For half a century now, Lynn Hershman Leeson has made pioneering contributions to performance, conceptual art, new media, and film with works whose formal and technical experimentation is matched by her fearlessness in the deconstruction of gendered identity in a misogynist and technologically mediated world. Her work is of such scope that as I traverse the theater of memory I have constructed in my mind’s eye to understand her expansive and inquisitive practice, the image that arises is less that of a classical building housing art pieces in a neat arrangement of cause and effect, and much more that of a cloud as its particles of ice and water rub against each other, creating electric arcs discharging flashes of insight—a network of artworks connected in multiple directions whose materials are Lynn’s own condensed time coming together with public life.

It is difficult to name another artist, man or woman, who has so presciently diagnosed the emergence of the cyborg self, illuminating in startling detail the effects that technology has today on our most intimate selves, our social relations, and our biological and political lives. This quality of cultural clairvoyance showed itself very early, when as a young artist managing a crippling heart condition Lynn made the *Breathing Machines* series (1963–72) of self-portraits that combined mechanical and electronic elements, including sensors and tape recordings playing the sound of her own breathing and addressing viewers as they approached. It was the early 1960s and these artworks were virtually alone in their exploration of interactivity, technology, and the feminist self, following only a short distance after the very earliest use of the term “cybernetic organism” by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, and anticipating by about 20 years Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto.” Yet this quality of collapsing history, of creating temporal and imaginary loopholes, is a fundamental part of Lynn’s work; I can easily connect those very early, very tactile mechanical self-portraits in wax and electronics to her groundbreaking works in internet-based, artificial intelligence, such as *DiNA* (2004) and *Agent Ruby* (1999–2002). And on to today, with her latest immersive installation *Infinity Engine* (2014–present)—a cross-disciplinary exploration that addresses the life-changing consequences of genetic engineering, bio printing, and DNA data storage on our collective future as a species.

Genetics, biomechanics, and artificial intelligence twine together with a feminist critique of media and to a conceptual understanding of the blending of art and life. These themes and approaches throughout Lynn’s practice weave a narrative that upends the comfortable and expected categories on gender. In this sense, the durational performance *Roberta Breitmore* is an early towering achievement that allowed her to live part time as a fictional persona for five years, from 1973 to 1978, with exacting rigor. Roberta evolved from “construction charts” mapping the transformation of Lynn into Roberta—using makeup and clothes—into a person capable of renting her own apartment, opening a bank account, and obtaining a social security number as well as holding increasingly risky relationships with men, all evidenced in photographs, newspaper announcements, letters, psychological profiles, and a comic book illustrated by Spain Rodriguez. There is something uncanny and disturbing about the level of involvement Lynn had with this character; yet, Roberta was a means to an end and the only possible way she could understand in her own body the limits to agency and power experienced by a young, attractive, chronically underemployed and therefore vulnerable woman in California in the 1970s. *Roberta Breitmore* resonates today with the fury we too feel as the pervasiveness of sexual misconduct by men in positions of power is finally publically acknowledged.

A performance largely captured as photographs conceived for the camera, *Roberta Breitmore* links to whole bodies of photographic work, including the *Water Women* series (1976–ongoing) of photo collages and digital images begun more than thirty years ago that continues today. It remains a potent metaphor for Lynn’s many explorations of alternate and parallel selves, of disappearance and appearance, of hybridity and multiplicity, and in the context of her present award also commemorates her present surfacing as one of the most influential and experimental American artists working today.

Lucía Sanromán