

# Ultrasound Vol.2

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## ABSTRACT

This series of work is speculative research designed to extend empathy to those who feel disconnected from the superficial expectations imposed by social media and create a context to reflect upon possible realities outside of typical social experiences. The project begins with questions; how can we use design to talk about humanity, to be considerate to others, to practice and liberate cultural conventional forms and meanings of “expected” bodies; and to embrace and ultimately to celebrate differences? What are the ways to recognize the essence of human beings that we hold in common? *Ultrasound Vol.2* discusses new ways of seeing through subverting the concept of “self-improvement via digital filters” by degrading the image quality of the reflected viewer’s imagery.

## Keywords

Body; media; live-feed projections; digital filters; simulation

## INTRODUCTION

In the platforms of the digital age and their related products, our body is reviewed and constantly interpreted. Although the development of technology and media has advanced our access to the complex layers of human diversity, the mainstream body images seem to remain limited and selective. We see less of an objective image of ourselves, further tolerating the culture and society to define reality for us.

Smartphone applications, for instance, feature auto-correcting facial flaws such as enlarging eyes and perfecting skins. The technological filters we are exposed to profoundly affect our view of ourselves and our relationship to others. However, I am subverting this concept of ‘self-improvement via digital filters’

by degrading the image quality to create an ultrasound effect and use the screen images to serve as a system that allows us to apply chance and possibility to our vision. Therefore, our reflections in the eyes of a digital filter can be a manifestation of the essence in a visually sensitive culture as we practice reading images.

We practice and learn to read images when it comes to viewing an immature fetus through low-resolution ultrasound images. Despite the ultrasound image’s fall-off in shape and quality, we tolerate it by acknowledging that the medium makes it possible to easily observe the internal system of the body, something that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

Viewing a fetus is excavating oblivious levels of memory while translating the tangible form, locating where we originate. It is both a form and message of life in both social and biological contexts, comprising growth and potential that we assume and expect towards development. Thus, the emotional experience of viewing the figure is amplified through the reduction of form, alluding to a hidden possibility. Regardless of the poor-quality display of an ultrasound image with reduced legibility, it gives impetus to focus on the essence over the appearance where we can reflect and apply in the digital age, a modern way of seeing.

Upon examining the phenomenology of ultrasound, the primary concept is infused in this project, *Ultrasound Vol.02*: creating a site to identify images, compare, diagnose existing conditions, explore ideas about our bodies, and expand understanding of new possibilities. It is speculative research designed to extend empathy to those who feel disconnected from the superficial expectations imposed by social media and create a context to reflect upon possible realities outside of typical social experiences.

In this participatory installation site, it uses a live-feed output to visualize the participants with ultrasonic-like imagery creating a dissonance of the viewer’s reflected image and allowing for an other-body experience. Two additional screens on each side will exhibit audiovisual of fetal sonograms and

alternative bodies to guide the viewer of this site. The viewer becomes both an actor and a spectator and is encouraged to observe, compare and be engaged beyond mere fixation. The use of multiple screens juxtaposed with the manipulated reflection of the viewer is used to (a) define the viewer's relationship in the space and recalibrate their experience, and (b) compare the corporeal body and embrace the ideas of tangible presence that are random and beyond control. Configuring audiovisual in a participatory format interrogates habitual anticipation of reading a narrative and escalates passive reading to active involvement. It is a way to offer alternative experiences by shifting the stance and position of the viewer. Through the interaction of technology, a new system of communication encourages active modes of participation that appeal to themes of human conditions.

In general, the image of a human figure creates an implied narrative of its own, mirroring its relationship to the world. In this way, the experience of looking at a human body embodies an intimate subconscious reflection of ourselves. Moreover, the practice of abstracting and isolating the body is a way to subjectively and objectively question images that adhere to diverse concerns of our understanding of our corporal and psychological existence. This challenges our traditional view of the human body, extending beyond the highly idealized, controlled images we are confronted with continually on our screens.

Overall, the concept leads to a framework for the merging of biology and technology and simulation as re-creation, therefore producing alternative aesthetic paths to our bodies with media. With real-time video technology, manipulation of the tangible presence of ourselves and others can provide the means to observe the self in different views. When we spot ourselves in security camera monitors, for example, the reflection of our body is experienced quite differently than when we look at ourselves in the mirror. The filtered imagery of the bodies uses abstraction as a means to subvert the tendency towards mimicry by exploring the essence of things. It is to offer a unique vantage point from which we can rediscover what it is that we hold in common and that the media can be leveraged to amplify this message. It opens a new way to critique and challenge our consciousness and societal values forced by the media.

## CONCLUSION

The disruption in the image implies the ever-present influence of media, technology, and the representation of the spectacle. Through making uncanny images, this presents the viewer to consider how the infusion of moving image technologies alters our relationship to the everyday. It is both a concept and a way of seeing and thinking about the humanness that deviates from the hegemony of a structured system. Design is not merely a vehicle for the expression or a tool to fix sociological problems but a medium to transmit ideas that shape understanding and work towards coexistence. This body of work is not to fully resolve a problem but to interrogate our expectations and behaviors.

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