

# What it's like to have a hyper-realistic 3D statue made of your head in just four seconds

## Reporter Laura Connor had a 3D scan of her head and a bust statue created by the Veronica Scanner at the Royal Academy Arts in London

We're a generation of the [selfie](#), seeing more mirror, video and photographic images of ourselves (and the Kardashians) than ever before.

But you will never have seen yourself like this.

I'll admit it: I mostly look at myself in the mirror during my sweaty early-morning commute, while desperately trying to smear on some make-up before I arrive in the office.

I've always suspected that my [mascara-stained hand mirror](#) never quite gave an entirely true reflection of myself – but apparently even the most expensive, immaculately-cleaned glass surface never shows an honest picture.



Laura holds her 3D bust

Alas, even Cher Horowitz's noble life philosophy in classic Nineties' film *Clueless* to "always take polaroids" before a date because she doesn't trust mirrors is apparently fruitless.

We never really see ourselves as other people see us – until now.

[London's Royal Academy of Arts](#) has teamed up with Madrid's Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation to bring members of the public the Veronica Scanner – an innovative new 3D printer.



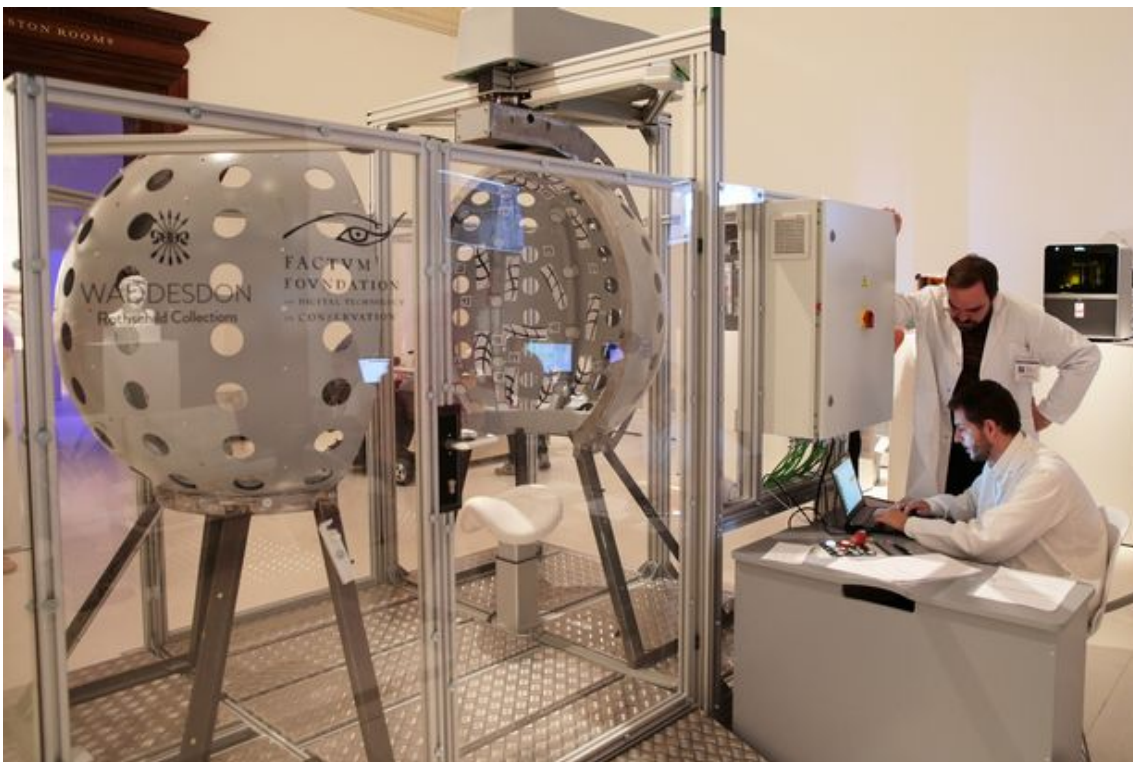
Laura inside the scanner

The Doctor Who-style zorb snaps 96 high-resolution images from every angle of visitors' faces and necks before carving a portrait bust in real time.

The result claims to be one of the truest likenesses between form and image.

Entering the metal contraption encased in four claustrophobic walls is a daunting experience.

I felt like I was stepping into a time machine.

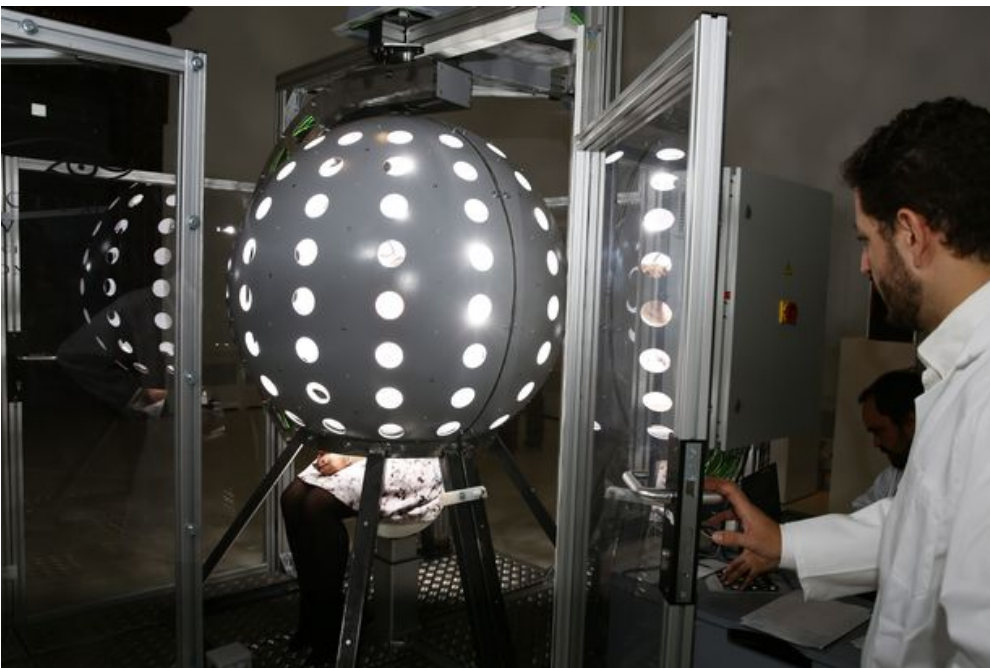


Technicians at work outside the scanner



Laura examines her statue

But after readjusting myself on the stool inside the glass cube several times as a team of bearded men in white lab coats stood outside with clipboards and computers, the process was over very quickly. All of sudden, the metal cage closed and a flurry of flashes whizzed around my head and shoulders. Before I could blink it was all over, and the super scientists released me from their zorb.



Laura being scanned



But what came next was perhaps even more surreal.

Over the next half hour, a 3D image of me was showcased on the Royal Academy's immaculate white-washed walls, with imperfections I didn't even know I had on full display to everyone in the room.

Perhaps even more bizarre was having a life-sized resin bust of my own head delivered to the office five days later for all my colleagues to see.



The machine in action

While you can pop into Asda these days and pay £40 to have a mini-me made using 3D printers, nothing quite rivals the Veronica Scanner.

Designed by Spanish artist Manuel Franquelo Giner, the bespoke head scanner uses both composite photography and photogrammetry to create the hyper-realistic likeness.

The machine was originally created for use in anti-ageing treatments – and I can certainly see why.



The resin statue

Vera translates as 'true' in Latin, and the camera's 50 x 50 x 50cm range seems to capture and map the fine surface detail of every line and skin bump on my face. The machine takes just four seconds to complete the intensely-detailed recording, meaning 40 people can be scanned a day while the technology is on display.

Adam Lowe, director of Factum Arte, tells me as we view the extraordinary images of my face on screen: "We see this as an experimental workshop which will push the capabilities of 3D recording to the limits and build bridges between recording and the emerging world of 3D output.



"We think of photographs as images but 3D portraiture shows they can also be sculptures, which is almost realising the dream of the Greek sculptors who aimed to create a realism that went beyond subjective interpretation."

With a somewhat heftier price tag for one of the busts made by the scanner, it's an expensive splurge to make just for your own personal use.

Members of the public have been able to have their own busts made over the past week, with punters able to splash out up to the tens of thousands for a bust of themselves made in DIAMONDS.



Laura says the nose and mouth are pretty accurate – but is unsure about the hair

Unsurprisingly, the event's quickly sold out.

While the hair looks stringy and terrifyingly snake-like, with my eyelashes almost engulfing my entire eyes on the sculpture, the nose and mouth bear an uncanny resemblance to my own.

I have even had to turn the statue away from my screen to stop feeling as if I am staring myself in the face – but at least that's my mum's 60th birthday present sorted.

While she might have been expecting a stunning Greek goddess for her mantelpiece, she might have to settle for a budget Medusa.