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Do You Spend Way Too Much Time On Your Phone? There's A 'Slumpie' For That

An artistic invention designed to make your ever-growing addiction to your smart phone all the more comfortable.

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We've all been there. Your phone buzzes, you checked out the issue, respond cleverly as usual, and then hover for a moment, contemplating your next move.

You have nothing else better to do, so you open up a new window — Instagram, perhaps, or Twitter, or maybe you're just scrolling through old pictures, laughing sadly at the good times gone by. Next thing you know your hands are sore, your brain dizzy and disappointed, your posture bears a strong resemblance to an overacting third grader playing a beggar in "Oliver." You've been outsmarted by your very own phone. Again.

South Florida-based artist [Jillian Mayer](#) has long explored the ways technology affects our lives and shapes our relationships. One of her previous web-based projects, [The Sleep Site](#), encouraged participants to tweet their dreams, thus digitizing our nightly fantasies. Another website, [Selffeed](#), collected all the Instagram uploads hashtagged #selfie and displayed them in real time, yielding a constantly morphing collage of strangers' self-portraits.



Most recently, Mayer has been both discomfited and inspired by a contemporary compulsion with smart phones. More specifically, she's concerned with the fact that we're on them. All. The. Time. "When I was younger, we were warned about sitting too close to the television screen but now the screen is in our hands," Mayer explained to The Huffington Post. "What effects does that have on us — our communicative behaviors, our social disposition in public, and our physical bodies?"

Mayer explained that futurist theorists like [Ray Kurzweil](#) talk of an impending technological singularity that will one day "elevate us from some of the plagues of the human body deteriorating or the brain losing its accumulated information." But until that day comes, and we're stuck plugging away on our screens for [4.7 hours](#) a day, what are we to do with the foggy brains, achey hands, and Golem-esque postures the little devices hath wrought?

The answer, friends, are [Slumpies](#).



To help our bodies deal with the physical ramifications of constant phone diddling, Mayer has crafted a series of hulking, life-sized fiberglass sculptures meant to support the strange, contorted shapes your physical self takes when getting into the phone zone. The sparkly apparatuses invite you to flop your useless skeleton onto their svelte curves while immersing yourself in the digital realm.

In Mayer's words: "Slumpies are a post-posture sculptural solution that leans towards an idea of function, relieving the human form of the duty of supporting it's own neck while acknowledging our ever-increasing relationship with mankind's best invention."



Slumpies come in shapes reminiscent of chairs, day beds, perches and chaise longues. The awkward, bulgy furnishings allude to the feverish pace of technology, and the bumbling effort we normals endure to keep up, only to be eternally one step behind. Slumpies land somewhere between the wonderfully unnecessary contraptions you'd find in a SkyMall magazine and the fantastical doodles you'd put in your "entrepreneur journal" after getting stoned.

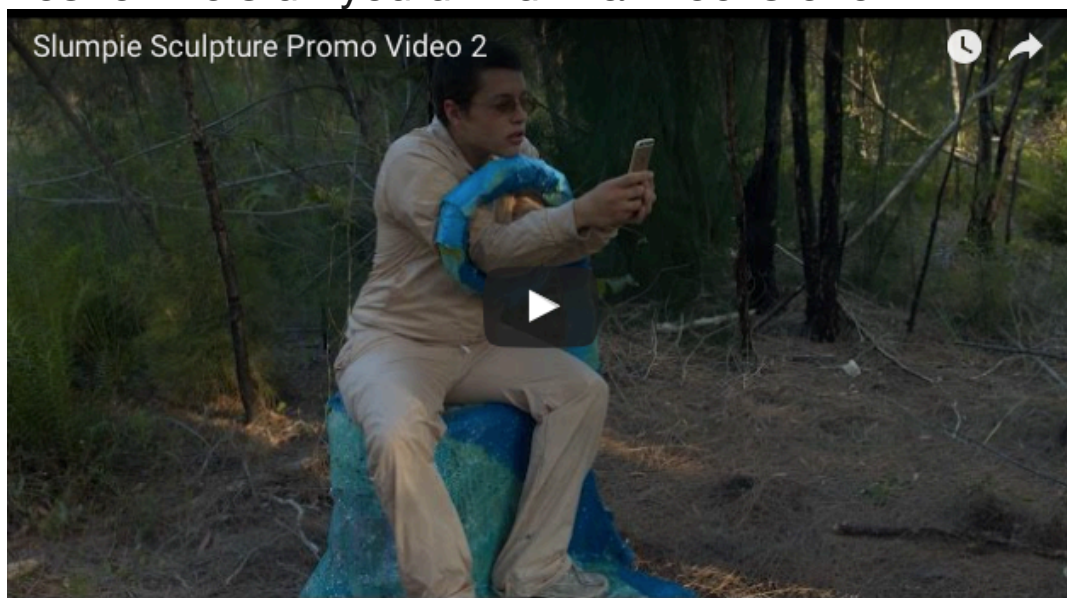
While Mayer's work relies on the notion that we are wildly affixed to our technological gadgets, the artist's tone is not critical or condescending. Rather, she elevates phones from their standard associations with squandered time and useless diversions — instead comparing them to fine art. "When I look around, it seems that we enjoy being on our phones," she said. "They help us communicate. We also enjoy art because it is another level of communication — it can tell stories, share ideas, and present abstracted ideas in a poetic way. It felt only right to combine the two."



Hence the Slumpies — interactive sculptures viewers can not only admire but physically rest on and charge their phones in. Rather than pinning quality phone time against the art viewing experience, Mayer collapses the two into a truly contemporary conglomerate of storytelling, communication, creativity and pleasure — without judgment. Oh, and in case you were wondering, the Slumpies *do* have WiFi.

To craft her art objects, Mayer studied strangers, examining the various positions their bodies would resort to in peek phone mode. She used this intel to craft functional yet exaggerated design objects, able to suit your phone surfing desires while simultaneously highlighting the general lunacy of the entire scenario — that we live in a world in which a Slumpie could ever exist.

In the same vein as artists like [Ana Prvacki](#) and [The Institute for New Feeling](#), Mayer infuses our age's compulsive attitude towards innovation, consumption and convenience with a hint of the uncanny, producing products that are, despite their surreal first impressions, more useful than most of the stuff you'd find in a Brookstone.



Mayer is a proud champion of “non-exclusive” art, work that doesn’t condemn popular culture and mainstream taste, but thrives off it. Accordingly, her target audience for her Slumpie series is anyone who suffers from a slight phone addiction — i.e., me, you, and everyone we know. “Anyone who reaches into their pocket to check their phone when a free moment exists is a perfect candidate to interact with a Slumpie sculpture. Are you reading this interview on your phone? Well then. You.”

The Slumpies offer a bright and sparkly vision for a lazy yet stimulating future, where bodies as we know them are slowly growing obsolete. Until that glorious day comes when the singularity will rid us of these fragile sacks of flesh forevermore, may we slump them haphazardly over comfortable structures built to enable our swiping and typing desires. See Mayer’s Slumpies in (passive) action to encounter the (mostly) logical next step to our inexorable technological addictions. And, if you aren’t that into them, you can always just slouch over an empty one and surf Tinder.

Mayer’s Slumpies are featured in her exhibition “Showroom,” on view until July 9, 2016 at [LAXART in Los Angeles](#).

