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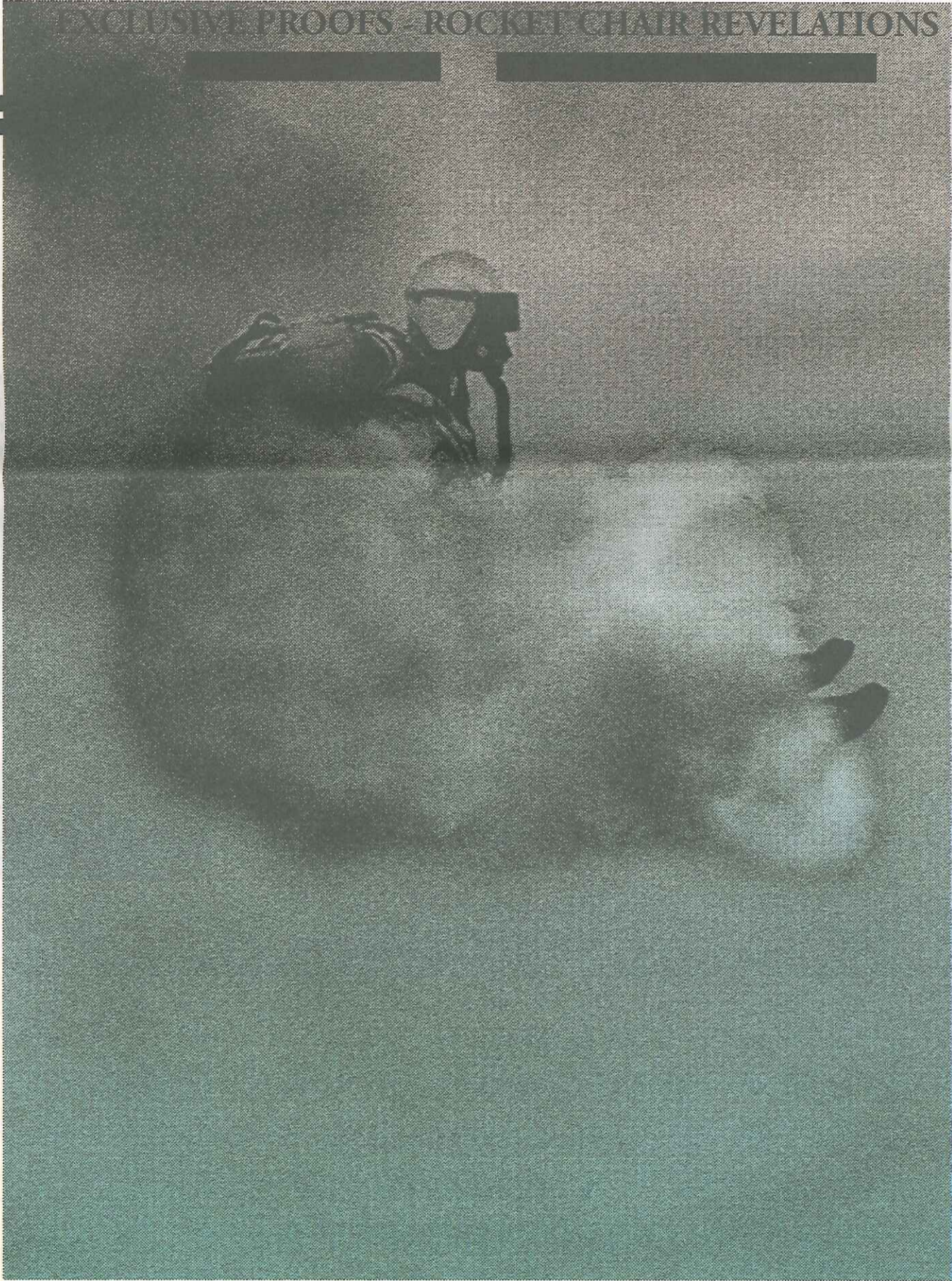
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— The —

# TRUE STORY

**THE THIRD KIND EXISTS - THE MERMAID THEORY REVEALED**

**EXCLUSIVE PROOFS - ROCKET CHAIR REVELATIONS**



Malak Mebkhout

# THE THIRD KIND

MERMAID THEORY : WHERE DOES THE WOMAN BECOME A FISH ?

Part 1

IT IS ALL ABOUT COLLAGE.

February 11<sup>th</sup> 2013, Switzerland.

The starting point of this story is a song called 'In step' by GirlTalk, in which the band Salt-N-Peppa and Kurt Cobain are mixed together. Dj Greg Gillis made them exist in one single entity, when they would never have been on stage together back in the 90's, because Hip Hop and Grunge Culture were threatening each other.

This "encounter of the third kind" made obvious to me, that everything needs to be re-invented. A smart collage of existing samples, that I also recognize as today's music, was dragging me right away in my teenage years. I was remembering. It was instant, expressive & powerful.

Either I like it or not.

"In step", *Girl Talk*, at 0:48.



Salt-N-Peppa  
Hot, cool & vicious - Push it  
1992  
HIP HOP

Kurt Cobain  
Nevermind - Lithium  
1991  
GRUNGE

There is many different ways of mixing or sampling existing forms & ideas. The cutting and pasting of extant things has become the favored creative method of this era. Artists, writers, musicians, designers or decorators employ the method of collage.

BUT

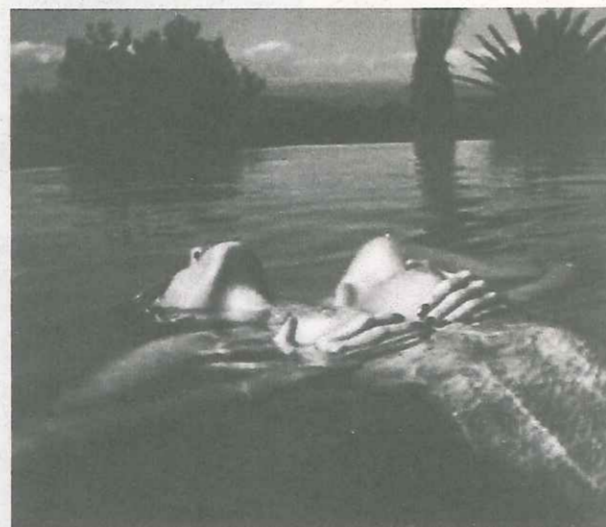
WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES A GOOD COLLAGE?



An impossible dialogue between two different kinds, that tells us a new story, is ultimately incarnated by the myths and legends of hybrid creatures like THE MERMAID. Fascinating since —, this living collage re-defines the limits of human nature.

## SUBMARINE FEMME-FATALE

The mermaid is a clever collage of a supremely beautiful young woman and a fish. This "submarine femme fatale" is both attractive and dangerous, normal and abnormal, powerful and disabled.



Helmut Newton  
Sans titre, St Tropez, 1975

« THE DESIGNER'S OBJECTIVE IS NOT TO CREATE AN IDEOLOGY, BUT COMMUNICATE MESSAGES OF CURIOSITY, ENTERTAINMENT & AFFECTION. »

Achille Castiglioni, Paolo Ferrari,  
Milan, Electa international Editrice,  
Centre Pompidou, CCI,  
1985, p. 14

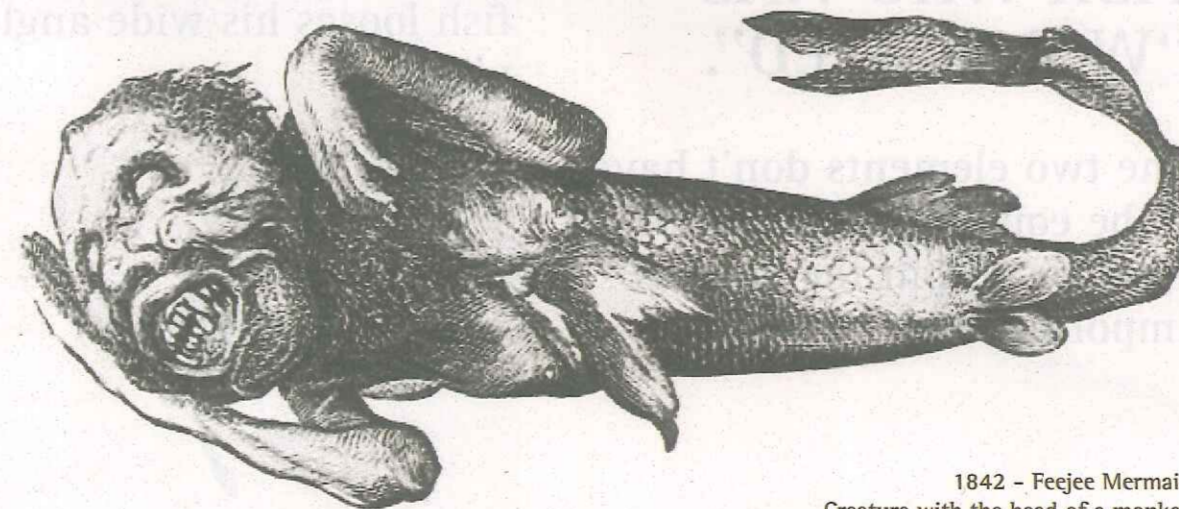
NEW & GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

**COME AND SEE**  
the most wonderful curiosity  
in the world :  
the mermaid !

The Fiji Mermaid which was exhibited in most of the principal cities in America, in the years 1840, 1841 & 1842, to the wonder and astonishment of thousands of naturalists and other scientific persons, whose previous doubts of the existence of such an astonishing creation were entirely removed.

« IT'S AN ADVERTISEMENT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE MUSEUM. I DON'T BELIEVE IN DUMPING THE PUBLIC, BUT I BELIEVE IN FIRST ATTRACTING THEM & THEN PLEASING THEM. »

Phineas T. Barnum (1810-1891)  
Showman, business man,  
scam artist and entertainer.



1842 - Feejee Mermaid  
Creature with the head of a monkey  
and the tail of a fish.

**QUEEN OF MERMAIDS FOUND DEAD**

THE MERMAID IS A GOOD COLLAGE.

The Mermaid illustrates a clever combination between aesthetics, functionalism and mysticism.

Mermaids are a universal symbol with a multitude of traditions, myths and meanings. They are hybrid creatures, half animal half woman with strong feminine identities. The two beings coexist in the same body with the prerogative of accessing the qualities of both ever being transformed, perpetually provocative and disturbing.



WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE A MERMAID OBJECT ?

# THE MERMAID THEORY

THE MERMAID IS A SYNERGY OF TWO DISTINCT ELEMENTS, THAT FORMS A SINGULAR ONE.

Fish and woman belong to a common group, they are two living species, vertebrates that breathe, eat, see, or move.

In each kind there are many subcategories that illustrate differences of shapes, colors, material, size ...etc.

A woman could have many different appearances or personalities.

A fish could be a salmon, a carp, a trout, a sardine, a shark and so on.

But if we look with greater attention, the woman is always subsequently beautiful, with long hair and desirable attributes.

WHERE DOES THE WOMAN BECOME A FISH ?

1  
+  
1



=



3

Easy to recognize, she appears exactly as we know. No change of scale or shape.

Fish, however is reduced to one single tool-like element: the fishtail.

Covered with shiny scales, this element is scaled and adjusted. It embodies the 'animal dynamic'.

IT WAS OBVIOUSLY THE WOMAN WHO WAS "FISHED" AND NOT THE FISH WHO WAS "WOMANIZED".

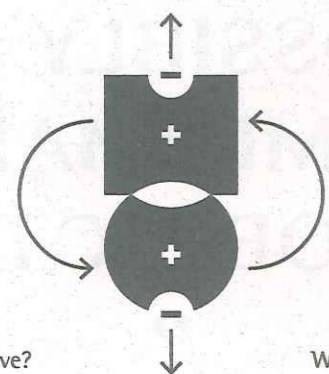
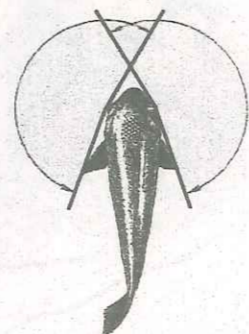
The two elements don't have to be equally present in the final result but they are as important.

THEIR COMBINATION ALLOWS A JUXTAPOSITION OF ABILITIES.

But if they gain new powers they also sacrifice some capacities.

The woman gets the ability to breathe underwater and swim faster. The fish acquires speech and fingers to grab things.

But the woman can no longer walk on land and the fish loses his wide angle vision.



What do I give?

What do I get ?

## THE MERMAID IS NOT AN ARBITRARY COLLAGE.

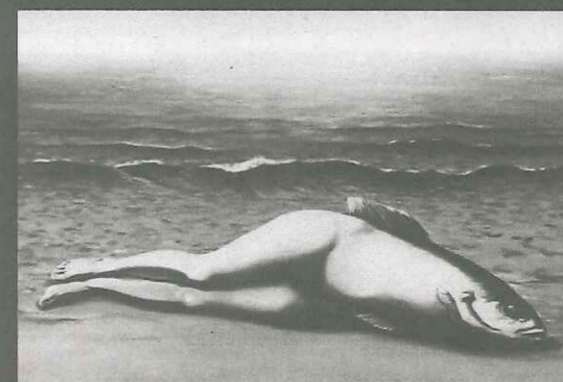
Well designed, it is a pact between sophistication and wilderness. Expressive and intriguing, it gives a fantastic vision of common things. The Mermaid uses explicitly familiar elements. What results is the feeling of recognizing something in what is actually an unfamiliar situation, thereby creating a ternary relationship between the known, the unknown and the re-known. Once the body transformed, everything is permitted. The magic of a mask or the virtue of an animal disguise, is the supreme weapon of freedom.

\* FIND MORE : «The History of Mermaids and Sirens, Symbols of Transformation» NORTHSTAR GALLERY Online : <http://northstargallery.com/mermaids/mermaid-history2.htm>



Glynis Johns as Mermaid Miranda (Moovie) 1948

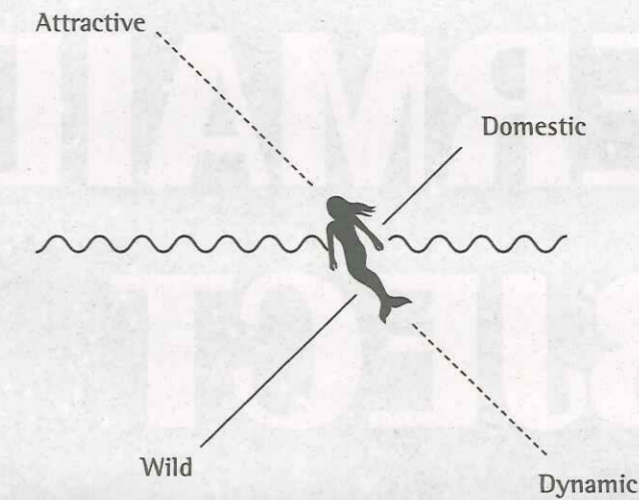
A FISH HAS BEEN WOMANIZED !



Rene Magritte (1898-1967) Collective Invention 1934

Contradictions

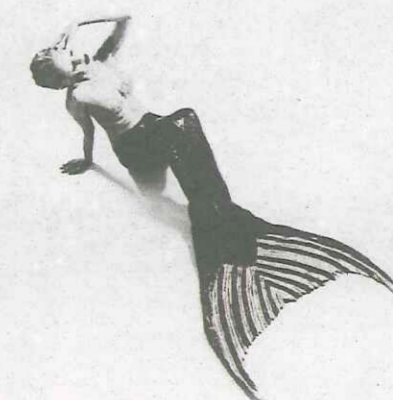
- Attractive . Intimidating
- Domestic . Wild
- Disabled . Dynamic
- Common . Monumental
- Natural . Polished
- Familiar . Sculptural



## PHANTASM AGORIC

«Dream, symbol. We could then say that today's sirens are the reemergence of the weeping, hair-tearing, breast-beating tomb Sirens of Greece. Or of those forces who, with a cosmic music, procure the pleasure of death. THEY ARE THE INEXTRICABLE PRESENCE OF DISTANT AND COEVAL EVENTS, OF THE REAL AND THE PHANTASMAGORIC. The last metamorphosis of the Sirens, their last face in history. And our last rejection of them. Still ambivalent then, indicating both the alarm and the all clear, Sirens have learned to rise above the feral howling created by man. Since the first World War, perched atop churches and city towers, they have been warning of the arrival of a new breed of death-bearing birds. In the event of disaster sirens start automatically. Could that be the only way they have left to continue their chant, whatever it may be, in the stubborn hope that someone might hear?» \*

Jose Durand



## ARCHETYPE



Barbie® embodies the collective unconscious of America. When a symbol becomes so commonplace, it merges into the culture and actually becomes less visible but not less influential. Barbie® is such a powerful cultural symbol, that when ever she is placed next to just about anything she changes the meaning of that thing, bringing powerful myths and symbols to the transaction and to the perceptions. She defines a life style celebrating self, eternal youth, perfect beauty and indulgent materialism. Barbie® is both toy and mythic object... an incarnation of "The One Goddess with a Thousand Names" Barbie® is an archetype which is ancient, matriarchal and profound." \*



Commandant Jacques-Yves Cousteau Photographed by Yousuf Karsh, 1972,

Sirens call man, urging him to abandon what he is, to become something new.

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE THE MERMAID THEORY INTO OBJECTS ?

Mythological objects ?

Object translation

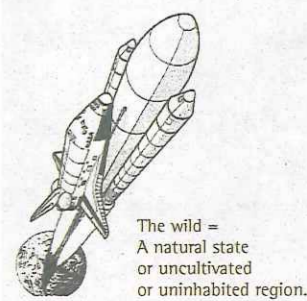
Metamorphosis of the ordinary into fantastic.

“Could we classify the luxuriant growth of objects as we do a flora or fauna, complete with tropical and glacial species, sudden mutations, and varieties threatened by extinction?”

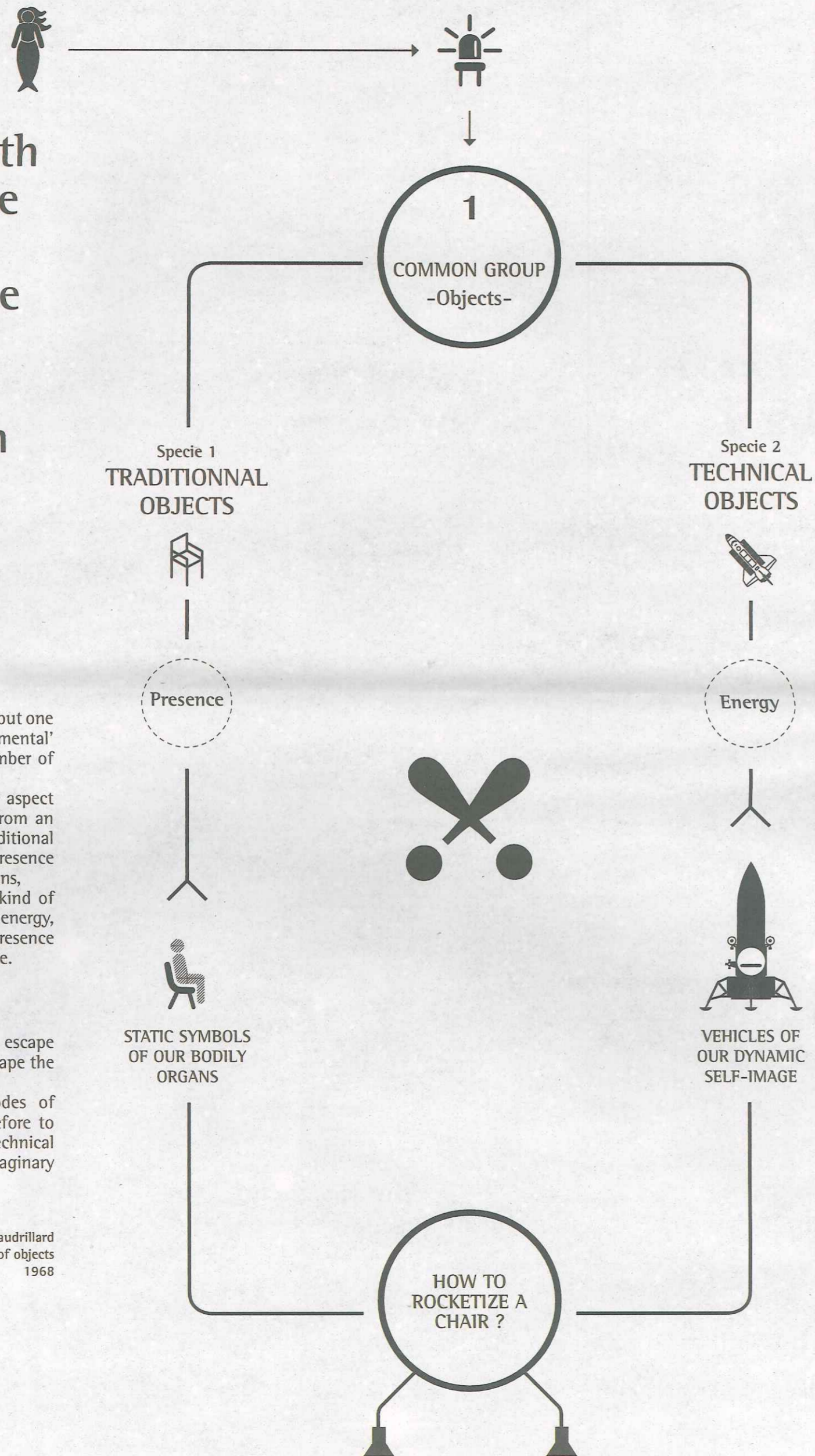
“ [...] whereas objects normally have but one real function, narrowly defined, their 'mental' functionality is unlimited, and any number of phantasies may have a place therein. A distinct evolution in their imaginary aspect is nevertheless signalled by the shift from an animistic to an energetic structure: traditional objects tended to bear witness to our presence being static symbols of our bodily organs, but technical objects hold a different kind of fascination in that they evoke a virtual energy, and are thus less receptacles of our presence than vehicles of our dynamic self-image.

“ [...] even if objects sometimes escape practical human control, they never escape the imagination. Modes of the imaginary follow modes of technological evolution and it is therefore to be expected that the next mode of technical efficiency will give rise to a new imaginary mode.

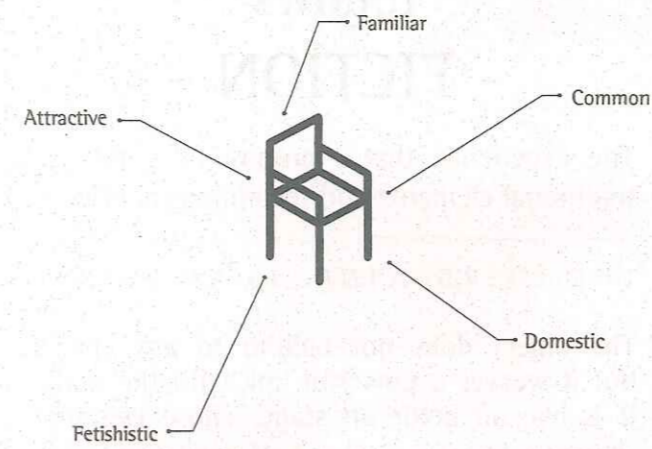
Jean Baudrillard  
The system of objects  
1968



The wild =  
A natural state  
or uncultivated  
or uninhabited region.



. Mermaid object .



CHAIR

A chair is an attractive object. Literally attractive. We spend more and more time sitting per day, travelling virtually through a screen into a gigantic network.

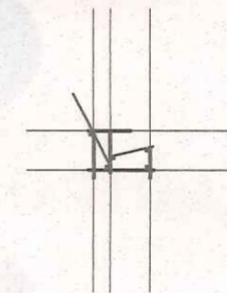
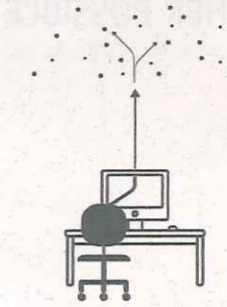
A chair is a familiar object. Easy to recognize with a seat, four feet and a back. It naturally belongs to our environment.

A chair gravitates in space and stabilizes the man in his verticality.

A chair is an object of fascination that reflects technical and cultural evolutions. As an important, almost banal design archetype, it has been used as a manifest symbol more than once.

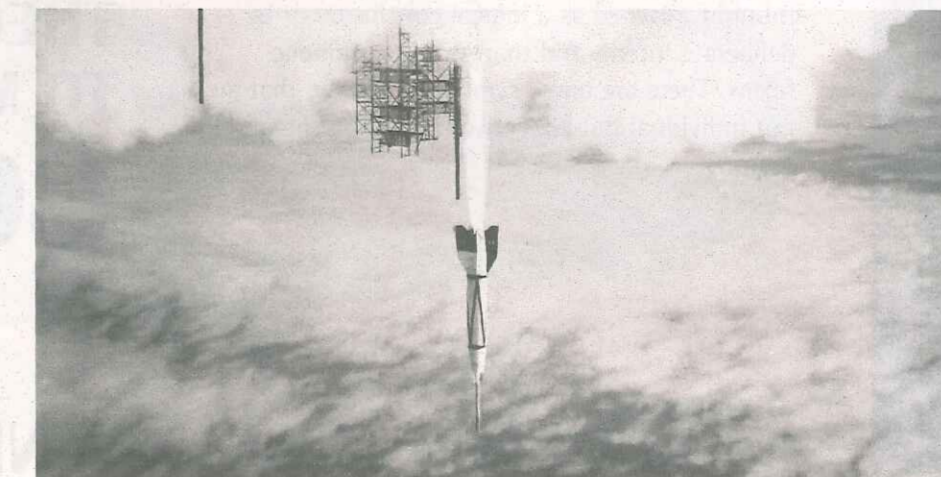
The chair separates limits and leads to human scale part of the unlimited space.

The chair is an object that has often been fetishized. It is an object of power, knowledge and death. If you get attached, it will make you prisoner.

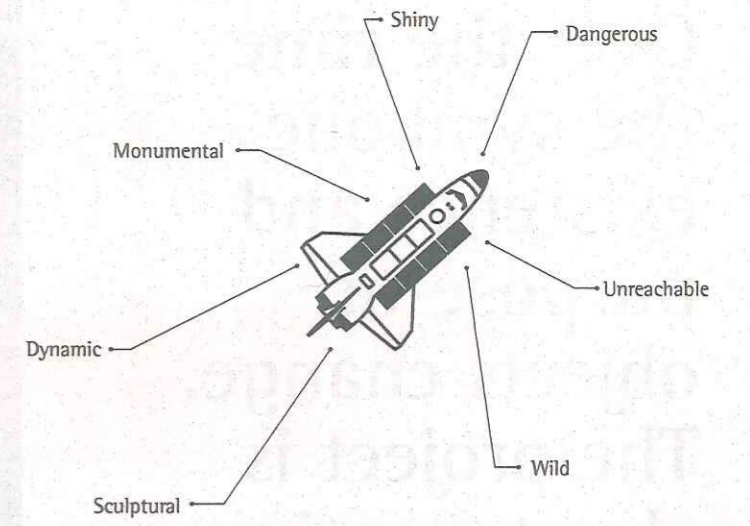


«To sit is an activity, if you are tired, lie down!»  
Gerrit Rietveld

«The creative conquest of space will serve as a wonderful substitute for war.»  
James S. McDonnell



An association becomes interesting when it is attached to a fantasy.



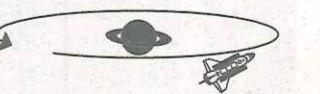
ROCKET

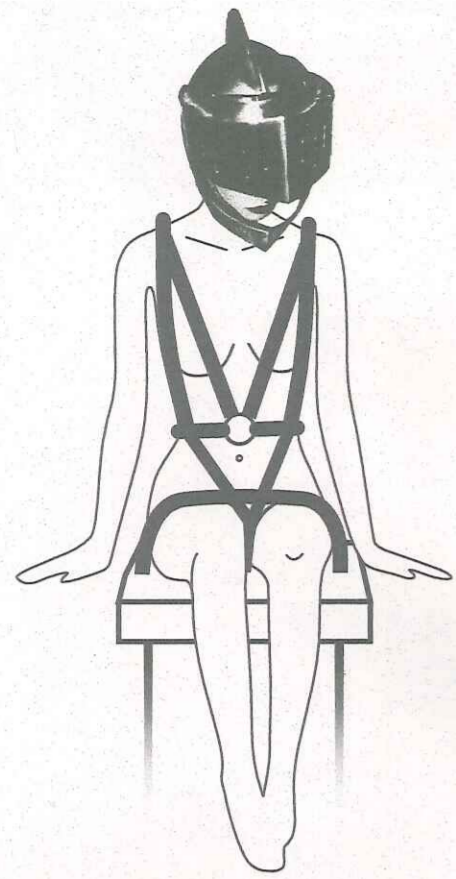
The rocket is a dynamic et dangerous tool. Famous as the WWII secret weapon, it is also a technical tool made to explore unknown territories.

The rocket is part of a collective fantasy but stays unreachable

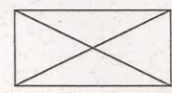
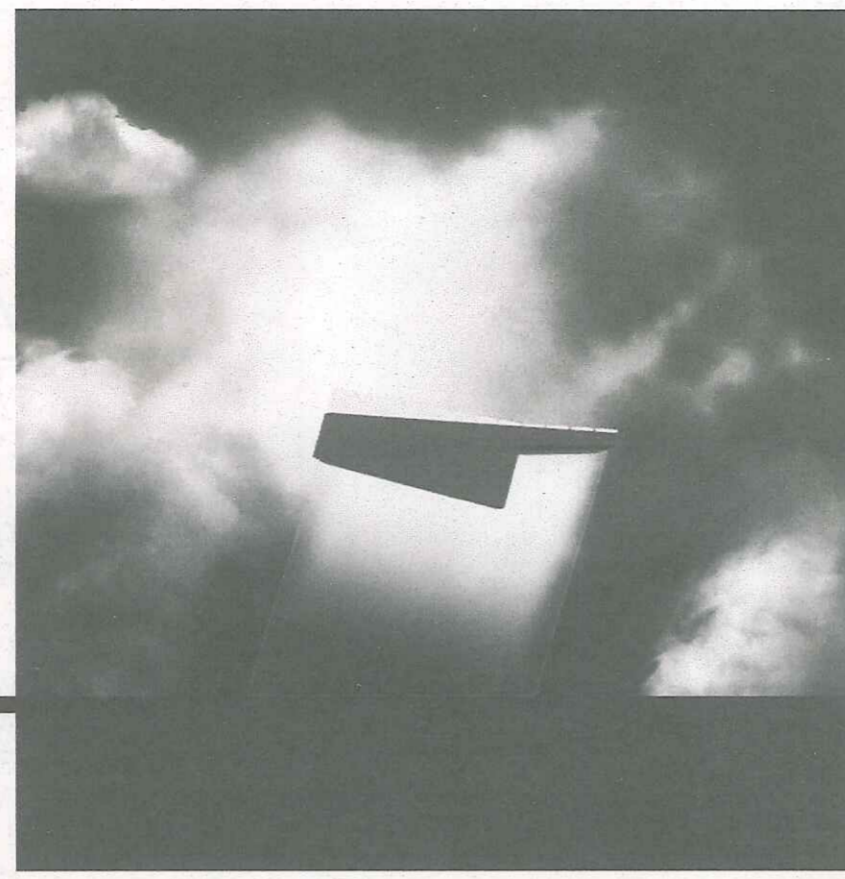
Only 500 human beings had the chance to experience it.

Take off ritual is a ceremony.





IT IS AN OBJECT THAT HAS THE DISTINCTION OF COMPOSING AN IMAGE WHEN IT IS PLACED IN A CERTAIN WAY



### THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

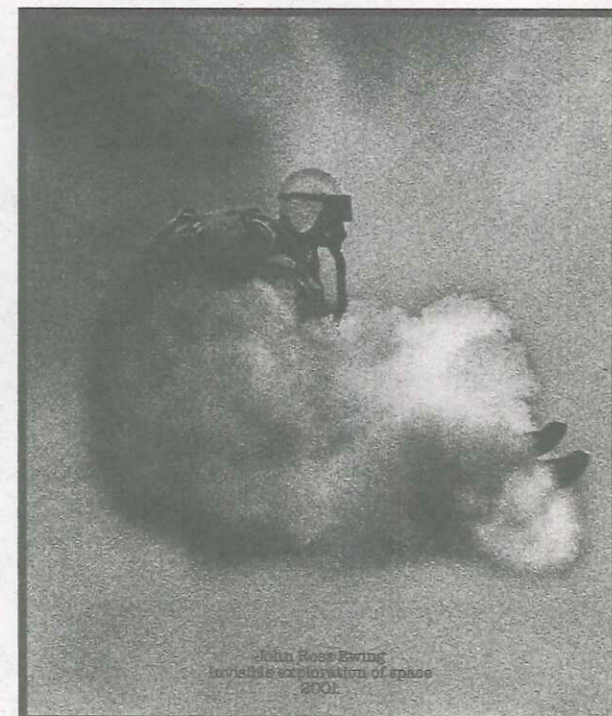
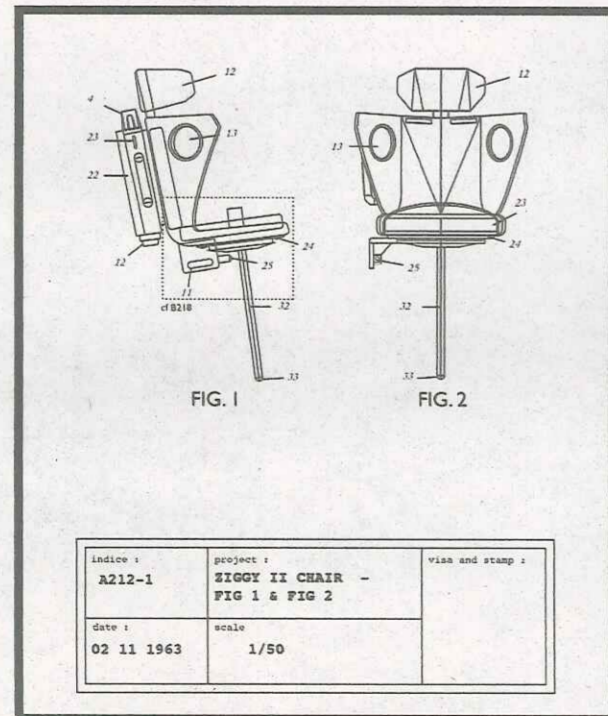
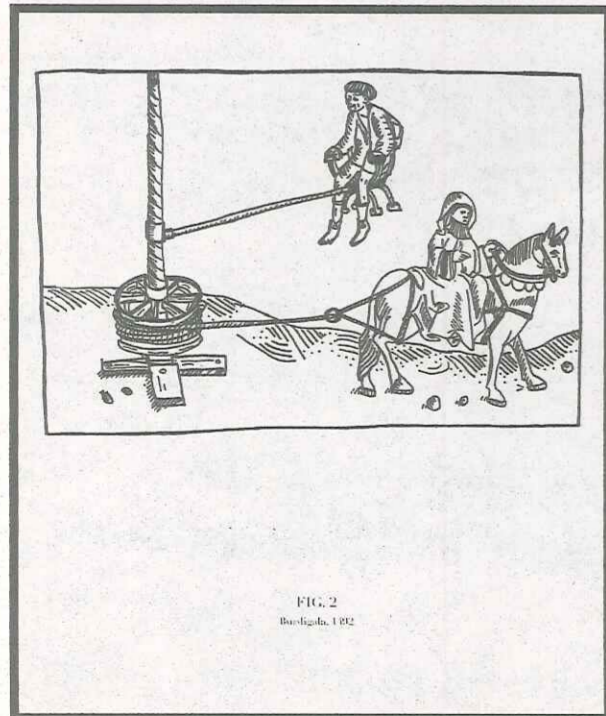
According to legend, Wan Hu (萬虎 or 萬戶) was a minor Chinese official, supposedly of the middle Ming dynasty (16th century), who attempted to become the world's first «astronaut» by being lifted by rockets into outer space.



### EXPERIENCE = NEW TYPOLOGY

The experience could be seen as the concept of motion sickness : the disorientation that happens when your body sees things that it associates with several disparate time periods at once, similar to what happens when the body receives the clashing messages that it's bouncing (from the eyes) and that it's stationary (from the body).

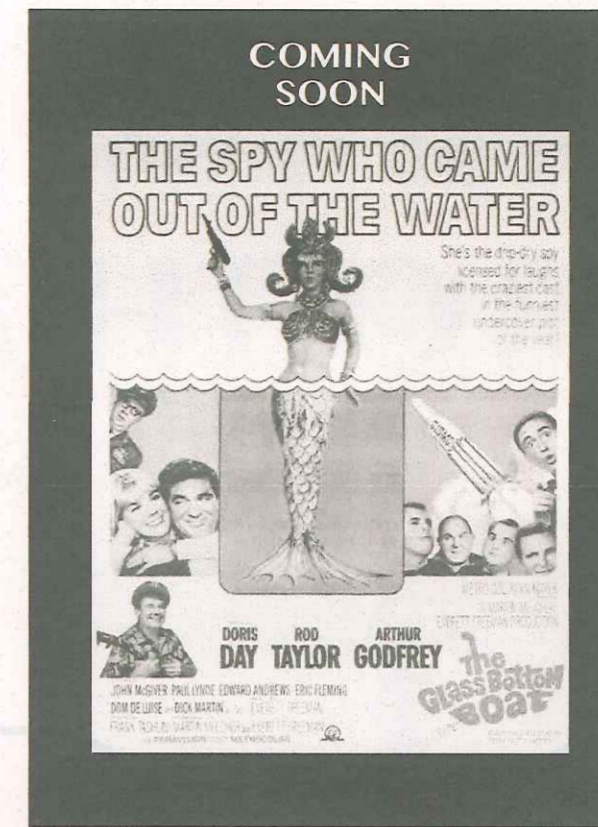
### FAKE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE OBJECT



Dreamed object & Real object

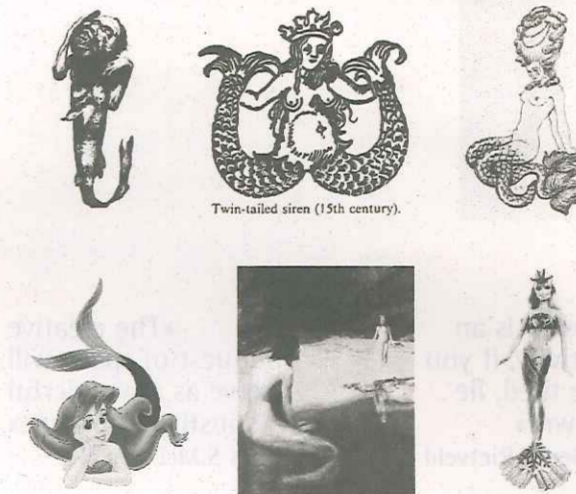
Over the time the symbolic existence and purpose of objects change. The project is about creating objects , which despite being practical, actually assist a certain kind of behavior rather than action.

What counts is the idea of a simingly functional object. The object becomes a prop and support structure for everyday life.



### VERSIONS

The \_\_\_\_\_ is a hybrid object, half-chair / half-rocket. The two beings coexist in the same whole with the prerogative of accessing the qualities of both ever being transformed, perpetually provocative and disturbing. The object should be seen not as an end result, but as a version. Just like mermaids do exist in a multitude of traditions, myths and meanings, the \_\_\_\_\_ has its own story.



Jung also observed: «A symbol always stands for something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. Symbols, moreover, are natural and spontaneous products. No genius has ever sat down with a pen or brush in hand and invented a symbol. No one can take a more or less rational thought, reached as a logical conclusion or by deliberate intent, and then give it «symbolic form». There are many symbols, however, that are not individual but collective in their nature and origin.

- FUNCTION - follows - FICTION -

The experience that I propose is a mix of traditional elements and technological effects.

THE THIRD KIND IS AN ESSAY.

The object does not belong to any space, but it weaves a powerful link with the body. It is like an actor on stage whose essential character remains elusive. Self contained, it is a combination of tradition and technology that reveals a human fantasm that existed for ages.

THAT IS, A 'VERSION' AMONGST OTHER POSSIBLE 'VERSIONS'.



THE MERMAID THEORY ALLOWS US TO MOVE FROM A COLLAGE



A NEW TYPOLOGY





# THE MERMAID THEORY

WHERE DOES THE WOMAN BECOME A FISH ?

*WOMEN AND FISH  
ARE TWO DISTINCT  
ELEMENTS,  
BUT THEIR ADDITION  
GENERATES SOMETHING  
DISTINGUISHABLE  
PERCEIVED AS AN  
ICONIC WHOLE.*

*WOMAN AND FISH  
HAVE DIFFERENT  
HISTORIES AND  
PROPERTIES.  
THE WOMAN TALKS,  
THE FISH BREATHES  
UNDERWATER.*

*THEORETICALLY,  
A WOMAN CAN CAPTURE  
A FISH AND SOME FISH  
CAN EAT A WOMAN.  
MIXING THEM  
ALLOWS YOU TO  
CREATE SOMETHING  
UNUSUAL,  
EXTRAORDINARY.  
SOMETHING THAT  
I WOULD CALL :  
"A THIRD KIND".*

*THE WOMAN GETS THE  
ABILITY TO LIVE  
UNDERWATER,  
THE FISH ACQUIRES  
SPEECH.*

*HOWEVER, THE WOMAN  
SACRIFICES HER ABILITY  
TO WALK ON LAND  
AND THE FISH HAS  
NO LONGER THE SAME  
PERCEPTION OF SPACE.*

*THIS NEW ASSOCIATION  
OF SHAPES IS ALSO  
A Juxtaposition  
of abilities*

the  
third  
kind