

Phantom  
Bodies

Material  
Obsessions

E.M PIMENTEL

ASSEMBLED  
IMAGES

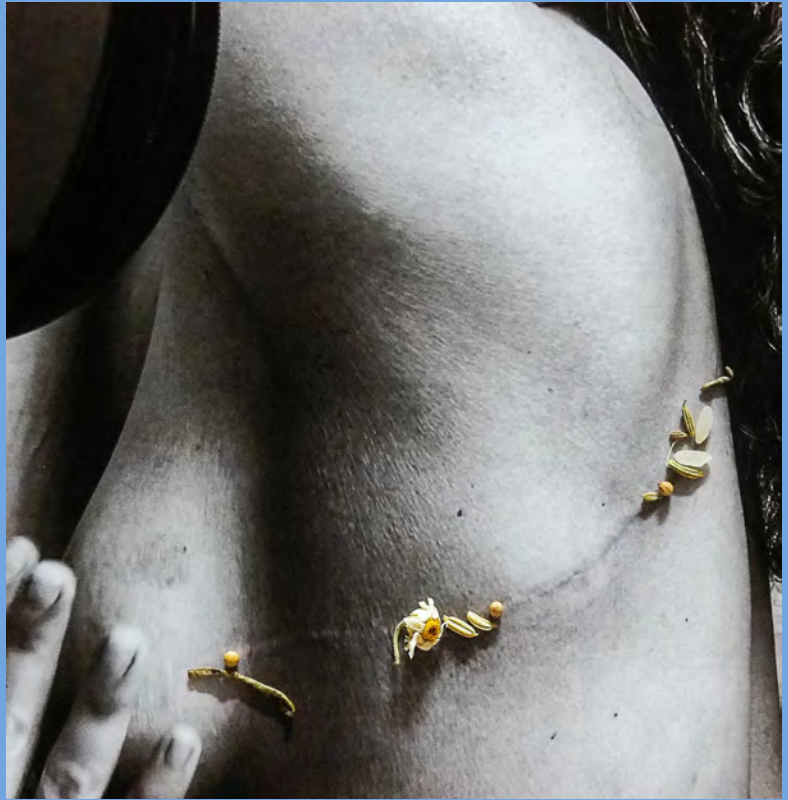
# Phantom Bodies

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SELF

A.



## AVERGONZADA SCARIFICATION

ASPHYXIATIONASYMMETRY

*SELF-PORTRAIT, FILM STILL, RICE & DAISIES ON HAHNEMÜHLETORCHON*

B.



J. BAUTISTA JOHN  
THE BAPTIST

BREATHBRONCHIOLES

*CABBAGE ON MARBLE FROM APHRODISIAS, TURKEY EXCAVATED 1904*

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CO

C  
C

YOUN  
VICT

C.



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T

## COLMILLO CORSET

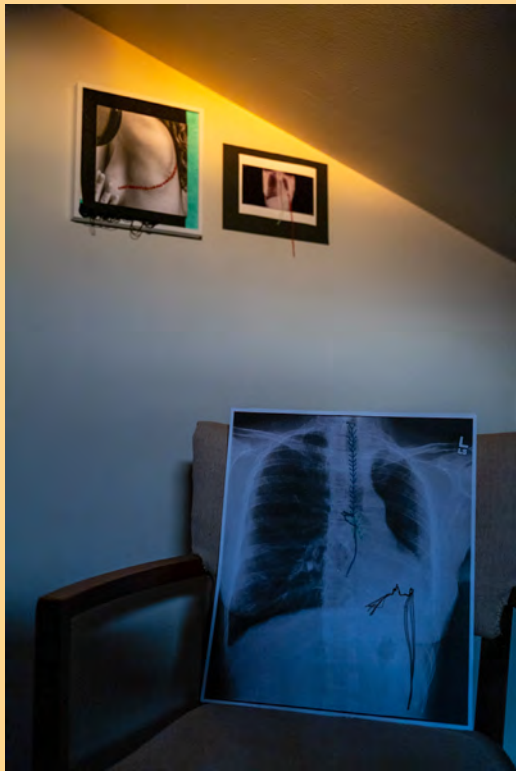
H  
S

COLLAPSECOSTAE

*YOUNG BULL, TANZANIA*

*VICTORIAN-ERA CORSET, IVORY BUSK, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM*

D.



## DECONSTRUCCIÓN THORACICS INSTALLATION

DEFORMITYDISCOMFORT

*SELF-PORTRAITS, EMBROIDERED X-RAYS, STAGED*

E.



EVA PINK  
EVE

EXCISIONEXTINCTION

*PORK RIBS ON SILK*

F.



FANTASMA  
MYOGLOBIN

FAITHFLESH

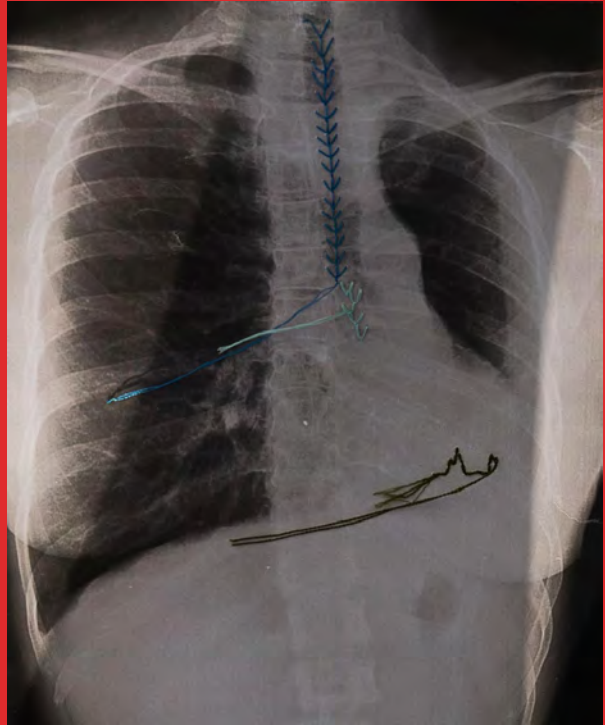
*TRACES OF PORK FLESH ON PAPER*

G  
EL

SILK



G.

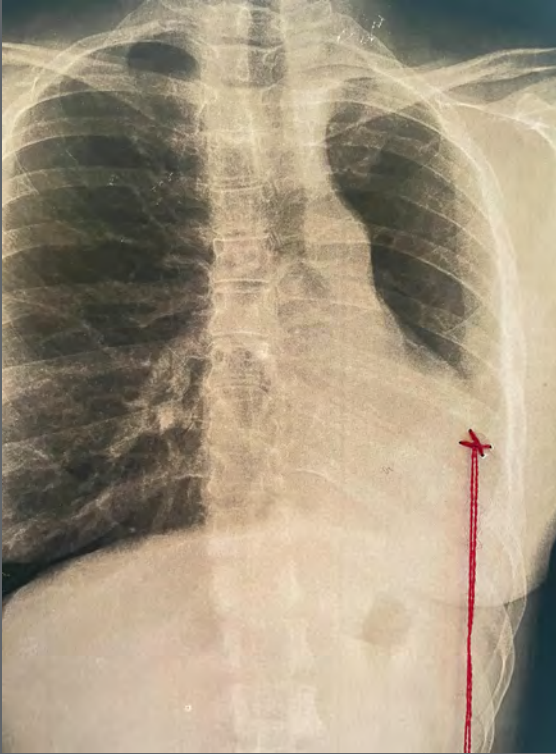


## GANGRENOSO ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

GAS-EXCHANGE GRADIENT

*SILK EMBROIDERY, THROAT PLACEMENT AND HEART ACTIVITY, X-RAY ON CARD*

H.



HEMATOFOBIA  
HEMATOSIS

HEARTSPACEHYPOPLASIA

WOOL ON CARD

H.

I.



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# IDIOPÁTICO EVIL EYE

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I N C I S I O N  
INVOLUTION

*HALF-SHELL SUPPORTED BY BRASSIERE WIRE*

J.



JOROBA TORÁCICA  
FLOW

JAMA-VUJOULE I S

MALACHITE SLICE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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F

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CO

J.  
K.

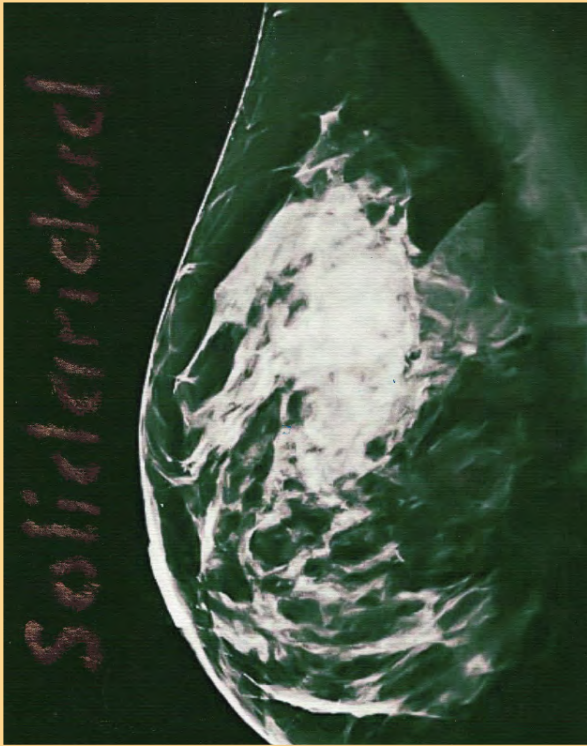


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## KÁRSTICO FLOW

KINETIC  
KYPHOSCOLIOSIS

*CORAL LIMESCALE, INDIAN OCEAN*



L.

LISIS / LÓBULO  
SUPINE VIEW

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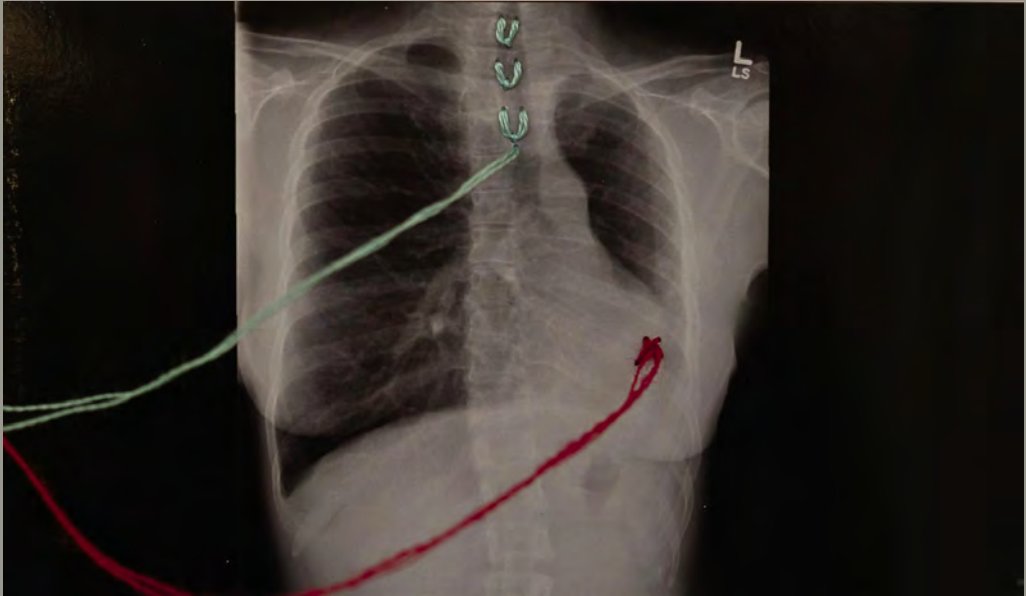


## MIASMA

MANGLED MORTALITY

*INTESTINES, MALE HARTEBEE, TANZANIA*

N.



## NEUMONECTOMÍA BREEZY RADIOGRAPH

NECROSISNOTHC

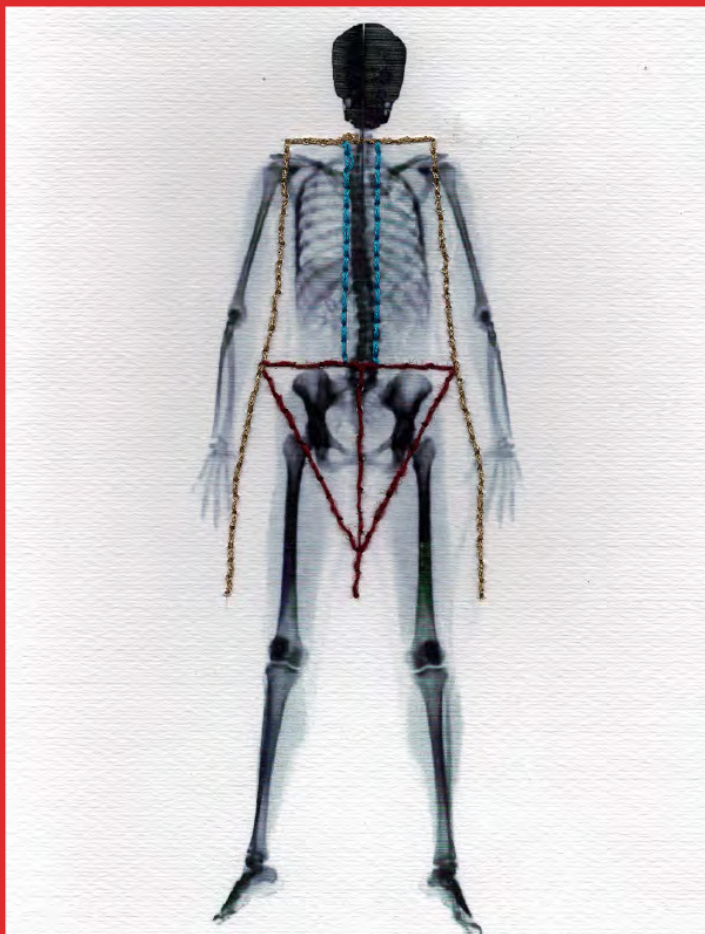
SILK EMBROIDERY, X RAY FILM

LURI



N.

O.



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PH

## OJO DE DIOS SEGMENTATION

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OPACITYOXYGEN

FILM

LUREX & WOOL EMBROIDERY, DEXA SCAN ON HAHNEMÜHLE ALBRECHT DÜHRER

P.



## PEDACITOS THE SUBLIME

PALPITATIONPNEUMONECTOMY

LUNGS OF A MALE BUFFALO, TANZANIA; FUJI VELVIA 35MM SLIDE

Q.



## ¿QUIÉN SOY? BECOMING

QUARANTINEORS-COMPLEX

CHILD PASSPORT, 3 FEETTALL & 3 YEARS OLD

R.



RIZOTOMÍA  
DENTATA

RADIATIONREGENERATION

*HOTHOUSED TROPICALIA, CARNIVORES*

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R.  
S.



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SOMNAMBULIST

SCARRINGSUBLUXATION

CACTI

T.



TORSO  
SIDE VIEW

TOMOGRAPHYTRAUMA

*PIG BONE AND FLESH ON PAPER*

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## UNIVERSO ROVING EYE

ULTRASONOGRAPHY U P R I G H  
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*ER* AMETHYST GEODE, BRAZIL

V.



VÁLVULA

VALETUDINARIANVENA-CAVA

HEART, MALE BUFFALO, TANZANIA

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WHIRLPOOL

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WHORLSWOUND

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*LIFE WITHIN AND IN BETWEEN*

XYZ.



RAYOS X  
FEATHER STITCH

X-RAYTTRIUMZ-ENDOXIFEN

*SELF-PORTRAIT - HORSEHAIR, STEELAND WOOL EMBROIDERY ON HAHNEMÜHLETORCHON*

OBJECT

ENTANGLEMENT

# Material Obsessions

# I.

IN 1978, MY PARENTS SAY I DIED DURING A PNEUMONECTOMY (LEFT THORACIC INCISION, BREAKING OF RIBS AND CARVING OF MUSCLE). MEDICALLY, DEATH IS THE 'PERMANENT AND IRREVERSIBLE CESSATION' (FISCHER 1993) OF THE BODY, SO TECHNICALLY I DID NOT DIE. YET SO PRECISELY HAD I TOLD OF BEING LAID TO SLEEP AND ALL THAT FOLLOWED, THAT I THOROUGHLY UNSETTLED ANYONE'S NOTIONS THAT DEATH IS 'RADICALLY UNEXPECTED' (FREUD 1915).

POST-SURGERY, THE SAC THAT CONTAINED THE DISEASED LUNG – THE PLEURAL SPACE – FILLED WITH AIR, FOLLOWED BY THE OPACIFICATION OF THE LEFT HEMITHORAX AS LIQUID TOOK ITS PLACE. A POWERFUL COMPENSATORY OVERINFLATION OF THE RIGHT LUNG LED TO AN OVERCROWDING OF THE RIBCAGE, AN EVENT THAT PROVOKED A MEDIASTINAL AND A TRACHEAL SHIFT TO THE LEFT, AND MY SPINE CURVED UNDER THE PRESSURE. MY HEART ROTATED ALONG ITS MAIN AXIS AND DESCENDED INTO THE LEFT DORSAL WALL WITH THE LEFT VENTRICLE RESTING AGAINST THE DIAPHRAGM. A TINY SLIVER OF THE REMAINING UPPER LEFT LOBE HAS REMARKABLY FILLED OUT OVER THE YEARS.

I HAVE NO CONSCIOUS MEMORY OF THESE DRAMATIC EVENTS. I LEARNED MUCH LATER MINE WAS THE FIRST SURGERY OF ITS KIND IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, SO RISKY IN FACT, MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER ORGANISED AN AIR AMBULANCE ON STAND-BY TO TAKE ME TO THE UNITED STATES, IN CASE MY FATHER – WHO TRUSTED HIS UNCLE TO UNDERTAKE THE SURGERY – HAD MADE THE WRONG DECISION.

SURREPTITIOUSLY, A FIRST PASSPORT HAD BEEN ARRANGED: A PHOTO HASTILY TAKEN OF ME IN MY HOSPITAL BED CONFIRMS MY CRISIS HAD BEEN REAL.

The incision to my left torso settled into a jagged track of anaesthetised tissue, the visible boundary that seals my chest cavity from view. I underestimated its territorial expanse, the rind-like quality, the troubling discovery that it resembled hastily stitched pelt. Such as it is, this scar represents a devastating blow, an awareness of the contingency of a finite presence in this lived world. We are but hints of flesh mired in constant, unquiet contradiction: a nothing, and an entirety.

We come into being through a presence bracketed by death but do all we can to forestall dying by medically staving off illness, and enriching our physical longevity. Humans possess an unconscious belief in their own immortality, what Freud (1915) calls 'the secret of heroism'. In the unconscious there is no sense of the passing of time, so we believe death will never find us. This delusion may be taken as a warning: rest our subjectivity on the impermanence of things and risk being swept up in the flux of time, since our present can be conceived, as Kierkegaard (1844) does, as waves of 'annulled succession'. That is, to die is to have one's time stop, and yet all that one was and continues to be, is left in one's wake.

How humans not think death is no mere pathology

of the mind, or a deficiency of comportment, but an understandable disinclination to prematurely take on board the radical crisis of the self that results from learning death is not merely an undeviating probability as one might be led to believe, but an imminent reality that demands one relinquish all current and future modalities of being.

This journal began as a visual and meditative account of the gratitude, anxiety and despair provoked by being in the world in such a fragile and resilient vessel. Through the seeing mechanism of the camera, and through acts of making, I sought to locate the body - an incarnated mind, a thinking object - amongst other objects that conspire to make the world sensible through our experience of them.

Inevitably, the decisiveness to ground the body in the material world provoked other instances of consciousness and a crisis in memory: the knowledge that the realm of the fantastic is, in fact, the realm of a lived world ensnared in disquiet and by wonder. The self loses a fixed reference, and this instability results in a gap that must be filled in by the imagination.

Until their known function is upset, objects possess solidity. To reduce them, in spite of this substance, to their raw data would be an act of 'barbarism' (Rosenberg, 1973).

II.

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VERSUS

THING

REFLECTIONS ON OBJECT  
ENTANGLEMENT AND  
THINGNESS

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Objects represent the data of the lived world, the tangible instantiation of human history, values, belief systems and aesthetics.

Decorative and practical, objects are the result of the process of ideation. Objects make reality intelligible. They function as grounding mechanisms in the face of changes in the lived world. The human desire to make contact with the real, to apprehend things through the senses, to possess a 'specific un-specificity' (Brown 2004) is what we are compelled to ponder on when we reflect on material entities.

Thingness is quality of an object that defines its objective existence or reality. This thingness skirts linguistic articulation. It is something animistic or vitalistic, a surreptitious anthropomorphism that leaves its imprint on the object but never quite is what is expected.

What separates thingness from the object that houses it is a quality: the very thing that cuts off the object from its materiality is the thing that brings it to life. Whereas an object can be named, the thing is what defines our relation to the object.

Thingness is what eludes or exceeds representation. This strange animism exhibits a recalcitrant alterity of being that withdraws itself and resists being known.

But thingness is not a mere metaphysical or magical presence. Things need to be thought, and thinking is necessarily conditioned by culture, history, and language. Things also need material presences as vehicles for their eventual physicality. Thus, thinking the thing requires the acknowledgement that thingness and thinking are two different if interrelated processes.

# III.

FORM &

FETISH

ABSTRACTION AS A FORM OF  
DISOBEDIENCE, A LURKING  
AMBUSHING MISCHIEF



Fetish objects are described, in Marx (1867), Freud (1927) and elsewhere, as contrary to reason. Objects contain the fetishistic tendencies of human anxieties and uncertainties.

Fetishism represents a complex system of signification that creates symbolic meaning: establishing order and social boundaries; making sense of fear; providing hope and protection; and establishing the ritual practices that bind communities together.

To fabricate the fetish, one needs things; and it is the thing, the carrier of characteristics that can be sensed through shaped matter. Their thingness evident, yet hidden, becomes a thing of abnormality.

Humans confer signification on objects, but fetish objects point to a sensuous border between ourselves and the things around us, between mind and matter, mediated by sensations, affect and passions.

Fascination with fetish objects transcended its origins to settle in two important philosophies: Marxism, (the delusion of political economy) and Freudian psychoanalysis (the hidden; the uncanny).

Marx indicates a concern with thingness and does not necessarily qualify the fetish as an object in the way that Freud theorises: as something that displays all too manifestly what it seeks to hide. In the Freudian sense, the word fetish has perverse connotations because it disrupts social order. It is a mechanism of contradictions, disavowing and yet affirming what it seems to lack.

Materiality, then, is not that which distinguishes an object from a subject: it is the gateway into an examination of the slippage from the epistemological to the ontological notion of object.

# IV.

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Like many creation myths, the Biblical account of Adam and Eve is infused with the primacy of man and, by deed and implication, the auxiliary condition of being the female.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE Yahwist narrative (which includes Genesis 2-16), God engendered Adam from dust. So that Adam would not be alone, He cast Adam into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it (Genesis 2:21).

It is said the 11<sup>th</sup> rib was taken, anatomically, a less valuable rib since the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> do not connect to the sternum. As the number twelve holds particular Biblical significance, it is thought the eleventh - a number of beginnings and of chaos - made Eve.

EVE

RIBS

CURVATURE

BONING

CORSETS

IVORY

EXTINCTION

MOLECULAR

COMPRESSION

MALFORMATION

AIRWAYS

BRONCHIAL TREE

BREATHE

V.

PHANTOM  
BODIES

VOTIVE OFFERINGS

What truth is there in a mechanised - and in a wholly subjective, embodied - manner of re-presenting the world?

'To be sensuous...to be real, is to be an object of sense, a sensuous object, and thus to have sensuous objects outside oneself, objects of one's sense perception. To be sensuous is to suffer or to be subject to the actions of another.' (Apter and Pietz, 1993:140)

'Whether or not the subject is dead, every photograph is this catastrophe' (Barthes, 1981:96)

The tenuous association between what is seen and what is known is never settled.

# VI.

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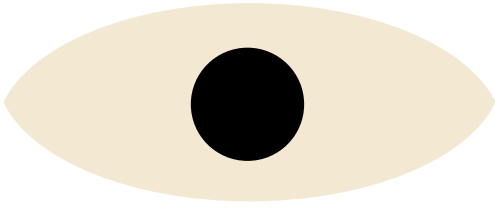
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