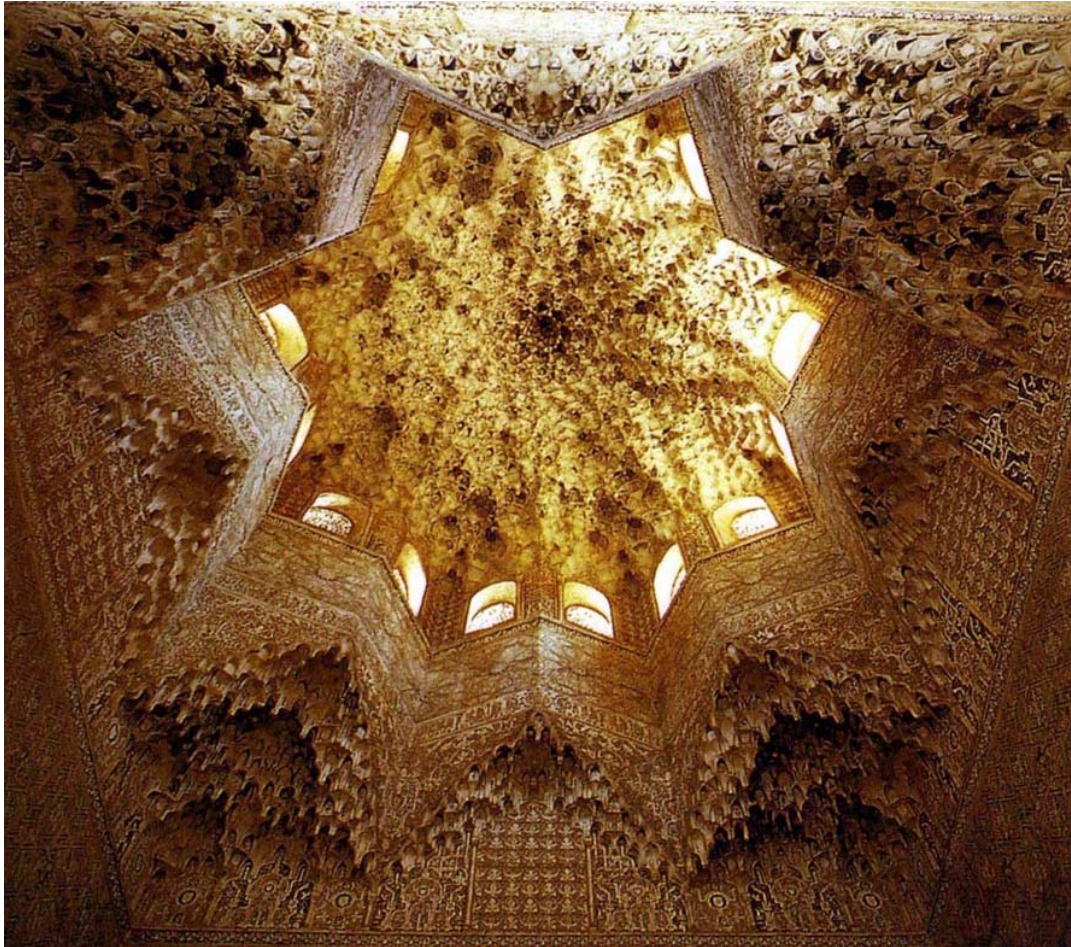
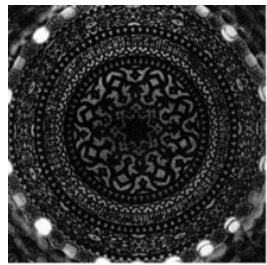


Fig.18. The dome of Alhambra in Granada.

Architecture in general is the modeling of the space, not the form. The scale of the space architecture deals with is beyond our grasp. Thus, our relation to a building depends on the experience and memory of this space. It's

possible to follow the same principles in the ornamentation of the surfaces in Islamic architecture. First of all, Muqarnas is a decorative element of the architecture, which is designed according to the negative space it engulfs. Its reference to the space can also be read as a reference to the 'Unseen' in the sense that both are incomprehensible. Secondly, the excessive, intricate geometry of the ornament expands the space towards infinity. The transformation effect is closely related to this movement.

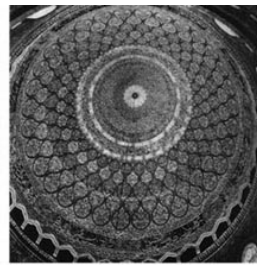
By observing the architecture of the domes in Alhambra, it's not possible to say that they are ornamented. The intricacy of geometry used in the muqarnas structure turns the interior void of domes to organic beings. The sublime effect of ornamentation exceeds perception. If realism can be considered as the excess of material or detail in comparison to what is perceived, Islamic ornamentation is realistic in a sublime level. It's not possible to perceive but only to look. It signifies, but the signified is not available to us...



Mausoleum of
Sultan Barkouk.
Cairo.
1399-1409.



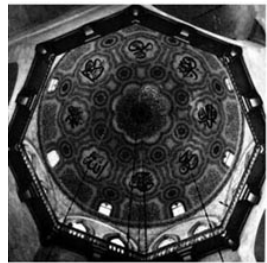
Grand Mosque.
Tlemcen.
1135.



Dome of the Rock.
Jarusalem.
Ottoman Era.



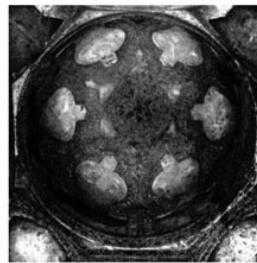
Grand Mosque.
Cordoue.
961-966.



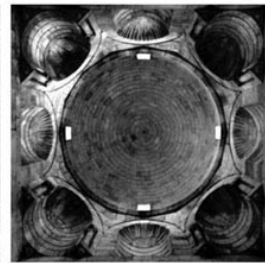
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Damas.
Ottoman Era



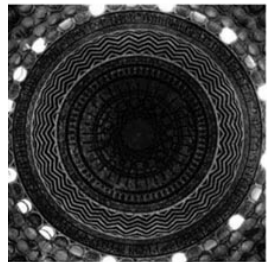
Mausoleum of
Saiyida Nafissa.
Cairo.
13. Century



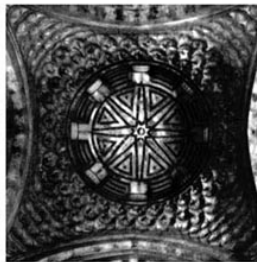
Mosque Al-Azhar.
Cairo.
970-972.



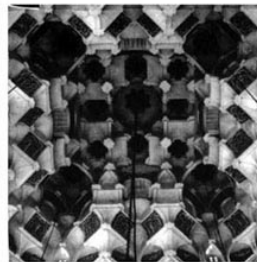
Madrasa Machad
Al-Hosseine.
Aleppo.
12. century.



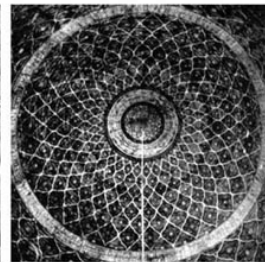
Mausoleum of
Sultan Barkouk.
Cairo.
1399-1409.



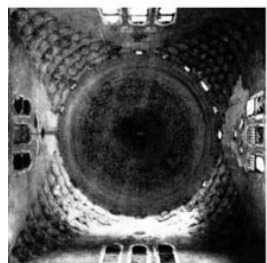
Madrasa of
Sultan Hassan.
Cairo.
1356-1363



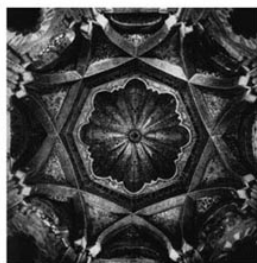
Mosque Al-Qarawiyyin.
Fas.
1142.



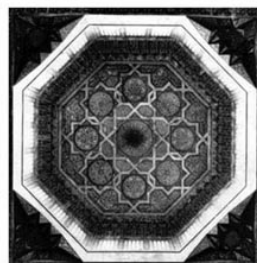
Mausoleum of
Imam Al-Chafil.
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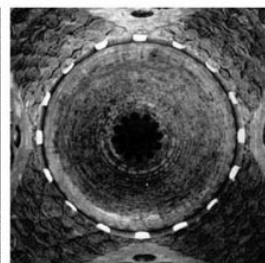
Mosque Mouaiyad.
Cairo.
1415-1420.



Grand Mosque.
Cordoue.
961-966.



Mausoleum of Kaitbay.
Cairo.
1472-1474.



Mausoleum of Kourkmas.
Cairo.
1507.

Fig.19. Various domes from different periods and geographies of Islamic Architecture.

The independent self-contained character of Islamic ornamentation also applies to the art of the object. For instance, on bronze, later twelfth-century feline shaped incense burner in Cleveland Museum of Art, the neck and the body of the animal are covered with an overall pattern of ogival compartments enclosing palmettes set against a pierced and cut-off background. Similarly, a Fatimid bronze rabbit -presumably a fountain head- has trefoil scrolls carved on its body, which obviously disguise its natural structure (Baer: 2).

The art of the object, in other words, the art of the figure deals with the form. However, the form becomes secondary by the application of the ornament. Ornamentation of the figures is in a sense the contemplation of the beings created by Allah. Instead of concentrating on the formal imitation of the animal, the artist performs the ornamentation, which as an act, is a consciousness of the beauty of the created and the creator. Just like the incomprehensibility and the beauty of life in a body, ornamentation equivalently exceeds the perception.

The ornamented surface becomes a moving and flowing skin rendering the body beneath alive. This is not a formal simulation but a process of realizing the life in a body.

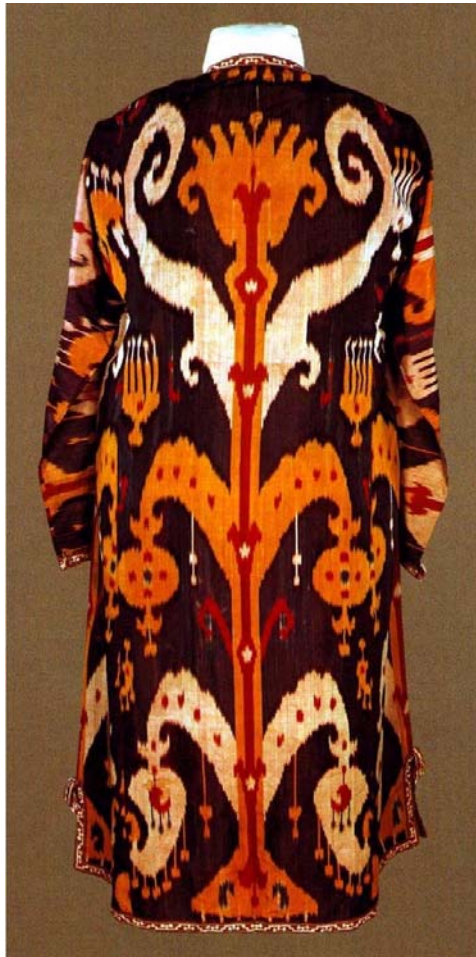


Fig.20. Man's coat, Bukhara, 19th Century.



Fig.21. Calligraphic Lion, İstanbul, 17th century.



Fig.22 Griffin, Spain, 11-12th century.



Fig.23 Incense burner in the form of a lion.

6.1.1. Musenna

Repetition, as the sign of a consciousness, is one of the basic aspects of ornamentation. The repetition of a form is usually used to strengthen its formal quality. However, a symmetrical repetition technique known as 'Musenna', which is frequently used especially in calligraphy, the movements of letters are mirrored so that each side of the writing equalize, erase the movement of the other. In the case of musenna, the symmetrical repetition of the form creates a sense of camouflage because the form is lost in the unity it creates with its twin.

On the other hand, it's possible to say that the total effect of the work exceeds the written text and starts to evoke anthropological references. In some examples, it looks like a face, although the intension may not be so. The technique resembles that of the 'Rorschach Test' images, which were used in psychology in the 40's. In this test, the patient is asked to interpret a sequence of symmetrical random inkblots. The success of the test is doubtful. However, the resemblance is significant in the sense that the signifier remains as a signifier without addressing a signified. "Signifiers signifying

nothing beyond their viscosity. Signifiers feigning the sign" (Dabashi: 129).

6.2. The Screen and the Gaze

The position of subject and object, the notion of identity is based on sight as seeing and being seen constructs relationships within the visible world.

In the operation of this relationship, Lacan mentions two phenomena, which he names as the 'screen' and the 'gaze'. These two operate together, not against each other.

This fact is observable in the variously modulated scale of what may be included, ultimately, under the general heading of mimicry. It's this that comes into play, quite obviously, both in sexual union and in the struggle to the death. In both situations, the being breaks up, in an extraordinary way, between its being and its semblance, between itself and that paper tiger it shows to the other. In the case of display, usually on the part of the male animal, or in the case of grimacing swelling by which the animal enters the play of combat in the form of intimidation, the being gives of himself, or receives from the other, something that is like a mask, a double, an envelope, a thrown-off skin, thrown off in order to cover the frame of a shield (Lacan: 107).

The screen is formed as soon as the frame of this shield is covered with the skin. This screen is the screen of representation, the symbolic order. The screen is a very

interesting phenomenon in the sense that it makes visible what is projected on it and simultaneously separates the subject and the object. The screen or the mask may seem to hide what is beneath, but the usage of it is actually a gesture, which makes an intense relation possible. "It's no doubt through the mediation of masks that the masculine and the feminine meet in the most acute, most intense way" (Lacan: 107).

Only the subject -the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man- is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is here the locus of mediation (Lacan: 107).

The gaze is that which can escape from the construction of this screen. From behind the screen, the gaze is sensible.

In our relation to things, in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it - that is what we call the gaze (Lacan: 73).

Depending on Lacan, it can be said that beyond the representative, formal, symbolic order of an artwork, there is a bodily/spatial relationship. There is a screen

which makes us see, separates us, creates within us a desire to penetrate; then there is a gaze by which we can sense our own body as it reflects, mimes, touches the other.

Lacan exemplifies the gaze with a bodily reference under the subject of mimicry. Ocellus is a dark eye-shaped spot on the body of some animals, which is believed to deceive predators. It can be thought that it is not actually the imitation of an eye but rather an organ of gaze. A gaze is not necessarily the existence of a seeing eye. It's more related to another function.

... It is a question of understanding whether they ... impress by their resemblance to eyes, or whether, on the contrary, the eyes are fascinating only by virtue of their relation to the form of the ocelli. In other words, must we not distinguish between the function of the eye and that of the gaze? ... The function of the stain and of the gaze is both that which governs the gaze most secretly and that which always escapes from the grasp of that vision that is satisfied with itself in imagining itself as consciousness (Lacan: 73-4).

That vision, that is satisfied in imagining itself as consciousness, practices perception as a window opening to the world outside. The function of the ocelli is to make that vision aware of its own voyeur, to turn the vision inside out. There is an element of psychosis involved in this model. As soon as the body starts

sensing itself, as soon as the subject sees itself seeing, the location is lost? Where is the body? Inside or outside?

6.3. *Introjection-Projection* (2002)

Introjection-Projection consists of mainly three elements: a video projection, a large white cloth, and my body. The video sequence is projected downwards from the ceiling on the white cloth under which I kneel in a circular pose. I form a rise on the surface moving occasionally to repose my body. The video projects a continuous sequence of the flowing close-up body images such as skin, hair, nipples, bones and interior organs. There is no cut in the sequence. The image is digitally processed in a way that it mirrors from the center creating a symmetrical view. The virtual line between the two sides overlaps my vertebrae. The work is performed in a pitch-dark space (without any other light source other than the projector).

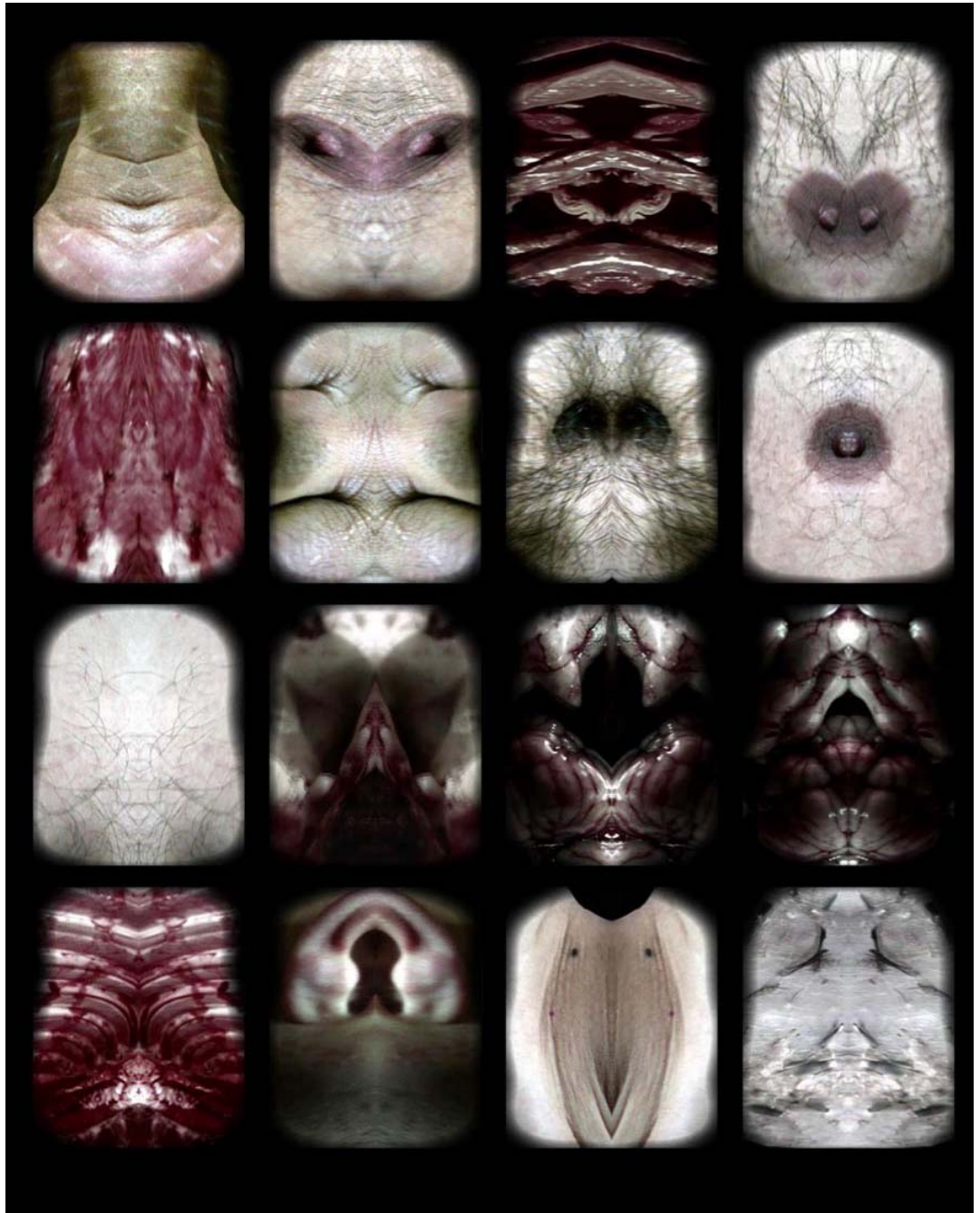


Fig.24. Video stills from '*Introjection-Projection*'.

A projection requires a surface just as the surface needs light to be visible. In this work, the surface rises like a body and the projection forces it back. The video light is on a body. The body is both made visible and deformed by a living, organic and moving surface.

In *Introjection-Projection*, there appears a tension between what is 'given to be seen' to the viewer, and the structure below that alluring image. It appears when the structure becomes visible through the surface. This surface is excessively covered with a 'punctiform' body of intricacy. This is what creates the lure. The symmetry evokes the anthropological conventions of the viewer. It inevitably recalls an image of a body. The gaze is there more than anything. The process is analogous to the 'dreaming' process Lacan describes. The viewer "... may say to himself, 'It's only a dream'. But he does not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself - After all, I am the consciousness of this dream." (Lacan: 75-6) Deceived by this infinite appearance, the viewer oscillates between the need to project a familiarity to the flowing image and the desire to penetrate the surface. Is it possible to penetrate it? Probably not without losing the position as a viewer. It is not anymore a relation of the subject and the object as such...



Fig.25. A photo sketch of '*Introjection-Projection*'.

7. CONCLUSION

In our relation with the world, we desire to see and to grasp what is around us. This hegemony over the visible world constructs the world in a dualistic subject-object relationship. However, what is called the 'body' cannot be defined or positioned in such a construction. Beyond such positions, within the corporeality of the body, this thesis presented various appearances of the body in its relations with the space. Rather than trying to define the separation between the body and its exteriority, possible connections and continuations is emphasized as well as the indifference between sensing and becoming.

Such a conception of the body is not possible to realize through an intellectual or formal approach. It requires both the artist and the viewer to incorporate their bodies into an artwork. Therefore the work needs to have spatial qualities that exceed the objectness.

The absence of the object leads into the presence of a site. 'Site-specificity' is used to refer to this spatial relationship through which the work is defined. The site-specific approach is an answer to the problems regarding

the representations of the body. Body as site is a site of sensation where the distinction between the object and the subject is replaced by the unity of the sensed and the sensing.

As exemplified by works of Arte Povera artists, when the body is thought as a site, 'performance' appears to be the realization of the body meaning that something is already there or taking place. Performing the body is to make this site 'available'. "...It's *performance* which returns to define site-specificity, not only as a set of critical terms and as a mode of work, but as a way of characterizing the *place* these various site-specific practices reflect upon" (Kaye: 12).

The term 'space' has become an inseparable concept with the corporeality of the body in this research. It is space where the body is sensed to expand and adapt to, in its relation with the things. It's the same space, of which the body tends to become a continuation. Beyond simple relations, in some cases the body becomes even a secondary thing, a definition of the space. It's also a spatial practice that takes place in the encounter of two bodies.

Finally, the surface of the body is the surface of the space. It's this sur-face that appeals to our eyes. Yet it's the same surface, the very skin that senses the space, as well as the body.

7.1. *Derma graft* (2003)

When my body is in a horizontal resting position, when it is still, the movement inside continues. The blood flows as the heart beats. The lungs continuously inhale and exhale.⁷ This movement within is visible from outside. It's projected to the skin. The skin becomes a screen. In the case of the internal movement of body, the skin serves not as a cover hiding the movement, but as a membrane, or a screen, which clarifies the movement. Just like an image projection, vibration also requires a surface to be sensed. Considering the fact that the source of this sense is inside the body, it can be said that the body is sensing itself. The sense is inverted. The skin trembles with the pulse and stretches with the

⁷ As exemplified in the works by Acconci, Oppenheim and Penone, a body is already in a state of action and performativity. Even the form of an object is in a sense the result of an action related to its essence. The work of the artist, in most cases, is to realize this performance.

rib cage. To sense this movement is just a matter of scale and position.⁸

Video projection can be used as an amplifier. When recorded as close-ups the projected movements amplify on the screen. 'Screened skin' will be working on this principle: the amplification of the internal movements of the body through video projection.

I will be lying horizontally, facing up, in the middle of a dark room. My body will be covered with a white cloth, which extends on the ground as well. There will be a very small rectangular hole in the cloth. This hole will be located on an area close to the heart.

A video projector and a video camera will be connected to each other to form a closed circuit. The projector will be screening what the camera frames at the moment. Both devices will be hanged down from the ceiling. The camera will be below the projector and very close to the body surface. The height of the projector will be defined according to the width of the room, so that the projection covers the base including my body.

⁸ Making sensible, available what is already there is related to the realization of the body in a human scale. In Penone's works, this scale is associated with anthropomorphic forms or an anthropological dimension where the body, the material or the site appears to perform just like a subject.

As a result of this setting, the room will continuously expand and contract. It will tremble with the heart. The projection of the skin will incorporate everything in the room including my body and the viewer's body. The skin will expand to the space. The environment and the body will have a similar texture and a simultaneous movement.⁹ This will create an effect of camouflage.¹⁰ The subject will be assimilated into space. The skin will become the locus of sensation.

⁹ This amplified movement of the projected image is a prosthetic extension of the body. With the unity of movement, an imaginary body, the body phantom is realized.

¹⁰ In camouflage, usually it's the body that blends into its environment. In this case the environment becomes an extension of the body and blending takes place as a result.



Fig.26. A photo sketch of the proposed work '*Dermagraft*'.

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