

Fox Trot, Crab Step, Lame Duck, Roger Rabbit, Do the Pony: Animal Dancing as a Technology of Co-Evolving Bodies

Spring Symposium

As part of the symposium series *Gender and Equality in the Arts*

15 – 16 May 2024

Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW

On-site and online:

Auditorium D 1.04, Tower Building, Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW

→ [LIVESTREAM](#)

With contributions by Fahim Amir, Claire Filmon for Simone Forti / Projet DICI, Kate Foley, Krööt Juurak and Alex Bailey / Performances for Pets, Edith Karlson and Maria Arusoo, Lisa Moravec, Alejandra Pombo Su, Filipa Ramos and Carlos Casas, and Feifei Zhou

Moderated by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer

Research: Marion Ritzmann

Press: Anna Francke

16 May 2024, 4.30 pm

Performance

Simone Forti's *Striding Crawling* (1977) performed by Claire Filmon / Projet DICI
der TANK

The symposium is open to the public and will be held in English.

Admission free.

More information and program: dertank.ch

“When dance will come to robots naturally, they will free themselves from being just tools at the service of humans,” an MIT researcher recently said (we paraphrase). In 1998, E.O. Wilson, an American biologist and authority on ants, published *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, in which he advocated for the interrelatedness and evolutionary origins of all human thought. He used a notion, *consilience*, to name the magical “jumping together” of all knowledges. That is, what we might call today all existing forms of intelligence. The spring symposium at Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW is dedicated to such movement—jumping, robotic, animal or otherwise—and the various knowledges and forms of life it brings together. Entitled *Fox Trot, Crab Step, Lame Duck, Roger Rabbit, Do the Pony: Animal Dancing as a Technology of Co-Evolving Bodies*, the symposium will be devoted to histories, choreographies, and ideas of animal movement and their evolution and appropriation in dance and performance across eras, cultures, and geographies. A closing performance of Simone Forti's *Striding Crawling* (1977) by Claire Filmon / Projet DICI will take place in der TANK, on the afternoon of 16 May 2024.

Over the course of two days, 15 and 16 May 2024, the spring symposium at Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW will bring together artists, choreographers, dancers, theorists, filmmakers, and hybrid practitioners, all of whom will consider animal dancing as both an ancient and nascent technology

oriented toward understanding the co-evolution of bodies. That is, animal bodies, human bodies, machine bodies, and organisms (and organs) without a body. Why so, and why now? If our contemporary vision of the world is often reduced to envisioning rigid and independent units that interact at some distance with one another, there is yet a more complex reality. The relationships between subjects and objects, human and more-than-human beings, bodies and technologies, is always fluid and necessarily constructed at the startling moment of mutual encounter. Such an understanding might affect the way that we understand intelligence—often interpreted as consciousness unitarily located in the brain—and its myriad forms, diverse bodies, and various manifestations and movements.

To be able to imagine decentralized forms of intelligence transforms how we view the movements we make and the technologies that we build, but it also offers a new way of understanding the agency of citizenship in our impoverished systems of democracy. Can a new political thinking and a new view of seeing social relation emerge from dance? Just as scholar and nanotechnology expert Laura Tripaldi has noted, we believe that our technologies do not belong to us, and we therefore cannot use them to change what seems unjust in nature. Instead, we simply borrow these technologies—like divine forces—and therefore we must handle them with sacred reverie. To borrow our movements, whether from animals or algorithms, might encourage different forms of assembly, varied ways of co-existing in which hierarchies are broken down, step by step by step, body by body. To do so, we need art and performance, and to trust in artists as those capable of enhancing a non-instrumental relationship with the cosmos.

Fox Trot, Crab Step, Lame Duck, Roger Rabbit, Do the Pony: Animal Dancing as a Technology of Co-Evolving Bodies is part of Institute Art Gender Nature's biannual symposia series *Gender and Equality in the Arts* that considers artistic practice within its entanglements with gender, coloniality, language, and ecology.

The symposium is dedicated to the memory Ida Applebroog.

Technical team

Charlotte von Engelberg, Emily Harries, Katharina Kemmerling, Daniele Praiano, Konrad Sigl, Kim Surenthiran

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PROGRAM (subject to alterations)

DAY I – 15 May 2024

Part 1

- 10.00 am Welcome by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 10.10 am Reading by Quinn Latimer
- 10.25 am Fahim Amir
- 11.05 am Claire Filmon for Simone Forti / Projet DICI
- Noon Lunch

Part 2

- 2.00 pm Welcome by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 2.10 pm Kate Foley
- 2.50 pm Feifei Zhou
- 3.30 pm Break
- 3.45 pm Krööt Juurak and Alex Bailey / Performances for Pets
- 4.30 pm Round-up of DAY I by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 5.00 pm End of DAY I, followed by drinks at Messy Kiosk Bar, CIVIC

DAY II – 16 May 2024

Part 3

- 10.00 am Welcome by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 10.10 am Reading by Quinn Latimer
- 10.25 am Edith Karlson and Maria Arusoo
- 11:05 am Filipa Ramos and Carlos Casas
- Noon Lunch

Part 4

- 2.00 pm Welcome by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 2.10 pm Lisa Moravec
- 2.50 pm Alejandra Pombo Su
- 3.30 pm Break
- 3.45 pm Round-up of DAY II by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer
- 4.20 pm Walk to der TANK
- 4.30 pm Performance of Simone Forti's *Striding Crawling* (1977) performed by Claire Filmon / Projet DICI in der TANK
- 5.00 pm End of DAY II

BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

Fahim Amir is a philosopher and author living in Vienna. He coedited *Transcultural Modernisms* (2013), and wrote the afterword to the German edition of Donna Haraway's *Companions Species Manifesto* (2016). He is the author of *Schwein und Zeit: Tiere, Politik, Revolte* (2018), which was translated into English in 2020, and Persian in 2021, as well as *The Manifesto for the Solidarity of Non-Humans and Humans in Urban Space*, for the ARCH+ exhibition *Cohabitation* (Berlin, 2021).

Maria Arusoo is an Estonian curator and dramatist. Since 2013 she has been director of the Estonian Center for Contemporary Art (CCA) and commissioner of the Estonian Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, where she has been responsible for six pavilions. Recent curatorial projects include *Through the Black Gorge of your Eyes* at the Estonian Art Museum (2023), which focused on Soviet-era women printmakers, co-curated with Eha Komissarov and Eda Tuulberg; and the Estonian Pavilion of the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, featuring Edith Karlson's exhibition *Hora Lupi*, in Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Penitenti.

Alex Bailey (Performances for Pets) is a UK-born performer and artist based in Vienna. In 2014, together with Estonian Choreographer Krõõt Juurak, they created Performances for Pets. From these experiences they started giving Workshops by Pets and independently they've worked with autistic and differently abled children. They have performed with their young child & co-parent as a non-nuclear family in *Codomestication*, and their work has been performed widely at Brut Wien, Tanzquartier Wien, CNDB Bucharest, and Temporary Gallery, Cologne.

Carlos Casas is a filmmaker and artist whose practice encompasses film, sound, and the visual arts. His works have been presented at the Shanghai Biennale, Bangkok Biennale, and Istanbul Biennial, and retrospectives of his films have been presented widely in international festivals and cinemateques across the world. *Bestiari*, his project with curator Filipa Ramos, is the Catalan contribution to the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2024).

Claire Filmon is a dancer, improviser, and pedagogue based in Paris. Since 1995, she has created and/or participated in improvisation performances with, among others, Simone Forti, Barre Philips, Julyen Hamilton, Nancy Stark Smith, and Lisa Nelson in such spaces as the Bastille Theater, Paris, the Bauhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Anvers, and the Judson Church in New York.

Kate Foley choreographs and directs projects for stage, camera, and specific sites. She founded and directed chamber dance companies in New York and San Francisco from 1986 to 1998. Since then, her major works include *Angels of Sudjerac*, *International Harvester Prototypes and Archetypes*, *The Journey of Halima*, and *Hatched Egg in the Nest*. Her choreography credits include Theater Ulysses' large-scale site-specific productions of *King Lear* and *Medea*, as well as Mike Kelley's epic *Day is Done*.

Krõõt Juurak (Performances for Pets) is an artist and performer born in Tallinn. They studied dance and choreography at ArtEZ, and Fine Arts at the Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions and performances include *LESSON* and *SCHOOL* at Tanzquartier, Vienna (2023), the Baltic Triennial 14, Vilnius (2021), *You're So Busy*, Shedhalle, Zürich (2021, 2022), *Thinking Like an Octopus*, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen (2021), and *Art for Animals: A Perspective Change*, Opelvillen Stiftung, Rüsselsheim (2020, 2021).

Edith Karlson is an Estonian artist based in Tallinn. In her sculptural practice, animals and people are the main protagonists. Her large-scale sculptural pieces produced by means of mixed techniques show a variety of characters, from ceramic dogs to cement dinosaurs and Neanderthals, composed into intricate installations. Her recent exhibitions include the Estonian Pavilion of the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, *Hora Lupi*, Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Penitenti (2024); *Return to Innocence*, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn (2021); and *Roots and Ruins*, Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn (2020).

Quinn Latimer is a writer, editor, and curator. Her books include *Like a Woman: Essays, Readings, Poems* (2017), *Describe This Distance* (2013), and *Rumored Animals* (2012). She was editor-in-chief of publications for documenta 14, in Athens and Kassel, and she is the editor of, most recently, *SIREN*

(*some poetics*) (2024), and co-editor of *Sahara: A Thousand Paths Into the Future* (2023). She is Head of the MA program at Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW.

Chus Martínez is a writer and curator, and Head of Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW. She is curator of Ocean Space, in Venice, for TBA21–Academy, and curatorial director of der TANK, in Basel. Her books include *Like This: Natural Intelligence as Seen by Art* (2022), *Corona Tales: Let Life Happen to You* (2020), and *Club Univers* (2017). Previously, she was Head of the department of artistic direction for DOCUMENTA (13), in Kassel.

Lisa Moravec is a writer, critic, curator, and lecturer. She works at the intersections of the performing and visual arts, and she was recently a steirischer herbst fellow. She is preparing her second monograph on the performance of artistic critique of AI technologies and posthumanist aesthetics, with a focus on bodily intelligence. Her first paper from this research project, *Training Humans not Machines: Artificial Intelligence and the Performance Culture of Its Critique*, has just been published (TDR, March 2024). Her book *Dressaged Animality: Human and Animal Actors in Contemporary Performance* (Routledge, 2024), is forthcoming.

Alejandra Pombo Su holds a PhD in Fine Arts, with a thesis on the paradoxes and effects of introducing the notion of performance in contemporary art practices. She has undertaken residencies in international institutions, including the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Florida, Pact Zollverein, Essen, CA2M, Madrid, and Tabakalera, San Sebastián, among others. Her work has been presented widely at festivals, museums, and art centers moving between the fields of visual arts, cinema, and the performative arts, such Museo Reina Sofia, Galeria Municipal do Porto, and Fundação Serralves.

Filipa Ramos, PhD, is a lecturer at Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW. Her research focuses on how contemporary art engages with nature and ecology. Ongoing projects include *Bestiari*, the Catalan Pavilion for the 60th International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia (2024); *Songs for the Changing Seasons*, for the 1st Vienna Climate Biennale; and the festival *The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish* (since 2018, with Lucia Pietroiusti). Her book, *The Artist as Ecologist*, will be published by Lund Humphries in 2024.

Feifei Zhou is an architect, artist, and researcher. She is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP). Zhou is the co-author of the upcoming book *Field Guide to the Patchy Anthropocene: The New Nature* (2024). She was a guest researcher at Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene (AURA), during which she coedited the digital publication *Feral Atlas: The More-than-Human Anthropocene* (2021). She was a finalist for the Wheelwright Prize in 2021.