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Morphosis 1: jewelry as metamorphosis and metamorphosis as jewelry

Marlon Mercaldi

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"The interface power and semiotic manipulation of the computer and its alliance with the new channels of telecommunication, with the new technology of satellite transmission and fiber optics, form computer networks with planetary extension. Thus, information can cross oceans and continents as easily as one can go through the rooms of a building."

Lucia Santaella

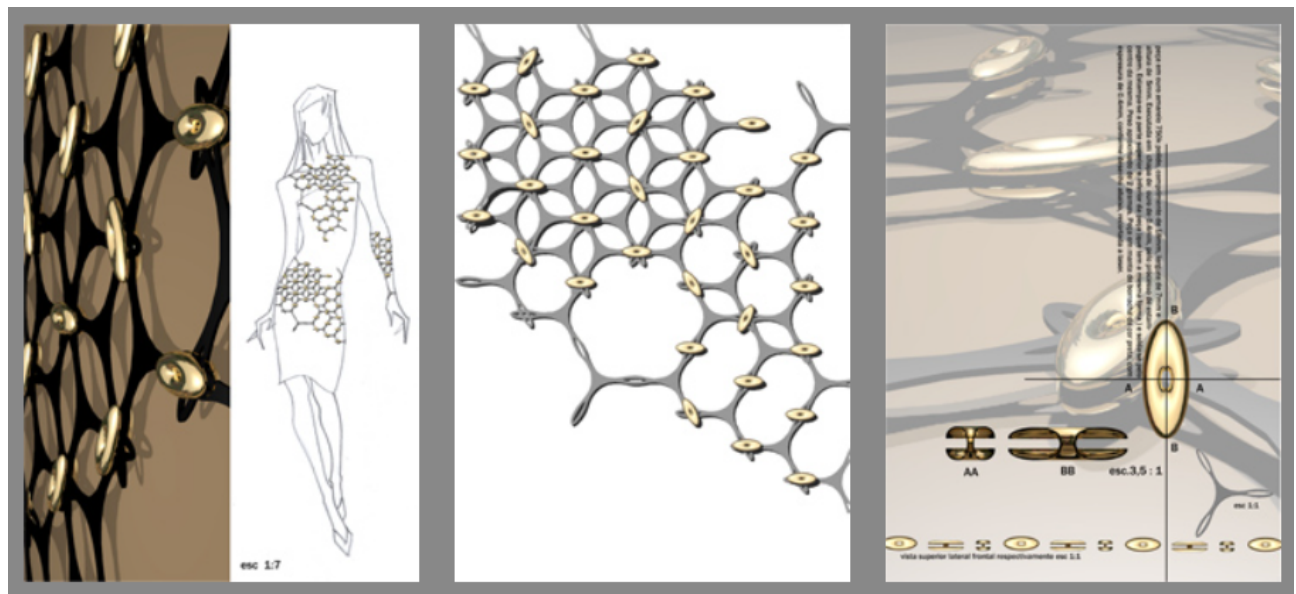
Concept

We witness the dilution of the concept of time x space. The information is accessible on a non-linear basis and in several places at once, deconstructing itself as quickly as it was generated. Territorial and cultural references are stressed and weakened at the same time. Marc Augé speaks of "non-places" as all the devices and methods aimed at the movement of people, as opposed to the sociological notion of place - airports, for example.

The concept of the Morphosis 1 jewelry is based on this context of paradoxes, where information is constructed and deconstructed almost simultaneously. Its time is no longer just

the time of using it, but the assembly time on the body. The space occupied is not a place defined a priori by the form of jewelry - ring finger, collar to the neck, etc.. - But to be defined by the user, which may be in fact several places at once.

The decline in the notion of the time/space relation in Morphosis 1 is materialized by a network or system of modules which is molded around the body. Its formal reference are structures found in nature, such as hexagonal molecular chains existing in the carbon or diamond. The construction is based on the principle of analogy, reflecting a natural systemic form, in a scale micro to macro.



Object

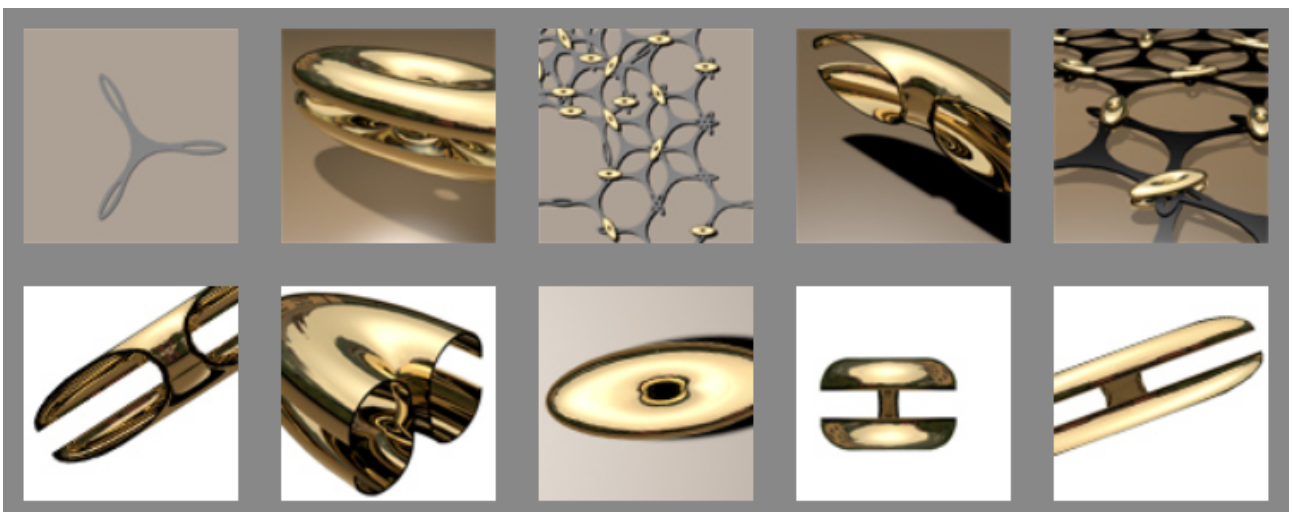
Morphosis 1 consists of a mesh of rubber modules connects to each other by gold elements. It can either be in contact with the skin, forming, for example, a structure around the neck and chest, as involving the entire forearm. It can be placed over the clothing, creating a plot around it. The jewelry is constructed in a moment to vanish in another - such as information networks - depending on the user's mood. Modulation allows the creation of different plots with different densities, between full and empty ones. It is also possible to overlay plots using a different inclination of the modules, thus generating new formal possibilities and greater density of the mesh. It is a jewel without a fixed form, which materializes, through analogies, concepts such as ephemerality and natural systems in geometric patterns chosen by the user.

The Morphosis 1 is not intended for mass production or the wide spread. It was designed for the AngloGold Ashanti Competition, a gold mining company, headquartered in South Africa. The competition is a biannual event taking place in various parts of the world. The theme of the

contest was the paradox. The piece's main material should be 18k gold, with all its possible alloys: yellow, white, black, green, pink.

This requirement poses some questions. First, about the value of objects, which is based not only on the use of materials, but also its significance and its design. There are rings of concrete and bronze or silver more expensive than gold rings, or rings of paper, more expensive than silver. The first jewelry, according to Joseph Campbell, were the teeth or claws of animals used as amulets and it was believed that they would help their user to acquire the qualities of that animal. Again, the value of these jewels was not related to the material itself, but to the meaning assigned to it. The meaning lies not in things themselves but in their significance.

Second, we study today the design of molecules and atoms, changing the structure of matter, via nanotechnology. Materials with unusual properties such as hybrid and fully composite materials. Materials that are still expensive and more expensive than gold, but that will become commonplace in the near future.



Process

In the Morphosis 1 design process roughs or sketches were not realized. The piece was modeled directly in digital environment, using the program Rhinoceros. Manual records of the design process were not made since the changes were saved by the program.

The organization of architectural design thinking - or thinking in general - is how to restructure a maze of ideas, often confused, resulting in a clearer way, as the thread of Ariadne to Theseus in the myth of the Minotaur. The idea is ancient. The maze is continuously re-configured through the ages in concepts and ideas different of the previous ideas.

Any object, however simple it may be, results from the process that culminated in its final form. Results of the path taken, but which way? Finally, it can be anyone. In the contemporary processes of design, some designers work on high tech issues, such as nanotechnology, while others explore the unusual plasticity of materials already widely used, such as wood, for example. In this sense, the process of creating a Morphosis was no different from others.

It was only one way. It could have been another.