

ZOMBIES, CYBORGS & CHIMERAS: CREEPY, UNCANNY & CONTESTABLE BODIES

In this age of body hacking, gene mapping, prosthetic augmentation, organ swapping, face transplants, gender reassignments, AI and AL, what it means to be other and what generates aliveness and affect becomes problematic. This is a time of Circulating Flesh, Fractal Flesh and Phantom Flesh. A time of extreme absence and alien experience. Of bodies performing in remote spaces with split physiologies and multiple agencies, where bodies are simultaneously possessed and performing. Being neither one nor the other, being neither here nor there, but partly present and mostly absent. Subjectively, the body now experiences itself as a more extruded system, rather than an enclosed structure. The self becomes situated beyond the skin. It is partly through this extrusion that the body becomes empty. But this radical emptiness is not through a lack but rather through excess. Bodies are profoundly obsolete. Bodies are inadequate, empty, involuntary, and absent to their agency. We are living in an age of excess and indifference. Of prosthetic augmentation and extended operational systems. An age of Organs Without Bodies, of organs awaiting bodies. Cadavers can be preserved forever with plastination and comatose bodies can be sustained indefinitely on life-support systems, whilst cryogenically suspended bodies await reanimation at some imagined future. The dead, the near-dead, the un-dead and the yet to be born now exist simultaneously. This is an age of the Cadaver, the Comatose and the Chimera. Of Zombies, Cyborgs, Hybrids and Humanoids. The creepy and the uncanny proliferate. The body has become contemporary chimera of meat, metal and code.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Stelarc explores alternate anatomical architectures. He is an artist whose projects incorporate prosthetics, robotics, biotechnology, medical imaging and the internet. He has performed with a Third Hand, a Stomach Sculpture, Exoskeleton and a Prosthetic Head. He is surgically constructing and stem-cell growing an ear on his arm that will be internet enabled. In 1996 he was made an Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh and in 2002 was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws by Monash University, Melbourne. In 2010 was awarded the Ars Electronica Hybrid Arts Prize. Between 2014-2016 was the Director of the Alternate Anatomies Lab. In 2015 he received the Australia Council's Emerging and Experimental Arts Award. Stelarc is currently a Distinguished Research Fellow and Director of the Alternate Anatomies Lab, School of Design and Art (SODA) at Curtin University. His artwork is represented by the Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne.