

REBECCA LINDSMYR
DEAR BODY

Dear Body,

We have lived through the same events, you and I. But unlike me, you know everything. You remember everything. It is all embedded in you. Has formed you. My memory has concealed, transformed and forgotten, but Body, you remember.

*The mind could lie. It mostly lies.
But the body never lies.*

Marina Abramovic

Body, you carry the process. You are the process. Floating. Moving. You; a collection of repetitive acts – of gestures and of movements.

Body, in every now you are also then. Your then is the reference for your now. Every then were also ones a now. It all exists simultaneously. Now and then mixing up; intertwining. Stepping over and in front of each other.

*my body knows the significance,
for the totality of my experience*

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

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Corporeality is the property or relationship of being bodily or having a body. In a phenomenological tradition, corporeality refers to the lived experience of one's own body in the world.

Embodiment is based on how the lived experience takes on bodily expressions, which are made visible in style, posture and movements.

*To re-member is first and foremost
not to represent but to re-body,
to materialize the inaccessible.*

Didier Franck
summarizing Husserl

Re-body. Materialize. Doing body. Doing painting. Performatively.

A re-visit of places, events, memories, emotions.

Gestures; Layered. Everything is there. At once. In body. In painting.

Painting as body. A remnant of a sequence of events. A process preserved as object.

Tension. How does tension feel? What is tension? Accumulation. Cluster.

A stroke. Soft. Wavy.

A slap. Strident. Sharp.

But what if habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an automatic reflex, then what is it? It is a question of a knowledge in our hands, which is only given through a bodily effort and cannot be translated by an objective designation.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

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The mirror. It becomes a way. Like the painting.
A way to create an observable copy. A way to step out. Step back.

The painting becomes a way to freeze a mirroring. Freeze a body.
Freeze a process. Freeze you.

Paintings tell stories of movements and gestures. Your movements and gestures. Movements and gestures forming you. They are you. Were you. Before moving on. A portrait in fixed time.

Paintings are attributed a subject position; an inherent ability to know what they need for themselves.

I am thinking of *Higher Beings Command: Paint the upper right corner black* by Sigmar Polke; a reflection on the painting as subject and higher power.

Like the fluid line between painting as subject and painting as object, bodies and processes flow between the two; move between being subject and object.

I am thinking of mirrorings; their ability to dislocate subject and object. The Mirror Stage; creating a copy of oneself through a mirror; transforming the self into an object that is possible to observe. See oneself through an external gaze.

To recognize oneself as an 'I' is to recognize oneself as an other.

I am thinking of Merleau-Ponty's reflection on the body as an object that does not leave the self. Whether or not an object that is indistinguishable from the subject still remains an object.

Body, your permanence is not a permanence in the world, but a permanence by my side. Yet, before my eyes, I can never see you in your fullness. For that I would have to possess another body, which itself could not be observed.

Body, I am thinking of our teenage years with eating disorders and forced exercise; how I thought I could control you. But you are the bigger one of us.

That period of time gave me insight into how easily I can be misled. How you, Body, stood stable and durable as I wobbled. How my attempts to control you hit me back. You were stable, but still moving. I imagine a snowball going downhill picking up what it passes by; transforming while steadily moving.

Maybe it was then you became a shapeless floating mass, difficult to make sense of. When the mirror's ability to objectify proved to be insufficient.

The objective gaze; the clinical gaze. To be placed on a couch or an autopsy table. To take apart and assemble. Follow traces; gestures. Study piece by piece.

To step back and forth before a painting. Being in it, out of it. Be in you, with you, and take a step away. Observe from a distance. Make understandable.

But Body, it is also you that physically moves me. That moves me away from you. Towards you.

You; Body; process. A balancing act. A flux between inner and outer understanding.

Writing a letter. Writing a painting. There is a relation between writing and painting. Is the most relevant part of writing the words or the act?

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How could a letter to you ever be anything but fragmented? Cobbled. Like the body. Like the process. Like the painting. Everything at once. Layers and fragments. A fluid mirroring.

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement.

Helene Cixous

Sincerely yours,
Rebecca

Movement; your own movement. Painting as physical writing; writing pushed to its apex.

Being driven away from the body. At the same time trapped in it; incarcerated. To be body and nothing more, and at the same time not being allowed to be body.

To give you, Body.
Give you space. Give you time.

Everyone thinks a painting is somehow about space, but I think it is much more about time.

Ian McKeever

Spending time with you. In you. With painting. In painting. In process. Processing. And moving on.

Rebecca Lindsmyr (b. 1990, Edsbyn, Sweden) is a painter currently undertaking an MFA at Malmö Art Academy. She holds a BA from the Glasgow School of Art. Her work explores understandings and representations of the body. She approaches painting as a formative and performative process in which the lived body is explored, produced and depicted through gestures, movements and mark making. Rebecca's work has been exhibited both in Sweden and internationally, at venues such as Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts; Biscuit Factory, Edinburgh; Gaggap, Leipzig; Köttinspektionen, Uppsala; Gävle Art Center; Galleri CC, Malmö and Bollnäs Art Hall.

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