

Sylvie Parent: "Et le clitoris?", Montréal, 2016

<http://numeriques.tumblr.com/post/149077048660/et-le-clitoris>

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What about the clitoris?

When I saw *Clitonics* for the first time, at the festival 'HTMiles' in 2014, her elegant, strange silhouette strongly appealed to me. Floating in the room at eye level, this smooth white creature seemed to invite being grasped. The undeniably organic nature of her curved, billowing form was contrasted by the artificial perfection of the contours. My first impression was that of a hybrid sexual organ.

This enigmatic object turned out to represent the clitoris, including its external parts as well as its interior. Very little of the clitoris shows on the outside, but it elongates and ramifies inside a woman's body. Creating a continuity between the visible and the hidden, between exterior and interior, the sculpture encourages viewers to envisage it in a holistic way not perceivable through natural vision.

In contrast to a realistic image, *Clitonics* deliberately omits such features as color, texture, nerve and blood vessels. Her synthetic and monochrome appearance is rather similar to a model or a prototype. The sculpture exposes and reveals this little known organ in the context of a feminist, or, to be more precise, a cyberfeminist practice of art.

Since 1999 Christina Goestl, who created this sculpture, has realised several art projects focusing on the clitoris, first on the Internet, as a graphic image, then in animated form, on video and interactively, sometimes using the pseudonym Clitoressa. A pioneer of net art and co-organiser of Public Netbase/t0 (1994–2006) in Vienna, she has designed several works on sexuality and gender, for the Internet.

Cyberfeminism explores digital technologies and networks to highlight an open, multifaceted, inclusive and collaborative expression of feminism. Goestl's work and her project *Clitonics* are fully committed to this aim. The project is not limited to making the clitoris known, but linked to a much more comprehensive reflection of sexuality and gender, utilising digital tools.

As a digital sculpture owing its development to an eventful process of on-screen creation, *Clitonics* becomes manifest in a synthetic form that suggests a certain indefiniteness. Her materialisation via 3D printing is significant in this regard. Already for several decades, enterprises and designers have used this process to create prototypes and alternative versions of one and the same product. In a similar way, *Clitonics* embodies a prototypical shape, resisting a fixed definition and making potential variants imaginable.

This sculpture not only reveals the clitoris (by showing her hidden parts and making her emerge from the computer screen), but also invites viewers to accept diversity and various options (individual anatomic characteristics as well as multiple configurations connected to the concept of transgender). In analogy to the apparent floating of the object in its digital environment, its state of suspension in space accentuates this notion of uncertainty about its origin and its destiny, underlining its variability and its potentials. In the words of the artist herself, "Clitonics flies and floats and is dedicated to gender modified, transsexual and gender modifying persons."

Clitonics: <http://www.cccggg.net/projects/clitonics/>

Christina Goestl: <http://www.cccggg.net/>

Clitoressa: <http://www.clitoressa.net/>

Public Netbase/t0: <http://www.netbase.org/t0/intro>