

Bio-punks and the democratic DIY design of the human body

By Bronwyn Williams

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In August 2018 Kim Kardashian and Chrissy Teigen caused a social media frenzy when the [posted pictures of themselves](#) sporting what appeared to be body-modification "jewellery" implanted in their necks and torsos on their respective social media feeds.



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Who needs Instagram filters when you've got mods? Here's the one and only
 ♦♦ @kimkardashian radiating in the A. Human Glow SS19 ♦♦, an implanted
 necklace designed for her, by her. Experience the future of fashion for yourself
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The Black Swan emerges. 💎💎 @chrissyteigen finds her wings in A. Human Feathers SS19 💎💎, a one-of-a-kind piece designed exclusively for her. Don't miss out on experiencing A. Human for yourself. Tap the link in the bio to make a reservation for our NYC showroom before they fly the coop.💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎💎 . . . ahumanbody.com #ahuman #chrissyteigen #nyfw #ss19 #fashionweek #newyorkfashionweek #nyfashionweek

A post shared by A. Human (@ahuman) on Aug 28, 2018 at 6:16am PDT

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The pictures turned out to be “fake news”. The apparent implants were just realistic-looking prosthetic make up. The posts were part of a publicity stunt for an artistic project called A. Human which is exploring the future potential of biological implants as body art.

But fake news or not, the campaign indicates that the bio-punk aesthetic is well on its way into the mainstream.

What is more, *authentic* biohacking - otherwise known as DIY biological enhancement - is gaining popularity. Bio-punks (a sub-set of the bio-hacker community that incorporates hardware into their body design) around the world are using technology to modify their own bodies for both aesthetic and functional purposes.

Democratising our DNA one DIY procedure at a time

At its core, the biopunk movement centres around giving people the power to design their own biological destiny through access to the latest biological, genetic, and technological developments modern science has to offer.

Bio-punks believe that access to genetic information and biological-enhancements should be democratic and open source so that all individuals can evolve (organically and inorganically) according to their own intelligent design.

As such, bio-punks experiment with how genetic engineering, robotics, brain-neural interfacing and bio-organic engineering - in addition to purely aesthetic body modifications - can enhance their own physical bodies.

Most bio-punks are self-taught and learn their art by practising on themselves.

Bio-punk bio-hacks range from the strange, such as implanting magnets into fingertips (you know, so you can be like Magneto in the X Men), to the ingenious, such as DIY 3D-printed-brain-wave-controlled prosthetic limbs, and devices that enable colour-blind people to “hear” colours.

In other words, bio-punks are activists for the democratic - DIY - development of the human race.

In a world where super-intelligent designer babies are now a reality thanks to CRISPR gene editing technology; a world where prominent technologists such as Elon Musk are calling for us all to get human brain-chip implants to upgrade our intelligence to compete with artificial intelligence; taking back control over your own biological destiny makes a lot of sense.

The fact of the matter is, as biological and cyborg technology advances at exponential rates, individuals who do not have access to these technologies could find themselves “left behind” the super-human cyborgs that can afford to enhance themselves and their offspring.

Bio-punks believe that the democratisation of technology, through DIY learning, experimenting and sharing of knowledge is the best way to avoid against the kind of devastating digital and genetic inequality that could feasibly see the human race splinter into a series of new super-human species within a few generations.

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