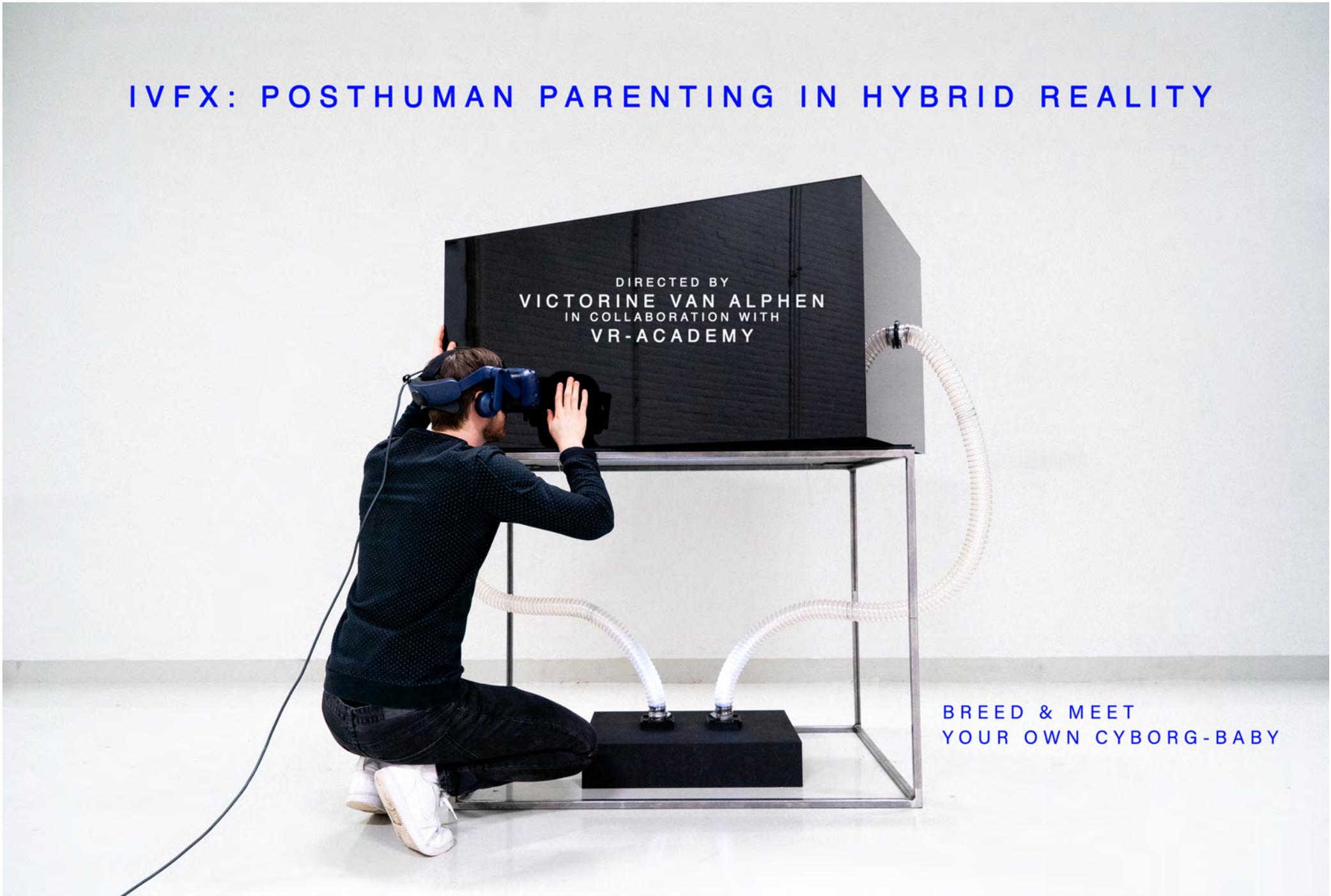


IVFX: POSTHUMAN PARENTING IN HYBRID REALITY

DIRECTED BY
VICTORINE VAN ALPHEN
IN COLLABORATION WITH
VR-ACADEMY

BREED & MEET
YOUR OWN CYBORG-BABY





In the future, what will it mean to breed or reproduce if it is not so much a physical matter but a matter of choice and technology?

Speculating on the future of human reproduction, philosopher and artist Victorine van Alphen developed a hybrid reality in which you can breed & meet your own 'personalized' cyborg baby.

What is IVF-X?

IVF-X is A post-human reproduction procedure to breed and meet your own Cyborg-baby in *hybrid reality. After an intimate interview, you will encounter your interactive cyborg baby, digitally grown for you, based on your choices.

IVF-X: Is it a Clinic? An institution? An immersive reality ritual? An audiovisual installation? A procedural performance? A glimpse into a possible future?

IVF-X is all of the above. It is a human-guided audiovisual installation in physical and virtual reality, that provides a sensory, socially and philosophically

stimulating interactive 'post-human parenting' experience: immersive, reflective, uncanny, sensual.

The procedure takes 15-20 minutes in 4 phases for a couple or single: In the 4 phases the role of the experiencers move from anticipators, to info-donors, to decision-makers to parents finally meeting their cyborg babies. To establish this, the 'procedure' combines analog, sensual, theatrical and institutional rituals with various digital soft- and hardwares, such as *Houdini*, *Unity*, *Motion AI*, *Mocap*, *VIVE (PRO)*.

IVF-X refers to a futuristic version of real IVF-clinics for artificial insemination (I.V.F. = In Vitro Fertilization). IVF-X extends our recent history of IVF into its future

form using VFX (visual effects) to move beyond the human form, and explores our most intimate reproductive desires. & dilemma's. (See [the Backstage Teaser](#), and the experience described per phase on page 4-7)

Relevance & Context: Taboos and Universalities

When IVF-X opened up to audience it was sold out immediately three months prior to the event. Overwhelmingly, The exhibition in VondelCS in Amsterdam's central Park, sparked so much discussion and curiosity that - through the international press - it reached all continents worldwide and was translated in over 12 languages.

*Hybrid reality is a combination of virtual reality and analog physical reality, where the physical and virtual realities together establish an immersive experience.



Parejas diseñan sus propios 'bebés virtuales' en exhibición de arte

La 'Experiencia de Reproducción Posthumana', creada por la artista holandesa Victorine van Alphen, da oportunidad de diseñar bebés virtuales.



Couples Design Their Own 'Virtual Babies' at Dutch Art Exhibit

By Reuters

Sept. 1, 2020, 1:09 p.m. ET



AMSTERDAM — Couples who want children of their own got a brief taste of parenthood by creating their own "digital babies" during a virtual reality art exhibit in the Netherlands.

Visitors selected the baby's character traits, physical appearance and other features by answering questions on a

荷蘭藝術裝置 VR體驗做父母



參與的市民，籍由虛擬裝置短暫體驗成為父母。

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Artist & Philosopher³ Victorine van Alphen collaborated with specialists in procedural visual simulation software, to grow cyborgs from the internal logics of the software, and to simulate new 'unimaginable' forms.

It was then that she realized how taboo, alive, deep and personal the subject of human reproduction really is, how universal and contemporary. "I believe the present moment proofs a fertile ground for discussing 1) human reproduction, as well as 2) intimacy with and aliveness of digital, post- and non-human forms since Technological, medical and cultural trends points towards something beyond our biological limitations." IVF-X deepened these topics by making them tangible, but that wasn't after extensive research and experiment from social experiments on the intimate dilemma's involved to the procedural simulation used to grow the cyborgs. The underlying questions, new questions raised and methods developed will be discussed in the Research Publication for the Master of Film, 2021. [Preview questions, method, outcomes]

Where did this project grow out of?

This futuristic and disputed project grew out of a experimental trans-disciplinary Research in which she explores the edged of technology.

Dreaming like an Alien: how to be alien enough to a medium to (mis)use the absurdity of the technology beyond the thinkable, yet immersed/acquainted enough to dream in it?

This method is highly embedded in Victorine's Practice: establishing 'intermediality' - tensions between various media through 1) experimentally pushing the logics of the technologies she uses 2) Carefully choreographing the audience through these trans-medial timebased experiences. (See *Short about Victorine van Alphen p.8*)

Victorine van Alphen developed this research and method experimentally at the Master of Film: Artistic Research In and through Cinema at the Netherlands Filmacademy for her investigation into 21st century Motherhood: **(Why/How) do future (wo)men need/want/create babies?**

She established a collaboration with the VR academy and the Immersive media & Visual effects department for an innovative creation of her Cyborgs. She will continue her research with the Philosophy of Mind department at the Radboud University Nijmegen amongst other fruitful collaborations, and uses various technologies and disciplines to reflect on, pervert and (re-)discover our most intimate human experiences.

The Experience in four Phases

Phase 1: *The Institution*



[image left] Phase 1: you enter the institution* and are guided to the motivation room with two screens [image right] playing 1) *Motherhood/Analog* (a visceral yet poetic YouTube-footage based film on the vulnerability and physicality of biological parenthood and 2) *Composition for Digital Womb*: showing the growing and evolving of two interweaving abstract pixel simulations** that seems on the verge of natural & organic < > artificial & Digital. *This still is from an IVF-X exhibition at VondelCS, 26-30 August 2020, Amsterdam. **Using universal growth formulas.

1) The institution: You as single person or any *couple are welcomed in the waiting room of the IVF-X digital fertility clinic. There you will be visually stimulated for the motivational procedure and intimately inter-viewed by two IVF-X guides who help you decide who will be the main info-donor for the cyborg and why. *any sort of combination is possible, also a threesome came over. Many LGBTQ+ visitors tested and helped develop IVF-X to be post-traditional. The Transketeers are currently making docu-TV for AVROTROS about Victorine and IVFX.



2) The interface & InfoDonorroom: The info-donor enters its preferences into a retro-futuristic interface on iPad accompanied by a projection of a digital womb (pixel and mathematics based growth and evolution simulation). The interface is inspired by Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* and interactively questions your preference in 'classic' western dichotomies such as male - female, natural - cultural, animal - posthuman, sensual - rational (mind - body), fact - fiction. The interface works beyond the dichotomies by enabling to sliding them into each other.



Phase 2: The Interface & InfoDonorRoom





3: The incubator: After this intimate intake - you will encounter your cyborg baby in a hybrid incubator (photo left), uniquely processed and digitally grown for you, based on your choices. The incubator is a rectangular smoked glass* physical object in which the cyborg can be seen wearing virtual reality goggles. (*Catholic Pope meets an RGB-future) The same albeit digital incubator is seen in VR to establish hybrid reality. [photo right: digital incubator after 'glitches']

Phase 3: The Hybrid Incubator



Phase 4: The Encounter
 “it seems alive, and it is as cute as it is uncanny, I want to touch it, take it home, change my answers. My choices created this! it so weird, and its mine, somehow”

See 'Backstage Teaser'

<https://vimeo.com/527963277/fd19d4a32d>



4: The encounter: Meeting the cyborg triggers various feelings and reactions in people, all surprised as they realize their post-human baby is not as human as they expected. The cyborg varies but may best be described as something ‘unfamiliarily familiar’. In that

sense: the encounter seems to be experienced as an alien encounter. Importantly the cyborgs behave, look and feel alive and human enough in its own uncanny-cute way to spark feelings of attachment, empathy, fear, and even parental love, pride and shame when

parents meet and interact with their post-human offspring. Most have no words for this intriguing encounter and are somewhat flabbergasted:

See Backstage Teaser

<https://vimeo.com/527963277/fd19d4a32d>

"To me, technologies are like lines of logics, that you can draw into the future."
 As a futurological artist and philosopher, Victorine van Alphen looks at designs, trends, culture, hardware, software, social expectations, language etc for the internal logics. "I look at the world with the understanding that nothing is 'normal', everything has its own particular and often constructed or internalized way of 'dancing'; of moving from A to B. On every level - from the intimate to the technological - I play with those 'logics'."



**Short about
Victorine van Alphen**

I [human, 1988] am a Trans-Disciplinary Researcher, Audio-Visual Artist, Curator, Futurologist and Philosopher from Amsterdam, part of the Dutch National ThinkTank. I was educated as audio-visual artist at the Rietveld University of Applied sciences in Fine arts and design, and Cooper Union for the advancement of Science and Art 2011-2015, as artistic researcher at the Research Master of Film at The Netherlands Filmacademy (currently graduating!) and as Philosopher and Interdisciplinary Scientist at the University of Amsterdam (2008-2012).

What drives her?

I play with our present from a future perspective. Intrigued by the human tension between sensual experience and rationality – between senses and systems – I create and discuss meaning through the experimental use of media and methods. I collaborate and create on the verge of performance and installation: I create realities that reflect and transform the known in tangible perspectives on the possible.



Image from *De achtste Dag/The Eight Day*, a theater piece for a *divided audience: the audience is divided into utopians and dystopians throughout the performance in which several actors, screens, scenes, interaction and speculation with the audience leads to this vulnerable endscene in collaboration with poet/physical actor Sieger Baljon. Frascati Theater, 2016