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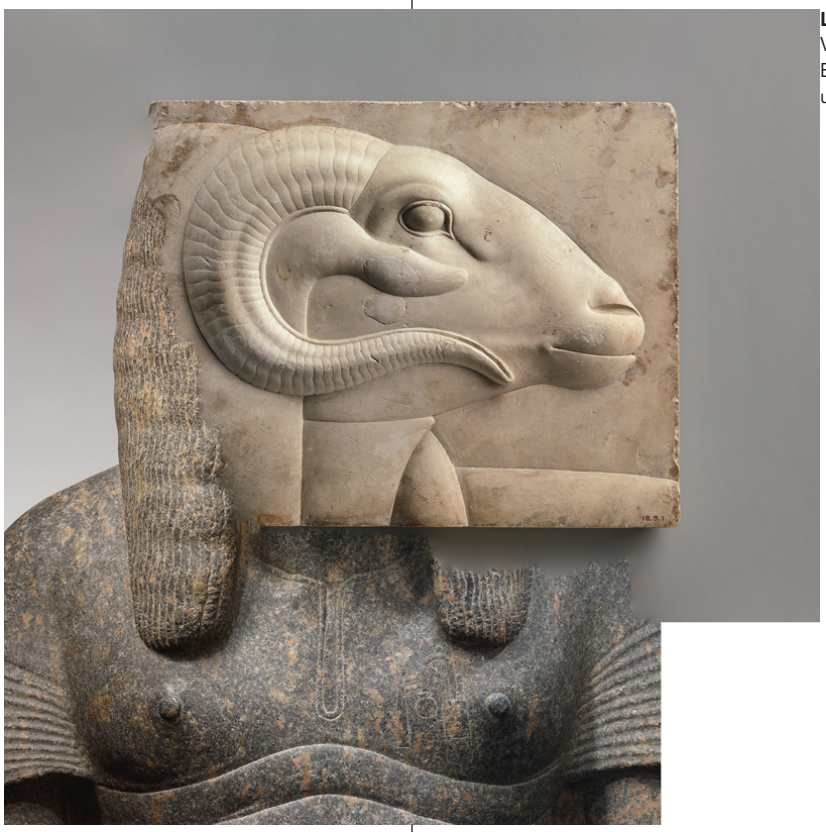
Fusion
Composite
Amalgamation
Hybrid
Combination
Cross-breed
Synthesis
Blend

Left: Velociraptor from Jurassic Park; the creature was engineered from a portion of dinosaur DNA and a portion of African toad DNA.

Humans are fascinated with fusion and combination—in rarity, potential, and strangeness. The desire to combine derives from a fundamental and prescient logical extrapolation seeking to understand. In the quest for understanding comes experimentation and through experimentation invention and creation. But the question follows: what to create from and experiment with? In ancient art and archaeology, Upper Paleolithic *Homo sapiens* used natural pigments to recreate both animals and themselves on the walls of caves. During this same period, the first illustrations of the totemistic hybrid emerged; early humans took the most fundamental entities they knew, namely the creatures of the Earth, as the raw material for novel forms. Ever since, hybrid creatures have abounded across media, in part because of the fecundity of the hybridization combinatorial scheme. Zoolatry, anthropomorphism, theriocephaly, and therianthropy—all these concepts typify the human fascination with fusion, transformation, and shapeshifting. From the beginning, these non-human animal–human and non-human animal–non-human animal blends took on symbolic value, representing complex abstract ideas. It is no wonder that hybrid deities came to dominate Egyptian and Assyrian art, and that synthetic, zoomorphic hybrid monsters can be found throughout many cultural mythologies (but especially Greek mythologies). Pegasuses, centaurs, sirens, chimeras, and hydras are all amalgamations of different biological building blocks. At the same time, they transcend corporality. Hybrid beasts constitute a human investigation of semiotics, of an abstraction of logic and the principles of engineering. Hybrid beasts, from the fantastic to the real, roam our collective imagination. These creatures inspire. Simultaneously, hybrids present a unique allegory for design, speciation, artificial selection, ideation via metaphorical interbreeding, synthetic biology, spatiotemporal connectedness, and interdisciplinary synthesis.

Left: The Great Sphinx at Giza with the head of a woman and the body of a lion.



Left: Iconoclash by Clement Valla; the ram head of the Egyptian God Khnum on an unknown human body.

Above: An Ancient Greek plate depicting two people fighting; one of these two people has the head of a horse or donkey and the tail of an unknown animal.

Above: Thoth, one of the dieties of the Egyptian Pantheon with the body of a human and the head of an ibis, scribes notes while Ammit, a lion, hippopotamus, and crocodile fusion creature known as the "Devourer of the Dead," sits nearby.

This project seeks to explore the concept of hybridization as it applies to object and artifact design—it seeks to understand how the cross-pollination of memes and the grafting together of different object body-plans can result in unseen results, forms, and ideas. This project will look broadly at craft, luxury, and material in attempt to find new harmony is discord, and novelty in the forcefully engineered body. This project seeks to metamorphose, manipulate, and ultimately understand forms of material and immaterial value through an investigation into hybridization—a driving force for memetic speciation, and thus rarity, uniqueness, and new beauty.

II-1. Problem

Sameness; the expected; boundaries; limiting tradition; standardization; known aesthetics; the predictable; monotony; repetition; uniformity; convention.

II-2. Hypothesis

The generalized methodology of applying hybridization to design will result in unforeseen object outcomes that challenge traditional conventions applied to form and intellectual categories.

Left: Archerfish-cheetah hybrids generated within the RTS computer game Impossible Creatures.

Above left: Internet Photoshop hybrid of a lizard and a big cat.
Above: Internet Photoshop hybrid of a frog and hippopotamus.

Far left: White liger, possibly a legitimate cross between a male lion (Panthera leo) and a female tiger (Panthera tigris).
Left: Ape-lizard from the 2005 film A Sound of Thunder.

Above: Part-human part-creature crew of pirates from the 2011 film *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides.*

Above: Bioengineered hybrid dinosaur from the 2015 film Jurassic World.

Visual and material research will be conducted. I will read heavily on ecopoetics, evolutionary biology, and traditional cross-breeding in an attempt to understand what underlies successful fusion. I will also investigate the history of hybrid iconographies to gain a firm grasp on the key anthropologic factors driving the creation of non-human animal–human dieties and similar mythological creatures. I will also conduct research into the recent history of sculpture and industrial design in order to understand how my work fits past and future design trajectories. Following the conclusion of my survey of hybrid histories and literature, I will begin the ideation phase of my project. I will produce concept sketches for a wide variety of objects. To these objects, I will apply hybridization methodologies. Next, I'll sort my concepts, choosing between 6 and 12 to produce. Complex or large-scale designs will be rendered as blueprint proposals. Finally, I will codify a distinct process for the generation of new forms, and publish it as a book.

01.06.16–02.10.16
Critical research conducted, collages assembled for 20–30 proposed hybrid objects.

02.18.16–02.25.16
Production of research book; continued ideation and design proposal production.

02.25.16–03.03.16
Narrowing of sketches to 12 focused concept. Writing on significance of chosen forms.

03.03.16–03.10.16
Outline for production of first 5 hybrid objects.

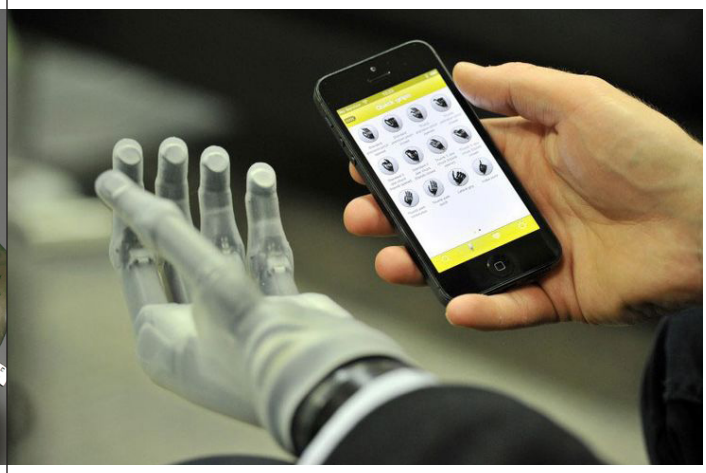
03.10.16–03.25.16
Production of first 5 hybrid objects.

04.04.16–04.11.16
Outline for production of remaining hybrid objects. Production of remaining hybrid objects.

04.25.16–05.18.16
Finishing of all objects; object documentation; production of concluding writing and book.

Left: Castaway Furniture by Ilaria Bianchi. Furniture made from existing material scraps.

Above: Biopolymer jewelry with contained USBs.



Above: Prosthetic hand controlled via smartphone app.

The final deliverables for this project will be between 6 and 12 objects that challenge traditional forms in design; while the nature of these objects is yet unknown, they will span conventional categories ranging from tableware to furniture to books to websites to technology housings. The final objects will range in scale from handheld to body-sized, and will likely follow a conceptual evolution from simplified to chaotic and complex. Deliverables also include a research book compiling resources read and cited throughout the ideation and method-crafting process, at least one sketchbook filled with process notes, 20-30 sketch collages, final styled documentation, and a reflective publication. Next steps include the publication of the work online, and the continued study interesting or unexpected results of the project.

Above: Lapka x Project Ara concept phone made from modular pieces.