

MEDIA CONTACT: Valerie Primeau | Director of Communications775.398.7221 | valerie.primeau@nevadaart.org**INTERRELATIONSHIP OF HUMANS AND TECHNOLOGY EXPLORED IN LYNN HERSHMAN
LEESON'S *OF HUMANS, CYBORGS AND AI***

RENO, NEV. (January 3, 2024) – For nearly 60 years, artist and filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson has been probing key issues within society, including the relationship between humans and technology, issues of surveillance, gender, and privacy. She has received international acclaim for her pioneering contributions to photography, video, film, performance, web-based and interactive art.

In 1988, Leeson asked us to, “Imagine a world in which there is a blurring between the soul and the chip, a world in which artificially implanted DNA is genetically bred to create an enlightened and self-replicating intelligent machine, which perhaps uses a human body as a vehicle for mobility.” Today, Leeson expands on the cyborg—a precursor of artificial intelligence—as an inevitable outcome of human development in a technologically driven society.

Lynn Hershman Leeson: Of Humans, Cyborgs, and AI presents three of Hershman Leeson’s most recent videos (made in the last five years) that explore the interrelationship between homo sapiens and the technologies they have created. Similarly, in each work Hershman Leeson presents three different techno-female personas that offer poignant observations about the world we live in.

“Lynn Hershman Leeson is one of the most prescient artists of our time,” adds Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, Apsara DiQuinzio. “She has created female identities that tellingly discern the complexities of inhabiting a gendered and technologically saturated field of experience. The same is true of her *Cyborgian Rhapsody* tetralogy, three of which we present in the exhibition. In each work, Hershman Leeson tells a distinct cautionary tale about the potential misuses and abuses of

technology, which has already begun to radically reshape human relationships, societies, and the history of life on Earth—and it is no coincidence that the soothsayers are women.”

In the first work, *Shadow Stalker* (2019) Leeson alerts people to the fact that everyone has an online alter ego, created perhaps unwittingly, through the data driven footprints they generate.

Consequently, personal information and behavior, has essentially become the most valuable currency since oil. Hershman Leeson’s video illuminates how, while online, people invest in their own market value. The more data they provide, the wealthier and more knowledgeable technologies become, which in turn impacts individual value.

In *Logic Paralyzes the Heart* (2021)—the first moving-image work to be acquired as part of the Museum’s Altered Landscape Collection—we meet the very first cyborg, played by actress Joan Chen. While on a retreat, she reflects on the past and offers her visions of a troubled future, particularly in relation to climate change. Notably, this video received honorable recognition when it was included in the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022.

The final, and most recent work, *Cyborgian Rhapsody: Immortality* (2023), is the follow-up to *Logic Paralyzes the Heart*. Like in the previous video, she introduces a new female protagonist, created with the help of AI, who goes by Sarah and bears a striking resemblance to the artist. Born in the future (2029), Sarah meets two human friends online, after interrupting their social media feeds.

Lynn Hershman Leeson: Of Humans, Cyborgs, and AI inaugurates the new Thomas Lee Bottom Gallery, a gallery purpose-built to showcase video, film, and multimedia work. The exhibition is organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, senior curator of contemporary art, with Kolin Perry, assistant curator.

This exhibition is sponsored by the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation, which recognizes that education and the arts enhance individuals’ lives and communities.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lynn Hershman Leeson (b. 1941 Cleveland, OH) lives and works in San Francisco and New York. Recent exhibitions include La Biennale di Venezia 2022, 59th International Art Exhibition: *The Milk of Dreams*; and in 2021, her solo exhibition, *Twisted*, at The New Museum in New York. Her retrospective exhibition, *Civic Radar*, traveled from ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany (2014) to Deichtorhallen Hamburg / Sammlung Falckenberg, Germany (2015); Lehbruck Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2016); and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2017). Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Altman Siegel, San Francisco (2022); bürobasel, Basel, Switzerland (2021); Rozenstraat, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2021); Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo Comunidad de Madrid (2019); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018); Haus der elektronischen Künste, Basel (2018); Modern Art Oxford, UK (2015); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2013), and the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (2007). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Museion, Bolzano, Italy (2022); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2022); Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2022); Jut Art Museum, Taipei City, Taiwan (2022); de Young Museum, San Francisco (2020); the Shed, New York (2019); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art Boston (2018); Whitney Museum of American Art (2017); and Whitechapel Gallery, London (2016); as well as international exhibitions, including the Gwangju Biennial, Korea (2021), Riga Biennial of Contemporary Art (2018) and the Glasgow International (2018). Her films have screened at the Sundance Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival, and the Berlin International Film Festival, among others. Hershman Leeson has received numerous awards, including an Prix Ars Electronica 2020 Award of Distinction (2020); a VIA Art Fund Award (2019); a Siggraph Lifetime Achievement Award (2018), the College Art Association's Distinguished Feminist Award (2018), the Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award from the 60th San Francisco International Film Festival (2017), a United States Artists Fellowship (2016), an Anonymous Was a Woman Award (2014), and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2009).

ABOUT THE NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

The **Nevada Museum of Art** is the only art museum in Nevada accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). A private, nonprofit organization founded in 1931, the statewide institution was designed by architect Will Bruder. The four-level, 120,000 square foot building is inspired by geological formations in Northern Nevada and is a visual metaphor for the institution's scholarly focus on art and environment. The Museum's permanent collections are divided into thematic focus areas including the Art of the Greater West, the Altered Landscape, contemporary art, and work ethic in American art.

The Museum's **Center for Art + Environment** is an internationally recognized research center that supports the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their natural, built, and virtual environments. The Center houses significant archive materials from more than 1,000 artists working on all seven continents.

Learn more at nevadaart.org.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Nevada Museum of Art acknowledges the traditional homelands of the *Wa She Shu* (Washoe), *Numu* (Northern Paiute), *Newe* (Western Shoshone), and *Nuwu* (Southern Paiute) people of the Great Basin. This includes the 27 tribal nations that exist as sovereign nations and continue as stewards of the land. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these Indigenous homelands.