Excerpts from the book:
"From Technological to Virtual Art" by Frank Popper, MIT Press, (2006)

For over thirty years Rebecca Allen has investigated a variety of technological forms of expression including 3D computer animation, large-scale performance works, music videos, video games, artificial life, multisensory interfaces, interactive installations, and virtual reality. Allen is not interested in technology for its own sake, however. Rather, she is interested in a technoculture which humanizes technology even while maintaining a critical stance towards it. Or perhaps one can even say that it is her critical approach towards technology that helps humanize it.

Allen demonstrates this critical approach with her concern with artistic quality and the conceptual integrity of her work – a conceptual integrity that stresses the effect on the mind of the viewer. Indeed her main concern appears to be the investigation of the perceptual and cognitive processes of the viewer. Her approach is based on a belief in technology, but technology as a means of expanding human potential by provoking people to become smarter. Not just intellectually smarter, but smarter about their own emotional reactions to technology. Thus she approaches technology from an almost expressionistic angle, where human feeling and emotional reaction predominate the art.

Such an approach is taken in an attempt to help people today live with the overload of information which we are exposed to on a regular basis. Her work strives to demonstrate how the technological landscape (which we cannot escape) can be paradoxically dominated by human needs. By the viewer/participant experiencing a space where digital and physical realities merge and by interacting with her intricate digital characters, Allen exposes her audiences to experiences where our carnal bodies and virtual data bodies coexist and interact comfortably. This is Allen's long-standing vision; a vision which acknowledges that we cannot escape the realm of the technological, but we need to take control of it, adjusting it to our needs as humans. By exploring advanced electronic tools Allen helps us understand where technology is most active in our lives.

Allen began her exploration of the relationship between art and technology as an art student at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in the early 1970's where Allen's prime influences were the art and technology movements of the early twentieth century: the Bauhaus, the Futurists and the Constructivists, primarily. Using a state of the art computer system called Vector General, and an early program that could interpolate 2D drawings, Allen realized her first computer animation in 1974.