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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEW WORKS ON VIEW AT ART HOUSE:  
THEMATIC INSTALLATION, “CYBERBODIES”, ADDRESSES THE INTERSECTION  
OF DIGITAL CULTURE AND THE BODY**

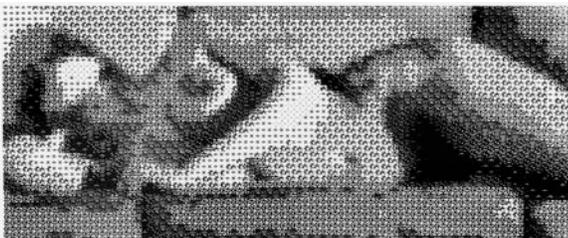
SANTA FE, N.M. – The Art House seasonal exhibition program, reveals “**Cyberbodies**”, a new thematic installation of artworks, with a public reception Friday, August 11, 5-7 p.m. The new installation continues to showcase significant highlights and new acquisitions from the Foundation’s digital art collection, including works of historic importance by Lynn Hershman Leeson, Eduardo Kac, and a collaborative work attributed to Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) by organization members Kenneth Knowlton and Leon Harmon. Combined, the artworks in “Cyberbodies” demonstrate how emerging technologies can extend, distort and disrupt the ways that bodies—especially women’s—are viewed as objects of desire in digital culture. The technologies explored by artists in this focused installation include interactive videodisc and touchscreen, a pre-internet Minitel system, and customized generative software.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation’s digital art collection spans the global history of computer art of the past fifty years. The collection includes some of the first algorithmic plotter drawings on paper, digital animation, software-driven, generative, and custom coded artworks, interactive works based on real-time gaming platforms, virtual reality, internet-based or networked art, and works that utilize LED and LCD displays. The Foundation recognizes the cultural and intellectual value of artworks that make use of experimental and innovative technologies.

**EXPERIMENTS IN ART AND TECHNOLOGY** (active since 1966, New Jersey)

*Studies in Perception I*, 1967

Screenprint in black and white inks on paper



Colloquially known as “Computer Nude,” *Studies in Perception I* is the most widely circulated early computer artwork. A photograph of the dancer Deborah Hay was ingeniously reconstituted as a bitmap mosaic through a generative program developed by Leon Harmon (1922–1983), a researcher in cognitive neuroscience, and Ken Knowlton (born 1931), a computer engineer at AT&T’s

Bell Labs. Harmon and Knowlton joined creative forces for the famous 1966 Experiments in Art and Technology collaborations, which brought together communications scientists with avant-garde artists

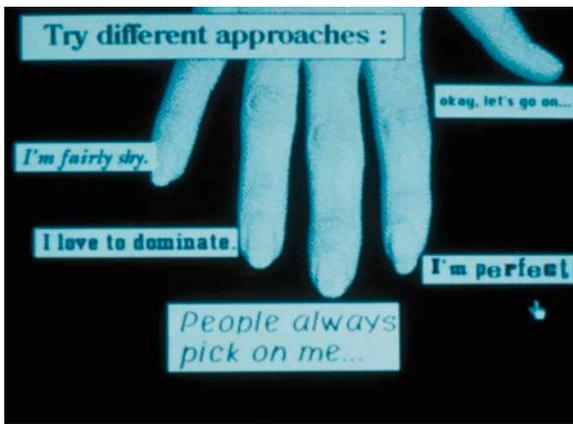
to forge a new type of advanced art, a precursor to today's digital art. (Andy Warhol's helium-filled silver mylar balloon installation was another famous artwork from this fertile project.) The computer print hung in Robert Rauschenberg's studio, where it was photographed and reprinted in a *New York Times* article, making it the first full-frontal nude ever shown in that publication. Due to the popularity of the image, a limited edition screenprint was produced by the artists from the original computer work, one of which we are exhibiting.

*Studies in Perception I*, as the title suggests, demonstrates the powerful capacity of a viewer's brain to interpret a composition of abstract symbols as a human figure. Groupings of the symbols called bitmap characters successfully emulate halftone and grayscale values—key effects in an artist's toolbox. The mainframe computer assisted early computer artists in speculating a scientific or mathematical theory of beauty.

**LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON** (Born in Cleveland, 1941; lives in San Francisco)

*Deep Contact*, 1984–1989

Interactive touchscreen installation



Since the 1970s Lynn Hershman Leeson has been a major voice of cyberfeminism, a field of art that critiques the role of technology in the representation of women's bodies and identities in our digital era. The first artwork to make use of touchscreens, *Deep Contact*, implicates the viewer as an active participant in manipulating characters within the artwork. Emergent personal technologies such as video dating, video games and the desktop computer in the mid-1980s prompted the artist to respond with *Deep Contact*, which makes a statement about the ways electronic telecommunications alter the structure, speed and objectives of human desire.

The video narrative begins with a seduction: "Try to reach through the screen and touch me. Touch me! Try to press your way through the screen," says Marion, knocking on the screen. The hostess Marion guides viewers through a navigable, choose-your-own-adventure-style journey through different scenes and characters such as a garden, a tavern and virtual TV stations. There is no clear end to the narrative. One meets a Zen master and a demon as representations of good and evil, as well as the artist playing herself. Touching different parts of Marion's digital body leads you to different video chapters. There are seventy-one segments to choose, with a map on the nearby wall to help guide you.

**EDUARDO KAC** (born in Rio de Janeiro, 1962; lives in Chicago)

*Tesão*, 1986/2016

Digital video animation on vintage Minitel terminal



*Tesão* is an animation carried out in three acts that unfold to spell the artwork's title, Portuguese slang for "horny." Created when the artist was twenty-four years old, the artwork is considered a piece of digital graffiti or visual poetry. *Tesão* could be publicly accessed on the Minitel network, a precursor to the Internet. Minitel was

primarily used in France and Brazil and connected twenty-five million users through their phone lines. Kac was one of the first artists to create telecommunications art designed, accessed and viewed within the Minitel system. The Minitel network was dismantled in 2012, effectively destroying *Tesão* until a digital archaeology research team in Avignon, France, reconstructed Kac's artwork to play as a simulated video file, matching the color and rhythm of the original.

The artworks by Lynn Hershman Leeson and Eduardo Kac are featured in *Net Art Anthology*, a program presented by Rhizome and supported by a Thoma Foundation grant. Net Art Anthology is an online exhibition that documents, preserves and restages internet artworks from the 1980s through today, many of which have been lost due to the swift obsolescence of website technologies. When complete in October, 2018, the Anthology will showcase one-hundred net art works from the formative years of this medium, establishing a critical overview of net art's history. <https://anthology.rhizome.org/>

Other installations currently on view at Art House include artworks from the Foundation collection by Daniel Canogar, Guillermo Gallindo, Yael Kanarek, Beryl Korot, Brigitte Kowanz, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Vera Molnar, James Nares, Alan Rath, Daniel Rozin, Laura Splan and Steina Vasulka.

### **PUBLIC RECEPTION**

*There will be a free public reception for “Cyberbodies” on Friday, August 11, 5-7 p.m., 231 Delgado Street, Santa Fe, NM.*

### **ART HOUSE HOURS & TOURS**

Art House is an exhibition space in Santa Fe, New Mexico, dedicated to sharing works from the Thoma Foundation collection. Art House's regular public hours are Thursday-Saturday, 10a.m.-5p.m. Admission is free, and school and group tours can be arranged in advance during both regular and by appointment hours with Foundation staff.

### **MISSION**

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation recognizes the power of the arts to challenge and shift perceptions, spark creativity and connect people across cultures. We lend and exhibit artworks from our collection and support individuals and organizations that make promising contributions to the areas of art we collect.

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Helen Colton, [helen@thomafoundation.org](mailto:helen@thomafoundation.org)  
505.995.0231

Art House, Thoma Foundation  
231 Delgado St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
[www.thomafoundation.org](http://www.thomafoundation.org)

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