



ART

ERICKA BECKMAN

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The American artist's videos of high-stakes virtual-reality games of skill and chance—imagine “Tron” crossed with “The \$25,000 Pyramid”—were underappreciated when they first appeared, in the late seventies and eighties. Now they're getting their due. (In recent years, Beckman's work has been on view at the Met and the Whitney.) In her two-channel piece “Hiatus,” from 1999, Beckman presents the early World Wide Web as a gendered field of capitalist competition: a cyber-heroine battles shock-haired scarecrows and buzzing electrical towers, only to be foiled by a Texas oilman with skin the color of Vishnu. Beckman's proto-digital feminism has a retro appeal, but the bitter irony of her art is how little the political climate has changed.

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745 Fifth Ave.

New York, NY 10151

<http://www.maryboonegallery.com> (<http://www.maryboonegallery.com>)

212-752-2929
