

Carnivorous Science: Gendered anatomy in the post human body, an  
hysteria of the machine in technological utopia

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For Queenie



*"in order to study the world, you have to stop it" -*

*Hiroshi Sugimoto*

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Research PhD program, the School of Fine Art, Music and  
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Emily Windon

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## ABSTRACT

My research is from a visual arts based methodology and in my own artistic practice, which forms an integral part of my research, I use myself as the subject, a strategy which has also been my foundational approach overall. My art practice is a central aspect of my research and whilst my research draws upon theoretical, historical and philosophical discourse, I have approached my research as a visual artist and my art practice has been as important a research tool as my reading has been, thus both have responded to and evolved with the issues I have been exploring. I have approached my hypothesis as a point for discussion and have not sought to argue a question and answer but instead allowed my hypothesis the space to be examined and analyzed.

My research is an investigation into how the subject is encoded with the discourse of modernism and how the subject can be liberated from this. I cover three main areas in the course of this investigation. These are anatomy and its role in gendering through scientific discourse, technology and its fundamental role in modernism and new technologies as a utopian ideal.

I look at modernist discourse historically and detail how modernist ideologies inform and frame social and cultural attitudes which, I argue, run along gendered paths. I discuss some key figures of modernist thought, such as Sigmund Freud and his predecessor, Jean Martin Charcot and the early inventors and scientists, Etienne- Jules Marey and Eadward Muybridge. I also discuss key theorists of the modern condition such as Hal Foster, Julia Kristeva and Michel Foucault. My research also looks at artists that have questioned accepted social and cultural ideologies, both historically and contemporary, and who present the modern subject in alternative ways, such as Joel- Peter Witkin and Hiroshi Sugimoto.

My research draws links between modernist thinking and technology and I map the changing face of technology as the tangible outcome of ideology. My research places hysteria as an important concept and condition that closes the gaps between seemingly broadly connected areas and I contextualize hysteria as the way ideology was encoded into the female body and mind. I also use the concept of hysteria as a way to liberate the subject from its ideologies.

In my research I look at the beginnings of scientific anatomy and its ideological foundations, and closely investigate the point where photographic vision becomes an element of a

gendered, patriarchal medical gaze. I discuss the emergence of a distinct medical gaze that occurred alongside the enlightenment, arguing that it is connected to the shift in culture that the scientific and industrial revolution brought about. I link this shift to new ways of seeing that the camera lens allowed and the implications this had on the clinical practice of medicine and the viewing of the body in general. I draw out significant ideological links to the beginnings of photography and the medical gaze, both new ways of seeing known and felt realities.

I have looked closely at the changing nature of perception which is distinctly modern and the implications this has had for women in society. I investigate the continuation of the medical female\social body and its subsumption into the new modern hegemony, using the hysterical female body as the point of investigation where the medical female body intersects succinctly with the modern gaze. Alongside my investigation of the modern, scientifically informed perception of reality, I discuss the alternative responses to modern life such as a return to nature, where there is an attempt to perceive the world without the lens of science. I investigate an uneasy tension within our modern reality, where there is a questioning of perception and a search for ways to relate to the world through non-empirical and technologically reliant systems. I look briefly at how this tension informs the new face of change like robotics, cybernetics and artificial intelligence, and the place of gender in a potentially bodiless society. Finally, I question whether the search for a technological utopia is leading toward a dystopia of the disempowered and a continuation of the hegemonies of modernism in the changing world of new technologies.