

"It's the basic condition of life to be required to violate our own identity."

- Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

"Technology is not neutral. We're inside of what we make, and it's inside of us. We're living in a world of connections — and it matters which ones get made and unmade."

-Donna J. Haraway

As a human being and creator, I am interested in cultural subversions of the artificial and natural, and how transhuman technology redefines and enhances human nature and biological identity. My work explores blurred divisions between the visceral body and machine, tradition and the new, hand and machine; artificialia and naturalia adapt together; not at odds, but mutate, fuse, and heal to create new hybridized natures and identities. I am interested in these ideas from a desire and attraction to the technological capabilities in body modifications, such as prosthesis and medical implants; necessary and life saving adornments that enhance lives that were dealt a short hand by nature.

In December of 2002 I had the surgery that fused titanium rods and screws into my spine to correct an extreme case of scoliosis. The extremity of the curve left an observable deformity in my gate, shoulders, and general stature in addition to compressed internal organs and bones. As a result I often was teased and bullied throughout my life, leaving behind internal scars that continue to heal. For the surgery a 16" incision was made down the length of my spine as well as a four inch incision at my hip, where a segment of bone was taken, ground, and mixed with the cement for the implants. This glue was used to cement the titanium into my bones and would for years to come promote bone growth over the metal. The entire process took six hours and I grew four inches from the elongation. This procedure was a life changing experience for me, and I am constantly in awe of the other people who have told me their own stories of modification and healing. Through these interactions I have found mental healing through connection and empathy.

As a maker and artist I have come to fixate on the visuals of organic bone structures growing over metal bars and screws. It has become the intangible object of my affection. Always present but never within grasp, attained yet not. Using the modified human body as the site and inspiration for the work I create I draw upon the visual vocabulary of the past and future, the lines between the ways of traditional craft and of the new, the body and the machine become fused together. I am compelled to create pieces with a distorted mimicry of biological nature, the exterior and interiors of the human body become pieces meant to be worn but act as a facsimile of what is at work beneath the skin.

My own material and process are a reflection of these ideas; Plastic for its tactile, utilitarian, materialistic, and problematic immortal qualities, for, unlike our own bodies, it is what remains after we are gone; the evidence of our existence, and the last thing left. Using a 3D pen, the extruded plasticity bestows upon the work a machine made immortality, bone forms within the work contort and mutate through fusion of hand and machine, referencing biotic sites of trauma, fragmentation, reassembly, mutation and adaptation. Through the use of the pen these objects bridge a gap between the 3D printed form and gestural hand drawing. With implanted screws, they become reminiscent of the human anatomy with medical implantations meant to bend the body to their will. It is the uncanny aspect of these pieces that make them alluring; the ambiguity in form, color, and a tactile confusion creates a morbid sense of uncertainty and conflict, as they appear to exist between the artificial man made and organic tissue.

By focusing on the relationship I have with my own body and my relationship to making, I learn and grow; contemplating the human connection to the artificial and the relationship we have to our own bodies. These bone forms contort and fragment with the fusion of the hand and machine, creating a site of trauma fragmentation, reassembly, disassembly, healing and growth. Underlying this bending the body to our will in the desire to create a better or more functional version of ourselves- a more whole self. While I do not repair a broken teapot, or mend a tear, I look forward to a different kind of preservation. In the act of creation, I find my own self-preservation and healing from mental and physical scars, and in this healing, create a new transhuman identity. It is my hope that others will find healing and connection through it as well.