

BODY AND TECHNOLOGY

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SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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FRIDAY 9AM-4PM

course description:

In this class, we will examine the cultural-technological construction of the body, bound up in ideas of race, gender, sexuality, health, industrial progress, and more. Using phenomenology, history and habitation as lenses to see more clearly we will complicate the body's condition as technologically dependent. We will create projects that provoke the body to act more as interpreter or director and technology as tool. This course will work to create new, embodied, sensorial relationships to our surroundings. Readings, projects and assignments are designed to hone in on ways we can actively engage the body in that process of understanding. The focus of this course will be to critically engage the body through experiential and experimental projects.

readings:

*These and other readings are posted on the course site under "links" and marked "READINGS" + title.

- 1) *"Introduction"* and *"Challenge and Collapse: The Nemesis of Creativity"* from *Understanding Media* by Marshall McLuhan
- 2) *"Perfecting Mankind: Eugenics and Photography"* curatorial statement by Carol Squires
- 3) *"Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game"* by Lisa Nakamura
- 4) *"In/Visible Body: Notes on Biotechnologies' Vision"* by Lucia Sommer
- 5) *"Filming the World Laboratory: Cybernetic History in Daz Netz"* by Brian Holmes
- 6) *"Globalization and Unsettling: Whither Design?"* by Saskia Sassen
- 7) *"Hacking Hacking"* by C-Lab

ongoing assignment:

In your notebook, create a catalogue of projects that respond to each assignment. Throughout the semester we will **visit the library***. There, you will look for artists, collaborative groups, designers, architects, etc that get you excited, inspire ideas or challenge your thinking. Keep a **photocopy** of the artist's work in a **8"x10"**

notebook. Keep information on the artwork such as artist's name, location of work, materials, title of the work, and 2-3 sentences describing the work (how does it function, who is it for, what is the social and/or political context of the work). Throughout the semester we will call on this research to share ideas, generate sketches and to present themes that emerge. As I talk with you individually about your work, I will look at your notebook as evidence of your investigation and progress.

For each assignment, you are required to find a minimum of 8 projects/artworks that inform your thinking. Adhere one image per page of your notebook. At the end of each project and end of the semester, I'll grade your notebook and will look for at least 32 'catalogue' pages.

* Library means library, for this assignment use printed books, NOT computer print-outs.

project #1 The Recent Past

Our ability to quickly navigate the world or communicate over long distances has been made possible by relatively recent, often unacknowledged inventions. These inventions have, in short time, altered experiences and shifted our expectations. Imagine what blue-tooth cell phone adapters might look-like if micro-chips had not been invented. How could you have have hundreds of analog maps at your fingertips if map applications weren't on you cell phone? How would you learn more about a monument or tourist site in a city without 2D barcodes? How would our friends know what we are up to without Twitter or FB?

For this project, make a new- or old- technology that assists the body. Does the function of the technology have anything to do with the design? How does the design of the technology interface with the body? How does this new or old object further mediate our existence today?

Oct. 1 * CRITIQUE DAY!

project #2: Feel Feeling

Like 3-D glasses many objects, materials or situations can alter the way we feel or sense the world around us. Those experiences can be sensational, reflective or turn our attention to part of the body that we otherwise didn't think of. For this project, use the head as a starting point to design an object that limits or enhances one or more senses. This object must be able to fit on a person(ex. head or shoulders) it must be secure, it can use internal or external mechanisms to alter sound, smell, light, perception, balance or other senses. This object should be portable and move with the wearer, and should think about how technology can extend or limit the reach of the body.

Nov. 5 * CRITIQUE DAY!

project #3: Skin-as-habitat

Many animals have developed skins or shells for protection or habitation in a space. Animals, unlike humans, are quite regional- they live in and evolve with in specific areas, developing appendages, shells, skins, colors and other adaptable parts. Humans, on the other hand, have created non-bodily materials to help mediate habitation and protection. For this project, create an object that helps the human body mediate, adapt to or inhabit a specific place or time. This object could relate to mobility, protection, temperature, ability to move external objects or fit in to spaces. This project considers the body in a place or time and therefore must have a careful consideration of both.

Dec. 17 * CRITIQUE DAY!