

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

FILM AND TV SCHOOL

Photography

BACHELOR'S THESIS

**How artist Arca is forming mainstream
visual culture**

Isabella Šimek

Thesis advisor: Tereza Stejskalová

Examiner:

Date of thesis defense:

Academic title granted: BcA.

Prague, 2021

AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMENÍ V PRAZE

FILMOVÁ A TELEVIZNÍ FAKULTA

Fotografie

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

**Jak umělkyně Arca formuje mainstreamovou
vizuální kulturu**

Isabella Šimek

Vedoucí práce: Tereza Stejskalová

Oponent práce:

Datum obhajoby:

Přidělovaný akademický titul: BcA.

Prague, 2021

Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor's thesis independently on the following topic:

How artist Arca is forming mainstream visual culture

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date:

Signature of the candidate:

Warning

The use and public application of the findings of this thesis or any other treatment thereof are permissible only on the basis of a licensing contract, i.e. the consent of the author and of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Abstract

My goal for this thesis is to analyse and discuss the way trans* and non-binary Venezuelan experimental artist and producer Arca is shaping mainstream visual culture, mainly through the social media platform Instagram. One of the questions I will be asking is what that means for trans* representation and its normalization in today's society, and whether it is helping to destigmatize the trans* community's position as a marginalized group, or if it is just another marketing strategy used for promoting. I will focus on Arca and her career, her transition, her visual changes, her presence on social media and its impact on the surrounding world. With growing trans* visibility it is important to consider how it is affecting our general perception of trans* individuals, since more trans* visibility in certain parts of the world can mean more trans* targeted violence.

Abstrakt

Cílem této práce je analyzovat a diskutovat o způsobu, jakým trans* a nebinární venezuelská experimentální umělkyně a producentka Arca formuje mainstreamovou vizuální kulturu, zejména prostřednictvím sociální platformy Instagram. Jednou z otázek, které si budu klást, je to, co její práce znamená pro zastoupení a normalizaci trans* komunity v dnešní společnosti, a zda pomáhá destigmatizovat její postavení jako marginalizované skupiny, nebo jestli je to jen další marketingová strategie využívaná k propagaci. Zaměřím se na Arcu a její kariéru, tranzici, vizuální změny, přítomnost na sociálních médiích a vliv na okolní svět. S rostoucí viditelností trans* komunity je důležité zvážit, jak taková pozornost ovlivňuje naše obecné vnímání trans* osob, protože větší viditelnost v určitých částech světa může znamenat vzrůst násilí zaměřeného vůči komunitě.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	8
2. Disclaimer	9
3. Queer theory, Transhumanism and The Cyborg	11
4. The rise of the popularity of androgynous aesthetics in popular culture	18
5. Arca - the "cybernetic goddess"	23
6. Increased Trans* visibility - positive or harmful?	28
7. Conclusion	32
8. Bibliography	37

1. Introduction

Experimental trans* and non-binary artist Arca makes a huge impact on the way the general society relates to and understands what it means to live within the realm of gender and sexual fluidity. This thesis is focusing on her practice and its broader context with a specific focus on Arca's presentation on social media, specifically Instagram. Despite the fact that social media lately started to play a formative role in the field of activism, their market driven bases can't be perceived only as a channel to distribute progressive ideas, but also as a capitalist tool with all its imaginable cons. Through a historical analysis of terms like queer, cyborg, or trans* in relation to specific pop-cultural references potentially comparable to Arca herself, this text provides a praise and at the same time critique of the impact social media has on the transformation from the heteronormative perspective to a more aware and diverse future.

2. Disclaimer

First off, I would like to make a disclaimer by saying that when I talk about trans* or androgynous aesthetics, I by no means mean to say that there is only one right way to look as a trans* person. What I mean by trans* aesthetics are visual traits that fall out of the ones we exclusively perceive as traditionally either masculine or feminine. Living in this society means growing up with a precoded expectation on what an ideal woman or man should look like, while dismissing everything that does not fit into said expectation. Say, a female presenting person with hairy legs or a male presenting person in a dress. From the moment we are born we are categorized into female and male; that is when specific characteristics and traits that feed into gender binary thinking are applied to us and the gender we were assigned at birth. This supports the manifestation of ingrained transmisogyny about conforming to traditional ideas of gendered beauty, or having to pick either a traditionally feminine or masculine presentation style. I would also like to point out that I will be focusing mainly on the trans* femme aesthetic, since this how Arca primarily presents herself.

Secondly, I am applying Jack Halberstam's use of the asterisk in the word trans* to my writing in this thesis when referring to the community. Halberstam discusses the usage of the asterisk in his book *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. He empathizes that the asterisk modifies and forbids any definite meaning of transitivity "by refusing to situate transition in relation to a destination, a final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity."¹ According to Halberstam, the asterisk defers the certainty of making assumptions about somebody's gender identity

¹ Halberstam, Judith. *Trans* : a quick and quirky account of gender variability*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 4.

and withholds any definite meaning given to the term trans*, which in turn
“makes trans* people the authors of their own categorizations.”²

² Halberstam, 4.

3. Queer theory, Transhumanism and The Cyborg

As a start, I would like to dive back into the late eighties, which marked the time where queer theory presented itself “as an empathetically post-marxist critique of sexual identity politics”.³ It was established on the terms “gay” and “lesbian” which were used as individual categories, though later replaced by the term “queer” to incorporate a wider range of identity politics that target and question heteronormativity or other dominant norms. In Rosemary Hennessy’s publication *Profit and pleasure: sexual identities in late capitalism*, Hennessy defines the term queer as “a mark of instability and identity” in regards to heteronormativity.⁴ It increases the visibility of the ways in which heterosexuality operates as a normative power regime and accentuates the distinctions between sexuality and gender made through it, which is the main reason queer theory is seen as an enhancement of lesbian and gay studies.⁵ To better understand the notion of the term queer, Michael Warner defines the being of queerness:

Every person who comes to a queer self-understanding knows in one way or another that her stigmatization is connected with gender, the family, notions of individual freedom, the state, public speech, consumption and desire, nature and culture, maturation, reproductive politics, racial and national fantasy, class identity, truth and trust, censorship, intimate life and social display, terror and violence, health care, and deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body. Being queer means fighting about these issues all the time, [...] always with consequences. It means being able [...] to challenge the common understanding of what gender

³ Hennessy, Rosemary. *Profit and pleasure: sexual identities in late capitalism*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 120.

⁴ Hennessy, 120.

⁵ Hennessy, 121.

*difference means, [...]. Queers do a kind of practical social reflection just in finding ways of being queer.*⁶

Furthermore, it is important to mention the performative essence of gender. Is there a necessary and natural link between someone's biological sex and their gender, and if not, why does there seem to be one? Why should it be considered normal for men to be only attracted to women and vice versa? In her publication and fundamental contribution to queer theory *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler discusses the question of the legitimacy of categories that are perceived as normal, where these categories come from and what fuels them. Butler challenges the assumptions made about sex and gender, in which sex is seen as biological while gender is seen as a social construct. She argues that this distinction is false and that it goes against the allegedly unifying values of feminism. According to Butler, sex and gender are both cultural constructs, since the existence of sex can not function without the cultural presumption made by the view of gender.⁷ She also implies that there is no natural basis to gender and no inherent connection between gender and one's sex, but rather it is due to social conventions about behaviour that evoke the appearance of this natural basis. Butler argues that this sense for naturalness comes from society as a whole; individuals acting in certain ways they think are expected of them, and through that, gender and the distinction between masculinity and femininity becomes „real“. This is where the performative aspect of gender comes into play, a term that is key to Butler's theory. She asserts that the performative is not just a performance, but something that makes itself real. This suggests that if gender is solely based on cultural influenced acts, gender

⁶ Warner, Michael. *Fear of a queer planet: queer politics and social theory*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xiii.

⁷ Butler, Judith. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), 11.

remains incidental and subject to interpretation. Butler bases heavily on Michel Foucault's theory that is discussed in his work *Discipline and Punish*, in which he talks about the oppression imposed on prisoners that doesn't manifest internally but rather on their bodies.⁸ The argument emerging from here is that the outer implementation of discipline and punishment onto the body forms the recalcitrant inner soul, which results in the soul being the prison of the body.⁹ Butler uses this assumption in her work and implicates further that gender is the dominant cultural agent that operates on the body, and therefore creates the concepts of masculinity and femininity.¹⁰

The performative, as Butler describes it, is a key element to how gender is perceived through the eyes of the queer community today. The queer body, which attempts to move away from the traditional view of gender and attempts to perform gender differently, is often presented through technological aesthetics. It is through technology and technological enhancements that allows queer people to perform gender in a way that goes beyond the traditional view of gender existing in our society. Arca's presentation to the public is all about performativity, mainly through her merging with technological parts that are part of her aesthetic, which I am going to analyze further later in this thesis.

To underline the significance of the technological aesthetic to the visuality of Arca herself, it is important to mention the principles of transhumanism. The fundamental ideas of transhumanism were first coined in the essay *Daedalus: Science and the Future* by J. B. S. Haldane in 1932, while biologist Julian Huxley is seen as the official 'founder' of transhumanism, after the term being used for

⁸ Butler, 172.

⁹ Butler, 172.

¹⁰ Butler, 173.

the title of one of his influential essays in 1957. According to him, referring to the “misery of human life” that Hobbes had described as ‘nasty, brutish and short’, “the human species can [...] transcend itself – not just sporadically, [...] but in its entirety, as humanity”.¹¹ The principles of transhumanism as a futuristic philosophy were not articulated until 1990 by British philosopher Max More. The basic idea of it is based on the assumption that the current form of the human species does not represent our final stage, but rather a starting point for future developments; a future oriented belief to leave behind our biological state and merge with technology. It proposes the enhancement of human life and body through technology and artificial intelligence.¹² While not directly mentioned by Arca herself that her aesthetic and practice are inspired by transhumanist principles, it is often implied in articles written about her. Her lyrics and music often carry a future-oriented implication that we are continuously transitioning.

It is also relevant to acknowledge the role of the cyborg that appears in Arca’s practice. In 1985, American professor, scholar, writer and feminist activist Donna J. Haraway published her essay *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, which would later become one of the key texts affiliated with left postmodernist feminism. Originating from the convention that forms the base for „Western` science and politics, [...] racist, male-dominant capitalism; [...] progress“ and „appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture“,¹³ Haraway proposes an argument for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries within this realm and the responsibility

¹¹ Huxley, Julian (1957): *Transhumanism*. Archived from the original on June 25, 2016. Accessed April 12 2021.

¹² “What Is Transhumanism?” *What Is Transhumanism?*, Accessed from: whatistranshumanism.org

¹³ Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature*. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 150.

for their construction.¹⁴ To execute this attempt, she introduces the concept of the „cyborg“. As it is characterized in the essay, a cyborg is a cybernetic organism with both organic and biomechatronic body parts. Not only is the cyborg a creature of fiction, but also a creature of social reality. It is the portrait of imagination and material reality, two things that form „any possibility of historical transformation.“¹⁵ Through the confusion of boundaries and the existence of the cyborg, Haraway envisions a world without gender and a world away from race, where cyborgs destroy all boundaries between human and animal, human-animal and machine, and the physical and non-physical that exist in our society.¹⁶ While the cyborg does not have any definite origin in the western sense, Haraway does turn to the late-twentieth century as a bridge where these boundaries begin to shift. The cyborg emerges from the movements afforded by capitalist domination and the structures of so to say intelligence communities, that in return offer a solution for the deconstruction of said domination, which in this case is the cyborg.¹⁷ To Haraway, all people are initially cyborgs. One of the arguments include the importance of relying on certain prostheses to get through our day to day, for instance wearing glasses or athletic shoes, an enhancement of our performance, a perpetual exchange with tools that are not a part of us but serve as an extension of us. Significant to the progression of my argument in this thesis and the connection to Arca is the fusion between the organism, say animal and human, and the machine; the fading distinction between nature and construction. With the idea of the cyborg, Haraway demolishes the oppositions between nature, artificiality, culture, the self and the world.¹⁸ The idea of nature implies that things are unchangeable, that they are naturally so and so, which

¹⁴ Haraway, 150.

¹⁵ Haraway, 150.

¹⁶ Haraway, 151-154.

¹⁷ Haraway, 151.

¹⁸ Hair Kunzru, "You are Cyborg." Wired. [online]. Accessed April 5th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.wired.com/1997/02/ffharaway/>

Haraway connects to the „natural weakness“ of women in the eyes of the Western patriarchy. Contrarily, if we view humans through the lens of the cyborg and its principles, they become not natural but constructed, which entails the possibility of reconstruction of humans. This results in the freedom of reformulating one’s identity, sexuality and gender in conjunction with technology.¹⁹

This reconstruction of one self can support the characteristics of androgyny, the blending of traits associated with both the masculine and the feminine.

To accentuate the connection between queer theory and viewing gender and queerness through a technological lens, I would like to go back to Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble*. Butler imposes the question: „If gender is constructed, could it be constructed differently [...]?“²⁰ As already established, the concept of construction is something that is also discussed in *The Cyborg Manifesto*. Haraway answers Butler’s question by declaring that “in the fraying of identities and [...] reflexive strategies for constructing them, the possibility opens up for weaving something other [...]”²¹, as well as questioning the relevance of gender by stating that “Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment. Gender might not be global identity after all [...]”²² The possibility of the construction of gender and the cyborg not feeding into standardized gender norms points to the fluidity of gender and the parallels between these two theories.

¹⁹ Kunzru, “You Are Cyborg”

²⁰ Butler, 11.

²¹ Haraway, 158.

²² Haraway, 180.

When we take the existence of the cyborg and place it into the present context, it is difficult not to mention the intersection with the internet to a certain degree, which presents itself as one of the few places for cyborgs and in which people can execute their gender-fluidity, since the internet can offer various other realities; a merging with the virtual. Legacy Russell calls this *glitch feminism*. In Russell's manifesto, she argues that glitch feminism allows an individual to embody the digital as an aesthetic by exploring the range of the online world, "blurring the divide between body and machine further."²³ Furthermore, Russell introduces the term "away from the keyboard" (or "AFK"), which to her implies the moving away from seeing the construction of online identities as only artificially fabricated, and instead helping us see that digital realities are echoed offline and are able to perform outside of the virtual world.²⁴ She also states that the blurring between the internet and the physical, which she calls a "glitched body"²⁵, can enhance the construction of a new visual culture.²⁶ This entails that Arca and her online presentation on Instagram might help to shift how we perceive current aesthetics and offers a way how to normalize trans* aesthetics even outside of social media.

²³ Russell, Legacy. *Glitch feminism: a manifesto*. (London New York: Verso, 2020), 48.

²⁴ Russell, 19.

²⁵ Russell, 49.

²⁶ Russell, 49.

4. The rise of the popularity of androgynous aesthetics in popular culture

With queer theory manifesting in the eighties and the visuality of queerness also heavily intersecting with transhumanism, it also marks the time androgynous looks and aesthetics could be classified better and placed into a specific discourse. As Haraway mentions at the beginning of her essay, „contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs.“²⁷ The use of the idea of the cyborg and its principles or similar variations of it can be found in recent films and TV shows, that I am going to discuss in the following chapter. I will attempt to bring this issue closer through the three examples of the science fiction movies *Ghost in the Shell*, *Blade Runner* and the television series *Star Trek*, as well as the use of these aesthetics in the music industry. It is through entertainment like this that the aesthetic found in science-fiction gained popularity over the years and further explains the appeal in Arca’s visual presentation, which shows many similarities to the examples mentioned.

An example of the concept of the cyborg in media is the long-running Japanese franchise *Ghost in the Shell*, which consists of several comic book series, television series and films, video games and mainly the animated film adaptation from 1995 by director Mamoru Oshii. Set in the year 2029, and with the help of cybernetic technology, human bodies can be modified or completely replaced by cybernetic parts; as well as owning a cyberbrain, that is electronically wired to a central network.²⁸ While not inherently starting out as a queer movie, it deals

²⁷ Haraway, 151.

²⁸ Dan Schindel: “Transhumanism and the Promise of the Bodiless Mind in the Original Ghost in the Shell.” Hyperallergic. [online]. Accessed April 3rd 2021.

Accessed from:

<https://hyperallergic.com/369060/transhumanism-and-the-promise-of-the-bodiless-mind-in-the-original-ghost-in-the-shell/>

with many themes that can be incorporated into queer theory as well. The main protagonist Motoko Kusanagi defies the traditional definition of gender, is pictured with a conventionally seen feminine identity and appearance but a cyborg body that lacks basic human attributes like the reproductive organs that we see as a part of a traditional female body. She uses "she/her" pronouns and her femininity is combined with androgynous bodily features. Therefore, *Ghost in the Shell* depicts a future in which technological advancement and human enhancing has become a normal part of society. Another example for the use of transhumanist aesthetics in media is the 1982 film *Blade Runner*. Artificial humans, or in the movie so called "replicants", are being hunted down by Blade Runners. Showcasing the transcendent nature of humanity, the transhumanist theme can be applied to the injection of hormones or body changes of trans* or gender non-conforming individuals that wish to change into their desired body.

The popular science-fiction television series *Star Trek* aired in 1966 for the first time, and while not explicitly including LGBTQ+ characters in the show up until a few years ago, it still offers a long history of being associated with the queer community through the exploration of queer themes, the presence of LGBTQ+ actors on screen and playing around with sexual and gender fluidity. *Star Trek: The Original Series* did not feature any queer main characters, although Georg Takei, who portrayed Helmsman Hikaru Sulu, came out as gay in 2005, and now continues to be an active public figure in fighting for LGBTQ+ rights, and was portrayed as such in a recent remake of the original series (*Star Trek Beyond*, 2016). Followed by *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which still didn't include any gay characters, a more candid approach to directing the conversation to queer issues appeared on the show through the seventh episode of Season 7 titled "The Outcast". It tells the story of Enterprise crew coming upon the people of the

androgynous race called the J'naii, inhabiting a planet where binary gender does not exist and where the general concept of gender is seen as offensive. During the episode Commander Riker gets to know the J'naii member Soren, who reveals to him that the principles of a female identity feel close to her, and they both start a romantic relationship. When the J'naii find out, they put Soren on trial where she pleads for herself: "It is not unnatural. I am not sick because I feel this way. I do not need to be helped. I do not need to be cured."²⁹ Then they perform a form of conversion therapy on Soren to wipe out all traces of gender in her.³⁰

Feeding more into the narrative that could be read as queer, *Star Trek: Deep Nine Space* was the first show in the franchise that portrayed a character that was a lot more playful with their gender. Lieutenant Commander Jadzia Dax belongs to the species of Trills who share their bodies with a symbiont that jumps from host to host and fuses with their personalities. They have the ability to share numerous bodies throughout their lifetime and are never placed in exclusively female or male ones, resulting in them living lives as both genders.³¹ Essential to this is the sixth episode "Rejoined" of Season 4 of DNS, where Dax reunites with Lenara Kahn, a former wife of one of her past hosts, having been male when marrying Kahn but both now being in female bodies when they reunite, making "Rejoined" the first *Star Trek* episode to depict a same-sex kiss. Furthermore, in season 7 of DNS, Ezri Dax is introduced into the show, a direct successor of Jadzia Dax who died at the end of Season 6. Due to the unexpected decline of Jadzia's health and having to find an emergency host quickly, Ezri has

²⁹ "Star Trek - The Next Generation. The Outcast." IMDB. [online]. Accessed April 15th 2021.

Accessed from: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0708815/quotes/?tab=qt&ref_=tt_trv_qu

³⁰ Dana Hanson, "Star Trek: A Queer History Of The Franchise." [online]. Accessed April 15th 2021.

Accessed from: <https://screenrant.com/star-trek-queer-history-timeline-lgbtq/>

³¹ Hanson, "Star Trek: A Queer History Of The Franchise."

not yet been in preparation training for the joining process of the symbiont and her, which is a mandatory measure before fusing together, leaving Ezri confused about the change of personality and identity. There is a lot of struggle and gender dysphoria integrated into this transition, which can be compared to the transition process of a trans* person.

With this, the history of queer related plot points throughout the *Star Trek* franchise becomes more evident. While these examples are not officially declared as queer intended by the franchise itself, different *Star Trek* actors have made statements in the past discussing the relevance of these plot points further proving that *Star Trek* can be seen as an important early contribution to the depiction of LGBTQ+ narratives in the media. It has led to the most recent introduction of two trans* characters into the show played by actual trans* actors, among the already existing handful of queer characters in *Star Trek: Discovery*, launching in 2017. In *Discovery*, a romance evolves between the non-binary human Adira and the trans Trill named Gray³². Adira and Gray are portrayed by non-binary actor Blu del Barrio and trans* actor Ian Alexander, which can be seen as a significant milestone in the portrayal of queer characters after nearly 65 years of *Star Trek's* run.

Not only visual entertainment has done its part to boost the popularity of androgynous aesthetics with cyborgs and bodily enhancements with machines, but a lot of it has also come from the music industry. Also heavily connected to Arca and her practice is Icelandic singer Björk, known for her science-fiction inspired persona. Her career emerged in the early nineties and has since then continued to grow and managed to cover a wide range of different musical

³²Adam B. Vary, "Inside the Groundbreaking 'Star Trek: Discovery' Episode With Trans and Non-Binary Characters." [online]. Accessed April 15th 2021. Accessed from: <https://variety.com/2020/tv/news/star-trek-discovery-trans-non-binary-blu-del-barrio-ian-alexander-1234824183/>

genres in each album, making her an experimental-pop sensation. Similarly to Arca, Björk has also experimented with robotic or humanoid visuals in her music videos; an example for that would be the video to *All is Full of Love* from 1999, where we can see her alter ego cyborg self exchanging a passionate kiss with another mechanically constructed female entity.³³ The same goes for her music video for *Cocoon*, where she takes on androgynous imagery. It is scenes like this that support the notion of connecting the transhumanist aesthetic with queerness, as well as supporting a sense of androgyny due to the absence of visual characteristics traditionally viewed as gendered or for instance non-existent reproductive organs. Although never having addressed her sexuality or any personal queerness publicly and therefore presenting as a cisgender heterosexual female, Björk's music can be seen as significantly resonating with the LGBTQ+ community throughout the nineties and continues to do so to this day.³⁴ Her visual presentation overall evokes an androgynous, mythical and fantastical atmosphere connected to her being, "with a lasting fixation on the melding of nature and technology."³⁵

³³ "Björk - All Is Full Of Love." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxBO28j3vug>

³⁴ Lee Williscroft-Ferris, "Björk: A Queer Icon." [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://thequeerness.com/2016/11/12/bjork-a-queer-icon/>

³⁵ Melena Ryzik, "How Björk Brought Her Sci-Fi, Feminist Fairy Tale to Life." [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/08/arts/music/bjork-cornucopia.html>

5. *Arca* - the “cybernetic goddess”

Alejandra Gherzi, better known by her pseudonym Arca, is a Venezuelan artist, singer, experimental music composer, performer and DJ based in Barcelona. Her active years of producing accompanied by a wider public recognition started in 2011, while she already made music and gained fame in Venezuela at a young age. Arca calls her own music a speculation, an idea borrowed from Octavia Butler. To quote The Shed, where Arca held two performances in the year 2019, in regards to her practice: “Music and performative acts work to destabilize binaries and resist categorization, instead proposing a third way that incorporates both playfulness and sensitivity.”³⁶ She came out as non-binary in 2018, later also stating that she identifies as a trans* woman, using she/her and it/its pronouns.

Throughout the years she primarily worked as a producer, writing songs and co-producing with artists like Kanye West, FKA Twigs, Jesse Kanda and most importantly Björk, which would later become significant for Arca’s further practice. Apart from releasing a few EPs here and there and the two studio albums *Xen* and *Mutant* over the years, Arca stayed in the background for the most part. At this point, however, she was already seen as a singular creative force in contemporary electronic music, her work ranging from experimental noise with violent beats to emotional, raw and sensual soundscapes.

2017 and the three years to come can be perceived as an important step in Arca’s career. Whilst co-producing the majority of Björk’s album *Utopia*, something that Björk has called the “Arca-Björk overlap”³⁷, Arca released her third studio album *Arca*, which for the first time included Arca’s vocals in their

³⁶“Arca: Mutant;Faith.” The Shed. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from: <https://theshed.org/program/64-arca-mutant-faith>

³⁷ Selim Bulut, “What we learned from Björk’s live Q&A.” Dazed Digital. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/37420/1/what-we-learnt-from-bjorks-live-qa>

entirety, something that Björk urged her to try after hearing Arca sing during a car ride together.³⁸ This album can be seen as a milestone in her career, a force that placed her out from behind the producer mask and into the spotlight. At the time of its release *Arca* was conceived as Arca's most queer work up to date, which is important to mention for the further understanding of her role in today's pop culture. To quote Pitchfork: "Arca's music sounds like it comes from a future we still haven't reached — one where the way we love will be fluid and liberated and uncompromising, rejecting every single convention of the here and now."³⁹ This statement links back to the transhumanist connection people tend to make with Arca and her work. Additionally, it is Arca's years-long collaboration with mainstream pop artists such as Kanye West that may have contributed to her gain of popularity throughout popular culture and mainstream music, while also keeping a strong relationship to fans of contemporary electronic music through her own experimental releases. These two groups would later intermix, making her the pop sensation she is today.

As she has evolved, she has fused the borders between her music and her being an artist. In 2019, Arca performed a four-night performance piece *Mutant:Faith* at The Shed in New York City, NY, where she played around with custom-built technology Arca co-designed, that would turn her body into an instrument, such as a pole generating noise through skin contact, her movements being translated into MIDI notes through specific gear or the use of myoelectric sensors that allowed Arca to play sounds with her muscles.⁴⁰ The title *Mutant:Faith* originates

³⁸ Alexis Petridis, "How cruising, graveyards and swan songs inspired Arca's new album." [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/apr/06/arca-new-album-alejandro-ghersi-kanye-west-bjork>

³⁹ "50 Songs That Define the Last 50 Years of LGBTQ+ Pride." Pitchfork. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from: <https://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/50-songs-that-define-the-last-50-years-of-lgbtq-pride/?page=5>

⁴⁰ Miles Raymer, "Arca - Developing psychosexual technologies in search of mediating transhumanist identities; a *Mutant:faith* in the face of fear." SuperRare. [online].

from Arca's belief that faith goes hand in hand with doubt, as she mentions in one of her Instagram livestreams. „Religionwise, biologywise... all the teachings of the most ancient spiritual practices involve reconciling with doubt. Faith and doubt renew one another.“⁴¹ I can relate with this statement since it resonates heavily with the experience of a person transitioning, whether it is physically or emotionally; the faith in what's to come but having doubts along the way, continuously switching between one and the other.

The major shift in the perception of Arca's work by the general public is marked by the release of her album *KiCKi* in 2020. It is as if this album serves as a tale written by Arca; a tale about her non-binary identity, a tale about her metamorphosis into an androgynous cyborg. The cover to the album has become some sort of defining image of Arca, an image that marks the point in her life she currently finds herself in: it is Arca standing still in front a white background with her nearly naked body, wearing nothing but see-through garments that cover her chest area and crotch. She is wrapped in metal pieces, almost creating a type of skeleton, standing on stilts that give her legs an animal-like look with metal constructions held in her hands and long claw-like knives extending out. There is a vast contrast between the almost machine inspired body and the softness found in Arca's expression, the entire scene bathed in delicate pastel colors.

The opener to the album is her track *Nonbinary*, which is accompanied by the first music video released for this album.⁴² The storyline in it ranges from Arca's body laying pregnant on an operating table while dozens of cables are plugged

Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from:
<https://editorial.superrare.co/2021/04/17/arca-developing-psychosexual-technologies-in-search-of-mediating-transhumanist-identities-a-mutantfaith-in-the-face-of-fear/>

⁴¹ "Arca talks about Transitioning - Instagram Live 5/11/2019." Youtube.

[online]. Accessed April 28th 2021. Accessed from:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hu7kKBAzVc

⁴² "Arca - Nonbinary." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfGz4MTQ28I>

into her, surrounded by robots and having a robotic look herself, proceeding to Arca covered in roses emerging from a clam shell, which can be interpreted as a reenactment of Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, but with a cybernetic twist. At the end we can watch two figures, two Arcas having a heated argument underlining the track's apparent significance to multiplicity. Both versions of herself can be seen as her alter ego, one as the newly discovered non-binary self and the other as the gendered self being perceived through the lens of heteronormativity, a self that she had embodied up until recently.⁴³ According to Arca, it is essential to realize that we can have "multiple selves without denying that there's a singular unit".⁴⁴ As numerous articles call it, the whole piece is a "futuristic cyborg fashion fantasy".⁴⁵ This could be seen as a type of „update“ of Björk's music video in collaboration with artist Jesse Kanda for *Arisen My Senses* from her album *Utopia*, which depicts Björk's rebirth with her „emerging from a womb, before entering a fantasy world as a fiery, feathered, winged creature“⁴⁶ and Arca performing in the video, also acting out a similar kind of „birth“. The reason *KiCK i* is interpreted as her most important work to date is the fusion between her experimentalist nature and her affiliation to the pop industry. Arca sees this album as a bringing together of all of her various aspects of herself and her work without excluding or holding back any of them. For Arca it is the possibility of not allowing easy categorizations made by others; as she says, she

⁴³ Rhian Daly, "Watch Arca become a cybernetic goddess in the video for 'Nonbinary'." NME. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <http://www.nme.com/news/music/watch-arca-become-cybernetic-goddess-nonbinary-video-2657381>

⁴⁴ Matthew Ismael Ruiz, "Arca Shares Video for New Song 'Nonbinary': Watch." Pitchfork. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://pitchfork.com/news/arca-shares-video-for-new-song-nonbinary-watch>

⁴⁵ Rachel Hahn, "This New Music Video Is a Futuristic Cyborg Fashion Fantasy." Vogue. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from:

<http://www.vogue.com/article/arca-video-cyborg-fashion-nonbinary-new-album-kick-i>

⁴⁶ Sarah Murphy, "Björk Documents Her Own Birth in 'Arisen My Senses' Video." Exclaim. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: https://exclaim.ca/music/article/bj_rk_documents_her_own_birth_in_arisen_my_senses_video

"wouldn't want to just go pop and [...] wouldn't want to go full experimentalist."⁴⁷ This allows for people more familiar with mainstream pop and people knowing Arca for her experimental electronic music to come together, feeding into her popularity and immense fame.

The way in which Arca could be challenging queer aesthetics of the previous generation of artists with a visibly queer presentation can be traced back to the start of her collaboration with Björk, with whom she shares a deep and intimate connection and continues to have a collaborative relationship with to this day.

Arca's visual changes started around the time she came out as non-binary, leaning more into her femininity, starting to grow out her hair and taking hormones, as she states in one of the livestreams she did on Instagram.⁴⁸

Parallels can be seen to Björk and her aesthetic, with the cyborg inspired looks in her music videos as stated earlier, as well as to artist Grace Jones, who was in many ways seen as an androgynous queer icon, and one of her live performance to *Love You To Life*, in which she wears cyborg and alien-like attire made out what looks like latex and antlers coming out of her outfit.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Matt Moen, "Arca: Embracing the Flux." Paper. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.papermag.com/arca-transformation-2645630264.html?rebellitem=8#rebellitem8>

⁴⁸ Youtube, "Arca talks about Transitioning"

⁴⁹ "Grace Jones 'Love You To Life' Live @ The Royal Albert Hall." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 12th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZD2Cvvic44>

6. Increased Trans* visibility - positive or harmful?

Using Instagram as a platform to spread awareness and information has been growing over the past few years: a spectacle going by the name of “Instagram activism”. Last year in May, George Floyd, a Black man, was killed by the police over a fake dollar bill, causing the biggest nationwide protest for Black liberation in all 50 US states. With US television news stations not covering police violence committed against protesters, people started to turn to social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter to keep everybody in the loop about what is actually going on on the streets in each state, posting and sharing footage, experiences of arrests due to protesting etc. Since then, Instagram has been used by people more than ever to educate people around them about systemic racism, to share Black people’s requests in need of financial support and to actively choose Black people whenever they can. This has taken the looks of information sheets that are clearly stating the most important facts regarding each issue that is discussed, whether it is an overview of organisations supplying financial aid, a list of books discussing the history of systemic racism and the ways we can fight against it, or advice on how to actively unlearn ingrained racism by constantly educating ourselves on that matter and having conversations with our surroundings about it. These sheets are usually designed to look pleasing enough for people to share it more easily, so rather than filling one post up with as much text as possible, the information communicated is usually designed in a more easily accessible manner.

A similar approach can be seen in advocating for trans* rights. 2021 has become the record year for anti-transgender legislations.⁵⁰ These bills cover a wide range

⁵⁰ Wyatt Ronan, “BREAKING: 2021 Becomes Record Year For Anti-Transgender Legislation.” Human Rights Campaign. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/breaking-2021-becomes-record-year-for-anti-transgender-legislation>

of discrimination, specifically targeting trans* youth, such as the anti-trans* sports bill for „creating fairness in women’s sports act“ in multiple different US states, which prevents people from joining student athletic teams that match their gender identity due to „inherent differences between men and women.“⁵¹ It goes as far as the state of Florida allowing schools to request examinations about a student’s anatomy or testosterone levels, which initially forces children to undergo genital inspections in order for them to be able to join sports teams.⁵² Others exercise the right to ban LGBTQ+ education in schools, the US states Tennessee and Arizona recently passing bills that allow parents to opt their children out from lessons that include LGBTQ+ history and the contribution to today’s society and sexual education that could „promote, normalize, support or address lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender issues or lifestyle.“⁵³ The most controversial anti-trans* legislation to be introduced this year has been the intention to criminalize gender-affirming healthcare for trans* youth, the main goal being to make it a crime for medical professionals for instance to provide puberty-blockers to a child’s care to delay endogenous puberty or banning the right to undergo gender-affirming surgery, classifying this kind of care as „child abuse“. These bills also intend to criminalize parents who support and encourage their children to access this care.⁵⁴ With all of the things mentioned going on, Instagram activism is at its peak, contributing to the amplification of trans* matters online.

⁵¹ “KS SB55.” Bill Track 50. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/1281393>

⁵² “CS/HB 1475.” Florida House Of Representatives. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1475/BillText/c1/PDF>

⁵³ Nico Lang, “Tennessee’s Next Anti-LGBTQ+ Move: Banning Queer-Affirming Textbooks.” Them. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.them.us/story/tennessee-bill-ban-lgbtq-books-schools>

⁵⁴ Oliver Haug, “45,000 Youth Could Lose Gender-Affirming Healthcare if Anti-Trans Bills Pass.” Them. [online]. Accessed April 14th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.them.us/story/youth-could-lose-gender-affirming-healthcare-anti-trans-bills>

Contrarily, Instagram has recently shown flaws regarding this. In December 2020, a new update of Instagram terms of use was released, which would inter alia hinder users to post "objectionable" content. The new guidelines stated that posts would be seen as a violation if they included "both solicitation and 'suggestive elements'"⁵⁵, which does not only involve nudity but also sexualised slang, among other things. Not only does this harm sex workers and their income by driving them away from the platform, but it additionally discriminates marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ+ community, since Instagram has long served as a source of income for trans* and non-binary people who rely on sending out requests for financial support from others, a critical connection that Instagram provides. These changes in guidelines can be seen as a direct suppression of communication coming from marginalized groups and censorship to artistic and activist expression.

On the other hand, the use of queer and trans* aesthetics on the platform become more and more apparent. Marketing strategies of mainly fashion brands include the use of aesthetics or work together with queer artists to promote their goods. Examples of this involve trans* artist and filmmaker Wu Tsang and her collaboration with the designer brand Gucci in partnership with Frieze to create a documentary exploring the underground New York House scene⁵⁶, Yves Saint Laurent's short film directed by Jim Jarmusch with trans* actress Indya Moore,

⁵⁵ Sophie K Rosa, "Sex Workers Denounce Instagram's 'Puritanical' New Rules." Novara Media. [online]. Accessed April 28th 2021. Accessed from: <https://novaramedia.com/2020/11/21/sex-workers-denounce-instagrams-puritanical-new-rules/>

⁵⁶ "Wu Tsang - 'Into A Space Of Love'." Frieze. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.frieze.com/video/wu-tsang-space-love>

or trans* actress Hunter Schafer becoming the new face presenting Make-up brand Shiseido.⁵⁷

The twist lies in the freedom Arca seems to have when posting content on Instagram. She regularly posts almost-naked images of herself, which in theory goes against Instagram's guidelines. This does not seem as a limitation to Arca, since this content does not get censored the way other trans* content does.

Instagram's eagerness to profit off of the queer aesthetic whilst simultaneously and gradually eliminating content from actual queer people that don't fit into these guidelines speaks to society's overall standpoint towards the trans* community. It is taking away a platform that serves as a connector between communities and primarily as a source of income for many trans* and non-binary people, that rely on Instagram for financial support.

This all raises the question whether trans* visibility and the normalization of trans* aesthetics as specified earlier in this thesis truly support the trans* community, and whether this visibility goes beyond any visual trend.

⁵⁷ Kathleen Hou, "Hunter Schafer's Face Has a New Job." The Cut. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.thecut.com/2020/08/hunter-schafer-is-the-new-face-of-shiseido.html>

7. Conclusion

One way in which Arca has gradually fidgeted her way into the hearts of the public is through her work as a producer. While not visible for the longest time, she has been part of popular music culture for a dozen of years, working as a producer for dozens of artists, her magic enfolding in the background. What then started off as deconstructed electronic experimenting, taking it one step at a time out of the producer role, became a journey so personal and raw; unthinkable to live without due to her ability to merge all the genres dear to so many different kinds of people into one, creating a buffet everybody could choose from. In my opinion, this complexity in her work and her being is why people all over the world look up to Arca and engage with her so heavily. Whether it is for her music, her artistic self, her trans* and non-binary identity or all of the things combined. In my eyes, on one hand Arca being non-binary creates another layer of sensation or curiosity for people that are not necessarily familiar with gender-fluidity or gender-nonconformity, resulting in her getting even more attention, on the other hand it attracts people from the trans* and non-binary community like me, that might view her as some sort of hero or idol, having seemingly found her place in a world that is still run by the heteropatriarchy; a place where she is able to do and share what she is passionate about and where she is being celebrated for it. Another reason for her extensive fame and popularity throughout the world might be thanks to her cyborg-inspired presentation, which, as already established earlier in this thesis, has found a big demand by virtue of science fiction films and TV shows. This adds another layer to the appeal of Arca's presence in popular culture. Arca does not only revive and at the same time radicalize the previous aesthetics of popular culture, but also somehow manages to embody the theory around gender

performance, transhumanism and the cyborg. She has found a language to express the principles of these theories and make what they are about accessible.

Let's say, people that have no background knowledge and are new to the concept of gender-nonconformity are introduced to it by Arca. They see her talking about her identity in interviews or in livestreams, crossing established gender binary borders through her lyrics and primarily through her aesthetic and visual presentation. These people are introduced to gender-nonconformity through an incredibly curated version that Arca chooses to present to the public and is part of her practice. A version that involves cyborg-like technological bodily enhancements or fantasy-inspired animal-like features, creating the image of a "mutant" as Arca calls herself. The popularity of cyborgs and transhumanist thinking urges people to interact with Arca's aesthetic, reposting her images on Instagram, which in turn brings them closer to engaging with trans* issues. On the other hand, it could also result in people possibly interpreting gender-nonconformity as an abstract concept, as solely an act, rather than a true lived experience. While I am convinced that Arca's art practice and how she chooses to present herself is undoubtedly another extension of herself that make her who she is and make her whole, which is one of the reasons so many people respect her, it raises the question whether her visual presentation doesn't perhaps raise the wrong image of trans* and non-binary people on the grounds of her immense fame and reach. It may support transness being viewed only as a trend, as a temporary stage in our society that in result may reinforce a purely superficial interaction with trans* issues, as long as it is comfortable and within the realm of easy access of clicking "like" and "share" on social media. It becomes a superficial interaction executed by the general public that does not

demand actual relearning and reconstruction of the internalized binary thinking existing in our society. It may encourage people adding queer vocabulary to their repertoire, becoming familiar with different pronouns, but all in all it neglects all the work and education that would be necessary to make a change in how we view trans* and non-binary people and to understand them a little bit better. It pushes the work onto queer people to educate others around them.

As already mentioned, for the general public, transness only seems to work when it stays in the realm of abstractionism. While the growing trend of Instagram activism and using the platform to spread awareness may urge people to interact with trans* matters more, it rarely ever leaves the dimensions of Instagram and reposting a few spreadsheets here and there, when in reality it would be needed to provide real support to trans* and non-binary people.

I am still only seeing trans* people talking about the anti-trans legislations happening, it's still only trans* people that keep educating people around them, implore them to listen to their experiences, amplify their voices and ask them to care. Instagram activism is great in theory in regards to easily accessible information that reaches a wide audience, something that is not necessarily done through other media, yet it proves itself to be inefficient in the long run. The sharing of information sheets about pronouns and misgendering is or the statement that „trans* rights are human rights“ is just as important for the education of cis people, yet it's not enough anymore when it comes to standing up for the trans* community by supporting them financially and advocating for their rights, especially in situations where the government is taking active steps to take those away, affecting a lot more than how society chooses to refer to trans* people in terms of using affirming vocabulary and language. Access to

gender affirming healthcare provides a framework in which trans* youth, their guardians and their doctors can actively help kids embrace their authenticity and autonomy.

In my opinion, many attributes of transhumanism present a large importance to queer visual culture. A big factor is the ability for the human body to transcend into something beyond our current perception, which shares many similarities with gender affirming surgeries when transitioning. When experiencing gender dysphoria or body dysmorphia, trans* and gender-nonconforming individuals take hormones or undergo surgery in order to achieve a desired look or body. This reconstruction of the body as mentioned by Donna Haraway, and as also Judith Butler writes about, is the primary reason the cyborg could be considered close to the values of the trans* community and its aesthetic. One gets the chance to imagine their body exactly how they want to, without socially imposed restrictions that would otherwise occur in the real world. These aesthetics can offer a framework for thinking about gender outside of our current perception of it. We are queering our form, which makes me think that all forms of transhumanist representation are inherently queer. When looking at *Blade Runner* and *Ghost in the Shell*, many aesthetical attributes that are now part of the current queer aesthetic can be found throughout both movies. While they were not produced with a queer mindset at first and do not directly link to Haraway's views on feminism, the general technological theme can be applied to today's queer visual culture. A body that can transform into whatever we want it to, a body that we're suddenly not tied to; since we can transcend into something completely new, beyond the general gender perception. It is artists like Arca who reclaim that potential that is unintentionally provided in these movies and TV shows.

While there are problematic aspects about to what degree we engage with trans* issues and how much we are willing to put in the necessary work and educate ourselves to shift gender binary thinking, it is people like Arca that are redefining the aesthetic of Instagram, and therefore also redefining how we perceive gender away from the internet. It helps to form our perception of the self and our surroundings, that may take us one step closer to a genderless future; a future where "a hundred sexes bloom."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ *The xenofeminist manifesto: a politics for alienation.* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018), 49.

8. Bibliography

Butler, Judith. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1990. ISBN 978-0-415-38955-6.

Halberstam, Judith. *Trans*: a quick and quirky account of gender variability*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-520-96610-9.

Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991. ISBN 978-0-415-90387-5.

Hennessy, Rosemary. *Profit and pleasure: sexual identities in late capitalism*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. ISBN 978-1-315-27014-2.

Russell, Legacy. *Glitch feminism: a manifesto*. London New York: Verso, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78663-266-1.

The xenofeminist manifesto: a politics for alienation. London Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018. ISBN 978-1-78873-157-7.

Warner, Michael. *Fear of a queer planet: queer politics and social theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8166-2333-3.

Web pages

"50 Songs That Define the Last 50 Years of LGBTQ+ Pride." Pitchfork. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/50-songs-that-define-the-last-50-years-of-lgbtq-pride/?page=5>

Adam B. Vary, "Inside the Groundbreaking 'Star Trek: Discovery' Episode With Trans and Non-Binary Characters." [online]. Accessed April 15th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://variety.com/2020/tv/news/star-trek-discovery-trans-non-binary-blu-del-barrio-ian-alexander-1234824183/>

Alexis Petridis, "How cruising, graveyards and swan songs inspired Arca's new album." [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/apr/06/arca-new-album-alejandro-ghersi-kanye-west-bjork>

"Arca: Mutant;Faith." The Shed. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from: <https://theshed.org/program/64-arca-mutant-faith>

"Arca - Nonbinary." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfGz4MTQ28I>

"Arca talks about Transitioning - Instagram Live 5/11/2019." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 28th 2021. Accessed from:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hu7kKBAzVc

"Björk - All Is Full Of Love." Youtube. [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021.

Accessed from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxBO28j3vug>

"CS/HB 1475." Florida House Of Representatives. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2021/1475/BillText/c1/PDF>

Dan Schindel: "Transhumanism and the Promise of the Bodiless Mind in the Original Ghost in the Shell." Hyperallergic. [online]. Accessed April 3rd 2021.

Accessed from:

<https://hyperallergic.com/369060/transhumanism-and-the-promise-of-the-bodiless-mind-in-the-original-ghost-in-the-shell/>

Dana Hanson, "Star Trek: A Queer History Of The Franchise." [online]. Accessed April 15th 2021.

Accessed from: <https://screenrant.com/star-trek-queer-history-timeline-lgbtq/>

"Grace Jones 'Love You To Life' Live @ The Royal Albert Hall." Youtube. [online].

Accessed April 12th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZD2Cvvic44>

Hair Kunzru, "You are Cyborg." Wired. [online]. Accessed April 5th 2021.

Accessed from: <https://www.wired.com/1997/02/ffharaway/>

Kathleen Hou, "Hunter Schafer's Face Has a New Job." The Cut. [online].

Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from:

<https://www.thecut.com/2020/08/hunter-schafer-is-the-new-face-of-shiseido.html>

"KS SB55." Bill Track 50. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from:
<https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/1281393>

Lee Williscroft-Ferris, "Björk: A Queer Icon." [online]. Accessed April 24th 2021.
Accessed from: <https://thequeerness.com/2016/11/12/bjork-a-queer-icon/>

Matt Moen, "Arca: Embracing the Flux." Paper. [online]. Accessed April 24th
2021. Accessed from:
<https://www.papermag.com/arca-transformation-2645630264.html?rebelltitem=8#rebelltitem8>

Matthew Ismael Ruiz, "Arca Shares Video for New Song "Nonbinary": Watch."
Pitchfork. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from:
<https://pitchfork.com/news/arca-shares-video-for-new-song-nonbinary-watch>

Melena Ryzik, "How Björk Brought Her Sci-Fi, Feminist Fairy Tale to Life."
[online]. Accessed April 24th 2021. Accessed from:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/08/arts/music/bjork-cornucopia.html>

Miles Raymer, "Arca - Developing psychosexual technologies in search of
mediating transhumanist identities; a Mutant;faith in the face of fear."
SuperRare. [online]. Accessed April 27th 2021. Accessed from:
<https://editorial.superrare.co/2021/04/17/arca-developing-psychosexual-technologies-in-search-of-mediating-transhumanist-identities-a-mutantfaith-in-the-face-of-fear/>

Nico Lang, "Tennessee's Next Anti-LGBTQ+ Move: Banning Queer-Affirming Textbooks." Them. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.them.us/story/tennessee-bill-ban-lgbtq-books-schools>

Oliver Haug, "45,000 Youth Could Lose Gender-Affirming Healthcare if Anti-Trans Bills Pass." Them. [online]. Accessed April 14th 2021. Accessed from: <https://www.them.us/story/youth-could-lose-gender-affirming-healthcare-anti-trans-bills>

Rachel Hahn, "This New Music Video Is a Futuristic Cyborg Fashion Fantasy." Vogue. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <http://www.vogue.com/article/arca-video-cyborg-fashion-nonbinary-new-album-kick-i>

Rhian Daly, "Watch Arca become a cybernetic goddess in the video for 'Nonbinary'." NME. [online]. Accessed April 20th 2021. Accessed from: <http://www.nme.com/news/music/watch-arca-become-cybernetic-goddess-nonbinary-video-2657381>