

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 biological matter but an offspring 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 an awarded post-human reproduction clinic to breed and meet your own Cyborg-baby in *hybrid reality. After an intimate interview, you will encounter your interactive cyborg baby: a creature existing on the verge of humanity & technology, 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 experience: immersive, reflective, uncanny, sensual.

The procedure takes 25 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 extrapolates our history of IVF into its future using VFX (visual effects) to create beyond the human form. IVF-X explores our most intimate reproductive desires & dilemma's.

Please see [the Backstage Teaser](#) (4 minutes) and read about the **experience described per phase on p. 4-7** in this pdf.

Relevance & Context: Taboos and Universalities

When IVF-X opened up to audience it was sold out immediately three months prior to the event. 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 translated in over 12 languages. After that we updated the prototype for international purposes mutating, adapting and enhancing it socially, aesthetically and technologically in every country we visited, from Mix Brasil (22) to Taiwan (KFF, 22)



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.



SUBSCRIBE | LOG IN

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。

感謝您瀏覽東網。請按入詳細閱讀本網站所載之使用條款及細則和私隱政策聲明，並須確定您同意接受有關條款及聲明的約束才可繼續瀏覽。

✓ 同意及關閉

Artist & Philosopher 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. Technological, medical and cultural trends points towards something beyond our biological limitations, how would we relate to these new forms of being?"

IVF-X made these questions more tangible, after extensive experiment: from social experiments on intimate dilemma's involved to procedural simulations to experimentally grow cyborgs. The underlying and discovered questions and developed methods will be discussed in the Research Publication for the Master of Film, 2021. [Preview questions, methods, outcomes]

Where did this project grow out of?

This futuristic and disputed project grew out of trans-disciplinary Research in which she explores the logic and absurdity 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 artistic practice using 'intermediality' or 'choreographing tensions between various media' through

- 1) Carefully guiding audiences through timebased experiences in distinctly different 'mediated' contexts.
- 2) Experimentally pushing the 'logics' of the technologies she uses so the medium itself shows its

'character'. **Victorine is fascinated by non-human imagination, (ab)using technology to arrive at unknown and unpredictable (visual) territories.**

Victorine van Alphen developed this research and method experimentally at the *Master of Film: Artistic Research In and through Cinema at the Netherlands Film Academy* during her exploration of 21st century Motherhood: **(Why/How) do future (wo)men create babies?** For which she established a collaboration with the VR Academy and the Immersive media & Visual effects department in Amsterdam. Here she found a way to 'grow' or 'evolve' cyborgs using visual based rendering & procedural simulation. She aims to continue her research, navigating trans-disciplinary collaborations and various social contexts to (re-)discover our most intimate human experiences.

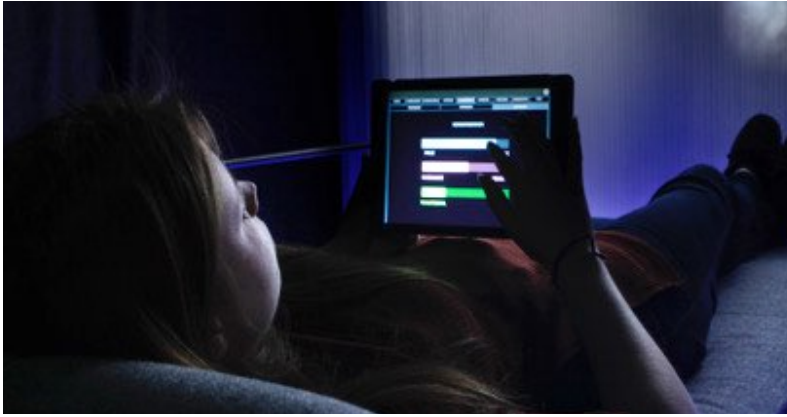
The Experience in four Phases

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 Reproduction*. (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 paradoxical verge of natural & artificial. *This still is from an IVF-X exhibition at VondelCS, 26–30 August 2020, Amsterdam. **Using universal growth algorithms

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. LGBTQ+ couples welcome! The Transketeers (3 transgender filmmakers) were the first to test IVF-X and are currently making a docu-TV for AVROTROS about Victorine and IVFX.



2) The interface & InfoDonorroom: The interface is inspired by Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto and interactively questions your preference in dominant western dichotomies such as male - female, natural - cultural, animal - posthuman, sensual - rational (mind - body), fact - fiction. Will it move your cyborg beyond the dichotomies by allowing you to mix and bend in the cyborg bender? The info-donor enters its preferences into a retro-futuristic interface on iPad accompanied by a projection of a 'digital womb': natural growth based algorithms translated to a pixellated simulation that feels both natural & artificial in its constant evolving & contracting.



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 physical object of smoked glass* in which the cyborg can be seen by wearing VR goggles. The same - albeit digital incubator - is seen in VR to establish hybrid reality. [photo right: digital incubator after 'glitches'/visual evolution]

*'Catholic Pope-design' meets an 'RGB-future' ;)

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"



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' or 'posthuman'. In that sense: the encounter seems to be experienced as an alien encounter. Importantly the

cyborgs behave, look & feel alive and human enough in their own uncanny yet 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. Many feel baffled and touched, looking for words to describe their ambiguous feelings.

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 media, designs, trends, culture, hardware, software, social expectations 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' so they come to the fore and allow new imaginations."



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

About Victorine van Alphen

Human: born 1988. Trans-Disciplinary Researcher, Awarded international Transmedia Artist, Curator, Futurologist & Philosopher from Amsterdam. ([C.V.](#))

Education:

- Master Artistic Research in and through Film at the Master of Film, Netherlands Film Academy (2018-2021)
- Audio-Visual Art at the Rietveld University of Applied sciences in Fine Arts & Design, Amsterdam (2011-2015)
- Scholarship for Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science & Art, New York City, 2014
- Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Science at the University of Amsterdam (2008-12) BSc Beta Gamma + BSc Philosophy.

What marks her work? What drives her?

Perhaps Victorine's defining method and skill as director, is how she navigates experiments into the unknown while interweaving sensual intuition & analytical/collaborative reflection.

"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. Collaborating on the verge of performance and installation: creating realities that reflect and transform the known in tangible perspectives on the possible."

victorinevanalphen.nl