

## Humanity.exe

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Initially I sought to explore the styles and techniques of Anime art from the 1980s and 1990s, however, along the way I found a deep interest in the concept of artificial intelligence. My body of work examined the techniques used in this period of the Anime art style in media such as movies (*Ghost in the Shell* 1995), television series (*Sailor Moon* 1992-1997), original video animation (*Bubblegum Crisis* 1987-1991) and video games (*Phantasy Star IV* 1994). My aim was to apply these techniques and create my own character that would be used in both of my final practicals. When studying and segmenting the un-proportional figures in *Sailor Moon*, I began to consider how 'human' robots would achieve the same movement and flexibility as bones and muscles. This led me to experiment with a concept I find fascinating: what it means to be human. My artist studies focused not only on art techniques, but concepts. *Ghost in the Shell* explored human identity in a world of factory-line bodies, and *Phantasy Star IV* considered how irregularity in character design can mark the difference between humans and androids. These inspirations culminated in my character Kc7, named after the chemistry term Kc, or equilibrium constant, as she is equal part human and robot. Kc7 struggles with her identity because she was programmed to feel like she is alive. She searches for connections between herself and living things and convinces herself that she is alive. This itself is all part of her programming, and she knows it.

Both final pieces explore opposite sides of Kc7's internal conflict. My first piece considered the scientific concept that everything that exists today originated at the beginning of the universe. In this sense, Kc7 is linked to every living thing, as the atoms and elements that she is made of have been continuously used and reused across time and space. I imitated the Anime production process by creating a cel, which were used as animation frames in 1980s and 1990s Anime. Cels consisted of a sheet of acetate which was inked on one side and painted with flat colours on the other. This would then be placed onto a detailed background which was often painted in gouache. The cel I created imitated a Hanken cel, which was a cel type specifically used for promotional art. For this piece, I used gouache to paint a headshot of Kc7 in retro Anime style on Dura-Lar Wet Media Acetate. I used three cels for this process: one for the ink, one for her monochrome skin tone, and one for a black background around her hair. Kc7's hair, lips and eyes were left blank so that the galaxy background could be seen through the acetate. The background was painted with gouache and POSCA paint marker. The galaxy uses the harmonious colours of magenta, purple and Prussian blue, which contrasts the otherwise monochrome piece. This galaxy symbolises her connection to the universe and all living things, with the piece aptly titled "*I Am Alive*". To show the process behind the piece, a second version was created with all the cels digitally arranged. The editing tool to fill in the background accidentally filled in parts of the galaxy hair, but this was effective and added variety to the piece, so I left it in.

For my second final piece, I explored Kc7's identity crisis in a combination with my line art style and that of 1980s and 1990s Anime. I also used media, which would not be used in Anime, such as watercolour and watercolour cartridge. I initially experimented with the idea of Kc7 being connected to cables while surrounded by flowers, symbolising the divide between her and organic life. I then combined these ideas, which resulted in torn black cables with exposed golden wires creeping out like vines.

These vines twist around the cables and bloom into pink flowers, symbolic of how Kc7's "humanity" programming has overridden her other essential programming, suffocating her. In my second final, Kc7 is hunched and wounded, with a gaping hole in her chest that exposes her metal layers. Each reference in this piece to technology is to reinforce the idea that Kc7 will never be human nor alive, no matter how hard she tries. Intricate gold circuits surround her wound, pointing inwards, to her heart and core, which emphasises the severity of her pain. From this cavity emanate the cables, which flow up to the ceiling, symbolic of how she is forever a machine. She grips these cables tightly, as if they are the hilt of a sword lodged in her chest. To accurately achieve these hand positions, I took a photo of myself and projected it onto the paper and traced it, editing in Kc7's face and cables with pencil. These lines were then cleaned and outlined with 0.8 waterproof fine liner. The pink and gold watercolours were applied straight from the palette, but the cables were painted with a wash created with black block and tube watercolour. This wash was then diluted for painting Kc7's shadows and wounds.

Conceptually, Kc7's wound itself proves she is not human, as she doesn't feel physical pain, only emotional pain. Unlike the first piece, where she is triumphant and confident, in this piece her head is bowed, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes are closed. In both pieces Kc7's skin is monochrome, symbolising her mechanical nature. However, in this piece, her gold lips and tears make her appear to be a marble statue, frozen in place, as if all her systems have shut down. The contrast between Kc7's monochrome skin and the gold and pink highlight how, without her "human" programming, she would be plain and simple, and nothing but a machine. For these reasons, the piece is titled "Humanity.exe", named after the execution file her system would be running to make her feel human. Overall, these pieces were highly successful, as they explored not only 1980s and 1990s Anime art, but something deeper: what makes us human.

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