

# Body Transformation Experiences: A workshop on How to Elicit, Assess and Support them through Multisensory Technology

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**Figure 1: Examples of devices employed to induce Body Transformation Experiences (BTEs), provided as inspiration: (a) SoniWeight shoes—transforming body weight via sound [19, 24, 88, 92]; (b) Transforming breathing via thermal feedback [15]; (c) HandMorph—transforming hand dimensions [54]; (d) Me<sup>2</sup>—encountering one’s child self [51]; (e) vARitouch—transforming tactile material properties [105]; (f) Emopal—emotional connections via brain–muscle interfaces [42]; (g) Movement sonification for rehabilitation [59].**

## Abstract

Over the last 30 years researchers in HCI, Cognitive Neuroscience, and Interaction Design have shown a growing interest in experiences that engage the moving and sensual body to alter one’s body perception. The way one’s body is perceived is highly plastic and can be altered through multisensory signals and feedback related to the body. The emerging developments in multisensory interfaces open opportunities to enrich, augment and transform body experiences in the real-world through the senses. This workshop focuses on the theories, approaches, methods, and tools to

design multisensory technology that elicit and support Body Transformation Experiences, and on how to best design these for and from a first-person, lived experience. We will explore how to elicit and assess multisensory Body Transformation Experiences, and showcase concrete examples of supporting them with technology. Through technology presentations, panel sessions with experts, and multidisciplinary discussions, this workshop aims to: (i) bring together researchers creating Body Transformation through sensory technology with those studying experiential effects of sensory-body interactions; (ii) map current methods, opportunities, and challenges in designing Body Transformation Experiences; and (iii) envision a road map for this field with future directions by fostering a multidisciplinary community, building collaborations, and inspiring innovative directions for design and research.



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## CCS Concepts

• **Human-centered computing** → **Interaction design**; *Human computer interaction (HCI)*; Interaction techniques; Interaction paradigms.

## Keywords

Body perception, Multisensory interaction, Embodied interaction, Embodied experience

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## 1 Motivation: Why This Workshop

Our bodies ground us in the world, shaping how we sense, move, and experience our surroundings. Research in diverse and complementary disciplines such as psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and somaesthetics, agree that our understanding, perception and lived experience of the body – our felt bodily sense, awareness, and attunement – is not static, but dynamically shaped through sensory signals and interactions. From neuroscience we learned that perceptions of body appearance (e.g., shape, and size [21, 43]), body configuration [65, 107], location [66], and motor abilities [38, 49], as well as bodily sensations [20, 37], can be altered through interactive and multisensory feedback (including visual [12, 37, 55, 93], auditory [96], or haptic [50, 54, 56, 75, 95] signals between others). In these Body Transformation Experiences (BTE), people report perceptual changes leading to unusual or novel experiences of their body, with the aid of multisensory technologies. Crucially, these perceptual alterations have been found to profoundly impact cognitive [25, 48], motor [34], social [18, 48] and emotional [32, 99] functioning, as well as self-identity [18, 68, 76, 93].

This opens up a vast avenue for technological interventions in health and well-being, including eating disorders [17, 90], physical rehabilitation e.g., in stroke [27, 59] or chronic pain [28, 62, 77, 89, 101], sports [103], dance [102], motor learning and physical (in)activity [11, 39, 40, 78], product design [54–56, 75], mental health [41], interpersonal relations [10], and the arts [9, 23, 26, 68]). From a somaesthetic and soma-based design perspective, such BTEs are not only measurable perceptual alterations but also opportunities for cultivating richer, more nuanced felt experiences of the lived body. By engaging first-person methods of bodily inquiry and aesthetic appreciation, soma-design foregrounds how interactive technologies can sensitively shape awareness, presence, and meaning-making, thereby expanding the transformative potential of BTEs beyond clinical or performance outcomes into everyday life and human flourishing.

In this workshop, we build on our recent CHI workshops related to body and sensorimotor augmentations [8, 58, 71, 83], extending their focus to designing these experiences that engage technologies and the body, and to assessing their impact on people. Our aim is

twofold: to map the emerging design space of BTEs across disciplines; and to envision a roadmap for how such experiences might be designed, studied, and embedded in diverse contexts. These explorations will focus on inducing BTEs through sensory feedback, measuring BTEs and their impacts across various dimensions (behavior, emotion, cognition, etc); and supporting BTEs through technology.

### 1.1 How to Elicit Multisensory Body Transformation Experiences

Multisensory research in HCI and cognitive neuroscience has extensively shown that signals from different sensory modalities can be used to transform the way one's body is experienced. In cognitive neuroscience, this often involves mapping an altered signal in one sensory modality to an unaltered signal in another modality, in ways consistent with prior beliefs and expectations [4, 12, 65]. For example, in the well-known rubber hand illusion [12] the (altered) visual experience of seeing a rubber hand instead of one's own being touched while feeling the (unaltered) touch on the own hand results in feeling that the rubber hand is one's own. Other examples include tapping sounds to induce illusions of arm elongation [91, 94, 96]; creaky sounds to evoke sensations of stiffness [36, 39, 80]; one's voice to induce perspective illusions [66]; haptic feedback for phantom limb experiences [12, 100]; and visual feedback in VR to modulate perceived body weight [60], constitution [35], perspective [38], size [55, 87, 104], or even to induce disembodiment [70]. Such illusions can also be elicited by scents [13, 15, 16, 65, 69], vestibular [33], motor [97], or interoceptive signals [7]. Experiences can be created according to physical properties and conceptual mappings related to the sensory signals. For example, the association between sound pitch and verticality can produce a sense of limb elongation when mapped to somatosensory or motor cues [53, 67, 86], while water or marble sounds linked to one body can elicit sensations of body fluidity [39] or different materiality [74]. Beyond the potential of these BTEs to understand multisensory integration and body perception, BTEs remarkably impact other aspects of experience: embodying a different skin tone can reduce racial bias for prolonged periods [48], embodying a friend can change one's self-concept [84, 85], or hearing one's footsteps with more bass or treble can shift motor patterns respectively towards one consistent with a heavier or lighter body [19, 88, 92]. Cognitive neuroscience thus provides powerful accounts of how multisensory signals shape body perception—typically through controlled experiments and measurable proxies of experience.

An extension of cognitive neuroscience inspired approaches builds on O'Regan and Noë's concept of sensorimotor contingencies – the law-like relation between actions and feedback in sensorimotor loops [57]. Manipulating these contingencies, such as adding tactile pulses to an exploratory action, changes how users perceive their bodies and environment. This typically involves high-resolution sensing of body activities that are transformed into audio or tactile feedback in real time [72]. Examples include technologies that estrange users from their bodies [63, 64], systems that modify how movements are experienced (e.g., feeling movement without actual motion [22], or altering the perceived continuity of action [1]), and wearables that change perceived physical properties of

the surrounding world [82, 105]. In this approach, BTEs emerge by reshaping the dynamics of action and feedback.

A different approach to BTE can be found in soma-design works which cultivate first-person, felt experience in the design process: for instance, attending to the aesthetics of interaction and the qualities of materialities; working with subtle bodily sensations rather than only overt actions; and fostering slow, reflective modes of engagement that make normally unnoticed sensations available to experience. Through such practices, technologies can be created that invite intimacy (close, affectionate contact with oneself or others) [6, 31, 81], and intimate care practices (e.g., [30]); support attunement to the lived body (e.g., [108]); and ultimately elicit BTEs—where shifts in attention, aesthetics, and relationality reshape how the body is sensed, lived, and understood. In this way, soma-design expands neuroscientific approaches, exploring how underlying processes of body transformation can also be aesthetically cultivated, refined, and extended—opening up new possibilities for designing the felt experience of transformation. Here, we are interested in works addressing how to transform people’s body perceptions through multisensory technologies in ways that impact functioning, identity, and health. Works will be selected to have a wide representation of approaches, conceptual and technical paradigms, diverse sensory channels with a focus beyond vision, different materialities, and works concerned with the ethical implications of these BTEs.

## 1.2 How to Assess Body Transformation Experiences

Body perception is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses perceptions of body configuration, position and motor abilities [38, 49], as well as body appearance (e.g., shape, and size [21, 44]), and bodily sensations that can enter conscious awareness [20, 37]. These dimensions form an integrated experience in which sensations, emotions, movements, cognition, and sociocultural interactions continuously co-shape one another, with significant implications for virtually every aspect of human experience (e.g., [3, 25, 37, 61, 73]). Due to its complexity, operationalizing body perception and isolating its various dimensions is often challenging. Within cognitive neuroscience, BTE’s are typically assessed by contrasting at least two comparable conditions in which variables are attempted to be controlled in the laboratory. At least one variable is manipulated to confirm that observed effects result from the manipulation rather than other factors. For instance, in the rubber hand illusion, the synchrony of touch on the rubber hand and the participants’ own hand is manipulated to confirm that the perceptual changes arise from the congruence between seen and felt touch [12]. Three main sources of data are used to operationalize body experience: questionnaires and scales in which participants report expected experiential changes [2, 12, 45]; behaviors consistent with the induced alteration [12]; and physiological changes corresponding to the elicited illusion [5]. While these methods are useful to identify generalizable relations between specific stimuli and specific operationalizations of BTEs, they do not capture the full richness and breadth of individual experiences.

Design research in HCI offers a significant opportunity to address these challenges. Building on a long tradition of designing for

technologically mediated body experiences [29], design research on body experiences aligns with phenomenological and pragmatic stances on body perception, emphasizing nuanced experiences that cannot be reduced to simple parameters or controlled experimental settings. In this approach, participants’ own accounts form the core data, while researchers’ perspectives and own experiences are active elements in the generation of knowledge. These methods are powerful to underline individual differences and acknowledge complexity, though they might be less suitable for generalization and replication. For this reason, combining the best of both worlds may advance a comprehensive science of body perception. Indeed, by integrating diverse data sources—ranging from interoceptive signals to muscle activation, movement patterns and participants’ own accounts— we can gain a richer understanding that allows to model and personalize BTEs. Here, we are particularly interested in work addressing how to assess BTEs both in controlled and real-world settings, across short- and long-term timescales, as well as works focusing on real-time, continuous measures and the modeling of the links between BTEs and changes in emotion, motor and social functions.

## 1.3 Concrete Examples on How to Support Body Transformation Experiences Through Technology

This workshop explores how technology can support and enrich BTEs through a mix of hands-on exploration and discussion. We will focus on (i) concrete examples and prototypes, experienced first-hand, and (ii) practical methods for making BTEs visible, measurable, and designable (see Figure 1 for inspiration). Our interest includes solutions that enable BTEs to be studied and supported outside the lab in natural contexts, as well as methods for collecting in situ data. Concrete examples will serve as provocations to spark reflection and discussion on the current BTE design space and envision how future technologies can shape meaningful bodily experiences.

## 1.4 Workshop Aims and Topics of Interest

This workshop aims to build a community of researchers, designers and practitioners interested in two main areas: designing/creating (multi)sensory BTEs and assessing BTEs. It will foster networking, encourage new collaborations, and expand the design space for multisensory BTEs by integrating research from diverse perspectives. Participants will share experiences, knowledge and insights into methods and tools by discussing key questions, such as:

- What theories, approaches, methods, and tools emphasize the role of sensory cues in body experiences?
- How can sensory signals (e.g., audio, pitch) be used to elicit distinct BTEs?
- How affect and sensory signals interact to elicit distinct BTEs?
- How and where can technologies for BTE be worn or integrated in the body?
- What relationships do people develop with BTE technologies (e.g., augmentation, extension of self)?
- How can BTEs enhance or augment people, including creating novel bodily experiences?

- How can BTEs be assessed—through experimental measures and subjective accounts of perception?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in designing BTEs that preserve agency, efficacy, and responsibility?
- How can BTEs be designed for inclusivity?
- What are the challenges of designing BTEs in-the-wild, their sustainability, and long-term effects?
- In what present and future domains can BTEs be applied (e.g., health, well-being)?
- What ethical issues arise when designing and researching BTEs, and which stakeholders need to be involved?

## 2 Length of the Workshop

Two sessions of 90 minutes.

## 3 Organizers

The organising team represents the multidisciplinary and international scope of the workshop. Collectively, they bring expertise in multisensory and embodied experiences and technologies, traditional and innovative design processes, methods, and tools, affective computing and real-life contexts. They have served on conference program committees, published extensively in top-tier conferences (e.g., CHI, IDC, DIS, UIST) and journals (e.g., HCI, TOCHI), special issues and books. They have organized related workshops [8, 14, 52, 58, 71, 83] and SIGs [47, 79] at CHI, as well as hands-on workshops at other haptics and HCI conferences such as at NordiCHI, DIS, IDC, CHIPlay, TEL, IEEE World Haptics, UIST [98, 106] – attesting to the interest in this topic in the CHI community. Most, if not all, organizers will attend CHI'26 and support on-site preparations if the workshop is accepted.

**Ana Tajadura-Jiménez** (main contact) is an Associate Professor at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M). She leads the *i\_mBODY* lab ([www.imbodylab.com](http://www.imbodylab.com)), part of the DEI Interactive Systems Group in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, working at the intersection between the fields of HCI, neuroscience and AI. She is Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded BODYinTRANSIT project and the SENSEBEAT-DS, both focused on multisensory technologies that alterbody perception and drive changes in emotion, behavior and health.

**Elena Márquez Segura** is a design researcher in the *i\_mBODY* lab, part of the DEI Interactive Systems Group in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at UC3M. Her work focuses on designing and studying playful technology-supported experiences for collocated physical and social action; and on embodied design methods facilitating their design. Currently, Elena is working with wearables and immersive technologies in domains related to health and well-being, in particular physical training and rehabilitation.

**Laia Turmo Vidal** is an interaction design researcher and post-doc at KTH Royal Institute of Technology developing body-centric and critical approaches to designing for health and well-being. Her work explores how interactive technologies (such as biofeedback devices, soft haptic wearables, and interactive machine learning tools) can positively transform body experiences in contexts of physical activity, rehabilitation, and chronic conditions.

**Marte Roel** is an interdisciplinary practitioner focused on bodily experience, empathy, and compassion. His academic work pertains

to the fields of psychology, behavioral science, and cognitive neuroscience. He is currently affiliated with the *i\_mBODY* lab at UC3M and the Psychology Department of the University of Zurich. Marte is co-founder of BeAnotherLab and the Association for Independent Research.

**Nadia Bianchi-Berthouze** is a Full Professor in Affective Computing and Interaction at the UCL Interaction Centre. Part of her research focuses on how full-body technology and body sensory feedback can be used to modulate people's perception of themselves and of their capabilities to improve self-efficacy and copying capabilities.

**Aneesa Singh** is a Full Professor in HCI and Digital Health at the University College London Interaction Centre. She is interested in the design, adoption and use of personal health and wellbeing technologies in everyday contexts, focusing on sensitive and stigmatized conditions.

**Frédéric Bevilacqua** is Frédéric Bevilacqua Head Researcher at IRCAM in Paris, leading the Sound Music Movement Interaction team within the STMS lab (IRCAM–CNRS–Sorbonne Université). His research is concerned with the modeling and design of human movement-sound interactions, and with the development of gesture-based musical interfaces. Applications of his research range from artistic creation and education to health.

**Alice Haynes** is a postdoctoral research fellow in Interaction Design at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm. Her focus is on designing body-centered haptic and shape-changing interfaces for well-being and interpersonal connection. She has recently started using soma design and first person methods to design for transforming her relationship to her body, exploring specific bodily experiences and perceptions such as scoliosis and body asymmetry.

**Don Samitha Elvitigala** is a Senior Lecturer/Assistant Professor from the Department of Human Centred Computing of Monash University. His research focuses on developing novel on-body interfaces that can enhance human capabilities by implicitly understanding humans' physical and mental behaviors. In particular, he explores how we can utilize everyday clothes and clothing accessories to develop human augmentations.

**Jun Nishida** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Maryland, College Park, leading Embodied Dynamics Laboratory (<https://emd.cs.umd.edu>). He explores the dynamics in human embodied experiences—how our bodies, perceptions, and somatic interactions contribute to the formation of physical skills, knowledge, subjectivity, and behavior through the design and engineering of new on-body somatic interfaces.

**Pedro Lopes** is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at University of Chicago, Director of the Human Computer Integration Lab (<https://lab.plopes.org>). Pedro focuses on integrating interfaces with the human body [46]—exploring the interface paradigm that supersedes wearables. These devices augment the body, not just cognitively, but also physically.

**Paul Strohmeier** is a Senior Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Informatics (MPI-INF) where he leads the Sensorimotor Interaction group and an Associate Fellow of Saarland University. His PhD work was honored with the SIGCHI Outstanding Dissertation Award. He has received an ERC Starting Grant for conducting

research on kinesthetic perception, sensory augmentation, and on-body systems.

#### 4 Plans to Publish Workshop Proceedings, Offline Materials and Pre-Workshop Plans

The workshop website ([www.imbodylab.com/chi26-body-transformation-workshop](http://www.imbodylab.com/chi26-body-transformation-workshop)) will present the aims, plans, organizers, snippets from devices and materials brought to our previous workshops for inspiration, the call for participation, prior readings, workshop schedule, and accepted submissions. We also plan to publish a collection of the submitted papers as workshop proceedings in our website and via <https://ceur-ws.org> or ArXiv using report numbers. The workshop will be publicized to HCI and multisensory researchers through mailing lists (e.g., SIGCHI, PhD-Design, NIME, MOCO), social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Bluesky, Instagram), and related project websites (e.g., BODYinTRANSIT <https://bodyintransit.eu>), including those of previous SIGs and workshops (e.g., <https://sensedbody.org>). We will also seek submissions through our networks. Potential participants may submit a position paper or an alternative format (conceptual design sketch, presentation slides, poster, or video). The organizing committee will select 10–12 submissions, inviting up to 20–25 participants in addition to the organizers and panelists (see Section 6). To facilitate participation and take full advantage of the workshop opportunity, we will hold pre- and post-workshop activities. The pre-workshop activity will be a one-hour remote session where participants introduce themselves, share their motivation, and provide a short overview of the work they plan to bring (e.g., a method or prototype; 1-2 minutes per participant). This pre-workshop activity will take place on Zoom, with the timing arranged in consultation with the participants. Based on these inputs, groups or “stations” will be formed around themes for the main workshop. Materials will be distributed beforehand via email, the website, and shared drives. The main workshop will be held in person.

#### 5 Diversity and Accessibility

The organizers are committed to the inclusion of participants across abilities, gender, ethnicity, location, institution, seniority, and research background. The participants will be asked to make workshop submissions fully accessible and include alt-text image descriptions. We will attempt to have live closed captions of the presentations for any participants who may need them. We will have volunteers at the workshop to facilitate group work and interactions.

#### 6 Workshop Structure and Activities

This workshop will consist of **two 90-minute sessions** (with a break) focused on the existing space of BTE research and the future of BTEs. The workshop will include three main activities, with the following schedule:

##### Session 1 (90 minutes): Mapping the existing space of BTE research

- Multisensory warm-up, welcome and Introductions (15 minutes).
- Activity 1: Experiencing the prototypes and methods brought by workshop participants (20 minutes).

- Activity 2: Mapping the Design Space for multisensory BTEs, using the prototypes and methods, and the workshop’s topics of interest (40 minutes).
- General sharing on salient themes (15 minutes).

–Coffee break–

##### Session 2 (90 minutes): Moving forward - the future of BTEs

- Conversation/Provocation: BTEs with invited panellists (20 minutes)
- Activity 3: Future next steps of BTEs (30 minutes)
- Panel Discussion and Closing (40 minutes)

These activities will be moderated by the organizers and invited experts, building on participants’ contributions. In **Activity 1**, participants will showcase their methods, prototypes, or concepts to kick off the discussion in **Activity 2**, focused on mapping the design space. For this, we will jointly physically annotate the prototypes and methods brought by participants using the questions in section 1.4 as prompts. We will end this activity discussing challenges and opportunities behind the prototypes and methods.

After the coffee break, experts will lead a moderated dialogue, designed to provoke and inspire discussion during **Activity 3**. The expert panel will include senior organizers and two distinguished invited experts. We are delighted to announce that our confirmed panelists include Kristina Höök and Mel Slater. Using the provocations as inspirations, participants will revisit the challenges and opportunities identified in Activity 2, to propose future directions for design and research. These will be discussed in a lively panel engaging the panelists, participants, and organizers. Finally, organizers will present communication channels established to continue the conversation, post-workshop plans (see “Post-Workshop Plans”), and opportunities for collaboration.

#### 7 Post-Workshop Plans

The post-workshop activities will focus on continuing the construction of a multidisciplinary community to study/design BTEs and related technologies. We will set up communication channels (e.g., mailing list, dedicated website, or Discord) to share ideas, foster collaborations, and explore funding opportunities. The organizers plan to coordinate a collaborative research article to be published in a journal (depending on how systematically the outcomes cover the themes, we will decide on a submission) and to which interested participants will be invited to contribute. The article will summarize the workshop’s themes, outputs, and reflections, mapping current work and outlining future directions. We anticipate that this continued exchange will raise awareness across domains and advance understanding of how to design and evaluate multisensory BTEs. Our goal is to bring the discussion to a point where we can organize a follow-up Dagstuhl seminar, bringing together HCI researchers and practitioners from real-life application contexts.

#### 8 Call for Participation

We invite researchers, practitioners, and designers interested in designing and evaluating sensory-driven Body Transformation Experiences (BTEs) and technologies to submit position papers

of up to 4 pages (single-column SIGCHI template, including references). Submissions should describe existing work, a conceptual design, or a position on the workshop topic, and include a concept, prototype or method to be showcased at the workshop, along with up to two discussion points participants would like to explore in the workshop. Alternate submissions in the form of slides, design sketches, videos, or posters are also welcome. Works will be selected to ensure diverse approaches, conceptual and technical paradigms, sensory channels and considerations of ethics. Authors must follow the SIGCHI Accessibility Guidelines (<https://sigchi.org/conferences/author-resources/accessibility-guide/>) to ensure accessibility. This workshop, consisting of two 90-minute sessions, aims to build a community and open the design space for sensory-driven BTEs by integrating research from multiple perspectives. It builds on recent CHI workshops related to body and sensorimotor augmentations, including Body×Materials (CHI '23), Walking the Future (CHI '25), and Sensorimotor Devices (CHI '25). Submissions are due February 12, 2026, via the workshop website ([www.imbodylab.com/chi26-body-transformation-workshop](http://www.imbodylab.com/chi26-body-transformation-workshop)) through a pre-questionnaire including demographic questions to help organizers establish authors' backgrounds. Submissions can be individual or collective. If accepted, at least one author must attend the pre-workshop activity, register and participate in the in-person CHI2026 workshop, and bring and showcase their contribution (concept, prototype, method). All accepted submissions will be published on the website and as workshop proceedings.

## 9 Expected size of attendance

35 people, including 20-25 invited participants, 8-12 organizers and 2 invited speakers.

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