

Fabric: revealing the Body



## Fabric

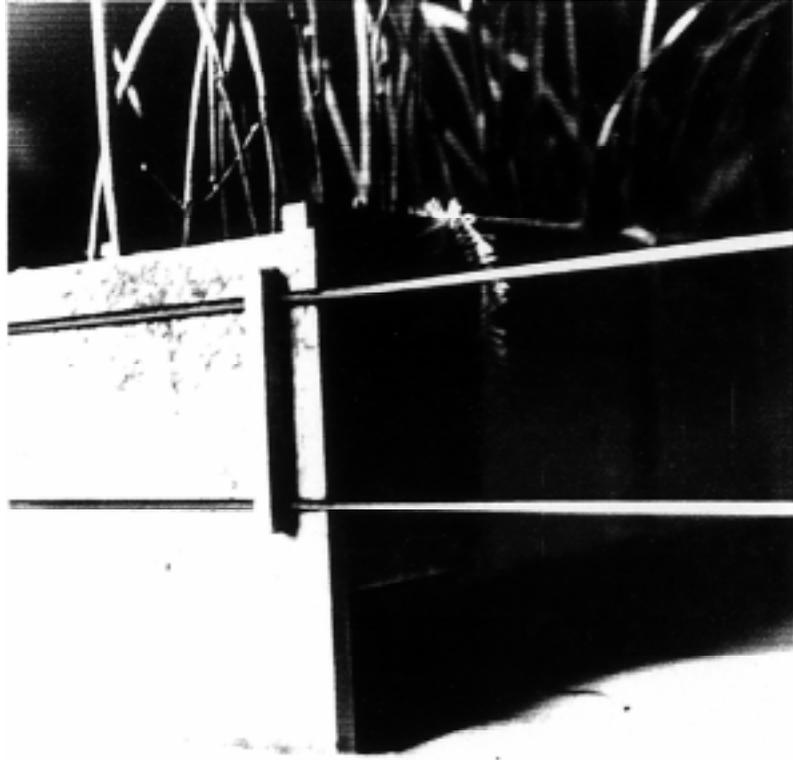
Forms: 5-6 fabrike, 6-7 fabrique, 7-8 fabrick fabric, L.fabrica, Fr. faber worker in metal, stone, wood, etc.

I. A product of skilled workmanship 1. an edifice, a building 2. a contrivance; an engine or appliance 3.a. Any body formed by the conjunction of dissimilar parts, a frame, structure b. esp. with reference to the animal body 4. A manufactured material; now only a 'textile fabric' a woven stuff

II.5.a. The action or process of framing or constructing; erection (of a building): Formation (of an animal body or its parts) Now only the construction and maintenance (of a church *fabrica ecclesiae*) 7.a. Of a textile article: The woven substance; tissue, fibre b. Occasionally used for: Structural material. Now specifically the basic structure (walls, floor, roof of a building

III.8. A building erected for purposes of manufacture; a place where work is carried on; a factory, manufactory

IV.9. attrib. and comb. as fabric glove, hat, fabric-faired, -printing



These words that appear throughout the maplist items reference the world of the tactile and textile article. The exploration of joint constructions, be they sewn, bound, wrapped, pinned, tied, knotted, folded, creased, threaded and/or wound is important in the making of each thing. That each movement be consequential and constructive is crucial, making it necessary to avoid a glued joint. Using thread in many of the constructions helps in the understanding of its delicate strong nature. The translation of joint constructions to use material in a threadlike way was a question that appeared through the construction studies. How does one thread metal, not making bolts, but creating through the constructive manner taught by the thread, a fabric? How can wood be made into a fabric? When is making a room or a vessel, akin to making a fabric (body)?

In weaving, the warp and weft can be dissimilar but still have some semblance of belonging to the same group (in cloth it is fibre). In buildings It is the interlacing of materials; steel and concrete, wood and glass, light and shadow, hardness and softness.



The reference to the bodily world, such as the skin and its relation to body is propounds the importance of this covering as a way to protect and reveal the life underneath. The temporary nature of fabric that Christo speaks of is another instance of the recognition of the covering and revealing of the body as a fleeting moment.

“ It comes from inside. It's not at all like cutting a continuous curve.... In my opinion when you see a smooth forehead, you feel a bone pushing from it. In my sculpture I try to have that feeling. Pressure, tension from inside, is like what you get in real life. It's growth. Growth comes from within. So for me, my work is organic and not abstract. It always has some relationship to an animal or a tree, to something that is alive.”

Henry Moore

“ The Newport project was also intimately related to landscape in that natural forms were accentuated by the fabric - in a sense made more visible, rather than altered or disguised

... In a way the fabric exists like our skin, or like the leaf on a tree. The leaves on a tree fall off, and our skin can be broken. All the elements of tension - sometimes involving real fears and serious technical problems are normal because we are dealing with very fragile but at the same time powerful material. In a way you can find persons on expeditions using cloth. It is very strange how fabric is a very important and singular part of any nomad society. I love that element because it creates temporary, and not permanent relations between things. It is very ephemeral. “

Christo



red  
blanket  
for my father

One hundred and ten barkstripped 5" long sticks taken from a climbing tree. Fifty five lining either side of an earthen plot 8' x 3'9" located on a slope aligned with a tree and the Missouri River. Red thread woven widthwise up and down the length of the plot, attaching to the smooth sticks. Fiftyfive daisies from a garden suspended above the earth within the thread crossings.

When eye level at the base of the plot a red blanket appears and covers the grave defining a space for the memory of the one placed there.

the physical traces of the blanket have disappeared, fading into the ground, leaving an impression in spirit only.

red  
blanket  
for my father



In *Socrates' Ancestor*, Indra Kagis McEwen discusses motion and fixity in relation to Daedalean (the first architect in Greek mythology) statues, statues (xoana) that could be set in motion .

“For Plato, divinity, insofar as knowledge had divinity as its source and object, lay in fixity, and Plato’s emphasis was on the bound state as such. In the culture of prephilosophical Greece, divinity lay in animation, and xoana were bound not because the fixed object was divine in its fixity, but rather the opposite. The emphasis was on the unbound, the animated state: the chains that bound the cult statue harnessed a fearful, excessive, supernatural life only in order the better disclose its presence.” *page 5-6*

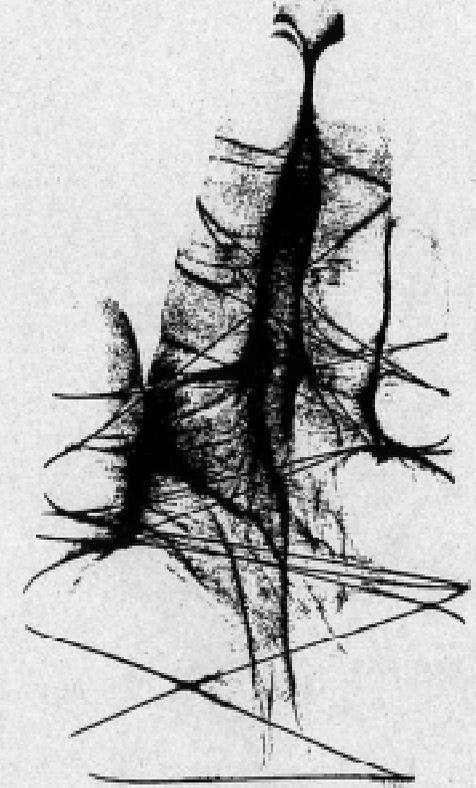
This binding of the animated state can relate to the all knowing, all powerful presence of God that the monastic life was bound to. A strict monastic order so that the divine nature of God could shine through in its fullness rather than a disorder that would disguise God’s presence.

## encased hands

One hand encased by binding the fingers and palm tightly together with strong black thread, knotted together for closure. One hand encased by thick steel wire wrapped around each finger, then the palm and the forearm. The wire holds the shape of the hand, no special closure is necessary.

The release of the hand is different in each. One requiring only scissors, the other an intensive struggle.

The encased hands were the literal binding of the physical body. What does that image evoke visually? One physical response was the desire to remove the binding as quickly as possible. In a way this is a reminder that a thing made eventually loosens its bounds, comes undone.



From Indra McEwen's book *Socrates' Ancestor*, page 1

A dialogue

**Euthyphro:** I really do not know Socrates, how to express what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on what ever ground we rest them, seem to turn and walk away from us.

**Socrates:** Your words, Euthyphro, are like to handiwork of my ancestor Daedalus; and if I were the sayer or propounder of them, you might say that my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed because I am a descendent of his...[For your] notions... show an inclination to be on the move.

**Euthyphro:** Nay Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but you make them move or go round....

**Socrates:** Then I must be greater than Daedalus: for where as he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus[Daidalon Sophia] ... to be able to detain them and keep them fixed.

Boundedness and fixity, binding and tying; actions that can be associated with fibre and a woven thing are actions associated with a sort of covering over, a way of keeping things together. If one has to keep things together, inevitably it seems that some things would rather not be under wraps. Does keeping something in place, at least for a moment bring out the quality that would be the most difficult to keep still? A sort of action in keeping something still has to completely engage the thing, has to become intimately connected with it.

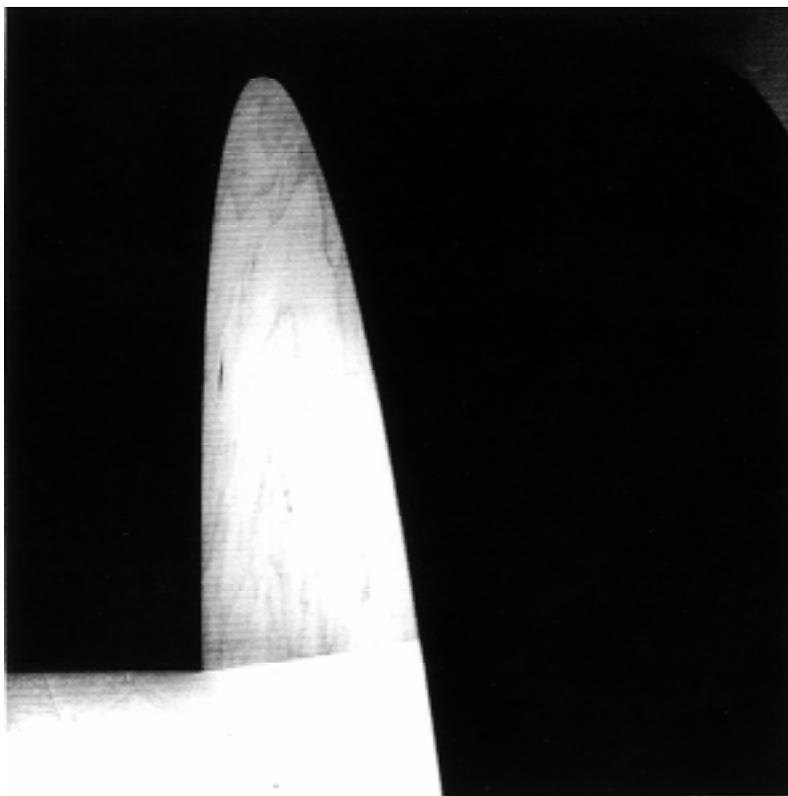


## bentwood catenary

five 1/16" sheaths of maple wood veneer layered together and bent to hold a curve made by gravity, the curve having dimensions 10" wide x 3/8" thick x 14 1/2" from the apex of the curve to the base.

the thin, light curve is capable of holding many times its singular weight in compression, and balances almost weightlessly on its most tensely curved line.

the wood curve, a natural catenary, is held in place by the bentwood construction. The purity of the form was a question, the form seeming so bound that there was a difficulty in perceiving it in any other way. When the catenary curve was cut into forms resembling the shadows of the uncut curve, the form was no longer bound.



## sound vessels

Six handcoiled and pinched clay vessels formed with an egglike beginning enclosed with a liplike opening, suggesting a bilateral symmetry.

the size of the vessel, and their enclosure contain a room that gathers in sound and reverberates it within itself unfolding its internal character through the connection between itself and the ear.

the sound vessels have a threefold nature of discovery in their making. The beginning was a challenge to make a pot larger than one's hand could hold. Forming the pot with the bilaterally symmetrical egg shape was also a beginning of understanding the pot more as a bodily form. Once the pots were made, through the closeness of the coiled construction, a discovery of their sound quality was apparent, each holds sound and reflects it back to the ear in an individual way. The openings (rims) of the pots also have a bilateral symmetry informed by the egglike beginnings. The next discovery was that the pots do not need to have literal bilateral symmetry in order to suggest their form. This opened up an entirely new aspect of their individual character and voice (the voice of how the sound reverberates inside of them).



sound  
vessels

