

Synthetics

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'Synthetics' is a body of work, using oil clay, Digital 3D, sound and photography; inspired by the ethics and possible ideas surrounding technology and the future of humans. The future of technology is always advancing, it is in our everyday lives, almost every single day, and in many forms. One day I'm sure Artificial Intelligence will arise; I believe robotic consciousness could exist. What paths would the world take if robotic humans were created, would a new species arise? a hybrid of steel and flesh? The future of technology and the ethics behind it is something that greatly interests me as an artist.

I was interested in Aaron Beck for the way he displays technological body enhancements surrounding combat and violence. Beck creates in digital 2D but perfects the three-dimensional painting style. I looked at his style and the types of real-life objects he uses to create a strong aesthetic. I also researched into Stelarc and his real-life body enhancements and stimulants. I was able to construct designs similar to his pieces, in a very greyscale autographic style. Another main inspiration was Ilya Nazarov and his concept art for Fallout 4 (video game). I was drawn to his character art, concerning the deterioration of artificial humans. Sculpting techniques were studied from Lori Kiplinger Pandy and Jiwoong Cheh which allowed me to create a more realistic sculpture.

I looked further into social groups, power and oppression creating a multiple realities surround how Artificial Intelligence would fit into the human world. My first thoughts were oppression of human replicas. From that, the fear inflicted within society and the following hatred towards the specific race, culture or social class. Humans are known to do this through primal safety mechanisms. Oppression could potentially arise upon these non-organic beings. I portrayed this through a mix of photography, using a close shot inspired by Steve McCurry's use of eye contact with the audience. The dark tones and insecure pose as the deterioration of the cheek is visible creates a real sense of character and creates interest within the work. I created mechanics inspired by Ilya Nazarov, in a 3D program called Blender and then combined the two elements within Photoshop. The mixes of (Beck's) familiarity, (McCurry's) eye contact and the unfamiliar creates an uneasiness that the viewer feels.

Moving forward in ideas I explored the concept of robots not replicating humans and being proud and the oppressors. I looked at repetition of figure within armies, and propaganda pieces from different eras that created a sense of power, force and pride. The different uniform styles were used in my design concepts for the robots. Red was prominent when it came to strong looking armies as it is the colour of heat, power and speed. I created the robots as three-dimensional models in Blender and textured them in Substance painter. The robots flag symbol located on their arms and chests was purposely designed to be similar to the multiplication symbol to represent the power of replication. I gave the robots an environment of very old compact apartments and smoke, suggesting a very grim future.

The human figure looking down at the robots from the security of his apartment added a grim narrative to the image. I took inspiration from Ian Hubert in the way he creates dystopian styled buildings. I additionally added orange haze from a corner to add more colour and interest to the image.

The sculpture focuses on technological enhancements on the exterior of a human, taking inspiration from Aaron Beck and Stelarc. I chose to do a small enhancement to the hand of a person. I designed the enhancement so that it was hard to tell what it did. I desired to make it believable by using familiar shapes and even some real-life elements. I used oil-based clay sculpture to broaden my knowledge and experience in 3D art. The hand is reaching for something so that the sculpture wasn't a static design additionally giving narrative to the piece. Even though I planned the enhancement to be exterior I decided to put the cords underneath the skin. This symbolised the connection and intertwining elements of technology and flesh. Furthermore, it gave the abstraction but familiarity of the technology more mystery. Within my sculpture I used wires and screws to add further depth and variation, coinciding with audience's familiarity. Sound elements were implemented to take the audience into an alternative world when viewing the exhibition.

Through creating this artwork, I have enhanced my skills and abilities in multiple areas, including media that I have not used properly before; such as oil clay or photography. My extreme interest and desire to learn when it comes to digital art and forms in three-dimensional mediums was fulfilled when embarking upon this creation. I learnt new ways of creating a concept from a drawing, to a sculpture and finally to a finished model. Thus, developing me as a young independent artist in both physical and digital world. Questions about the technological future, or possibilities in alter realities, have been formatted through artwork into an expression of ideas. This artwork has allowed me to show my ideas following concepts of historic armies, minority oppression and biological enhancements through technology.

I think my piece is successful in enabling a viewer to think about the possibilities and create their own narrative from the elements that I provide. Having a physical object and a sound element connects to the audience through multiple senses. I believe this use of elements creates an enhanced experience, one not obtained from a flat image. Areas of improvement would be to try and combine a few further visual elements, so the audiences first thought is how the pieces are connected. I would try to create more realism in the hand sculpture adding finer details such as veins and skin texture. A rework to the jaw element in the oppression piece, would create a more believable image.