

Julian Staddon  
School of Art and Media  
Centre for Digital Cultures and Innovation  
Doctoral College



## Research interests

PhD Thesis: AN ARTISTIC INQUIRY INTO DATA BODY AUGMENTATION AND POST-BIOLOGICAL IDENTITY

This thesis examines Post-Biological Identity and Augmentation Aesthetics through the *Data Body Trader* Art project, the establishment of *The Mixed and Augmented Reality Art Organisation* and the iterative processes, outcomes and conclusions resulting from these endeavours. Specifically, this research aims to present a body of artist practice that focuses on Augmentation Aesthetics, in order to create works of Art that enable better understandings of Post-Biological Identity. This is achieved through the creation of artworks and practice-based research endeavours that focus on the relationship between bodies of matter, data bodies, and their augmentation in embodied, interactive scenarios. This thesis expands these claims to demonstrate through Art, how by having bodies that are both material and virtual, humans are bio-digitally convergent and therefore Post-Biological, and how this requires a reconfiguring of current methods for discourse and representation in these fields.

This thesis presents a practice-based research journey through these discourses, with a particular focus on embedding Augmentation Aesthetics and Post-Biological Identity within the history of art, embodiment and media, identifying and addressing previous gaps in knowledge and practice-based research models. Following an introduction to the field and its place within artistic practice, a hybrid set of terms and a bespoke practice-based, iterative methodology that was developed will be presented, along the outcomes of these being put into practice, specifically through the *Data Body Trader* artwork and more expansively through *MARArt.org*. Through a process of iterative practice-based research, several new conclusions are established and presented in the form of artworks, exhibitions, interviews, invited papers and panel discussions. Furthermore, by undertaking a socially engaged approach to the development and presentation of its outcomes through *marart.org*, this research pivots from historical examples and recent arbitrary iterations of augmentation, towards a more expansive contemporary understanding of the term, in order to better define the field and the artist's own practice.

These outcomes make several original contributions to knowledge, offering both an artistic project and an organisational approach that explore and present Post-Biological Identity through the lens Augmentation Aesthetics, in other words, an aesthetics that focuses on entangling the physical and metaphysical, through liminal artistic practice. This allows not only for a better understanding of these fields, but also to function as a point of reference for further research and development.

By presenting methods of production and proliferation of bodies, as both data and flesh at the same time through Augmentation Aesthetics, this thesis offers a redefining of our understandings of human representation, more specifically trans-individuality, bio-digitally convergent bodies and this emergent concept of the Data Body. The thesis is concluded by framing this research within the wider discourses of immersive media art, Bio-Art and how these perpetuate extended human experiences of self, forcing us to reconsider how we engage with and consider them both in the wake of new innovative approaches and more speculatively into the future.

## Qualifications

Master, Curtin University  
Award Date: 19 Sep 2008

## Employment

### School of Art and Media

University of Brighton  
4 Jan 2016 → 27 Jan 2024

### Doctor of Philosophy, Centre for Digital Cultures and Innovation

25 Sep 2017 → present

### Doctor of Philosophy, Doctoral College

University of Brighton  
4 Jan 2016 → present

**Lecturer**

1 Jan 2020 → present

**Foudner/Director**

1 Jan 2019 → present

**Founder/Director**

1 Jan 2012 → present

**Steering Committee**

1 Jan 2009 → present