

Human Nest

Human as Medicine?

Hosted by: Leyu Li

Project Information (EN)

But what happens when the body is no longer merely enhanced — but harvested?

Billionaire Bryan Johnson is transfusing his son's blood in pursuit of longevity. Neural implants developed by Elon Musk are already being embedded into human skulls. The human body has become a testing ground for technologies promising a longer, "better" life.

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Human Nest is a bio art and speculative design project inspired by historical concepts of the "human body as medicine" found in the Compendium of Materia Medica, and by animal-derived medicinal substances in Chinese medical traditions. It imagines humans incorporating animal genes into their own tissues to produce medicinal materials, while extracorporeal prostheses harvest, preserve and process them into medicine.

What if human saliva became medicine? Bird's nest, both a delicacy and traditional medicine, is made from the solidified saliva of edible-nest swiftlets. Human Nest imagines humans genetically modify their oral tissues with swiftlet genes, enabling their bodies to secrete viscous saliva that gradually solidifies into edible "human nests".

Human Nest pushes this logic further: can we dissolve the boundaries between human, food and medicine — engineering our bodies to produce, harvest and consume their own medicinal substances?

Maybe, in pursuit of a longer and "better" life, humanity could achieve immortality in an unexpected way: not by escaping bodily decay, but by consuming and regenerating ourselves at exactly the same rate.

Death would no longer need to be defeated. It would simply become part of our metabolism — we consume ourselves, regenerate ourselves, and consume ourselves again.

And when everything else in nature has been exhausted as a resource, might the final page of the Compendium of Materia Medica simply read:

"Human"?

Projectinformatie (NL)

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Image List

Filename	Caption	Credit
main_1788183001.png		

The images above are included in the ZIP under /images.