

Cyberfeminism Mutates

Cyberfeminism is a mutating word with a nebulous history. Its evolution is less a single root system with multiple branches than a network of entangled rhizomes, constantly and multidirectionally moving.

Coined in the early 1990s by the British cultural theorist Sadie Plant and artist collective VNS Matrix, the word cyberfeminism takes on its prefix “cyber” — recast from Cybernetics, a 1948 book by Norbert Wiener, and “cyberspace,” from William Gibson’s 1984 novel *Neuromancer* — as a provocation. This cyberspace of the 1980s was stocked with and characterized by cyberbabes and fembots, a techno-utopian imaginary of the male gaze. “Cyberfeminism” prompted women and marginalized communities to imagine how a reoriented cyberspace could look. By now, three decades after its origination, cyberfeminism has shifted from a loose artistic movement exploring the emancipatory potential of cyberspace towards a collective drive to provide software, hardware, and wetware education and to get marginalized groups online. Today, with questions of technology more and more clearly “bound together with questions of ecology and the economy,” as noted by Cornelia Sollfrank, the term is self-reflexive: technology is not only the subject of cyberfeminism, but its means of transmission. It’s all about feedback.

WETWARE showcases nine artists to celebrate and support their work and the upcoming publication [CYBERFEMINISM INDEX](#), slated for an October 2022 release with Inventory Press. Drawn from the terms “hardware” and “software,” wetware, by definition, applies to the computational ability of biological life forms, though the term has become slang for biotechnologies. Here, we twist the term, calling WETWARE to focus on the embodied, slimy components of technology, and the organic, rhizomatic nature of networks. Shown in chronological order, we present seminal cyberfeminist artworks from the early 1990s to pornographic and techno-spiritual pieces from the early aughts, and contemporary adaptations and brand new commissions from 2022. Each artist is also featured in the publication CYBERFEMINISM INDEX and suggest a wide web of cyberfeminism’s continuous evolution.

Preorder the book: <http://www.inventorypress.com/product/cyberfeminism-index>

Estroworld Now: The Quarantine Edition

From the make-up, soaps, and birth control pills in your bathroom to plastic packaging in your kitchen, beauty, hygiene, and lifestyle products in the average home cater to a consumerist culture driven by ideals of beauty, sterility, and purity. In actuality, these everyday items leach a multitude of pervasive chemicals that wend their way through our bodies, environments, and urban systems, disrupting hormones of all species and causing ecological threat to our landscapes. Obscured to us through their invisible size, and also by the conglomerates who lay havoc on the earth to sell us these products, micro-polluting chemicals are part of today’s stark reality of living in toxic worlds. Mary Maggic’s “Estroworld Now: The Quarantine Edition” (2021) invites users to navigate 3D model renderings of the interior of an actual suburban home in the North-West of England. The work is part of The Estroworld, a fictional corporate conglomerate of petrochemical, agricultural, and pharmaceutical industries whose products and molecular residues are simply inescapable. In The Quarantine Edition, visitors are confronted with an overpopulation of Estroworld products, pop ups, and derivative company slogans, that promise to either shield or distract us from our current state of planetary ruin. Are we all already living in The Estroworld? How political is your shampoo?