

7 August 2019

New Suns: A Feminist Literary Festival returns to the Barbican

[New Suns: A Feminist Literary Festival](#)

Saturday 5 October, 10.30am–5.30pm

Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

The Barbican and publisher and curator Sarah Shin present *New Suns: A Feminist Literary Festival* - a book fair and day of talks, workshops and screenings, on **Saturday 5 October**, exploring feminist approaches to technology.

This second edition of New Suns is inspired by science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin's essay 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction', which is built around the idea that the first tools humans developed were not spears and knives for hunting and killing, but containers for food and water, baby carriers and bags - tools devised and used by women to sustain life.

The festival programme questions the notion of technology and its place in a male-dominated history; looks at ideas of storytelling as a form of cultural technology; and delves into current feminist debates on knowledge production, online activism and bodily autonomy.

New Suns brings together writers, artists, academics and poets including **Merve Emre** (author of *The Personality Brokers*, *Paraliterary: The Making of Bad Readers in Postwar America*), Poet **Sandeep Parmar**, **Sophie Lewis**, (author of *Full Surrogacy Now*), **Irenosen Okojie** (author of *Butterfly Fish*, *Nudibranch*), artist and author, **Sophia Al-Maria**, (BCE, Whitechapel Gallery), **Reni Eddo-Lodge**, (author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*), artist and author **Tai Shani**, (2019 Turner prize nominee) and artist **Zadie Xa**.

More than thirty publishers will host stalls and book signings in the free-to-access Level G spaces at the Barbican, in the spirit of the 1980s International Feminist Bookfairs. Last year's bookfair included publishers **Hachette**, **Penguin Random House**, **Fitzcarraldo Editions**, **Silver Press**, **And Other Stories**, the Independent Alliance including **Faber** and **Scribe**.

New Suns also includes the Barbican Cinema's season *Cyberfeminism on Film: Gender, Sexuality, Technology* curated by author So Mayer. This film programme, which takes places from 5-8 October takes author Donna Haraway's *The Cyborg Manifesto* as a starting point to explore still radical ways of thinking about gender, sexuality and technology. Featuring animation, experimental film and video, documentary and science-fiction, these films offer a variety of genres and creative ideas for thinking about modern cyborgs and the technological world we live in.

The Bag of Stars: Storytelling and Technology

A panel discussion exploring storytelling as a cultural tool

5 Oct 2019, 12pm, Frobisher Auditorium 2

Tickets £12

Authors **Sophia Al-Maria** and **Irenosen Okojie**, Turner Prize-nominee **Tai Shani** and chair **Victoria Sin** discuss how Ursula Le Guin's notion of the story as a device for telling strangely realistic fictions informs their own approaches to challenging dominant myths of linear progress and apocalypse. Through their writing they explore post-patriarchal futures, time travel and cyborgian myth, and look at monstrosity and political selfhood

with a cast of characters including medieval mystics Hildegard of Bingen and Theresa de Avila, shape-shifting goddesses and Britney Spears.

Radical Kinship: Care, identity & reproduction

A panel discussion exploring current debates in reproductive justice and bodily autonomy

5 Oct 2019, 4pm, Frobisher Auditorium 2

Tickets £12

Alongside chair **Reni Eddo-Lodge**, **Merve Emre**, associate professor of English at Oxford University, author **Sophie Lewis** and poet **Nat Raha** explore the impact of technology on contemporary understandings of 'belonging' and identity. They will navigate the many global struggles for bodily autonomy including reproductive justice, sex work decriminalisation, trans and migrants' rights.

Revisiting the Future: Technofeminism in the 21st Century

A panel discussion exploring current debates in technofeminism

5 Oct 2019, 5.45pm, Frobisher Auditorium 2

Tickets £12

Mindy Seu, Assistant Professor at Rutgers University, **Cornelia Sollfrank**, pioneer of Net Art and 1990s cyberfeminism, **Judy Wacjman**, Anthony Giddens Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science and chair **Marie Thompson** explore contemporary theories and practices of technofeminism. Incorporating ecological, decentralized, economic and intersectional perspectives, they look at how today's forms of discrimination and exploitation are being responded to by feminist hackers, techno-eco-feminists and others.

Elective Affinities: Poetic patterns and programs

A reading and discussion exploring the relationships between poetry and technology

5 Oct 2019, 2.45pm, Fountain Room

Free. Drop-in

What happens when you place technology in the realms of the poetic, symbolic and mythical? Poets and artists **Nisha Ramayya**, **Erica Scourti** and **Rebecca Tamás** read from their work engaging with weaving, algorithmic writing and witchcraft. Chair: Sandeep Parmar.

Ritual Listening: Pauline Oliveros' Sonic Meditations

A guided workshop utilising meditative ritual to explore sound

5 Oct 2019, 12.30pm, Fountain Room

Free. Drop-in

*Workshop led by Object Blue, Frances Morgan and Irene Revell
Programmed in collaboration with Rewire Festival*

A meditative workshop where you will listen to sounds and be asked to imagine and make sounds. All are welcome regardless of musical or meditation experience or ability, and you will be guided throughout.

Pauline Oliveros' Sonic Meditations are written instructions for meditative rituals intended for healing. They are investigations into new social experiences and relations via sound. Producer Object Blue, writer Frances Morgan and curator Irene Revell (Electra) lead this workshop using the Sonic Meditations originally developed in Oliveros' women's group ♀Ensemble.

Pauline Oliveros (1932–2016), a pioneer in electronic music, brought to her adventures in music the study of consciousness, autonomic feedback and Native American and East Asian cultures, particularly Buddhism and martial arts, to create an experimental field of investigation into the self and sound.

Feminist Ways of Knowing: From Objective to Embodied Knowledge

Screening and discussion programmed in collaboration with Res.

5 Oct 2019, 5pm, Fountain Room

Free. Drop-in

Featuring a screening by artist **Zadie Xa**, the discussion will begin with Xa's provocation that selfhood is a specific, yet hybrid set of cultural references. Xa draws on Korean shamanism and folklore, music, digital space, fashion, and art history as well as her experiences within Asian diaspora.

Convened by Res., Xa, independent curator and writer **Isabel de Sena** and artist and researcher **Annie Goh** discuss what 'knowledge' is valued and what counts as 'technology'. From accelerationism to algorithmic governance, notions of 'rationalism' and 'objectivity' are gaining influence. In this context, how are mystical technologies and indigenous knowledges reclaiming space?

[Cyberfeminism on Film – Gender, Sexuality, Technology](#). Part of New Suns Festival
5-8 Oct 2019

Gendernauts: A Journey Through Shifting Identities (18)

Germany 1999 Dir Monika Treut 87 min

Winner of the Teddy Award for Best Documentary at the Berlin Film Festival, 1999

5 Oct 2019, 4pm, Cinema 2

Tickets £12

New German Cinema alumnus **Monika Treut** journeys through late 1990s San Francisco, meeting trans and intersex artists who live, love and work at the cutting edge of gender and digital technologies.

Marking the 20th anniversary of its original release, this screening offers an opportunity to experience its vision of gender fluidity and self-determination. With a sharp and curious eye, honed by a long career observing and participating in sexual subcultures in Berlin, Treut explores the Bay Area, where new gender formations met more utopian ideas of technology, before the tech giants became omnipresent. Featuring legendary trans thinkers and activists Susan Stryker and Sandy Stone, along with trans and intersex artists and their partners, *Gendernauts* is living history on film.

Family Film Club: Mary and the Witch's Flower^U + Show and Tell Introduction with So Mayer

Japan 2018 Dir Hiromasa Yonebayashi 103 min

5 Oct 2019, 11am, Cinema 2

Tickets £3.50 (£2.50 Under 18)

This charming animation from Studio Ghibli's Hiromasa 'Maro' Yonebayashi, adapted from Mary Stewart's children's book *The Little Broomstick*, is a gentle and timely film about using power responsibly and taking care of the planet – and each other.

We also welcome curator **So Mayer** for our Show and Tell before the screening.

Adults can only come if they're bringing a child, and children can only come along if accompanied by an adult.

Transfigurations – A Barbara Hammer Tribute (18)

7 Oct 2019, 6.15pm, Cinema 2

Tickets £12

We present a programme that bends time and brings together a century of feminist film experiments in honour of lesbian filmmaker Barbara Hammer (1939–2019).

Hammer transfigured history by recovering her predecessors and creating spaces for future LGBTQI+ visions; ‘woman with a movie camera’ and cinematic theory of ‘dyketactics’, conceived in the 1970s, has become a feminist rallying cry in recent years.

Using technology to intervene into the erasure of women and LGBTQI+ people, Hammer worked with archive material and video, as well as her own images, to rewrite an inclusive lesbian queerstory. This programme presents Hammer as queer historian, leaping backwards from her cyborg experiments with super-wide lenses and early computer editing, to a transformational dance film by Hammer’s beloved precursor, Maya Deren, and forward to Tanya Syed’s portrait of butch icon Peggy Shaw, which draws on Hammer’s lesbian aesthetics and performative portraiture.

Ritual in Transfigured Time

US 1946 Dir Maya Deren 15 min Digital presentation

Bent Time

US 1984 Dir Barbara Hammer 21 min Digital presentation

No No Nooky TV

US 1987 Barbara Hammer 12 min Digital presentation

Peggy Shaw - A Film Portrait

UK 2014 Dir Tanya Syed 16 min 30 sec Digital presentation

Maya Deren’s Sink

US 2011 Dir Barbara Hammer 30 min Digital presentation

Conceiving Ada (15)

(US 1997 Dir Lynn Hershman Leeson 85 min)

8 Oct 2019, 6.30pm, Cinema 2

Tickets £12

In celebration of Ada Lovelace Day, we present this playful drama, in which pioneering computer engineer Ada (played by Tilda Swinton) comes to digital life across the centuries.

AI wizz Emmy (Francesca Faridany) creates a programme that can bring historical figures to life through photography; when she connects with Lady Ada Lovelace across the centuries, the two women find much that connect them. Everything from their thoughts on love, sex and the pressure to reproduce, to the suppression of women in science and technology and their overbearing mothers – both roles played wonderfully by cult actress Karen Black. Longing for Ada’s company, Emmy begins to develop a way of bringing Ada across the centuries – but could it work?

The first ever film to use a virtual set, Lynn Hershman Leeson’s fantasia is full of feminist technological ideas, innovative visual technique and a compelling, female-centred story.

Sarah Shin, co-producer of the festival, said:

‘Technology is inseparable from the stories that we tell about it. Rapid, vast leaps in technological advancement are occurring at the same time as our growing and dire ecological crisis: we must tell alternative stories that challenge the predominant

connection of technology with ceaseless profiteering, war and the hallucination - now with visible glitches - of the onward march of heroic civilisational 'progress'.

'Through a feminist lens, New Suns seeks to instead rediscover lost pathways to the potential of technology for paradigmatic renewal, now more essential than ever for the survival and wellbeing of interconnected ecosystems of planetary life.'

New Suns is part of **Life Rewired**, the Barbican's 2019 season exploring what it means to be human when technology is changing everything,

ENDS

Notes to editors:

New Suns was conceived by Sarah Shin and produced in collaboration with the Barbican.

Sarah Shin

Sarah Shin is a publisher and curator. She is a co-founder and director of the Silver Press and Ignota Books. Previously she worked at Verso Books for close to a decade.

Life Rewired at the Barbican 2019

Life Rewired is the Barbican's year-long arts and learning season exploring what it means to be human when technology is changing everything. Running throughout 2019, the season investigates the impact of the pace and extent of technological change on our culture and society, looking at how we can grasp and respond to the seismic shifts these advances will bring about.

barbican.org.uk/liferewired

Press Information

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About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](http://barbican.org.uk) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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