

NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Matthieu Gafsou **H+** Transhumanism(s)

Text by David le Breton
Designed by Kehrer Design (Martin Lutz)
Hardcover
21,4 x 26,5 cm
152 pages
79 color ill.
English
ISBN 978-3-86828-843-8
Euro 39,90 / GBP 35,00 / USD 48,00

In his series Gafsou explores transhumanism and all kinds of body modification or enhancement.

Transhumanism (abbreviated as H+) is an international intellectual movement that aims to transform the human condition by developing and making widely available sophisticated technologies to enhance human intellect and physiology.

Matthieu Gafsou's H+ series explores several and sometimes opposite aspects of transhumanism: Artificial limbs, exoskeletons, implants, neuroprosthetics, Quantified Self gadgets, nootropics, dietary supplements, anti-ageing, biopower, body hacking, genetic engineering, body preservation. The series mixes documentary approach and allegorical visions and reveals the presence of transhumanistic ideas in our lives.

»Matthieu Gafsou's beautiful, disturbing images portray the dissolution of technologies and people, the erasure of former ontological boundaries. Sometimes, even, sensitive humanity, with the unavoidability of its face-giving body, seems intrusive in view of the objects' aesthetic perfection, their impeccable design. These weightless objects prefigure a world where the human seems superfluous, irrelevant. And from page to page, the work unfolds the mystery of these technical and scientific advances that are disrupting social ties, especially since information technology became banal. Matthieu Gafsou creates no sharp contrasts, but his photographs' frozen look, their absence of shadow, to be precise, induces an unease that is occasionally intensified by the captions that accompany them.«

– from the text by David Le Breton

Matthieu Gafsou (b. 1981) is a Swiss photographer, who initially studied esthetics of the cinema, history and philosophy at the University of Lausanne. His work has been shown in solo and collective exhibitions and can be found in public and private collections, for example the Musée de l'Elysée, the Musée d'art du Valais, the Mudac, the Fondation Hermès, the Fondation HSBC pour la photographie, the Michaelis School of Fine Art. His series *Only God Can Judge Me* was published by Kehrer in 2014.

David Le Breton is professor of Sociology at the University of Strasbourg, as well as a member of the Institut Universitaire de France and the Institut des Etudes Avancées de l'université de Strasbourg (USIAS). He is the author of, among other works: *Anthropologie du corps et modernité* (Puf), *L'adieu au corps* (Métailié), *Disparaître de soi. Une tentation contemporaine* (Métailié), and *Marcher. Eloge des chemins et de la lenteur* (Métailié). He has also recently published *Sensing the World. An Anthropology of the Senses* (Bloomsbury).

Exhibitions

Only God Can Judge Me
Fotoleggendo, Rom
08. – 10.06.2018

H+
Les Rencontres de la Photographie d'Arles 2018
02.07. – 23.09.2018

Please note: These photographs have been copyright cleared for worldwide print and electronic reproduction in the context of reviews of the book only.

Print media: No more than THREE photographs plus the cover image from the selection can be used in total – they are not to be used on the cover or cropped. Online media may use a total of TWELVE images in a gallery.

For further details, press images, permissions and review copies, please contact the publisher's press office:

Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or
Sandra Dürdoth, sandra.duerdoth@kehrerverlag.com
Kehrer Verlag, Wieblinger Weg 21, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany
Fon +49 (0)6221/649 20-25, Fax +49 (0)6221/64920-20
www.kehrerverlag.com

Press images



1
© Matthieu Gafsou



2
© Matthieu Gafsou



3
© Matthieu Gafsou



4
© Matthieu Gafsou



5
© Matthieu Gafsou



6
© Matthieu Gafsou



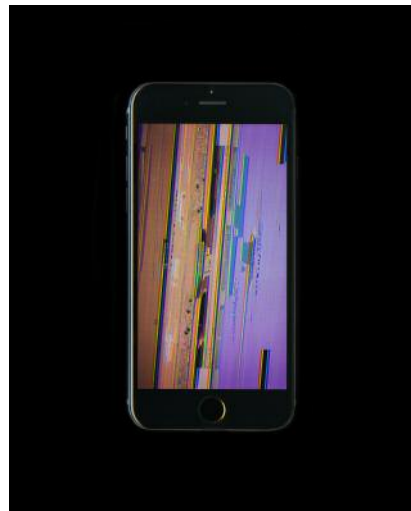
7
© Matthieu Gafsou



8
© Matthieu Gafsou



9
© Matthieu Gafsou



10
© Matthieu Gafsou



11
© Matthieu Gafsou



12
© Matthieu Gafsou

Captions

1. Neil Harbisson considers himself a cyborg. Afflicted with achromatopsy, a rare form of color blindness, he has had a prosthesis called Eyeborg implanted into his skull that converts colors into sound waves. Mr. Harbisson advocates creative enhancement of the human and sometimes distances himself from transhumanism, which, he thinks, is stuck in stereotyped or commercial depictions. His view is more that of an artist than a disciple of technoscience. He takes pride in being the first human to appear with a prosthesis in a passport photo.
Munich, July 15, 2015
2. [...]
3. Considered one of the earliest modern prosthetists, Swiss physician Jean-André Venel (1740–1791) developed a corset for people with scoliosis, a curvature of the spine. The idea was to treat a malformation or disability. Technically, the corset is an orthotic device, which compensates for an absent or deficient function, as opposed to a prosthesis, which replaces a function. Orthotics are the forerunners of the exoskeleton, the development of which is accelerating for civilian and military uses.
4. Virtual reality (VR) allows us to slip into a real but non-physical new space. The technology makes it possible to understand the brain better and improve cognitive skills. In the future, it will be used to treat neurological disorders. “Virtual reality is merely popularizing the idea of offering a product deprived of its substance, real core and material resistance... [It] is a reality that really isn’t one. When the end of the virtualisation process is reached, we will start perceiving that ‘real reality’ is itself a virtual entity.” (Slavoj Žižek, *La Subjectivité à venir, Essais critiques*, trans. François Théron, Paris: Flammarion, Libres Champs, 2006, p. 18.)
Cognitive neuroscience laboratory, Geneva, Biotech campus, March 22, 2017
5. This exoskeleton can be used for therapeutic purposes or to augment the wearer’s motor skills. Many companies sell such products, in general as support for a strenuous activity or to treat physical handicaps. But DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is working on the most spectacular exoskeleton prototype, capable of turning a soldier into a nearly inexhaustible war machine.
6. Bioluminescence in the *Aequorea victoria* jellyfish has allowed scientists to make advances using transgenesis, the transfer of a gene from a cell of one species to a cell of another. Mice that have received the gene responsible for bioluminescence in the *Aequorea victoria* jellyfish glow when exposed to UV rays. Researchers use this property as a marker allowing them to analyze the growth of tissues, organs, tumors, etc.
Freiburg, March 30, 2017
7. [...]
8. Kriorus’s brand new facility. The vats contain cryogenized brains and whole bodies awaiting the day when science can wake them up.
9. Hannes Sjöblad, activist and co-founder of then Swedish biohacking organization BioNyfiken, is a leading promoter of transhumanism in Europe. In Paris in 2016, he held the first Implant Party, where candidates received their microchip implants in public. He earns his living by giving companies strategic advice about technology and lecturing on the “enhanced human.”
Paris, Futur en Seine, June 30, 2017
10. In 2007, Steve Jobs launched the iPhone, which drastically increased our dependency on machines. Smartphones are now considered memory prostheses.
11. American professor Robert Wilson Chester Ettinger, a transhumanist trailblazer, wrote *The Prospect of Immortality*, the bible of believers in immortality and a sort of cryogenics guidebook. He thinks “natural man” is deficient: Cryonics is the key to unlocking and making the most of his full potential.
12. [...]