

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>

Contested Zone

Contested Zone (1993) by VNS Matrix is a digital image created for the 1993 project ALL NEW GEN. Part artwork, part computer game, ALL NEW GEN was released as a CD-ROM and distributed widely in Australia and internationally. The CD-ROM was also exhibited as the centerpiece of the ALL NEW GEN installation with lightboxes, soundworks, photography, sculptural elements, video and a Bonding Booth for pleasurable distraction.

Join the cyber warrior All New Gen and the renegade tribes of the Contested Zone to sabotage the databanks of Big Daddy Mainframe and launch the New World Disorder. Enter the Contested Zone, a labyrinth of bizarre and mysterious cyberworlds, where the future is now, and Big Daddy Mainframe is in control. Manipulating the minds of the online masses through his nasty neural nets, BDM is expanding his transplanetary empire and nothing will get in his way. But resistance is not futile! All New Gen, an omnipresent being (computer virus, bio simsystem, intelligent mist) is on a mission with the renegade tribes to sabotage the info core of the insidious data dictator. All New Gen is assisted on her mission by the DNA Sluts, a band of renegade Sheroges; along with ferals, data deviants, cortex crones and code warriors.

For more context, please visit: <https://vnsmatrix.net/projects/all-new-gen>