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ART GALLERY

New cultural understanding of the signifier "corporeality"

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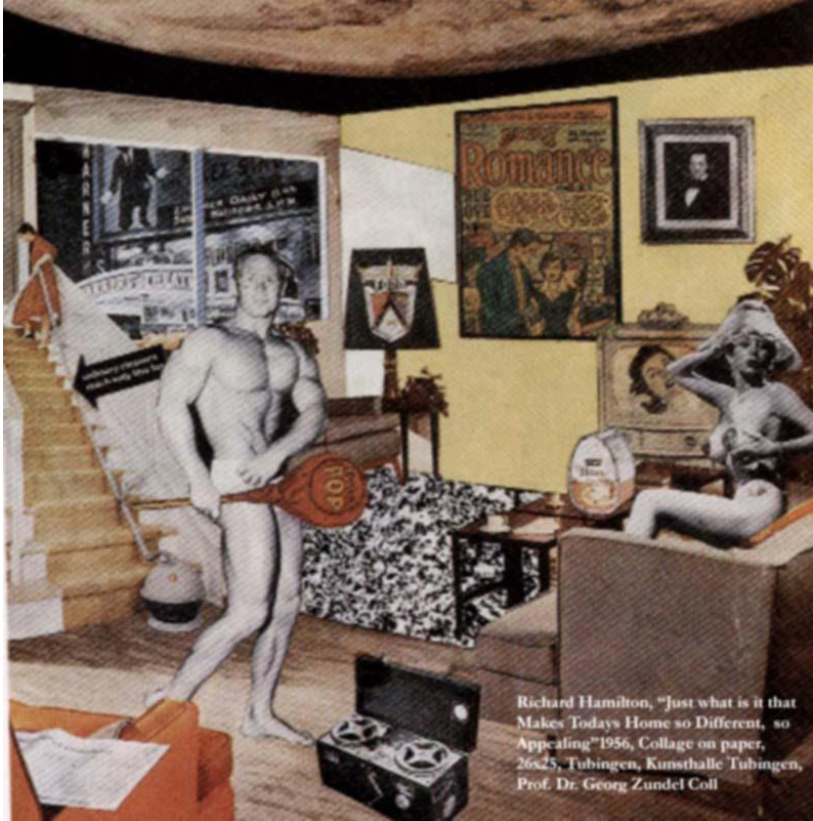
The “Freudian body” is a 20th century western cultural artifact.

Based on Freud's theories, the “Freudian body” reflects a corporeal image which has exerted a huge influence on the Imaginary of western men and women. For, by converting Freud’s thesis about sexuality into an apparel of reference and an apparel of control, 20th century western “Freudian culture” has produced images with which a whole population of men and women have identified. The identification with the Freudian model, its idea of sexuality and sexed bodies, was mostly a collective phenomenon. As such, it has influenced several generations of men and women. In other words, under the influence of Freudian-sexed-bodies-leading principles, 20th century western men and women redesigned their bodies and transformed it into a “Freudian body”.

The “Freudian Body”
Leo Bersani

The principles on which the collective identification was based, were already present in Freud's 5th conference entitled "Femininity". In his conference, delivered in 1933, Freud divides human sexuality into two categories: the positive [+] category and the negative [-] category.

Referring respectively to man and to woman as male and female, Freud asserted that male men were to be referred to as [+phallus] and female women as [-phallus]. For, according to Freud, men **have** what women do not **have**.



Richard Hamilton
"Just What is it that Makes Today's Home so Different so Appealing", 1956

Freud, Sigmund, 5th conference entitled "Femininity", 1933

Modern corporeality

the 'strong' straight vertical ascending phallic bodies

When western men and women started identifying themselves with the image of the modern body, they also started requiring it for themselves.

Since the vertical line represented "Power", bodies of western modern men and women became **straight vertical ascending bodies**.

Bodies which did not fit the Freudian model and the new modern corporeal image were considered powerless and as such, bodies of no importance, negligible and insignificant.



Helmut Newton

Modern female

Body:Sumo6

But, in 1980's, few cultural
phenomena pointed at a “**Coupure**”
Fredrick Jameson

“Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”, 1991

According to Jameson, these phenomena were the signs of the passage from modernity to post modernity in western developed countries. Based on a new order and a new deep structure, in short, writes Jameson, new superstructures, they reflected a new cultural logic.

Fredrick Jameson, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" , 1991
« superstructural expression » :3

In its present state, the new cultural logic radically weakens the power and the influence of the fundamental principles of 20th century modernity. Among others, it **weakens** the symbolic power of the signifier "One" hereby replaced with "multiple" and "multiplicity", two of the signifiers on which the new post modern order and the new post modern reality rely.

"Multi" becoming one of the main signifiers of the new post modern cultural logic, "multiple" and "multiplicity" imply a **new reality** which departs from the reality of the "grid", one of the basic fundamental concepts of 20th century modernity.

Thus, the structure of the grid while replaced with net-structures of the type of the "rhizome", its replacement has led to a multiplicity of rhizomic structures.

Lauren Berlant: "What does it matter who One is?" , Critical Inquiry: Vol "", nb1, Autumn 2007

Jameson, ibid: 2, « the nature of multinational capitalism today »

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 1980, Capitalisme et Schizophrénie, Milles Plateaux, Les Editions de Minuit:13-15

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, ibid.:16

1. Introduction: Rhizome

7^{va}di NOTE

XIV piano piece for David Tudor 4
disegno del 1949
adozione pianistica: 27.3.1959

1 { S
M
P

2 S
P

3 sequenza
frequenza
timbro
durata
intensità

4 Andante piano

5

SYLVANO BUSSOTI

The new postmodern structure is therefore linked to the (1)« rhizome ».

(1) Rhizome: Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, 1980 , Capitalisme et Schizophrénie, 1000 Plateaux, Ed. du Seuil, Paris
<http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/archive/courses/liu/english165HL/materials/class12notes.html#3>



“Rhizome” is a philosophical concept developed by [Gilles Deleuze](#) and [Félix Guattari](#) in their [Capitalism and Schizophrenia](#) (1972-1980) project. It is what Deleuze calls an "image of thought," based on the [botanical rhizome](#), that apprehends [multiplicities](#).

2. 1914: One or Several Wolves?



Field of Tracks, or Wolf Line

The **rhizome** itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. “

Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [[University of Minnesota Press](http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/kellner/deleuze.html), 1987-
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/kellner/deleuze.html>

<http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/archive/courses/liu/english165HL/materials/class12notes.html#3>



Guggenheim Museum, Franck Gehry architect, 1997

The dominant **visibility** of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, denotes the new post modern cultural logic .



It discloses a rhizomic structure.

© E. Corbero, virtourist.com

Guggenheim Museum, Franck Gehry architect, 1997



Relying on the new rhizomic structure and on the principles of its new aesthetics, the visibility of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao has transformed the Museum into a symptom of the time.

It has transformed the Museum into a sign-building which dominates both the Bilbao local cultural scene and the international cultural scene.

Guggenheim Museum, Franck Gehry architect, 1997



The Guggenheim Museum is therefore a **model**.

It has become a reference for those buildings which have adopted similar aesthetical values.

Guggenheim Museum, Franck Gehry architect, 1997



“Multi” having become one of the main signifiers of the new cultural logic, “multiple” and “multiplicity” imply a new reality – a reality which dispels the “grid”, one of the fundamental concepts of 20th century modernity.

Jameson, *ibid*: 2, « the nature of multinational capitalism today »

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 1980, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie, Milles Plateaux*, Les Editions de Minuit:13-15

So, the new Visibility
And its rhizomic
structure is
the sign of a
'COUPURE' or 'BREAK'
Fredrick Jameson

...not only in
architecture but
in Fashion as
well.

Fredrick Jameson, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of
Late Capitalism" : 1991



For, the field of Fashion clothes has adopted the new visibility, its aesthetics and its radical spirit. In the 1990's, John Galliano and Issey Miyake designed outfits which structure was not without recalling the structure of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.

John Galliano 1993



John Galliano & Issey Miyake's outfits were performed according to the new post modern cultural logic.

Issey Miyake 1991

Towards the postmodern body

John Galliano & Issey
Miyake's outfits
reflect **Fashion POST
MODERN AESTHETICS**

Post modern Fashion clothes
aesthetic is so different from the
aesthetic of modern clothes that,
to understand its new logic and
the radical changes involved, one
needs to collect the aesthetic
features which disclose the deep
break between modern and post
modern Fashion.

Towards the postmodern body

Here are some of the basic dominant parameters and some of the basic dominant characteristics of post modern outfits' aesthetics:

Dominant post modern aesthetic parameters and characteristics in the field of fashion:

- *diagonal / transversal **segments***
- *Units*
- *Super impositions*
- ***Assemblages***
- *Knots*
- *Round volumes*
- *strings*
- *Wraps*
- *Ropes*
- ***Lumps***
- ***Bumps***
- *One-sleeve outfits*

- *Multi/plicity*
- *movement*
- ***roundness***

Towards the postmodern body

Knots and Knotting

Y. Yamamoto 2006



Towards the postmodern body

Knots and Knotting



Rei Kawakubo 1983



Towards the postmodern body

מקטעים אלכסוניים

Diagonals/transversals segments

Yohji Yamamoto 2008



Towards the postmodern body

מקטעים אלכסוניים

Diagonals/transversals

segments

Yohji Yamamoto 2008

AP



Towards the postmodern body

מקטעים אלכסוניים

Diagonals/transversals segments

Yohji Yamamoto 2008



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

יחידות מחוברות

Linked units

Vivienne Westwood 2007



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

יחידות מחוברות

Linked units

Vivienne Westwood 2007



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

יחידות מחוברות

Linked units

Y. Yamamoto2007



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

העמדה של יחידה ביחס ליחידה אחרת
or Super imposed units /
super-impositions

Y. Yamamoto 2000



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

העמדה של יחידה ביחס ליחידה אחרת
or Super imposed units /
super-impositions

Vivienne Westwood 2006



Towards the postmodern body

Assemblage

העמדה של יחידה ביחס ליחידה אחרת
or Super imposed units /
super-impositions

Vivienne Westwood 2006

העמדה של יחידה ביחס ליחידה אחרת - super-impositions



Y. Yamamoto 2000



Towards the postmodern body

רִיבּוּי - Multiplicity

Viktor and Rolf, 2003



Towards the postmodern body

עגול ועיגוליות
Roundness

Hussein Chalayan, 2000



Towards the postmodern body

עגול ועיגוליות
Roundness

Viktor & Rolf 1998-99



Towards the postmodern body

עגול ועיגוליות
Roundness

Rei Kawakubo,
Comme des Garçons 2003



Towards the postmodern body

עגול ועיגוליות
Roundness

Ann Sofie Back 2007



Towards the postmodern body

Strings, Links and Linking

Ann Sofie Back 2007

Towards the postmodern body

Lumps

“Lumps“ were placed on different parts of the body - from bottom to top, front and back, on the waist, the hips, the belly, the buttocks and the shoulders.





Towards the postmodern body

Lumps

When Kawakubo created her novel radical proposals, thus replacing modern clothes, she did not perform “superficial” or surface changes – such as change in colors, fabrics and length - but **deep structural changes** in relation to bodies.

Her corporeal alternative has been an issue in the field of Fashion since the 1980's.

[Rei Kawakubo1997](#)

Towards the postmodern body

Lumps



Rei Kawakubo 1997

Towards the postmodern body

Lumps



Rei Kawakubo 1997

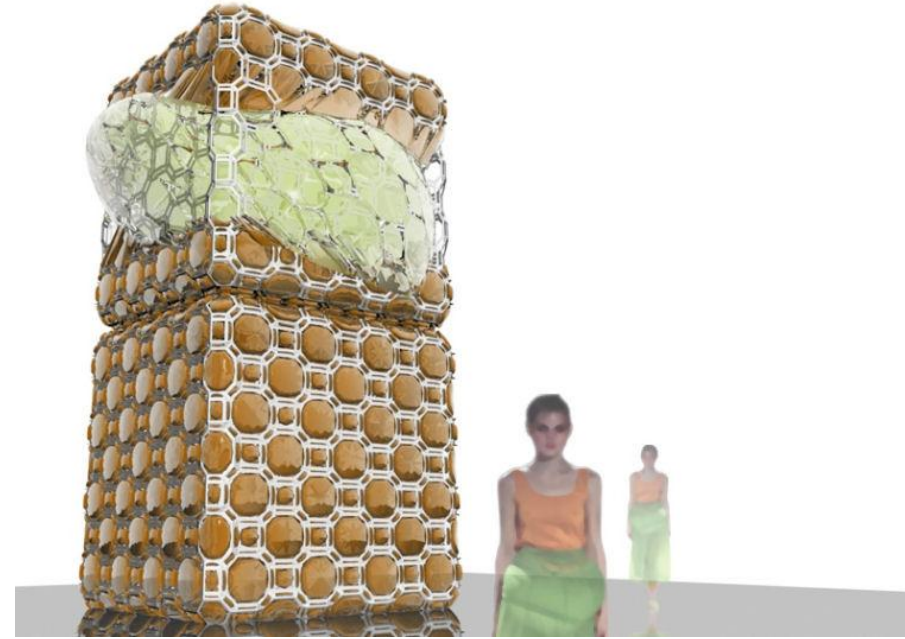
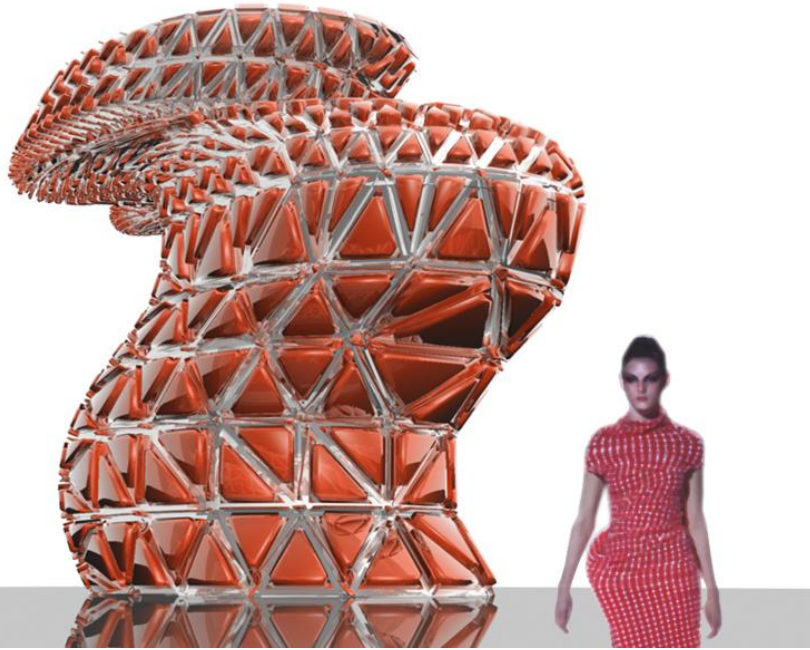
Towards the postmodern body

Bump

Rei Kawakubo 1997



Towards the postmodern body



U:phoria architecture+design payed tribute to “Comme des Garçons” 1997 idiosyncratic collection

The studio of U:phoria architecture+design embarked on an exploratory journey to study the parallel practices in fashion and architecture, with inspiration drawn from Comme des Garçons’ Spring/Summer 1997 “Bump & Mind” Collection.

www.worldarchitecturenews.com/index.php?fuseaction=wanappln.projectview&upload_id=11104

Thus, when in the 1980's and the 1990's, a **critical** approach to the “Freudian body” was initiated by artists and designers, a **new cultural *understanding*** of the human body, which extent, though limited, has reduced neither its importance nor its influence and its quality; was launched.

Based on a **new cultural logic** , this **new post modern cultural *understanding*** of the human body has weakened and therefore limited the power of the Freudian corporeality and its impact on western men and women.

Men's Proximal fashion

"נטולי המכנסיים"
No trousers



Rei Kawakubo,
Comme des Garçons 2009

It is in the context of this new corporeality that post modern fashion designers presented their **men's collections** which radical aspect consisted in that they included **no trousers or pants**.

By eliminating the trousers from men's collections, not only did post modern fashion designers show that they **rejected** the Freudian masculinity of male men and its phallic or phallo-centric Power; but that they were willing to relate to or, eventually, to define a **new masculinity** which basis would no longer be the signifier 'penis/phallus' and its metonymic generic corporeal image.

Men's Proximal fashion

"נטולי המכנסיים"
No trousers



Etro 2009

Wrapped in the new sartorial proposals, from waist to hips and legs, men were not presented as “female” or as “feminine” but rather as **proximal**.

Men's new proximal identity denoting men's **proximity** to women was defined in terms of **similarity** not only in the field of Fashion clothes but in the domain of the corporeal.

Men's Proximal fashion

"נטולי המכנסים"
No trousers



Vivienne
Westwood 1997-98



Vivienne
Westwood 2005



Vivienne
Westwood
2005-6



Knots & Knotting

Men's Proximal fashion

קיצור המכניסים
Shortened pants



Roundness

Vivienne
Westwood 2005-6



Knots & Knotting

Men's Proximal fashion

קשירה וקשרים

Knots & Knotting

Vivienne

Westwood 2005-6



Men's Proximal fashion



שרוול יחיד
One-sleeve

Vivienne
Westwood 2005-6

Towards the postmodern body

So, one can therefore ask:

Who are the men and the women who wear, or will wear, the new diagonal rhizomic knotted post modern sartorial proposals or outfits?

Who are those men and women who will wear the Lumps and the Bumps that Kawakubo has designed?

The answer is:

post modern men and women.

For, post modern men and women have accepted the idea that they have the power to change the structure of their body and construct a new body.

Since, they relate to each limb and each organ as to an individual independent separate organic item, they feel free to **transform** each limb and each organ, in terms of dimensions, volumes, textures, forms.

Reducing they buttocks, flattening their belly, increasing the volume of their breast, diminishing the volume of their breast, expanding the volume of their lips, stretching the skin of their arms, straightening their nose, implanting new teeth, they have been given - thanks to the new technological and technical developments in the field of cosmetics plastic surgery - the choice and the power to **enhance their visibility** and therefore their look.

The post modern body is therefore no longer a homogeneous body .

It is not a vertical body responding to the modern principle of the "One".

It is not even a "natural" body relying on the concept of "Nature" and "natural" anatomy.

The post modern body is the result of linked together individuated segments-limbs.

It is therefore a construct.

As a constructed body based on the principle of "assemblage" of knotted body segments, knots acting as "connexions"; the post modern corporeality is necessarily rhizomic.

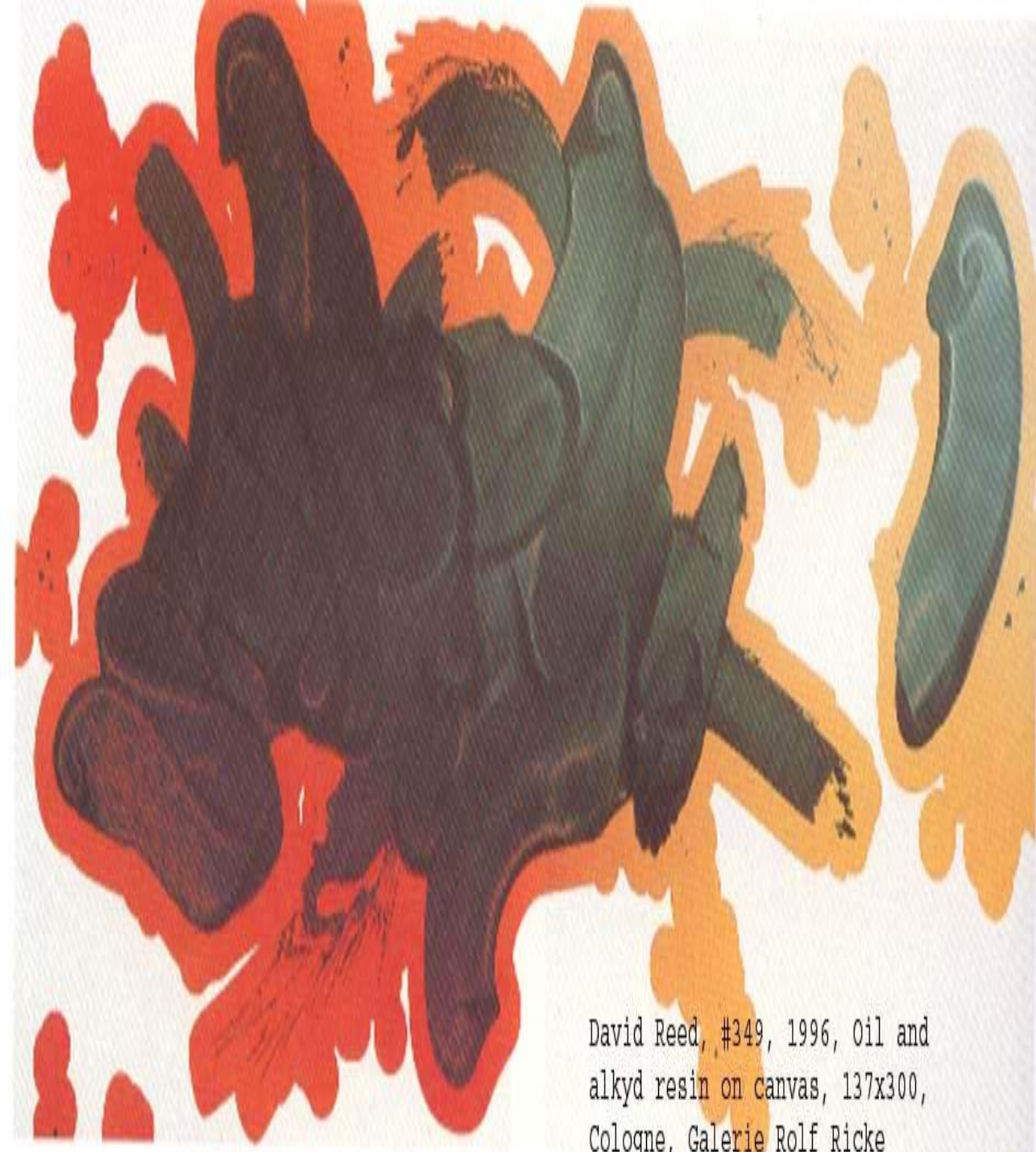
Here are some examples which will help understand what the post modern body is like:



Francesco Clemente, Untitled,
1984, Oil on canvas, 274x477,

Postmodern
rhizomorphic
structured body-
multiplicity &
proximity

Relying on rhizomic,
multiple, complex ,
proximal and variable
structures, the post
modern corporeality
discloses a new cultural
reality of the body

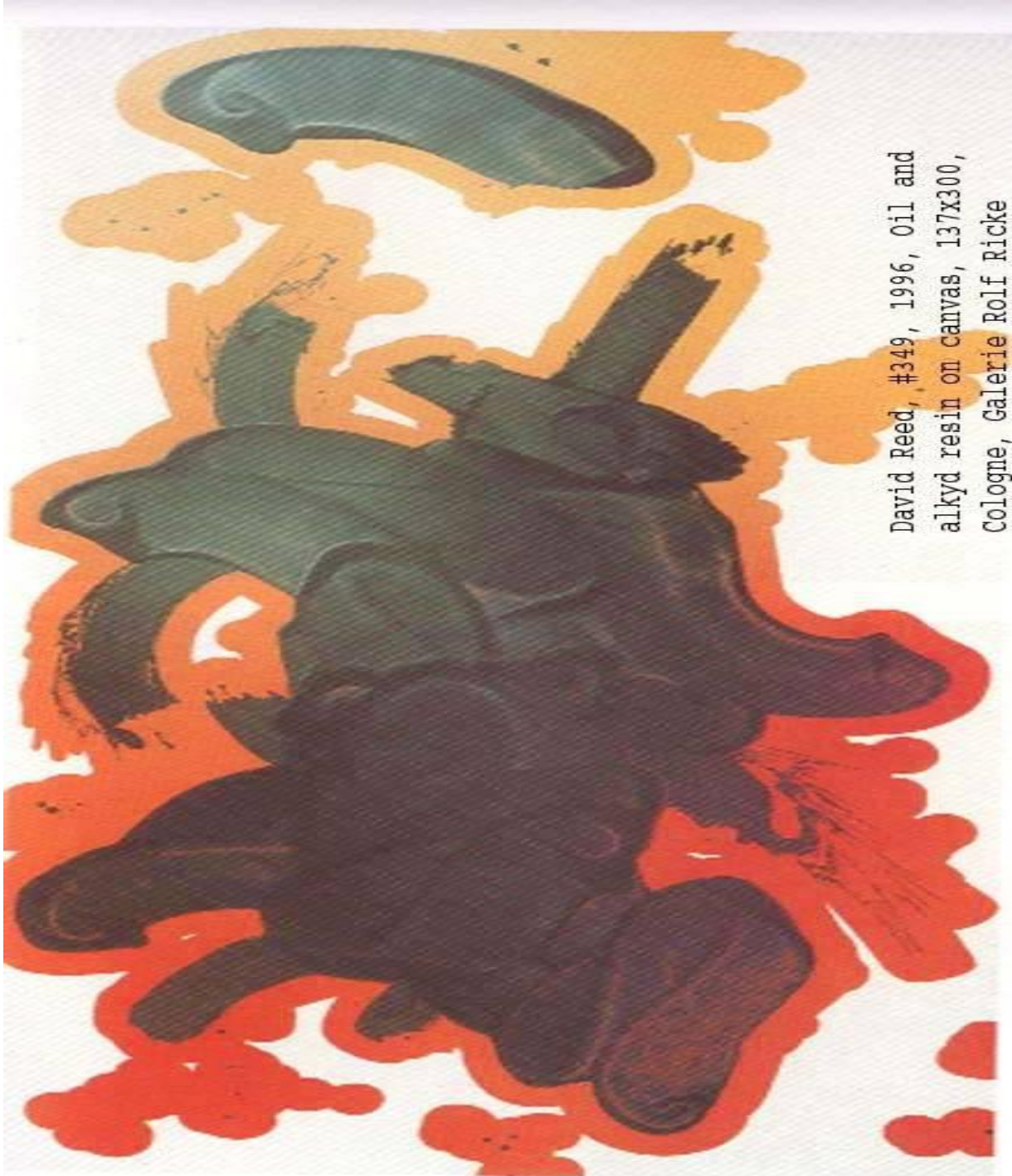


David Reed, #349, 1996, Oil and alkyd resin on canvas, 137x300, Cologne, Galerie Rolf Ricke

Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body - assemblage, fluidity & movement

roundness, links & fullness

Genetics the science of cloning, transplants and DNA, presents the body as a set of knotted replaceable limbs~ organs



David Reed, #349, 1996, Oil and alkyd resin on canvas, 137x300, Cologne, Galerie Rolf Ricke

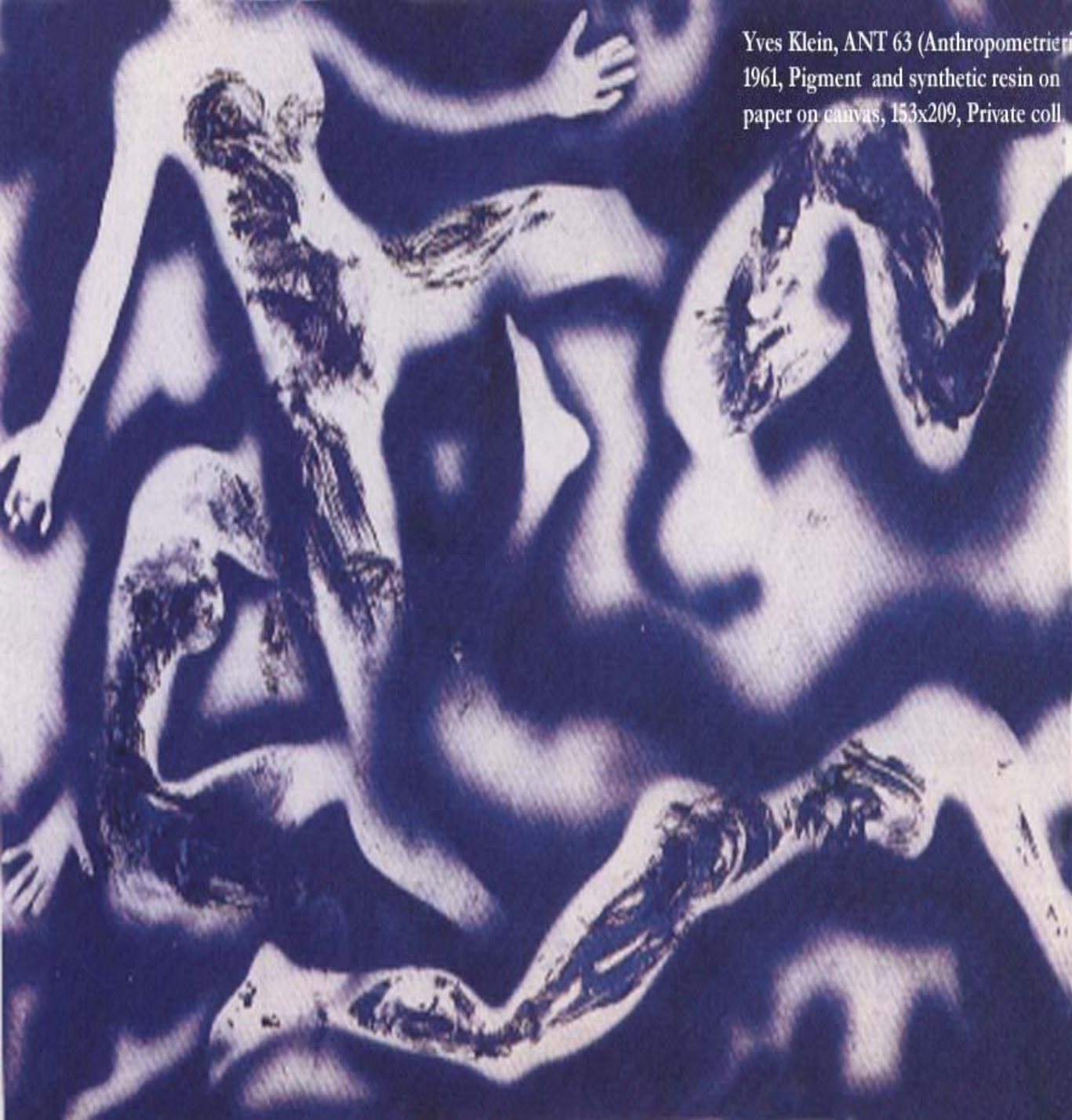
Richard Prince, Untitled, 1996,
Acrylic and silk screen on canvas,
221x147.3, Cologne, Jablonka
Galerie

Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body
-roundness, fluidity & knots



PUT AD IN A SWINGERS MAGAZINE
AND MY PARENTS I PUT AN AD IN
A SWINGERS MAGAZINE AND MY PARENTS ANSWERED IT.

Yves Klein, ANT 63 (Anthropometric
1961, Pigment and synthetic resin on
paper on canvas, 153x209, Private coll.



Postmodern
rhizomorphic structured
body -links, diagonals &
fluidity

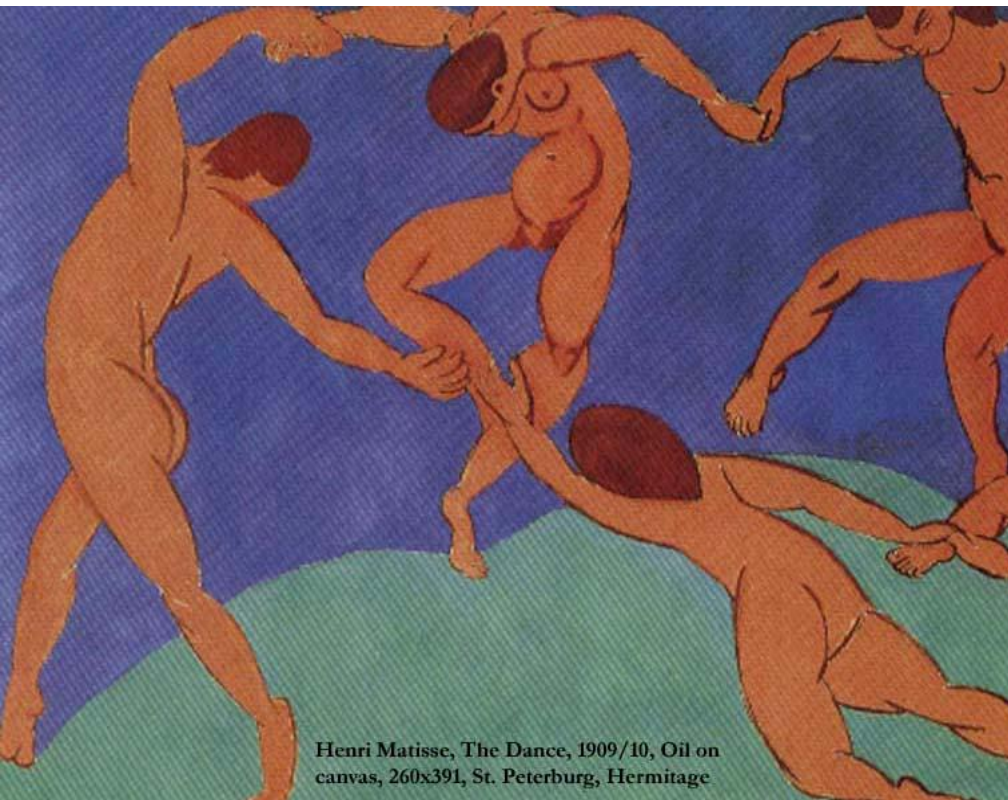


Postmodern
rhizomorphic
structured body -
roundness, links &
proximity

Keith Haring, Untitled, 1988, Acrylic
on canvas, Private collection

Keith Haring, 1988

Postmodern rhizomorphic structured bodies - proximity, roundness & links

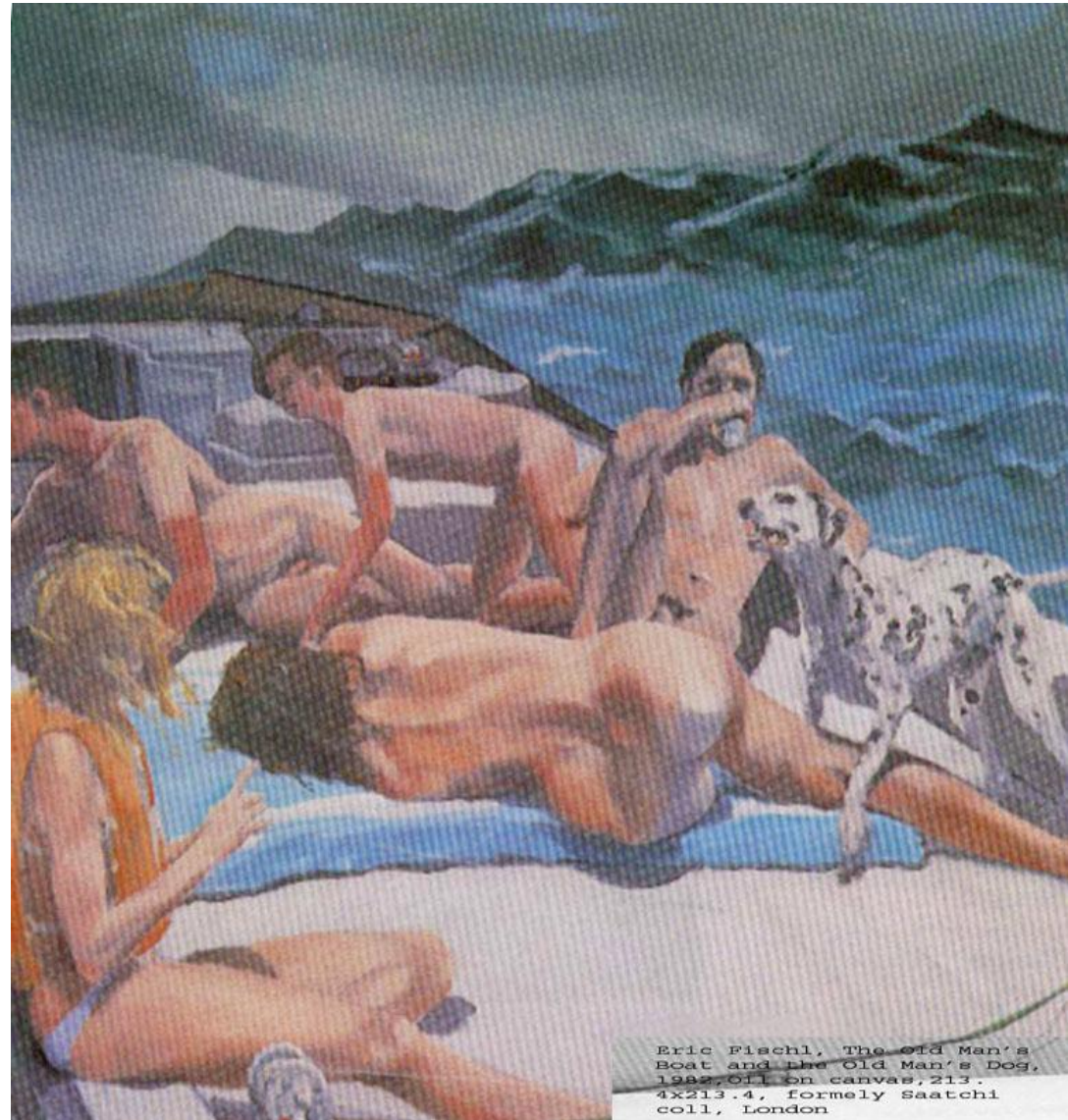


Henri Matisse, The Dance, 1909/10, Oil on canvas, 260x391, St. Peterburg, Hermitage

These examples show that the new postmodern cultural logic cannot reiterate the rupture between women and men as stated by Freud's theories. Thus, after he integrated the concept of “phallus” into the register of the Symbolic, Lacan stated that "*there is no woman*". Indeed, in the post modern cultural logic, there is no "woman". Not only because the signifier '**lack**' on the basis of which the signifier '**woman**' used to be defined - is no longer a leading signifier but because men and women now share a proximal full complete entire rhizomic body, a corporeality which leaves open the concept of men's and women's "*sexuation*" or sexual identity.

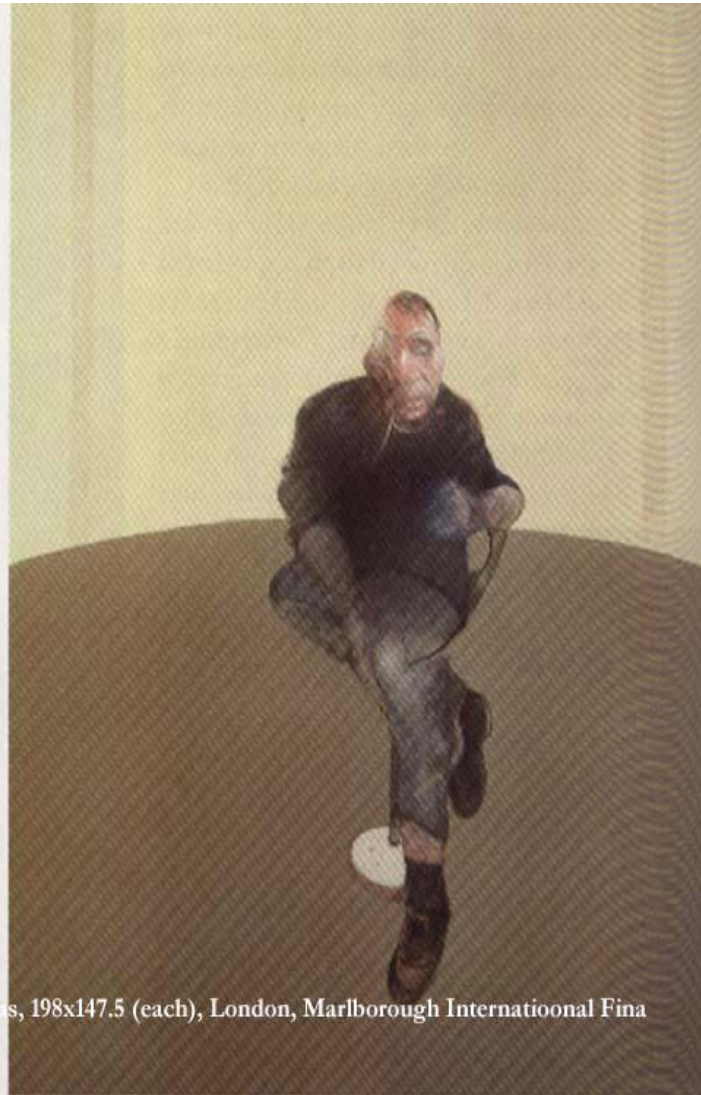
Postmodern rhizomorphic structured bodies -
fullness & roundness

Giving much importance to
"roundness" which symbolic value is
"fullness", the corpo-reality of post
modern time has a goal.
Its aim is, while redefining men's and
women's proximal identities, not
only to dispel a sexually oriented
approach to the bodies but to
eliminate the binary logic based
Freudian corporeality hereby
replaced with a horizontal
combination of "coordinates" - "The
coordinates of the body".



Eric Fischl, *The Old Man's Boat and the Old Man's Dog*, 1982, Oil on canvas, 213.4x213.4, formerly Saatchi coll, London

Eric Fischl, 1982



Francis Bacon, Study for Self Portrait, (Triptych) 1985/6, Oil on canvas, 198x147.5 (each), London, Marlborough International Fina

The coordinates of the body

Postmodern
rhizomorphic
structured body-
roundness &
diagonals

Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body- roundness & assemblage



Based on a "mix" of coordinates, "a connecting of stems", a "knot of arborescence", a "multiplication" and a "proliferation", a "*deterritorialization of the organic body*" *pushed towards a new threshold*", the new post modern corporeality has become a polyvocal rhizomatic corpo-reality.

quotes: Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand plateaus

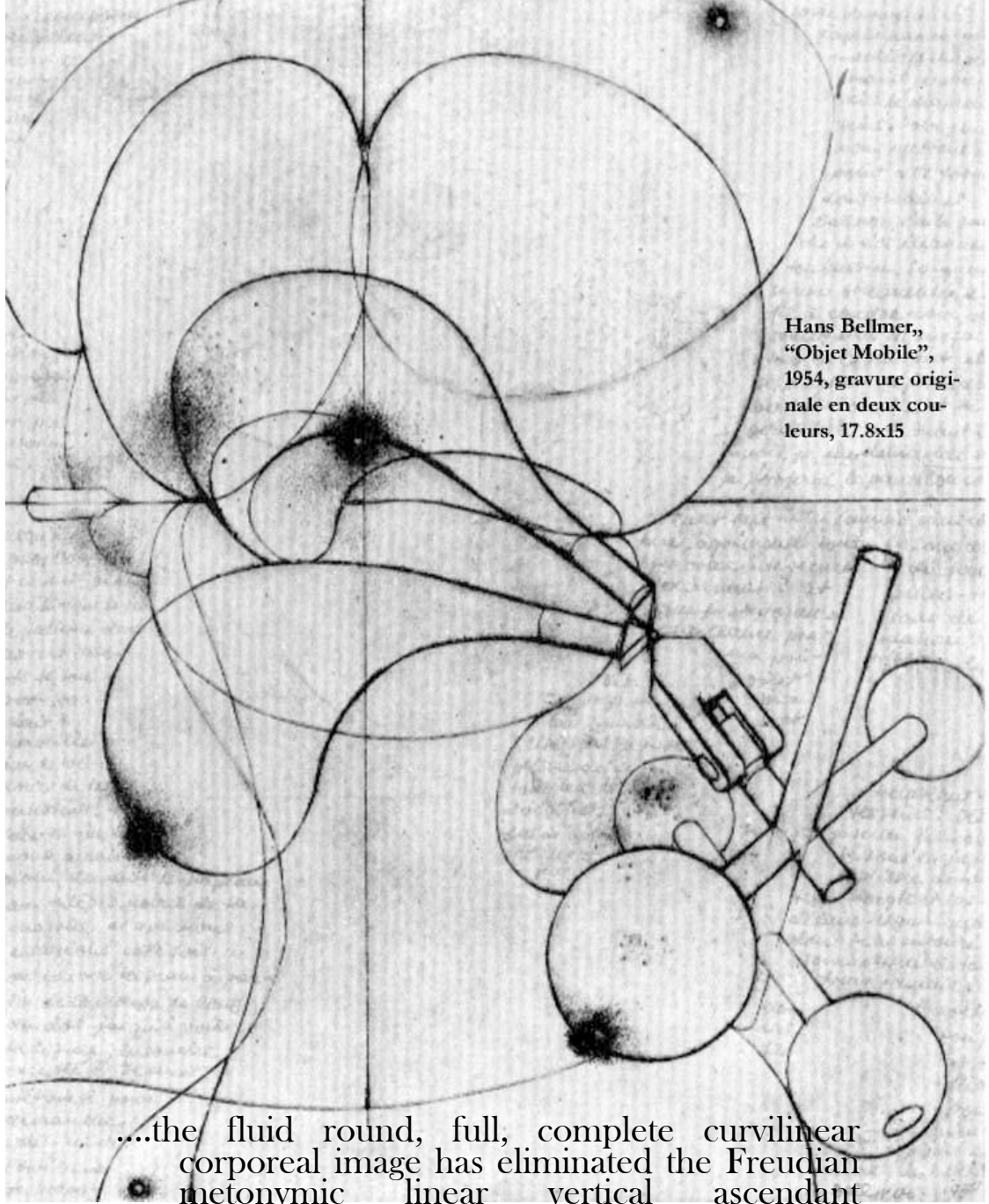
Hans Bellmer, Le Centre de la Poupee, Aluminium
peint, 46x15x22, 1935-1936

Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body-roundness & knotted, linked together limbs, fluidity & movement.

Although relying on **virtuality**, this new corporeality is nevertheless **real**.

It is real not only because it relies on the **experience of the subject** but because it responds to the **new superstructures of the time**.

As a cultural artifact, the post modern corpo-reality is not only the result of what psychoanalysis calls a subject's "**fantasy**" but the result of a subject's deep structural **program**.



Hans Bellmer,,
"Objet Mobile",
1954, gravure originale en deux couleurs, 17.8x15

....the fluid round, full, complete curvilinear corporeal image has eliminated the Freudian metonymic linear vertical ascendant corporeality

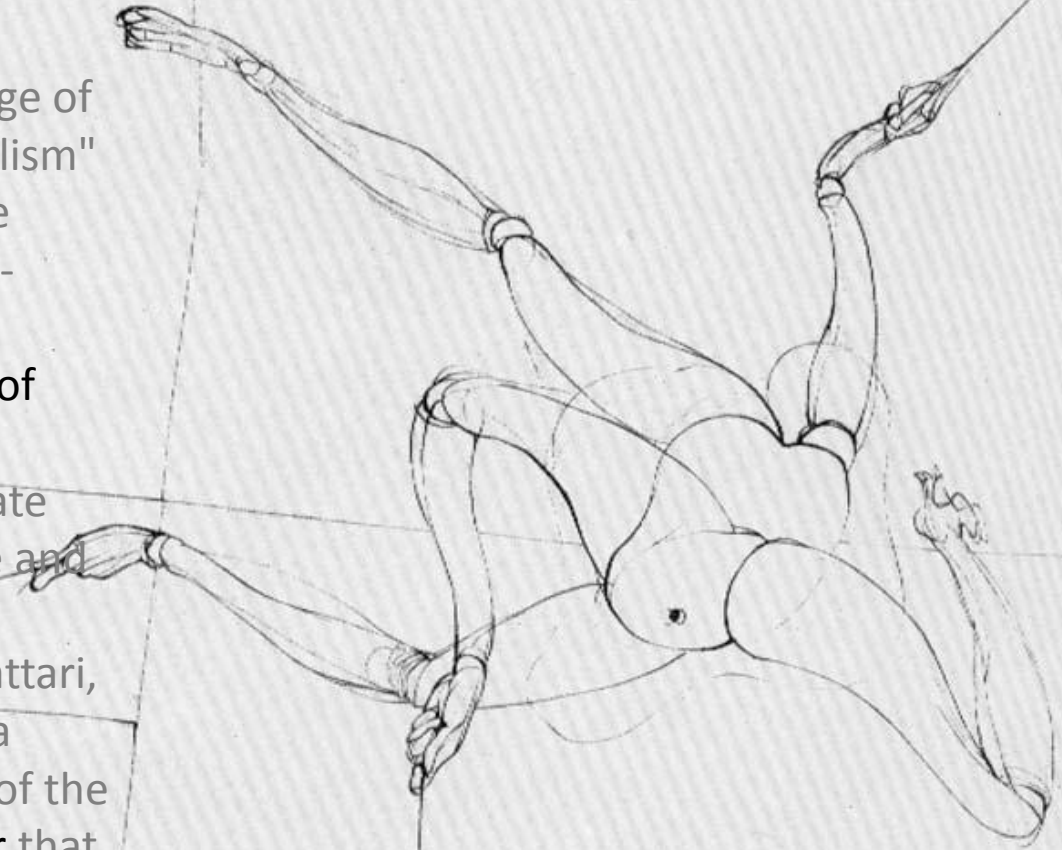
Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body- diagonal segments~limbs & their assemblage

Post modern corporeality and its multiple generated bodies are therefore **political**.

They "outline particular assemblage of power": the power of "late Capitalism" and its fluid monetary masses, the power of globalization and its geo-economic reality.

These "very specific assemblages of power impose signification and subjectification as their determinate form of expression" write Deleuze and Guattari.

For, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "There is no significance without a despotic assemblage, no mixture of the two without assemblage of power that act through the signifiers and act upon souls and subjects."



Hans Bellmer,, "Les Marionnettes", de Henrich Von Kleist, technique mixte, tirage en couleur sur Roma avec suite sur papier Japon,28x30, Paris date:

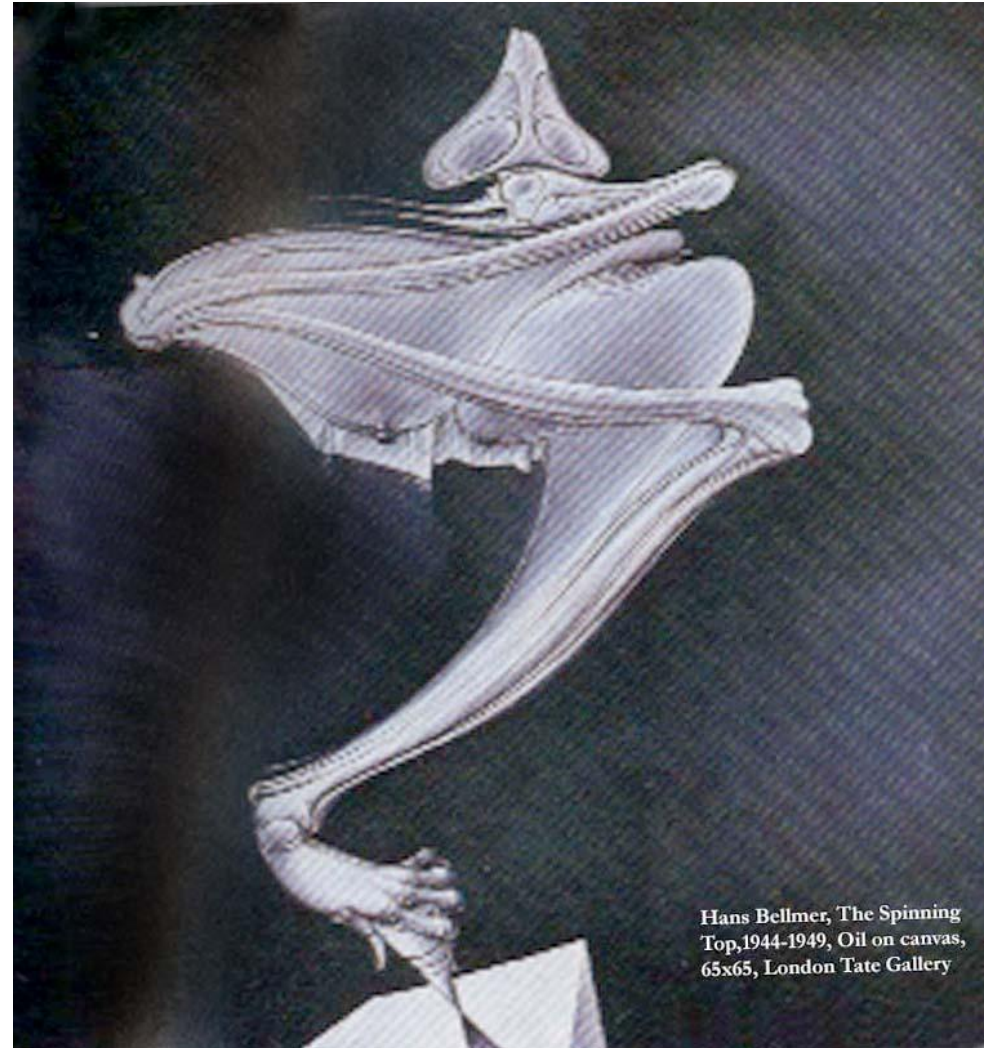
Postmodern rhizomorphic structured body- transversal

vectorialized knotted limbs

This is why, by reproducing the idea of "assemblage" and generating rhizomic post modern bodies, post modern subjects create "*assemblages capable of plugging into desire*".

Performing their postmodern body according to their desire, desire becomes the engine of post modern subjects and generates the combination of the coordinates of the post modern body.

Desire, therefore, "opens a rhizomatic realm of possibility effecting the potentialization of the possible". It allows the body to jump – I quote Deleuze and Guattari - "*from the organic strata to the strata of significance and subjectivization*". As such, it leads to rhizomic, variable and unpredictable bodies.



Hans Bellmer, *The Spinning Top*, 1944-1949, Oil on canvas, 65x65, London Tate Gallery

A Thousand Plateaus, ibid:166

A Thousand Plateaus, ibid:190

A Thousand Plateaus, ibid:181

Rhizomorphic or rhizomic corporeality

is not a new proposition. Already present in within ‘Modernity’, its status however, has changed. For although its image is not yet the image the majority identifies with, it nevertheless reflects a new

....dominant cultural understanding of bodies.

Quoting Jameson [1], we shall say that the rhizomorphic or rhizomic postmodern corporeal image has become a “cultural dominant”.

[1] Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, *1991*

What, then, will be the visual translation of the new cultural postmodern anatomy in the field of advertisement?

Up to now, advertisement has shown images of women with open legs, open mouth and indirect "seducing" look. Be they dressed or naked or in between these two situations when wearing bathing suit, bras or knickers, women were photographed on the basis of the "Freudian body". So were men, virile or not.

But now, when women's and men's cultural anatomy has become full, fluid, round, rhizomic, multiple and when the symbolic position of men and women has been redefined as proximal; new images are required.

If it continues to be “what sells”, one will ask oneself what kind of images will advertisement invent?

To this question, an answer has already been given by **Vodka Absolute**.



Advertisement : visual translation

IN AN ABSOLUT WORLD



Thank You.

Dr. Michal Popowsky