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‘All the Leaves in the World’: the *Subjectile* as a Problem

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Rather than addressing the problem of the dematerialisation of the artwork (which is misplaced because there is only a difference in degree between material and immaterial), I would like to draw attention to a more fundamental problem, namely the ontological difference between matter and materiality. The claim that it is only the ephemeral processes of contemporary art that challenge the established practices in art-historical research gives

the impression that questions of materiality in the more traditional art forms could already be adequately answered. It seems that one has had to wait for the (alleged) dematerialisation of the artwork in order to be able to see materiality as a problem – because the more the matter dematerialises, the more the *being* of materiality (which is neither material nor immaterial, but rather not- or *im-material*) comes into view. I take the ‘paper’ that Jacques Derrida saw throughout its long history as being made up of its gradual ‘de-paperisation’ as my starting point. In *Paper machine* (2001)¹, a text written in apocalyptic tone, at the time when the era of paper was in ongoing decline and withdrawal, Derrida discusses paper as a quasi-transcendental apparatus, expanding his perspective to include ‘all the leaves in the world’ (*toutes les feuilles du monde*), that is, *subjectiles* of all kinds, things that in one way or another ‘lie below’:



Päivikki Kallio, *On the Track – The Deluge*, 1995, installation, transferred photocopies on mirrors, papier mâché, beeswax, spotlights
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Photo: Jussi Tiainen

¹ Originally, *Paper machine* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2001).

hypokeimena.² Because, even in our present era of 'dematerialisation', we continue to live in the graphosphere, which implies dealing with all kinds of underlying surfaces, actual or virtual.³

Two years ago, Päivikki Kallio edited the anthology entitled *Art of Transfer and Transmission* (2017), which was dedicated to the study, in her words, of 'printmaking as a conceptual practice, independent of the material means'. The authors of this publication shared a view that printmaking as an activity has the ability to generate 'new and potentially conceptual thinking', and that this ability is located in the 'break or an abyss' that lies at the core of the act of printing itself. This abyss is the machine, the indeterminate 'zone' between the printing plate (or 'matrix', as Kallio wants to call it⁴ – a sort of maternal *subjectile*⁵) and the print (or 'trace'). This 'apparatus of the printed art' is a Latourian 'collective process', which brings together a number of actants, human, as well as inhuman.⁶ Susanne Gottberg, in turn, has for many years created paintings in which the wood grain patterns of the unprimed plywood, used as a painting support, reflects through a painted drapery. Isn't the strange feeling these paintings creates in us also the result of an abyss – or conflict – between the intentional image object and the physical image carrier? I will come back to this later.

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- 2 Derrida poses a question: 'When we say "paper" (...) are we naming the empirical body that bears this conventional name? Are we already resorting to a rhetorical figure? Or are we by the same token designating this "quasi-transcendental paper" (...)' Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005 [2001]), 52; Jacques Derrida, 'Maddening the *Subjectile*'. Trans. Mary Ann Caws. *Yale French Studies*, 84, 1994, (154–171), 157–58, 169. The *subjectile*, the untranslatable French notion presumably first used by Antonin Artaud, does not refer to any determinate substance, or object of knowing. In fact, as Derrida reminds us, even Artaud did 'not speak about the *subjectile* as such, only of what "is called" by this name'. The *subjectile* is 'the unique body of the work in its first event, at its moment of birth, which cannot be repeated'. Furthermore, the *subjectile* is not reliable, it can betray, 'not come when it is called, or call before even being called, before even receiving its name'. The *subjectile* is always 'to come' (*à-venir*), and 'oscillates between the intransitivity of *jacere* and the transitivity of *jacere*'. Anyway, we can list some features of *subjectiles*, they are 'everything distinct from form, as well as from the sense and representation, which is not representable'. There are various materials which can be called by this notion (i.e. they are not *subjectiles* as such, but one can refer to them by using this name: wall and wood surfaces, paper and textiles. Derrida writes that among *subjectiles* there are two classes: the ones that 'let them be traversed (we call them *porous*, like plasters, mortar, wood, cardboard, textiles, paper) and the others (metals or their alloys) which permit no passage'.
- 3 Derrida claims that even today, 'the page continues, in many ways (...) to govern a large number of surfaces of inscription, even where the body of paper is no longer there in person (...). Even when we write on the computer, it is still *with a view* to the final printing paper, whether or not this takes place.' Derrida 2005 [2001], 46.
- 4 Kallio specifies, that '(a) matrix can be considered the conceptual turning point, a moment when the transmission or translation takes place'. Päivikki Kallio, 'New Strategies – Printmaking as a Spatial Process, as a Transmissional Process, and as a Spatial-Transmissional Process'. In Jan Pettersson (ed.), *Printmaking in the Expanded Field* (Oslo: Oslo National Academy of the Arts, 2017), (87–105), 88.
- 5 Because, as Derrida reminds us, the *subjectile* 'can take the place of the subject or of the object – being neither one nor the other'. Derrida 1994, (154–171), 154.
- 6 Inhuman actants are, for instance 'presses, corrosives, plates, printing inks, tarlatans, stones, [and] rolls'. Kallio 2017, (87–105), 87; Päivikki Kallio, 'Välissä ja vyöhykkeellä'. In Päivikki Kallio (ed.), *Siirtämisen ja välittymisen taide* (Helsinki: Kuvataideakatemia, 2017), (17–63), 18, 28, 43; Milla Toukkari, 'Kuulun filosofia'. In Päivikki Kallio (ed.), *Siirtämisen ja välittymisen taide* (Helsinki: Kuvataideakatemia, 2017), (103–157), 107. Kallio believes that 'by using the concept of the matrix it is possible to study works that do not use any paper to make the trace visible'. However, even if there is no paper in the printmaking of the expanded field, there is still always some kind of *subjectile*, no matter what name one gives it.



Susanne Gottberg: *Object*,
2013–14, oil and colour pencil
on wood, 122cm x 86cm
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Kiasma

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Petri
Virtanen

Image-folds

*A corporal is a white linen covering the table of the altar, on which is placed the host during Mass, this little white piece of unleavened bread which is usually called corpus Christi, the 'body of Christ'. A corporal must always be folded when it is not used during the Eucharistic sacrament.*⁷

As I pondered these questions, it seemed natural to me to start with the texts by the French art historian Georges Didi-Huberman. For decades he has been fascinated with what he calls 'contact images', images that produce their visibility – as he writes – within the event of a *blind take* (*prise aveugle*).⁸ In his book entitled *L'Étoilement* (1998), Didi-Huberman studied the paintings of the French artist Simon Hantaï, who was famous for his method of *pliage*: first he folded his painting canvases, then painted them with a brush, and then unfolded them – it is to be noted that the title of the book *L'Étoilement*, which refers to the geometrical concept, (in English it is called 'stellation') combines *L'étoile*, French for 'star' and *la toile*, French for 'canvas', forming a neologism *L'Étoilement*, which, in turn, makes an association with something that is simultaneously very near to us – like a material texture of a canvas – and yet very far away, out of our reach, the distant stars. Didi-Huberman writes that, when Hantaï unfolded the canvases he previously had folded, there still remained 'the memory of the knot', that is, 'the memory of a moment of the folding (*le pliage: l'étoilement*)

⁷ Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'Étoilement. Conversation avec Hantaï* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2013 [1998]), 111. My translation.

⁸ Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Images-contacts'. In *Phasmes. Essais sur l'apparition I*. (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit); Georges Didi-Huberman, *Being a Skull. Site, Contact, Thought, Sculpture*. Trans. Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 75.



Susanne Gottberg, *Folded White*, 2012, oil and colour pencil on wood, 81cm x 366cm
Private collection

Photo: Jussi Tiainen

when the canvas was just a disordered mound'.⁹ Here I want to make reference to another work by Susanne Gottberg – *Folded White* (2012) – in which the translucent white of the folded tablecloth – a precursor to the *corporal* – only barely covers the wood surface of the image carrier.¹⁰ Folding, of course, adds a temporal dimension to the work, as well as the psychological dimension of presence and absence – '(t)he all-powerful fantasy of returning and recalling, of making something to disappear, and then making it to reappear again'¹¹. Here we are dealing with the Freudian *Fort-Da*: of the manipulation of absence – in Derrida's words, 'a grief or *chagrin* for a sheet of paper itself (...), a nostalgia for its colour or weight, its thickness and resistance – its folds, the back of its recto-verso, the *fantasies* of contact, of caress, of intimacy, proximity, resistance, promise' – a grief of the *subjectile*.¹² Didi-Huberman writes: 'When we touch something with our hand, the exact place where contact is made becomes invisible to us (we have to remove our hand in order to see what we are touching).' According to him, 'this is the (...) paradox specific to contact images'.¹³ It is a question of putting the reverse side in contact with the front side, the hidden inside with its manifest side – or the unconscious with the consciousness. It is a question of accomplishing a 'sublation (*Aufhebung*) of the usual notion of the painting', by 'using the canvas as a contact matter, a matter of manipulation (...), and in that way to finish with the idea of a *subjectile* as the projective surface for images'.¹⁴ What Didi-Huberman has called *une pensée du subjectile*, is the radical critique of the surface.¹⁵ With his term 'technical unconscious' he refers to Gilbert Simondon, who thought that the formation of a vessel out of clay remained inaccessible to the cognition. According to him '(i)t is the clay that takes shape according to the mould,

9 Didi-Huberman 2013 [1998], 86–87. My translation.

10 Susanne Gottberg has told me, how – in order to be able to represent properly the pleats in the tablecloth – she had to start folding the fabrics herself. This is the corporeal dimension that is always present when dealing with *subjectiles*, whether they are palpable or only represented.

11 Pierre Férida, *L'Absence* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2008 [1978]), 268. My translation.

12 Derrida 2005 [2001], 62–63. Didi-Huberman has attached to his book a detail of a fuzzy photo taken of Hantai's mother before Simon was born. In this close up, all one can see is her ironed apron (*tablier*) made of wax cloth with its many folds. For the artist, this photo seems to represent a holy relic, comparable to a corporal. Didi-Huberman 2013 [1998], 39–45. Naturally, this is an allusion to Roland Barthes' *La Chambre claire* (1980), in which he discussed the (ever shown) photo taken of his mother long before he was born.

13 Didi-Huberman 2016, 75

14 Didi-Huberman 2013 [1998], 51–52. My translation.

15 Didi-Huberman 2013 [1998], 63. My translation.

not the worker who gives it shape. The potter prepares the mediation, but he does not accomplish it.¹⁶

A little machine for two hands

The *subjectile* is an apparatus – Derrida calls it a ‘little machine for two hands’.¹⁷ Because what is printed on paper doesn’t proceed directly from a single movement of just one hand – there is a ‘division of labour: to each hand its role and its surface, and its period. Let us remember the manuscript painter who held his pen in one hand and his scraping knife in the other (...).’¹⁸ The film director Jim Jarmusch has stated that he prefers to write by hand, because he feels that ‘(i)n the notebook it is possible to see how the mind works. When writing on the computer, once you delete the written text it disappears, but on the paper, even the text that has been crossed out remains’ – it ‘will have been’, it insists to be thought.¹⁹ Even the paper has a bodily grip on us, because it ‘has always been more than (...) a medium (or a straightforward means of communication, the supposed neutrality of a support) (...).’²⁰

The *subjectile* is a machine with no determinate qualities, its hierarchy is unstable, the categories of high and low do not apply to it: the finest paper, made of chiffon and rags, can again become worthless.²¹ All we can say is that what we call the *subjectile* is something that resists – sometimes too much, sometimes not enough – when too much, it has to be, in Derrida’s words, ‘mistreated’ or ‘violently attacked’ (just as Antonin Artaud did with his pictograms).²² What is called the *subjectile* is anything but an ‘inert surface laid out *beneath* some markings, a substratum meant for sustaining them, for ensuring their survival or subsistence (...), an immobile and impassible surface underlying the traces that may come along and affect it from the outside, superficially, as events, or accidents, or qualities’.²³ We all know that paper not only preserves, but it can also destroy – when we say that something is ‘only on paper’.²⁴ However, as Bertrand Prévost has remarked, there is no need to trust discourses in which the *subjectile* is regarded as a projective, inert surface. In his article on drawings, he claims that the ground (*le fond*) of them is not projective but rather *inductive* – to draw is not to project, as in *disegno*, but to enhance (*exhausser*) the *subjectile*.²⁵ He regrets that we often forget that the *experience of the subjectile* (which we go through as we deal

16 Georges Didi-Huberman, *La Ressemblance par contact* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2008), 34–35. My translation. Technical unconscious is a sort of *natura naturans* in the Spinozian sense.

17 Derrida 2005 [2001]. However, as Susanna Lindberg remarks, Derrida’s machines are always ‘quasi-machines’ and the technics involved in them ‘quasi-technics’, see Susanna Lindberg, ‘Derrida’s Quasi-Technique’. *Research in Phenomenology* 46, 2016, (369–89), 372–73.

18 Derrida 2005 [2001], 50. As Immanuel Kant pointed out in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783), although our hands have all the same properties, they are not identical to each other: a glove that fits on our left hand, does not fit on our right hand.

19 Veli-Pekka Lehtonen, ‘Jim Jarmusch vaikuttaa dinosaurukselta mutta puolustaa teinejä: Uuden elokuvan inspiraation lähde oli tarina 15-vuotiaasta tytöstä, joka tappoi kaverinsa ja tunki ruumiit takakonttiin’. *Helsingin Sanomat* 23 August 2019. My translation. Heidegger already was of the opinion that the machine degrades the word, reducing it to a function of transparent medium – in other words, the machine degrades the ‘not’ implicit in the genesis of meaning. Jacques Derrida, ‘Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hand’. Trans. John P. Leavey. In Peggy Kamuff & Elizabeth Rottenberg (eds.), *Psyche II: Inventions of the Other, Vol 2* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008 [2003]), 178–79.

20 Derrida 2005 [2001], 42.

21 Derrida 2005 [2001], 43.

22 Derrida 1994, (154–171), 169.

23 Derrida 2005 [2001], 42.

24 Derrida 2005 [2001], 44.

25 Bertrand Prévost, ‘Au fond du dessin’. In B. Prévost (ed.), *Profondeurs du dessin* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2011). So that, in Deleuze’s words: ‘The rising ground is no longer below [but] acquires autonomous existence.’ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2008 [1968]), 37.

with them) is as much visual as tactile – so he finds it unnatural that in exhibitions drawings are always shown under glass. According to him, this is alien to the nature of the drawings – actually, to all *subjectiles* – which are meant to be held in the hands, and experienced not only with our eyes but also with our fingers: ‘The feeling of paper between the fingers, even the sound of the paper sheet’ (the rustle of the leaves, from which paper is made, the *negation* of the leaves).²⁶ Michel Serres would call it *la noise*.²⁷

The *subjectile* always has a certain thickness (*epaisseur*), sometimes only *inframince*. It also has two sides: front and back. When elucidating the notion of *Erscheinung*, ‘appearance’, Heidegger referred to the phenomena of ‘symptoms of a disease’ – phenomena that show themselves, but while doing so, ‘indicate’, or ‘announce’ something that does *not* show itself: the disease. The nature of this ‘appearing’ is therefore a *not-showing-itself*. Heidegger underlines that the ‘not’ in this case does not mean a privative modification of a phenomenon – it is originary. According to him, ‘all indications, presentations, symptoms, and symbols have this basic formal structure of appearing (...).’²⁸ This ‘not’ creates an unrestricted tension, to which Didi-Huberman has referred with his quasi-concept *le pan*, a word with a pronunciation very close to the word ‘pas’, French for ‘not’.²⁹

Memory of the (k)not

One of the first occurrences of *le pan* is in Didi-Huberman’s reading of Honoré de Balzac’s short story, *The Unknown Masterpiece* (*Le Chef-d’œuvre inconnu*, 1831), in which the novice artist Nicolas Poussin and the established painter François Porbus are trying to catch a glimpse of a painting no-one had ever seen, made by the master painter Frenhofer, a painting depicting a young woman named Catherine Lescault. In his interpretation, Didi-Huberman proposes that the *pan* of Frenhofer’s masterpiece is the ‘announcement of a female body that does not manifest itself in something that manifests itself (...) Catherine’s body is thus indicated, but without it being manifested as such (...) nor as appearance. The effect of *pan* would be (...) the symptom par excellence of *soma* in the *sema* pictorial.’ Symptom, no more mimetic semblance, *Schein*. But here we are also dealing with sublation (*Aufhebung*) and negation (*Verneigung*). Since, as Alenka Zupančič remarks: ‘The content of a repressed image (...) can make its way into consciousness only on the condition that it is negated or erased, crossed out, by the ego’, therefore, as Freud said: ‘Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed (...).’³⁰ Didi-Huberman suggests that this ‘not’ (*le pas* or *le pan*) leads to a kind of metamorphosis. It is, however, only a quasi-hallucination – a ‘false’ *Aufhebung*³¹: the *pan* proposes only a quasi-metamorphosis’ – this is the Blanchotian step (*pas*) not beyond – ‘the painting still remains a painting [i.e. a thing], albeit with the dimension (...) of *extreme tension*.’³² Here it is elucidating to bring to mind what Edmund Husserl thought about images. He remarked in his lectures dealing with image consciousness that we must distinguish three

26 Prévost 2011. My translation. According to Derrida, the *subjectile* always has its phonetic dimension: ‘Beneath the appearance of a surface, it holds in reserve a volume, folds, a labyrinth whose walls return the echoes of the voice or song that it carries itself; for paper also has the range or the ranges of a voice bearer.’ Derrida 2005 [2001], 44.

27 Michel Serres, *Genèse* (Paris: Bernard Gasset, 1982).

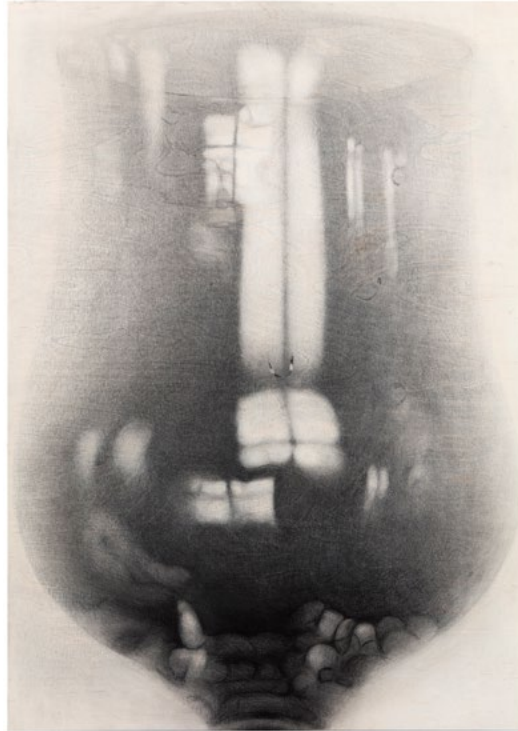
28 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 2008 [1927]), 52.

29 Didi-Huberman refers to this passage in Heidegger’s text in his *La Peinture incarnée* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2008 [1985]), as well as in his *Invention of Hysteria*. Trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003 [1982]), 103, originally, *Invention de l’hystérie* (Paris: Éditions Macula, 1982). In the latter, he explains that the ‘indicating-phenomenon’ is ‘more than an appearance and less than a phenomenon’.

30 Alenka Zupančič, ‘Hegel and Freud: Between *Aufhebung* and *Verneigung*’. *Crisis & Critique*, 4, (1), 2014, (481–93), 483.

31 Didi-Huberman 2008 [1985], 59; Zupančič 2014, (481–93), 485.

32 Didi-Huberman 2008 [1985], 59. My translation.



Susanne Gottberg, *The Space*, 2019, chalk and colour pencil on wood, 90cm x 65cm
Photo: Jussi Tiainen

moments in images: firstly, the physical object as the image carrier (*Bildträger*), secondly, the representing image, that is, the intentional phantasy object which 'hovers' before us (*Bildobjekt*), and finally, the represented or depicted object, in other words, the image subject (*Bildsujet*).³³ Here I want to draw attention to the conflicting intuitions Husserl talks about, by taking Susanne Gottberg's *The Space* (2019), as my point of reference. If we follow Husserl, we should see how the image apprehension, a glass drawn with chalk and colour pencil, displaces the apprehension of the image carrier, the wood surface. Following Husserl, the apprehension content of the wood surface is subordinate to the apprehension content of the image object. And yet the wood surface belongs to the apprehension content of the image, creating a conflict between them. The appearing image, a glass, 'conflicts with what is actually present', the physical art object. Husserl insisted that this conflict must be sustained in every way, because if the line between semblance and reality blurs, it is detrimental to the aesthetic experience of the image.³⁴ The glass is just an image: no matter how much it appears, it remains 'a *nothing (ein Nichts)*'.³⁵ So, when we see the glass we see some *thing* that is not – but how *is* this 'not'? Lambert Wiesing suggests that it is 'artificially', that its presence is reduced exclusively to its visibility (the glass can only be seen, its glassy surface cannot be touched) and its function as a referential sign. Wiesing draws a strict demarcation line between the image object and the image carrier, finding no denotative function as a sign in the latter. In his view, image consciousness treats images as signs, whose materiality does not play any function that would determine meaning.³⁶ But is it necessary, or even reasonable, to negate the material signifiers in this way?

33 Edmund Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory (1898–1925)*. Trans. John B. Brough (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005 [1904–1905]), 21.

34 Husserl 2005 [1904–1905], 43–44, 49–50.

35 Husserl 2005 [1904–1905], 50.

36 Lambert Wiesing, *The Philosophy of Perception. Phenomenology and Image Theory*. Trans. Nancy Ann Roth (London: Bloomsbury, 2016 [2009]), 136; Lambert Wiesing, *Artificial Presence. Philosophical Studies in Image Theory*. Trans. Nils F. Schott (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010 [2005]), 50–51.



Päivikki Kallio, *Meetings*, 2009, both details from the installation, *ImagOn*, sandblasted on stones of varying sizes, prefabricated by Mari Ojala

Photo: Jussi Tiainen

Emmanuel Alloa has suggested that Merleau-Ponty's proposed mode of seeing, which he called 'seeing with', more closely matches actual image perception. Let us remember how he used the Lascaux Paleolithic cave paintings as his example, saying that, although the images of animals are painted on the limestone walls, they are not there in a similar manner to the cracks and deformations in the rock. Their mode of being is different. One cannot say that they are nothing, since they are there, but their mode of being is *being-not-there*. What is this specific mode? It is movement, as Merleau-Ponty wrote: 'Pushed forward here, held back there, held up by the wall's mass they use so adroitly, they spread around the wall without ever breaking their elusive moorings in it.' Since he felt that the images he was looking at were in constant movement, he found it very difficult to determine where the images were. Therefore, he felt it was more prompt to say that he saw 'according to' (*voir selon*), or 'with it' (*voir avec*), rather than that he saw it.³⁷ Can we any more say, where the glass Gottberg has painted is – or where are the hands in Päivikki Kallio's installation entitled *Meetings* (2009)³⁸? They are not-there.

37 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind'. In Galen A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 126.

38 'The first matrix of this (...) installation is the photo of a hand; the second is a halftone digital film, which is exposed to *ImagOn* [a photopolymer film]; and the third, is the matrix. The halftone stencils have holes through which sand is blown (sandblasted), therefore the picture is mechanically engraved on the surface of the stone. The even surface of the stone is a possible fourth matrix (...)' Kallio 2017, (87–105), 88.

The Not-there – a translation

Any *subjectile* is a flat, two-dimensional surface – it always has its thickness, a magnitude that is not extensive but intensive.³⁹ I have noticed that when viewed very closely, the surfaces of some of Gottberg's paintings resemble the skin. Hegel wrote: 'The skin is not a surface. Its concept never stops oscillating between the integument (that which covers) and the dermis (that which discovers).'⁴⁰ It is 'the incarnate, the tone of the human flesh which unites in a remarkable way all the other colours, without any of them coming to dominate the others. Admittedly, the juvenile and healthy red of the cheek is pure carmine, without the slightest shade of blue, purple or yellow, but this red itself is only a puff or rather, a reflection coming from within and which is lost imperceptibly in the rest of the skin colour. But this colour results from the interpenetration of all the fundamental colours. Through the transparent yellow of the skin appear the red of the arteries, the blue of the veins, and in the light and the dark, as well as all the other gleams and all the other reflections come to add gray tones, browns, even yellowish.'⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty wrote: 'When through (*à travers*) the water's thickness (*épaisseur*) I see the tiled bottom of the pool, I do not see it despite (*malgré*) the water and the reflections; I see it through them (*justement à travers eux*) and because of them.'⁴² If there were no distortions, no ripples of sunlight, if it were without that flesh (*chair*) – this "Not", *Verneigung* or "false" *Aufhebung* – that I saw the geometry of the tiles, then I would cease to see it *as* it is and where it is – which is to say, beyond any identical, specific place. I cannot say that the water itself – the aqueous power, the syrupy and shimmering element – is *in* space; it is not somewhere else either, but it is not in the pool.'⁴³ Alloa claims that, here, Merleau-Ponty makes a reference to the Aristotelian *diaphanous* – both the 'perceptual milieu of vision' (the transparent and transformative element in which the actual perception takes place), and the 'structure of visibility' (that 'there is' (*il y a*) visibility – in Benjaminian terms, translatability – which, being only potential, is neither visible nor translatable).⁴⁴ This is the 'not' which makes us see. It is the in-between medium, or *subjectile*, whose resistance is a prerequisite for all sensing: a rustle of the leaves in all *subjectiles*.

39 Here I am referring to Immanuel Kant's distinction between logical and real oppositions that he made in his pre-critical oeuvre. The intensive magnitude deals with real oppositions, in which, in Marco Giovanelli's words: 'The relation between reality and negation, between being and non-being, is not thought in terms of the model of non-contradiction between A and not-A, but instead on the model of the equilibrium between forces through which "attraction and repulsion (+a and not-a)" are opposed to each other "really (not logically like a and not-a)".' See Marco Giovanelli, *Reality and Negation – Kant's Principle of Anticipations of Perception* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 37.

40 'La peau – la subjectile par excellence'. Didi-Huberman 2008 [1985], 27, 134.

41 G.W.F. Hegel, *Esthétique. La Peinture. La Musique*. Trans. S. Jankelevich (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1965 [1835]), 92. Didi-Huberman cites this passage in his *La Peinture incarnée*, op. cit., 27.

42 This reminds me of how sometimes an excellent translation – the 'not-original' – can reveal in the original text contents which were not actualised in it, because, in Samuel Weber's words, '(t)he original can only be itself by becoming something different', or (this epitomises the paradox of *survivance*), '(...) the original work can only survive insofar as it is able to take leave of itself and become something else'. See Samuel Weber, *Benjamin's -abilities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008), 61.

43 Merleau-Ponty 1993, 142.

44 Emmanuel Alloa, *Resistance of the Sensible World. An Introduction to Merleau-Ponty*. Trans. Jane Marie Todd (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017 [2008]), 97.