

Transhumanism Daily

Mingqing Sally Yuan

Artist statement

Augmentation in many forms have always been a part of contemporary society, orthodontics being a personal example. The vintage dental phantom symbolises the longevity of these practices. A large portion of the population have undertaken procedures to surgically and technologically enhance their quality of life, such as artificial teeth and prosthesis. People actively seek out augmentation to heighten their autonomy. Are these normalised augmentations not also a facet of transhumanism? This work aims to ask several questions of the relationship between identity, the body and technology.

The religious imagery is presented in relation to the soul, representing a kind of transcendence from the mortal form. Distortion and disruption of the human form is a potent element of horror. Ethicists believe a transhumanist agenda runs the risk of trivialising the human body, stating it treats the physical form as a 'hunk of meat' to be trimmed, the gruesome imagery of raw flesh and twist of limbs represent the body-horror basis of these fears.

Transhumanism is a philosophy that has long since fascinated both artists and scientists, a classic trope of science fiction that mirrors the pursuit of the advancement of humanity through technological augmentation. It is an interdisciplinary investigation of the ethical implications of artificially prolonging life and artificial enhancement of the body.

Augmentation has complex and potentially perilous influences on the current understanding of humanity and what we consider to be human. These concerns are also compounded by the psychological impact of augmentation that may contradict the internalised concept of the body. It poses the question of how a human would adapt their identity and personhood around these augmentations.

Transhumanism revolves around more than just physicality, so what is to be said about humanity as a spiritual force? Are we only human if the body is human, or does humanity extend beyond our flesh? Perhaps my perspective is controversial, but it appears to me that if our soul is indeed the extension of ourselves irrespective of the physical form then a person would remain human even if the original form is lost.

