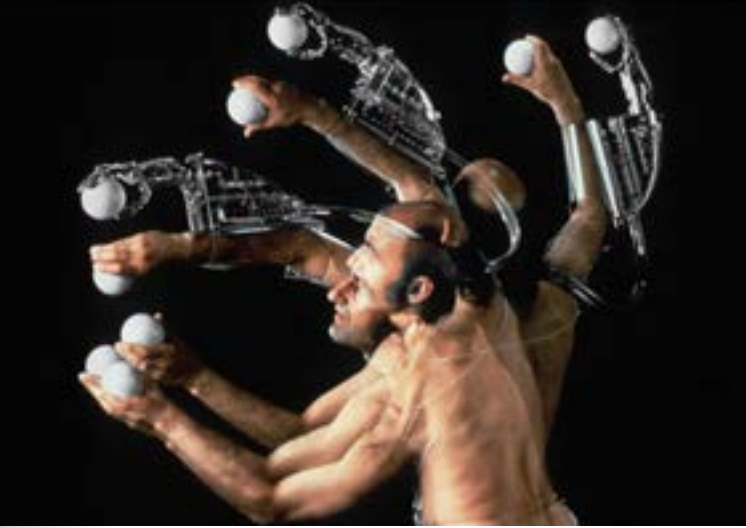


**MOAD** VITO **ACCONCI**  
 LAURIE **ANDERSON**  
 ED **ATKINS**  
 TRISHA **BAGA**  
 IVANA **BAŠIĆ**  
 GRETCHEN **BENDER**  
 SADIE **BENNING**  
 DARA **BIRNBAUM**  
 ZACH **BLAS**  
 GEORGE **BRECHT** *and*  
 ROBERT **WATTS**  
 NANCY **BURSON**  
 JAMES **BYRNE**  
 PETER **CAMPUS**  
 PETRA **CORTRIGHT**  
 ANDREA **CRESPO**  
 JAIME **DAVIDOVICH**  
 OTÁVIO **DONASCI**  
 JUAN **DOWNEY**  
 ZACKARY **DRUCKER**

RHYE **ERNST**  
 VALIE **EXPORT**  
 JES **FAN**  
 ANETA **GRZESZYKOWSKA**  
 K8 **HARDY**  
 LYLE **ASHTON HARRIS**  
 LYNN **HERSHMAN LEESON**  
 TISHAN **HSU**  
 JULIANA **HUXTABLE**  
 PIERRE **HUYGHE**  
 SANJA **IVEKOVIĆ**  
 JOSH **KLINE**  
 CAROLYN **LAZARD**  
 MARK **LECKEY**  
 RAFAEL **LOZANO-HEMMER**  
 ANNA MARIA **MAIOLINO**  
 CHRISTIAN **MARCLAY**  
 HELEN **MARTEN**  
 SIDSEL **MEINECHE HANSEN**  
 ANA **MENDIETA**  
 MARTA **MINUJÍN**

PETER **MOORE**  
 BRUCE **NAUMAN**  
 NAM **JUNE PAIK**  
 LETÍCIA **PARENTE**  
 CLAUDIO **PERNA**  
 SONDRA **PERRY**  
 HOWARDENA **PINDELL**  
 ULRIKE **ROSENBACH**  
 PAUL **MPAGI SEPUYA**  
 CINDY **SHERMAN**  
 LORNA **SIMPSON**  
 MARIANNA **SIMNETT**  
**STELARC**  
 HITO **STEYERL**  
 MARTINE **SYMS**  
 RYAN **TRECARTIN**  
 WOLF **VOSTELL**  
**THE WOOSTER GROUP**  
 ROBERT **WATTS**  
 ANICKA **YI**



Cindy Sherman. Untitled #92, 1981. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

Sterlac (03). Third Hand, 1980. Courtesy of the Artist

Juan Downey. Plato Now 1973. Courtesy of the Artist



Octávio Donaschi. Video *Creaturas*. Courtesy of the artist

Juliana Huxtable. *Lil' Marvel*, 2015. Courtesy of the Artist and JTT, New York

Smart phones, tablets, and computers. Wearable tech, artificial intelligence, and viral videos. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, we constantly shift between the physical world and digital realms that are accessed through technology. As a result, seemingly once-stable divisions—between the real and the virtual, the body and the machine—are eroded.

*The Body Electric* presents work by an intergenerational group of artists from the past fifty years who use technology to explore identity, embodiment, class, race, and sexuality. Video cameras record private moments and public spectacles, photographs capture alternate personas, and digital avatars simulate human behavior. Together, they reveal ways that technology changes our collective understanding of the body, everyday life, and sense of self. From the inviting and familiar to the provocative and unsettling, the works in the exhibition move nimbly from the material world to the space of the screen and back again.

Though not organized chronologically, the exhibition is anchored in the mid-1960s and artists who were the first to employ TVs as both the subject and the material of their work. Television formed a crucial part of the expanded practices of pioneers such as Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, Marta Minujín, and Jaime Davidovich, whose work spanned performance, sculpture, and the moving image.

For many artists since then, the lens of the camera and the space of the screen have offered avenues to explore the politics of the mediated image. Other artists employ advances in body hacking and wearables to make porous the boundary between the body and technology. Several engage with avatars as a means to extend the self into virtual space. Some of the most recent works explore health and treatment—issues particularly pertinent today given the ongoing politicization of health care.

While technology marches on at an irrepressible pace, *The Body Electric* views these changes skeptically. The exhibition looks to common threads and shared concerns, despite each artist having access to differing technology at different times. Certainly, artists will always respond to new technologies (photographic, televisual, digital), and seek to challenge and subvert their logic. Yet regardless of how advanced technology might appear, the artists in the exhibition ask perennial questions across eras and generations.

#### PERFORMING FOR THE CAMERA

Whether using still photography, analogue video, or webcams, a number of artists in the exhibition have turned the camera lens onto themselves and their collaborators. Some of these works highlight the body as a site of both personal expression and external judgment through performance, documentation, and physical manipulation. Others subvert or parody the glossy stereotypes and idealized figures seen in magazines and on television.

In the late 1960s, Sony introduced the Portapak, the first commercially available portable video recording system that could be carried and operated by one person. Artists quickly adopted this technology, using it in new ways to question conventions of femininity and beauty, comment on patriarchal attitudes, examine race, or visualize queerness, among other themes. More recently, with the development of digital technologies, the effects of the Internet on identity have become another primary focus. Works by Sanja Iveković, Anna Maria Maiolino, Ana Mendieta, Claudio Perna, Howardena Pindell, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, and Cindy Sherman chart a history of artists turning the lens of the camera onto their own bodies, creating personal spaces of performance. Whatever the format—from imitations of print advertising to streamed video confessionals—many of these works anticipated today's pervasive selfie culture.

#### EXTENDING THE SELF

Today, there are new opportunities to communicate and express ourselves virtually. In expanding digital landscapes, artists explore the presence of the body and its increasingly porous boundaries. Some focus on the human form in the physical world, examining qualities of malleability through sculptures or photographs. Created with unusual combinations of the organic and synthetic, the works may often seem uncanny or disconcerting.

Other artists engage the use of avatars, or digital representations of an individual, which can be an idealized version of one's own identity or an entirely new character. Presented here as lifelike talking heads and holograms or in VR installations, these figures perform human behaviors or express relatable emotions. The works reveal ways that avatars can blur the divisions between the self and technology, while questioning the agency of our virtual personas.

Disembodied beings and digital avatars populate contributions by Laurie Anderson, Ed Atkins, Pierre Huyghe, and Sidsel Meineche Hansen, while sculptures by Anicka Yi, as well as an immersive installation by Trisha Baga, explore the slippery ambiguity of materials poised between the digital and analog, the real and rendered. Footage of performances by the Wooster Group offers a frenetic meditation on the all-pervasive presence of technology, and the fusion of body and screen. And Zach Blas's artificially intelligent *Icosahedron* (2019) takes the form of a crystal ball.

#### THE POWER OF IMAGES

How powerful is the mass media in shaping and influencing our understanding of the body and identity? Works by Gretchen Bender, Nancy Burson, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Sondra Perry, and Martine Syms challenge stereotypes of femininity and critique power structures that dictate how images are produced and consumed. For these artists, the lens of the camera creates a space to rethink the

representation of sociopolitical identities and to question the structures that govern our understanding of race and gender.

Dating from the 1970s to today, these works employ techniques of appropriation, repetition, and imitation. Using a variety of technologies—from analogue photography to digital animation—they draw our attention to ways that feminine identities are constructed. The artists focus on clothing, makeup, body language, and gesture to reveal how certain markers are often tied to stereotypes of class, race, or gender. Such social biases are also embedded in the technology we use, inevitably reinforcing prejudice and inequality.

#### THE MALLEABLE BODY

Artists who explore the body as fluid and subject to change reveal transformations through internal or external forces. The human form and sense of self are negotiated in relation to shared cultural narratives (like those found in online communities or TV shows) as well as the more intimate spaces of care and treatment.

Several works here directly address the viewer by calling attention to our physical presence in the gallery or provoking a visceral response. Some focus on the complexities of gender identity. Others examine physical changes by documenting personal journeys through illness and healing or challenging ideas of cleanliness and propriety. Works by Jes Fan, Josh Kline, Carolyn Lazard, and Marianna Simnett reflect on the malleability of the body, speaking to themes of care, surgical intervention, and chemical and biological processes imperceptible to the human eye. Together, these artworks make visible what is unseen, concealed, or often considered private.



Hito Steyerl. *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013. Image courtesy of the Artist, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Esther Schipper, Berlin





Sidsel Meineche Hansen. *Second Sex War Zone*, 2016.  
Courtesy the artist & Rodeo Gallery London Piraeus

Aneta Grzeszykowska. *Selfie #17*, 2014. Courtesy of Raster Gallery, Warsaw

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November 5, 2020 – May 30, 2021

Wednesday 1:00 – 6:00PM Thursday 1:00 – 8:00PM Friday – Sunday 1:00 – 6:00PM