



Patricia Piccinini, Big Mother, 2005, human hair, fiberglass, silicone, leather

VPAS 6300
What does it mean to be human?
Proseminar in Visual and Performing Arts
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
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Fall 2026
T 4:00-6:45 p.m.
ATC 2.705E
(EODIAH Conference Room)

Offices Hours: In person or via Teams by appointment. Please reach out for a meeting!

Description: Like all life, humans are kaleidoscopic entities. Art reflects this complexity, showing humans to have varied capacities and ways of being. Reveling in these truths, this class shows how art manifests many definitions of 'life' across time. It explores the question "What does it mean to be human?" through methodologies of humanism, antihumanism, dehumanization, nonhuman lives, posthumanism, transhumanism, and radical humanism. Students study writings from the renaissance, enlightenment, Marxism, existentialism, neo-conservatism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, post-structuralism, and Orientalism. Grades are based on short essays, presentations, and individual participation in classroom discussions. While no prerequisites are required, students should be comfortable dialoguing about art, art history, philosophy, and theory.