

# Sondra Perry Explores the Intersection of Technology and Black History in America

BY JENNIFER KRASINSKI

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*Courtesy of The Kitchen*

**Who or what defines evil?** In America, certainly after 9-11, it's a word that's been used to describe any act of insurgence against a vision this country has of itself as essentially good. It's a polarizing concept, refusing self-reflection in favor of a willful blindness — and, in its refusal, conflating power with virtue, might with right. In her ferociously witty and searingly intelligent "Resident Evil" exhibition, multimedia artist Sondra Perry dissects how this notion of evil infects black identity, how it colors blackness in America.

Just thirty years old and less than two years removed from Columbia's MFA program, Perry is already making a name for herself as a thinker and maker, creating videos and installations at the intersection of black history (both the personal and the collective), technology, and identity. As she told New Museum curator Lauren Cornell last year in an interview for *Mousse* magazine: "I'm interested in how blackness is a technology, changing and adapting, through the constant surveillance and oppression of black folks across the diaspora since the 1600s. Unmediated seeing isn't a thing."

What *is* a thing for Perry is the question of who is mediating — and how. Throughout the exhibition, she makes her own presence known as the designer of the stories she flashes before her audience. Sometimes she appears as an avatar, modeled in her own likeness. Her hand, though invisible, is felt when we see a cursor dance across a screen. She's the one we assume is behind the camera that paces her hometown of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and enters her family





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Our country was a terrifying place for many of its citizens long before November 8; it's just that some of them — some of *us* — only recently learned exactly how and why ours is a nation to be feared. What we are seeing now is what America is and has been for some time. Perry's exhibition puts us in a mind to remember that all we had to do to know this was to watch closely, and pay attention.

Sondra Perry: 'Resident Evil'

The Kitchen

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Through December 10