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THE BROOKLYN RAIL

Fabijanska, Monika, "Lynn Hershman Leeson with Monika Fabijanska," *The Brooklyn Rail*, July 2021

JUL-AUG 2021

Art | In Conversation

Lynn Hershman Leeson with Monika Fabijanska

"Artists have to be optimists and believe that their efforts will make a difference."

Portrait of Lynn Hershman Leeson, pencil on paper by Phong H. Bui.

Lynn Hershman Leeson: Twisted at the New Museum is the first museum solo exhibition in New York of one of the most important American new media and feminist artists, who has long enjoyed recognition in Europe, and more recently, on the West Coast, where she lives and works. Her feature films, *Conceiving Ada*, *Teknolust*, and *Strange Culture*, all starring Tilda Swinton, will stream on Criterion Channel beginning August 1.

During her 60 year career, Hershman Leeson made pioneering contributions to performance, photography, video, interactive net-based media and robotic art using artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Most recently she created a DNA-based artwork. Her works have raised questions about biological and artificial manifestations of identity, the impact of digital technologies and biotechnology on the human body and privacy, about digital rights as human rights, etc.

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We usually meet at a café but this interview took place in October of the pandemic year, on Zoom. The screen froze immediately, but we could hear each other and didn't want to break the conversation. I have worked twice with Hershman Leeson, secretly nicknaming her a haiku artist—for the brevity of her statements that carry profound meanings. After I transcribed our conversation, we kept the exchange going and Lynn generously offered more thoughts. The conversation largely followed the works chosen for the exhibition, and feminist themes in her art and films—femininity as a social construct, women's recognition and the notion of genius, and her contributions to feminist historiography. Lynn discussed complex ideas behind her pioneering use of emerging technologies, from her interest in cyborgs and post-humanism since the 1960s to recent works created in genetic labs. We talked about the ethics of science and ecology.

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Seduction of a Cyborg*, 1994. Video, color, sound; 5:52 min. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

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Monika Fabijanska (Rail): The occasion for our conversation is your exhibition at the New Museum, which will at last give New Yorkers the opportunity to see some of your major projects. The exhibition begins with a group of your early drawings of bodies showing internal organs, and wax sculptures of body parts (1963–71). Where does the fragmentation of the body come from?

Lynn Hershman Leeson: I think that at the time I myself was fragmented—there are times in your life when you don't coalesce and struggle with being unformed, raw, unfinished. But I also think that one can create a gesture of representation that conjures an essence that is often more vital, more truthful than a polished inanimate object that has no scars or flaws gnawing for completion.

Rail: Unusual things happen with these fragmented parts; very early on you started to make them alive. What year did you make your first breathing sculpture? Was it the first "live" artwork that you created?

Leeson: Yes, that was around 1965, and they continued from there. Sound was always a way of extending these works in time. I thought sound was part of drawing. I was surprised to learn recently that these were actually the first sculptures to incorporate sound and media as an essential element of their composition. I did faces that talked, giggled, or breathed for the next five years. They had sensors and knew when someone was looking at them, and the sound was an active form of engagement, a way to begin a conversation. Some of these wax pieces had wicks, and were lit and transformed into a performed suicides that I documented to record transformations and transitional evolutions.

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Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Self Portrait as Blonde*, 1968. Wax, wig, feathers, Plexiglas, wood, sensor, and sound. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

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Rail: Why did you want to have this golemic touch; to make your sculptures alive?

Leeson: It is a survival mechanism. Around the same time I experienced heart failure. Under oxygen for months, you mostly hear your breath, so breath became a way to reach out into the real world—you breathe out and you breathe in, and your body ingests information.

Rail: There is also a series of wax body parts that are not even whole face masks but parts of a face, and they are not animated. Are they earlier?

Leeson: I did those and then put the sound to them, and later they grew into faces. Body parts, faces, full bodies, sound—no one would show them because they did not fit into any prescribed category so they lived under beds or in closets for several decades. They made a grand entrance in 2014 in the exhibition *Civic Radar* which Peter Weibel curated for ZKM.

Rail: It caught my attention that for a good portion of your career, you had nothing to do with art galleries ...

Leeson: Not because I didn't try!

Rail: I mean, hotels, department stores, pavements—you showed everywhere!

Leeson: My most important work came on the cusp of disaster. I was thrown out of a museum for using sound and media in the early 1970s, and figured, who needs museums![1] So I showed everywhere else. There was no precedent for many of my works from the breathing machines to *Lorna* and on, so galleries and museums found it was not worth showing.

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Rail: Yet when you did *Non-Credited Americans* at Wanamaker's department store (1981), ICA Philadelphia was behind it, so at some point you did secure institutional support for your projects.

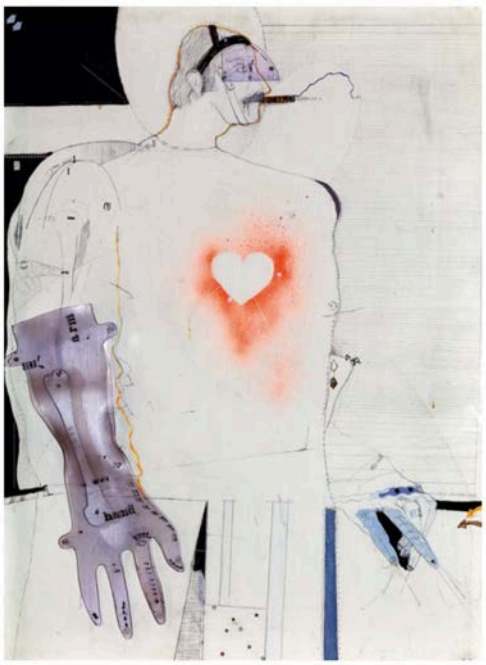
Leeson: I did *25 Windows* at Bonwit Teller in New York with Alanna Heiss (1976) and they saw that. But I had very little art world support for my work until very recently.

Rail: Among your early drawings, there are these cyborgs, where machine parts are embedded in women's bodies, men's bodies, even a horse, interspersed with their internal organs. Does this idea come from your experience in the hospital and realizing that we are complex machinery?

Leeson: I think it is also about reproductive technologies. We are reproductive and I felt early on that we were becoming partners with machines. The time was ripe for a cyborgian embrace that would enhance our evolution.

Rail: Were you already a mother when you were sick?

Leeson: No. I was pregnant.



Lynn Hershman Leeson, *X-Ray Man*, 1970. Acrylic, pencil, Letraset, and Plexiglas on wood, 41 ½ x 29 ½ in (105.5 x 75 cm). Private Collection, The Netherlands, Courtesy Paul Van Esch & Partners, Amsterdam. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco. Photo © ZKM | Center for Art and Media, photo: Tobias Wootton

Rail: Well, taking it from the idea of motherhood—is the motherboard the beginning of your interest in technology? Could one look at it this way?

Leeson: No. When I was maybe 15 years old I did a drawing on newsprint, you know, on something that wouldn't last. I tried to xerox it, but it diabolically became caught inside that early mechanism. I was horrified and thought the piece would be ruined. Ink spilled onto this mutated and ripped drawing. It was not what I expected, but it was a new kind of progeny, a dynamic merging of human and machine. When I stopped thinking of the idea of what that drawing was, and began to realize what it might become as a collaboration with technology, I realized that this partnership was inevitable, vital, alive, and reflected the time we were living in.

Rail: That brings us to the idea of chance. Chance and control are opposites but you have an ongoing interest in both.

Leeson: I always begin shooting before actors know the camera is on, and keep shooting after the scene ends. That usually discarded footage can be a wonderful blur of reality. You can actually see actors come out of their role and become something else. And to me, that is more interesting, it's like taking the frame off and seeing this hidden truth that people don't usually allow others to see.

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Rail: I think this interest can be traced back to your early performance, *Roberta Breitmore* (1972–78). You told me that you were inspired by European postwar theater, specifically, Tadeusz Kantor.

Leeson: Yes, that really changed everything for me.

Rail: In what way?

Leeson: Essentially, it was the idea that art could go beyond the frame, beyond expectations, and could destroy boundaries and interact with an audience in a profound way. The idea of Kantor going into the audience, of things that started on the stage only to break out of it to surprise the audience, was totally radical at the time. Stepping in and out of characters was really revolutionary. I saw them in a basement in Edinburgh and was overwhelmed by their courage and boldness.

Rail: I checked what Kantor performed in Edinburgh over the years—I found that you were at the festival in 1973.

Leeson: So that's when ... I was only there once.

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Roberta's Construction Chart 1*, 1975. Archival digital print and dye transfer, 35 5/8 x 23 5/8 in (90.5 x 60 cm). Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

Rail: Control and chance play enormous roles in science. Your interview with the father of synthetic biology, Dr. George Church, as part of your *The Infinity Engine*, is scary. You are trying to engage him in a conversation about the ethical responsibility of science. At the beginning, he resists it, fully embracing the possibilities that science provides, but eventually he does talk about ethics. He is sure he is in control, but then admits everything is ultimately determined by the global economy, governments, coincidences ...

Leeson: Luck, yes.

Rail: Luck ... But then, this is also how nature evolves, how everything mutates—by chance. ...

Leeson: We are now privileging the idea of symbiosis introduced by Lynn Margulis whose brilliant work was sadly not taken seriously for decades. She introduced the idea of global simultaneity of information. Prior to now we had a very linear view of ecology and how we develop as a species, how anything develops. And that's not the way it happens. Like trees talk to each other through their root systems simultaneously all over the world, things are very often invented at the same time around the globe.

Rail: *The Infinity Engine* is a complex, multi-room interactive installation, a simulacrum of a genetics lab you created in collaboration with scientists and which includes bio-printed specimens, crystals of the *LYNNHERSHMAN Antibody* created with Novartis, and your archive bio-stored in your DNA—a pioneering DNA-based artwork.[2] I used to say that you are an artist who lives in the future. But you say that you actually live in the present, and it is us who live in the past. What can collaboration between an artist and scientists give to today's society?

Leeson: It provides a fuller view of possibilities. I think that the best scientists are extremely creative but they have a different language and different system of research. Working together we have often created a new language and broader range of information. I think formal disciplines are very restrictive. They are steeped in boundaries. So if you have two people who trust each other and are capable of brainstorming with different perspectives, you might be able to invent things that seem appropriate to make.

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Lynn Hershman Leeson, *The Infinity Engine*, 2014- (still from a projection). Genetic Lab installation that includes genetically modified fish, CRISPR derived wallpaper, Bio-printed Ear, videotapes, etc. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

Rail: Yes, it is striking about *The Infinity Engine* that eventually you collaborate as equals—you bring a creative idea to the process of science, and science brings incredible possibilities to what an artist can do. But looking at how you constructed the eight rooms, it seems to me that you also thought about giving us access to the lab in order to let us understand how it operates —which is about the democratization of science—but also means keeping an eye on scientists.

Leeson: Yes. But if an exhibition's meaning is inaccessible, it defeats the purpose. For instance, if you have an ear sitting on a table, people don't understand why it is there or that it is bio-printed and maybe it's the *very* first bio-printed ear, so that lack of knowledge affects what they are seeing. I believe information provides depth and allows viewers more access.

Rail: Such understanding is very important for me as a curator who tries to provide channels of communication between an artist and an audience. Artists often illustrate scientific ideas. What distinguishes your work is that you interpret the work of scientists but also push them towards new ideas.

Curating the exhibition *ecofeminism(s)* at Thomas Erben Gallery in 2020, I realized the importance of spiritual feminism. It is a charged term today; it seems totally passé. But its insistence on bringing nature and civilization back together is relevant. Do you think that spiritual feminism or spirituality are in contradiction to science? If so, can we find a way to bring them together?

Leeson: Yes, I think we have to. Without the spirituality of what we're doing and the unquantifiable elements, these works are not alive. You have to integrate both. I had an insightful discussion with Dr. Caleb Webber, head of genetics at the University of Oxford—he came to that same conclusion. In the end you have to question what is love, how do you explain it scientifically, can you create it, would you want to? That's how he ends the discussion of all the possibilities we have with genome variation, including erasing historical scars, such as generationally passed trauma, in the future. He reflects that there are some things that we can't quantify that are really important, that we have to keep in mind. I do think that good scientists care about quality survival which includes the spirit, not just technical survival.

Rail: I think that you are very much on the optimistic side … or perhaps you just give up the idea that we can control future developments.

Leeson: Yes, because technologies are neutral; it is the ethics of what we do with the algorithms that determines how we're going to survive. Artists have to be optimists and believe that their efforts will make a difference. It's too hard otherwise.

Rail: Another idea pertaining to your work is the notion of genius. Feminist art criticism challenged the myth of an artist as "genius" and emphasized the role of collaboration. In your film *Conceiving Ada* (1997), you present Ada, Countess of Lovelace, author of the first published computer algorithm written in 1843 for the "father of the computer" Charles Babbage, as a female genius.

Leeson: Talent is not gendered, culture is. When it is restrictive, it prevents targeted participants from having opportunities to enhance the planet. Women are progressively gaining a greater sense of entitlement. The premise of *Conceiving Ada* was to take somebody who never received credit in their lifetime—Ada's algorithm was ascribed to Babbage—and create a legacy, even a century later to liberate the fact that they were the authors. I talked about it this morning with the producers of my next film.

When I made *Conceiving Ada*, I invented a technical process I named "virtual sets" in 1997. And I patented the process. Six months later, James Cameron employed a slightly different method, in his film *Titanic*. Now, virtual sets are the way they make many films but all the credit has gone to the guys. This is hubris, and I think that women have resisted or were never able to engage with even claiming what they've done, during their entire lifetime. Equality needs to be claimed.

Rail: Do you think it has changed? Are we at the point when women are acknowledged for what they do and we should no longer worry about feminist and women's legacy?

Leeson: There is a long way to go, to get equality and access but while we are not there completely, there are more possibilities now. Things are changing very slowly.

Rail: I agree. I find it problematic that there is excitement about a few women artists getting recognition equal to that of men—while so many other names will fade unless their legacy is written in the history of art. Speaking about feminist historiography, artists often become curators but for an artist to contribute to art history is quite rare. You organized and filmed the re-performance of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* in 1993 and made a video about Ana Mendieta's death and the murder trial of her husband, *Conspiracy of Silence* in 1991. Later, you did two films about women's art, *!Women Art Revolution* (2010) and *Tania Libre* (2017), directly contributing to feminist historiography. Why, as an artist, did you take up this role?

Rail: You also made a film about a male artist in 2007, *Strange Culture*—again, you felt compelled to support another artist. It told the story of Steve Kurtz who in 2004 was preparing a MASS MoCA exhibition that would let audiences test whether food has been genetically modified, when his wife died of heart failure. The paramedics became suspicious seeing petri dishes in his home and called the FBI, who detained him on suspicion of bioterrorism. Under the USA PATRIOT Act he faced up to 20 years in prison. Your film showed the post-9/11 paranoia.

Leeson: Totally. I was in a carpool with somebody who knew Steve and told me the story. I remember feeling outraged. So I started to make a DVD. I didn't intend to make a film but it turned into one and had amazing repercussions—it opened the Berlin International Film Festival, the *New York Times* praised it—the film played a major role in letting people know Steve's story, and eventually the charges against him were dropped. So those two films had something in them that changed history. With *!Women Art Revolution*, it was giving a voice and a coherent history to the feminist art movement. Much of the information was formerly unknown. And with Steve—it was questioning the media, the double standards, the fictionalization of it, and letting people know of circumstances that could shift the outcome.

For *!Women Art Revolution*, I additionally put all of the raw material online, transcribed, at Stanford's Special Collections Library. You can go to their site and see all the material, 17 hours of Carolee Schneeman or 20 hours of Judy Chicago and many other important artists—it's all there, accessible.

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Glass Vial of Synthetic DNA*, 2018. Molecular reduction converted by Twist Bioscience, San Francisco, 1 x 3 in. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

Rail: The collaboration with Steve Kurtz led to your interest in biotechnology, and you now have an archive bio-stored in your DNA in addition to your archive at Stanford. So your interest in history as a key to the past and as a key to the future are truly interlocked.

Leeson: Yes!

Rail: This is precisely what I find unique about your work—that you move between history and the technology of the future; understanding that the future is in the past and perhaps the past is in the future, with such ease.

Leeson: But that's exactly what DNA does, if you look inside of it. DNA is made of our history and then we add to it and can create a different future of the DNA that we possess. It is evolutionary.

Rail: Could you speak a little bit about what's in the vial, coded in your DNA?

Leeson: I see this process as a form of expanded cinema. I made a timeline and put my *Electronic Diaries* (1984–1996), other things about my personal life, and all my massive research about genetics onto it—each page or image as one frame. My history and interests took a frame that became the film that became the DNA, processed at a micro level. It was low res to save money, but I was interested in the conversion which became a haiku of my essence, of the life I've lived, and my interests. I put it in a blue lab room that is locked as a nod to Duchamp and Yves Klein.

Rail: That's interesting, because now you actually have a life after life. You've already preserved yourself and you can start anew!

Leeson: Yes!

Rail: This is astounding. There were people who tried to freeze their bodies; you chose to preserve your identity. Importantly, you embraced your *entire* identity, and especially what's in *The Electronic Diaries* (1984–2019).

Leeson: Yes, the element of trauma, which is a key part of life it seems. Recognizing the trauma, the scars, and epigenetically understanding their history becomes part of the story.

Rail: To pass as your legacy what you wanted to expunge from your memory is a remarkable act of bravery. The *Diaries* is the work that will stay. For me, it changed the history of art. When I saw the 1988 part, *First Person Plural*, I was disoriented by your editing, splintering one persona into what is perceived as many voices. I immediately knew that I had to show it in my exhibition *The Un-Heroic Act: Representations of Rape in Contemporary Women's Art in the US* in 2018. When we discussed the work during the artist talk, I had an impression that you still didn't want to get this devil out. Now that you actually put the *Diaries* into your DNA, I am moved that you embraced it as the key of your legacy.

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *First Person Plural* (1988) from *The Electronic Diaries*, 1984-2019 (still). Video, color, sound, 28 min. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

Leeson: I was so fortunate to be able to do these works. They could not have happened earlier because the technologies had not been invented yet. A lot of it is about persistence, faith, and gestation. For instance, it took me three-and-a-half years to get my interview with George Church. I only had 30 minutes to do that interview. When he realized that I understood what he was doing, he became more willing to have a real conversation, not just answer questions. He helped me a lot to get my archive converted to DNA, he understood why I wanted to do it. And he introduced me to the people who could do it at a very low cost, at Twist Bioscience.

Rail: For me, a central question is how to make sure that feminist knowledge and art is passed down so that women do not have to reinvent the wheel generation after generation. With this work, you enriched feminist legacy for the future generations of women.

Leeson: I was, again, just lucky. Last year all the curators at MoMA voted on the works in its film collection and told me they felt that *!Women Art Revolution* was regarded as an important piece because they hadn't known these stories. It is the only true relic of that history.

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Rail: Identity is one of the main themes in your art. One of key projects of feminist art is your exploration of socially constructed identity in *Roberta Breitmore*. Masks are used in art as a way to hide one's identity, shield secrets, or distance oneself or one's characters. Masquerade is also a tool to access another persona, often used at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s to cross gender binaries—by California feminist performance artists, Eleanor Antin and Linda Montano, or, for example, British musicians such as David Bowie and Peter Gabriel. With all your transcending boundaries between human and the machine and your interest in genetic cross, in your masquerades you have never crossed gender boundaries. Why?

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *CyberRoberta*, 1996. Custom-made doll, clothing, glasses, webcam, surveillance camera, mirror, original programming, and telerobotic head-rotating system, Aprox. 17 ¾ x 17 ¾ x 7 ⅞ in (45 x 45 x 20 cm). Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

Leeson: I considered doing that. You know, when Duchamp created Rrose Sélavy, he was also thinking of making her a Jewish person and then he decided to do just Rrose. I think I wanted to stay with something I knew, rather than assume an identity that could turn into a stereotype of presumptions. Masks can also unmask a truth, and women I think are masked in society and culture. The essence of who they are is often concealed and invisible, and so it was a way of finding an archetype that could be projected out of the conditions of female life in particular times.

Rail: Were you close with Linda Montano and Eleanor Antin?

Leeson: I know them, of course, but our work is very different. They were creating works for performance photographs—and in doing so they did not take the risks involved with interacting in real life. I admire their work but presumptions of identities and then performing or photographing them in an art context is different from an investigation into live experiences without expectation. Life improv, so to speak. There was no rope to hold on to. The next generation—which was all about the image, not about the essence of what it means—garnered a lot of recognition for the projects many of us instigated a decade or more before, but that has happened throughout history.

Rail: I noticed that there are many analyses of your work in the context of gaze and image theory. It is obviously an important aspect of your work, especially in *Roberta Breitmore*, your photo-collages from the 1980s like the "Phantom Limb" series, or *The Electronic Diaries*, where gaze is a powerful element of the construction of the character, but I don't think it is what your work is truly about.

Leeson: No, not at all.

Rail: I think it really is philosophical. You start by asking "Who am I?" but then you are asking "What is life?"

Leeson: And "Who are we?" "How does this culture define us?" "How are we treated by it?" and "What's the trauma that culture imposes to diminish possibilities for a particular group of people?"

Rail: What are you afraid of today the most?

Leeson: The world now is fraught with difficult conditions. I trust the next generation. There are biohacking labs coming up, sprouting all over the world. In Berkeley there are a hundred biohacking labs with young people trying to save the planet, for instance, trying to purify the water in Flint, Michigan; to figure out ways that we could control toxicity. They're devoting their lives to this. And I think that they will hopefully help us find the way out of it. We're at a critical time for the preservation of all life.

Rail: It is a good moment to talk about *Twisted Gravity* (2020)—the work about water which you created in collaboration with Harvard's biological engineering lab. It probably developed since I showed preparatory drawings in *ecofeminism(s)*.

Leeson: Yes, absolutely. The labs at the Wyss Institute at Harvard which Dr. Richard Novak heads had to close for a few months because of the pandemic and then they had trouble getting plastic because it was used for PPE. Eventually, in the fall, we had everything we needed and they etched the first plates with my *Water Women* images and could start working with the bioreactors along with the AquaPulse system of pulsating electronics. The installation opened at the Gwangju Biennale in Korea. It functioned perfectly.

Rail: And how did it eventually develop? Is it one filter that at the same time clears bacteria from water and degrades plastic in it, or are they two separate devices?

Leeson: When I made the *LYNNHERSHMAN Antibody* with Dr. Thomas Huber who was working on antibodies at Novartis, we decided we wanted to do another project and came up with the idea of purging plastic from water. He contacted the Wyss Institute and Dr. Richard Novak was interested in a collaboration, so we tied this into the "Water Women" series I began 50 years ago, which is about evaporation and transcendence. Eventually, it turned into *Twisted Gravity* where toxins light up as they degrade and purify. There are two separate elements. One is the AquaPulse system that actually pulsates electricity through the water and disintegrates the plastic and kills bacteria, and the other one is an ecological system that uses waxworms and other elements that eat the plastic and dissolve it.

Rail: *Twisted Gravity* takes us back to the idea of genius —you proved with your career and works about other creative women that a woman can be a genius and at the same time so many of your projects are collaborative—science projects, films, the 1990s works which you worked on with programmers.

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Twisted Gravity* (detail), 2019-21. Installation view in the Gwangju Biennale, Korea. Created as a collaboration with The Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering, Harvard University, featuring the Aquapulse System for purifying water. Courtesy the artist; Richard Novak and the Wyss Institute; Bridget Donahue, New York; and Altman Siegal, San Francisco.

Rail: When you say trilogy, you mean continuing *Conceiving Ada* and *Teknolust* (2002)?

Leeson: Yes. I had the idea to do a trilogy about technology and society using the same actor that ages over time, that would give three different stories of where we are with the technology of that time.

Lynn Hershman Leeson (writer, director, producer), *Teknolust*, 2002 (still). 35 mm feature film starring Tilda Swinton, 85 min. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue, New York; and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.

Rail: Tilda Swinton's playing four characters in your *Teknolust*—scientist Rosetta Stone and three female Self Replicating Automatons (SRAs) whom she injected with her DNA—was spectacular.

Leeson: She's totally brilliant.

Rail: The film was so funny that one could say it's like a Disney fairy tale, but it's actually like a Brothers Grimm fairy tale ... I mean Ruby is a prostitute who is a breadwinner. ...

Leeson: Yes. They are all fables of how we live through the time we are born into.

Rail: What is exceptional about your work is that building on the mantra of feminist art, "the personal is political," you take such a long view in your stories stretching back and into the future. I always think of you as a rather uniquely European American artist, whose focus is on narratives of time.

Leeson: That is a very kind thing to say. Survival and preservation of the planet I think, will have to come from both a spirited ethos and collaboration with all living things. Finally it is essential to replace endemic contamination and ravaged systems, which by the way, includes discrimination and racism, with unity, sentient awareness, and compassion.