# Gabriel Orozco
# Painting as Mnemotechnics

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Since the invention of photography in 1839, every generation of painters has had to confront the manifest and latent impact that subsequent technological and scientific developments have had on the methods, procedures, and iconographies of painting. Every time, at the very moment that painterly practices have been assimilated to technologically produced forms (such as that of the index as the sole and singular module of pictorial representation), such practices have approached the threshold of disappearance, only to return with ever-greater vehemence in dialectical countermovements. While this dialectics within Modernist history is too long and too complicated to be rehearsed here even in the most schematic of manners, we can single out a specific set of questions concerning the changes in the structural organization and technical application of pigment and paint that occurred during that history.

Framing the issue thus, we are reminded instantly of how painting engaged with its imminent digitalization via Georges Seurat's divisionism as early as the 1880s (human subjects, on the other hand, appear to be confronting this final transition to exclusively digital forms of perception only now). In response to the universally ruling laws of empirico-criticism and positivist verifiability, painting developed its own principles to make every constituent unit of the painterly process as transparent to self–reflexivity as cognitively and perceptually possible.

For heuristic purposes, we might construct an initially plausible art-historical axis of technologically defined pictorial morphologies leading from Seurat, through Roy Lichtenstein, to Gabriel Orozco's new digital series *Particle Paintings,* one of two groups of new works by the artist that will occupy us in this essay.

Tracing such a line makes it clear that despite apparent similarities between the different mimetic responses of painting to newly emerging technological and scientific principles—a similarity sometimes seeming to verge on identity (as for example in the reduction of painterly processes to digital dots)—these responses actually result from very specific, historically heteronymous changes. Moreover,

they signal profoundly different artistic responses to these changes, with a mimetic assimilation to a particular technological structure being, for example, affirmative in one instance and critically or melancholically subversive in another.

In 1961, one might well have posed the question (as in fact many did) of whether any criteria—other than the iconographical—could distinguish Lichtenstein's Ben-Day dot paintings from Seurat's divisionist ones. Today, we might ask a similar question: What, if anything, differentiates Orozco's new digitalized *Particle Paintings* from those that Lichtenstein painted some fifty years ago? One answer to the first question could have been that Lichtenstein's "divisionism" was distanced from that of his great Modernist precursor by the very fact of its citationality, or by what we might call an ironical or allegorical repetition of the total mechanization of the painterly process itself.

As for an answer to the second question, we could begin by arguing that unlike the object of Lichtenstein's homage, Benjamin H. Day and his invention of the dot matrix for color printing in the early twentieth century, a very different and specific technological framework determines Orozco's recent paintings: The underlying grid structures of these works are generated by a computer program (a so-called raster to vector conversion program) that digitalizes any image it is fed. For this reason alone, it should seem initially plausible that at least one of Orozco's new painterly projects, in its mimetic embrace of the new technological regime of digitalization, is not comparable to either Seurat's or Lichtenstein's principles. After all, both of those artists internalized historically overdetermined stages of a fundamentally different technological and scientific analysis of the apparatus of vision and the practices of perception and reproduction.

Yet as soon as the first hypothetical historical axis is transcended, a second immediately presents itself, one articulating the inevitable countermovement to the first. After all, Seurat's radicality generated a number of fundamentally different responses and dialectical reversals (at the hands of artists ranging from Paul Gauguin and Odilon Redon to Pierre Bonnard and the Nabis group) that reopened the full range of the historical contradictions, if not disavowals, that the positivist empiricism of neo-impressionism had concealed. Thus the second axis would not establish the continuity of those forms of organizing pigment and paint according to techno-scientific principles; it would emphasize its utter opposite. Once painters had recognized that painted color could not withstand the most stringent demands concerning its empirical, perceptual, and cognitive parameters, new dimensions emerged—ranging from the hallucinatory (via the musical) to the decorative—to compensate for the loss of color as a representational system. (This opened up the prospects of one of painting's future epistemic failures—after all, chroma disappears from avant-garde culture again and again after 1911.)

Bonnard seems to be a particularly productive reference here (though in truth, any of the Nabis would suffice), since his painterly facture (unlike that of Redon or Gauguin) remains closer to that of his immediate predecessors in divisionism. Yet while Bonnard sustained the structure and the facture of divisionist painting, his actual color seems to have been defined by a programmatic rejection of the presumably positivist and scientific character of the color theories deployed by Seurat. Reinvesting painting's chromatic dimension with pre- or non-scientific qualities and claiming them as integral to his approach to specific forms of painterly perception, Bonnard used color in such a way that it corresponded primarily to the infinitely differentiated nature of the psychic apparatus rather than the nature of the scientific analysis of perceptual experience. As an allegorist of color, he redeemed its phenomenal appearances in an endless process of differentiation and variation that seems to mourn the disappearance of color's originary denotative and representational capacities.[1] And while Bonnard's color, detached as it is, ultimately pronounces the loss of originary referential and illusionistic functions, it induces the mnemonic and the oneiric as one of painting's new potentials, surpassing the limitations of color's merely decorative ends.

Henceforth, painting—whether acknowledging it or not—will be confronted with precisely this dialectic: Should its explorations primarily address the complexities of the impact of technological developments on the apparatus of perception? Or should it negate the impact of these regimes by insisting on the fundamental alterity and essential inaccessibility of the apparatus of psychic experience? Inevitably, the most important artists will have engaged with the inextricable simultaneity of both of these spheres and their various interdependencies and interactions.

Orozco's second group of new works, which he has produced over the past three years, is a series of large-scale drawings and paintings on paper that he calls *Corplegados*. In manifest opposition to the large and significant group of *The Samurai Tree* (2008), the resolutely abstract paintings that preceded the *Corplegados*, these new works seem to be addressing a range of issues deriving from that countertradition wherein color, drawing, and facture resuscitate somatic origins (or attempt to return to a psychosomatic grounding of painting) while trying to counteract, if not to defy, painting's apparently inescapable subjection to technological transformations.

Thus the *Corplegados* should be seen, first of all, as constituting one half of a dialectical whole and as the extreme opposite of the artist's *Particle Paintings* (and by implication of course also as a dialogic response to the comparable work by some of his peers in the field of digitalized painting). It will then be one of the tasks of this essay to clarify the extent to which Orozco's dialectical oppositions,

those emerging within his own oeuvre as well as those emerging in relation to the works of others, produce a rather complex statement about the conditions of painterly production in the present moment.

## The Corplegados

Let us begin then with the *Corplegados*. The name comes from a neologism coined by the artist that translates, roughly, as "folded bodies." They were begun in 2008, relatively early in Orozco's most recent cycle of production. On first encounter, this group of approximately fifty large-scale, almost identically sized painting-drawings on paper (thirty are complete, twenty still in the process of being executed manually, a process that can take a year or more) undoubtedly register as astonishingly, even confusingly, diverse; as willful in their textures, gestures, colors, types of drawing (from the iconic to the indexical and from the figurative to the pure material trace), and sudden photographic insertions and extensive citational writings.

These drawings immediately call to mind the artist's earlier diaries and notebooks, which collected all kinds of visual source materials, sudden insights, written inspirations, material and textual references, and photographic memorabilia in the manner of an artist's atlas. Since beginning to use a computer for his daily record keeping, Orozco has brought to an end the elaborate practice of making manual notations and collaged recordings in his notebooks. Yet, with the *Corplegados*, it appears that this mnemonic operation has now been shifted onto a more monumental scale, as though the artist wanted to save both the formal operation and the ritualistic procedure of remembering itself from oblivion.

The diffusion of techniques in the *Corplegados* makes it appear as if Orozco—who is, after all, equally accomplished as a painter and a draughtsman—had handed over the choices of color and line, of composition and distribution, and of pigment and facture to the autonomous multitude of the pictorial options themselves. All appear to be equally available or cancelled, valid or invalidated (as though painting and drawing had juxtaposed themselves in a collage of their own diversity of procedures). Rather than having been chosen by the artist, these ceaselessly alternating varieties of painterly idioms seem to appear on their own accord and following their own desire—at one moment in orderly, succinctly segregated sequences, at other times in utterly implausible constellations—lacking, or rather defying any evident artistic intentionality. Yet neither "automatism" nor "chance operation" seems to be the proper term to identify these organizational principles.

Even the mere task of describing this vast variety of antiquated painterly strategies seems unmanageable at first: It is a spectrum that calls forth, at various moments, foliage, oriental ornaments, indexical handprints and footprints, and *informe* aleatory traces from pouring and leaking liquid paint. While on display like so many incompatible yet equally seductive charms, this multitude is not triumphant in its mode of presentation. Rather, each of these double-sided door-sized sheets confronts us with an undercurrent of hesitation, if not doubt. The bewildering polymorphous abundance seems to signal the artistic effects of social affluence, of overproduction, of inflation on the most withdrawn and even ascetic pictorial strategies. Asking whether these avant-garde strategies can actually still fulfill any of the radical and subversive promises they initially suggested makes the mannerist dimension of the *Corplegados* even more manifest.

## The Cut

There are, however, three formal orders, or interventions, operating in these opulent works that are sparse and rigorous, defining each of the drawings as if they wanted to counteract the chaotic affluence of the painterly surfaces and skins with the *memento mori* quality of the skeletal: the cut, the fold, and the ambiguous equivalence of the drawings' recto and verso surfaces.

If the bodily references surprise at first, I would point out the extent to which the cut and the fold in these works, along with their planar reversibility, construct a somatic and purely indexical countersphere to the chaos and cornucopia of visual devices they seem to deliver "at first sight." By contrast, the initial index, an explicitly physiological or somatic marker, results from the incision and removal of two elliptical or almond-shaped cutouts from the surface of the paper. This bodily orientation of the spectator is often exacerbated by one or even two additional sets of elliptical cutouts *or by a* circular excision that—*according to the artist—he* places more or less at the level of the navel or the anus of the spectator.

Thus, if the baroque accumulations of surface marks in the *Corplegados* appear initially as actual or potential allover structures, their open fields are now inscribed with a peculiarly rigorous reorientation into the vertical reading/viewing position of the spectatorial subject. Rather than allowing for a radical reversibility or rotation, these excisions place the spectator inevitably "at eye level" (even if his or her actual body height might or, might not, exactly correspond to it).

## Rectos and Versos

A second strategy for actually embodying the spectator in the experience of the *Corplegados* results from all of these works playing, or should we say *performing*, the duality of the recto-verso distinction that has traditionally served as a way of distinguishing the surfaces of drawing and painting hierarchically. (With a few exceptions, when a painting or a drawing has a recto and a verso, a primary and a secondary status are inevitably assigned to the two sides.)

Outside of sculpture, any predecessors for such a strategy of spectatorial embodiment through planar reversibility are almost unknown (one exceptional case of course would be Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*, where the reversibility of the piece—the possibility of a double-sided planar reading—is anticipated in the very conception of the work, which is situated between two panes of glass).[2] While executed with the more traditional mediums of painting and drawing on paper, the recto-verso relationship in Orozco's *Corplegados* is equally intended to maximize perceptual and structural contradictions. The artist anticipates that the traces inscribed in what the French call the *face* will acquire their own pictorial qualities as imprints and as dye marks on what is appropriately then called the *dos,* the facial or ventral on the one hand, and the dorsal on the other. This reversal, then, subverts a peculiarly persistent hierarchical distinction, hardly challenged by painters in the twentieth century, that, like other forms of hierarchical differentiation, more often than not has served deeper power structures in social relationships at large.

Thus, Orozco invokes a series of distinctions whose metaphorical horizons are rather complex—between that which is shown and that which is concealed, between that which is frontal and that which is dorsal, between that which is intentional and that which occurs more or less by accident outside of the manual control of the artist and is only legible after the conscious field has been completely established. These horizons could easily be situated as analogues to the intertwinement of the structures of the conscious and the unconscious in everyday behavior and discursive formations, *those* between thought and forgetting *or between* articulation and repression. They could also be naturalized as distinctions between that which can be shown and seen and that which is withheld from exposure, like inside and outside, light and dark, day and night. And they could foreground the inextricable intertwinement of these structures at all times and on all levels of experience.

## The Fold

Orozco's third strategy, which is in manifest contradiction to the multitude of pictorial and design strategies performed in these painting-drawings, is the fact of their multiple folds, each generating a new and different type of linear indexicality, a material definition and marking of the support surface that corresponds to the physicality of the incisions. Each of the works is folded four times, initially to reduce its size for ease of storage or transportation while in process. Yet parceling these large sheets also allows the artist to work on the drawings as though they were the pages of a book, or a portfolio *to be opened* up for inscription and the momentary recording of newly discovered data. Fully expanded, however, either laid out horizontally or suspended vertically, the sheets are treated like the surfaces of paintings. Inevitably, being a medium for the recording of travel experiences, under constant revision by continuously added data, the folded painting-drawing also acquires the status of a map in progress.

As was the case with the elliptical removals that situated the painting-drawings on a bodily spectatorial axis with the viewer, and as is emphasized by the drawings' innate performance of recto-verso reversibility, the manifest remnants of the iterative gesture of opening and folding endow the painting-drawings with yet another dimension of physiological immediacy, an actual embodiment that dialectically opposes the mere gestures and factures of drawing and painting.

We have to clarify further how the various visual and semiological strategies, operating side by side in these drawings, interact in their profound and manifest differences, whether they are displayed as mutually exclusive or shown in a competition for legitimacy and credibility with each other.

Could we argue that the *Corplegados* enact publically, almost ostentatiously, the seemingly inexhaustible repertoire of chromatic differentiation, of modeling and shading, of chiaroscuro and drawing, of gesture and facture, of depth and color—and do so as if staging them all for the last time? Or are they suspended in a manner of willful equivalence, deeply anchored in the somatic dimensions of perception yet universally accessible and randomly distributed in their rehearsal? Seeming to span the full range of bodily articulations, they also retrieve some of the artist's unique and specific regional and historical resources, as if they were inevitable and integral—not for others, but for himself. For others, they appear to be exemplary ways of insisting on a certain ineradicability of the subject's inviolable terrains and traits.

It would be conceivable, for example, that the intense bodily dimensions of the fold and the cut relativize the seemingly conventional qualities of the painted and

drawn lines. In other words, and more simply phrased, we could ask, Is the emphatic indexicality of both cut and surface fold the primary or the ultimate semiological condition, situating and grounding the spectator phenomenologically and relegating the more conventional forms of drawing to a different register? This question does of course have a history and is not quite as abstruse as it might appear at first: It was, for example, clearly posed in Marcel Duchamp's final painting, *Tu M'* (1918), where an equal sampling of the various semiological conditions (iconic, symbolic, indexical) was displayed in a manner that posed the question of which types of signs would retain credibility and authenticity and which would be handed over to perdition, or memory.

## Particle Paintings

None of these questions troubles the spectator who encounters Orozco's *Particle Paintings* for the first time. However, what might trouble us is the chasm that separates this group from the *Corplegados*. While we know Orozco to be an artist of extraordinary diversity and scope, and while his work has shifted dramatically in the past—for example, from a sculptural accumulation of found construction detritus, as with the *Penske Work Project* (1998), to the pristine and immaculately executed *Samurai Tree* paintings—the polarity between the *Corplegados* and the *Particle Paintings* seems to alert us to a more profound schism in the field of contemporary artistic production in general. The two groups confront us with a fissure in the criteria for artistic competence at large, as well as increasing doubts concerning the capacity of cultural production to continue to signify publically and socially. While any etiology that purports to explain this rent in the fabric of cultural signification would be premature and speculative given the obscurity of its origins, we would nevertheless venture to consider one factor as part of a possible explanation for the extreme discontinuity in cultural practices in general and in these two instances of Orozco's recent production in particular: a programmatic voiding of any political dimension of officially accepted cultural production—or rather, the systematic artistic and social delegitimation of such a dimension—that has resulted in the ultimate loss of even a residual social "connectivity" (to use a term from the very milieu that enforces that condition). This regime of universally anomic representation has been induced in decades past by numerous economical, political, and technological factors, inevitably leading artists to doubt whether their production has any place and function other than that of purveying the maximization of surplus value.

Such an explanation might illuminate the rift between Orozco's two seemingly incompatible recent series, and indeed, their opposition does probe these very questions: What types of technical production procedure and what kinds of painterly representation, if any, are still capable of claiming a dimension of communicative collectivity? What types of iconography, if any, are still capable of functioning as a social representation without having first been assimilated to technological regimes merely mimetically? And yet, with equal urgency, every artistic production in the present is confronted with that question's dialectical opposite: How can painting inscribe itself mimetically within these newly ruling technological parameters, which organize collective perceptual experience in order to claim that very publicness as a communicative space and structure—as a medium and as a sign system?

First to the question of iconography. Orozco's digital paintings leave the spectator in no doubt as to the utter superfluity of all discriminating orders of the image itself and of the meaninglessness of distinctions between genres. In fact, Orozco's random-seeming choices prompt us to ask when we last encountered paintings whose iconography was meaningful. Of course, Andy Warhol comes to mind first. Paradoxically, what might have appeared at the time as a strategy of aleatory iconography—a feature that was of primary importance in the initial reception of Warhol's oeuvre—has now been turned by retrospective reading into *a cohesive iconography.* And we might well ask the same question of what appears to us now as a principle of iconographic willfulness in Orozco's work: Will it ever acquire a cohesion, a historico-textual grounding, at least one that *could at all be anticipated* by any theoretical formulation in the present moment? If the feeling of arbitrariness concerning Orozco's iconic choices eventually subsides, and an underlying stable principle of selection emerges after all, will it be the dialectical opposite of what we identified as the phenomenological embodiment of the *Corplegados*?

The digital paintings open up a chasm that makes any quest for a distinction between a meaningful image and an utterly meaningless one totally pointless: They stimulate the yawning terror of a ceaseless and random image production and consumption that has in fact become the common reality of the everyday. What makes the sudden encounter with Orozco's digital paintings bewildering is that he seems to have recognized this decisive caesura in the field of iconic representation itself. The effect is similar to that of discovering an unanticipated disaster or accident in an utterly familiar context where one never would have expected it.

The same dialectic prevails in painting's confrontation with a profoundly different technological register, one that is ultimately more fundamental since it deeply affects perception, vision, and cognition itself, much more so than mere technical reproducibility ever threatened or promised to achieve. Clearly, we

cannot evaluate the appeal or interest of any particular work in Orozco's new group of digital paintings according to its subject matter, which constitutes a rather perverse citational universe whose primary function seems to be to enforce the universality of the technological impact on perception itself, which is to say the absolutely devastating consequences of a fully completed digitalization of the mnemonic accounts of our visual culture that will efface all specificity and historical contextuality by the very principle of providing access to every single image according to that same digital process.

In a certain way, then, the *Particle Paintings* seem to provide an iconography of de-motivation and loss, their apparently random choices and utter vacuity providing a sense of what become of iconography under such conditions. Like an errant subject, disoriented by the perpetually intrusive presence and the universally desublimating equivalence of all technologically mediated images, Orozco's pictures shift from the fields of found landscape photographs (e.g., *Rocks in the River*) to art history (e.g., *Courbet's Oak, Cézanne's Bridge, Turner, Mondrian, Pollock*); from personal records (e.g., *Broken Bicycle in a Railing*) to public media clichés (e.g., *Sophia Loren*); from flower still lifes (e.g., *Broken Red Flower, Fluttering Flowers*) to political propaganda (e.g., *Uncle Ho);* from postcards (e.g., *Bahia Harbor*) to press photographs *(*e.g., *Stream in the Grid*) to Modernist pictorial epistemology (the singular *Red Monochrome*).

That last painting in particular, *Red Monochrome*, opens up yet another dimension separating Orozco's project from those of his apparent predecessors: the technological disintegration of color itself. And while similar inroads were in fact taken at various moments in Modernism, it is not until now that even the monochrome itself, the quintessence of an apparent climax of painterly self-referentiality, succumbs to the very order of its technological production and reproduction. Thus, all previous attempts at making the monochrome the ne plus ultra of self-critical reflexivity appear suddenly as having been grounded still in the somewhat mythical bonds of the various associations with which color has been attached to its supposedly originary referents.

Orozco's seemingly disrespectful citations of Mondrian (in which the Dutch artist's paintings of the mid-1920s appear like cheap computer prints, if not Lego sets) and of Pollock are not any more disrespectful of the masters than Lichtenstein's quotations of Mondrian, Picasso, and Matisse were. Yet Orozco's now suspend their memory within the digital dissolution of painterly culture in the present.

This question about a usable pictorial past, about the attempt to redeem the history of painterly practices mnemonically at least, is renewed by each painterly generation. It seems to have been posed once again by Orozco in his choices of pictorial references, which imbue a certain willfulness with the dimension of

allegorical devalorization. The very devalorization that the technological process of reproduction itself has inflicted on these historical objects is reiterated in their painterly citation. But this repetition of a historical devaluation in Orozco's paintings (it should be noted that all of the paintings recited by him are among his most favorite works) precisely articulates an incomparable dimension of violence: the paintings' degraded utopian aspirations are remembered not just as those of artists, but also as those of a class, and of a society, and of their promises. That Orozco's paintings look with a cold and disenchanted eye at the actually existing status of utopian thought in the present is what endows these *Particle Paintings* with their deeply discomforting blandness and vacuity.

This enumeration of random encounters with technologically produced image types inevitably calls up earlier, equally arbitrary atlas accumulations of photographic materials by artists from Rauschenberg to Richter. While such accumulations might still have shocked audiences in the late 1950s who were not yet versed in the legacies of aleatory accumulations and constellations of photographic collage and montage imageries, this simultaneity of innumerable iconographic references cannot serve for us as the primary scandal anymore. It is, however, worthwhile to remember that Rauschenberg's and Richter's situation at that time was comparable to Orozco's in the present: a historical moment when the violent impact of a new and inescapable kind of technology-based image production (in the earlier iteration, it was television) forced painting once again to come to its senses about its social place and functions and to verify what kind of representation, if any, it could still sustain with credibility in the public sphere.

Paradoxically, then, we have to recognize that the seemingly erratic multiplicity of painterly procedures and pictorial conventions governing the *Corplegados*—which should be regarded as attempts at querying the extent of the historical availability and viability of those procedures and conventions—find their dialectical counterpart in the *Particle Paintings*' dissemination of iconographic typologies, which are all equally invalidated and mutually disqualifying because of their citational randomness. If we encountered an almost baroque wealth of painterly factures and design processes in the *Corplegados,* we now confront its counterpart in the technocratically ordered iconographic anomie of the *Particle Paintings*.

Yet, in a paradoxical turn, an additional order of restraint once again affects our perception, all the more deeply since it is almost invisibly buried in the texture of the paintings themselves, constituting the most rigorous regime of an almost disciplinary reduction of the painterly act and its performance. In the *Particle Pictures,* all painterly and pictorial operations have been reduced to the smallest, and the lowest, common denominator: a Q-tip size deposit of pigment inserted in the interstices of the digitalized grid. It is mechanical, yet artisanal,

an anonymous yet individually produced digital touch of paint (revealing itself all the more as a shock of the present when one remembers suddenly the former generosity of Niele Toroni's seemingly autonomous painterly imprints).

And in the same manner that the folds, the cuts, and the planar reversibility of the *Corplegados* ultimately inscribed a phenomenological order of bodily inscription within the abundance of painterly means and procedures, the actual painterly procedure of the *Particle Paintings* inscribes the purest and smallest form of the painterly index within the seemingly never-ending rush of digitally defined images and their willful and random iconographies.

After all, each molecular unit of paint inserted within the gridded pixilation of the processed image manifests a gesture, or at least an almost pathologically reduced version of one, recognizing and articulating the very range and aspirations that have been left to the artisanal and the artistic production of paintings in the digital age. And in the same way that the indexical folds and cuts of the *Corplegados* instilled the most residual, yet also the most reliable, dimensions of corporeal agency to the spectator (beyond all vestiges of what might have to be acknowledged as a set of cultural practices forever doomed to be lost and repeated), in precisely that way does the individual indexical dot, applied by hand in some kind of iterative madness of manual intervention within the gridded surfaces of the *Particle Paintings,* remind its spectators of the dialectical differences between assimilation and opposition—between mimetic inscription and a *détournement* of the very technocratic codes that seemingly have absorbed all capacities of visual and tactile, let alone somatic and political, resistance.

1. Édouard Vuillard, is rather different in this regard, and in a comparison with the work of Bonnard particularly illuminating. For Vuillard, color acquires the final condition of the decorative, rather unproblematically, it seems, compensating for color's lost historical dimensions. Yet with Vuillard color never seems to transcend that condition of the decorative, and the subtle and seductive impertinence of the melancholic confinements of his interiors never quite succeed in seducing us into believing that these are regressions worthy of our most ardent pursuit.
2. Of course, as with all strategies of radical artistic intervention there are predecessors that might illuminate Orozco's procedures. Strangely enough, and perhaps this is already significant, most examples can be found among three-dimensional objects where the revelation of the inside-outside dialectic occurs earlier and more frequently than the recto-verso enactment. For example, one might think of the various propositions in which artists suggested to the spectator/viewer that a tactile box could become an acoustic event, works ranging from Marcel Duchamp's *A bruit secret* (1919) to Robert Morris' *A Box with the Sound of its Own Making* (1962), or the sudden inversion of a regular stereometric outside into a polymorphous disorderly inside, as in Eva Hesse's *Accession* cubes.