



Synthetic Pleasures

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Iara Lee

USA, 1995

82 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Caipirinha Productions**

Producer: **George Gund**

Cinematographer: **Marcus Hahn, Toshifumi Furusawa, Kramer Morgenthau**

Editor: **Andreas Troeger, Stacia Thompson**

Sound: **Antonio Arroyo, Matthew Sigall**

Music: **Mike Kandel, Single Cell Orchestra, Haruami Hosono**

Principal Cast: **Michio Kaku, Scott Bukatman, Jaron Lanier, John Perry Barlow, Orlan, Robert Gurland, Robert Ettinger, Timothy Leary**

Print Source/Foreign Sales Agent: **Caipirinha Productions, 134 East 93rd Street, #15B, New York, New York 10128, USA. Tel/Fax: (212) 410-5117.**

An Evil Town

Richard Sears

USA, 1995

22 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Print source: See page 369.

From kickout raves to mind-expanding VR simulations. From artificial worlds created in vast shopping malls to the latest in flash-frozen pets. *Synthetic Pleasures* is the ultimate how-to book for Futureworld, consumer style. More than just a documentary, Iara Lee's film is a rich and overwhelming barrage of information and imagery. Punctuated by sound bites from experts – more wide-eyed acolytes than academics – and accented by a hypnotic techno score, *Synthetic Pleasures* neatly ties together all newsworthy trends, from the kooky to the horrific.

Working from a simple premise – that many of today's trends stem from a desire to transcend the natural world – Lee divides her film into three sections. The first, "Synthetic Environments", shows how we create the world in our image, through the Biosphere, high-tech kitsch and computer-generated universes. "Synthetic Bodies" concerns how we attempt to "perfect" our corporeal selves with plastic surgery, genetic engineering, cryonics and cybernetics. "Synthetic Identities" concerns our minds, altered through drugs, the Internet and more.

The voices of the future include some of the most fascinating people alive: John Perry Barlow, cattle rancher, former Grateful Dead lyricist and co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation; Orlan, a French performance artist who "adjusts" her body through plastic surgery every few months; Steve Roberts, a self-styled high-tech nomad who boots around the U.S. in his computer-laden,

105-speed recumbent bicycle; and Timothy Leary, the granddaddy of all alternative-reality theorists.

More than anything, *Synthetic Pleasures* reflects its subject matter, a massive mind massage, a smart drug for the next millennium. Be prepared to face your future.

Based on a Charles Bukowski story filled with sexual hatred and gore, Richard Sears' *An Evil Town* is a mind-bending trip through the sleaziest hotel and movie theatre in San Francisco.

– *Noah Cowan*

Iara Lee is of Korean descent, but was born and raised in Brazil. She studied film and philosophy at New York University, and was in charge of programming for the São Paulo International Film Festival. She made several short films in New York and Japan, helped run New York's Korean Film Festival in 1994, and has been active in cultural exchange events, including the No Budget Film Workshop. *Synthetic Pleasures* (95) is her first feature.

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