



See Yourself X: Human Futures Expanded

Madeline Schwartzman

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See Yourself X (SYX) is the second volume of Madeline Schwartzman's timely series that looks at human perception and the sensory apparatus. *See Yourself Sensing: Redefining Human Perception* (2011)—the first of the series, is a collection of fifty years of futuristic proposals for the body and the senses. *See Yourself X* focuses in on our fundamental perceptual domain—the human head—presenting an array of conceptual and constructed ideas for extending ourselves physically into space. What will be the physical future of the head and the sensory apparatus in fifty years time, as the mechanisms for how we communicate and sense change, and become obsolete, prompted by the advancement of brain-to-brain communication? SYX looks at where we are now, in the hope of projecting into that future.

SYX explores all forms of physical head augmentation, including new organs, hair extensions and hairdos, masks, head constructions and gear, headdresses, prosthetics and helmets by artists, designers, inventors and scientists, as well as technological extensions into space. Conceptual topics include the obliteration of the face in fashion, art and folk wedding costume; the politics of hair extension from 18th century hair rolls to contemporary fashion; surrealistic juxtapositions of objects and the head; gender, ritual and identity in contemporary art hair and hair constructions; space-age architectural helmets of the 60s, and conceptual projects that highlight, analyse or deny the internal or perceived functioning of the head and brain. Everyone with a head should be interested in this book.

SYX had inauspicious origins. In March 2012 Schwartzman was involved in an airplane crash on the way to a book talk. The wing of her Delta MD-80 knocked over a shuttle bus at over 150 miles per hour while landing in Detroit. Luckily no one was hurt. But it did spark an investigation: do pilots feel the width of their wings? If so, this would mean that the head was effectively approximately 150 feet wide? This was the catalyst for SYX: to look across art practices and contemporary culture at all ways of extending the head into space, and to move headlong into the future.

See Yourself Sensing has been used widely at design institutions across the world. *See Yourself X*, like its predecessor, will be both an exhibition in book form, and an academic book, with examples of Schwartzman's innovative head-centred design projects from Columbia University and Parsons.

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