

**Working title:** Body/Interface

**Keywords:** embodiment, sculpture, self portrait, artificial life

**Central question:** How can I connect with my body to better understand how it works to serve my physical art practice?

**Motivation:** I'm interested in exploring my experience in my physical body by practicing embodied or instinctual making. My experience will be translated into a series of sculptures/self portraits that manifest as mechanisms or interfaces. I want to insert humanity into precise technical design. My aim is to create a version of artificial life and connect the technological and natural, logical and emotional. I hope understanding and improving my relationship with my body and myself will positively impact my art practice and connection to others. I'm exploring how I truly see myself.

**Intended audience:** ??? people with eyes

**Context:**

#### Projects and Artistic Inspirations

- [Emotor](#), Tim Hawkinson
- [She Bon](#), Sarah Petkus
- Brian Oakes, [PCB sculptures](#)
- Kelly Heaton, [sculptures](#)
- [Archive of Digital Portraits](#), Blair Simmons

#### Literature

- [The Wisdom of Your Body](#), by Hillary L McBride PhD
- [The Defecating Duck. or. the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life](#), Jessica Riskin
- [The Art and Science of Portraiture](#), Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis
- [Your Body is Not Your Body](#), edited by Alex Woodroe and Matt Blainstone
- [Bodily Natures](#), Stacy Alaimo

**Form:** A series of sculptures depicting body parts, my experience in my body, or my identity. They might be literal body parts or metaphorical; some sculptures will be interactive, others may not. They might manifest themselves as interfaces, mechanisms, video, or even material explorations. My past work and intuition has leaned into humor, color, and technology so I anticipate those stylistic choices being present in my thesis as well.

Currently, I am working on a brain PCB sculpture. It has hundreds of LEDs which represent neurons firing. In my research I've found that neuron connections break down in states of heightened anxiety or depression. In my introspection I've found that when I have heightened anxiety it feels like my brain is stuck in an infinite loop. Depending on if a person is detected in front of my brain sculpture, the firing patterns of the neurons will change states. The PCBs will

be sandwiched by acrylic cross-sections and I am currently experimenting with a bioplastic covering to act as the gray matter.

The other sculptures are undefined at the moment and require a bit more research and contemplation. One thing I'm interested in investigating is movement and mental health because a kinetic sculpture could work well for exploring something like that. I've also learned that human touch is really important to health, so it could be interesting to make a machine/robot that needs to be touched and explore its materiality. The other body-interfaces will involve some aspects of physical computing, digital fabrication, video and screens, craft, and my doodled self-portraits.

### **Production Plan:**

#### This semester

- Finish building brain sculpture and prototype adding a biomaterial component
- Finish Womb from last year by replacing stepper motor and driver and finish documentation
- Research: finish reading *Defecating Duck* and *Mind-Body Problem* articles. Start reading *The Art and Science of Portraiture*

#### Winter break

- Brainstorm body interfaces and mechanisms
- Learn about 3D scanning and creating meshes for 3D printing, experiment with 3D modeling/drawing softwares like Blender or Womp
- Iterate on Lungs pneumatic sculpture – need to meet with Kari
- Research: continue *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. Maybe read *The Body Keeps the Score*.
- Stretch goal or just idea: Learn to use the ShopBot to CNC wood guy, experiment with felting

#### Spring semester

- February
  - Prototype body parts/interfaces 2 and 3
  - Order parts and materials
- March
  - Build body parts/interfaces 2 and 3
  - Some user testing? Not sure what this would entail yet
- April
  - April 03: Alumni Feedback Day
  - Work on documentation of all body parts
- May 01: Final Review