

God's Inspiration and Human's Creation—Lin Pey-Chwen's Eve Clone Series

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A pious Christian, Lin Pey-Chwen was one of the most critical promoters of feminist art movements in Taiwan in the 1990s, and she was the chief editor of *Women Art Discourse* (1998), a quintessential essay collection of the era.

In 2001, at the advent of a new century, she was hired as the chair of the Graduate School of Multimedia and Animation Arts, National Taiwan University of Arts, and she also served as the director of the Digital Art Lab. Ten years later, in 2011, she launched her large-scale solo exhibition *Eve Clone Series*, which impressed the art scene and became one of the most shocking and reflective works combining female arts and digital arts in contemporary Taiwan.

The first large-scale solo exhibition of the *Eve Clone Series* presented in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei. In the intervening seven years leading up to the “Making of Eve Clone” exhibited at Galerie Grand Siècle in Taipei in 2017, a whole series of creative concepts and development was created, and this process is still ongoing. It contains the “Inspiration of God” religious sensibility and the artist's self-reflection and “creation” of human destinies. These works are outstanding types and examples rarely seen in avant-garde creations in contemporary Taiwan in recent years.

Eve was the first woman, according to human understanding. God created Adam in His image. Then He thought that it was not appropriate to live alone, so He removed one of Adam's ribs to create Eve. From the beginning, Eve seemed to be destined to be subordinate to men.

Given that Lin is an artist who has long been concerned about feminism, as well as a Christian, it is natural and reasonable for Lin to use Eve as her creative theme.

The first version, *Eve Clone I* (2004), was a 3D animation integrating a rather regular nude girl with the wings from the artist's previous butterfly series. The animated images of

Eve spreading her wings were projected on a large screen. In the *Eve Clone II* series in 2006, Eve's wings had metamorphosed into a pupa covering her body. As if in the setting of a gigantic test tube, the viewers' interventions generated many floating bubbles. The number of the viewers determined the number of bubbles and the speed at which the pupa metamorphosed into wings and then into Eve. The *Eve Clone Specimen* series in 2009 used Lenticular to present Eve with beautiful and vivid wings, as if displaying specimens.

The *Portrait of Eve Clone* series in 2010 revealed a crucial change. Eve was more like the normal woman in earlier series, but in this series, her characteristics as a clone were emphasized, and the descriptions of the "Revelation" in the Bible were integrated. In the gigantic 3D images of a close up of her bust, Eve's originally smooth head and back were presented with mysterious carvings: "666," the Number of the Beast in "Revelation", carved in languages including Chinese, English, Arabic, Egyptian and etc. This design presented a sense of human-beast integration. The beautiful yet cool eyes of Eve Clone changed according to the angle of viewers. The agile turning, looking back, and gazing of the Eve Clone in the cold aqua tone, arranged in a row, strongly impacted and shocked the viewer.

The solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, in 2011 was centered on *Portrait of Eve Clone*, which was presented as a large-scale interactive projection in a hexagon. The effect of soaking in water (a test tube formula) and background sound effects were added, creating *Eve Clone III*. In addition, *Hands of Eve Clone* and *Fingers of Eve Clone*, two sculptures of hands and severed fingers carved on resin, were placed in test tubes like medical biological specimens. According to the Bible, the Number of the Beast, 666, appears not only on the forehead but also on the right hand. Therefore, the artist placed six pairs of hands in different gestures with the Number of the Beast in large glass jars, which seemed to be filled with medical formalin to simulate a state of ongoing experimentation. The six right hands were carved with different textures representing snake skin, bark, pupa shell, seashell, metal, and ore to emphasize that the Eve Clones had genetic mutations. The six severed fingers were attached to a plate numbered with 666 to strengthen the impression that test creatures were being objectified, and that their genetic organs were removed and preserved.

At the same year, *Eve Clone IV* (2011) was an expansion of *Eve Clone III* and was exhibited at "Yes, Taiwan: 2012 Taiwan Biennial" at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. In addition to the enlarged hexahedron, on-site images were also integrated to tighten the connection between the viewers and the works. Moreover, six color variations were utilized to enrich the feelings of the change in settings.

2011 was a productive year for the artist. In *Eve Clone III*, the use of digital technology and the creative concepts, the creation capacity reached the peak. In the same year, she also completed *Mass Production of Eve Clone*, *Inspection of Eve Clone*, and *Revelation of Eve Clone*.

In *Mass Production of Eve Clone*, Eve became a beast and developed into a whole body in a sitting position. The number of presentations was expanded from the original 6 to 18. They were arranged in a line of digital frames; each Eve Clone had her unique color and was marked with “666” in different languages. Holding the same posture, they rotated 360°, representing the mass production and normalization of cloning.

Inspection of Eve Clone utilized infrared photography to foreground the 666 on Eve Clones and the tattooed totems, including roses, dragons, phoenixes, serpents, and scorpions, all of which are beautiful but dangerous. The words on top of the images imitated the common serial numbers in infrared photography. They presented a date and time of diagnosis and the person who conducted the diagnosis to strengthen the imagery of medicine and biotechnology.

Revelation of Eve Clone I was a critical starting point of the later series. In this work, the artist compared Eve Clone with the woman in “Revelation” who rules all the kings in the world. As stated in “Revelation 17:5,” “And upon her forehead was a name written, ‘MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’” The same script was presented in languages including Chinese, English, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew at the bottom of the image. At the top of the image was a number automatically calculated by the computer to represent a life index (Time Code). When the viewer entered the site, the life index was immediately activated and began increasing rapidly. When the viewer left, the life index immediately stopped, and the colors on the Eve Clones gradually faded.

This piece was first exhibited at Galerie Grand Siècle in Taipei. Later, it was often requested for exhibitions such as the “Next Body” digital art exhibition at Huashan 1914 Creative Park in 2011, Art Stage Singapore 2012, WRO Media Art Biennale 2013 in Wrocław, Poland, and “The Apocalyptic Sensibility—The New Media Art from Taiwan” (2015) at Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

Revelation of Eve Clone was developed into the II, III, and IV series in 2012, 2013, and 2014, respectively. When developing *Revelation of Eve Clone I* in 2011, the artist adopted the form of two-dimensional output, selected the scripts of the Bible in six different languages, and launched the *Documentation of Revelation of Eve Clone* exhibition. *Revelation of Eve*

Clone II (2012) presented animated images, time, and scripture in *Revelation of Eve Clone I* with a holographic technique on a flat surface. This new type of document was employed in an attempt to discuss the idea that “Time is congealed, but the sight of the viewer instantly makes it move.” The images were framed in a classical, gorgeous wide frame to contrast the coexistence, attraction, and tension between the classical and the technological.

Revelation of Eve Clone III (2013) was presented on a large scale as wide projections, featuring interactive images calculated by computer programs, background music like holy hymn, and a spatial atmosphere. It also included a sculpture of the head of Eve Clone in front of the projection installation. That was the golden great image recorded in “Daniel” of the Bible. When the viewers raised their hands to touch the 666 mark on the forehead, the Eve Clone images on the projection would raise her head and move her body.

Revelation of Eve Clone IV (2014) altered the setting of the tangible body in the front and that on the screen in the back and made everything into film. In addition, Eve Clone was replaced with a full-body sitting statue and was portrayed as the Great Image described in “Daniel”: “...the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay” (Daniel: 2.31–33). She was submerged in seawater, among ruins. The seawater was tinted red and became blood. Finally, she escaped the water but was smashed by a stone, becoming “like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them...”

The *Revelation of Eve Clone* series concluded with *Great Babylon* (2014). The City of Destruction in “Daniel” became New York City in reality. In the film, Eve Clone stands on top of the Empire State Building, looking down at the crowded buildings and streets, as if Eve Clone were the great image that controls the Great Babylon, only to witness the city being burnt down by a huge fire from heaven, including Eve Clone herself.

In 2015, Lin’s *Eve Clone* series entered a new stage, the *Making of Eve Clone* series. The artist’s focus returned from Biblical stories and prophecies to Eve Clone herself. The artist reflected on the entire process of creating Eve Clone in an act of retrospection how she used sketches, computer software to construct human-like wire frames, and engaged in the tedious process of gradually pasting pictures to imitate human skin tones, metallic tones, the greens of holographic images, golden great images, and 360° rotation to present the transformation at each stage... This was a creative process by God’s inspiration and the artist’s unconscious entrance into the process of Human’s Creation.

In the *Making of Eve Clone* series, the artist overlaid the Eve Clone on arms opened wide like a cross, looking down on Earth in *Great Babylon* like the famous *Vitruvian Man* by Leonardo da Vinci, and revealed the magical similarities between the two. They are similar not only in body proportions but also in the mindset of challenging God's original creation. Additionally, both of them present the contrast and intertextuality between art and technology.

In 2017, Galerie Grand Siècle in Taipei exhibited the major piece on the overlapping of the *Making of Eve Clone I* and da Vinci's manuscript, and several sets of works, namely *Goddess of Eve Clone*, *Making of Eve Clone Documentation I—Hand, Front of Head, Back of Head, Side of Head*, and *Making of Eve Clone Documentation II—Golden Head and Silver Chest, Silver Chest and Brass Belly, and Iron Legs and Part of Iron and Part of Clay Feet*. Integrating two-dimensional output and computer 3D images, the artist conducted a complete retrospective and organized the processes and details of creating Eve Clone that began in 2004.

Since the first large-scale solo exhibition in 2011, the artist has maintained that her intention in creating Eve Clone is to criticize the over-expansion of technology and humans' getting lost in their ambition to challenge the essence of God's creation. This is a deep retrospective on humans' highly developed artificial life, since reproductive technology was used in 1996 to create the first cloned sheep, Dolly. It is also the continuation of the creative concepts of the artist and of her series since 2004, "Un-Natural—Back to Nature" (Performing Arts Center, National Taiwan University of Arts, 2004) and "Artificial Life—Back to Nature" (Art Center of Notational Central University, 2006). However, the means by which the artist criticizes over-expansion are precisely the technology that she wholeheartedly criticizes. Perhaps as Roland Barthes stated, "The best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn and to produce an artificial myth."

Critics have long been adopting the perspective of anti-technology to understand and interpret Lin's *Eve Clone* series. However, if we return to the beginning, we must consider Lin as a creator, one whose creative concepts and methods, including the *Antithesis and Intertext* (1995) in Taipei Fine Arts Museum, have long presented a fundamental mode of thought that is dialectic and intertextual, as reflected in *Reality and Falsehood* (1996), *Viewing View—Back to Nature Series* (2000), and *Un-Natural* (2004). Although the *Eve Clone* series contained an initial motivation to counter the over-expansion of technology and even included in its creation process religious "revelations" to strengthen the idea, when it reached the *Making of Eve Clone* stage, we suddenly realized that the once ignored feminist concepts were so naturally and clearly presented and elaborated in these works. Eve is no longer only a rib taken from Adam's chest. In the self-construction and creation process, Eve Clone and the male figure in da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* possess the same proportions, thoughts,

and values.

Far back in *Portrait of Eve Clone*, the beautiful, cold, and staring eyes called to mind the pair of eyes in Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, which stare right into the viewer outside the painting.

Through long-term persistence and hard work, Lin has become the most energetic and outstanding of the female artists who emerged in the 90s, and she has continued to hold exhibitions. She is worthy of close attention and high expectations.