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## **Women's Fluid Digital Art in the Imperfect Tense**

**Hsu Su-chen**

Digital technology has become a part of younger women's lives with the growing ubiquity of the Internet in Taiwan. Weaving and sewing by hand seem rather strange and unfamiliar to this generation of women. The Internet doesn't have any gender connotations for them, and it gives them a relatively inexpensive means of creating art. Women have been much better represented in contemporary digital art over the last few years than in other forms of art in the past – where men dramatically outnumbered women – and women have also notched up some eye-opening achievements.

The Women's Art Association in Taiwan held an international exhibition featuring women and digital technology in 2003 – "From my Fingers: Living in Technological Age." This exhibition took pains to reaffirm a relatively neglected corner of digital art, which is the sense of feeling referred to by "fingers." The exhibition further also built on the unique social experience of individual female artists. A total of 29 women artists from Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, France (a French artist living in Taiwan), and the US (an artist of Asian descent) took part in the exhibition. All the works were connected in some way with technology; they also emphasized that women artists are concerned about contemporary social problems, are interested in people's thinking in the age of technology, and see a close relationship between the body and machinery.

The artists' works were deeply infused with technology-oriented themes, such as the organic person, online illusionary journeys, the digital body, monitor fantasies, and virtual technology and evolution. Their methods are generally characterized by the use of interdisciplinary art forms, many computer manipulations, and program design image space devices. There is an interesting difference between these women artists' works and those of men: They tend to focus more on babies, the living environment, body perceptions and attitudes, and ideal worlds. Apart from their artistic development and original social participation, these artists also make strong statements concerning their attitude

towards the body, their concern for vulnerable groups, and their attentiveness to environmental protection.

As for art that connects women, technology, psychology, and society, women artists are finding ways of using the characteristics of digital media – namely its reproducibility, penetration, flow, fragmentation, and immateriality – to digitally codify the body, behavior, and experience as works of art. Furthermore, the dynamic quality of digital art contrasts with such original concepts as rootedness, place, home, community, and slowness, and produces flow, speed, change, and fragmentation. The transformation of the two sets of concepts and changes in background texture allow the development of many new possibilities. In particular, the illusionary world of cyberspace is a dissociated, vague, unfamiliar space where occupation and identity can be fluid. Cyberspace allows people to engage in expansion, extension, and blurring in this "dwelling" margin.

It is no cause for criticism that this state of intersecting fluidity may cause artists to experience new feelings of frustration. However, this state also gives women artists opportunities to enjoy the possibilities that come with the hesitation, loss, and fortuitousness of losing their way. Frameworks that obstruct women's fluid identity and activities and all kinds of transgressive practices make people give up a certain part of their self. They cause the individual to possess a personal map that can be constantly altered and drawn.

The facts strongly prove that women's art spans the gap from modernism to post-modernism, and reaches right up to today's powerful contemporary art. The reason for this is its constant expansion from the multiple richness of the differential subject to towards the requirements of equal rights, and its steady loosening of the legitimacy of sovereign values. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, at least in Taiwan, this project is still ongoing, and still in the imperfect tense.