

# PRODUCING FUTURES – AN EXHIBITION ON POST-CYBER-FEMINISMS

February 16–May 12, 2019

Cao Fei, Cécile B. Evans, Guan Xiao, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Juliana Huxtable, Mary Maggic, MALAXA, Shana Moulton, Tabita Rezaire, Gavin Rayna Russom, Frances Stark, Wu Tsang, Anna Uddenberg, VNS Matrix, Anicka Yi

In the group show *Producing Futures—An Exhibition on Post-Cyber-Feminisms*, the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst surveys the causes championed by feminists in the post-internet era. The maturation of a number of technologies and the associated digitization of many or perhaps all domains of life have progressed to a point where a digitally engendered media universe arguably defines the compass of our reality and the meanings we find in it. The cyber-feminists of the 1990s hoped to harness the internet's potential for communication and networking to establish cyberspace as a realm of liberation and self-empowerment; the time has come for a critical review of this optimism. The new freedoms opened up by the World Wide Web have gone hand in hand with the entrenchment of existing hierarchies and power structures. The exhibition revisits the cyber-feminist movement's historic aspirations and visions, contrasts them with the contemporary situation, and inquires into ways in which its ideas may still be productive. The presentation accordingly undertakes a critical engagement with different feminist approaches that turn the spotlight on the tension between the body and technology and on discriminatory gender norms. For instance, the contributing artists reflect on and defamiliarize the offerings of various online platforms in order to further blur the boundaries between the virtual and real, the online and offline domains, as well the genders. Many of the works pursue a holistic approach, drawing on (medical) science, the occult, and other fields to stimulate a more comprehensive discussion and generate ideas for a livable future of emancipation, gender justice, and social equality.

While showcasing the diversity of these feminist strategies and concerns, *Producing Futures—An Exhibition on Post-Cyber-Feminisms* also seeks to forge a new synthesis under the aegis of an alternative model of knowledge formation called "SF". Proposed by the American biologist, philosopher of science, and literary scholar Donna Haraway, this concept—the abbreviation "SF" may be read as "science fiction", but also as "speculative feminism" or "string figures"—describes a practice characterized by the entanglement of diverse reflections and considerations, of the factual and the fictional. An open invitation to embark on intellectual experiments in which speculation emerges as a valuable breeding ground for innovative visions of the future, it is explicitly opposed to conventional modes of knowledge formation that often rely on the establishment of hierarchical systems of order and promote rigid ideas of inclusion and exclusion, of right and wrong. As a way of taking possession of the world, such conventional epistemes give rise to certain social structures including, for example, sexism, racism, and classism. Meanwhile, a growing chorus of voices has denounced the tacit acceptance of these structures: feminism has become a buzzword in popular culture, with various hashtags causing a stir in the media. We have never been more networked than today, with manifold options for getting in touch with each other, exchanging ideas, and forming alliances. Still, the digital universe is not just an empowering safe space; the growing online visibility of marginalized groups has also met with harsh condemnation. Various communities and many individuals have become targets for hate-filled responses. These intersections between the virtual and real domains and our experiences in both demonstrate that cyberspace is not a sphere unto itself, separated by a sharp line from our real lives. Our experiences in it have come to exercise a crucial influence over how we engage and interact with our environment and assimilate and process information. That is also true of the "womxn"—the unusual spelling is designed to draw attention to the prejudices, discrimination, and institutional barriers they confront, and emphatically includes trans women and women of color—whose works are on view in the exhibition.

Curator:  
Heike Munder (Director,  
Migros Museum für  
Gegenwartskunst)

Assistant Curator:  
Elsa Himmer

An accompanying  
publication, *Producing  
Futures—A Book on Post-  
Cyber-Feminisms* (in Eng-  
lish), with essays by  
Joanna Walsh, Yvonne  
Volkart, Paul B.  
Preciado, Heike Munder,  
and Elsa Himmer is  
released in April 2019.

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With works by VNS Matrix and Lynn Hershman Leeson, pioneering explorers of the internet's possibilities in the 1990s, the exhibition looks back to the early days of cyber-feminism. Almost three decades later, it is high time that we rethink the issues they first raised; the need to develop a more deliberate stance on the online sharing of personal data as well as the inexhaustible flows of images catering to entrenched (and often sexist) clichéd role models is one main emphasis of the exhibition.

It is most explicit in Wu Tsang's video installation and the sculptures of Guan Xiao and Anna Uddenberg, who confronts us with an unsparing exposition of the prevailing conception of femininity. The necessary reimagining of womanhood as an open and queer gender identity is a project that is addressed head-on in Gavin Rayna Russom's art as well as the works of Juliana Huxtable, where gender dichotomies and even the human-animal distinction are obsolete. Shana Moulton analyzes the pressure we put on ourselves in our relentless pursuit of perfection with canny irony in a video installation that examines her own neuroses. Her New Age-style spiritualism bears some resemblance to the holistic reparative practice sketched by Tabita Rezaire and the artist duo MALAXA (Alicia Mersy and Tabita Rezaire). They make art that seeks to break the silence over contemporary injustices as well as the iniquities of the past in order to initiate processes of healing. Anicka Yi visualizes the fierce patriarchal resistance that female empowerment and the prospect of women building strong networks can prompt. Inspired by insights in cutting-edge biotechnology and genetics, her tent sculptures consider feminist concerns through the lens of science while also reflecting on the normative authority accorded to experts. The artist Mary Maggic counters the power imbalance between scientists and laypeople with DIY science tutorials. Where her guidance on "estrogen hacking" refers to physical space and the bodies beyond the screens, Cécile B. Evans's video launches a more general inquiry into the idea of embodiment in light of the reality that we share cyberspace with a multitude of digital beings. Such scrutiny of the significance of bodily existence goes hand in hand with a meditation on closeness and affection, as Cao Fei's and Frances Stark's videos demonstrate. They chart the internet as an ecosystem encouraging experimentation with the self and reveal the ways in which online games or Chatroulette fundamentally alter the subject's experience of identity and intimacy. What ultimately unites these diverse artistic positions is the shared quest to establish gender and identity as open, performative, and therefore always temporary constructions.

The exhibition highlights the enormous potential for change that is unleashed when people come together for collective action, a mobilization now facilitated by various online platforms. Like Donna Haraway's game of string figures, it weaves together a variety of positions in order to propose new perspectives on our emotional and rational, our conscious and unconscious entanglements with cyberspace. It illustrates that feminism concerns all of us, with implications not just for how we live together but also for our existence in a natural environment on which we are increasingly wreaking havoc. Our visions for the future, then, should draw on a range of (spiritual, liberal, ecological, and/or biological) approaches; sustained engagement can build a community based on comprehensive equality, and thanks to today's (new) communication technologies, such a community is now conceivable on the global scale.

For detailed information on the individual artistic positions, please consult the labels accompanying the works in the gallery.

## Events

### Symposium

*The Revolution of Digital Languages or When Cyber Turns to Sound of Poetry*

*A Symposium on Post-Cyber-Feminisms*

in cooperation with the MAS program in curating at the Zurich University of the Arts and the PhD program in practice in curating ([www.curating.org](http://www.curating.org))

Thursday, April 11, 2019, 6–7pm

Friday, April 12, 2019, 9am–6pm

For more event listings, please visit [migrosmuseum.ch](http://migrosmuseum.ch).

## Art education

### Public guided tours

Sunday, March 3, 2019, 2–3pm

Thursday, April 4, 2019, 6–7pm

Sunday, May 12, 2019, 2–3pm

### Family afternoons

Sunday, March 10, 2019, 2–5pm

Sunday, April 14, 2019, 2–5pm

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Cao Fei  
*i.Mirror*, 2007  
Machinima  
28:00 min.

Courtesy the artist and Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou



Cécile B. Evans  
*Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen*, 2014  
Single-channel video on monitor (color, sound),  
carpet, rubber plant, digital print on photogra-  
phic paper, inkjet print on wallpaper, marley floor  
22:37 min., Dimension variable

Sammlung Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst



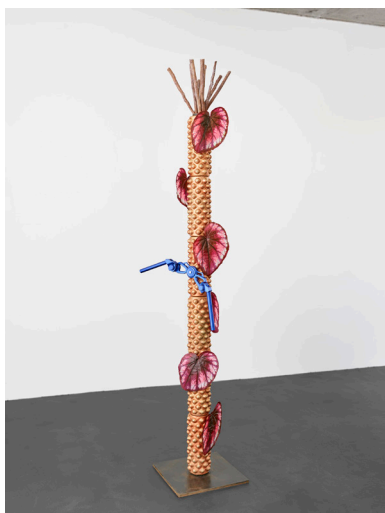
Guan Xiao  
*Flying Fox*, 2018  
Rim, resin, motorcycle leg guard  
120 x 70 x 35 cm

Private Collection, Palma de Mallorca



Guan Xiao  
*Enjoyable Relationship*, 2017  
Brass, acrylic paint, rim, artificial flower ring  
Two parts: one part 120 x 70 x 60 cm;  
one part 81 x 55 x 38 cm

Private Collection



Guan Xiao  
*Bamboo*, 2017  
Steel, brass, acrylic paint, resin, metal motorcycle  
handles, artificial leaves  
230 x 53 x 53 cm

Private Collection

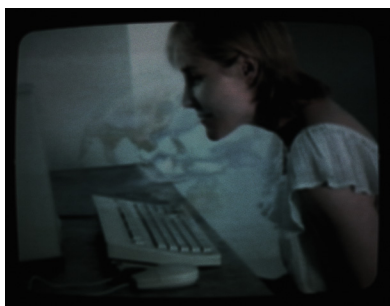


Lynn Hershman Leeson  
*Venus of the Anthropocene*, 2017  
Vanity dresser with drawers, stool, carpet, mirror  
with custom facial recognition software to read  
the viewer's DNA, anatomical model, plastic  
body parts, plastic labeled DNA composite jars  
Dimension variable

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York

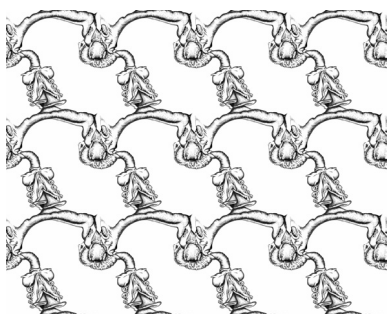
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Lynn Hershman Leeson  
*Seduction of a Cyborg*, 1994  
Single-channel video on monitor (color, sound)  
5:52 min.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York



Juliana Huxtable  
*Untitled*, 2019  
Inkjet print on wallpaper  
Dimension variable

Courtesy the artist and Project Native Informant, London



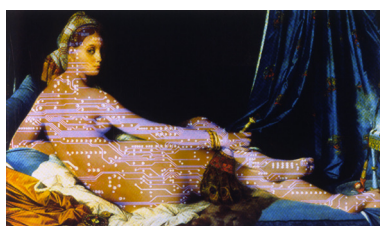
Mary Maggic  
*Housewives Making Drugs*, 2017  
Single-channel video on monitor (color, sound),  
Vinyl print  
10:12 min., Dimension variable

Courtesy the artist



Mary Maggic  
*Estrofem! Lab*, 2016–17  
Mobile labs in suitcases  
2 parts: one part 54 x 38 x 16 cm;  
one part 42 x 28 x 15 cm

Courtesy of the artist



Lynn Hershman Leeson  
*Digital Venus Series*, 1996, 2001  
Digital print  
6 parts, Dimension variable

Courtesy the artist and Waldburger Wouters, Basel / Brussels

*Digital Venus—Blue Angel*, 2001  
Digital print  
152 x 136cm

*Digital Venus—Digital Dreaming*, 1996  
Digital print  
132 x 74 cm

*Digital Venus (uffizi) 1*, 1996  
Digital print  
162 x 115 cm

*Digital Venus (uffizi) 2*, 1996  
Digital print  
102 x 73 cm

*Digital Venus (uffizi) 3*, 1996  
Digital print  
106 x 76 cm

*Digital Venus After Botticelli*, 1996  
Digital print  
78 x 127 cm

*6 Point Plan for Hormone Queering Resistance*  
*Open Source Estrogen*

1. Unearth the dominant patriarchal agents of hormonal p
2. Demystify the institutionalized "black-boxed" knowledge
3. Resist neoliberal pharmaco-capitalist profiteering of (un
4. Reject glorifications of "the natural," condemnations of
5. Undermine deeply entrenched notions of (eco)hetero-n
6. Consider the micro-performativity of hormones as an ag

Mary Maggic  
*6 Point Plan for Hormone Queering Resistance*, 2016  
Vinyl text on wall  
Dimension variable

Courtesy of the artist



MALAXA  
*Flag for God*, 2016/19  
Digital print on Backlit fabric, acrylic leaflet  
holders, leaflets  
4 parts: one part 244 x 152 cm;  
3 parts each 15,5 x 11,5 x 3,8 cm

Courtesy the artists

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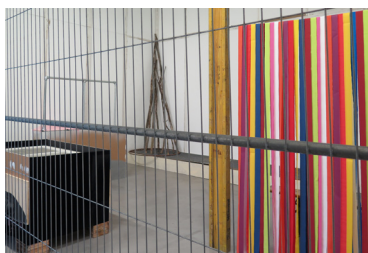
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Shana Moulton  
*My Personal Measurements*, 2019  
3-channel-video projection (color, sound), various objects  
Dimension variable  
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich



Tabita Rezaire  
*Sugar Walls Teardom*, 2016  
Gynecological chair, mechanical arm, single-channel-video on monitor (color, sound), pink wall paint  
21:30 min.; 218 x 162 x 85 cm  
Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg



Gavin Rayna Russom  
*SINless*, 2019  
Various materials  
Dimension variable  
Courtesy the artist and Galleria Fonti, Naples



Frances Stark  
*Nothing Is Enough*, 2012  
Single-channel video projection (b/w, sound, loop)  
14:00 min.  
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Köln/New York



Wu Tsang  
*A Day in the Life of Bliss*, 2014  
2-channel video projection on screens (color, sound), two-way mirror and mirror, beanbag chairs  
20:00 min.  
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Anna Uddenberg  
*Disconnect (airplane mode)*, 2018  
Styrofoam, polyurethane foam, acrylic resin, fiberglass, plaster, car interiors, wall-to-wall carpet, baby carrier backpack, vinyl foam stripes, linoleum, flooring, mesh fabric, velour fabric, synthetic hair, acrylic nails, mountain bike helmet parts  
119 x 196 x 185 cm  
Courtesy the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin



Anna Uddenberg  
*FOCUS #2 (pussy padding)*, 2018  
Acrylic resin, fiberglass, fabric, synthetic hair, puffer jacket, vinyl film, bike helmet, flip-flops, bar stool VENUS, acrylic nails, fake fur, selfie stick, wall tattoo, horse gears  
200 x 55 x 70 cm  
Boros Collection, Berlin

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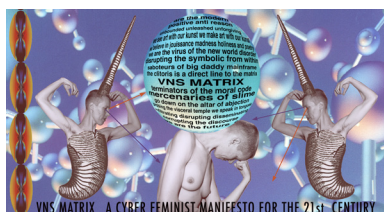
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Anna Uddenberg  
*Focus (mixed emotions)*, 2018  
Acrylic resin, fiberglass, fabric, puffer jacket, bar stool VENUS, acrylic nails  
170 x 55 x 60 cm  
Collection of Alexander V. Petalas, London



VNS Matrix  
*All New Gen / Bad Code*, 1993/1997  
Video-sound-collage (loop)  
20:00 min.  
Courtesy of the artists



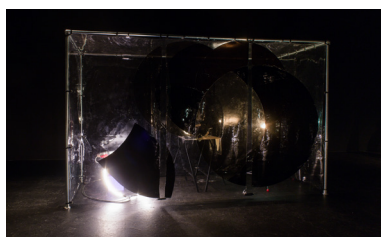
VNS Matrix  
*The Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century*, 1991  
Inkjet print on wallpaper  
300 x 600 cm  
Courtesy the artists



Anicka Yi  
*Home in 30 Day, Don't Wash*, 2015  
Vinyl, steel pipes, metal bowl, wire mesh, nylon string, DVD, black tea, foam, plasticine, neon light, hydro gel beads, plexiglas, sponge, worklight  
198 x 310 x 127 cm  
Courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York



Anicka Yi  
*We Are Water*, 2015  
Vinyl, steel pipes, motorcycle helmet, scent diffuser, metal bowls, mouthwash, plastic bottles, socks, hydro gel beads, glass container, black tea, plastic bucket, water, worklight  
198 x 310 x 127 cm  
Courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York



Anicka Yi  
*Your Hand Feels Like a Pillow That's Been Microwaved*, 2015  
Vinyl, steel pipes, metal bowls, beeswax, dried shrimp, glycerin soap, hair gel, metal pins, seaweed, foam, plasticine, pigment powder, worklight  
198 x 310 x 127 cm  
Courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York

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