

Aesthetic Investigations

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Making sense of darkness. Art, sensation and a particular kind of thought process.

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Abstract: Experience can involve sensations that intensify awareness and thought, casting them to a place of oddness, far from what is common, encoded and comfortable; an intensity thus generated allows for sense to flow in various and different directions. Art deals with these sensations in particular ways. It deviates from the typical modes of sense making and materialises objects, however insubstantial or ephemeral, which encapsulate and conserve those sensations. Yet, for this to occur a process of transmutation must take place. In this article the artistic process is presented as a disembodiment strategy: a certain reality is disengaged from its original context to be reincorporated into another, new entity: the artwork.

The plunge into the depths entails losing oneself, or experiencing a 'sensual uncertainty'. I have always felt drawn towards some notion of fear in a very visual sense, towards sensations of falling, of being pulled inwards, of losing one's sense of self. (Anish Kapoor).¹

INTRODUCTION

Experience can involve sensations that intensify awareness and thought, casting them to a place of oddness, far from what is common, encoded and comfortable. Art deals with these sensations in particular ways, materialising

objects—however insubstantial or ephemeral—that attempt to encapsulate and conserve them. For this to occur a process of transmutation must take place, as the original sensations cannot be stopped, belonging as they do to the continuum of life.

This paper meditates on the creative process inasmuch as it occupies a central role in both art production and art reception. The creative process is hypothesised as a disembodiment strategy wherein a certain content, disengaged from its original context is reincorporated into another, new entity: the artwork.

By retrieving a personal, bewildering experience—later to be confronted with the viewing of certain pieces by the artist Anish Kapoor—it becomes evident that it is not the initial experience *per se* that is revived, but rather the intensity unleashed while making sense of the occurrence, a process which implies bypassing conventional, organised thought.

In shifting from the condition of spectator to that of art producer, the practice of art is reflected upon as an activity grounded in thought processes and modes of sense making comparable to those previously commented on.

I. SENSATION

The sensation experienced: visiting a grotto

Consider the following description of a visit to a grotto: The spectacle offered by the massive galleries—the walls covered with mineral formations of various colours and sizes—would in itself have made the visit worthwhile but what made the experience memorable was something else. At a certain point in our tour, the guide warns us the lights will be turned off, so we may, for a brief moment, experience the native darkness of the space. By way of curiosity and with the obvious intention of generating a mood of staged suspense, she warns that if a person were to dwell at length in the absolute darkness soon to be experienced, sensory deprivation would cause confusion, one would be assaulted by visual and auditory hallucinations: the brain, lacking information from an organ, would begin to invent it.

If the guide's words provoked a certain curiosity, they did not prepare for the experience, physical and concrete, which then took place: the immensely vast and hollow space became suddenly invisible. Due to the massive proportions of the gallery we were in, the corporeal sensation was equivalent to being outdoors: an outdoors become suddenly and inexplicably... gone.

What happened was the draining of a sensory function—its complete annihilation—resulting in a nameless *milieu*; something that could not be termed blackness, for nothing in this compact denseness—in a peculiar contact with the eyeballs—justified the use of even the word *black*. There was no colour simply because there was no vision. The entire lexicon of chromatic and luminous references became inappropriate. This state could not be called 'blindness' since it related to an episode in a visual person, rather it

was a state of non-vision; that is, one saw what there was to see, but the very foundation of vision was subtracted; the sudden and absolute disappearance of the reason for vision greatly intensified the awareness of the missing sense.

Vision emerges powerfully against this negative form. The body strains, attempting to establish itself, striving not to be engulfed; longing for the perceptive sense, it forces the eyes to straddle the darkness that presents itself. Awareness of the physical location responsible for vision becomes intense; the two eyeballs become acute presences, extended, excessive, *ultra-present*. Open-eyed against the emptiness, sensing only air against the parched surfaces of its globes one seeks a change, however slight, in what is felt: by opening and shutting the eyelids, by rotating the eyes in their sockets. The air becomes tangible as it touches the eye, and the eye—its function lost—ceases to be a bodily organ, subjugated to a task, and becomes something indefinable: a sphere of uncertain substance, an object to be removed and handled; an eye-object, dilated, out of proportion, demanding the whole of one's physical extent and mental space.

The sensation

A body wrought by the *ultra-presence* of an eye-object; an eye that is suddenly not what it is—what it is supposed to be—and can therefore be something else; an immersive space no longer possible to recognise as external, that entangles one in its dark viscosity, intensifying awareness and thought that are cast away to a place of oddness, far from what is common, closed and comfortable: what is this, but the disorganisation of an orderly set, made up of parts clearly defined in their functions? What is it, but the shattering of 'the organisation of the organs we call an organism' and the summoning of an *ovular* existence?²

The egg, as defined by Gilles Deleuze, represents a vital force beyond the organised body, beyond the distribution of functions. It can be compared to the statue covered with marble referred by Étienne Condillac: in his *Treaty of Sensations*, Condillac proposes a mythological model intended to clarify how sensations are structural to our understanding of the world. He describes a statue 'internally organised' as a human being; externally it is entirely covered with marble while being animated by a spirit, which in itself induces no ideas; the marble, covering the entire surface of the statue, allows it no use of its senses.³

The sense of smell is the first to be uncovered, but as the statue has no conception of its limits—of itself—it interprets the stimulus that emerges in its sensitive field as a mode of its own existence. The scent of roses it experiences is interpreted as a mode of being: I *am* this sensation-smell-of-roses or I *feel myself to be* this sensation-smell-of-roses. It has no way of distinguishing the sensation from the whole to which it belongs; in fact, it has no notion that there is an *I* separate from something *other*. There are only

particular conditions of being: characterised by certain olfactory presences or otherwise characterised by their absence.

According to Condillac, the statue equipped with all but the sense of touch, would still be unable to form an idea of the outside world. It is this sense that will allow it to create a notion of extent, of something that takes up space, which is distant, which is separate. Touch allows it to feel the continuity of its body *versus* the discontinuity of that which no longer belongs to it.

This fiction describes the awakening of the differentiated subject (conscious of itself, of its extent, of its physical limits). It also tells of the emergence of the organ, i.e. of the moment when, from an amalgam of indistinct and unspecified sensations of being—characteristic of an extended experience of self which encompasses the body but also a world that is not yet *external*—certain functions emerge: body parts and the kind of sensations they afford. With respect to vision ‘Condillac introduces an interesting distinction: “the statue doesn’t need to learn how to *see*, it needs to learn how to *look* ...”’.⁴

The idea is that the statue, before acquiring the sense of touch, ‘sees what there is to see’, but learning to take the outside world as such implies learning to *look*.⁵ What the statue sees, until then, is a personal mode of being; it sees itself as part of a substance from whence it must extract itself as a subject that looks: ‘from the meshes (...) of an iridescence to which I originally belong, I emerge as eye’.⁶

This eye that emerges is an organised eye: a functional organ. An eye that recognises forms, that groups and labels, that associates the parts and anticipates the outcome, that considers what it sees as belonging to an ordered whole and therefore seeks out the lines of force sacrificing those more subtle and delicate. It is the regulating and self-regulated eye: preferring symmetry, stability and simplicity, that tends to close that which is open, rank that which is out of the series, ascribing name, cause, and purpose to what it captures. It is the eye essential for survival, pragmatic and nimble; on the other hand it is the domesticated eye, which, having learned to look has lost its primary ability to see. The extraction of the subject that *looks* is done at the expense of the pure sensation, of the unsettled stain and inconsequent line.

Egg, organism and body without organs

The egg represents, in Deleuze, the ability to see the pure sensation beyond the acquired capacity of looking at the world; it stands for the ‘iridescence to which I originally belong’ ‘before’ being extracted as eye:⁷

We know that the egg reveals just this state of the body ‘before’ organic representation: axes and vectors, gradients, zones, cinematic movements, and dynamic tendencies, in relation to which forms are contingent or accessory. [...] for the organism is not life, it is what imprisons life.⁸

The disorder provoked by the dispelling encounter—the annihilation of *looking*, which long ago replaced *seeing*—leads to something that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari baptised with a term taken from Antonin Artaud: the body without organs (BwO).⁹ Both Deleuze's egg and Condillac's statue are mythical representations of an indeterminate vital force, while the BwO deals with conceiving, or rather assuming, a particular state: a becoming-*other*, which allows thought and thus sense, to flow in different directions.¹⁰ If we consider, as Deleuze proposes, that the meaning of a thing is a force, or intensity, which takes possession of it, then, depending on the way this appropriation takes place the meaning of this thing will differ.¹¹

It is not about 'returning' to the egg, but about generating ways of being traversed by the force—the intensity—that invokes it. The BwO is disordered (dis-organ-ised) in nature, only 'flesh and nerve': stripped of codes, structures, meanings, it provides different means for channeling sense;¹² it does without conventional organs and generates other, provisional ones:

A wave with a variable amplitude flows through the body without organs; it traces zones and levels on this body according to the variations of its amplitude. When the wave encounters external forces at a particular level, a sensation appears. An organ will be determined by this encounter, but it is a provisional organ that endures only as long as the passage of the wave and the action of the force.¹³

The sensation conserved.

An experience of Anish Kapoor's work

Many years later, confronted with certain works of Anish Kapoor, the sensations experienced in the grotto were recalled; these were as if present, embodied, conserved in the pieces.

In *Adam* (1988-89), for example, Kapoor excavates a space of pure darkness in one of the smoothed faces of a block of pink sandstone; in *Mother as a Void* (1988), this darkness is created in the hollow of hemispherical pieces. In both cases the effect is achieved by coating naturally retreating forms with a dark blue pigment, which enhances the effect. But to say this is to say almost nothing, the works go beyond the conditions of their making and the result is paradoxical and disturbing. They defy the sense of sight; our eyes cannot fix them, it is not clear what we are seeing.

How deep are these holes? We can always tell—by walking around the pieces—that the darkness doesn't exceed the physical dimensions of the works before us; but this is a rational construction, given through intellect and the kind of knowledge it provides that braces us to an organised reality. The relation established with a work of art is not of that order; it must be governed by another instance, by the logic of what is felt. To penetrate the darkness of Kapoor's pieces (to understand it), one must lose one's mind, let the eye-organ become an eye-object to probe the darkness with the sensitive

surface of this provisional organ. The intensity generated by the event—by confrontation—it is the BwO that can grant it passage, allowing the sensation to be: the sensation, in this case, of being before a space without measure, that far exceeds the actual presence of the works. The darkness created by Kapoor is a space that cancels out the organism but that does not empty space itself.

These dark areas are gaps that open onto a place of transmutation; they are the sites of modification from one state to another. This other state is an appropriate image of artistic creation, as the force that founds aesthetic experience and grounds creation is necessarily generated in a dimension where things are of one mass only; a place beyond meaning or where meaning collapses; hovering as *virtuality*.¹⁴ Kapoor's Voids are compact and dense; darkness is a place of potency, an *all* rather than a *nothing*; it is also a *nothing* in the sense it doesn't represent anything to our organised beings—an *all-nothing*: chaos, from which all that is created must necessarily emerge.

The darkness in Kapoor's works is particular in that it confronts us with this state—or space, or zone—by making it concrete, by objectifying it. Perhaps the place where his works lie—between painting and sculpture—puts them in a better position to retain a sensation like the one experienced in the grotto; because like the grotto, they involve us in an experience that is visual and spatial: the experience of a vast hollow darkness, which is expressed as simultaneous (parallel) to the space occupied by our organism, by our organised eye and body.

The installation *Void Field* (1989) attests to the coexistence of these two states. A number of sandstone blocks are arranged in the exhibition space; each has a hole—lined with dark pigment and about the size of a hand—on its upper face. The repetition of holes, each opening into the dark opacity, produces the strange impression of overlapping realities: the darkness could be the same for all. One feels that a single darkness is present, occupying all the space—not just the interior of the stones, but also the space beyond them, between them, under them—literally overlapping, like a negative dimension, the space that we occupy, and where the stone blocks are located and our bodies circulate. One considers the possibility of being pulled into the dark side, entering through one of the holes, and on the other side, looking back to see a series of white holes of lightness, about the size of a hand, all opening onto one, unique, clarity.

Two spaces (or states), simultaneous and overlapping—one indeterminate, kneading into its thick consistency everything that creeps in, the other enlightened, determined, organised, named.

The *presence* of this increases as one becomes aware of it—like the ring in the ear that, once detected, becomes impossible to ignore. Soon, it becomes impossible to view the works of Kapoor without feeling that other space about, pressing on the walls, the floor, the ceiling. The walls soften, becoming tumescent, vortices open on the floor and walls, some of the works

become incomplete—partly non-formed—the absent portion guessed on the other side. This other space looms and becomes excessive, demanding (once again) the whole of one’s physical extent and mental space.

II. ART AS *BRICOLAGE*

‘An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts.’¹⁵ This statement of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari refers to what these authors call *desiring-machines*.¹⁶ We are all such machines: in turn capturing flows transmitted by the surrounding reality (as organ-machines) and emitting energy flows (as energy-source-machines); and ‘this is how we are all [“bricoleurs”], each with their little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions.’¹⁷ The translators for the Portuguese version of *Anti Oedipus* clarify in a footnote: ‘*bricolage* is untranslatable into Portuguese, the word refers to the usage of broken or castoff things, whose use is modified to adapt to new functions’.¹⁸

This idea can serve as a starting point to describe an artist: an artist is a particular kind of bricoleur who leaves behind a trail of concrete objects (entities)—of various forms, materials, consistencies or times—capsules of her/his encounters with reality.

Deleuze and Guattari define an artistic object as ‘a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects’;¹⁹ the artist as organ-machine perceives and is affected by reality and these are the sensations, extracted or derived from her/his experience, which s/he seeks to conserve, fixing them into objects. Because art always implies the materialisation of something, there are always objects (however insubstantial or ephemeral) that channel the force—the intensity, the affect; the artist is one who is interested in and knows how to transform her/his experience of the world into entities with consistency of their own, i.e., separated from her/him who originates them.

There is an internal disposition that leads an artist to apply energy and effort into generating objects that attempt to preserve something essentially fugacious and transitory; artistic objects embody something generated in a flow, originally belonging to the continuum of life. For this conservation to occur a process of transmutation must take place since the original and lived sensations cannot be immobilised.

To consider this process it is convenient to analyse the type of relationship the artist establishes with those portions of reality chosen as base material for her/his activity: for her/his *bricolage*.

An intense affection: the object as an example of affect

An individual in the course of her/his life at a given moment and in particular conditions, before a phenomenon of nature or man, arising from within or without, can be intensely affected. The experience of darkness in the grotto is an example of such an experience, but others could be pointed out.

These experiences can occur before a thing of disarming simplicity or dizzying complexity; before something beautiful, extraordinary or astonishing or too cruel, oppressive or agonising; before something exceptional—which stands out in its singularity—or something that being so common surprises by its generality. In these moments one’s whole consciousness focuses on the event, which gains an overwhelming dimension.

At this point, a concept introduced by Georges Bataille, and developed by the philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, can be considered: the abject.²⁰ In her book *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva presents the abject as a ‘twisted braid of affects and thoughts’;²¹ violent and dark, it fascinates and simultaneously revolts us; something very close but unassimilable, something beyond ‘the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable’.²² The question is: How can something that is beyond thought be the subject of an essay intended for collective understanding? In the last chapter, Kristeva gives us her answer:

Perhaps those that the path of analysis, or scription, or of a painful or ecstatic ordeal has led to tear the veil of the communitarian mystery, on which love of self and others is set up, only to catch a glimpse of the abyss of abjection with which they are underlaid—they perhaps might be able to read this book as something other than an intellectual exercise.²³

Comprehension depends on the reader’s personal experience, not only of intellectual nature, but also affective. Furthermore, the possibility of not understanding is assumed, reading can amount but to an ‘intellectual exercise’; it is implied that a reader who has not experienced it, may not relate to the theme.

Throughout the book, her analysis draws on literary excerpts—Dostoyevsky, Borges, Bataille, Céline—and, also in the last chapter, the author goes on to consider literary art the privileged channel of this *thing*—the abject, the sensation of abjection.²⁴ Kristeva concludes that art, in this case literary art, with its power to transmit more than the consensual meaning of words, serves to convey a notion that cannot be understood through intellectual means alone.

Abjection is an excessive experience, ‘[drawing] towards the place where meaning collapses’;²⁵ it reveals something visceral and unnameable. Unnameable but not beyond description, since an entire book is written about it and the sharing of its content is possible; it is unnameable because its meaning does not stabilise, hence the necessity of experience for its understanding. If, in spite of everything, meaning passes it is because we can summon our experience and identify within us—viscerally—something to which we can relate. The meaning(s) conveyed by the words *abject* and *abjection* is(are) closely linked to singular experience; the words conjure and evoke, but they cannot tame the content they express.

Kristeva's strategy to describe the abject is to outline a field that corners the intensity, which for a brief moment can be felt. Kristeva's essay tells of a primal, vital force in its absolute crudity: this is an affect. And what becomes obvious, above all, is the excessive nature of affect. It can be compared to what Deleuze and Guattari identify as an event, which 'exceed[ing] in every sense its own actualisation' retracts into indeterminacy as soon as it is glimpsed; escaping, constantly slipping between words.²⁶

Affect is not sentiment

'Because affect is not a personal feeling [...] it is the effectuation of a power of the pack, that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel'.²⁷ The 'pack' in this context refers to the state that is generated (assumed): the becoming (and affects are becomings). Becoming-pack, becoming-subject, becoming-darkness, becoming-other... what the force that runs through us makes us *be*, even if the incarnation is of infinitesimal duration: even if the sensation is immediately smothered and covered up.

Sentiments are composite beings involving affect, but involving other elements as well; they are complex interactions between multiple instances of our existence and include, moreover, a specific name—an encoding—that crystallises particular sensory and affective configurations, already entangled with ideas, memories, pictures, words—be they personal and subjective, or collective and cultural. Affect becomes sentiment—is sentimentalised—when it is defined, structured and named. When Deleuze and Guattari say an affect is not personal (whereas sentiment is) they are not displacing it into ideality; affect is certainly felt within each actual being and in this sense it is very personal. What this implies is that affect is yet a part of the amalgam of indeterminacy, governed by *ovular* synergies.

And surely, the idea of a pure affect—unsentimental—is an abstraction; actual experience always offers composites.

Regarding perception and memory, Henri Bergson considers they are two acts that 'always interpenetrate each other, are always exchanging something of their substance as by a process of endosmosis'.²⁸ We are condemned to ignorance of the pure manifestations of one and the other; knowing only a single phenomenon we call, now perception, now memory, depending on whether the presence of one or the other prevails in the mixture.²⁹ In the words of Deleuze 'the question is not whether the two lines meet and mix together. This mixture is our experience itself, our representation'.³⁰

Applying this reasoning to the distinction between affect and sentiment: what experience provides is always a composite we opt to call, now affect, now sentiment, depending on whether the associated sensation(s) or the causal relationship(s) perceived seem more or less concise (sorted/classified). The names we give to sentiments vary: abjection, terror, love, awe, sublime, sacred, *et cetera*. But let be it conceded that in these mixtures there is an

element, indeterminate and ambiguous, to which we choose to give the name *affect*.

Affect is something that remains in a dark zone, where sentiments no longer fully participate; affect is impersonal in that it is still basic and unnamed; not contained, not resigned, unrestrained, assimilating in itself all the complexity and ambiguity that subsequent judgments or criteria will grant it.

Affect and code

It is important to refer that talking or writing about affect—about something like abjection—is already attempting to encode it; sentimentalisation is difficult—if at all possible—to avoid. The upsurge of affect is immediately and inevitably followed by elaborations, which involve intellect, memory and language, cultural, social and individual narratives, that tend to suppress and conceal its very ambiguity.

According to Denis Hollier ‘this is the weak point in Kristeva’s approach. When she connects to objects or specific substances, then it becomes a problem of classification’, affect then loses its formless (*informe*) nature.³¹

Formless, another term coined by Bataille, is where meaning collapses.³² It is a term used to demolish boundaries and disqualify things; Bataille describes it through the word *spit* or *gob*. Krauss associates the term to an anti-Gestalt process, which opposes the tendency to give shape, coherence, comfort.³³

Perhaps the notion of the formless is entangled in the discussion on the abject because those involved understand that every attempt to approach affect leads to a classificatory dead end; the notion of formless due to its dissolving nature, allows to back out of the alley, to undo elaborations that are too structural or referential.³⁴ And perhaps this is the only way to talk about an affect, through constant advances and retreats, mindful that the meaning must constantly be unmade and remade. Perhaps, as Hollier remarks, the abject—or rather the affect that underlies it and underlies any sentiment—cannot be *said*.³⁵

What is inferred is that affect cannot be encoded. Because to be fair, it is said many times in many different ways: Kristeva says it and seeks to demonstrate how Dostoyevsky, Borges, and so on, say it; Bataille says it, as do other contributors to the discussion around the abject and the formless. However, none say it decisively or conclusively; the matter is not closed, the meaning is not resolved.

Affect is considered indescribable because it doesn’t conform to codes (word, language, discourse); in order to reflect upon affect one must first accept the terms of its fleeting appearance, its transience. To penetrate its territory, language must surrender its conventionality; only then will it be able to redirect its assertive skills to the underlying instability.

In art (literary and otherwise) as well as in theoretical texts that address such notions (that describe the conditions by which one arrives at these

notions), it is never about defining or explaining but about evoking, summoning, triggering the appearance of something that withdraws at every turn; it is about assuming a state that (emulating Kristeva's strategy) corners the intensity so it can manifest itself and be felt.

In art, thought implies becoming-other.

The way art relates to affect implies a deliberate effort to place oneself in the line of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari refer Cézanne's words that in order to preserve a passing minute of the world we must 'become that minute'.³⁶ In fact, it is not under the effect of the original sensation that an artwork is produced; there is a distance, if only because an artwork takes time to be made and in the process one needs to re-summon the affect. To capture it—to think it—one must be prepared for instability, willing to (re)embody a certain present and capture in it something that summons and defines it: its lines of force.

One must enter into such a state as mentioned by Bataille, in which one '*loses himself* in something other than himself'.³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari echo this idea in that which they describe as *becoming-other*: becoming-animal, becoming-wolf, becoming-molecular, et cetera. A becoming, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is not a relationship, it is not about producing a resemblance, an imitation or an identification; neither is it a progression or a regression; it is not something one imagines, not a dream or a phantom: a becoming refers only to itself, produces nothing but itself and is absolutely real.³⁸

The becoming-animal of the human being approaches Human to Animal, attracting one to a place where the two overlap until they are confused, until the one can no longer be distinguished from the other. But neither do they remain identifiable as the one or the other: Human becomes Animal, but this animal also becomes something else, something derived from being human.³⁹

The becoming-animal of the human being is a state and in this state or zone it is possible to take hold of an unknown force, as such, as intensity, as affect; it is into the domains of affect that one penetrates through becoming-animal. The human being enters into such an understanding of what it is to be Animal, that (s)he becomes, not Animal, but *that which is understood*.

Becomings allow one to dissolve into an indeterminate state from which can be extracted a being that contains the intensity—that embodies it. This is what is made tangible in an artwork: this becoming, this state, this being (or block) made of affect and percept; that is of sensation.

III. CONCLUSIONS

At the basis of both aesthetic experience and artistic creation—considered to be comparable processes—is the seizing of a sensation; something perceived and felt in the world—be it interior or exterior. It is less important to identify the primary source of this sensation—whether it comes from an internal dis-

position or an external provocation, whether it is as *energy-source-machine* or as *organ-machine* that it is generated and apprehended—than it is to reflect on the particular way in which these sensations are processed and made sense of.

The creative process deviates from the typical (comfortable, encoded) modes of sense making, implying procedures that go beyond common sense, generating something that exceeds it and focusing one's consciousness on this very excess. Beyond the limits of code and usual forms lies the possibility of a different relation, of an attribution (production) of sense that is singular; in Bataille's words: 'that transcends the common limitations'.⁴⁰ This unusual presence demands to be managed and the body-without-organs provides an appropriate image for the condition that serves for dealing with it—configuring a state of dissolution or disorganisation that allows one to become something else, enabling thought, and thus sense, to flow in different, unconventional directions.

In the case of art, this process is made tangible through objects: because in art there are always objects (however insubstantial or ephemeral) that channel the intensity of sensation—of affect—making it perceptible and experiential. The artistic process seeks to grasp the intensity, giving it materiality and plasticity, so it can be held, kneaded and moulded. However, as it is not physical matter, one cannot manipulate it with one's hands of flesh; provisional limbs must be generated to enable the artist to handle this immateriality with members of equal consistency.

The artist's organism handles the plasticity of materials and produces forms; forms that in turn materialise sensations whose plasticity must be approached by other means. The relationship between the two instances is not straightforward: forms do not seek to translate sensations nor do the latter seek to guide forms, both happen simultaneously; it is through the interaction between the two, through the provocations and suggestions they exert upon each other, that objects and meanings arise. Thus, both the organism and the body-without-organs are necessary participants in artistic creation.

Artworks are capsules for a particular type of understanding, apprehended in perceptive and affective experience, expressed as sensation. To convey notions that cannot be understood through intellectual means alone, a particular kind of thought process is called upon; one that functions as a trap, assembling a structure that conjures and corners rather than presenting its content. In all its complexity and ambiguity, art echoes the fleeting form of that which it attempts to make tangible, generating objects whose meaning is equally transient: what is contained does not stabilise and cannot be resolved.

In this may lie the one condition that can be pointed out in aesthetic and artistic processes: a particular relation with the flow of time, more specifically, with the idea of the unrepeatable; an unrepeatability that has nothing to do

with the uniqueness (and even less with the originality) of the occurrence, but rather with the *ultra-particularisation* that experience convenes; in its pact with the present, with presence and with becoming.

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NOTES

1. Bhabha 1998, xxxi.
2. Deleuze 2001, 44.
3. Cf. Condillac in Zupančič 2000, 42–45.
4. Zupančič 2000, 43.
5. Condillac in Zupančič 2000, 43.
6. Lacan 1988, 82.
7. Lacan 1988, 82.
8. Deleuze 2001, 45.
9. Cf. Deleuze 2001, 44.
10. References to this idea of becoming-other abound in the work of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari: cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005, Deleuze and Guattari 1994, Deleuze 2001.
11. Deleuze proposes to understand the sense of a thing (a being, an event, an object, a word) as a force that takes possession and expresses itself through it (Deleuze 1983, 3). Sense is thus the accumulation of a force (intensity), that in traversing the thing and ourselves provokes in us a reverberation: a reaction, a physical or mental act.
12. Deleuze 2001, 45.
13. Deleuze 2001, 47.
14. What Deleuze and Guattari call virtuality can be thought of as an in-between state; the passage between chaos and actuality. Chaos, they say is ‘a void that is not a nothingness, it is a virtual, containing all possible particles and acquiring every possible form to disappearing immediately, without consistency or reference, without consequence’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 118) But there is already in virtuality, a pressure for something to come from chaos. Already ‘it is not the same virtual’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 156) who ceases to be a chaotic virtuality to become a consistent virtuality; ‘Real without being actual’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 156), non-chaotic virtuality is called an event; being ‘the part in everything that happens that escapes its own actualisation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 156). Consistent virtuality is virtuality glimpsed and felt, immersed in the chaos that reabsorbs it, but leaving a trace in the actual, as ‘expectation and reserve’.
15. Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 1.
16. Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 1.
17. Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 1–2.
18. Deleuze and Guattari 2004, 7, note of the translators Joana Moraes Varela and Manuel Maria Carrilho.
19. Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 164.
20. Bataille 1970a, 217–221.
21. Kristeva 1982, 1.
22. Kristeva 1982, 1.
23. Kristeva 1982, 209.
24. Kristeva 1982, 208.
25. Kristeva 1982, 2.
26. Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 156.
27. Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 240.
28. Bergson in Deleuze 1991, 26.
29. Cf. Bergson in Deleuze 1991, 26.
30. Deleuze 1991, 26.
31. Bois et al. 1994, 7.
32. Bataille 1970b, 217.
33. Cf. Bois and Krauss 1997, 241–2.
34. Regarding this, consider the remarks of Krauss: ‘Kristeva’s project is all about recuperating certain objects as abject-waste products, filth, body fluids, etc. These objects are given an incantatory power in her text. I think that move to recuperate objects is contrary to Bataille’; and Foster: ‘I wonder about the primordial nature of abjection as proposed by Kristeva. The problem might be not that this notion is not structural enough, but that it is too structural.’ (Bois et al. 1994, 3–21).
35. Bois et al. 1994, 20.
36. Cézanne in Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 169.

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