

***The First Comprehensive Retrospective in the Americas of
Bay Area New Media Pioneer, Artist, and Filmmaker
Lynn Hershman Leeson***

Friday, February 10, 2017 through Sunday, May 21, 2017

Opening Night Party: Friday, February 10, 2017, 7 p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO - (November 22, 2016) Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) announces its presentation of [Civic Radar](#), the first US retrospective devoted to the influential media artist and feminist art pioneer **Lynn Hershman Leeson**. The exhibition will be on **view Friday, February 10, 2017, through Sunday, May 21, 2017.**

Originally curated by Peter Weibel and Andreas Beutin and organized by ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany, this remarkable exhibition spans the length of Hershman Leeson's career to date, from the early 1960s to the present. She has made major contributions in photography, video, film, social art, performance, installation, interactive art, and web-based media art. **Civic Radar**, as organized by **YBCA's Director of Visual Arts Lucía Sanromán**, will focus on Hershman Leeson's investigations of identity and viewers' relationships to various modes of surveillance, as well as her contributions to the fields of social performance and engaged practice.

"It is often said that artists are visionaries who show us a path toward the future, but very few fit this description as well as Lynn Hershman Leeson," **remarks Sanromán**. "A fearless pioneer whose performances were fueled by indignation regarding the vulnerable position of women in American society, her work has been a harbinger of experiments in social practice, new media, and interactive and net-based art decades before technology and digital culture would reshape our experience of reality. Based in the Bay Area for her entire career, it has taken too long to bring global attention to her complex practice. At YBCA we feel that doing so today is more urgent than ever."

Civic Radar begins with Hershman Leeson's drawings, paintings, and sculptures from the early 1960s, then explores her shift toward performance, installation, and conceptual work, displaying her enthusiastic embrace of evolving media. The exhibition covers photography, film, video, and digital media, including sound, interactive, and social media exploring the effects of modern technology on the self—particularly the female self.

Civic Radar will include Hershman Leeson's pioneering work **Lorna** (1983–84), an interactive story of an agoraphobic woman. The first-ever artwork to use laserdisc technology, users can play it in the style of a retro computer game. The exhibition also features the voyeuristic eye-tracking cabinet in **Room of One's Own** (1990–93), where the user peers into a miniature bedroom and their eye movements are tracked to trigger scenes and sounds from the female "occupant," at the same time that surveillance footage of the peering eye itself is captured and projected in real time.

Another section will present documentation of the **Roberta Breitmore Project** (1973–79), a critical work in Hershman Leeson’s artistic oeuvre. Over the course of what the artist calls a “private performance,” she adopted the alternative persona of Breitmore and invented for her a distinct history, voice, posture, style of dress, personality, and set of neuroses, as well as her own credit card and driver’s license, in order to address the fragmented and multiple roles that play out in different aspects of one’s daily life.

In her recent works, Hershman Leeson addresses the influence of digital culture on our most intimate selves, along with the latest scientific developments in the field of regenerative medicine and genetics research, for instance 3D bioprinters that re-create human body parts. These are featured in a new large-scale installation **Infinity Engine**—a fully functional replica of a genetics lab, including a room equipped with reverse facial-recognition software that photographs visitors to reveal their DNA origins, and adds their captured information to an ever-evolving composite. *Infinity Engine* was first prototyped at YBCA in the 2013 exhibition **Dissident Futures**. Generating infinite narratives about the future of the human species in the post-genetic engineering age, it appears in this exhibition in an expanded form.

Over the last five decades, Hershman Leeson has received much international acclaim for her films. She often works in collaboration with the actor Tilda Swinton, who has appeared in four of Hershman Leeson’s longer-length films. *Civic Radar* features **Teknolust** (2002), with Swinton in the role of Rosetta Stone, a scientist specializing in biogenetics who creates a hybrid machine-human organism. The sci-fi drama deals with cyber-identity and cloning, as well as the decoupling of sexuality from human reproduction. The artist’s fifth film, on the dissident Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, tentatively titled **Tania Bruguera: A State of Vulnerability**, is currently in production and scheduled to debut in fall 2016. (YBCA is currently organizing a survey exhibition devoted to Bruguera titled *Talking to Power / Hablandole al Poder*, which will be on view June 16–September 24, 2017.)

Ticket information

[Civic Radar](#) opens Friday, February 10, 2017, and is on view through Sunday, May 21, 2017.

Gallery admission: \$10; seniors, teachers, and students: \$8; YBCA members: FREE

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street, San Francisco CA 94103
415.978.2787, ybc.org

About Lynn Hershman Leeson

Over the last five decades, artist and filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson has received international acclaim for her art and films. She is recognized for her innovative work investigating issues that are now recognized as key to the workings of society: the relationship between humans and technology, identity, surveillance, and the use of media as a tool of empowerment against censorship and political repression. Her activist films on injustice within the art world and society at large have been praised worldwide. *!Women Art Revolution!* won first prize in the Montreal Festival for Films on Art and was hailed by the Museum of Modern Art as one of the three best documentaries of 2012. Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* called it “the most comprehensive documentary ever made on the feminist art movement.” Her 2009 film *Strange Culture*—which the *New York Times* deemed “the perfect balance of form and content” and *The Nation* called “a brilliant and moving examination of fear and its manipulation”—resulted in the release of an artist facing a prison sentence of 23 years.

Organizing Partners and Funders

Lynn Hershman Leeson: Civic Radar is curated by Peter Weibel and Andreas Beutin, and organized by ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany. The presentation at YBCA is organized by Lucía Sanromán, Director of Visual Arts.

YBCA Exhibitions 2016–2017 are made possible, in part, by Mike Wilkins and Sheila Duignan, Meridee Moore and Kevin King, and the Creative Ventures Council. YBCA Programs 2016–2017 are made possible, in part, by The James Irvine Foundation. Additional funding for YBCA Programs 2016–2017: National Endowment for the Arts, Adobe, Abundance Foundation, Gaia Fund, Grosvenor, and members of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Free First Tuesdays underwritten by Directors Forum Members. YBCA is grateful to the City of San Francisco for its ongoing support.

About Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, film/video, and civic engagement. YBCA venues include the Forum, Screening Room, Galleries, and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787). For more information, [visit ybca.org](http://visit.ybca.org).

###