

ENDLESS SUTURE PROJECT

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the endless suture project is research project that is documented by a series of notes and sculpture ... a more accessible definition would be to say it is an art project, but i think that the first definition more specifically describes what it means to me ... the sculpture's interpretation has evolved over the course of its construction as the research progressed ... the research refers to a series of textual investigations made to help me find answers to various questions i asked myself about this art object ... i think that the thesis question could be simply put as; what is my relationship to the world of objects? ... and from there a seemingly endless series of questions has arisen along the way that has directed the research to lead me through an array of fascinating and insightful discourses ... generally, the site of my inquiry is where semiotics and psychoanalysis overlap ... it would aid the viewer/reader to have knowledge of these subjects in order to better understand the interpretations that i have constructed ... if not, i would hope that if the endless suture project were interesting to someone, it would prompt their own research into these subjects ... to participate in a discourse of furthering an understanding of our relationship to Otherness would be the goal of presenting the project for consideration ... to consider a relationship to the world of objects is to consider a relationship to the Other, as the Other would be everything that is not the self ... in other words, the project is an attempt to define the distinctions between reality and the real, and to understand one's position to these concepts ...

the endless suture sculpture is a fairly ambiguous object, and its intended interpretation probably wouldn't be made ... i think of it as sort of a poetic model of a Lacanian concept of desire ... to understand how this interpretation works i will refer to the following statement from the essay Code-Duality and the Semiotics of Nature ... "to make things visible, we make other things - or in a certain sense the same things - invisible" ... the endless suture sculpture is filled with an assortment of objects ... they are my personal possessions that at some time had value to me, but in time became junk to me ... so, all this junk were once my objects of desire ... to highlight this notion, i make all these objects invisible by sewing them up inside of furry fabric, and make the aggregate of objects visible as one object ... the melange of objects is revised as all the same thing ... the object of desire ...

the endless suture sculpture is actually a grouping of separate pieces, but when thrown together appears to be one piece ... the grouping can be arranged and rearranged to construct a seemingly infinite number of

forms ... it doesn't matter what form it is, it's still the same thing ... just like the objects of desire comes in many forms, it doesn't really matter what the object is, we expect it to do the same thing ... we expect it to fill the void of unfulfilled desire ...

the project title, endless suture, refers to the process of trying fill the void of unfulfilled desire ... a suture heals a wound ... the wound is our separation from the real ... we are forever trying to heal that wound by consuming anything and everything that might make us feel better ... whether physical or metaphysical objects (ie. theory, religion, entertainment, culture), we are forever consuming in hopes of connecting with the real ... metaphysically, the endless suture project is a way for me to meditate and mediate on this theory ... it's my therapy ... physically, the endless suture project is a way for me to solve practical problems ... 1. what do i do with all this junk that has outlived its usefulness to me, and 2. how can i economically make an art object ... my solution to these two questions constructs another interpretation that speaks of the alchemistical transformation of abject materials becoming "art" ... and/or, it sends a subversive message that deconstructs the art object as just more junk sewn up in a fuzzy concept ... for to be honest, the art object shouldn't be excluded from the list of objects of desire that attempt to fill the void of some lacking sensation ... it's a vain attempt to catch a glimpse of the real ... to view the real is to experience without signification, and since consciousness is experienced as language, it would seem an impossible scenario ... the endless suture sculpture attempts to illustrate a signifier whose referent is a process ... the concept of desire is not an object that occupies space ... the sculpture attempts to put in front of the eyes what is happening behind the eyes, to make the invisible a visible object.

TEXT EXCERPTS RELEVANT TO THE ENDLESS SUTURE PROJECT

Lacan Lecture by Tom Davis

4.1 We cannot experience the world directly.

The crucial point is this: we cannot experience the world directly. All we can experience is a mental event. I touch the table, or see a friend, and think I am experiencing the table or the friend directly. This is not true. I see or feel some phenomena, and interpret them, and what I experience is the interpretation: friend, table. That is the only way I can know the world. I can't get behind

the interpretation to experience the world direct, raw, unmediated.

The interpretations, that are all I can know of the world, are made up of two things: language, and images that I have previously experienced: previous interpretations. They are not real. They are mental events.

Here I am in a lecture room, and I am perceiving a lecture room, but that's an interpretation. My cat would not perceive a lecture room, if she were here now. Neither would a Martian or a tribal man plucked from the Amazon rain forest. I know it's a lecture room because I recognize it, and I do this by comparing it with a database of images inside my head. The second step is to define it, and I can do this because I have a collection of definitions, in fact a kind of dictionary, also inside my head. This dictionary is called language. These two things, images and language, make up all of my experience of everything. Experience = images + language.

4.2 Experience = images + language.

I experience language as being more or less controlled and precise, and the images as being rather dreamy: undefined. I experience language as somehow secondary, artificial, and the images as somehow primary, or basic.

Both language and images, says Lacan, are false. All these mental events that I perceive are approximations, makeshifts. Remember how inadequate language is for describing the world? If you compare the words 'lecture room' -- hear them, just the words, 'lecture room' -- with what seems to be going on here, the difference is pathetic. And the database of images that I have with which I compare this image-experience with others feels very shadowy and shifting. Both, says Lacan, are not real. They are false.

4.3 the real

We cannot perceive raw reality. Whatever raw reality is like, and I cannot possibly imagine what it might be like, I know it doesn't have lecture rooms in it. Lacan calls this raw reality 'la réelle': the real.

4.4 desire

Now, Lacan says that though we cannot know the real, la réelle, in any way whatsoever, we have an obscure sense of it, of its plenitude, its incredible fullness and richness. We want it.

Desire, for Lacan, comes out of the imbalance between what we perceive, language and images, and what actually is: la réelle. This enormous discrepancy is the primary fact of our mental life, like a constant imbalance or vertigo. This, not eros, not sexual desire, is the main thing that motivates everything, for Lacan.

It is impossible to satisfy this desire, because we cannot know what we want. The real is utterly unknowable. Everything gets in the way: all the mental events that make up our false view of the world. We can't even really long for what we long for; we are fundamentally confused.

So this longing is displaced: we long for everything else instead. Sex and food and consumer objects, trying to fill the void of desire. But we are not satisfied by any of these things, because as soon as the desire is fulfilled it vanishes, becomes, strangely, unsatisfactory: no, I think, that's not it, that's not what I wanted. Soon another desire arises: maybe that's it, maybe, maybe, and so I long for that instead. Until it too is satiated and falls away. And so on for ever.

Of course if we could somehow actually encounter the real, without any conceptualization coming in between, it might be blissful, or it might be actually terrifying. It would be like meeting God, face to face.

Code-Duality and the Semiotics of Nature
by JESPER HOFFMEYER and CLAUS EMMECHE

Differences, which make a difference

'There are in the mind no objects or events - no pigs, no coconut palms, and no mothers. The mind contains only transforms, percepts, images, etc....It is nonsense to say that a man was frightened by a lion, because a lion is not an idea. The man makes an idea of the lion' (Bateson 1972: 271).

According to Gregory Bateson information is based on *difference*. A sensory end organ is a comparator, a device which responds to difference. While reading this, for instance, your eyes do not respond to the ink, but to the multiple differences between the ink and the paper.

The number of potential differences in our surroundings, however, is infinite. Therefore, for differences to become information they must first be *selected* by some kind of 'mind', the recipient system. Information, then, is *difference which makes a difference* (to that mind):

'Try to describe a leaf or, still better, try to describe the difference between two leaves of the same plant, or between the second and the third walking appendages (the "leg") of a single, particular crab. You will discover that that which you must specify is *everywhere* in the leaf or in the crab's leg. It will be, in fact, impossible to decide upon any general statement that will be a premise to all the details, and utterly impossible to deal with the details one by one' (Bateson and Bateson 1987:164).

What enters the mind as information always depends on a selection, and this selection is mostly unconscious. In this sense one should not speak about 'getting' information, rather information is something we 'create'.

Furthermore, only a tiny fraction of the actual differences exhibited by the phenomena under study will be mapped on to our description. Thus, every time we make a description most of the differences which might be potential information, are not selected. In other words, every time we create knowledge, we also - and by necessity - create *non-knowledge*. (Nørretranders 1982, Hoffmeyer 1984). To make things visible, we make other things - or in a certain sense the same things - invisible. This creation of non-knowledge, which by necessity accompanies any process of investigation, is in itself a legitimate reason for the very widespread uneasiness towards the scientific project. Might it not be, that the ecological and economic crisis now facing earth has its roots in the mud of our collective non-knowledge? Certainly, myth (Prometheus) and religion (the tree of knowledge) have known all the time the dangers inherent to the project of seeking knowledge.