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DOSSIER

WEARING IMAGES

Edited by Diane H. Bodart

IMÁGENES PORTADAS

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THE FLOWERING FOOT OF FLORA. DETAIL OF SANDRO BOTTICELLI, PRIMAVERA, LATE 1470S OR EARLY 1480S, TEMPERA ON PANEL, 202 X 314 CM, GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE.

WEARING IMAGES. INTRODUCTION

IMÁGENES PORTADAS. INTRODUCCIÓN

Diane H. Bodart¹

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Abstract

In the past decades, studies on the materiality and the efficacy of images, as well as the artistic and social practices related to them, have allowed scholars to explore how much images' making, use, handling and display contributed to the activation of their powers of presence through their interaction with the viewer. Further, the growing interest in the articulation between the history of art and the anthropology of images has brought to light the close links between the art object and the body: in fact, if the body can be the medium of the animate art object, the art object can potentially act as a substitute of the animate body. But what happens when the body is the support of a distinctive image, when it inscribes an image on its own surface, whether directly on the skin or through intermediary props such as clothing or corporeal parure? *Wearing Images* investigates the different modes of interaction between the image and the body that wears it in the Early-Modern period, when devotional, political, dynastic or familial images could be worn as medals, jewels, badges, embroidered garments or tattoos.

Keywords

Second skin; double-sidedness; *abyme*; tattoo; armor; medallion; embroidery; clothing.

Resumen

En las últimas décadas, los estudios sobre la materialidad y la eficacia de las imágenes, así como de las prácticas artísticas y sociales asociadas a ellas, han permitido a los historiadores explorar hasta qué punto la fabricación de las imágenes, su uso, manejo y exhibición contribuyó a activar sus capacidades de presentarse a través de su interacción con el espectador. Además, el creciente diálogo entre la historia del arte y la antropología de las imágenes ha puesto de relieve las estrechas conexiones entre el objeto artístico y el cuerpo: en efecto, si el cuerpo puede ser el medio para el objeto artístico animado, el objeto artístico puede actuar potencialmente como sustituto del cuerpo animado. Pero ¿qué ocurre cuando el cuerpo es el soporte de una imagen distintiva, cuando inscribe una imagen en su propia superficie, ya sea directamente en la piel o a través de intermediarios como el vestido o un adorno?

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Wearing Images investiga las diferentes modalidades de interacción entre la imagen y el cuerpo que se viste con ella en la Edad moderna, en una época en la que imágenes devocionales, políticas, dinásticas o familiares podían vestirse como medallas, joyas, placas, prendas bordadas o tatuajes.

Palabras clave

Segunda piel; doble cara; *abyme*; tatuaje; armaduras; medallas; bordados; vestido.

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ON THE INTERIOR side of his right arm, Harris bears a nicely-designed tattoo of a fennel. Fennel is one of his favorite vegetables, and he has a particular passion for food. *Foeniculum vulgare* is also a curative plant; in ancient times it was believed to have apotropaic properties and to divert the evil eye. Moreover, *finocchio* – fennel in Italian – is a popular insult used to mock or defame gay people. The process of self-defining through the assimilation of an insult, as an affirmation of legitimate belonging, is the path that Francophone African writers, such as Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor, followed in the 1930s when they incorporated the derogative term *nègre* in their claim of *négritude*². Inscribing on his skin the image of the verbal insult, Harris playfully transforms a mark of infamy into a declaration of identity, activating a process of reclamation.

In his 1993 foundational work on Polynesian tattoos, *Wrapping in images*, Alfred Gell searched for a «basic schema» that could articulate the two principal manifestation of tattooing, which appeared on the one hand in ancient or preliterate tribal societies, and on the other hand in marginalized minorities of modern state systems³. Twenty-five years later, the tattoo has undergone a gentrification, fueled by the «tattoo renaissance», a movement claiming a high artistic status for tattoos⁴. Celebrities also contributed to this process. Football players have progressively covered their bodies with tattoos, as a symbolic armor enhancing their power, which they unveil to the gaze of their audience each time they score. In its rise to the commercial mainstream, tattooing has lost something of its uncanny semantic power, turning more towards a fashionable ornament. One recent episode in Thailand offers insight: instead of apotropaic prayers, a tattooer mocked Western tourists' desire to have traditional Buddhist tattoos, by inscribing on their skin names of popular dishes such as «spring rolls» or «chicken rice» with Thai alpha-syllabary⁵. In this context, Harris's fennel is remarkable by the way the image encapsulated in the body is reinvested semantically through the controlled reactivation of ancient processes, transforming imposition into appropriation, infamy into identity and ornament into protection.

The practice of wearing images has a long history that begins with the inscription of images directly on the skin through painting, tattooing or scarification⁶. In early modern Europe, the use of tattooing survives to some extent, particularly in the devotional context of pilgrimage to the Holy Land or to miraculous sanctuaries

2. YALA KISUDIKI, Nadia (ed.): «Négritude et philosophie», dossier, *Rue Descartes*, 83, 2014. I am grateful to Dominique Robin and Adam H. Levine for the inspiring discussions about the process of reclamation.

3. GELL, Alfred: *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, pp. 1-39.

4. FLEMING, Juliet: «The Renaissance Tattoo», *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 31, 1997, pp. 34-52, 34-39; DEMELLO, Margo: *Bodies of Inscription : A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2000; WITTMANN, Ole: *Tattoos in der Kunst: Materialität – Motive – Rezeption*, Berlin, Reimer, 2017.

5. GAETANO, Giuseppe: «Thailandia. Tatuaore folle: parolacce e menù a prezzo fisso al posto delle antiche scritte sacre», *Corriere della sera*, 17/9/2018.

6. THEVOZ, Michel: *Le corps peint*. Genève, Skira, 1984; CAPLAN, Jane (ed.): *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2000; VV.AA.: *Tatoueurs, Tatoués*. Exh. cat. (Paris, Musée du quai Branly), Actes Sud, 2014.



FIGURE 1. JOHN WHITE, PICT WARRIOR HOLDING A HUMAN HEAD, WATERCOLOR OVER GRAPHITE, WITH PEN AND BROWN INK, 24.3 X 17 CM, BRITISH MUSEUM, 1906,0509.1.24, LONDON.

such as the Basilica della Santa Casa in Loreto⁷, but images were more commonly borne on the bodies through props. Tattoos were mostly related to the savage state of the native tribes of the Americas or of the ancient indigenous people of Europe such as the Picts in Britany. Interestingly, Jacques Le Moigne de Morgues and John White reconstructed the images of these ancient Britons with «painted bodies», engraved by Theodore de Bry in 1590 for the first volume of his famous anthology *America*⁸. In their watercolor drawings, the patterns of the tattoos of the male warrior, the woman and the young daughter bear striking similarity to those found on contemporary mediums more commonly used to wrap the entire body in images, such as the armor and the dress. The grotesque masks on the chest, belly, knees and shoulders of the Pict warrior, as well as the scales on his legs (Figure 1), are closely related to the mascarons, heads and skin of fantastic beasts that similarly adorn ceremonial armor in the sixteenth century⁹ (Figure 2). With the rise of artillery in warfare, armor lost its functionality, becoming progressively overgrown with engraved or embossed floral and grotesque modes of ornament¹⁰.

These proliferating images encircle the body in a visual net, shifting the values of defense and offense traditionally embedded in functional battlefield armor to a symbolic dimension. In this context, the mascarons of powerful creatures, such as

7. BRUNA, Denis: «Le 'labour dans la chair'. Témoignages et représentations du tatouage au Moyen Age», and GUERZONI, Guido: «*Notae divinae ex arte compunctae. Prime impressioni sul tatuaggio devozionale in Italia (secoli XV-XIX)*», in «La pelle umana», dossier, *Micrologus*, 13, 2005; OUSTERHOUT, Robert G.: «Permanent Ephemera: The Honourable 'Stigmatisation' of Jerusalem Pilgrims», in BARTAL, Renana, and VORHLT, Hanna: *Between Jerusalem and Europe: Essays in Honour of Bianca Kuhnel*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015, pp. 94-109; GNECCHI RUSCONE, Livia (ed.): *Stigmata. La tradizione del tatuaggio in Italia*. Exh. cat., Cinisello Balsamo, Silvana, 2017.

8. DE BRY, Theodor: *America I: Admiranda narration fida tamen, de commodis et incolarum ritibus Virginiae*. Francfort, De Bry, 1590. See FLEMING, Juliet: *op. cit.*, pp. 39-50; SLOAN, Kim: *A New World: England's First View of America*. Chapel Hill, NC, The University of North Carolina Press, 2007; SMILES, Sam: «John White and British Antiquity: Savage Origins in the Context of Tudor Historiography», in SLOAN, Kim (ed.): *European Visions: American Voices*. London, British Museum, 2009, pp. 106-112.

9. STOICHITA, Victor I.: «La seconde peau. Quelques considérations sur le symbolisme des armures au XV^e et au XVII^e siècles», in PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, Agostino (ed.): *Finis corporis. Eccedenze, protuberanze, estremità nei corpi*, conference proceedings, *Micrologus* 20, 2012, pp. 451-463.

10. PYHRR, Stuart W. and GODOY, José-A. (eds.): *Heroic Armor of the Italian Renaissance: Filippo Negrolini and his Contemporaries*. Exh. cat., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998; GODOY, José-A. and LEYDI, Silvio (eds.): *Parures triomphales: le maniériste dans l'art et l'armure italienne*. Exh. cat., Genève, Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, 2003; QUONDAM, Amedeo: *Cavallo e cavaliere: l'armatura come seconda pelle del gentiluomo moderno*. Roma, Donzelli, 2003; LAROCCA, Donald J.: «Monsters, Heroes, and Fools: A Survey of Embossed Armor in Germany and Austria, ca. 1475-ca. 1575», in *A Farewell to Arms: Studies on the History of Arms and Armour. Liber Amicorum in Honour of Jan Piet Puype*. Delft, Legermuseum, 2004, pp. 35-54; SPRINGER Carolyn: *Armour and masculinity in the Italian Renaissance*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010.

the Gorgoneon on the breastplate, the dragon-heads-as-pauldrons for the shoulders or the lion-head-shaped helmet work as apotropaic, protective elements that render the body impenetrable, not unlike the mythical skin of the Nemean lion¹¹. These masks of alterity also empower the body by expressing the terrifying strength and petrifying force of the martial furor that animates it¹². Moreover, these empowering masks are incorporated on the muscled and perfectly-proportioned anatomy of the Pict warrior, whose skin, hardened from tattooing, is entirely covered by a blue background, recalling the process through which the hardened steel of Renaissance armor turns blue through heating. Similarly, the Gorgoneon or the leonine head is included in ceremonial anatomical armor *alla romana*, as seen on the breastplate of the armor made by Bartolomeo Campi for the duke of Urbino Guidobaldo della Rovere (Figure 3)¹³. Following the model of ancient Greek and Roman anatomical breastplates, the warrior's body is covered by a second skin of steel, incorporating the hardened and invulnerable tough skin of mythical heroes, such as Achilles, Ajax and Hercules.

Gell uses the 'second skin' as a paradigm to define the transformative process that tattooing operates on the body, creating a «character armor» that participates simultaneously in defense and constitution of the social persona¹⁴. He develops the fundamental notion of the duplicity of the second skin, which at the same time covers and reveals the body through images, calling upon Didier Anzieu's work on the *Moi-peau* (*The Skin-ego*). Anzieu considers the double-sidedness of the skin, which protects the inner cavity of the body while communicating its internal state to the external world¹⁵. On this basis, Gell defines the basic schema of tattooing as «the exteriorization of the interior which is simultaneously the interiorization of the exterior». Renaissance armor, which at the same time defends and empowers the

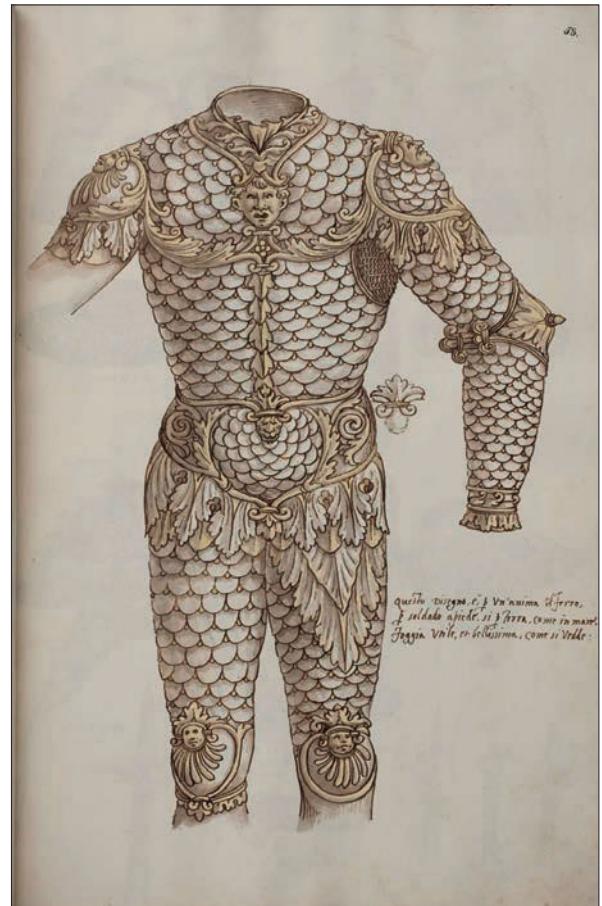


FIGURE 2. FILIPPO ORSONI, DESIGN FOR SCALE ARMOR, CA. 1540-1560, HERZOG AUGUST BIBLIOTHEK WOLFENBÜTTEL, COD. GUELPH I.5. AUG2, FOL. 58.

11. STOICHITA, Victor I.: *op. cit.*

12. SCHMITT, Jean-Claude : «Les masques, le diable, les morts», in *idem: Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps: essais d'anthropologie médiévale*. Paris, Gallimard, 2001, pp. 211-237.

13. PYHRR, Stuart W. and GODOY, José-A (eds.): *op. cit.*, pp. 278-284, n° 54; SPRINGER, Carolyn: *op. cit.*, pp. 85-89; STOICHITA, Victor I.: *op. cit.*

14. GELL, Alfred: *op. cit.*, pp. 28-39.

15. ANZIEU, Didier: *Le moi-peau*. Paris, Dunod, 1985. On Gell's «basic schema of tattooing» and his reading of Anzieu, see also FLEMING, Juliet: *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38; CAPLAN, Jane: *op. cit.*, pp. xii-xiii.



FIGURE 3. BARTOLOMEO CAMPY, ARMOR ALLA ROMANA OF GUIDOBALDO II DELLA ROVERE, DUKE OF URBINO, 1546, STEEL, GOLD, SILVER AND BRASS, PATRIMONIO NACIONAL, REAL ARMERÍA (A 188), MADRID.

body while expressing its terrifying inner force, belongs to the same visual regime as the foundational act of inscribing images directly onto the body through ink pounced underneath the skin. This observation can be extended to all images visually incorporated on the body through a prop that physically wraps it as a second skin, including clothing. In the «True picture of a young dowgter of the Pictes» by Jacques Le Moine, the body of the maiden is completely covered by a variety of the fairest flowers, which simultaneously define and reveal the transitory inner virginal state of the *jeune fille en fleurs*¹⁶ (Figure 4). The symmetrical disposition of the colorful and refined flowers, standing out against the extreme whiteness of the maiden's skin, recalls the floral patterns of the white satin dresses at the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts of England, impressively rendered by the detailed figurative language of court painters like Marcus Gheeraerts de Younger or Robert Peake the Elder. In Peake's portrait of the ten-year-old Princess Elizabeth Stuart (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, ca. 1606; Figure 5), the refined floral dress defines the status of the 'young daughter' of king James I, and future queen of Bohemia, as the desirable object of many matrimonial negotiations¹⁷. But the most eloquent vision of the floral dress as interface between the interior and the exterior of the body is the unforgettable Flora in Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, late 1470s or early 1480s; Figure 6). Crowned with flowers, the goddess of Spring wears a light white dress embroidered or painted with an herbarium's variety of colorful flowers, which are also depicted on the forest clearing that she crosses with a dancing step¹⁸. On Flora's second skin, real flowers merge with painted or embroidered ones, revealing here the generative power of her body. To her right is her origin story: she was once the nymph Chloris but Zephyr's fecund embrace transformed her into a goddess. In Botticelli's composition, the silhouette of the green plants underfoot is imprinted on Chloris's transparent veil, as if they were absorbed into her body before, through Zephyr's transformative touch, springing out from her mouth as blossoming flowers. From there, they fall on the dress of her double,

16. FLEMING, Juliet: *op. cit.*, pp. 39-50; SLOAN, Kim (ed.): *European Visions..., op. cit.*, pp. 90-92, n° 172.

17. SPEELBERG, Femke: «Fashion & Virtue: Textile Patterns and the Print Revolution, 1520-1620», *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 73, 2, 2015, p. 35. For the flower motive in the dresses of Elizabeth I, related to her virginal rule on the order of things, see STRONG, Roy: *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1987. For the virtuous needlework and its parallel with drawing: JONES, Ann Rosalind, and STALLYBRASS, Peter (eds.): *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 134-171.

18. About the dress of Flora, possibly painted, and its relationship to the mythological pageantries at the Medici court in Florence, see FRANCSTEL, Pierre: *La réalité figurative. Éléments structurels de sociologie de l'art*. Paris, Gonothier, 1965, pp. 228-252 (II. La fête mythologique au Quattrocento); DEMPSEY, Charles: *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli's Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 65-73.

Flora, visualizing the metamorphosis through this floral bridge. The goddess of Spring, from the fold of flowered fabric on her lap, in other words from her fertile womb, spreads flowers all around her, transforming the green grass below into a colored flower field step-by-step under her feet.

The basic schema of wearing images as second skin, intended as an interface between interior and exterior, can be more broadly applied to single images that are adjoined to the body through a variety of ways: including painting, embroidery, engraving directly on fabric or steel garment, or accessories sewed, pinned, tied or hung. These objects can take the shape of medallions, badges or jewels, and frame coat of arms, emblems, portraits, devotional images, mythical or historical characters, and even mirror capturing the reflection of miraculous images or relics¹⁹. The visual inscription of the image on the body, which suggests a direct contact, builds up a close relationship between the wearer and what the image represents, a relationship that has on the one hand an intimate dimension, because of the physical closeness, and on the other hand a social extension, because of its public display. For example, the medallion worn on the chest, which can contain a miniature portrait of a parent, a beloved, a friend, a patron, simultaneously declares the wearer's belonging to a dynastic or social *familia*, while revealing the image that he carries in his heart. According to the rules of their order established in 1489, the Conceptionist nuns were to wear a *venera*, a medallion with the image of their Holy patron, the Immaculate Conception, on their heart²⁰ (Figure 7). This medallion, declaring the status of the nun as part of her order, was a visual statement that she had devoted her life to the imitation of the Virgin, whose image was said to be literally «impressed in her heart» (*impresa en su corazon*). Thus, the medallions, calling out to external viewers, visualize the ties between the



FIGURE 4. JACQUES LE MOYNE DE MORGUES, A YOUNG DAUGHTER OF THE PICTS, CA. 1585-1588, WATERCOLOR AND GOUACHE, TOUCHED WITH GOLD, ON PARCHMENT, 26 X 18.7 CM, YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART (PAUL MELLON COLLECTION), NEW HAVEN.

19. PASTOUREAU, Michel (ed.): *Le Vêtement: histoire, archéologie et symbolique vestimentaires au Moyen Âge*. Paris, Éditions du Léopard d'or, 1989; HACKENBROCH, Yvonne: *Enseignes: Renaissance Hat Jewels*. Firenze, Studio per edizioni scelte, 1996; BRUNA, Denis: *Enseignes de plomb et autres menues chosettes du Moyen Âge*. Paris, Éditions du Léopard d'or, 2006; RICHARDSON, Catherine: «As my whole trust is in him»: Jewelry and the Quality of Early Modern Relationships», in MIRABELLA, Bella (ed.): *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2011, pp. 182-201; HACKENBROCH, Yvonne: *Jewels of the Renaissance*. New York, NY, Assouline Publishing, 2015.

20. Francisco MANSO y ZÚÑIGA, *Reglas y ordenaciones de las Religiosas de la Limpia e Inmaculada Concepcion de la Virgen*, Mexico, 1635, p. 9, quoted by PERRY, Elizabeth: *Escudos de Monjas/Shields of Nuns: The Creole Convent and Images of Mexican Identity in Miniature*, Ph.D. Diss., Brown University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1999, pp. 53-54; CORDÓVA, James: *The Art of Professing in Bourbon Mexico: Crowned-nuns Portraits and Reform in the Convent*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014, pp. 35-68.



FIGURE 5. ROBERT PEAKE THE ELDER, *PRINCESS ELIZABETH, LATER QUEEN OF BOHEMIA*, CA. 1606, OIL ON CANVAS, 154.3 X 79.4 CM, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK.

wearer and the figure represented, in terms of love, allegiance, faith or devotion. Fashioning the social persona, establishing social relations and acting continuously upon their wearers, those images are artefacts with agency²¹, which are activated through their contact with the body. They function within a performative dimension: through their bodily display and manipulation, they are hidden and revealed, and animated with movement. In this perspective, the body as support of the image, considered in the light of Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, is not only an intermediary, in other words a vehicle of representation, but a mediator, acting as an agent of transformation: it transforms the opaque image into a transparent layer that unveils the inner figure²².

In the visual construction of early modern paintings, the depiction of image wearers is particularly fascinating because it implies the inscription of the image within an image, through a process of repetition and reduction. This process can sometimes be very literal, such as in the portrait of the *Borgne d'Harambure* (Versailles, Musée national du Château; Figure 8), the foster brother of the king of France Henri IV who lost his eye in 1588 while fighting for his king in the Battle of Niort²³. In the picture, d'Harambure is wearing a double medallion on his chest that pairs a miniature reduction of this same portrait of himself, on the right, with a miniature portrait of the king, on the left. Through the reduced repetition on the medallion, the portrait of d'Harambure wearing the joined image of himself and of his king is virtually repeated to infinity, thus intensifying the

ties between the gentlemen and his sovereign. This repetition of the image within the image is the process that André Gide significantly defined as *abyme*, referring to the heraldic – misinterpreted – figure of the blazon within the blazon, endlessly repeating its reduced image²⁴. Gide nonetheless had a broader understanding of this process

21. In the sense of GELL, Alfred: *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998. For the concept of agency in the history of art, see OSBORNE, Robin, and TANNER, Jeremy (eds.): *Art's Agency and Art History*. Malden, MA, Blackwell Pub., 2007, pp. 1-28 (Introduction). For the agency of portraits medallions, see KELLY, Jessen: «The Material Efficacy of the Elizabethan Jeweled Miniature: A Gellian Experiment», in OSBORNE, Robin, and TANNER, Jeremy (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 114-134; KOOS, Marianne: «Wandering Things: Agency and Embodiment in Late Sixteenth-Century English Miniature Portrait», *Art history*, 37, 5, 2014, pp. 836-859.

22. LATOUR, Bruno: *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 39-40. For the application of this interpretative grid to the materials of the image, see LEHMANN, Ann-Sophie: «The Matter of the Medium: some tools for an art-theoretical interpretation of materials», in ANDERSON, Christy, DUNLOP, Anne and SMITH, Pamela H. (eds.): *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, c. 1250-1750*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2015, pp. 21-41.

23. DIMIER, Louis: *Histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XVI^e siècle*. Paris, Bruxelles, G. van Oest, 1924-1926, II, p. 353, n° 5.

24. GIDE, André: *Journal. 1889-1939*. Paris, Gallimard, «Pléiade», 1948, 41, 1893; see DÄLLENBACH, Lucien: *Le récit spéculaire. Essai sur la mise en abyme*. Paris, Seuil, 1977, pp. 15-31.

of *abyme*, considering the reduced repetition in a less literal way: «In a work of art I rather like to find transposed, on the scale of the characters, the very subject of that work. Nothing throws a clearer light upon it or more surely establishes the proportions of the whole.» He was thinking here of the literary trope of the narrative within the narrative, and famously, he compared it to the reflected image produced by the convex mirror in early Netherlandish painting: «in certain paintings of Memling or Quentin Metzys a small convex and dark mirror reflects the interior of the room in which the scene of the painting is taking place.» The displaced and inverted repetition, through an effect of condensation, has the power to unveil the very essence of the work of art.

If we take the foundational example of Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* portrait (London, National Gallery, 1434), the convex mirror effectively reveals the broader proportions of the whole on multiple levels²⁵. It unveils the structure of the pictorial composition, completing the image and its narrative by showing the other side of the room, including two characters who would be otherwise imperceptible. It reveals the 'backstage' area of the painting's production and reception, the «*scénario de production*», according to André Chastel, referring to the process of the pictorial act and the act of seeing²⁶. Furthermore, it reveals the conception of pictorial representation proper to the painter and to a broader cultural and historical context: here, the continuity of pictorial space defines the painting as a fragment of an imagined wider vision that goes beyond the material limits of the painted surface²⁷. When worn on the body, the image *en abyme* is even more complex, because it is activated through the inscription on the second skin of one of the main characters of the representation. In Hans Memling's diptych



FIGURE 6. SANDRO BOTTICELLI, PRIMAVERA (DETAIL) LATE 1470S OR EARLY 1480S, TEMPERA ON PANEL, 202 X 314 CM, GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE.

25. BELTING, Hans and KRUSE, Christiane (eds.): *Die Erfindung des Gemäldes: das erste Jahrhundert der niederländischen Malerei*. Munich, Hirmer, 1994, p. 155, n° 49-50.

26. CHASTEL, André : «Le tableau dans le tableau», (1967), in *idem: Fables, formes, figures*. Paris, Flammarion, 1978, II, pp. 75-98; ARASSE, Daniel: «Les miroirs de la peinture», in *L'imitation, aliénation ou source de liberté?*, (Rencontres de l'Ecole du Louvre). Paris, La Documentation Française, 1984, pp. 63-88; STOICHITA, Victor I.: *L'instauration du tableau*. Genève, Droz, 1999, pp. 289-293; BODART, Diane H.: «Le reflet, un détail-emblème de la représentation en peinture», in *Daniel Arasse. Historien de l'art*. Paris, INHA, 2010, pp. 43-61.

27. BELTING, Hans: *L'image et son public au Moyen Âge* (*Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion*, 1981), transl. F. Israel, Paris, Gérard Monfort, 1998, pp. 66-68; ALPERS, Svetlana: *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1983, pp. 41-49.



FIGURE 7. JUAN CARREÑO DE MIRANDA, *FIVE CONCEPTIONIST NUNS*, 1653, OIL ON CANVAS, 191 X 168 CM, CONVENTO DE SANTA ÚRSULA, ALCALÁ DE HENARES.

of *Mary in the Rose Garden with San George and a Donor* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, ca. 1480-1490; fig. 9), the reflection on the polished, mirror-like breastplate of Saint George reveals the continuity of the space between the material division of the two panels: on close inspection, we may in fact distinguish the specular image of the right arm and hand of the saint, gently pushing the back of the donor towards the silhouette of the Virgin, wrapped in her red cloak, and of two musician angels, dressed in white, who appear in a large grassy field enclosed by a row of trees and the profile of a city dominated by a church. The reflection on saint George's armor visualizes his role in the donor's prayer: the active intercession of the patron saint brings the devotee to the Virgin's side²⁸. The reflected image appears here at the intersection between the temporality of the broader narrative and the temporality of the acting body, a process

that we also find in other kinds of images worn on the body, such as the embroideries on liturgical vestments.

In Alonso Sánchez Coello's 1580 Escorial altarpiece of Saints Stephen and Lawrence, the two deacons of the early Christendom wear embroidered images of their own martyrdom and of the instruments of their torment on their dalmatics, fashioned after the sixteenth-century liturgical vestments that were rendered in needlepoint by Toledo workshops after cartoons made by the court painters of king Philip II²⁹ (Figure 10). On closer examination, it appears that in the embroidered scene of his stoning, saint Stephen wears the same dalmatic, which is however not yet embroidered with the image of the martyrdom: in fact, its frame is still a uniform field of red. Therefore, the image of the martyrdom is imprinted on the second skin of the deacon, in other words on his liturgical vestment, only once the torment is accomplished, transforming his body into a glorious body, from which relics were conserved in the reliquary altars in the nave of the basilica of the Escorial where the

28. DE VOS, Dirk: *Hans Memling: The Complete Works*. Ghent, Ludion Press, 1994, pp. 312-315, n° 87. For the visualization of the mental dimension of prayer in Memling's diptychs, see FALKENBURG, Reindert L.: «Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych: The Place of Prayer in Early Netherlandish Devotional Painting», in HAND, John Oliver and SPRONK, Ron (eds.): *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 92-109. For the process of *abyme* activated by reflections on armor in Renaissance painting, see BODART, Diane H.: *La peinture au miroir de l'armure*. Turnhout, Brepols, forthcoming.

29. BENITO DOMÉNECH, Fernando: «La pintura religiosa en Alonso Sánchez Coello», in *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el retrato en la corte de Felipe II*. Exh. cat., Madrid, Museo del Prado, 1990, pp. 114-127; MULCAHY, Rosemarie: *The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 28-36.

painting was displayed. Ultimately, the image embroidered on the dalmatic reveals the inner virtue of the saintly body that successfully endured the suffering of martyrdom through the firmness of faith. El Greco was to re-elaborate this idea few years later in the *Burial of Don Gonzalo Ruiz de Toledo, Count of Orgaz* (1586-1588; Figure 11), displayed above the sepulcher of the pious gentleman in the church of Santo Tomé in Toledo³⁰. In the scene of the stoning embroidered on Saint Stephen's dalmatic, the image of the martyrdom is conspicuously absent on the vestment of the tormented deacon, where a red, square frame is reserved for its eventual embroidery. Here, the spectacular needlework image, which inscribe a narrative image into a narrative painting, is associated with another worn image that attests to an accomplished miracle: the reflection of the same saint Stephen and of his companion saint Augustin on the breastplate of the devout Count of Orgaz, which testifies to their miraculous apparition at his funeral, in the early fourteenth century, to bury him with their own hands. Through their reflection, the miraculous apparition operates a transference of holiness, revealing the purity of the body of the deceased count. Between these two reflected images appears a third one, the hand of the contemporary knight of Santiago who is present but unable to directly touch this «body touched by hands of saints»³¹. This specular image of the hand, appearing on the count's 'second skin' beside the reflections of the two saints, introduces a temporal link between the day of the funeral in the distant past and the contemporary period, re-enacting the miracle of the burial, at a time it had been contested, in the very place where it was accomplished. Through the process of *abyme* established by reflections on the armed body of the Christian hero, El Greco unveils here one of the principal powers of representation in painting: the revival of the past in the immanence of the present.

Wearing images activates a stratified visual, physical and semantic process that sits at the intersection of the anthropology of images and the history of art. In the past decades, attention to the materiality and efficacy of images, as well as to the social practices related to them, has brought to light to what extent the making, use,



FIGURE 8. JEAN D'HARAMBURE, NAMED LE BORGNE D'HARAMBURE, CA. 1600, OIL ON PANEL, 29 X 19 CM, MUSÉE NATIONAL DU CHÂTEAU, VERSAILLES.

30. SCHROTH, Sarah: «Burial of the Count of Orgaz», in BROWN, Jonathan (ed.): *Figures of Thought: El Greco as Interpreter of History, Tradition and Ideas*, (Studies of History of Art, 11). Washington, National Gallery, 1982, pp. 1-18; MARÍAS, Fernando: *El Greco: life and work, a new history*. Londres, Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2013.

31. «no era justo que manos de pecadores mudasen cuerpo que santos con las suyas habian tocados»: according to the report of Alonso de Villegas (*Flos Sanctorum*, 1588), this was the argument used to refuse the project of new lavish sepulcher for the count of Orgaz, which would have implied displacing his body; see SCHROTH, Sarah: *op. cit.*, p. 5.



FIGURE 9. HANS MEMLING, DIPTYCH OF MARY IN THE ROSE GARDEN WITH SAINT GEORGE AND A DONOR, CA. 1480-1490, OIL ON PANEL, EACH 43 X 31 CM, ALTE PINAKOTHEK, MUNICH.

handling and display of images contributed to the activation of their powers of presence through their interaction with the viewers³². In that context, the links between the art object and the body can become very closely tied: in fact, the body can be the medium of the animate art object, just as the art object can potentially act as a substitute of the animate body. Interestingly, the image worn on the body constitutes in this regard a very specific case that allows a shifting and reframing of the interpretative grid: indeed, the body is not entirely involved as a medium of a whole and unique image, but instead, it acts as a support for a distinctive image, while keeping its own identity perceptible. Therefore, the power of presence of the activated image follows here other schemas. The collection of essays gathered in this dossier aims to explore these different modes of interaction between the image and the body that wears it in the Early Modern period, through a large and representative variety of objects. Analyzing the portrait jewels offered by the queen of England Elizabeth I to her worthier subjects, Marianne Koos addresses the agency of portrait miniatures in the context of the gift economy. Beyond the act of seeing, she understands the animation of these images through the bodily experience of handling, wearing, kissing, hiding or unveiling them, and she examines the role of their complex and precious jeweled frames in this process. Laurent Hablot investigates the use of the emblazoned garment from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, not only as signs of identity defined through

32. FREEDBERG, David: *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989; BELTING, Hans: *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, (*Bild und Kult: eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*, 1990). Transl. E. Jephcott, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994; JACOBS, Fredrika H: *The Living Image in Renaissance Art*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2005; BELTING, Hans: *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, (*Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, 2001). Transl. T. Dunlap, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011; BREDEKAMP, Horst: *Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency*, (*Theorie des Bildakts*, 2010). Transl. E. Clegg, Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2018.



FIGURE 10. ALONSO SÁNCHEZ COELLO, SAINTS STEPHEN AND LAWRENCE, 1580, OIL ON CANVAS, 235 X 185 CM, BASÍLICA DEL REAL MONASTERIO DE EL ESCORIAL.

the affiliation to a familial or social group, but also as a means of embodiment of the social persona and the supreme entity that it represented: on the body of the king of France, the fleur-de-lys robe visually materialized the kingdom embodied by the living sovereign. Felix Jäger explores the decoration of armor in Renaissance Italy, beyond its symbolic dimension, in terms of embodied practices. In the fifteenth century, the prince embodies the qualities necessary for his rule through the physiology and discipline of bodily experience of the battlefield armor. The sixteenth-century ceremonial armor, embossed with hybrid creatures of grotesque ornaments, incorporates instead a composite mnemonic image of the order of things on the body of the prince, while placing him beyond the categories of the natural world on which he rules. Guido Guerzoni, presenting a collection of sixteenth century tattoos on wooden tablets in the Basilica of Loreto, retraces the forgotten but uninterrupted history of devotional tattoos in Italy from Antiquity to the nineteenth century, emphasizing how the ancient, indelible mark of infamy and sign of pain was transformed in the Christian era in a stigma of true faith and a symbol of martyrdom. While these devotional tattoos were ostensibly inscribed on the arms, paper amulets, including text or images, were carefully hidden under clothing and worn in direct contact with the body. Katherine Dauge-Roth investigates the magical-religious use of these inexpensive artefacts for healing and protection and their wide diffusion in the age of print, in sixteenth and seventeenth century France. She considers the superstitious dimension of this practice in the light of the medical and theological debates that it generated within the context of the Reformation. Cristina Borgioli reconstructs the history of inscribing images on liturgical vestments from the thirteenth century,



FIGURE 11. EL GRECO, *BURIAL OF THE COUNT OF ORGAZ* (DETAIL), 1586-1588, OIL ON CANVAS, 460 X 360 CM, SANTO TOMÉ, TOLEDO.

when the role of images became central in the Christian worship, to the sixteenth century, when the sacred garments were transformed into instruments of identity, a phenomenon also seen in secular ceremonial clothing. The woven and embroidered historiated figures connected the officiant to the sacred space of the enacted liturgy, while the inclusion of coat of arms, emblems or mottoes, defined the religious or civic community and glorified their patrons or institutional allies. Julia Maillard closes the dossier with her analysis of the liminal case of the masque costume in the pageantry at the French court of Catherine de' Medici. Her study offers critical nuance to our ideas of fashioning identity in the Early Modern Period, showing that masque costume, rather than disguising the wearer as someone else, instead produces an image which reveals and animates a character of his social persona.

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