

How should her hands feel? Smooth or coarse? Like plastic or silk? It would make more sense to reassure you that her hands are not real. It might make it easier for you to hold onto them longer; at the very least to hold onto the idea of them.

They *look* real, that's the important part. Some would argue that they are, indeed, real. But that gets us into a metaphysical conversation that we're not quite prepared for. We didn't design this experience with those conversations in mind; we had other priorities. We want to stress that this design is meant to invoke something—a sensation in you, your body, your mind. Her hands looking real will perhaps make your emotions feel more real. Make sure to leave us feedback about your feelings. We want to prioritize your responses. Tell us what looking at her hands feels like.

Do you think you could hold her hands? Would her hands become yours? Not just intertwined, but enmeshed; overlapping; on the same planes; motion tracked and superimposed. Are her hands surrogate hands? Vessels or substitutes? What would that feel like?

Are your hands wishing they could belong to another? We designed her with this in mind. Often we wish our hands could be more. Do you need more hands than the ones you were first given? Are these an extra set?

What of the rest of her? We decided to remove parts of her forearm. Previous prototypes showed that the forearm felt alien; that the hand was *coming out* of you instead of *belonging* to you. Does it matter if you can see the rest of her or not? You won't be able to really see yourself, so why bother showing the rest of her? It's unimportant; trivial. Obviously the face needs to be there; we identify with faces so much. It'd be impossible to make you feel a certain way without including a face.

Bodies are different, and carry different associations. Would your own body make more sense if you could see more of her? Would it make you more aware of the limitations of your own flesh? It might make you uncomfortable; it might make you wish not to be in your body any longer. We worry about this with the face. Does she show too much emotion? Does she show too little? Do you identify with the face? Do you feel it belongs to you?

We feel that she can show more by being shown less; providing potential and wonder through her absence. Making her without a body makes a space for you to belong, for *both of you* to come together. It's not that we want you to become her, but rather for the idea of yourself to dissolve. We want to make it easier for you to think of yourself as someone without a body.

Make sure to answer our messages when they appear on your mobile device. These will help us make your experience more appealing. That being said, it's important to keep in mind that this is

a process. We're constantly working on incorporating feedback into the bodies and experiences we make. Our bodies are constantly in development; constantly becoming.

But what of the environment she is in? You will be there too, with her hands and her head. Where do you find the most comfort? We need to make a space that is both comforting and inspiring; a contemplative space that isn't startling. It should be domestic then. A clean house; orderly at the very least. But the space should need work, because work calms the nerves. Not necessarily labor, or something strenuous—a simple task; it should be repetitive but rewarding. Watching something, or doing the dishes comes to mind. A task that makes you feel accomplished but not exhausted. With her hands—with your hands—feeling some toil but never breaking a sweat. There should be no sweat in the space we make. Because we won't design pores or glands or bodily functions. Those would be too cumbersome and ultimately work against our design intentions.

You can drink in this space, but it will provide no taste and sustenance. It will only be enabled as an option to make you feel more at home in this environment. It is a routine task, a habitual performance that studies have shown make the experience feel more real. So much of what we've designed is based on these studies. The performance of quotidian activities is integral to making the occupation of virtual bodies more believable. If we cannot embody these everyday performances than the avatar will immediately feel removed from reality. This paradox is something we're working on with the environment itself, since we imagine the space should reflect the need for quotidian gestures.

To that end, should this space be serene or musty? Should it feel lived-in or freshly made? Should it be pristine or flawed? Do we want your vision to wander away from your task or do we want to focus your attention squarely on your new self? We want to minimize distraction, but we don't want it to seem like we're preventing curiosity. We want you to occupy all objects in the space we've designed—just like you would in your everyday experiences. You should project your mind and thoughts into the objects that surround you. Fashion everything as an extension of your mind and body. We made this space to make that experience more lucid. You perform this task anyhow—putting your mind against and into the tools and technology of your lifestyle. Our space just assists in this process, making your experience curative and contemplative.

How best can that happen? We want this to be appealing; to appeal to your mind. For all of the mundane inconveniences of the body, we want this space to be where those hindrances can be overcome. Likewise, we designed her with this objective in mind. So that her hands are your hands, so that her experiences are your experiences.

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Written in response to *A room within which the computer can control the existence of matter*, (2017), an interactive online film by Rowena Harris.