

Lecture Gallery (Bodification) - Transcript

Bodification can be found on the ground floor at MOD. in the Lecture Gallery. This exhibition is partially interactive: if you require assistance, please ask a MODerator for assistance.

Content warning: This gallery has some confronting medical themes. There are also screens which play a series of videos with audio.

The Lecture Gallery is a high-ceilinged room with black walls and floor, around 6m wide by 6m long. The Bodification exhibition features a central empty area, around which are plinths, screens and artworks on the floor, on the walls and hanging from the ceiling.

The wall text to the left as you enter reads:

Bodies are wild. For the most part, they breathe without you thinking, they fight disease, and they grow. But eventually, they start to expire.

Just like your car, your phone, or your favourite pair of jeans, your body might be due for a service. But in the process of repairing it, could it be enhanced?

Step into this gallery, where our fleshy insides are on display, and expect to feel a little 'ick'. Here we have a mix of real and speculative futures for your body. Can you tell what is really possible?

*Get up close to hybrid animal-human organs with *Circumventive Organs* by Agi Haines. Could your organs be improved if you combined them with those of an electric eel, rattlesnake or leech?*

*Explore what could happen if we push against ethical boundaries when experimenting with our bodies. The video work of *Modular Body* details the story of Cornelius Vlasman, a biologist who creates an organism made from human stem cells, OSCAR.*

Explore the healing potential of silver nanoparticles, spray-on-cellular solutions, and wound-healing injections.

Zoom in on chips that mimic organ function on a minuscule scale, enabling more efficient and cost effective testing of medicine.

Throughout the gallery are glass cases on black plinths, with titles like "What if we could mimic organs on a chip?" and "What if your ability to repair had no limit?" The

contents are an amalgam of real scientific discoveries and inventions, and imagined future medical advances. It is almost impossible to distinguish between them.

On the screens hanging from the ceiling near the back wall is artificial scientific documentary footage and news broadcasts, which talk about the medical discoveries in the room. To the right of the entrance is a large chandelier made of prosthetic white feet, which was created with leftover casts from the University of South Australia's podiatry course.

The final plinth, to the right of the entrance, is a black plinth with a glass case on top, the top of which is around 1.5m high. White text on the side of the plinth reads, "What if you could engineer your body?" Inside the case on a flat white surface are three shallow silver trays. A small label reads, "Circumventive organs."

Information about this case is featured on the gallery's interactive tablet. It reads, *"With the introduction of bio-printing, new organs could become a reality. The ability to replicate and print cells would mean different cells could be joined to create new organs. This would enable us to create Frankenstein-esque hybrid organs using different body parts – or even those from a different species. Naturally, this would take millions of years. Or be impossible."*

Circumventive Organs showcases three examples of how animal-human organs could create new medical possibilities.

The first, a defibrillating organ using cells from an electric eel. These discharge an electric current when the heart goes into attack."

The first tray holds a wet, red item like a 7cm, three-legged starfish. From the bottom two legs, a long red squiggly vessel snakes from point to point.

Gallery text: *"The second, an organ using rattlesnake muscles. These release mucus from the respiratory system of a person with cystic fibrosis into the stomach."*

On the second tray is a flat, wet pinkish organ around 5cm by 7cm. It is connected to a slightly larger, pink, crescent-shaped organ. On the wider side of the crescent, the wet-looking flesh extends into many tiny, grey globules.

Gallery text: *"The third, uses the saliva gland of a leech. This releases anticoagulant when it detects pressure of a forming blood clot to avoid strokes."*

In the middle of the third tray is a small two-chambered organ around 4cm long. It has a long, thin, red vessel streaming away from one side.

This concludes the audio description of Bodification in the Lecture Gallery, by Access2Arts for MOD. You will find the next exhibition through a door at the far end of the gallery on the right side; turn left as you exit the door and follow the hallway to the Universal Gallery.