Doctoral thesis

Using the Body as a Fictitious Interpretation of the Imagination

Artistic work: If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is

Ya-Wen Fu

Academy of Art in Szczecin (Akademia Sztuki w Szczecinie)

Promotor Supervised by:

dr hab. Tomasz Wendland

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I hereby truthfully assure that I have prepared the work independently, with the exception of the aids already known to the applicant, that I have indicated all aids used completely and accurately, and that I have indicated everything that has been taken over unchanged or with modifications from the work of others.

Ya-Wen Fu

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1   Introduction

After I finished my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the National Taiwan University of Arts, I be-came interested in computer programming and multimedia technology. Perhaps it was this interest that led me to study media art when I came to Germany in 2004. Between 2007 and 2016, I completed my studies for a Diploma and then a Master's Degree at the HGB Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig. Since the end of 2019, this was followed by Ph.D. studies at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, Poland for further pursuit of creation and research.

This Ph.D. program focuses a lot on analyzing one's communications with the surroundings and society. Experiencing cultural differences in this age of online media and globalization, I've realized that while there are confrontations between technologies and humanities, there are also integrations. Yet how do I combine technologies with artistic creation to convey messages and emotions of human beings? The combination of technology, art, and emotion is a recurring theme in my projects. There's no doubt that we cannot live without technology. Our lives are deeply connected with science and technology, which make our lives easier and, at the same time through various exogenous factors, lead to aliena-tion among us. As J. Robert Oppenheimer once said, "there are children playing in the street who could solve some of my top problems in physics, because they have modes of sensory perception that I lost long ago." Therefore, my research project has been developed not only through the employment of science and technology. In addition, the theme of bodily and sensory experiences runs through the whole project, focusing especially on the abstract imaginary state of bodily perception. What I'd like to explore is how we can find an ideal way to coexist with the body under various conditions so that the body is no longer a mere passive tool for transmitting information and performing actions. Rather, as we act, we depict fictional imagination by making use of our bodily experience.

During my studies, I have been experimenting with different creative approaches to realize my ideas, combining multiple media and technologies in my creative projects. I have also learned to consciously use my body in performative works, and at the same time, to see my body as an object parallel to other objects.

For me, the most important thing in creation is to bring together different elements — such as sound, mechanical devices, body, and bodily performance — and create tension between them. Therefore, for me, my art projects are more like installations than performances. Here, the feeling of conflict between different elements and media is very important because it often helps me to focus on very material aspects.

The dissertation, *Using the Body as a Fictitious Interpretation of the Imagination*, is built around the observation and study of a sci-fi protagonist (an avatar of myself) and offers a study of my creative projects between November 2019 and November 2021, focusing on the representation of the relationships between body and space. The protagonist is a character — a person, an event, an object — that disassociates and constructs meanings. Its exploration of an issue in each chapter reveals how my creative attention was drawn to the relationships between the body, technology, awareness, and society and how that led to the formation of my art projects. The tensions between the body and technology, as described in the dissertation, were translated into a project *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is.* As I translated them, I kept asking myself how I could represent the tensions that people experience in daily life and the international tensions that we see in mass media. I often try to explore materials *as acted on by forces*. Materials that change shape under forces, such as tension springs, moldable acrylic glass, rubber, and fabrics, for example, play an important role in my projects. Eventually, I use my body as one of these materials and expose it to the materiality of other materials. In so doing, I have a good sense of how I should present the relationships between individuals and their surroundings. What's more, by figuring out a specific approach for differentiated conceptions, I can critically analyze individuals in a space. Sensing and perceiving the existing Self and the surroundings it reaches, I examine the boundaries between individuals and their surroundings. In my works, the artist's body takes on the part of a real person presenting herself in a showroom. Unlike most performers whose body, and therefore vulnerability, is completely exposed to the audience, I get to hide and protect myself in the designed installation structure. The devices used in my projects are indeed the extension of the body, while the human figures in the exhibitions/performances seem like half-human devices. At first glance, these devices appear to be protective shields or armor. However, a closer look would reveal something completely opposite of such first impression: In my works, through the dynamic exhibitions, I am conveying an idea that "one's body can never be fully free from social molding and constraints."

Figure 1.1

Work in process of Aiming but at what side shot (2019) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

2 The Body as a Social Vehicle

„Dieser Körper ist sozial designierter Körper, und er ist nichts jenseits

der Designation." (Schroer, 2005, p.49)

In the sci-fi story in my mind, the protagonist has a body like an organic structure where every inch of the skin has been replaced with small, transparent pieces of penetrable and refractive mirrors. Covered with countless mirrors, the body reflects its surroundings. Now questions arise: What is this body which, instead of displaying itself, displays the reflection of the environment it engages with? Does it still belong to the protagonist? Or is it transforming into another person or being? With such transparent, mirror-plated skin like a high-tech organism, the protagonist's body constantly metamorphoses, making it possible to become any person.

However, this also prevents the body from ascertaining its identity. The whole body is covered with mirror-plated skin, which interacts with the surroundings. As light is refracted and reflect-ed, the mirror-covered protagonist responds to any messages from the people, objects, and events around, resulting in emotional interplay through reflections and feedbacks. While the endless interactions interfere with the two sides' perceptions and knowledge about each other, mutual learning is also facilitated, forming an internal virtuous cycle. This cycle is a part of an interactive system that also includes the surrounding space, which is intriguing due to its explorability, unknownness, and interpersonal metaphors.

The mirror skin allows the protagonist to go beyond labels such as gender, name, and title. As the body turns, the mirror skin changes angles, constantly introducing images into inside the body through infractions. The received external images are then compared and contrasted with internalized images. Divergences are found through the repeated switching of viewing angles.

What possibilities of actions does this body have? When we try to envisage its action model, the combinations and balances of its intentional actions (movements performed with certain intentions) and reflex actions (pure bodily movements) are what first come to mind. For example, bringing a chubby body carefully through a narrow alleyway. Checking the temperature of a hot cup of coffee carefully by hand before drinking. Such simple daily actions are like habitual bodily exercises of perception, with proactive involvement, passive reaction, as well as participation in and response to situations. The process involves both intentional and reflex actions of the body. Experiences with actions are

created as the time differences and cross-reactions between the two are balanced based on implicit bodily perception. Implicit bodily perception is often overlooked. However, one cannot disregard that when perception is missing, the resulting awareness is gone as well.

By viewing perception as a medium and trying to separate the dominance of the body from what we remember from experience, we re-experience daily life stimuli in a way that prompts us to rethink how we, as individuals, learn and become accustomed to various social activities. This is followed by reflection on whether it is possible to detach ourselves from the social behavior patterns built under social and cultural norms. When the body is involved in an interplay of perception, visual images are generated and the body is interconnected to the perception through the images. It is thus enabled to explore and perform social practices from alternative angles and, in turn, reshape its life experience.

As individuals living in social collectives, human beings are subject to education and learning, infusing our thoughts and imaginations with preconceptions rooted in social norms. We operate our bodies according to judgments based on other people's precedents. All these could be said to be "reproductions" to various degrees. Instead of having the body constantly reproduce and repeat these social behaviors, why don't we reflect on the contradictions embedded in what we do with the body? As a result of taking things for granted, we habitually choose what framework we follow, refusing to raise questions — or even dismissing the occasional questions that come across our mind — in order to maintain the sense of security constructed by the perceived reasonableness and mental preconditions. Does it mean that we — as individuals in social collectives — have become a body, a single vehicle? Does it also mean that we have become a symbolic machine that remains unchanged?

What happens if we expand the symbolic meaning of the body and view it as a field for receiving social and cultural instructions and tasks? We experimentally spray colors on the invisible but real trajectories of perceptual interactions. As the existence of perception is highlighted, the interoperating bodily senses are allowed to move between subjectivity and objectivity. During this state of ambiguity, the body's past experiences are integrated with the current situations. Moreover, we can timely detach ourselves from our usual stances and go above any presumptions; taking a third-person perspective, we look at and reflect on them from afar in a process of debates and critiques.

In Pierre Cabanne's Dialogs with Marcel Duchamp, Carbanne asked, "What determined your choice of readymades?" Duchamp replied, "That depended on the object. In general, I had to beware, at the end of fifteen days, you begin to like it or hate it. You have to approach some-thing with indifference, as if you had no aesthetic emotion. The choice of readymades is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste."

3   How Formation Can Be Imagination

One of the things the camera taught me was to see the world, the same world that my eye sees, in its metaphoric, symbolic state. This condition is, in fact, always present, latent in the world around us. — Bill Viola (as cited in J. Paul Getty Museum, n.d.)

The skin of the protagonist's body in my sci-fi fantasy is replaced with a mirror-like material, thus expanding the imaginations derived from visual perception. No matter what angle the body is positioned at, the skin can reflect the surrounding images in a process that evokes and materializes the mobility of the body. The body's ability to perceive establishes its place in the surrounding world and guides it to integrate with its motor responses, thus filling the body with the possibility of "je peux" (I can).

This, after all, is a world of sci-fi stories with a self-contained space-time system. Back in the real world, how should the body describe its existence when it acts as a medium that connects with the surrounding world and communicates with other creatures living in it? The body's vision is enabled by its visual function, allowing it to see the external world as well as itself. With the vision, it sees; by seeing, it develops a sense of trust that forms a self as naturally as a plant performing photosynthesis when necessary conditions are in place. This, in turn, gives it the coordinates of its whereabouts in the world.

Yet how is the existence of a human being formed? It's not enough even if we try to simulate the existence by implanting various organs into a body, or by transplanting numerous mirror-plated skins to capture more interactive images. While the body proactively employs its senses to access information, it also passively receives information from everywhere through its sense. The interplay of such proactiveness and passiveness and their dependence on each other constructs perception, through which the body interacts with its surroundings. Perception occurs naturally as if one's body has a built-in programming system that is constantly creating meaning. Here the body can be understood as a changing interface that connects the surrounding things with the body (as a field). Attached to the body, these things go further to present the formation of the body in a variety of ways, such as a montage.

If we may return to the questions about the fantasy story: What is this body which, instead of displaying itself, displays the reflection of the environment it engages with? Does it still belong to the protagonist? Or is it transforming into another person or being?

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The images obtained through the body's mirror skin are analyzed by referring to visual experiences; this is unlike how we're enabled to see new things and aspects when we keep taking different perspectives. Then some unneglectable, thought-provoking questions emerge from the trajectories of visual movements, which could be either inside out or outside in. Who is seeing? What is seen? What is unseen?

In a nutshell, having gone beyond the scientific or empirical interpretation of an *image*, how do we now understand what is projected by *it*– now that *it* has dual meanings, existing both in the internal field of the body and in the space external to it. *It* has to be approached through the trajectories of visual movements, and as we strive to *see it* from varied angles, we cultivate the sensory potential which coordinates it in both its meanings. Only in so doing can the so-called *imagination* be formed*.

Take what an artist does at work as an example, the body is like a musical instrument, and the trajectories of visual movement give shape to a piece of sheet music. What happens in daily life leaps across the score like music notes. As the body tries to play the music in various ways, it receives the ongoing notes through all its senses; it seems to be playing from the sheet music, but it is also rewriting the score. People are always curious about artists, wondering: What music is written in that piece? How does an artist read the score and capture the notes dancing on the paper, putting them in place, and even adding notes that are not included in the score to create a new piece of music?

The protagonist in the sci-fi novel ponders whether one's behavior is, in fact, designed by the social system? Would the imposed social system be made explicit when the body, refusing to play its role as a meaningful body, breaks away from the social gaze? When its strength is depleted and the body collapses in this endless tug of war, perhaps we would finally see a route for escape in despair. Studying these questions, the protagonist comes up with an art project, *Space In Between.* In this piece, hung in the center of the space are three acrylic hoops, which are connected to the four sides of the space through an extension made of tension springs and ropes. The body's movement shifts the space and the ropes, changing the positions of the hoops as forces travel between the body and the ropes. To increase the inner strength of the body and the external tugging and pulling, the protagonist makes clothing out of calf leather. The leather is molded to the body shape to reduce the gap between the body and the clothing pieces and create a snug fit that allows the body to exert its strength to the fullest. Contact microphones are used to accentuate the interactions between the moving body and the space installation as the sounds onsite are picked up by the microphones like dialogues.

Figure 3.1

Space In Between, performed by Ya-Wen Fu at 2015 Media Art Biennale WRO *Test Exposure* (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 3.2

Art Project *Space In Between* by Ya-wen Fu (2015) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 3.3

Space In Between, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2020 at HALLE 14 – Centre for Contemporary Art, Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 3.4

Space In Between, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2020 at HALLE 14 – Centre for Contemporary Art, Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

4   Images in a Mirror

The physical relationship between the mirror skin and the light is that when the light on the surroundings, the mirror skin, and the body meet at various points, different pictures of it are shown. As the body moves, it receives information from the surroundings in the form of images in the mirror. At the same time, the functions of the mirror skin exceed what is offered by its mirror material: it has a guiding function, which becomes an additional sense that opens up the space for interaction between the two sides and allows them to infiltrate into each other's field. In other words, light and space are like a pen in an author's hand, and the body, media, images, and shapes and figures give the author the imagination to start writing about the protagonist's journey.

As the nameless body keeps moving from one place to another, trying to prove its existence, it unconsciously asks itself: How should I determine my personality and optimize my image so that I secure my existence in society? As our contact point with the rest of the world, including other creatures, *self* brings the function of mirror skin to its fullest. The refractiveness of the mirror allows the *self* to penetrate its surroundings unhindered. At the same time, it sees its mirror image–a human figure–from another mirror-covered body and vice versa. The human figure in the mirror is like our own face, full of reactions and the accompanying fluctuations of emotions. We're first attracted to the image, being struck by its similarity to what we look like and by the imagination constructed as the face and its lookalike image reflect each other. Then we start to ponder the ambiguity between the two: Is this mirror image *my self*? Or is it another *self* that looks like *my self?*

As Socrates said in his dialogue with Alcibiades:

> And have you observed that the face of the person who looks into another's eye is shown in the optic confronting him, as in a mirror, and we call this the pupil, for in a sort it is an image of the person looking? (Plato, n.d.)

In my science fiction novel, I wrote in one chapter about a school that has put its motto on its exterior walls: "Nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself." The inspiring motto is followed by a list of role models and educational guidelines for success. It uses the media to promote presumed images in an attempt to create a standard "ideal" body image.

This is similar to what happens in today's social media, full of standardized online messages that endlessly highlight a picture of a smarter future as if to suggest a "world of infinite possibilities". The protagonist in my novel pursues every possibility of self-improvement, striving to transform his flawed self and bring himself closer to the perfect body that meets the "ideal standard". With this desire for perfection, the longing for an ideal me, the protagonist works as if piecing together jigsaw puzzles by referring to the picture printed on the box. The presupposed "perfect" picture seems readily achievable if one follows the guidance of the conventional pieces. However, when encountered with sudden external forces, its inherently fragmented structure can very likely fall into an endless cycle of breaking down and piecing together.

Through the mirror skin, we realize the differences between ourselves and the projected body image under a certain situation. This realization is deeply linked to the ideal image implied in social media. When we realize the difference and similarity between the *ideal image* and *ourselves*, we are looking at a *self* as reflected by the environment. As this *self* looks back at *itself* through a *self* that is split off from it, a loop of reflection is formed where it stands: it locates *itself* by looking at the *self* reflected in the mirrors of other *selves.*

This splitting and entanglement of imagination respond to the boundaries between the sci-fi world in our mind and the real world we're put in. The boundaries are blurring but still show and surround the images of their respective protagonists, and in this way nourishes the *space* unfolded by the body. The boundaries are like a frame made of sugar, which slowly melts with time as temperature rises, infiltrating into one another's contextual space.

The self in the mirror inspires and prompts the protagonist to explore the relationships between the self and the space. The exploration evolves into a creative project, *Under Tension.* Estimating the gravity and elasticity a spine can bear, the protagonist makes an experimental wearable device with tension springs for the 24 vertebrae. The spine is connected to one end of the 24 springs while the other end is fixed to the architectural structure of the space. The body and the device become an integrated whole, and every movement involves the combination of and the struggle between the 24 extended vertebrae and the surrounding space. Along the way of such interactions, the body and the space keep talking to each other. When the body stops moving, it doesn't feel the wearable device on it. It is in a spontaneous and relaxed state that creates a subtle sense of security and imagined comfort–even though the body is physically contained to be kept in this fixed state of comfort, if not pleasantness. The physical relaxation and sense of security can be interpreted as misguided. Were the body in a "safe" posture like this in the real world, it could end the posture with any movement it likes. On the contrary, if the body here tests how far the springs can stretch, opposite forces are created between

the device and the space, and the pressure and elasticity imposed on the body will double. The pulling and tugging back and forth make it increasingly difficult to stretch the limbs and keep balance until the body reaches the most extended posture possible.
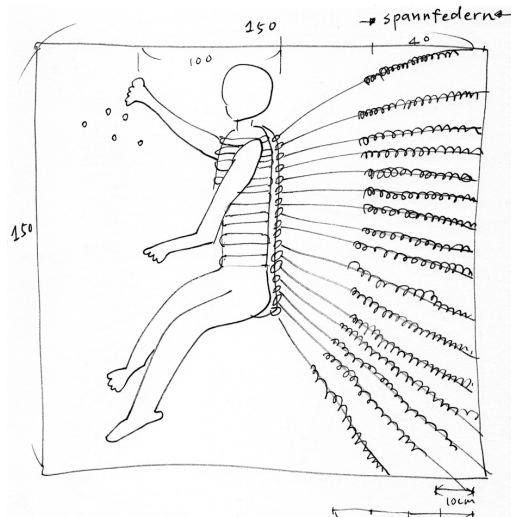
Figure. 4.1.

Sketch for *Under Tension*

Figure 4.2

Under Tension, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2018 at "inSonic 2018: *Algorithmic Spaces*" ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)
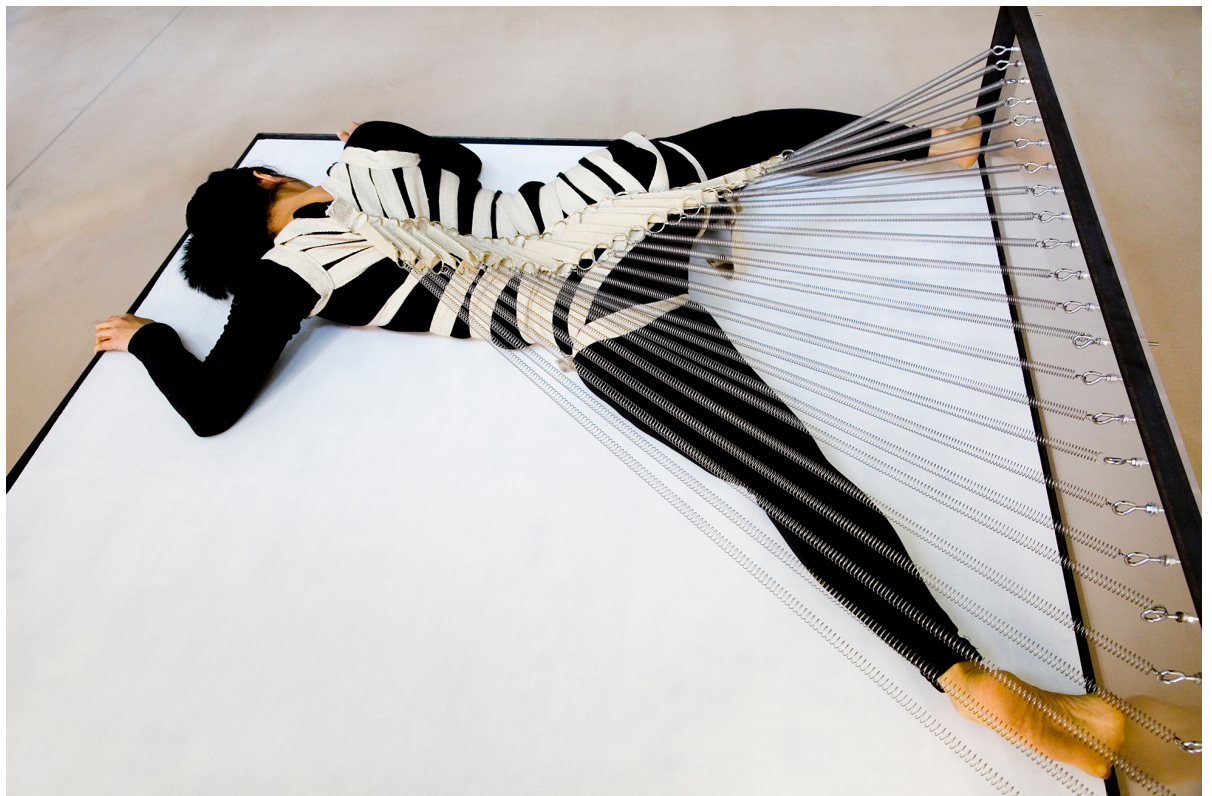
Figure 4.3

Under Tension, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2019 at the Kaohsiung Award Exhibition, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 4.4

Under Tension, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2019 at the Kaohsiung Award Exhibition, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)
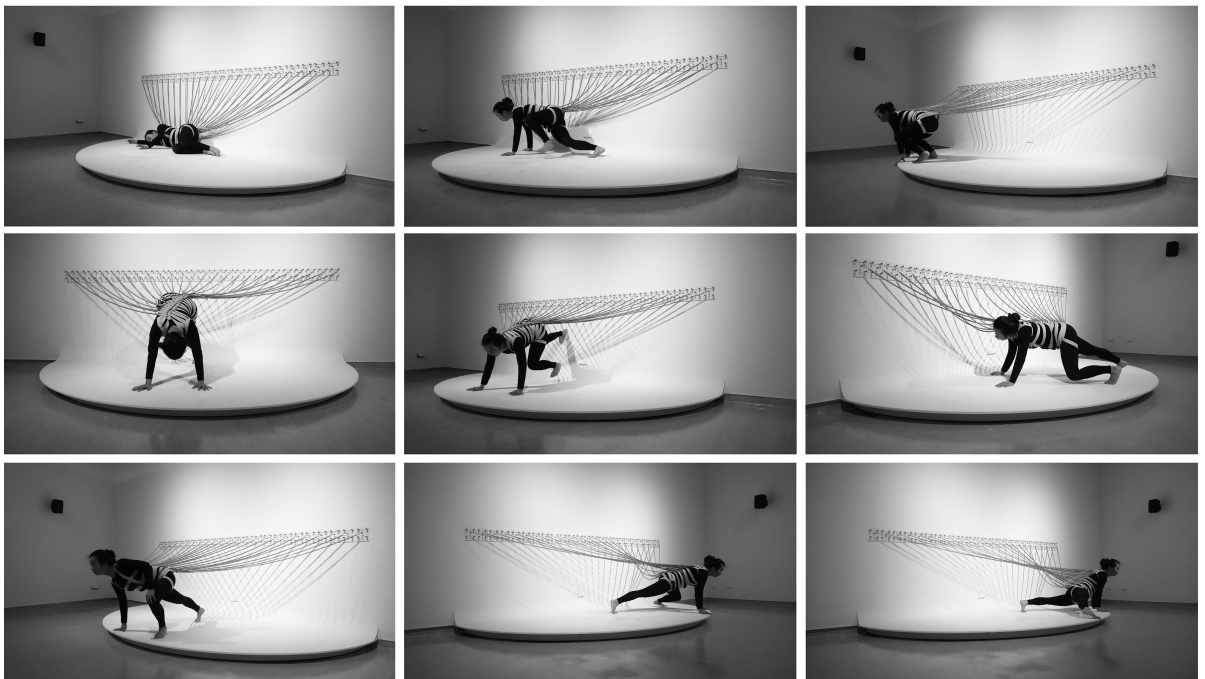
Figure 4.5

Dancer Shu-Yi Chou, performing Ya-Wen Fu's *Under Tension* at the 2020 Taiwan Biennial
(photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

5   The Covetousness

How do we begin to covet, Clarice?

Do we seek out things to covet?

We begin by covet-ing what we see every day. Don't you feel eyes mov-

ing over your body, Clarice?

And don't your eyes seek out the things you want?

—The Silence of the Lambs (Demme, 1991)

In the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*, psychiatrist Dr. Hannibal Lecter asks FBI agent Clarice Starling, "How do we begin to covet, Clarice?… And don't your eyes seek out the things you want?" What do our eyes see in our ordinary everyday life? The perspective we choose to take shapes our understandings of how things look and what they are made of. If something we see from a detached perspective could be understood as a generic, third-person *they*, then the question here is: Is it "*they* who are seen" or "*they* who are formed through the reflective mirror skin" that draws attention? To take the questions further, what is the tension between the two like? Are they subject to social constraints?

Assuming the other person standing opposite the protagonist is also covered with the same medium, i.e. mirror skin, there would be reflections upon reflections among the protagonist, this other person, and the surroundings. While factual representation is made possible through the act of seeing, the act involves more than seeing the reflections of the appearance of things. Rather, it is responding to an imaginary *they* by seeing *them* in the mirror. In *The Silence of the Lambs*, serial killer Buffalo Bill kills and skins his victims to create "skin suits" for himself. Bill loathes his own identity and covets to transform his image. By putting on the skin of another person, he fulfills the desire for such transformation. What does he see when putting on the skin of this imaginary "perfect me"? What he sees is not the shell of his body but the image he longs to see in himself. By dismembering a body to remake the shell of another body, a new body image is created — a process very much describes the entanglements between a violent angle of view and imagination. What Bill does not wants to own his victim's body, instead, he wants to realize his innermost desire, which prompts him to create his own "reality", a reality built on his covetousness.

Fiture 5.1

Still from *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991, 01:35:42)

Fiture 5.2

Still from *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991, 01:35:48)

I started to write a sci-fi novel in my mind because I longed to imagine freely. This fictional piece allows me to build a world of my own, a world made of special technologies and numbers. Bodies can be formed using various numbers and serve as bridges that connect with this virtual world. They can also take on different images to play the *self*. As one identity shifts to another, the body is put in an imagery situation that gives the desired image and thus a sense of satisfaction. The relationship of projection between the body and its mirror image shows the similarities and differences between the two existences. Furthermore, it allows a detached perspective. As one keeps changing positions to look around,

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constant rethinking and questioning are made possible, and one also explores ways to see the surrounding "reality". Even though in the setting of my novel, technology can record every detail happening at the moment and replay the scene using holography, the protagonist still asks, "How should I understand the reality in front of my eyes?" While there are thousands of answers to this question, they'd be filtered one by one in the mind before a preferred answer is chosen.

Take artist Alicja Kwadethe's exhibition *In Absence* (*In Abwesenheit*) as an example. She said in her interview with Sebastian Frenzel that the exhibition started with a question:

> *What actually is this I? And here I look at myself no differently than a stone. That is, I try to gather as much information as possible so that I could describe the object of my study. A stone has a certain chemical composition, a certain density, a certain weight, a certain surface structure. It was under certain forces which shaped it into the way it is. This is exactly what I'm doing to myself. In my study, I am totally interchangeable — I could be anyone else— except that, of course, I have the easiest access to myself (as an object of study).* (Frenzel, 2021)

To the protagonist, to make a choice means a series of weighing and balancing, as if putting weights on the two ends of a scale. What is consciously desired is put on one end; anything unwanted, on the other. An imbalanced scale signifies uncertainty about what is desired. The balance and trade-off in making a choice work like the unseen desire. Like invisible air pressure, it alters the positions of the weights and puts the scale in constant imbalance — who'd know which end would go up the next minute? Desire, a complex and elusive emotion, fogs the protagonist's mirror skin, blurring its "vision" to the extent that the protagonist cannot fully grasp the "reality" of what is "seen". The protagonist, therefore, raises a series of "questions" to find ways to construct the relationship between his body's sensory experiences and the surrounding things.

As a result, the idea of *pulling forces* is at play in *Aiming but at what*, another project by the protagonist. Based on the principles of archery, an interactive installation is built to connect the linearity of time, the extension and contraction of space, and the people in the present. One of the major tasks in the implementation of the project is to translate bodily strength into tangible, measurable distances. After multiple attempts and experiments, rough measurements were obtained by filming the movements of objects and enlarging the video screen. Based on the measurements, the protagonist sets out to look for locally available fabric whose stretch meets the installation's requirements the most. The installation is designed to include a hoop covered with the stretch fabric and set between the archer and the bullseye. An arrow hangs above the hoop — a string from the tail of the arrow connects to the archer. When the archer pulls the string, it pulls the arrow, which in turn pulls the fabric and

turns it into a cone that points toward the archer. When the archer releases the string, the fabric pulls the arrow back. The arrow shooting toward the bullseye turns the fabric into a reversed cone. Standing at his/her viewpoint, the archer looks for the possible hiding place of the bullseye behind the hoop, imagining, measuring with the eyes all the obscured possibilities. Where is the target? As the archer searches, his/her body, the surrounding space, the installation within, and the projected video interweave into a drama. In this dramatic piece, whether the arrow hits the bullseye is no longer important. What matters is the process of pulling and tugging between the body, the space, and the installation, and how — along this temporal dimension — the boundaries between them are blurred and the roles of these three characters are switched. Seeing all these from a more detached perspective would lead to a question: What do you see? An interpretative approach imagined by yourself? A truth that cannot be validated? Or a fact that is hidden in this piece of drama?

Fiture 5.3

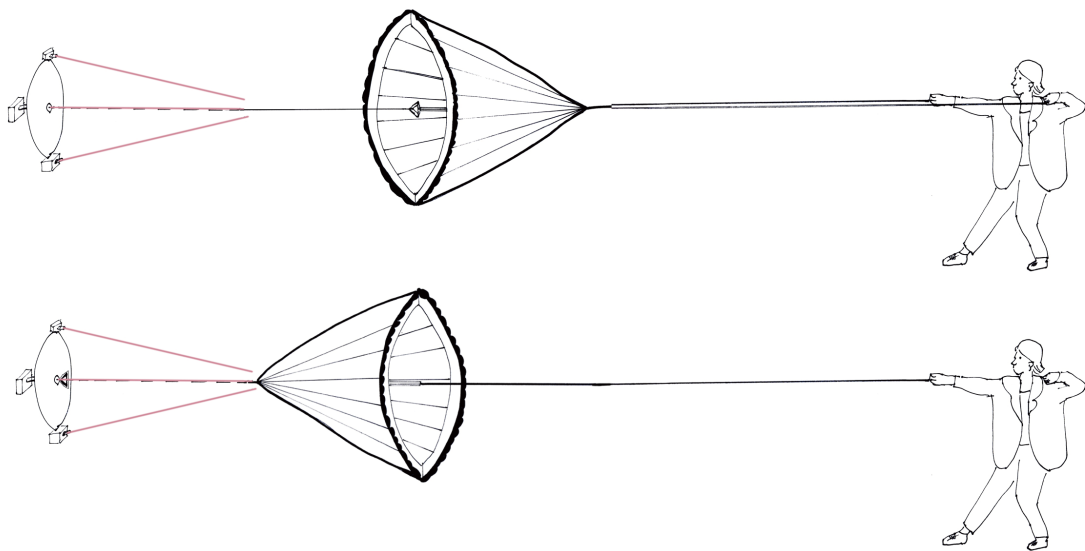Sketch for *Aiming but at what*

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Fiture 5.4

Work in process of Aiming but at what, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2017 at Studio BUBEC, Praha, Czech Republic (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)
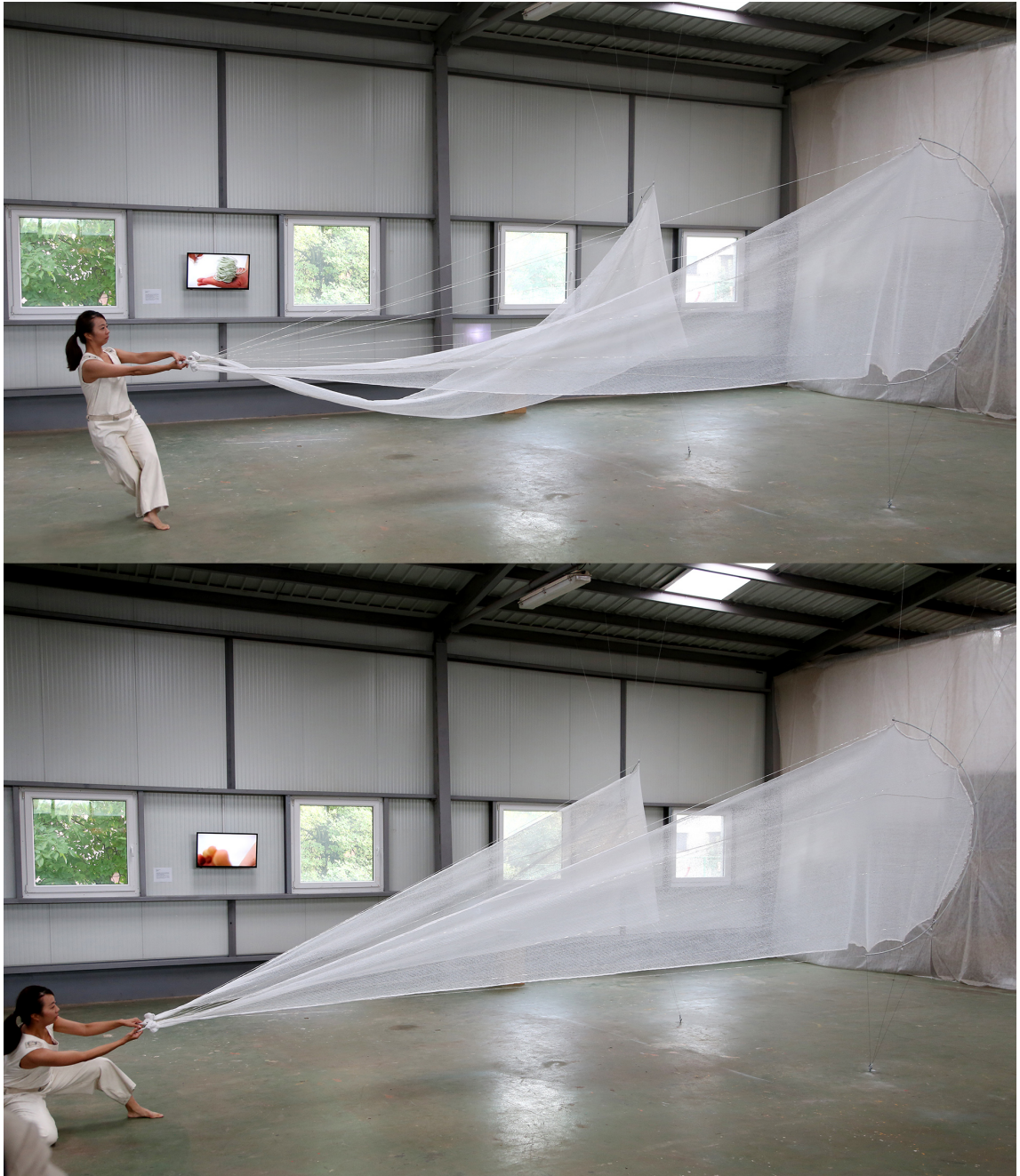
Fiture 5.5

Aiming but at what, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2018 at Soulangh Cultural Park, Tainan Taiwan (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Fiture 5.6

Aiming but at what, performed by Ya-Wen Fu in 2018 at CYNETART-Festival, Hellerau – European Centre for the Arts Dresden Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

6   A Defective Body, from a Perspective

> The word Körper (body) describes the object we know as our body in the living world, focusing mostly on how it is represented from a medical perspective and how it is researched in science and can be manipulated through external interventions. In contrast, the word Leib (lived body) refers to the object that we know as our body based on the knowledge we gained through personal experience.
>
>   --Gernot Böhme [1]

I keep thinking about how, in the setting of a digital era, the protagonist of my sci-fi novel can go beyond constraints. The protagonist can convey messages according to individual abilities and receives messages efficiently. This enables a smarter life as it accelerates the acquisition of practical knowledge from daily life experience and builds a sharing community marked by message immediacy and various specialties. If the body of the protagonist exists like basic characters used in programming, which can compose multi-functional virtual bodies by putting in different commands, then a defective body can be optimized or even replaced with digitalized imagination. To look at it from another angle, the extended virtual body is like a new image attached to the body. With considerable dependence between the two, the new image interacts with the protagonist using technologies developed by the latter.

From the perspective of the protagonist, what kind of body is a defective body? Does the protagonist have a congenital or acquired physical disability and is therefore not satisfied with the functions of his body or does he long for a better body? Or is the protagonist lusting for an imagined body that matches the socially constructed ideal body image? In the world of my sci-fi novel, desires grow without limit, unbounded by any boundaries. The protagonist is free to have programmed bodies that disappear and exist without end as if going through levels in a game, ending up uncertain of one's existence in a real body. The protagonist threads back and forth among bodily memories constructed by imagination and social context, creating the meanings of bodily actions through experiments and failures in a programming-like process.

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[1] From Gernot Böhme's Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (2003, as cited in Fran-ziska Wotzinger, 2020, p.19).

Meanwhile, in our real world, the Australian artist Stelarc once had a cell-cultivated ear attached to his arm using surgical technology. A microphone connected to the Internet was implanted into the replicated ear to enable remote listening and other functions of a distributed Bluetooth system. Stelarc hoped to alter the structure of the body for good. The man-made ear on his arm was part of an expanded body, working as if it were another person's organ to receive messages from afar, shortening the distance between here (i.e. where his body is) and elsewhere. Even though the attached ear had to be removed due to infection, there was a short period of time when it went beyond what skin organs could do, making it possible for an Other to send messages to Stelarc's body. The transmission of messages freed the body from the constraints of where it was.

Figure 6.1

Stelarc's *EAR ON ARM*
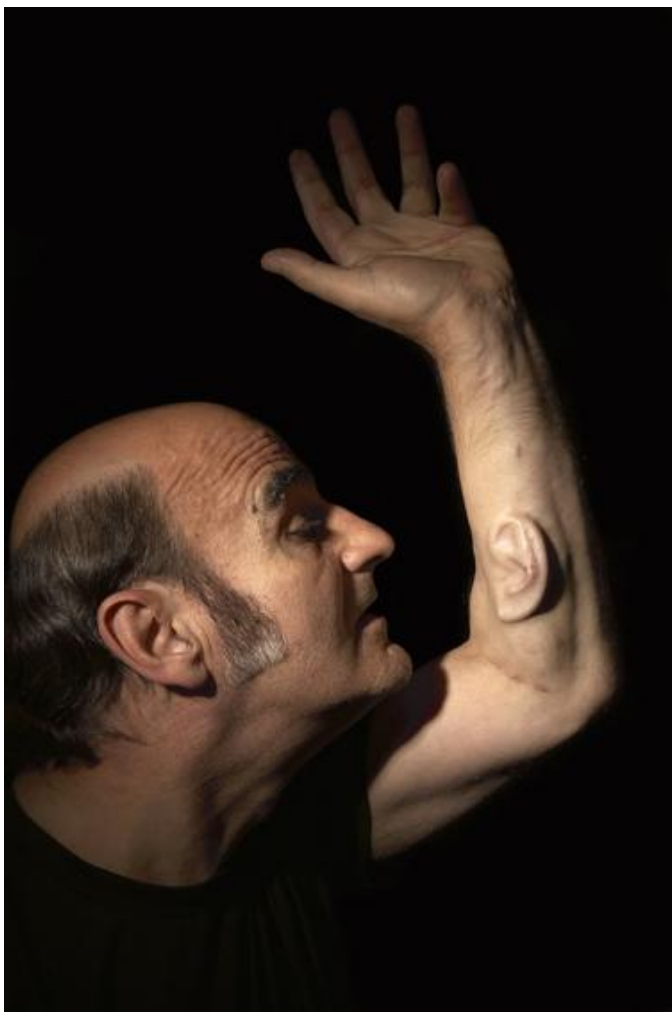
Note. From Sellars , N. (2008). Ear on Arm [photograph]. EAR ON ARM. STELARC. Retrieved 2021, from http://stelarc.org/?catID=20242.

Working on the project *Metamorphose*, the protagonist works with the body, trying on various materials to see whether they fit, how much weight they hold up, and how they allow the body to interact with the installation in the space. Generally speaking, the key is to view the device as an extension of the body to the extent that the body, the device, and the space are merged into one united whole. Looking for inspiration for this project, the protagonist thinks about how metaphoric images of power and desire can be turned into wearable devices. Or perhaps they should take up the shape of fist-like objects? In answering these questions, the protagonist keeps experimenting with possible ways of design and eventually decides to use 3D printing. The 3D-printed objects are then transformed into wearable devices.

Moreover, interfering objects are deliberately put in the installation to become counterforces when things are set in motion. When an object in the project is tossed, its path is disrupted by the interfering counterforces instead of following the "perfect" path in physics terms, according to its velocity and weight. This leads to the constant metamorphose of the installation on display. For example, the hanging fist-shaped objects spin at varying speeds. Their shapes are gradually changed by the motion apparatus as the fists keep knocking against and colliding into each other and, slowly, disintegrate. Among these fist-shaped objects in various sizes, some are molded from ice, which melts from solid into liquid during the exhibition/performance. The deformation and disappearance of the ice fists are not unlike the disappearance and invisibility of power. What's more, it also resonates with the theme of how intertwined layers of power constantly metamorphose.

Figure 6.2

Art Project *Metamorphose* by Ya-Wen Fu (2020) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.3

Metamorphose, performed by Ya-Wen Fu and Shu-Yi Chou in 2021 at Solo-Exhibition, Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.4

Metamorphose, performed by Ya-Wen Fu and Shu-Yi Chou in 2021 at Solo-Exhibition, Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.5

Metamorphose, performed by Ya-Wen Fu and Charles Washington at "2020 POCHEN Biennale ", smac - Staatliches Museum für Archäologie Chemnitz Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.6

Metamorphose, performed by Ya-Wen Fu and Charles Washington at "2020 CYNETART", GEH8 Kunstraum, Dresden, Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.7

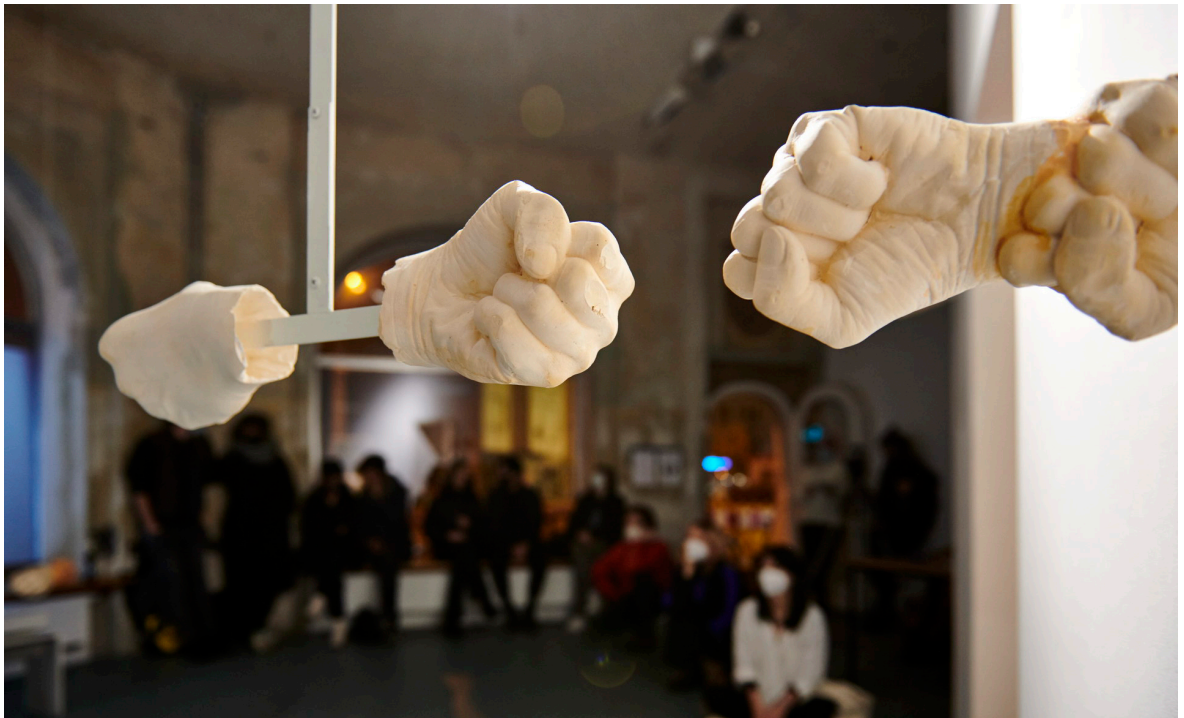Art Project *Metamorphose* by Ya-Wen Fu (2021) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 6.8

Metamorphose, performed by Ya-Wen Fu, Wolfgang Zarnack and Daniel Romero in 2021 at D21/Spot: *The "Perfect" Path of a Swing*, D21 Kunstraum Leipzig, Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

7   Technology-Enabled Imaginations

> It is not enough to create an object, it is not enough for it to be. We must
> show that it can, by some artifice, arouse in the spectator, the desire, the
> need to see.
> –Paul Nougé [2]

The prevalence of medical advancements and other technology-enabled disruptions, innovations, and applications is what shapes the outline of the world in my sci-fi novel. This outline represents a concentrated mix of technological changes and activities that engage with aspects of people's life.

Cyber technology provides the protagonist with real-time access to the knowledge and technologies needed from various disciplines, making it possible to continually upgrade one's bodily functions. Even technology R&D computer programs allow constant updating to the extent that they can be replicated and widely used. The technological context gives the protagonist a sense of trust and confidence, enabling the creation of a functional shelter against the elements while shaping an internal force that drives one to survive. It seems as natural as sunset and sunrise — or sunlight, water, air, and all other environmental elements that allow the growth of life. These and the encounters, symbiosis, and allelopathy between creatures are all parts of nature, in which possibilities are nurtured. Seen from this perspective, technological and natural developments demonstrate a similar evolution. In fact, technologies are simply ways of linking oneself to the surroundings and guiding such relationships. The links in turn are used to mold the representations of one's existence.

As data builds up, the protagonist gradually realizes that despite all the technological advancements, one can never reverse-engineer the rapid replication of (re)production to trace the original program. While the rapid production focuses on technologies and is obsessed with the perfect form, the protagonist eventually discovers in it a conceptual core that goes beyond the technologies of the original program. Extracted, the conceptual core alters the relationship structure between the protagonist and the surrounding interacting objects.

Self-evident desires are revealed as the purposes of the protagonist's experiments. As with psychological suggestions, they infuse the person with certain senses and awareness, which are made visible as

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[2] From Anna Balakian's *The Surrealist Object* (as cited in Klaus, Robin, 2021, p.5).

in a profile diagram of the body. In the tug of war between the actions of the analog body and the experience of the digitally transformed body, the two bodies acknowledge their similarities, differences, and even contradictions and conflicts. The protagonist is no longer satisfied with the technical extension of bodily possibilities. The image data reflected between the protagonist's mirror skin and those of other bodies is a constant reminder of how shifting and alternating viewing positions stimulates one to interact with the social surroundings. This realization also enables a detached understanding of one's existence in that society.

To visualize bodily perceptions and the invisible, the protagonist uses a sculpture in a creative project, *The body in which I feel at home,* which presents the dialogues between the body and the video installation of the sculpture. The piece contains two opposite aspects. In the video, the protagonist improvises a real-life situation using bodily expressions, showing how the body perceives, moves, and recognizes its limits. To illustrate and make this real situation visible, the protagonist uses in the performance a sculpture that stands for a figurative corset. The sculpture is made up of 80 metal rings and tension springs. The protagonist's physical movements add pressure to the metal rings, thus increasing the tension on the body. In the course of this, communication develops between the body and the sculpture, leading to an interaction between tension and release.

The video and the performance are directly connected, creating a contrast that allows the audience to experience the process of perception, movement, and limitation. On the one hand, the performance portrays the reality–but with a limit imposed by the protagonist utilizing the sculpture, i.e. a substantial limitation that doesn't exist in real life. On the other hand, the video conveys a realistic condition in which the body moves about in a seemingly free and limitless way. A certain quality of constraint is only made clear through the contrast with the performance. The protagonist believes that we all live with our limitations but only a few of us perceive these as such. The goal of this project is to illustrate this and thus evoke a process or state of recognition in which one becomes aware of their limitations.

Figure 7.1

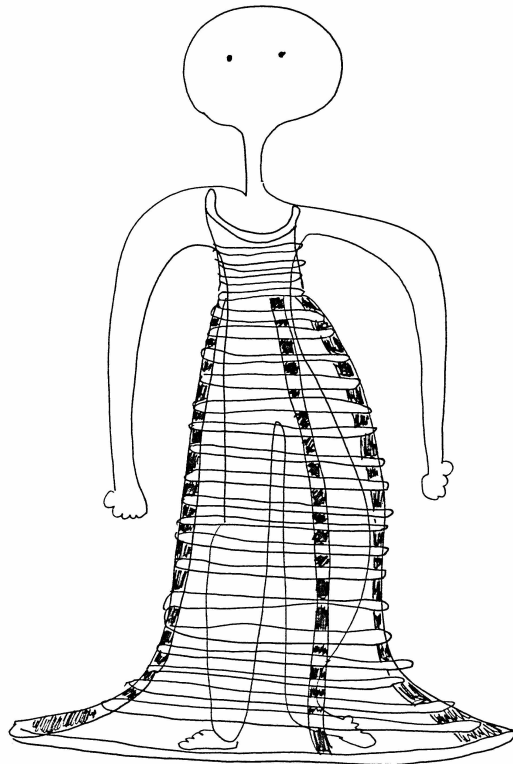Sketch for *The body in which I feel at home*

Figure 7.2

The body in which I feel at home performed in 2013 at the Hellerau-European Centre for the Arts, Dresden Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 7.3

The body in which I feel at home, 2013 (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

8 Interrelationship Between Perfect Technology and Desire

What should the protagonist do facing images reflected by the mirror skin as well as the contradictions arising from the technology-desire interrelationship? What would happen if the reflected images were deliberately ignored? Or what if the protagonist confronted, directly or indirectly, the contradictions and thus revealed the hidden reasons for the enthusiasm about technology? In the setting of my sci-fi novel, an immense craving for knowledge about everything makes it impossible for the protagonist to ignore the surrounding images. The interaction between technology and the body highlights the ever-changing balance between the two, which indirectly acknowledges the differences and conflicts between them. Tempted by an invisible desire, the protagonist keeps trying to interpret the contradictions within. As the protagonist explores a variety of aspects—if the mirror image cannot be understood as a mere reflection of reality, and the body does not function as an enclosed individual without connection to the outside world while, internally, it becomes aware of and cognitively analyzes its own desires—could all these even more clearly point to the fact that the beautiful imagination inspired by technology has in fact blurred the perceived reality?

The world in this sci-fi novel is not simply a space that accommodates the protagonist: it is more a concept describing the relationships with the surrounding environment. Now able to write formulas for whatever situations in life and even re-experience them again and again by entering a game mode, the protagonist begins to question the appearance of what happens. The relentless questioning aims to clarify the root of one's own desires and to mediate the perception of reality and imagination in the situations. For example, the protagonist designs a paradoxical situation in the game, where one sees a piece by René Magritte. It is a painting of an ordinary pipe that can be found everywhere. However beneath the picture of the pipe is a line that reads, "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (This is not a pipe)." The protagonist realizes that while a pipe is seen by the eyes and reflected by the mirror skin, the textual symbols on the piece state that it is not a pipe. The artist frames the relationship between the image and its textual description in a paradoxical way. The title of the work, *La Trahison des images* (The Betrayal of the Image), is a clear reminder that the protagonist should rethink the image before the eyes, breaking away from the usual mindset of seeing is believing. What is seen is not necessarily real, nor is the mirror image received by the body. What's more, even the triggered vision of pipe smoking is refutable. Such highlighted negation of representation initiates a nonstop debate within the protagonist: if that's not a pipe, then what is it? The game environment encourages the protagonist's distrust of seeing images and even enhances the critical and reflective way of thinking about them. Is the meaning of a real object as directly indicated by its image or as framed by the textual description of the image? On the other hand, what is the reality represented by the image and the text?

Figure 8.1

La trahison des images

Note. René Magritte, La Trahison des images, 1929, Huile sur toile 60 x 80 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison Collection, 78.7. From Wikipedia Foundation. (2021, July 3). *La trahison des images*. Wikipedia. Retrieved November 29, 2021, from https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_trahison_des_images. Fair Use.

Such repeated exercises in game situations enable the protagonist to realize the vanity of image and the abundance of delusions within. However, extreme negation and questioning of what is seen is also a sign of excessive bias. Therefore, reflective and critical thinking is crucial in dealing with images. At any level of the game, one should always ask oneself: based on what principles do I make judgments, and what are the determining factors in my decision-making? This will shed light on the invisible desires hidden deep in the body and, in turn, demonstrate how to deconstruct the Self.

9   The Technical Formula for Desire

> How man is able to fly must first be invented. If you do nothing, nothing
> happens. (Wie der Mensch zu fliegen vermag, muss zuerst erfunden
> werden. Tut man nichts, geschieht auch nichts.).
> – Gustav Mesmer (*Flugfahrräder*, n.d.)

Figure 9.1

Gustav Mesmer

Note. From Gustav Mesmer (https://gustavmesmer.de/). Photo© 2021 Gustav Mesmer.

Trapped in the levels of the game, the protagonist begins to explore the connections between desire
and the nature of the Self while digital technology makes it possible to concretize these abstract con-
cepts. At this stage, one is enabled to understand images through a variety of interfaces. However, the
biggest breakthrough overall is found in how things are presented. The protagonist realizes that desire
can function like a motor, which rotates regularly and precisely governs the output speed and direction
of an entire mechanical system. Based on the experience gained along the way, it keeps updating itself.
Nevertheless, the protagonist decides to reject the precision of the motor model because, for the pro-
tagonist, technology is not about "the perfect production": it is about activating one's existence
through the operation of technology.

In one level of the game, the protagonist meets Gustav Mesmer, an artist who defines himself as "primitive". Mesmer tells the protagonist about his dream: to build a flying bicycle that runs solely on the rider's muscular power. He deliberately uses more primitive construction techniques and structures that are at odds with aeronautical knowledge, trying to take himself to the sky like a bird flapping its wings. Most of his tools and materials for the machines are collected from garbage heaps—waste of all shapes and sizes, anything that can be used to build the skeleton structure. To fly like a bird, Mesmer tinkers with every detail and does not stop until he's convinced that the machine may be able to fly.

Figure 9.2

A flying bike (Flugfahrräder)

Note. From Gustav Mesmer (https://gustavmesmer.de/). Photo© 2021 Gustav Mesmer.

Mesmer enthusiastically describes to the protagonist his careful attempts to take off and his countless falls and failures. Unfortunately, however, he never really succeeded in getting his flying machine completely off the ground. The one time he came closest to success, his machine rose slightly by six inches for a short while. For Mesmer, what gives a sense of worthiness is not the apparent success of something. Instead, it is his imagination about flying that drives his continuous work on building flying machines. The machines' mechanical functionality and technologies are not the point. If he intended to create a machine that could fly, it would be reasonable if he simply redesigned the machine to have

its basic structure and overall concept meet the intention. Yet he insisted on modifying the details of his machine according to his conceptual imagination of flying, regardless of the technological factors that determine the success of this flying experiment.

Figure 9.3

A flying bike (Flugfahrräder)

Note. From Gustav Mesmer (https://gustavmesmer.de/). Photo© 2021 Gustav Mesmer

Flying, as imagined by the protagonist, is to spread wings and be free, floating and moving through the air and free from gravity. On the other hand, there's also the risk of losing balance and falling. Gustav Mesmer's experience inspires the protagonist to realize how–tapping into technology and illusions of imagination–one can use the body as a medium to understand one's own existence and, more importantly, to reveal oneself. Mesmer explores his desire to fly by making rudimentary flying machines. Looking at the image of the wings he has created, he imagines being able to fly like a bird and takes the imagination further to aspire to physically experience the feeling of taking wings. Eventually, he completes the inward journey of traveling into the world that he wishes to express to the external world. The body creates technology because of the desire to fly, and the technology turns the body into the power source of a machine. However, in following a paradoxical value, it deliberately refuses the most productive "perfect" technology and reduces the possibility of flying to zero.

10   Divergence/Uniqueness

Growing up in a sci-fi novel, the protagonist has a close commensal relationship with technology. The interactions that occur when the body is used as the medium to travel in games and virtual realities co-construct and induce the authenticity of the stories presented within. This leads the protagonist to resonate with what is perceived; it creates the cognition of physically entering the "inside" of the image interface. Here, the interface can be seen as the beginning of the connection between the "inside" and "outside" spaces. The protagonist becomes aware of the limited cognition, where subjectivity issues may be involved in one's "imagination about perfection" and the "inadequacy of technology". This awareness triggers the constant questioning of whether the reality generated in the interplay between desire and technology is in fact an illusion. The protagonist cannot help but wonder, "How have I come to perceive flying as being something beautiful?

The story told by Mesmer on the game level is about most of the people on the sidelines who have a beautiful aspiration to fly. By acknowledging its infeasibility, they choose to ignore the constraints of reality and encourage the idea of making flying machines. Reflecting on this, the protagonist is puzzled — what is it that makes all these people perceive flying as something "beautiful"? The all-but-unquestioned collective consensus seems like a cliché to the protagonist. Why does it seem like a cliché? Is it because the protagonist does not perceive flying as wondrous, and does not have the desire to fly? Or is the protagonist an anomaly? Why is there a divergence between the protagonist's imagination and most people's? Such questions have sowed the seeds of doubt in the protagonist's mind. Not wanting to be a dissident who opposes something merely for the sake of opposition, the protagonist starts to make a flying device that combines technology, devices, videos, the body, and ready-mades. The cross-disciplinary approach hopes to validate the protagonist's illogical and heterogeneous ideas — to prove that people's perception of flying can be more diverse and that a different idea can coexist with the consensus of others.

The protagonist begins by using a variety of materials and technologies to take measurements for the wearable device. A pair of fabric wings of different sizes, which connect to the surrounding space, are made. When the wings are worn, the bouncing force it creates and the wind resistance allows the body to stay in the air for a short period, during which the body is in an unstable and unbalanced state. The attempt to simulate flying is repeated and recorded with a video recorder. The footage of the body in the air in a flying-like state is then played back in slow motion and edited in a computer into one continuous clip. The produced slow-motion video clip shows the body flying and landing while the space and time are slowly rewound.

Figure 10.1

Screen capture of the video *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is* (2021)

(photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 10.2

Screen capture of the video *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is* (2021)

(photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Like an eerie metaphor of flying, the body in the video wears all-black wings and is stranded in the air in a narrow space rather than in a wide sky with flocks of birds. The video is played on a loop in a white space with six to eight panels of mirrored glass, where a projector is set up at each of the two ends of the space. The projected images of flying travel through the mirrored glass. What is left when the

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image passes from the first to the last glass panel? The short time lag of the mirror refraction makes the body image, passing through the mirrored glass, appear as if it is independent of the original play-back image. None of the remaining images on the glass is a complete image of the body flying: the incompletion manifests its discrepancy with the reality, concretizing what it is like to have a "mis-guided imagination about something beautiful".

Figure 10.3

Installation design for *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is* (2021)

(photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)
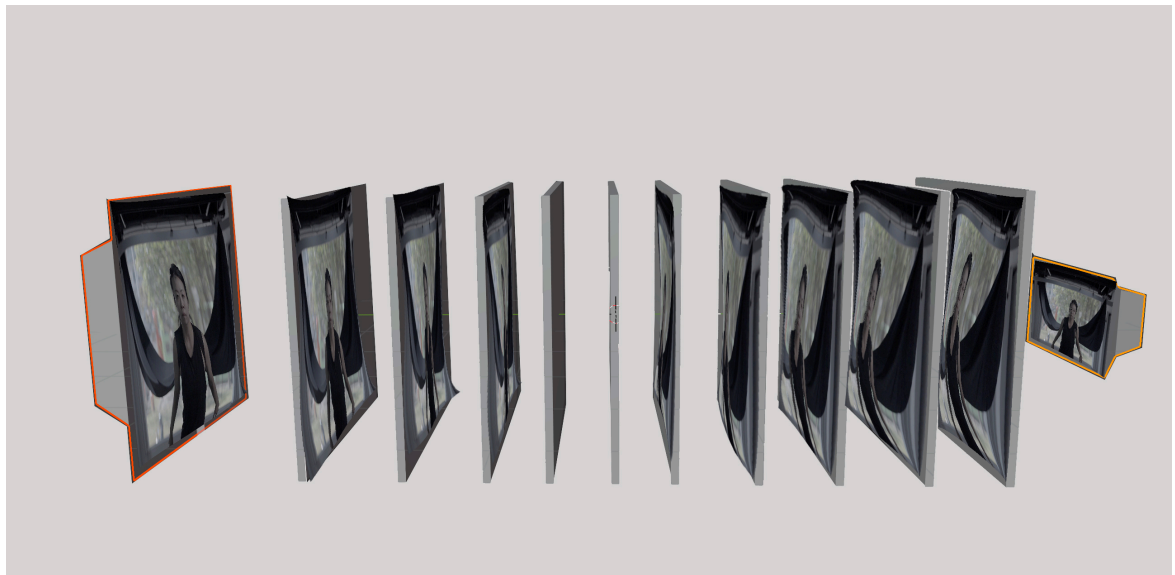
The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see my-self there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed to-ward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am.

– Michel Foucault (Schneider, 2007, pp.88-89)

Figure 10.4

Weisse Folter's *White Torture* (2007)

Note. From Schneider, G. (2007). *Weisse Folter* [Exhibition] Exhibited at K 21 Kunstsammlung
Nord-rhein-Westfalen March 17–July 15 2007.

The playbacks in slow-motion guide the viewers in the white space into a situation where the visual senses and physical time conflict with each other, allowing the viewers to experience the conflict between the deliberately created images and the space and to experience the connections within the conflict. Meanwhile, the protagonist imagines that every eye of the viewers is like a piece of mirrored skin on her body, enveloping the entire space and mirroring each other's sight of the slow flight. At this point, the protagonist seems to have gained the power to control time, using the projected slow-motion video to magnify the sense of motion in flying and falling. The fear of falling is concealed in the body's repeated attempts to fly, thus creating a sense of confusion. The technology of video media releases the tension of images into the space and among the viewers to realize the concept of "if I want to fly, I am ready for the possibility to fall".

The project title, *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is*, implies the protagonist's skepticism about the claim that "flying is beautiful", while the emotion of fear is subtly hidden in the images. The slow flow of time and space presented in the video installation is an experimental attempt by the protagonist and a transformative interpretation of images. It reminds the viewers that they are

in a space opposite to the time-space in the visual images. It is this process that allows people to transcend the realm of time and space and, in turn, accommodate diverse interpretations of bodily motions. The images created by the light of the projector make the transition and flow between the real and the imagined spaces possible. The experiences in the games have inspired the protagonist to incorporate technology into the development of experimental art projects. The protagonist highlights that the execution of the projects focuses on creating a concept or idea, as evidenced by the control over of time, the use of space and technology, and the shifts of power between bodies.

Before exiting the game mode, the protagonist accidentally accesses another program, *Hijacker:{，}*, written by artist Hsien-Yu Cheng. According to Cheng, he "uses the term 'assimilator' to indicate the positive and negative relationships in the process of absorbing messages, learning, and obtaining information. By endowing machines with imagination, he reveals in *Hijacker:{，}* the society's 'assimilated specifications' in the pursuit of 'standardization'." As a dreamer narrates his dreams and a third party depicts and imagines someone else's dreams, this piece explores the subjective exchanges and changes in message transmission and how imagination can be key to special abilities. The transmission and interpretation of messages from dreams between machines/technology, the body, and AI as a third party are presented in the space using images and words. Chen uses machine learning, data access technology, and brainwave technology to transform and visualize the imagination that creates dreams, in the course of which AI as a third party reconfigures and symbolizes these data to produce images and present the found matches. Here some questions arise: How authentic is it? Had we been shaped and molded when the process occurred? Did this occur to the extent that we've already lost our unique imagination as dreamers?

Figure 10.5

Hsien-Yu Cheng*'s Hijacker:{，}*

Note. From Cheng, H. Y. (2020). *Hijacker:{，}*. (photo courtesy of Cheng, H. Y.)

11 In-Betweenness

One of the central elements in the setting of this sci-fi novel is *the body* of the protagonist, which is the major medium enabling the protagonist to infiltrate the sci-fi world. The body as a medium can switch to a third-person perspective to engage in diverse motions and sense the surroundings in possible scenarios. As the protagonist experiences the life programs written by the body, mediating the mix of reality and desires and imaginations in these scenarios, connections are created between the used technologies/techniques and the protagonist. This, in turn, extends the concept of the body. The focus is no longer limited to the two-dimensional pursuit of optimized physical and sensory functions. Rather, a three-dimensional concept of the body enables the protagonist to bring to life creative projects envisioned within diverse contexts. The body and its surroundings keep constructing each other in a reversible relationship of interplays. This involves multiple explorable scenarios– explored either from an egocentric, self-regarding perspective or a detached, third-person, entering-another-person's-life-experience point of view. Switching between the levels and roams *in between* the real and the imagined spaces, one is enabled to create a unique vision with which it is possible to have multi-faceted dialogues with one another.

Figure 11.1

Sketch for *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is*
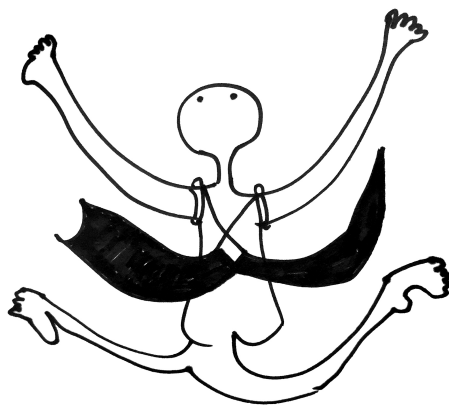

Figure 11.2

Process of shooting for the project *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is* (2021)
(photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Having gained experience from different projects, the protagonist begins to execute the flying project *If I can't fly, I may never know how beautiful flying is*. A variety of media and sound techniques are used to create a wearable device that concretizes the abstract and invisible *tension* between the body and the spatial installation. The protagonist wishes to see, in this explorative experiment, what else may happen when the media are put together for the concept of the art project. By combining mechanical devices, sounds, the body, and its performance, dialogues are created in an interactive performance between the wearable device and the spatial installation. The role of the protagonist is very important in that it requires precise control and calculation of how space, technology, time, the body, and other elements are proportioned and connected for interactions in the project so that when the viewers go through intense sensory experience, they are also immersed in the concept and the space as a whole.

Figure 11.3

Working on the project *With/Out You* from 2015 to 2016 (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 11.4

Working on the project *With/Out You* from 2015 to 2016 (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

The readers of this sci-fi novel might wonder what motivates the protagonist to create these projects. Is it to test the idea and concept of body-machine integration by extending the limbs with technical devices? Or is it to explore, in an installation-based performance, what other expressions of the body may be possible when its concept is extended. The protagonist tirelessly answers the questions by pointing out the core values that each project follows throughout the stages of its implementation. For example, in the project *With/Out You*, the protagonist is concerned with how one's existence fits in with the surroundings—people, objects, and events. The focus is not on the optimization of body parts enabled by technological advancement but on how an extended body interacts with various objects in the space. Working with a prosthetic company, the protagonist develops a tailor-made, transparent mechanical device for the right leg, which strengthens the leg despite disrupting the body's usual sense of balance. Putting on the wearable mechanical device, the body is temporarily in a state of imbalance before, going through several interactions, it gets accustomed to one after another "foreign objects" in the space.

Figure 11.5

With/Out You performed in 2016 at the Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 11.6

Art project *With/Out You* (2017) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 11.7

With/Out You performed in 2016 at the Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig Germany (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

Figure 11.8

Art project *With/Out You* (2016) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

12   Conclusion: I, with *No Self*

In writing this Ph.D. dissertation, where my research and my creative experiences are incorporated into its chapters of discourse, I imagine the existence of a sci-fi world that is always there but in a parallel time-space. In that world, body-machine integration can be seen everywhere and all bodily senses can extend into each other. Against the technological backdrop, an *object* is not observed as a mere *objec*t but from a broad vision that shifts constantly between *the subject* and *the object*. Always referred to as the protagonist in the dissertation, this character is genderless, raceless and without skin color—a being that *is* and *is not*, a comprehensive concept of *no-self*. Only when breaking away from the normal understanding of "I" can one go beyond the habitual, standardized ways of experiencing to reflect on oneself and others. This is what enables a real "conversation". As described in the dissertation, the protagonist (an avatar of myself) uses technologies to explore the possibilities of extending the body, delivering complex emotions and unique thoughts in experimental, installation-based, multi-media performances and projects. In the process, the body's immense possibility to be developed is always a source of inspiration for the protagonist. When a wearable device is put on for physical motions that engage with an installation, the space, and time, the protagonist is made even more aware of the invisible tension and the joint force between these elements. The sense of pulling and plundering, the powers intertwining yet giving way to each other, embodies the core of the protagonist's creative endeavor — to keep revealing the *representation of tension*.

My doctoral dissertation *Using the Body as a Fictitious Interpretation of the Imagination* turns discourse into a world where reality is interwoven with virtuality. With their respective perspectives, readers look into this book from "the outside world" while taking back the fantasies from the book to the world they're in. Based on the content of the book, the readers analyze and shed light on their imagination, while the scenarios in the text are vehicles of elements that can be translated and applied to the readers' real life. In so doing, the readers attempt to construct a hybrid time-space as they build their own ways of viewing things and an extended scope of perceptions. Similarly, I hope to encourage the viewers of my art projects to think about the raised issues from different perspectives. Experimentally hiding metaphorical significances in the projects, I expand what is signified by the body, viewing it as a field that receives orders and tasks from society and culture. The body is used as a medium to connect to the surrounding world and communicate with other creatures living in it — how would the body describe its existence if its skin were made of mirrors and it is therefore enabled to expand all its visual-based imaginations? How would it deal with the ambivalent relationships between technology and desire? Use of the body as a fictitious interpretation of the imagination — the interpretative approach proposed in the dissertation — is exercised in my Ph.D. project *If I can't fly, I may never know*

how beautiful flying is. In this exploration of the connections between desire and the nature of the Self, digital technology enabled the concretization of the proposed abstract ideas, allowing me to think about how things should be represented in the creative project. I took a cross-disciplinary approach that combined technology, installation, video, the body, and readymades to create ghosting images of the body. The discrepancy between the incomplete images and the reality is a concrete manifestation of what it is like to have a "misguided imagination about something beautiful". Meanwhile, the viewers of this art project can try to deconstruct the connections between their reality and imagination. What's more, as they experience scenarios/spaces presenting different perspectives, they may even notice aspects they never noticed before of an image and gain insights by turning away from their usual way of thinking.

Working on my doctoral discourse and art project, I used the body as a medium that could take on a third-person perspective. Imagined scenarios involving bodily motions and perceptions of surround-ings were addressed, and elements such as the control over time, the use of space and technology, and the shifts of power between bodies were incorporated. The approach highlights how my art pro-jects are always implemented around a concept or idea and how I carry out my art practices and reach the conclusion of an I, with *no Self.*

Figure 12.1

Work in process of Aiming, but at what side shot (2019) (photo courtesy of Ya-Wen Fu)

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14   Appendix

Solo Exhibition 2021: *The "Perfect" Path of a Swing*
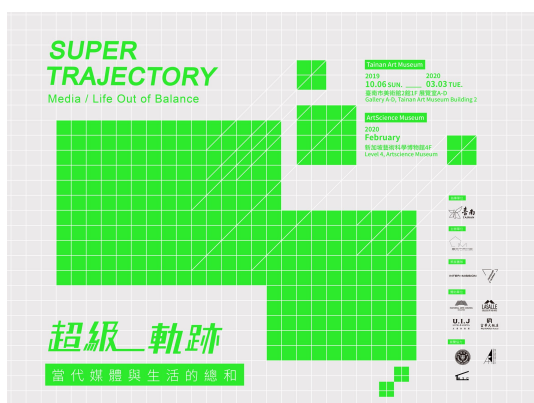Venue: D21 Kunstraum Leipzig Germany
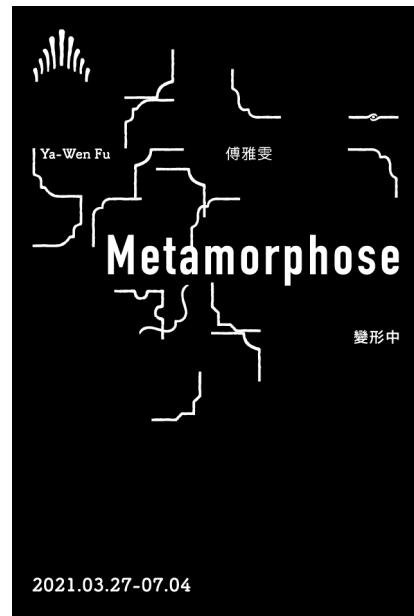
Solo Exhibition 2021: *Metamorphose*
 Venue: Taipei Fine Arts Museum(TFAM), Taiwan

Group Exhibition 2020: *Metamorphose*
Venue: SMAC – Chemnitz, Germany

Group Exhibition 2020: *Space In Between*
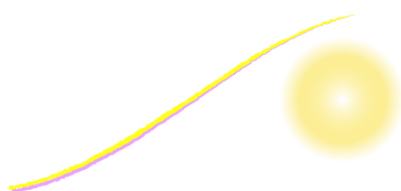 Venue: HALLE 14 – Contemporary Art, Germany

Group Exhibition 2019: *Aiming, but where to IV*

Venue: Tainan Art Museum II, Taiwan

Group Exhibition 2019: *+ Anhydrite Biennale*

Venue: Barbarossa Cave, Germany

TWO PERSON EXHIBITION 2019: 가는 선 *Fine Line*

Venue: space xx , Seoul, Seouth Korea

Group Exhibition : *Kaohsiung Art awards 2019*

Venue: The Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan

Group Exhibition : *inSonic 2018: Algorithmic Spaces*
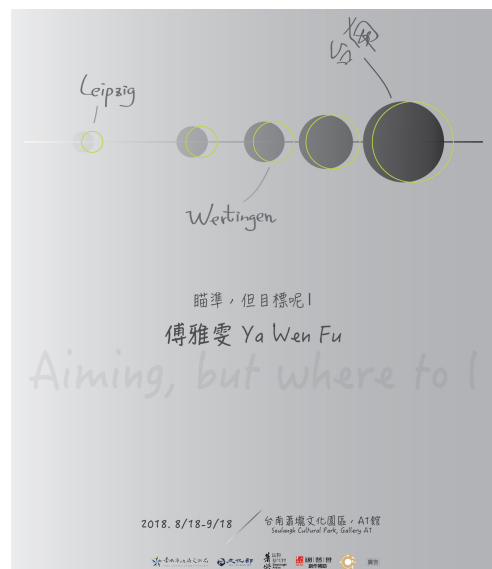
Venue: ZKM |Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

Group Exhibition : *CYNETART 2018*

Venue: Festspielhaus Hellerau, Germany

Group Exhibition 2018 : *iJacking Hannover*

Venue: Kunsthalle Hannover (Kesselhaus)

Solo exhibition 2018: *Aiming, but where to l*

Venue: Soulangh Cultural Park, Gallery A1, Taiwan

Ya-Wen Fu

Ya-Wen Fu was born in Taiwan

www.bearfuinberlin.com

Education

2019-2022 PHD-Fine Art in Academy of Art in Szczecin, Poland

2016   Meisterschüler Program in Media Arts, HGB Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, Germany

2013   Diploma in Media Arts, HGB Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, Germany

2007-2013 Study of Media Arts, HGB Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, Germany

2003   Bachelor in Fine Arts, National Taiwan University of Arts, Taipei, Taiwan

Artist in Residence

2020 KWW – Art-Science-Economy Scholarship, The Artists' Village Schöppingen, Germany

2019 A-I-R-2019, Hellerau – European Centre for the Arts Dresden, Germany

2018 Städtische Galerie Wertingen, Germany

2018 Soulangh Cultural Park, Taiwan

2017 Bubec – Residency Program, Prague, Czech Republic

2016 Residency Changdong of National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea

2015 Gyeonggi Creation Center, Ansan, South Korea

2014 LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, Gijón, Spain

Awards / Grants

2019 Selected Award, *Kaohsiung Art Awards*, The Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan

2018 Awardee, *A-i-R CYNETART 2018*, Hellerau – European Centre for the Arts Dresden, Germany

2017 Awardee, *Leipzig Art Award* – PARADIGMA Blickwechsel, Leipzig, Germany

2014 Honorable Mention, *Altonale 16 Art Awards*, Hamburg, Germany

2012 Selected Award, *7th Digital Art Awards Taipei*, Taiwan

Collections

Space In Between, Art funds, State Art Collections Dresden, Germany

Under Tension, Art Bank Taiwan, The National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan

Solo Exhibitions

2021   *The "Perfect" Path of a Swing*, D21 Kunstraum Leipzig Germany

2021   *Metamorphose*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

2021   *Metamorphose*, Hong Foundation / Project Seek, Taipei, Taiwan

2018   *Aiming but at what*, Soulangh Cultural Park, Gallery A1, Tainan, Taiwan

2016   *With/Out You*, Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig, Germany

2014   *Space In Between*, LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, Gijón, Spain

Selected group exhibitions

2021
Exploring the Undefined, Taipei Artist Village, Banyan Room, Taipei, Taiwan
Fine Line by Carsten Goering and Ya-Wen Fu*,* REITER Galerie, Leipzig, Germany

2020
POCHEN Biennale, smac - Staatliches Museum für Archäologie Chemnitz, Germany
CYNETART-Festival, GEH8 Kunstraum Dresden, Germany
KUNST(RE_PUBLIC), HALLE 14 – Centre for Contemporary Art, Germany
Museumsnacht in Halle und Leipzig, ONLINE-SHOW 2-HALLE14, Germany

2019
Kaohsiung Art Awards, The Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan
TWO PERSON EXHIBITION – Fine Line, space xx, Seoul, South Korea
ANHYDRITE - Biennale of media art, Barbarossa Cave, GeoPark Kyffhäuser, Rottleben, Germany

2018
inSonic 2018: Algorithmic Spaces, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany
CYNETART-Festival 2018, Hellerau – European Centre for the Arts Dresden, Germany
DOTLAND II, ehemalige Zigarettenfabrik Schmargendorf, Berlin, Germany
PARADIGMA Blickwechsel – Analog / Digital, Tapetenwerk Leipzig, Germany
f(r)iction in between, WERKSCHAU – Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei, Germany

2017
Fuchsbau Festival, Kunsthalle Faust, Hannover, Germany
Simulating, Object and Perception, Art Bank of the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan *Elsewhere is Nowhere*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse (KEX), Vienna, Austria

2016
Elsewhere is Nowhere, Digiark Gallery, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan
The People's Cinema, Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria
Unlimited Limitations, Residency Changdong, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea
Second Art Award, Landesmuseum Württemberg, Old Castle, Stuttgart, Germany

2015
5. Dresdner Biennale / 21. Kunstfestival ORNÖ, Dresden, Germany
WRO 2015 Résumé exhibition – other view, WRO Art Center, Wrocław, Poland
WIN / WIN 2015, HALLE 14 – Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei, Germany
TEST EXPOSURE, 16th Media Art Biennale WRO, Wrocław, Poland