In 1979, Patricia Moore undertook a journey into the future. She determined to explore life as it might be for a woman in her 80’s, a woman physically changed by the course of time, and living in a youth-driven culture. Through extensive prosthetic alteration of both her physical appearance and abilities, she was able to transform her body from that of a woman of 26 years to a woman of more than 80 years of age.

With variations in dress, she became women of different levels of social status. Hidden prosthetics blurred her vision, reduced her natural level of hearing and altered her posture and range of motion, for the portrayal of a variety of levels of health and personal ability. With the use of canes, walkers and a wheelchair, she was able to approximate reduced mobility and confront physical and emotional inaccessibility.

While in character, she traveled to 116 cities throughout the United States and Canada experiencing, firsthand, the reaction of people, younger and healthier, who, upon encountering an older woman, chose either to support her presence, or look the other way. She was shown kindness, friendship and love. And she experienced rejection, hatred and fear. She was attacked by a gang of young boys on an isolated city street, mugged, beaten and left for dead. The injuries sustained left her with permanent challenges and constant pain.

When Moore reemerged, as a woman of 30 years, she was forever changed, both as a person and a professional. She had developed a passion for inclusive creations for the total human lifespan, and dedicated her career to finding universal solutions, by design. Through her research and her practice, she provided designers the incentive to step back, analyze their mission, and retake their role as responsible providers for the quality of life of consumers.
The need for "humanism" in design has never been more critical as a result. By concentrating on so-called “mainstream product development” and ignoring people who, because of their age, body form or functional range, are marginalized, designers fail to provide the necessary foundation for meeting consumer needs.

As long as chronic health conditions, the effects of disease, aging and injury create consumers who might use wheels to walk, eyes to hear and fingers to see, there will always be a place for specific need products and environmental compensations. But these requirements are best considered within the context of the dedicated design process so that even the so-called special situations become commonplace and ordinary.

Design is the ultimate prosthetic and designers the veritable enablers. Beyond the confines of the aesthetic, Moore demonstrates how designers have the capacity to fashion the quality of life itself.