

Implantation



Trans-humanists, bio-hackers, grinders, body hackers, Magnet implants under skin. Fingers, arms, palms, the web between thumb and index, where else? RFID implants, basically anywhere you can imagine. The uses of different implants in different places are obviously not the same, and don't have the same effects. Magnetic implant though, they are seen to be classical, old school body hacks, the magnetic implants are most effective in the sense that it is integrated into the body's nerve system, meaning there is a feed of information perceivable, in this case a sort of magnetic vision. Whereas a RFID implant is purely there for other devices to detect and respond to the presence of the chip in turn, for example; sign into a personal computer account, identification, pay as a VIP. There is no feedback to the user, he or she or the animal chipped, gains no sensory advantages.

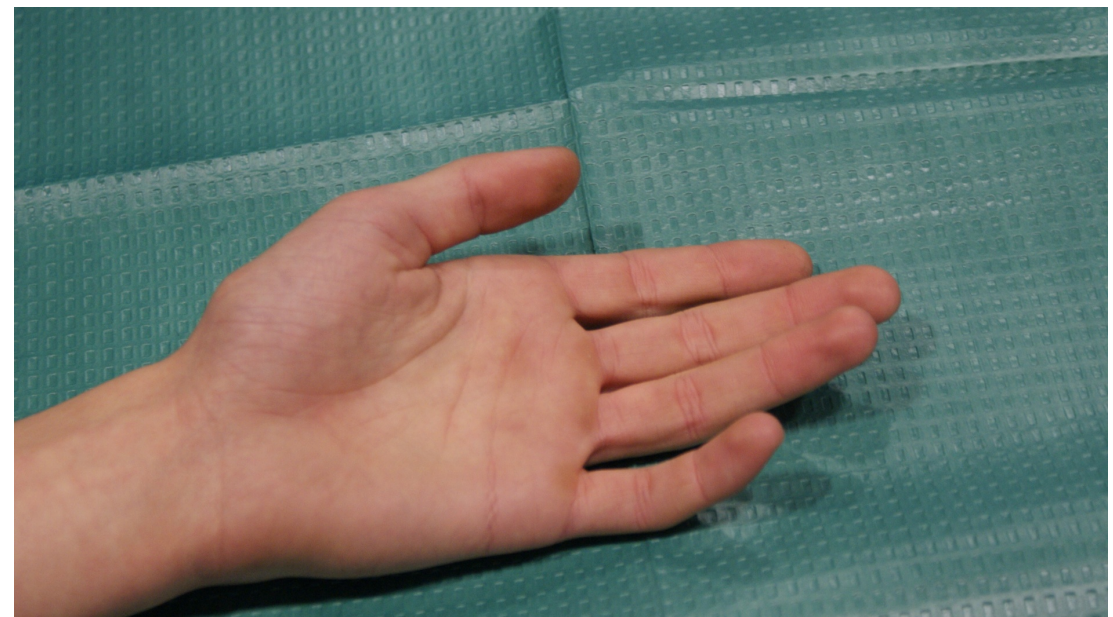
The procedure

People will either go through a professional piercer, a doctor or perform the operation on the kitchen counter. Some go to real lengths and endurance to introduce objects into their bodies, which is more cost effective. Others might opt for professional intervention. I heard about the idea after reading body hacking, by Cyril FiÈvet, a French writer with a clear enthusiasm for body modification.

Although insisting he does not promote DIY body hacking, he does reference J.P. Satres 'je pense donc je suis' (I think so I am), transforming it into 'je modifie donc je suis' (I modify so I am). There is also an abundance of forums, articles, channels and videos available online, describing and documenting people's experiences. Yet, no one has managed to successfully describe the feeling a magnet implant makes, available.

Why?

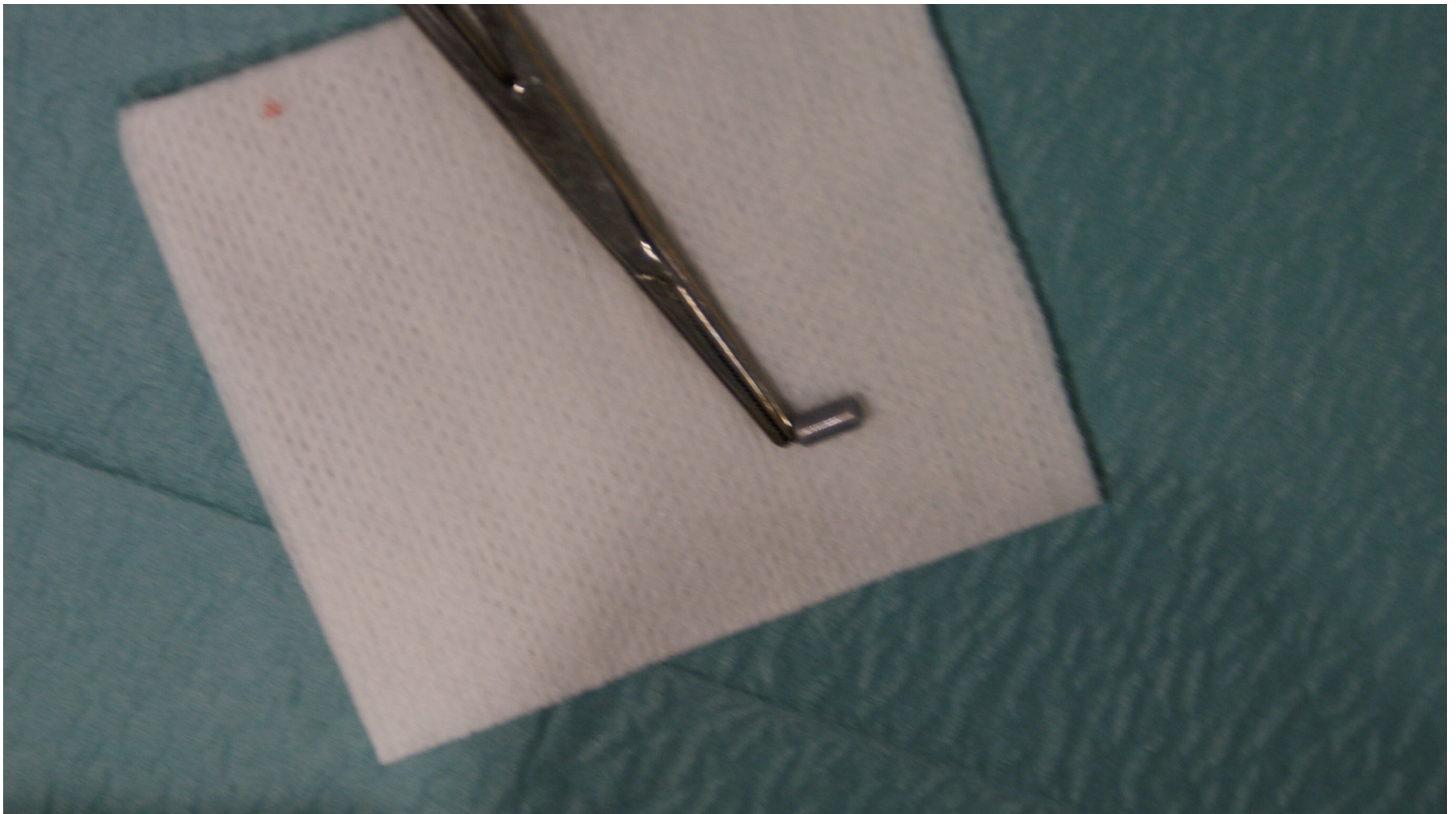
Would be the first question in most people's heads. Some speculate, saying we must not be 'properly tuned into our biological senses. And thus, we search for answers faraway, when in matter of fact the question is close.'





Personally I was tempted to describe accurately the feeling the implant can give, the extent of the sense gained, the experiences both positive and negative and personally a better understanding of the procedure and what follows.

Lyon, 11 o'clock, 11th of November 2013, the rendez-vous with a piercer who agreed to perform the implant. I brought a friend to photograph the whole procedure. The piercer put Moriarty on, I had no choice in the matter. We talked a bit about how the procedure would go, and the recovery and asked a couple of questions. He put two vague marks on the skin, one for the incision, one for where the magnet was supposed to end up (, which was not where is ended up at all). Local anesthetic was injected, in through the tip of the finger heading down towards the rest of the hand. As he pressed down on the plunger I felt the finger swell up, something like at the beginning of a balloon, when it resists a little. After taking the needle out, I realized that it had indeed swollen and was very bulbous.



The first cut was painless as it was most of the time. From time to time I could feel the cut pried apart, it wasn't painful I just could feel that my finger was being widened from the inside. It's hard to imagine that it wasn't painful at all, but it really wasn't. He had to re-cut the hole as it wasn't big enough, with he did three times with scaple, and poked countless time with two small poles, one larger than the other. There were also two pliers, one for grabbing, one for spreading. The implant measures 3mm by 7mm, it is a cylinder 3mm in diameter. The neodymium is coated with a thin layer of parylene because neodymium has a tendency to rust and being a rare earth metal is mildly toxic. The magnet itself went in really quickly. Animated GIF available online: <http://www.moqu.us/m/Kw36Ns>

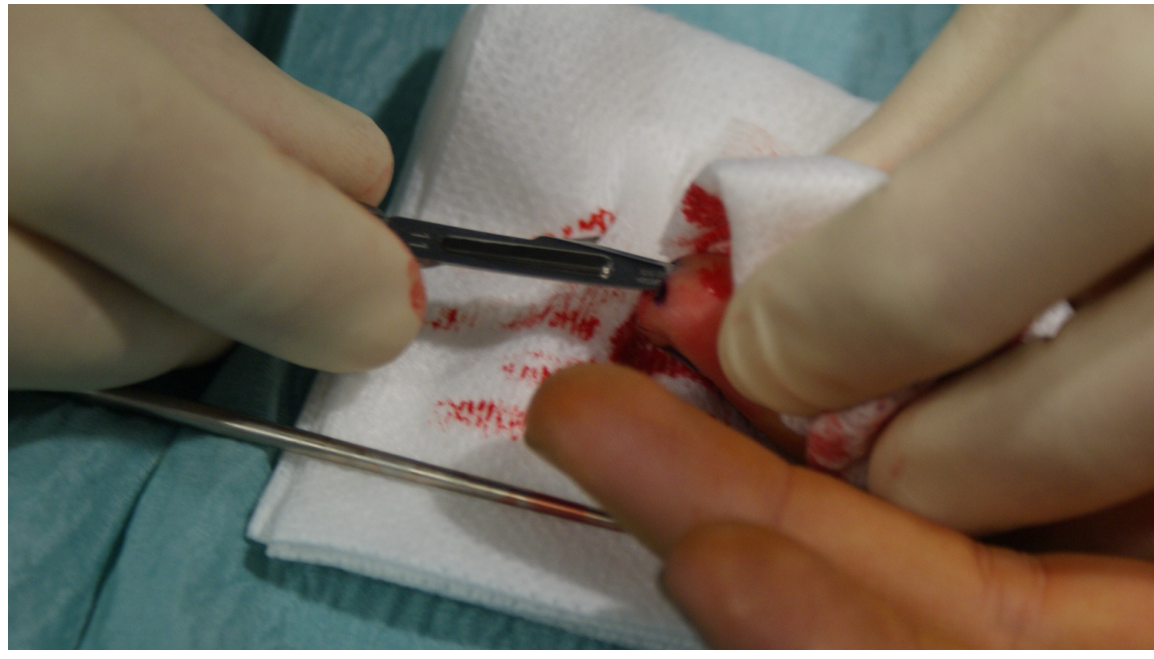
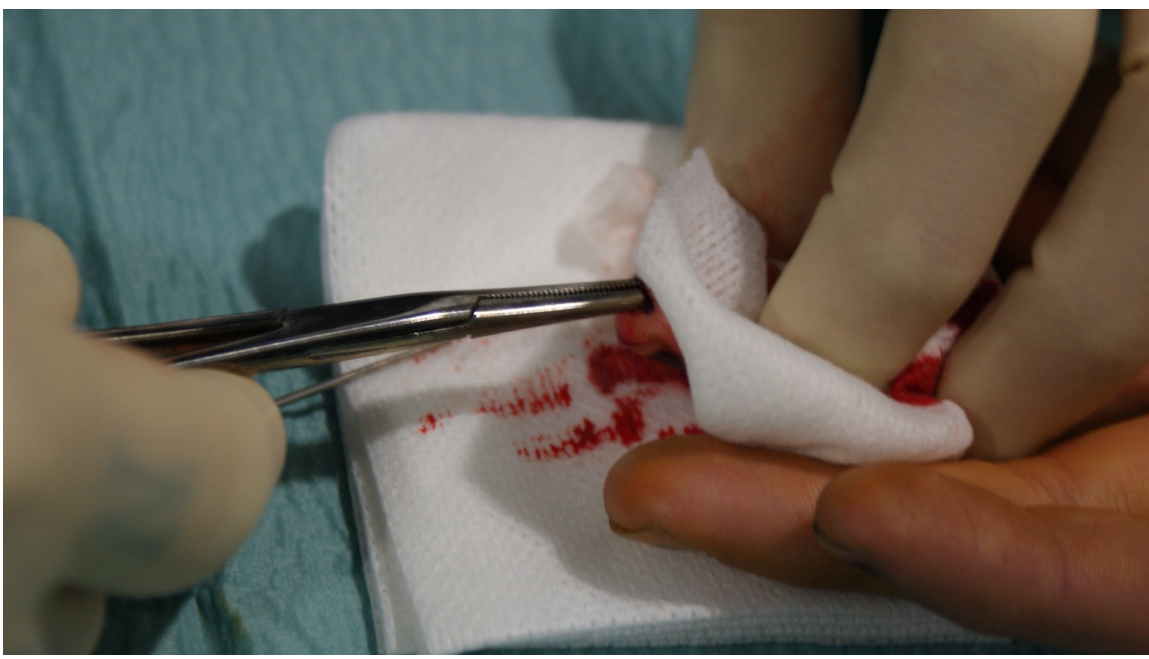


Five senses is the commodity for humans as it is for most mammals. Considering the very small number of people undertaking this procedure, most people are completely satisfied with their five senses, and even find it bewildering some would try to increase their perceptions with technologies. Most people are content with their five, five a day, commute, communication lifestyles. The urge to modify, alter, change our own bodies seem to me to be natural, even logical. Humans power lies in their ability to transform our environment to our bodies, and adapt our tools to the surroundings. Would it not seem the logical continuation to take the next step altering ourselves to understand and function better, quicker, more precisely in our environment. Our brain is undoubtedly capable of processing so much more than we currently are, relying on our 'valid' bodies. We have made such advanced inventions such as computers, wifi, radio, 4G, telecommunications, MRI, robots, the list goes on, granting us efficiency and power far beyond our bodily capabilities. Our brain is capable of operating complex systems, machinery, even automatic prostheses simply by using our brain. Is it a supercomputer with a shell weaker than its own potential?

After the operation, my finger was numb for the next couple of hours, until the anesthetic wore off, then painful, I was well aware of something new under the finger's flesh. The pain dull, until I would accidentally lean on it, or press it in any way. I woke up this morning lying on my hand, shockingly painful.

12 november

Turning up at the school library, walking through the doors and the security tag detector, I could feel it vibrate, not as if I was holding a magnet, it was the very inside my finger that vibrated. Though it is still tender and swollen, the vibration was neither painful nor pleasant. It was something like a very mild electrical current. The texture felt like when you run a finger along a phone, ipod or device that is charging, that strange rippled texture, different from when it's running off it's batteries. When I got home, I plugged my computer in, I was holding the charger (or resistance block), as I did so, I could feel the current passing through. It was something like a vibration or an oscillation, but not as if the finger was being vibrated by something physical, exterior. As if the finger itself hummed. It would hum or purr if it was a sound. I cannot think of a taste it could be, or a sight, it's so new, a strange feeling, hard to translate into our senses, as it is to explain what sight is like to a blind person. In any case it's possible so far to feel the contour of an electromagnetic field, and therefore the direction from which it comes. Walking through anti-theft detectors, it is distinctly stronger, but also it feels as though it is surrounding, not something next to or underneath. It isn't a bother. It isn't a pleasure.



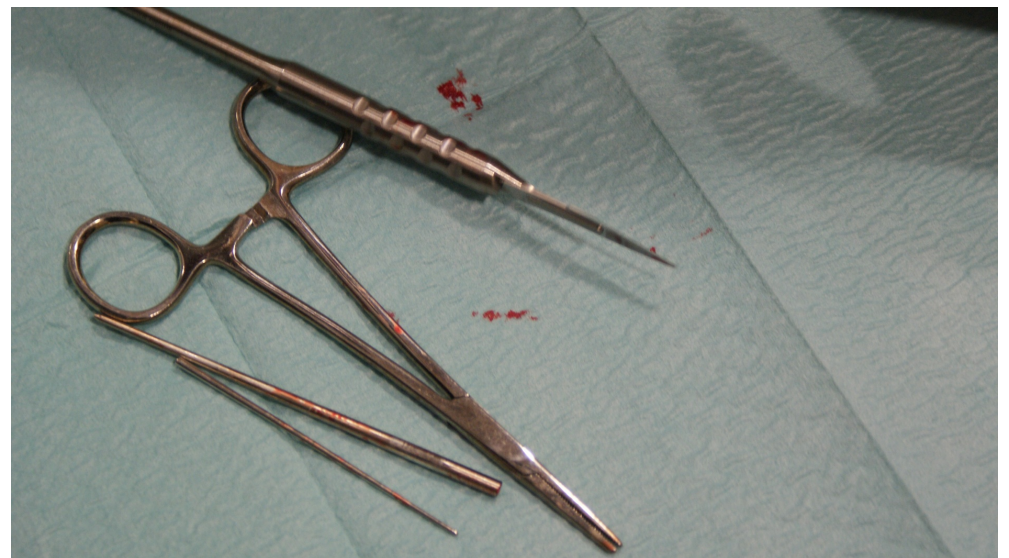
13 November

There is not much to report today, I can still feel the detectors, chargers and whether my computer is charged, in the process of or unplugged, also some electrical cables, very subtly. The swelling has gone down, and for the most part it doesn't hurt, except the tip of the finger where the cut and the stitches are, or if I unwillingly squash, bash, strain or unintentionally get another magnet stuck to the finger (which is by far the most painful).



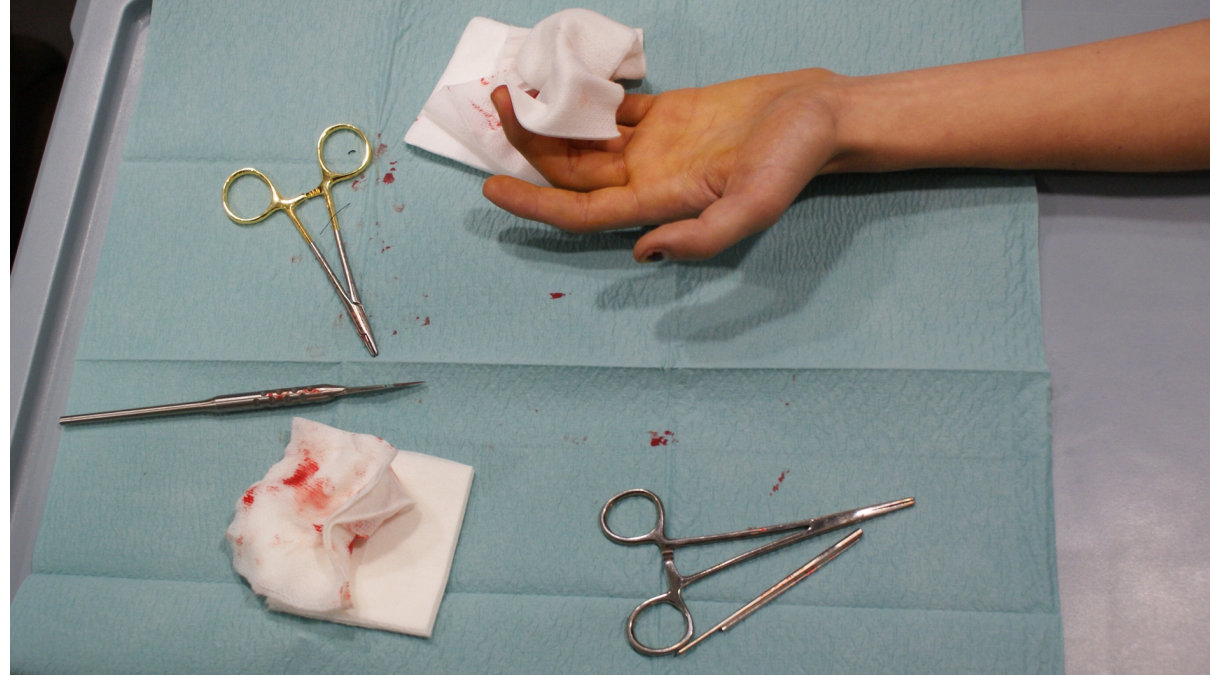
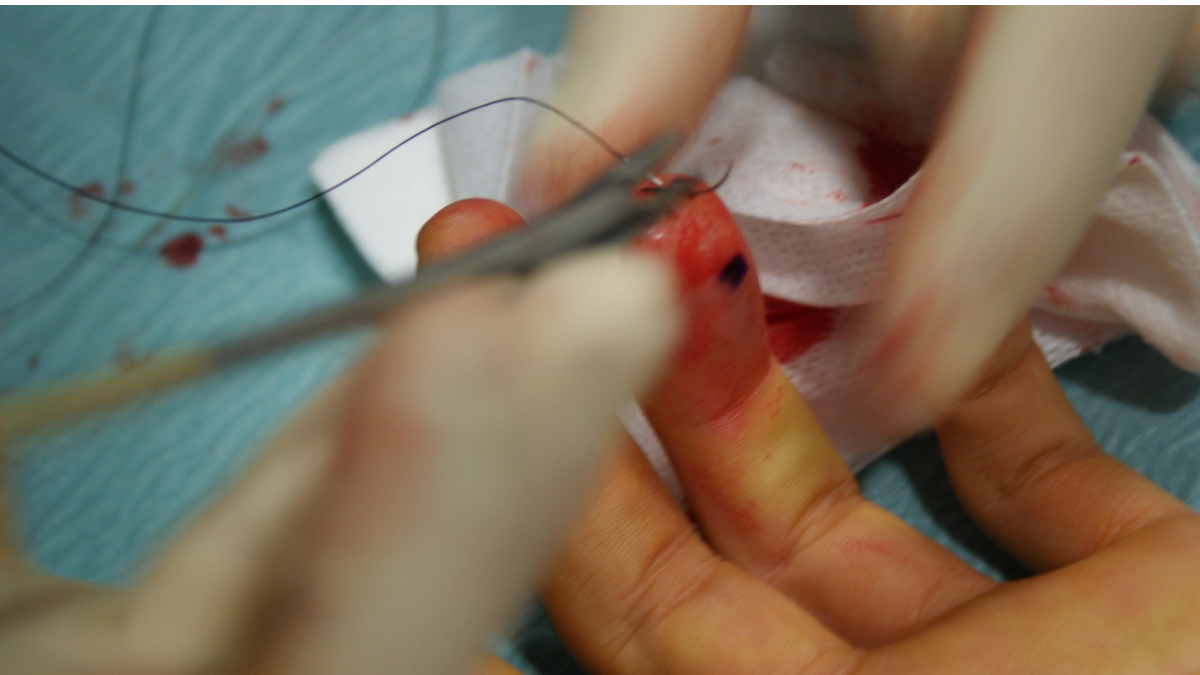
14 November

In the morning there was absolutely no change, I was yearning for something new (, a feeling or finding). The pain was a little less noticeable, but there was bruising now. I was working the whole day so didn't have much time to find new fields, devices, places, sensations. But I wandered, given the strength of the magnetic field around the library entrance, I thought it might be possible for someone holding the finger to feel it. I experimented and found they could feel something, I thought that was wonderful. I tried it on different people some were reluctant, most described it as a gentle vibration. Clearly the feeling is not the same for the implanted person as for the outsider holding on to the finger. I since realized the same effect would happen if the person was holding neodymium in their own hand, but that's not nearly as fun. I also found out that having water on your hands makes it a much weaker feeling, water must then slow or stop the waves from passing as easily. So I wandered, what else blocks electromagnetic waves, or on the contrary accentuates them. I went into town that night and was delighted to come up with a trick, simply by picking metallic objects out of people's hands, some guessed there is a magnet involved, few believed I had one in my finger, many bought me drinks.



15 November

I woke up to find, one of the stitches had come undone, it still went through the cut, just the knot that held it closed was gone. I didn't panic, from the look of things it was that of a small paper cut on a hypochondriac's finger. I ended up ripping it out with my teeth, painful admittedly, but it was friday night and things seem sensible that cease to be on saturday morning. That night I was working the lights for a concert at the theatre, as I made transitions from one light to another, I could feel the difference in my finger. My perception isn't strong enough to tell which is which by feeling alone, but I am adamant it is possible, meaning I could in the future feel if the brightness on stage is equal throughout a performance. Is it possible to be a good lighting director and be blind? Maybe not, but it does make you wander where the limits of a magnetic implant are. I suppose, the limit is that of imagining possible utilities for the implant.



16 November

Up until today sticking anything on the magnet was a pain, since this morning it doesn't hurt at all, unless what's stuck on is also a magnet, that hurts. there are more magnets in our everyday devices than one would have been thought. I felt a variety of pulsations and vibrations as I was walking around Lyon, present in certain spots, squares, streets, shops, etc. The exact whereabouts of the motor, generator, resistor or whatever it might be is still very ambiguous. Every now and then it just pronounces itself, in sometimes very unexpected places.

17 November

It is difficult to explain with other senses what it feels like.

If it were a sound it would hum, or a note cut in a strong wind, but the wind can't be felt.

If it were a taste it might be somewhere between plastic and rice crackers.

If it were a sight it would obviously be a machine detailing vital statistics in a hospital, or an array of electricians tools.

If it were a smell it would be slightly warmed wires, dust and gaffer tape.

If it were a texture, glitter, rough carpet, electric toothbrush, pages flicking in a big book, running a finger along a metal device charging its batteries, running a finger along a long grid or fence.

As a matter of fact, it is a feeling, or a texture coming from the inside of the finger. The brain is capable of instantly processing the feeling as electromagnetic waves. Some have come to call the perception magnetic vision, I would disagree with this name, for two reasons. The first being that vision out of all the senses is the most remote one; you may be able to see something miles away without being able to smell, hear, taste or feel it. It would have to be something more sculptural, more textural, as the preexisting sense it relies on is that of touch, calling it a vision seems simply wrong. The secondly, to say it is magnetic vision or magnetic touch is to naming it partially, it is more than just magnetic, it is also electricity, and manipulations of electricity.

18 november

Today brought the first frost, going out without gloves I noted how the cold changed the feeling, it is much harder to feel the surrounding magnetic fields. I took the last stitches out this morning, it is more comfortable now the skin isn't held together by string. Walking around a shopping center, there were a variety of magnetic fields, it is truly astounding the range of sensations picked up by a piece of metal.

I think I should take the opportunity to write about the specific metal, it's called Neodymium, it's a rare-earth magnet or rare-earth metal, with the particularity of being the strongest permanent magnet to date. There is a little known case of a person losing their finger tip after two neodymium magnets snapped together from 50 centimeters apart.



19 november

In most cases I can tell in a computer where the processor, hard drive or CD-ROM drive is.

There are two kinds of electromagnetic fields. A permanent magnet field with feels like a tug which is like a heavy compact object glued to a fingertip, or a push, basically like when you hold to magnets so they bound off each other, but much more precisely. You can feel the different degrees of magnetism, layers in invisible 3dimensional fields surrounding us. An electromagnetic field is different.... is perceivable electrical manipulations such as storing electricity, changing it's frequency, motors, generators, resistance units, lighting equipment, anti-theft detectors, cables, CD-ROM drives, hard drives, unidentified fields in town, public buildings, squares streets. Most of what is detailed above is this kind of electromagnetic fields.

First installment of journal,
there will be new editions as
the project advances, and I
become more accustomed
to the magnet.

2013.

Kobas Vincent Verschuren.