

Hive Mind

Solo exhibition by multi-media artist Renee Rilexie

In this body of sculptural work, Renee Rilexie uses the human head – so often the focus of social media selfies and profile pictures – to interrogate the human condition in a digital era. The sculptures consist of blank, clone-like craniums, intricately and painstakingly embellished with thousands of metal nodes, circuit boards and charms. Each head is assembled to respond to a different ‘symptom’ of our relationship with technology, constructing an exhibition that aims to encourage us to consider how rapidly advancing digital technologies are affecting our relationships with each other and ultimately ourselves.

In this day and age it would be more convenient to digitally render and 3D print these pieces but Rilexie’s process of manually, delicately, unhurriedly handling and inserting more than 5000 SIM cards and over 100,000 pins into the scalps and faces of these automatons favours physical and temporal experience over convenience, and the resulting work rewards eye-contact over snap-shot. It’s slow work in the face of the scramble for super-fast connection speeds. The artist’s aim however is not to preach, but to invite a pause for thought in a richly sensual space.

The deliberate positioning and patterning of hardware on these heads opens up themes to reflection; our increasing obsession with online identity, security and password protection, the multiplication and perhaps dilution of our being. Is the contemporary human more connected or more fragmented? As we experience more moments, memories and meetings through the partition of an electronic screen.

These highly tactile sculptures, crafted with a patient dexterity prompt us to reflect on how we interact with and value the tangible over the digital, the actual over the virtual and meditation over instantaneity.

Written by Ralph Overill