

SIMIAN



Lynn Hershman Leeson, *The Electronic Diaries (1984-2019)*. May 14 – Jun 26, 2022

The Electronic Diaries (1984-2019) An early pioneer of new media artworks, American artist Lynn Hershman Leeson examines the moral, cultural and political derivatives of the electronic evolution. Over four decades, she records herself, documenting not only her own life as a woman in an increasingly capitalist society but the way in which electronic technologies become more and more embedded in our daily lives.

'We have become a society of screens, of different layers, that keep us from knowing the truth', Lynn Hershman Leeson says, illustrating the complex interrelations between the real and the mediated self that works as a thematic undercurrent all through her six-film work series *The Electronic Diaries* (1984-2019).

In Part 1 of the series, filmed between 1984-1986, Hershman Leeson puts questions of self-image to the forefront, mirroring, cutting and multiplying her own image while revealing intimate details of body dysmorphia, guilt and abandonment. Hershman Leeson offers an eery glimpse into the future of reality TV and social media, as she reflects on how our relationship with screens distorts the truth and creates a gap between fiction and reality.

In Part 2, Hershman Leeson extends her reflections on themes of feminism, truth and control. Here, the character of Dracula becomes an abstraction of the power of mass media and personal traumas, anxieties and obsessions. 'You're not supposed to talk about it', she whispers as black and white images of the cape-clad man move across the screen. Dracula both seduces – and kills.

The subtle hints towards death become a theme in Part 3 where the discovery of a brain tumour puts forward reflections on Hershman Leeson's own mortality. At the same time, a new dimension is added to the electronic diaries which both assume the role of life witnesses as well as an almost religious confessional.

As time and digital technology evolves, Hershman Leeson becomes increasingly interested in moral questions connected to

DNA modifications and cyborgs, linking her own reproduction and forthcoming role as a grandmother with manipulation of species and the tyranny imposed by evolution. In the sixth and final film, Hershman Leeson and long-time friend and documentarist Eleanor Coppola reflect on women's rights through the decades. Here, it becomes clear that even if the media continues to distort and control female bodies and narratives, it also has the power to bring agency to the voiceless. 'Life is the ultimate editing process', Hershman Leeson candidly concludes as she looks back on her life as it has unfolded to the backdrop of the electronic evolution.

Nanna Balslev Strøjer



A close-up photograph of a person's thumb pressing a glowing green circular button. The button is part of a dark, rectangular device, likely a computer keyboard or a specialized remote control. The word "POWER" is visible above the button, and the word "ON" is partially visible below it. The background is dark and out of focus.

POWER

ON

1. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 1)*

8:46 min.

Video projection

2. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 2)*

9:09 min.

Video projection

3. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 3)*

14:16 min.

Video projection

3. 4.

4. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 4)*

7:18 min.

Video projection

5. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 5)*

15:49 min.

Video projection

6. *The Electronic Diaries (Part 6)*

20:14 min.

Video projection

2. 5.

1. 6.

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Lynn Hershman Leeson

(b. 1941) is internationally renowned for her pioneering work. Solo exhibitions include KW, Berlin, New Museum, New York and Altman Siegel, San Francisco. Her work is represented in several collections, among others The Tate Modern, London, LACMA, Los Angeles, MOMA, New York and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Her films have been screened at the Sundance Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival and The Berlin International Film Festival, among others. Leeson recently received a Special Mention for her contribution to the main exhibition Milk of Dreams at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. Lynn Hershman Leeson lives and works in San Francisco.

Works courtesy of:

The artist
Altman Siegel

**Simian, Kay Fiskers Plads 17
2300 Copenhagen
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**Opening hours during exhibitions:
Thursday, Friday, Saturday 12-17
or by appointment**