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*Felt/Seen*

PROBING THE BODY/WORLD DIVIDE THROUGH  
REBECCA HORN'S *EXTENSIONS*

FIGURE 1—*Rebecca Horn, Arm Extensions, 1968*



### *Form and Function: Horn's Extensions*

A WOMAN STANDS WITH HER BACK TO THE CAMERA. HER HANDS and lower arms are wrapped in red cylinders of fabric that extend to the floor beside her feet, thickening the diameter of her arms. A criss-cross of red strips encircles her from mid-torso to ankles, binding her legs together. This is German artist Rebecca Horn's *Arm Extensions* (1968), a work she made while still a student (*fig. 1*). Starting with this piece and continuing until 1974, Horn produced a number of sculptures to be worn by a participant or by the artist herself; I refer to them collectively as *Extensions*.<sup>1</sup> I argue that these works demonstrate a persistence of certain gestures, including the alteration of the wearer's felt sense of physical extent and capabilities, as well as active complications of the separation between performing subject, sculptural object, and surrounding environment. Through such gestures, *Extensions* challenges the simple centering of the subject in the body, instead questioning the body's boundaries with the world.

Most scholars in the humanities would no longer claim that an individual can be fruitfully discussed in isolation from his or her social context. Yet the body, though emergent from and as the matter of its environment, is still seen—erroneously—as something isolatable. Descartes placed the body in the object category along with all other matter, speaking of consciousness as “this me ... completely distinct

from the body,” and this thinking is not yet extinct. Alongside it, efforts by cultural critics to counter Cartesian disembodiment have sometimes led to another problem: the strict location of the subject in and as the body. Horn’s work advances questions that complicate both of these formulations. The subject does not float in a transcendental space, distinct from the body. Neither, however, can the subject be said to begin and end at the skin. This becomes more evident when considering our radical contingency on material conditions outside the skin.

*Arm Extensions* exemplifies one of the gestures that evokes these questions of subjectivity: destabilization of the performer’s body image and schema through intervention in his or her proprioceptive sensations. Describing *Arm Extensions*, Horn has stated that “After being in the piece for a while, the subject gains the impression that, in spite of her erect posture, her arms are gradually touching the ground, as if they were actually growing into the floor.”<sup>2</sup> Horn speaks of the performer’s perception that her arms are lengthening. Through this and other comments, Horn expresses her interest in perceptions of the body’s extent, and specifically in distortions of the performer’s corporeal experience.

Unique to Horn’s work at this time was its focus on how the performer’s perceptions were affected by the sculptures, which in many cases altered the subjects’ internal sense of his or her location, motion, and physical extent. These are *proprioceptive* senses.<sup>3</sup> For example, proprioception allows a person sitting at a table to know approximately where his or her feet placed, and also to feel motion, such as wiggling the toes, all without the use of sight. This is not a tactile experience but an internal sense of the body as moving, and as having a location. Normally, one would also have a clear sense that his or her legs ended at the feet, and did not extend through the floor and into the basement, since proprioception also registers spatial extent. Such

commonplace experiences of bodily boundaries and motions are what *Extensions* interrupts.

When participants wear Horn’s objects, practice with them, and adjust to them, what occurs is an intervention in this schema via the proprioceptive sense. Participants wearing the *Extensions* sculptures experience their bodies ending at a new point, beyond their previous spatial boundaries, as in Horn’s description of *Arm Extensions*. They also encounter altered capabilities, as their physical actions may be limited, expanded, or both simultaneously. This study shows how the works in *Extensions* become vehicles of enactment for these perceptual shifts. Beyond this, it examines these shifts in terms of their implications for subjectivity.

Horn’s early sculptural forms also compound the definitions and functions of the sculptural medium. She began making them in 1968, a politically charged and radically engaged time for German university students as it was for their counterparts in the U.S., France, and elsewhere. Though political and social upheaval surrounded Horn, *Extensions* appears to have been influenced primarily by her personal experience of extended hospitalization and the ways it dramatically altered her corporeal experience. This led to her body-extending sculptures, which aimed to communicate her experiences to her performers. Horn’s contemporaries also probed the divide between artwork and artist’s (or participant’s) physical presence, between performance and art object. This period also witnessed the development of installation art, a form that reduces the sense of boundaries between the viewer and work. American art historian Amelia Jones describes another general shift happening at this time, from a Modernism in which the artist was strictly invisible and absent from the finished work toward a new trend of art practices centered on the artist’s body.<sup>4</sup>

Horn's *Extensions* series is distinctive in that not only is the body present as part of these works but the sculptures become part of the body, changing its dimensions and capacities. Although employed in performance, they are not props; neither are they costumes aimed primarily at visual transformation of the participant; rather, they mark the felt experience of corporeal proportions and motions as their site of intervention. In changing the physical form and function of the participant, in extending the body and effacing its separation from its environment, Horn's work destabilizes the sensory experience of body and the subject's distinction from the object. It demonstrates a potent artistic engagement that intersects with several territories that were under contestation at the time the sculptures were made. Theorists as well as art practitioners during the era of *Extensions* dealt with related concerns, grappling with the complex imbrications of the body and subjectivity. Partitions between traditional art practices such as sculpture and dance, the forging of new practices such as performance and body art, the conceptual move away from object-based art, and art's reflections and refractions of subjectivity: all were of Horn's time as well as of her work.

### Feathers Dancing and Bodily-Perceptual Fluidity

HORN MAKES EVIDENT HER DUAL INTEREST IN DISTORTING THE performer's body image and in perceptions of the body's extent by describing *Arm Extensions* (1968) as giving its performer the impression that her arms extend the ground.<sup>5</sup> This leads the participant to experience the sculptural objects simultaneously as part of the body and as a separate object. These same themes recur in the 1974 *Berlin Exercises*, a suite of short films documenting performances, many of which feature *Extensions* sculptures. The films make it clear how first-hand bodily perception is a key site of operation for this work. They

point to felt physical experience, rather than visual perception, as the point of entry for the performer as well as the observer.<sup>6</sup> The performances shown in *Berlin Exercises* intervene in the felt sense of the extent and function of the body, enacted through the objects.

One of these performances, *Feathers Dancing on Shoulders*, builds upon the body of the performer to achieve this intervention (fig. 2). A narrow metal band encircles the participant's shoulders, secured to her torso with straps. This band supports metal epaulets, which hold upright a row of large feathers on each shoulder. A system of strings connects the feather shafts to the wearer's feet, such that motions with a foot or leg translate into dips and folds of the row of feathers on the shoulder above. A low-tech gesture toward a cyborg body, the apparatus mimics a musculature. The participant moves with an aura of experimentation, as if she is learning to use her new parts by observing causality between lower-body motions and their resultant effects on the feathery extensions. She also pulls the strings with her hands, and in this way can manipulate the feathers individually.

With many of the *Extensions* pieces, Horn worked with participants over time to produce a change in their bodily awareness. She asked people to work with her devices repeatedly until they adjusted to them as part of their bodies, as would the wearer of a prosthesis.<sup>7</sup> This approach is reflected in the inquisitive attitude of the *Feathers Dancing* performance, its improvisational quality, and in particular in the way the dancer's gaze is often trained on her new parts and how they respond to her motions (fig. 3). "Through the act of fitting it and wearing it time after time, a process of identification begins to evolve, an essential factor for the performance," Horn emphasizes, speaking generally about *Extensions* [italics mine].<sup>8</sup> This reflects her engagement with the alteration of bodily experience. *Feathers Dancing* shows this process unfolding.



FIGURE 2 AND FIGURE 3—*Rebecca Horn, Feathers Dancing on Shoulders, from Berlin Exercises, 1974–75*

Analysis of the primary field of action for *Feathers Dancing* and other *Extensions* sculptures—that is, the irresolution of internally feeling one’s body as self versus seeing it as an object in space—calls for a reading of French psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage. This proposed stage precipitates a tension between the experiences of feeling the body firsthand as self versus seeing it in the mirror as object (yet still self). It involves the production of boundaries between the inner world of felt experience and the outer world of objects seen. The production of such boundaries generates the categories themselves: internal (to the body) and external (to the body), and thus between the experiences of that-which-is-me and that-which-is-NOT-me.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, intervention in this perceptual boundary as accomplished by *Extensions* destabilizes these categories, “me” and “not-me,” raising doubt as to the precise location of boundaries. These tensions are at the heart of Horn’s body extensions, and they force a renegotiation, a confrontation with the subject-object slippage first encountered in the mirror stage. *Feathers Dancing* invites the performer back into this generative moment of the self-image. A significant aspect of Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage is that a toddler’s experience of its own image in a mirror evokes the aforementioned tension: between the visual, secondhand image of the body, newly becoming legible as self, and the firsthand, felt experience

of it.<sup>10</sup> As Horn's performer regards her newly extended shoulders and their functional conjunction to her feet over the course of the performance, adjusting to a body differently abled and at the same time unfamiliar to her in its visual form, *Extensions's* potential engagement reveals itself at the level of the body image first formed at the mirror stage.

### *After the Fact: Surviving as Image and Object*

IN A 1998 INTERVIEW, HORN STATED THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF *Extensions* were "not strong enough" to communicate to their viewers, with the implication that the experience of the works was limited to the participants.<sup>11</sup> The impact of the images, however, is crucial to consider. Horn's *Extensions* performances took place between 1968 and 1974. Since then, they have been shown as video and published as still photographs and/or video screen shots in catalogues and in other books; the Tate Modern, which owns most of the series, has put some of the objects on display as sculptures.<sup>12</sup> Viewers thus encounter the work as objects of sculpture and documents of performances. If it cannot be accessed through these forms, then its impact is lost. With Horn's *Extensions*, the pertinent issue is whether a viewer can enter into empathy with the performer, and thus imagine the bodily distortions suggested by the work.<sup>13</sup>

In some ways, this poses a particular challenge for *Extensions*. The performances turn not on a visual narrative, nor a conceptual frame, nor an act of endurance, but on a deliberate intervention in the performer's felt experience of his or her body for the purpose of distorting it into newly imagined forms. *Extensions's* mode of intervention places them just that much further from the experience of the viewer seeing its reproduced images, since the primary impact is in the body-sense of the participant, a hidden interior not given to the

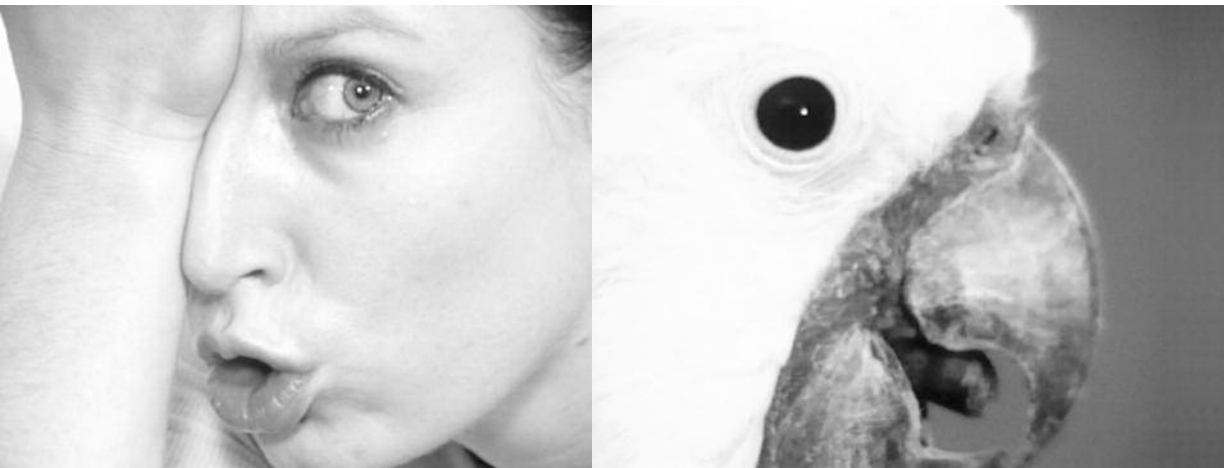
later viewer. In other ways, *Extensions's* direct engagement with the body, even a body mediated via film, works to impel empathy even in an audience who sees only the work's documented trace.

### *Reading the Documents and Displays: Invitations to Empathy*

BLINKING DEMONSTRATES HORN'S INTEREST IN IMAGINED projection into the body of another. In this case, it is the artist who appears to imagine inhabiting of another body, that of a bird. This contrasts with her other works, which invite viewers to relate in this way to the performer's body. The bird is the performer here, and Horn is the viewer, looking on and exploring what avian embodiment might feel like. The footage cuts between Horn, crouched against the wall of her studio, and a white cockatoo perched on the back of a chair in the same room (*figs. 4 and 5*). The piece reads almost like an acting exercise, as Horn appears to mimic the bird: she covers one eye, as if to reproduce the bird's experience of its sight extending to the side.<sup>14</sup> She squats near the floor and purses her lips. The cockatoo blinks. She blinks as well. The remarkable thing about this performance is that it shows the artist extending herself into a body significantly different from her own. This is precisely what works like *Touching the Walls with Both Hands Simultaneously* (also from *Berlin Exercises*), as well as many other *Extensions*, ask of the viewer. This filmed experiment shows a direction of inquiry that sheds some light on the larger body of work and the way it leads a viewer toward empathic projection into the physical experience of the performer.

In *Touching the Walls with Both Hands Simultaneously*, the viewer takes Horn's place, and Horn becomes the bird. She begins with her back to the camera and her figure centered in its view (*fig. 6*). She walks slowly away, toward the back wall, arms outstretched.

FIGURE 4 AND FIGURE 5—Rebecca Horn, *Blinking*, from *Berlin Exercises*, 1974–75



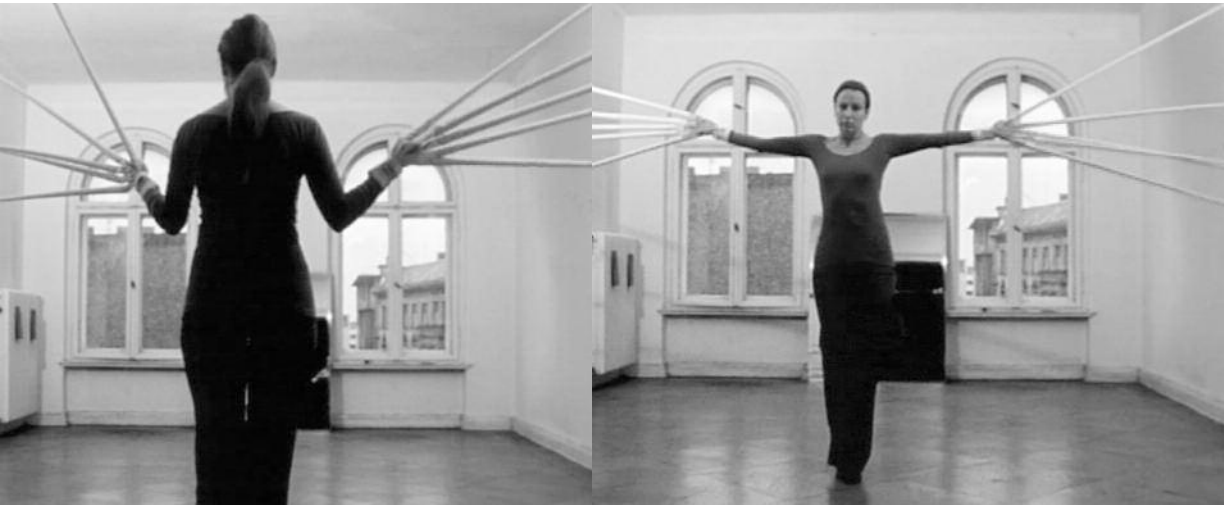
White fabric gloves cover the artist's wrists and hands and the balsa wood dowels that extend from her fingers, each one about as long as the artist is tall. The continuous white fabric over the hands and the wood visually blends the extensions with Horn's body. Spreading the fingers apart, she drags their tips along the walls and walks, making a clearly audible scratching sound. Upon reaching the far wall, she lifts the fingers skyward and slowly turns around to face the camera, extending the prosthetic fingers out once again to repeat the scratching gesture as she ambles toward her starting point (fig. 7). This process repeats for a total of three minutes. As Horn spreads her wings to reach the distant walls, the viewer looks on, just as Horn did with the bird in *Blinking*, but here the question is what it might feel like to scratch opposite walls of a room with such prodigious fingers.

Formal devices specific to the way *Touching* and other *Extensions* sculptures are documented function to bring the viewer into the piece. In *Touching*, Horn enters with her back to the camera. Still photographs of *Arm Extensions* (1968), *Head Extension* (1972), and *Pencil Mask* (1972) also show the figure from behind. This pose is significant in that it is decidedly *not* a portrait-style, frontal shot of the kind used to present a performer as a narrative character or to draw attention to his or her visual transformation through the expanded hands with fingers that reach the walls, as if they were a prop or costume. The pose signals interior experience as the territory of the work, and asks the viewer to see it from inside.

Museum practices reflect the artist's desire for viewers to share her bodily experience. In 2004, the Tate Modern in London acquired and exhibited *Finger Gloves* (1972), a piece nearly identical to the one used in *Touching*; along with the object, they displayed a photograph of the artist's performance (fig. 8). In fact, the Tate website lists the photograph as one of the materials of the sculpture; the photograph

FIGURE 6 AND FIGURE 7—*Rebecca Horn, Touching the Walls with Both Hands Simultaneously, from Berlin Exercises, 1974–75*

FIGURE 8 (OPPOSITE)—*Rebecca Horn, Finger Gloves, 1972, installation view*



is inseparable from the piece itself. The Tate also elected to quote Horn describing her firsthand experience in the display caption of *Finger Gloves*: “the finger gloves are light. I can move them without any effort. . . . Feel, touch, grasp anything. . . . The lever-action of the lengthened fingers intensifies the various sense-data of the hand. . . . I feel me touching, I see me grasping. . . .”<sup>15</sup> The same text accompanies the image of the piece on the museum’s website. The artist specifies certain heights at which *Finger Gloves* and other pieces of hers should be hung. *Finger Gloves* is displayed at hand height for an average adult; works in mask form are hung at head height. These choices reflect the artist’s desire to place the works in parallel with the viewer’s body, as well as the museum’s awareness, even as they display the inanimate object on the wall, that the work is centered on the felt experience evoked by its performance.

Because the site of the work’s action is firsthand proprioceptive experience, access to the potency of *Touching*—indeed, to that of all the *Extensions*—lies in understanding the work as a concept piece, or thought experiment to be enacted, rather than only as an image—or even an object—to be seen. A traditional art historical description from the point of view of an outside observer can be enhanced by a first-person tactile-visual description. Try it: imagine you are wearing the finger-extending gloves, performing *Touching the Walls*. Reaching out, you touch both sides of the wide room. You have expanded through your fingers to fill this space exactly. Your fingertips scratch along the walls as you walk to the back of the room; you then tilt them upward as you turn back toward the door. They hover near the ceiling until you stretch your arms wide again, and you feel a slight bump as your fingertips again encounter the walls. You are feeling the work from the inside, just as the artist is inclined to describe it. When Horn describes *Touching the Walls* as extending her spatial sense of her

body, she speaks in terms of the felt experience of performing the piece, not of what the viewer might see or read. These words echo her comments on *Arm Extensions*, in which she describes the performer’s sense of her arms stretching to the floor.<sup>16</sup> Both descriptions place Horn in the position of narrating from within the sculpture, even in the case of *Arm Extensions*, which was worn by someone else. She does not make a clear distinction between these two modes, as if the intention remains the same no matter who is wearing the sculpture. There is no way to know what the performer actually experienced, but what is of interest here is the position from which Horn narrates the account, however fictive, of what is felt.

The description of the work from an interior perspective is not surprising, since Horn conceived this work as she renegotiated the experience of her own body while confined to a bed for nearly a year in 1965: “I couldn’t stand [being hospitalized]. . . . All of my early performances came out of my experiences at this time. . . . You have this tremendous longing for communication, and also this strong desire to communicate through the body.”<sup>17</sup> In another interview, she makes an even more explicit connection between her disabling experience and the work: “I wanted to pass on this experience of being confined to a bed.” Like her hospitalization, works from this period invoke a radical shift in bodily experience and capacities for the wearer. Horn describes how the performer in *Arm Extensions* has her arms “embedded in thickly wadded stumps,” and explains that this “made her [into] an earth-bound object.”<sup>18</sup> Through the binding of the legs and extension/constraint of the arms, the performer is contained within her body and by objects, constraints shared by Horn’s experience of illness.<sup>19</sup> Inferring from the work and her statements, Horn wants to communicate to the wearer through the sculpture, to evoke a particular type of bodily experience so that the performer has a shared ex-

perience with the artist. The difficulty, if not impossibility, of succeeding in this inevitably creates a tension: there is no way for Horn, let alone later viewers, to know whether the performer had an experience akin to hers or not. At yet another remove, seeing the reproduced image places the viewer outside of the experience. Nonetheless, the work's engagement of the performer's body pulls toward an invitation to empathic projection, to imagining the experience of embodying the physical alterations that the sculptures enact.

This work still attracts attention and interest: the attraction occurs precisely because the documentary images, treated as a proposal for a thought experiment, can provoke an empathic bodily imagination. The formal approaches seen in the documentary images of *Touching the Walls*, *Head Extension*, and other works support this, whether they were deliberately intended to do so or not. *Blinking* offers strong clues that Horn was herself thinking in terms of visually stimulated, imagined projection into a different corporeal experience. Since the photographs, films, and objects are what remain of this period of Horn's practice, it is crucial that a viewer of the documentation grasp the shifts in bodily experience that were the goal of Horn's participatory practice. This requires more than passive viewing: it requires the viewer to project his or her own body imaginatively into the experience, to empathize with the body seen in the image, to ask "how would I move and feel, or sense of the extent of my body, if..." but also to acknowledge the impossibility of knowing another's experience of embodiment.

### *Whence the Distinction between Body and Environment?*

A WEARER OF ANY OF HORN'S *EXTENSIONS* WORKS HAS THE potential to sense that the sculptures occupy an ambiguous position between belonging to one's body and not; Horn calls this a process of identification which is, to her, crucial to the performance.<sup>20</sup> This hints

at the body's ambiguous position, reflected in conversation, wherein the speaker's body is alternatively placed in the subject position (I ache all over) or spoken of as an object (my body aches, but I'm fine). When Horn describes the performer's experience of *Arm Extensions* (1968) as a feeling of being able to touch the floor while standing upright, she points to just such an I/it ambiguity. Only if the performer identifies with the sculpture as herself can she say that her arms are touching the ground.

Horn goes on to describe a sense that one's arms are growing into the floor: Here she indicates her concern with the felt sense of the boundaries between the body and its environment. If the performer develops the sense Horn describes, the perceptual divides not only between the body and the sculpture, but between these and the rest of the world, soften and become less strident. The boundary between body and all other matter reveals itself as perceptually arbitrary. As the work produces ambiguity in the subject-object distinction, it calls into question the body-environment boundary. Whether this is experienced by the performer as perception or contemplated by the viewer in the imagination, it begs for comparison with an outside perspective on what is happening at the level of matter. As it turns out, the flexibility of the spatial experience of the body, highlighted by Horn's *Extensions*, is closer to the material condition of the flesh and its environment than is the common-sense, ending-at-the-skin perception.

*Touching the Walls with Both Hands Simultaneously* demonstrates Horn's operations on the body-environment boundary. Horn made the extended fingers specifically for *Touching* and scaled them precisely to fit the dimensions of the room where the performance took place.<sup>21</sup> "Through this," she explains, "my own body space expanded to take in the entire room."<sup>22</sup> This accomplishes a purpose she voiced for *Arm Extensions*, that of "connecting with the space."<sup>23</sup>

Since the wearer can feel that slight bump as the extensions meet the walls, where does her sense-receptive body end? One could ask this question broadly, for example, of anyone using a hammer or performing in an oversized Disney character costume at Disneyland. Hammering transmits force through to the hand, and a performer feels a muffled pat of kids' hands through the padding of his giant Mickey Mouse head. In this case, though, there is neither a use of the device as a tool nor as element of visual narrative. Horn was specifically interested in experiments that extend proprioception. The fingers used in *Touching the Walls* extend her spatiality and her capacity for sensation—and thus her ability to “take in the entire room”—exactly to its edges. Speaking as she does points to a sort of body-becoming-environment, as if she were able to experience the room from the point of view of a gas that could spread and fill every inch of space. Horn's work thus grasps the conjoined nature of embodiment, pointing to human existence as physically coupled with its environment.

This conjunction may also be understood through the observations of Irish disability studies scholar Margrit Shildrick. In cases of conjoined twins, Shildrick found that the language and practices of families and doctors always resolved conjoined bodies into two individual subjects contained within two bodies fused together, or “trapped in the same body.”<sup>24</sup> This was true even though shared organs sometimes meant the “two” bodies were each partial and thus entirely contingent upon one another for survival. In rare cases, where the second body was so incomplete as to clearly not be separately viable, the person's family and community thought of them as a single subject, albeit with extra parts. Shildrick argues that this neat resolution into either one subject or two avoids a more complicated discussion of where one subject ends and the other begins. Shildrick finds that the boundary cannot be set at the skin, as is the easy—if

inaccurate—answer with regards to the normative body. The body conjoined, therefore, confounds the closure of the subject and body into a bounded whole, a separate individual who begins and ends at the skin.<sup>25</sup>

This also describes the physical relationship of the human and its planet. The human is physically congruous with its entire environment; human and earth are not viably divisible.<sup>26</sup> Discourse inscribes their separation into two, nailing down body and environment as individual and separately existing. If this separation is physically enacted, as in the surgical separation of the conjoined, it carries the risk of death for one aspect of the shared body. Horn's *Extensions* likewise frustrates the simple conclusion that the single subject equals the skin-bound body. In extending her body space to the size of the room, Horn belies the conflation of subject and body into bounded individuality, into metonymic singularity.

The outline that bounds the individual as subject appears in psychoanalytic discussions of subjectivity.<sup>27</sup> Lacan states that the function of the mirror stage is to *establish a relation* between the inner and outer worlds; this implies the drawing of a boundary to distinguish the two. The mirror stage establishes the “mental permanence of the ‘I,’ at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination.” This statement speaks of the formation of this bounded individuality, divisible from its surroundings, which comes to understand its consciousness as located in the body it sees in the mirror. The mirror vision of this body offers it as self-enclosed and isolatable.<sup>28</sup> Lacan's mirror stage speaks of an originary moment of understanding the self as separately bounded, in resonance with Shildrick's conclusions. Shildrick's surgically separated twin is quite literally cut into individual being and (both before and after surgery) “nailed down as one” by the discourses that define his or her existence.<sup>29</sup> *Touching the Walls* re-

veals this bounding as arbitrary because it allows Horn's body to become the room and to sense the walls as its boundary. *Arm Extensions* confounds this division as well, by allowing a standing body to reach (and join to) the floor with its arms. Other *Extension* works contest this boundary in various ways.

The body, though made up of the matter of its environment, is still commonly spoken of as something isolatable.<sup>30</sup> This is supported by common sense: we appear to end at the skin. However, the stakes of maintaining this view are high: a trenchant sense of self-sufficiency can rest upon this assumption of body/environment separability, and stacked upon that individualism are the troubling ethics of capitalism, intertwined as they are with environmental disregard.<sup>31</sup> Put another way, if I end at the skin, I can externalize the impacts of my behavior on the environment. Haraway casts the astronaut in space as an enactment of a problematic sovereignty, as “an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency...”<sup>32</sup> in the context of her discussion of the impossibility of such an autonomy. Following this line of inquiry into—and beyond—Rebecca Horn's work begins to open up a discursive space in which the body is no longer a site where a notion of centered and physically autonomous subjectivity might lodge.

Extensions are an inquiry into the body/environment cut. They complicate the separation between human and other matter, suggesting that the division cannot be so clearly drawn as it is in common parlance. Even philosophical and art critical texts collapse the self into the body and assume the subject can be located there. Horn's artistic interventions and their foregrounding of the contiguous nature of the body and environment re-open and perpetuate questions that texts like this close. What is at stake is the finalization of the body as a separate entity; this work challenges such a construct, and thus critiques a Cartesian model of the subject. The closed and unified no-

tion of the body is the last hiding place of the centered subject: conflating body and subject risks reification of the division between self and world that underpins individualism and limits ethical concerns.

## Notes

- 1 For convenience, I use the term *Extensions* in reference to Horn's work of this period. The artist does not use the label *Extensions* as a general term, though some of the works include it as part of their titles.
- 2 Rebecca Horn, et al. *Rebecca Horn: The Glance of Infinity* (Bonn: VG Bild-Kunst, 1997), 50.
- 3 Art practices in Europe (and elsewhere) were going through multiple dramatic shifts in the 1960s and '70s against a complicated political backdrop that included the ongoing Cold War and its global impacts. Germany's anti-authoritarian student movement was gaining intensity in 1968, and university students were also central to the U.S. Vietnam War protests and French *mai 68* strikes.
- 4 Horn was hospitalized for nearly a year in 1965 and was weakened for another two years. She suffered lung poisoning from sculpture materials she used as a student.
- 5 Jones makes these observations in her introduction to the text she co-edited with Tracey Warr, *The Artist's Body* (New York: Phaidon, 2000).
- 6 Horn's comments on the work state that this is her intention, and a further examination of *Extensions* shows that this concern with proprioceptive distortion pervades the series.
- 7 In my own experience of wearing a prosthesis, the initial sense of strangeness and discomfort was acute, in contrast to the sense of contiguity with my body that has grown over the past year.
- 8 Horn, *The Glance of Infinity*, 49, emphasis added.
- 9 Lacan uses the German terms *innenwelt* and *umwelt*, which in his context refer to the inner world of individual consciousness in contrast to the outer, social world. I read “The Mirror Stage” with an interest in where the body is significantly implicated in the text, though only mentioned in passing and not much discussed by secondary sources. Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience.” Delivered at the 16th International Congress of Psychoanalysis, Zürich, July 17, 1949. From *Écrits: A Selection*, Alan Sheridan, ed. (London: Tavistock, 1977), 333.
- 10 Lacan, “The Mirror Stage.” I use the Lacan's theory to investigate the problem of the subject-object status of the body, but it is important to note that the theory is problematic. In one critique, Belgian philosopher and psychoanalytic theorist Luce

Irigaray faults Lacan's focus on the exclusive importance of the visual in the formation of the sense of self; I acknowledge that I am emphasizing the visual aspect of the mirror stage.

- 11 Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, 16.
- 12 The major exhibition catalogues from Horn's 1993 show *The Inferno-Paradise Switch* and her 1997 show *Glance of Infinity* include reproductions of these photographs, although the exhibitions themselves focused on her later work. *Berlin Exercises* (1974) was included as video art in the exhibition *Digital Heritage: Video Art in Germany from 1963 to the Present* and released on the eponymous DVD. The Tate Modern owns some of the objects used in the film; the objects bear the same titles as the film clips that show them in use.
- 13 Obviously I would argue that it is indeed possible, since I have based this study entirely on photographs, film footage, and my own reenactments, having seen neither the sculptural objects nor the performances in person.
- 14 I have not encountered any explanatory text associated with *Blinking*, but it seems reasonable to assume that since birds' range of vision extends to each side, and they must turn their heads in order to see straight forward, Horn's gesture of covering one eye was meant to reproduce this experience, to see as a bird might. Cockatoos also leave one eye closed for periods of time, which may be what Horn is mimicking.
- 15 The Tate Museum website, text accompanying the image of the sculpture *Finger Gloves*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=99999961&workid=25&searchid=9537>.
- 16 Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, 50.
- 17 Horn describes in many interviews how the making of the *Extensions* sculptures emerged from the experience of being hospitalized. This section draws on Horn's statements in Heinz-Peter Schwefel's 1993 documentary film *An Erotic Concert* (Amsterdam: Éditions à Voir 1993), as well as in Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, and Rebecca Horn, et al. *Rebecca Horn* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1993). Quote is from the Guggenheim catalogue, 15–16, emphasis added.
- 18 Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, and Schwefel, *An Erotic Concert*.
- 19 While Horn's statements tell a personal story, this essay reads the work in the context of its broader relevance to embodiment and subjectivity. Critics sometimes skewed interpretations of the art practices of women toward the personal and diaristic, and many of these analyses miss significant alternative readings and/or fault such work for not attaining relevance beyond the personal. Critics have pointed out instances of this kind of overly personal reading—and the limited interpretations it encourages—in some author's criticisms of Yayoi Kusama, noted in Laura Hopt-

man, et. al. *Yayoi Kusama* (London: Phaidon, 2000) and Ana Mendieta, noted in Jane Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta? Identity, Performativity, and Exile* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999). Horn criticizes her own early work in just this way. My reading of this work, however, shows its pertinence beyond the personal.

- 20 Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, 49.
- 21 Heinz-Peter Schwefel, *An Erotic Concert* (Amsterdam: Éditions à Voir 1993).
- 22 Horn, *Glance of Infinity*, 16.
- 23 Schwefel, *An Erotic Concert*.
- 24 Margrit Schildrick, "You Are There, Like My Skin," in *Thinking Through the Skin*, Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 164.
- 25 Extending this to an understanding of the boundary between pregnant body and fetus, a far more commonly experienced relationship, reveals a similar discursive resolution of separate subjects, despite their fully conjoined bodies. The problem with this as a metaphor for the conjoined condition of the body and environment is that it can be settled by birth, which could be claimed to prove the duality of the subjects, resolving this form of conjoined subjectivity into two individuals.
- 26 Separation of the human from earth would mean his death, space missions notwithstanding (astronauts and cosmonauts bring a portable—and unsustainable—piece of their physical environment with them). Some would argue that the earth would fare quite well without its humans. Withholding this type of value judgment, I can say that James Lovelock is cogent in his argument regarding the interdependence of life and earth, such that the demise of all humans, or even most, would alter Earth's environment appreciably.
- 27 This is not as often discussed in terms of the body and its material ground. Didier Anzieu's *The Skin Ego* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) is a notable exception.
- 28 Lacan, "The Mirror Stage," 333. Lacan's focus is on the inner and outer worlds in terms of the individual consciousness; I read "The Mirror Stage" with an interest in where the body is implicated in, yet absent from, the text.
- 29 Deleuze and Guattari describe formation of the boundary of individuality as the individual "pinched" into being out of a field of immanence and "nailed down as one," indicating an originary separation/alienation that brings the single subject into existence. They, like Lacan, are speaking generally on subjectivity, but again, this is applicable to the body. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "How to Become a Body Without Organs," from *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 356.
- 30 In the conclusion of their text *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual*

*History of Personal Identity* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2006), Raymond Martin and John Barresi fall back from their explication of the decentered subject to commonsense conclusion that we are centered, after all: in our bodies.

- 31 Let me be clear that by criticizing “individualism” I don’t mean to recommend repression of self-interest nor submission to the will of any social group. The target of my criticism is the sense of self that is ignorant of its contingency.
- 32 Donna Haraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 151.