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“Reconstructing internet media”. An Interview with Evelin Stermitz from ArtFem.TV (Austria)

Interviewee: **Evelin Stermitz**

Interviewer: Red Chidgey

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ArtFem.TV <http://artfem.tv>

Personal Website <http://www.evelinstermitz.net>

World of Female Avatars <http://world-of-female-avatars.net>

Can you introduce yourself?

My name is Evelin Stermitz, I studied art at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana and by this I got in touch with media and new media art. I am engaged in this media field partly influenced also by my previous theoretical studies of media communication. The general background is, that I have always been interested in art and feminism and therefore went into this field: art, feminism, media, media art, new media art, by connecting these fields. This was partly influenced by women artists, friends of mine, working in the art field, and current women artists that I met. So it just came to me somehow as a field of interest. When I began with my art studies, which I did rather late, I thought, the only thing that I would like to articulate and what I can dedicate to art is feminism or women's issues. So this became my field, also connected to personal experiences.

The most important person who influenced me in my earlier works has been Eva Ursprung from Graz. She is a contemporary artist and we collaborated together in various projects also before my art studies. We had some discussions and they have been always very supportingly and encouraging for me and my work in this field. She did and does a lot in this field around women artists in general and women in media art. The second thing is that she introduced me to Faces mailing list, which is a very interesting exchange for women artists. I found my international collaborations and did my projects. This ArtFem.TV project developed also because I intend to push more women in the arts and to raise the voices of women artists. Also from my own background, because it was difficult for me to find exhibition places for my work at the beginning — to articulate my works in this male dominated art system. After a while work is overflowing me and I am also exhibiting my works with feminist content in mixed-gender exhibitions, partly to infiltrate also other group exhibitions with feminist issues and to bring the works out from these sometimes incestuous exclusive feminist circles.

Were you ever involved in Eva's magazine projects?

No, her feminist journal EVA & CO was earlier. She stopped later working on this project. After this she founded the collective group W.A.S. (Women's Art Support) in 1993. All of this is of course influencing her artistic practice.

Do you make videos yourself?

Yes. I began working on videos since more than ten years ago, and working in photography even longer. First of all I worked in photography, but then I thought, photography is maybe too quiet, it is not vivid, it is not living... video is more lively. But I am interested in both media and also in net art. Since I am most of the times not living in a very huge city like New York, I am really doing a lot of work over the Internet. I am connected to many people and places through the Internet. That is very interesting for me, also in this cyberfeminist context. But maybe also in New York, most work would be maybe done over the net, since it is so difficult to meet up with people, because of the distances and hyper busyness of everyone.

What is net art?

With net art you reach a lot of spectators in a global scale. Net art is democratic, out from this gallery scene. It is not targeted by an art market. It is collaborative, interactive for the recipients, involving them. It can involve a critical approach, be subversive toward the media Internet, involving digital language and code within the cyberspace. It has many points of views. To use the screen, to be seen on the screen. The Internet for art. It is one option to act as an artist within this media Internet. There are many women artists working on net art projects, if you go to my website you can find some collaborative works. It is out of the art market, so that is why it is not so commonly known. But it can reach people who are normally not confronted with art. The negative aspect of net art is, that some projects can vanish, disappear from the server or url, since data can get lost, or systems break down, or just the url does not exist anymore, or new systems do not correspond to older ones, however.

How does this art go public? How do people find it?

There are some net art platforms on the Internet. Some are already archiving this genre of art form. One is of course *Rhizome.org* in New York, maybe the earliest and important one, also connected to the New Museum, but still not targeting net art on the art market. Another one is *net-art.org*, but there are many more. For women artists *Assemblage - The Women's New Media Gallery*, compiled and curated by Carolyn Guertin is a profound archive. So you can find net art projects also already archived and listed. In general, I think the artists who are working in the field find themselves and their audience. They look up other artists to collaborate. I am also doing interviews with women artists working in this field. And now recently during the last two decades, of course there are exhibitions solely oriented on net art. Exhibitions in galleries and institutions of course, but not really targeting it, just exposing net art. Because it is really not saleable in its principal form; how can you market net art? You can make some prints out of it maybe. Also most important new media festivals, such as the FILE – Electronic Language International Festival, are featuring net art and the Istanbul Contemporary Art Museum curates a Web Biennial. But net art is really spread all over the world and accessible for everyone. This is why I meant this democratic option of it. For me it is also interesting to work on these projects, because if you publish the work then online and it is accessible for so many people in a global scale, it is a powerful way of articulating art.

How did you come into feminism?

It began with my media studies where I was introduced to feminist film analysis and women's issues in media, also psychological theories. But then later I did not want to become a media theoretician, I wanted to do concrete works in this field, influenced by theory. I don't know, it just happened. It was influenced by my own experiences at the art academy, at the art market, meeting male artists, meeting male persons in general and discussing topics with them. Partly they didn't understand it, or had different perspectives. It is really a field which is not open to everyone from the opposite sex. I thought it was important to articulate it, to create an ongoing discourse, and also to open it to the opposite sex. I have the opinion that it really does not help so much to articulate these female issues only to women or the same gender. Also because male people should change their thinking, or opinion, or behaviour somehow. Especially within these kind of fields and processes which are constructing gender and socialization processes. In general, my opinion is, that everyone of us is gendered and an exclusive discourse is splitting up much more, rather than constructing new visions of gender aspects, which all in all of course does not exclude the feminist emphasis of issues on the female gendered sex.

Do you call yourself a feminist?

I must say that I call myself a third wave feminist and for myself it is important to name this. Because the feminist movement is a long movement and if no one is talking about it anymore it is losing its power and still a lot of things are not reached yet. So it is going backwards. Well, I would say maybe third wave feminist or cyberfeminist. I am not one of the persons who are engaged in feminist issues, but then don't name it, for whatever reasons.

What is third wave feminism?

By this I mean that the first wave was of course in the 1920s/30s with gaining the right to vote and other social benefits for women, but beginning much earlier on an informal level, because there were very rare influential women who had something to say on a public level. Well, not to forget the Seneca Falls Convention, a first women's rights convention already in 1848, to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women in the U.S. Then the second wave came up around the 1960s/70s together with many other movements, like political, gay and lesbian movement, anti-war movement. So it was a very vivid time for all of this. But everything was very influenced by feminism because it was really a fight and struggle to get a voice in the binary society by a movement where private problems became political issues as "The Private is Political". Then in the 1980s, 90s and later, it came a little bit to a backlash because the new generation appreciated the benefits of the movement, but did not want to be associated with feminism. There was also the rise of the electronic media, the new global world order, transversal politics and post-structuralism. So third wave feminism was influenced by this cyberfeminist movement, partly to collaborate globally, finding new alliances and to subvert, reconstruct, relocate, remap, the male media machine Internet - a machine of representation of male visions and male power. It was not a big counter movement, but formed by ironic breaks and citations, later theoretical analysis have been done and media activism, hacktivism occurred. This occurred not so much before. Feminist movement before was more country and continent located. Later in the 1990s it became globally. That is why I call it third wave feminism in context of cyberfeminism.

Is "third wave" used much in the Austrian context?

In Austria I would think not. I think in Austria feminism maybe only exists in very intellectual circles and not in public discussion in a positive way so much. Maybe in politics, but more on

the level of creating laws or equalizing gender aspects. In Austria there is this movement of gender mainstreaming, but in my opinion, I think it is more important not to create gender mainstreaming but instead thinking of a gender dissolving, to delete this gender aspect at all. I think that in Austria feminism is very idealised discussed, at Universities and in politics, but the general society is very anti-feminist oriented, especially the older male generation, and this is still passed on to the younger male gendered generation. In general, I think the younger generation - women until 30 - do not understand feminism so much, because they are not so often confronted with it and see it rather as a negative label. Their life is fun, easy and cosy somehow, within their adolescent problems of still young women; they are studying or working; but then later when they have to fight for something of their right they recognize the reasons for and the background of their fight. They have not been aware of this before maybe. I am also not sure, if second wave feminism had much impact on general society in Austria at all. Austria is very traditional, there is not much moving in Austria. In Austria, in traditional relationships, the woman is part of the man and subordinated. I mean, it is maybe very critical what I am saying, but it is my opinion. Austria is a very traditional country, very looking backwards, security and stability oriented, not looking forward, inside oriented, angst-ridden, too much nagging and complaining. Particularly for the art scene, it is not very collaborative and sometimes perfidious, somehow the art system stuck in the bourgeois fin-de-siècle. Austria has a lot of history and this history has to be kept. So in my opinion, there is not much space and will to evolve new things and concepts. Most intellectuals emigrated during World War II or have been murdered in concentration camps. Well, I know, I am too critical, but these are my opinions, thoughts and experiences. (...guess I will never get a funding from Austria in the future).

What is cyberfeminism?

Cyberfeminism is a movement to reconstruct, deconstruct the internet media in an active way, not in a passive user way, also by ironic citations, or quotations, breaks, to remap the Internet with a feminist bent. Maybe it is not a big counter movement in a massive way, but it is something. Because the Internet is like all media, a male media and structured by male power, opinions and visions. There have been early cyberfeminists in Australia - VNS Matrix, and other pioneers. They really created very explosive and influential projects. Very shocking maybe to male persons, but also playing with their visions. And with this movement of the Australian cyberfeminists a lot of other projects came up. They influenced a lot of other feminist thinkers through using the internet in this way. This was in 90s and later. A lot of theoretical work has been done and not to forget the Cyberfeminist International meetings at Documenta X in Kassel, Germany, 1997.

Does cyberfeminism just happen online?

It happens online but they are thinking outside. Well, I mean, it always informs over the media when using a media. It is relocating and remapping thoughts over the Internet. I think it is very powerful because it is reaching everyone. Also within the *Old Boys Network* collective, the intellectual community is very powerful. They have very interesting theoretical texts on their website and they are infiltrating also the old male art system with this collective in a way. There was one great net art exhibition in Germany where Cornelia Sollfrank [[http://www.vdb.org/smackn.acgi\\$artistdetail?SOLLFRANKC](http://www.vdb.org/smackn.acgi$artistdetail?SOLLFRANKC)] submitted a project entitled *Female Extension* with the *net.art generator* [<http://net.art-generator.com/>] where she faked women artists with net art projects (Galerie der Gegenwart der Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1997). The jury was very surprised about the fact that so many women submitted their projects. But she faked it. She invited coders to set up four or five software systems – these serving like coders or

programmers for the net art works. You can type in a name or some content and they create a net art project for you. It was very clever and sophisticated. It showed that the art system is still male. If you go to group exhibitions in art institutions in Austria or maybe also more far in Europe, in general from ten artists, two or three are women and the rest are male. I did not make a survey on this, but I guess, I am not so much wrong.

Did Austria have a big second wave feminist art scene?

Second wave, yes there was VALIE EXPORT, very important. But she collaborated also with men and created very interesting happenings and performances, like with Peter Weibel. They raised a form of public performances and got public attention for this, but of course it was a big media shock. She got very negative attention for these public happenings where she was also one time on court for this. Society in Austria in the 70s was like in the 50s, you know. I mean they have not been very much forward like in the United States, somehow they stuck in the after war period. There have been a few other women artists in this field, working mainly in photography, but during the years they disappeared from the art scene and exhibitions.

How can feminist art influence? Or how is feminist art a form of activism?

I think also what a friend of mine, Deb King from Detroit, says, that art is always informing. It is mirroring the society on the level of a critical discourse and it is informing people's opinions. Maybe if it is only shown in these gallery circles it is not so much influential, because the gallery visitors are already educated about ongoing discourses maybe. But if it is going outside and happening more public, like on festivals including panels and workshops as here in Ljubljana or other places, it is reaching much more people in an inclusive way. But feminism can also be very much extreme. For example the *Festival International du Film Lesbien et Féministe de Paris* does not even allow male people from the press to attend the festival, so it is very excluding and binary, but maybe this is their tradition and statement.

Do you think that's quite second wave?

I think so, yes. Because second wave was very much divided, but of course related to this big struggle to find a position for women in the society as the opposite sex. And now it is becoming much more inclusive. Also in some current feminist exhibitions you can find male artists with very critical works. Like in the "Gender Check" exhibition at the MUMOK in Vienna, there have been also male artists, but coming from this socialist background, a political background with different social structures. Also the exhibition "Stop Violence Against Women" at the C2C Gallery in Prague was mixed gendered.

Do you have any involvement in queer? Queer theory or queer activism?

I think it all comes together with feminism and I think feminism is not only there for women. There are also a lot of other gendered people who are suppressed or marginalized or are suffering from social exclusion or are under social pressure. So of course, all this comes together and is important. I think our society should become very vivid and open to all kind of gender theories or sexes or whatever. Queer is an option of this. But I am not a queer theoretician or queer activist. In a sense that art and our society should be open to everyone, everyone should be involved and no one left out. Queer is for me a fluid option of a more gentle society structure without binary power structures.

Is queer a label you would use in the context of your work?

Yes, I would use it in the sense of being inclusive. I mean, not to define feminism or label it only for women. Because queer theory is much more open to all kinds of opinions towards suppression by sexes. Socially constructed sexes.

Do you read or consume any feminist media?

Yes, but mainly online media. I think that online media about feminism is very strong in the United States, because feminism is much more institutionalised in the U.S., also from the media point of view and in cultural institutions such as museums. So they have very interesting articles. In Austria there is this newspaper online, it is called *Der Standard* and they also have the female version to it: *Die Standard*. I am reading this sometimes, but I am very embarrassed by this because they do not really do deep research work. They also use stereotypes of feminism and femininity and women, so it is leading sometimes in the other direction. It is more like name dropping of famous women also, as to find important women in a field and drop their name with their stories, and this in all fields: politically and culturally. And the articles are very short so it is not going very much in deep...but it is something. (...guess, again I will get no future funding from Austria for this.)

Are the articles short because they're online?

No. They could also put longer articles online. I mean, it gives an overview, it is not so bad. But it is not going into deepness. Well, but most online media do not go so deep. If you do not know what and where to search and read, you are lost.

What about blogs?

No. Unfortunately I do not have time to read blogs. Because I find blogs are not very well researched. But they are sometimes interesting and I read blogs by friends. But in general I do not have time for this and also I do not think they are professional writings. I think blogs are very important as a whole new media movement and liberating the voice of individuals; but I just do not have time to read these. A friend of mine from Portugal, Carla Cruz, has a very interesting blog. It is called *All My Independent Women* [<http://allmyindependentwomen.blogspot.com>]. She is collecting information from all over the world, focused on art, feminism and women artists. In general, I prefer to read newspapers, online or on paper, really like information that I can quote later. Because it is hard to quote a blog, you know. Another one to mention is the *Digital Research Blog* [<http://digitalresearchers.blogspot.com/>]. Also Maria Perez Ptqk has a very interesting blogzine [<http://ptqkblogzine.blogia.com/>]. Well, it all depends on the writer. But sometimes for me blogs are just information dropping, as collecting information from the net which is interesting for the creator of the blog and then just dropping it online again. Then the info is often on the Internet, but of course that is the sense of the Internet, to be as much published as possible, but...

Tell me about ArtFem.TV...

It began in 2008. It was my former professor Srečo Dragan, he is a very feminist thinker and in general I have been also very much influenced and informed by men about feminism, who gave me the contact to work with a company to create an online television. And then I thought, what can I make out of it? So I thought, I would like to present art and feminism on a feminist art television channel. But later, after half a year, I left his company because we could not work together; they did not understand art and non-profitable work. Although it was for free, and I could use their server and online platform for free, but I did not want this

commercialised system anymore. So I stopped this collaboration and I created with my programmers my own ArtFem.TV platform, not in collaboration with this company anymore. So it began. It is very easy actually. Also because I thought about my own video works, where can I publish them? I do not want to put them on YouTube and also not on my website. It does not make so much sense. So I thought it would be interesting to create an online platform for women artists and their artworks. So this happened, and the first three or four months were very interesting, because I received a lot of performance video works from other artists, later also video art works. I sent out some email calls to mailing lists, if some women artists would like to contribute with their video works to this platform and so I got good feedback and very interesting works and collaborations, so it all raised up. At the very first beginning most supportive have been women artists from the U.S., they were very much interested and intrigued by this project. I just wanted to create an online platform for this kind of women's works, because I think, if you present the video works always on your own website people cannot find them so easily, if they do not know the artist's name. And if someone is interested in a special artist or video, the recipient can look it up further on the net and find the website of the artist.

Why didn't you want to use YouTube?

Because it is too popular. There are so many non-professional things on it. I wanted them on an artistic platform. YouTube is very popular and there is too much information and many features, I intended to have a pure video site. Maybe YouTube is of valuable information for some decades later to see how society worked at this time as a source for a media sociology study. Also some artists are using YouTube to create artworks out of it in conceptual means. There is one interesting video art project by Natalie Bookchin entitled *Mass Ornament* (2009). She collected video works of young women dancing, all around 16/17 years old. Everyone is dancing the same dance alone at home. It is a special field of interest to collect these videos and put them all together in a theory of the *Tiller Girls* and *The Mass Ornament* by Kracauer.

Is ArtFem.TV voluntary or are you paid?

It is voluntary. I do not have any budget but just my time as input and ArtFem.TV as output. I am doing this on my own. The only thing I got for free is the server, so I do not have any costs for this space. It is hosted on an artistic server in Graz - *mur.at*, so artists can use it for projects hosted there. Also the web design was a friendship work by my brother in law Torbjoern Karlevid and his friend Vincent Van Uffelen. ArtFem.TV is voluntary but I think that women artists can benefit of it. People are looking it up. I got very good responses from theoreticians that they are using it in their classes to show examples. Also curators are looking it up for exhibition selections.

Tell me more about the name 'ArtFem.TV'

This is Art and Feminism and TV together. It is an artistic online television. ITV is the new term for internet television. It is a platform and an archive. It comes together because I developed it like this also theoretically and it will be an archive later, or already now. Also in Vienna they have this video archive and they intended to put it online; they did not do it complete until now, so I do not know if they have it on the internet server also. I think it makes no sense. For me it was also this idea that the internet really liberated video art. Because before you had to travel to the Centre Pompidou to look up video works by famous artists from the archive, since video art is not so good to perceive out from books, like

photography for example. And now it is available everywhere and for everyone. This is really wonderful I think.

I was wondering if 'TV' was a play, like TV being quite popular...

No it is not a play. It has this idea of TV also, because you can pick up the works from the different channels at the site. You have video art, performance, documentary, short film...so you can select what you would like to see, like an artistic online television screen, a TV screen for the art of and by women.

Do women donate their works to you?

Yes. First, in 2008, not so many works have been online on the net in general. So I got DVDs sent, then I converted them and put the videos online, it was a rough job. And lately, a lot of works are already on the internet, so I could download them and transfer them directly to ArtFem.TV, and it is very easy somehow now. But of course, I am asking the artists. Either I am contacting them, or they are contacting me.

Do the works come with more information about the artist?

No. Just the title of the work and the name are online. Because it should be very pure. I do not like this overload of information on websites. I also do not have advertisements on this website, of course. Just the videos and the title of the work and the name of the artist.

Do you have links to the artists' websites?

No. This is not possible – it is not really space for this, too much work, also with the programming. But it is easy to find it out. You can just google for the name of the artist and find the website, mostly. Now how it is, I think it works out good, but who knows for the future.

How many hours a day or week do you spend on the project?

The first year was very intense. I uploaded in one year 200 videos. I did it all in my free time and spare time that I could use. And lately I am a little bit slow. I spend maybe 2-3 hours a week, or maybe 4 hours a week on it. But it depends. Sometimes it is more intense, maybe 2 days a week for it.

Have your experiences or ideas with the website changed over the last year?

Yes it changed. First it was more an experimental project, the first half year or first year as an idea of this online video media gallery, also as a feminist art platform. And now...also for me I learned a lot. I saw a lot of works by women artists that maybe I would not see before or would not have dealt with. So for me now it changed as a project. Now for me it can live on its own, because it has already developed. So the first year was the developing phase and now it can stand on its own and spread around and go its way. Also last year, in 2009, it has been exhibited a lot. This was very nice. It was at the Videomedeja Video Festival at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Serbia, and in other exhibitions and venues, which is documented on the website. So this is very nice, that I could also bring this project to exhibition spaces, out from the cyberspace to a real space. And also together with this project,

all the artists, and also these topics, in a way to influence and infiltrate these other places with it.

Do you have any selection criteria?

The criteria is that it should be articulated women's topics or women's issues, gendered issues. Either in a poetic way or critical way or radical way; to issue these fields of women's articulations. I have the opinion that a lot of women are not articulating themselves, or their issues. Because they are subordinated under these male structures and they think only these male structures are working and important. These male structures are the field of our discourse and the field of our law. I mean the discourse of speech and law and society. Of course we are still living in a male world. I hope you understand what I mean.

Is it just professional artists you have on ArtFem.TV?

Well, I would say that most of these artists are professional artists. But I found one very interesting statement from a woman who is a singer in her spare-time, but her statement was so very strong, so that I put it on the website too. On the website there are very young artists, I would say around 30 but also many artists from the older generation, like Martha Rosler. She gave me the permissions to use her video works on the website, and also so did Nina Sobell and many other. These are all artists from the generation of the 70s. But there are many generations on the website and I am very glad that the older generation from the second wave feminism is supporting this idea of ArtFem.TV too and still influencing an ongoing discourse.

Do you see any differences in the works of women from different generations?

Yes. I would say, first of all, technical of course. First video works are black and white and the editing was not always possible. These are experimental videos. Nowadays videos are very colourful, are perfectly software edited, influenced by popular culture. The second aspect is a variation from the aspect of content. But from the content aspect, it varies not so much I would say. Maybe in the 1970s they articulated the issues stronger, and there was also this strong bodily discourse. But it is not really true, there are contemporary video works online which are very radical and strong, but in contrast to this also very sublime works. I would not say so much variations from the content itself, but maybe just from the structure. I mean the contents varies forced by societal changes influencing the artist from outside, but not from the artists articulation inside itself alone, and maybe the issues became broader. This happens, because the video works are influenced by its time of production and since feminist issues are societal issues, society changes over the time, and with this the works of the artists. But here I must say, that feminist issues as societal issues did not change so much from its importance, and maybe also the video works therefore did not alter so much, but it came to a shift. Of course a pop generation is articulating gender issues different, also within this Riot Grrl's movement, and femininity and sexuality is articulated different, found new negotiations. And definitely, if you compare Pipilotti Rist's works with early works from women artists from the 1970s, you can see a difference in all. But all in all each artist has the own style of creation and issues, so the video works are different always from content and technical (post)production aspects. For a more in-deep discussion, this question has to be dealt separately.

Some discussions of third wave says it embraces irony, contradiction, more difficult to pin down subject positions...

No this is not true. Because also Nina Sobell, especially in her “Chicken” videos, articulated ironic gendered subject positions in early video art. Or if you think of Martha Rosler in the kitchen, it seems to be harsh, but it is dealing with the irony of language speaking the subject. It was already there, you know. Irony and contradiction combined with a woman’s reality and her experiences in a male society was always addressed as a representational position, also in media and their critique. Of course the first discourse was TO establish A SUBJECT. Maybe this discourse is dissolving, since gender binaries are dissolving and the subject positions changed slightly therefore, and it is to find other issues, leading away from a binary discourse, or influenced by other cultural movements. But in general I would say no. But the constitution of a (female) subject in a male society is a process of modern and post-modern society in general. Either it is dealt with harsh seriousness or irony, or in a sublime way, the constitution of a subject is always in the foreground, however you would like to pin it down, gendered or toward a non-gendered society.

It is interesting to say what is written about contemporary feminism, in a theory way, and to bring it down to what feminists are actually doing, and seeing if there is any actual fit.

No I would not say that this is divided. Of course it is a different structure of intellectual and activist work, but it is not divided. If you analyse it from the point of aesthetics, it is maybe different in viewing the issues. But they are still articulating the same...not same of course, but interwoven. But, yeh, the issues from the 70s are still here, not really the same issues, but I mean, ok, maybe they are more liberated. Or articulated in a different way in new decades.

Have there been any generational dialogues that have come from ArtFem.TV?

Yes. First, in a practical way, I sent out the email notification about the exhibitions and other news about ArtFem.TV always with this open email addresses so that the artists can communicate themselves, and with this women connected. And also women found their way to curators or exhibitions of different generations or artworks. I articulated different generations also when I talked about ArtFem.TV in context of video art and performance in one lecture in Ljubljana and in Split, by structuring the feminist movement and the video art movement, and finding connections within both. It then became obvious that all is still here, this tradition of performance in video, but it was in the 1970s more connected to the body, circling around this field of women in a private space, also household space, and definitions of women in this space, like mother, cook, sexual object, consumed object. Martha Rosler did this, Nina Sobell did this. And later it became more connected to this public field. How women articulate themselves in public spaces and also in a media space. Of course the critic on media representation of a women’s commodified object from the 1970s was before, but for example, there is one contemporary artist, Michelle Handelman from New York, she articulated this issue very impressive in this hyper-mediated societal context in her work *I Exist*, as the constitution of a being in a hyper-mediated society. Also maybe works became more sublime, in a way non-direct, but as I said already before, this varies by the artist. In the 70s, maybe it was more direct, but maybe this is our perception nowadays. I think women artists are thinking about their medial positions in society like they did in the 70s, but in a 21st century context and background, and I think this is a proceeding dialogue without any significant break in it.

Do you see your project as activism?

Yes, but I mean, it is maybe rather “soft activism”. But I also got very good feedback from male persons on this project. They really like it. They find it interesting with the works and to see different points of views. They get access to feminist ideas of women and are not excluded. Also one time I did a very critical video work about communication between women and men. Men told me they find this video very interesting because they also do not like this communication style but it is really existing in our binary society. This surprised me somehow.

Do these videos have an element of consciousness raising about them?

Yes. I think so. But I do not want to be a woman priest, you know. I think it should be free to everyone to make up their decisions of what to think about it. I am not fighting for anything. That is also important. I just want to have it there. I mean, it is activism, but like I said, ‘soft activism’. A soft persuasion. You cannot force anyone to think anything, that is my opinion.

Does claiming a feminist title or influence stigmatize you at all in the art world?

Not at all. I think it is the opposite. It is opening up. Because a lot of people who are confronted with my works like critical thinking. I am just doing critical thinking and maybe art working on a political or social discourse.

Do you work on ArtFem.TV from home?

Yes. I work at my place in my studio. But I can work from anywhere, sometimes I worked from abroad, since I just need a laptop and the internet.

What skills have been involved in doing the project?

You need to work with computer interface online tools. My programmer explained me this. But I am also familiar with this online working because I also did my own website and other projects before. I am used to working with this online interfaces. Also I need to work to create the pictures for the website and prepare videos for the internet, to change the format of the videos, which means working with software and hardware. This was at first very time consuming, mainly during the first months, because I got different DVDs with different codecs of the videos, which took a lot of time to prepare them for the upload.

Have you thought about taking interns or volunteers?

Yes, the last half year, I wished that I would have an assistant. Also for this kind of communication and research work, contacting artists, inviting them to the project. These communication things also take a lot of time. Yes, this would be really lovely. To prepare the data, to upload it. It would be a great benefit for the project.

Have you thought about funding?

I applied for a funding last year, in 2009, at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Culture within the Media Art Funds. But I did not get any support. I just got a brief letter, which states, that by a rejection of an application, the applied person should not contact the office and ask for any reason or statement of funding refusal. In Austria, there are not a lot of funding options for the arts. The work on ArtFem.TV is very time consuming and I never get payment for my time on this project. But as long as it helps someone, whether women artists or art and

feminism, then I'm happy. I mean, art is always also a personal decision, initiative and personal time spending. I see it as an art project too. It is really like my own art project.

How would you define your role in the project?

I am foundress of this project, curator and editor.

What are the challenges or obstacles of producing ArtFem.TV?

I think the hardest thing is the time. The rest is really not hard. It's time. And tiring and exhausting work in front of the screen. Sometimes I worked 16 hours a day, 24/7. This was in the first year. The last half year was not so exhausting then anymore, because all the first pressure of establishing the project has been released. Computer work is very tiring and can damage the body seriously, in my opinion. Because excessive computer work can mean that you cannot sleep anymore, inside your brain you feel electrical flashes and you have problems with the body's movement, paranoia to lose all the data, and so on. I have had these problems. Sometimes I thought I need 2 days off from the computer, but it was not possible. Now I am taking the time and do not work so excessive anymore, sometimes. But I'm happy, you know. I'm happy that it worked out fine and that people like it and find it interesting. That is the most important thing.

What would be the best thing that could happen from this project?

Best thing would be that I could get one assistant and make it larger to expand it. And also to have more time to communicate it, to send it to different places of exhibitions and festivals. That is also important for the artists involved on the website, because they should be spread around. Of course people are looking it up on the Internet, but it is also important to show it in these traditional art spaces. I do not have time to send out press releases but I do submit it to festivals and other venues.

Is there a geographical scope to the project?

No. It is worldwide. For now the video works online are mainly from artists from the United States and Europe. I do look up the statistics, and ArtFem.TV get most hits and visitors from the United States. But in general visitors are from all over the world, that is the positive thing of the Internet.

Thank you for the interview!