

The background of the entire page is a solid purple color. Overlaid on this background is a faint, blurred image of several people sitting around a table, appearing to be in a meeting or conference. The image is centered horizontally and vertically.

FEM  
eeting/

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS. 2020. TROY

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FEMeeting: Troy 2020

20- 21 March 2020

Media Sanctuary's NATURE Lab Initiative (North Troy Art, Technology, and Urban Research in Ecology)

Organizing Committee:

Branda Miller, The Sanctuary for Independent Media, New York

Dalila Honorato, Ionian University, Greece

Kathy High, NATURE Lab, New York

Marta de Menezes, Cultivamos Cultura, Portugal

Layout:

Cultivamos Cultura

Diana Aires



## FEMeeting: Women in Art, Science and Technology

Launched in 2017, the conference “FEMeeting: Women in Art, Science and Technology” was driven by the desire to develop and promote more direct collaboration between individuals who identify themselves as Women, independently of their sex. The idea behind FEMeeting was orchestrated by the Portuguese artist Marta de Menezes and scholar Dalila Honorato, after realizing that women in the field of Art and Science have an unquestionable presence worldwide.

FEMeeting acknowledges the social relevance of a core community and its role for the future. FEMeeting’s main purpose is to disseminate projects that are being carried out by women in order to contribute (a) to the development of research methodologies in art and science and (b) to the development of collaboration strategies that can increase knowledge sharing and bring communities together.

In recognition of the vital role of grassroots creative praxis in building our growing global network, FEMeeting announces its first community meetings taking place this Spring: “FEMeeting: Troy 2020” and “FEMeeting: Paris 2020”.

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## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



**Branda Miller** is a Professor of Media Arts in the Integrated Electronic Arts Department at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Arts and Education Coordinator at The Sanctuary for Independent Media. Miller is known for video art works in which social themes are embedded within experimental forms, she approaches video-making as an educational tool. Since 1987, she has worked with urban youth and community groups to craft a series of multi-cultural, social-issue tapes in which the production process itself is a vehicle for the empowerment of the videomakers. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including grants from the National Endowment for the Arts; the MacMurray Video Residency, American Film Institute Television Workshop; and an Emmy Award for Best Editing of a National Television Special.



**Dalila Honorato** is currently Assistant Professor in Media Aesthetics and Semiotics at the Department of Audio and Visual Arts of the Ionian University where she is one of the founding members of the Interactive Arts Lab. She is the head of the organizing committee of the conference “Taboo-TransgressionTranscendence in Art & Science” and developer of the studies program concept of the Corfu Summer School in Hybrid Arts. She is a guest faculty at the PhD studies program of the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis in Alma Mater Europaea, Slovenia, and a guest member of the Science Art Philosophy Lab integrated in the Center of Philosophy of Sciences of the University of Lisbon. Her research focus is on embodiment in the intersection of performing arts and new media.

**Kathy High** is an interdisciplinary artist working in the areas of technology, science, speculative fiction and art. She collaborates with scientists and artists, and considers living systems, empathy, animal sentience, and the social, political and ethical dilemmas of biotechnology and surrounding industries. She has received awards including the Guggenheim Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and National Endowment for Arts. High is Professor in Arts, and has a lab at the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy. She is project coordinator for the urban environmental center, NATURE Lab, with the community media organization The Sanctuary for Independent Media, and is also on the board of directors. She is also on the GENSPACE board of directors (Brooklyn) and REFRESH advisory board.



**Marta de Menezes** is a Portuguese artist with a degree in Fine Arts by the University in Lisbon, a MSt in History of Art and Visual Culture by the University of Oxford, and a PhD candidate at the University of Leiden. She has been exploring the intersection between Art and Biology, working in research laboratories demonstrating that new biological technologies can be used as new art medium. She has used diverse biological techniques including functional MRI of the brain to create portraits, fluorescent DNA probes to create micro-sculptures in human cell nuclei, sculptures made of proteins, incorporating live neurons or bacteria. Her work has been presented internationally in exhibitions, articles and lectures. She is currently the artistic director of Ectopia, an experimental art laboratory in Lisbon, and Director of Cultivamos Cultura in the South of Portugal







ABSTRACTS

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## **ALLISON BERKOY**

Allison Berkoy is a Brooklyn-based artist. Her work explores the communicative potential of physical-digital environments when combined with mutable, unpredictable storytelling and media; driven by code, sensors, and human bodies. With participatory and absurd narratives, Allison's installations become stages for performance, testing the boundaries and etiquette of human-machine interaction as well as human-human relationship.

Allison completed an MFA in Electronic Arts at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, MA in Performance Studies from New York University, and BS in Theatre from Northwestern University. She is an Assistant Professor of Emerging Media Technology at CUNY's New York City College of Technology.

ARE YOU PREPARED? Is an interactive lecture on the subject of emergency preparedness and simulation, hosted by an autonomous machine-sculpture in the guise of a talking balloon. As the lecture proceeds, the balloon asks increasingly more of its audience, requesting response and participation while ratcheting up the absurdity of its requests. The project mixes live performance, interactive installation, documentary content, and body-controlled games for the audience to play; probing the potential of crisis simulation as a destabilizing force for change.

Students from NYC College of Technology, in the program of Emerging Media Technology (MTEC), have collaborated with Professor Allison Berkoy in developing the project's system prototypes. Set up as a research and development lab, the work has focused on three key areas: a series of body-controlled games using computer vision, opportunities for human-computer interaction with individuals and groups in live performance, and integration of code-driven audiovisual and interactive systems.

The first prototype featured a body-controlled voting system, a "how high can you jump?" contest, real-time emergency data, and many bad jokes. Following a successful run with small test audiences, work has begun on prototype #2 for test runs in May 2020.



Angela Beallor discusses her project, MG (aka I Want a Baby! Reimagined), a queer, experimental theatrical staging of Sergei Tret'iakov's censored Soviet 1926 play I Want a Baby! The original unstaged play follows Milda Grignau, a cultural worker, who desires to contribute a new proletarian citizen to the new society. Milda would like to conceive a child without a parenting or romantic partner and goes about, with a eugenic perspective, selecting someone to help with this project. Once she is pregnant, the play skips ahead to the future, right over the labor of pregnancy, birth, and childrearing. I consider, as Tret'iakov does in the play, some of the ideas and propositions of those who, in the decades surrounding the Russian Revolution, called for new visions of romantic love and family life in order to collectivize these everyday spaces and relationships. My project, however, centers upon Milda's unspoken desire, Milda's absent labor, and the revolutionary proposals to change everyday life (byt) in this early Soviet play. I examine the historic revolutionary reevaluation of motherhood and its relevance for today.

My adaptation of this project adapts Tret'iakov's play while adopting Milda as a part of a queer lineage, retroactively reproducing queerness into the past (Rohy). This project draws out the "queer potential" embedded in these revolutionary visions: hidden within these earlier utopian ideas, we may find other (un/intentional) radical propositions that, in our return to this history, can spark new future trajectories.

## ANGELA BEALLOR

Angela Beallor is a visual artist. She was a 2015 BRIC Media Arts Fellow and Jerome Foundation Grant recipient (2013) for Pink Lenins. Her video, I Want a Baby! REVisited (Lecture) won first place in the 2017 Sofia Queer Forum competition. She staged M.G. (aka I Want a Baby! Reimagined) at EMPAC (2019). Artist-in-residence at CCI Fabrika, Moscow; Vermont Studio Center; Habitable Spaces, and Flux Factory. She has exhibited at Museum of Contemporary Art (Cleveland) (2017); Smack Mellon (2016); SPACES (2016); Here Art Space (2014); and, with Sharon Hayes, in the Whitney Museum (2012). She is a Rensselaer PhD candidate.

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## **ANNA LINDEMANN**

Anna Lindemann calls herself an Evo Devo artist. Her work combines animation, music, video, and performance to explore the field of Evolutionary Developmental Biology (Evo Devo).

Her work has been featured at black box theaters, planetariums, galleries, concert halls, film festivals, and natural history museums. She graduated from Yale with a BS in Biology before receiving an MFA in Integrated Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Digital Media & Design Department at the University of Connecticut where she has pioneered courses integrating art and science.

[www.annalindemann.com](http://www.annalindemann.com)

I will present on THE COLONY, an art-science performance about sisterhood and the evolution of communication in both ants and humans. I presented in-progress work on THE COLONY at FEMeeting 2018, and I am now delighted to present on the completed performance, which premiered at the University of Connecticut in September 2019.

In particular, I will highlight the "Swarm Raid" scene, a music video sequence à la Busby Berkeley that depicts a surreal trip to the grocery store inspired by an army ant swarm raid. (More about the "Swarm Raid" can be found here: <https://annalindemann.com/swarmraid/>). Featuring more than fifty swarming dancers from the local community, "Swarm Raid" embraces patterns of collective movement and action. "Swarm Raid" also examines the hierarchies within collectives. The music for "Swarm Raid" features an operatic performance by a demanding (ant) queen, just as the swarming dancers invoke the half a million workers within an ant colony that tend to the queen and gather food for the colony. Throughout "Swarm Raid," the queen's own sister tries unsuccessfully to bridge the divide between workers and queen.

The "Swarm Raid" music video, and THE COLONY more broadly, aims to kindle a sense of awe and understanding of our diverse biological world, while using the ant colony as a lens for understanding the ever-present challenge of human connection.

Angela Beallor discusses her project, MG (aka I Want a Baby! Reimagined), a queer, experimental theatrical staging of Sergei Tret'iakov's censored Soviet 1926 play I Want a Baby! The original unstaged play follows Milda Grignau, a cultural worker, who desires to contribute a new proletarian citizen to the new society. Milda would like to conceive a child without a parenting or romantic partner and goes about, with a eugenic perspective, selecting someone to help with this project. Once she is pregnant, the play skips ahead to the future, right over the labor of pregnancy, birth, and childrearing. I consider, as Tret'iakov does in the play, some of the ideas and propositions of those who, in the decades surrounding the Russian Revolution, called for new visions of romantic love and family life in order to collectivize these everyday spaces and relationships. My project, however, centers upon Milda's unspoken desire, Milda's absent labor, and the revolutionary proposals to change everyday life (byt) in this early Soviet play. I examine the historic revolutionary reevaluation of motherhood and its relevance for today.

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## **BORYANA ROSSA**

Boryana Rossa is an interdisciplinary artist and curator who works in the fields of electronic arts, film, video, performance and photography. Most of Rossa's works have been shown internationally at venues such as steirischer herbst, Graz; National Gallery of Fine Arts, Sofia; 1st Balkan Biennale, Thesaloniki; Kunstwerke and Akademie der Kunste, Berlin; The 1st and 2nd Moscow Biennial For Contemporary Art; Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art (MUMOK) Vienna; Zacheta Gallery, Warsaw; Sofia City Art Gallery; Sofia Arsenal – Museum of Contemporary Art (SAMCA), Sofia.

In 2004 together with the Russian artist and film maker Oleg Mavromatti, Rossa establishes UTRAFUTURO—an international group of artists engaged with issues of technology, science and their social implications. In 2012 Rossa has finished her PhD on Post Cold-War Gender Performances, in the Department of Arts, at Rensselaer, Troy, NY. She is also a director of Sofia Queer Forum, together with philosopher and activist Stanimir Panayotov

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## CAROLYN ANGLETON

Carolyn Angleton is a bioartist, researcher and experimental gardener. She has taught art, critical theory and feminist studies at California State University, Fresno and Sierra College in Rocklin, CA.

She is a co-founder of ARC-BAC, a synthetic biology collaborative at American River College in Sacramento, California. As an active participant in the biohacking community, she serves on the organizing committee for the MIT Biosummits, and has received project funding from "BioHack the Planet" in Oakland, California for her research project "Rendering a Biosynthetic Carotenoid Pathway." Her work utilizes a laboratory-based art/research process to hybridize knowledge production practices

I will be speaking on a strain of artistic production which uses biotechnological tools to develop color, pattern and physical form. We live in a society where scientific research involving molecular manipulations will soon become common place and affect many aspects of our lives, yet the actual lab procedures are obscured and result in the public's fear-based response to the microscopic unknown and unseeable.

These works attempt to redefine what is considered an artistic practice, and exist as hybrid species somewhere between sculptural object and laboratory protocol-based research. My installations serve to reconstitute and reframe scientific knowledge systems and systems of desire, thereby equating their validity and deconstructing hierarchical ways of understanding the world as discrete fields of research and perception. By proximity and a blurring of boundaries, (systems) of biotechnological research, species verification, ritual/religious iconography and multi-species portraiture are co-associated, mashed up, and trans-generated into multiple and entwined cross-referencing visual sources and genetic "banks" of co-polluted ways of knowing.

### Water and Light: Ode to a River

As a fruit of the collaboration between Victoria Vesna and myself, [waterbodies.org](http://waterbodies.org) is an attempt to create a framework for curated crowd sourcing to raise the issue of collective consciousness about water as a life force and a reflection about the state of humanity.

As a personal response to [waterbodies.org](http://waterbodies.org), in the Summer 2017, I started to photograph the Hudson River in Ossining, NY at different times of the day.

Now with more than a thousand photographs taken over a period of two and a half years, this visual study took me to an inquiry on how humans perceive water and light frequencies and its implications.

Refracting, reflecting or even absorbing light waves, analogous to the study of Chakras, the Hudson river enhances the visual and physical perception of light promoting the potential for meditation and healing.

### CLAUDIA JACQUES

Intersecting art, technology and science, Brazilian-American interdisciplinary artist, designer, educator and researcher, Claudia Jacques de Moraes Cardoso, M.F.A., Ph.D. designs interactive hybrid art and information environments that aim to promote human consciousness and the expansion of human knowledge. She collaborates with many artists exhibiting and presenting both nationally and internationally. She has published in Leonardo, TEKS, Art & Engine, etc., and serves as Art+Web Editor for Cybernetics and Human Knowing journal. Jacques teaches studio, digital and communication arts, and her studio is in Ossining, NY.

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## **ELIZABETH PRESS (EP) AND ANGELA BEALLOR**

Elizabeth Press (EP) is a media-maker and Arts lecturer at Rensselaer. EP collaboratively started the queer performance series, The Gentle Grandpa Salon, is on the board of the Media Alliance and helped launch the Hudson Mohawk Magazine - a daily collectively-produced radio program. EP dove into journalism in 2003 as a producer for the TV/Radio program Democracy Now!, covered the UN climate negotiations for The International Institute on Sustainable Development and made a hundred transportation advocacy videos for StreetFilms.org.

EP is working on a project about underground human milk sharing networks and milk production in non-biological and nonbinary parents.

This presentation is a discussion of two intertwined projects, Elizabeth Press (EP)'s documentary on donor human milk and their collaborative project, with Angela Beallor, of "A Drawing Out : Lactic Orchestration". Both projects center upon the labor of breastfeeding and breastmilk pumping to emphasize and explore actual and potential collective relationships around the process of producing and sharing milk. "A Drawing Out" was initially inspired by a photograph from mid-1920s Soviet Russia, depicting a group of factory workers pumping together in a milk center attached to their workplace. This image, animated and combined with Press' microscopic recordings of breastmilk, serve as a backdrop for a live performance. In "A Drawing Out," multiple people pump breastmilk together in front of an audience. The sound of this labor is amplified using small microphones attached to the milk pumps creating a biological/material soundscape of machine noises and the pumping body. Press' video work combines a visual exploration of (donor) human milk using microscopic video technology with the narrative accounts of people who have induced lactation, donated and received milk.

These interviewees are connected to one another, through the unregulated exchange of human milk. Those who produce an excess of milk offer and provide milk (without monetary exchange) to those who are unable, for whatever reason, to produce enough milk to feed their child. Press not only explores the alternative economy of free exchange driven by surplus and need but also tells stories of how some queer and non-traditional families acquire human milk.

Invasive Surfaces of the Americas: Kudzu,  
Asphalt, and Turfgrass

In this talk I explore my experience working the kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) as part of the recent project *Mississippi: An Anthropocene River*. Transplanted from East Asia in an age of imperial expansion and bioprospecting, *Pueraria* species have become firmly rooted in the natural-cultural landscape of the Southeastern United States over the past 150 years. Meanwhile the myth of kudzu has seeped into the collective consciousness of Americans well beyond the plant's biological range, becoming a rallying symbol for the "war on invasive species," which has claimed the attention and energy of conservation biologists, agrochemical engineers, and weekend "weed warriors" across the United States in recent decades. While the species has become a well-worn symbol of the out-of-control newcomer, recent data actually tell a different story of a species in decline, thoroughly eclipsed by the expansion of other "invasive surfaces" like pavement and lawns. Sharing strategies from my time in Natchez, that including public fieldwork, a kudzu-entanglement workshop, and series of video and audio guides, I relate how this mythic vegetal other—the "vine that ate the South"—lead me in an alternative reading the natural-cultural landscape of the riverbank town of Natchez, Mississippi. Along the way, I relate how kudzu invites us to reckon with forms of environmentalism that are premised on erasure and exclusion, from herbicide-based restoration to white nationalist ecofascism.

**ELLIE IRONS**

An artist-educator based in Brooklyn and Troy, NY, Ellie works in a variety of media, from drawing to gardening, to reveal how human and nonhuman lives intertwine with other earth systems. Recent work focuses on plants, people and urban ecosystems in the so-called Anthropocene. She is a cofounder of the Next Epoch Seed Library and Environmental Performance Agency. She received her BA from Scripps College in Los Angeles and MFA from Hunter College, CUNY. She is currently completing a practice-based PhD at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, researching the intersection of socially engaged art and urban ecology.

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## HANA VAN DER KOLK

Hana van der Kolk is a dancer, performer, artist, educator, counselor, and facilitator of community spaces based in Troy, NY (US).

Their work takes the form of workshops, performances, events, material remnants, texts, videos, and approaches to restoration and relinquishment in the face of untenable pasts and unthinkable futures. Hana has performed internationally and taught at numerous universities, and in healing, community, and DIY spaces throughout the U.S. and Europe. Hana leads ritual/workouts as radial diamond kinetics, works with Troy Bike Rescue, and is engaged in an ongoing collaboration with Tomislav Feller, which took the form of the ceremony/performance nothingnessXXX in Amsterdam and Zagreb in 2018. Hana is currently pursuing the practice-based PhD in Art at RPI in Troy, NY.

I would like to lead and discuss a selection of experiential practices at the heart of my creative research, and then show excerpts from my in-process, experimental documentary Grief Points. The participatory component of my presentation will consist of awareness-, imagination-, movement-, and relation-focused practices, which exemplify and underpin my overarching interest in the possibility of more interconnected and livable futures through embodied moves towards multi-dimensional intimacy. Grief Points, which features images born out of and referring to such practices, takes a non-linear approach to documenting my four years as a sex worker, offering sessions in what I called transformational domination. The film aims to explore the role of pleasure-filled submission in the ongoing longing for the end of patriarchy and the restoration of the planet. It weaves my personal, psycho-spiritual, creative practices and rituals for unlearning and survival together with the embodied work I did with cis men to invite them into a parallel journey of unlearning.



For Novelty Use Only is a DIY biopunk project that aims to inform the public about the dangers of the unregulated toxic sex toy industry. I have collaborated with a team of artists, biologists, engineers, and STS scholars to transform Nathalie Dubois-Calero's bacterial fabric into "PDA Fabric," a fungal, algal, and bacterial medium made of three simple ingredients. This medium can be made at home and is used to identify the microbiotic inhabitants of a sex toy using only the naked eye. This is a citizen science project, and its attendant "Sexy Microbiotic Field Guide" is available as part of a zine that our team has distributed in order to raise awareness of toxic sex toy materials.

Our Mission Statement: "Our aim is to inform the public about the dangers of the unregulated toxic sex toy industry by promoting sex-positive/LGBT-inclusive education, eco-friendly lifestyles, and the disintegration of sexual shame.

Our goal is to turn consumers towards body-safe, eco-friendly lifetime pieces made of recyclable silicone or natural materials, and to pressure the sex toy industry into abolishing its abominable practice of selling unsustainable, unsafe products that damage consumers and the environment.

Our hope is that by allowing everyday people to learn more about the materials and microorganisms that comprise their sexual accessories, we can facilitate access to a future that is healthier, sexier, and science-ier!"

## HAZELLE LERUM

Hazelle Lerum is a writer, poet and science and technologies studies (STS) scholar from Portland, OR. Her writing has appeared in ANGLES, REALITY BEACH, plain china, and The Mochila Review, and has been featured on the Mochila Chat podcast. As an artist, she engages primarily with words, dirt, rope, and bugs. She is currently collaborating with PhD candidate Hined Rafeh in a bioart project that aims to recenter the materiality of DNA. She receives her B.S. in Science and Technologies Studies from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute this May.

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## HINED RAFEH

Hined A. Rafeh is a HASS fellow and PhD candidate in the RPI STS program, and her research explores genetic data, techno-identities and critical scientific engagement.

She serves as the project lead for the Politicizing DNA group in the Tactical Humanities Lab. Her dissertation examines the legislation of genetic data, with a focus on the commercialization of genetic tests.

"Hands, touching hands; Genes, touching genes"

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) has many forms. The image of DNA is often the double helix, an image that was deduced more than 60 years ago yet was only photographed in 2012. Spit and blood are extracted from people, from which a digital code, the genome, is extracted. This code is then analyzed to test for health, ancestry, and even superhero genes. In this process, the material of DNA, this white mucus, is often absent.

My dissertation on the governance of genetics further reveals the absence of the genome, with only its digital code and results given any consideration. This project brings the physical material of DNA back to the forefront, to see, touch, experiment and perhaps even play with it. I plan on extracting large amounts of DNA from various sources, human and nonhuman, to investigate its physical traits. In contrast to my research that deals with DNA in its many forms, this project focuses on the physical through a series of experiments that ask the following questions: what does DNA feel like? What happens when you dry it, freeze it, burn it? Can you make clothing out of DNA, or paint with it? I will hold a public workshop to invite participants to engage with the completed experiments, and to invite them to engage with DNA face-to-gene. Rather than seeing it through a microscope, let's look at this stringy substance that has made such an impact in biology and society.

From prebiotic times to now, the earth has been constantly transforming. Life –as we know it– is merely one of its incarnations of form.

To visualize this endless transformation of the same basic matter, I employ microbes arriving from and returning to their landscape as a model system for exploring this moving system of material give and take (<https://vimeo.com/199725740>). Despite human notions of threatened termination such as scarcity, toxicity, nuclear apocalypse doomsday clocks, waves of immigration (international or interstellar) threatening colonization, or disaster by biblical, natural, or anthropogenic means, contemporary and ancestral microbes have performed life in all manner of climates, conditions, and material incarnations. They teach us that we are always eternally left with a simple truth: all there ever was, is all there ever will be. In this grand animation of good and bad or right and wrong, the material basis (with or without the bulldozer of 'life' moving around its bits and pieces) is finite. Thus, the Performance is ultimately one of negotiation as the Composition is always already Complete.

## JENIFER WIGHTMAN

Jenifer Wightman is a research scientist specializing in greenhouse gas inventories and life cycle analysis of agriculture, forestry, waste, and bioenergy systems at Cornell University. Her art practice began in 2002 and employs scientific tropes to incite curiosity of biological phenomena and inform an ecological reflexivity.

Her art has been commissioned by NYC parks, featured at the Lincoln Center, BAM, and Imagine Science Festival, and is held in collections such as the Morgan Library, Library of Congress, Gutenberg Museum, Bodmer Museum, and the Danish Royal Library.

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## JENNIFER ZACKIN

For the last 20 years I've been integrating public art, social sculpture, installation, performance, collaboration, ceremony, photography, video, collage and drawing into acts of reverence and reciprocity. Whether wrapping trees in patterns of brightly colored rope, growing medicinal herbs in public gardens for public use, offering large masses of rose petals to oceans and lakes, creating absorbent tentacles out of salvaged materials to aid in the clean-up efforts of toxic spills, I seek to engage and create community in my process, bringing art and ritual into everyday life. Every act is an exploration of exchange, communion, performance, skill-sharing and mark-making.

Mathematically speaking, a torus is a three-dimensional ring or doughnut shaped-object around which energy can flow. As it spins, a vortex forms through its central axis. This pattern can be found throughout the universe in hurricanes, galaxies, and atoms. Nikola Tesla's experiments with energy employed the torus in the development of his famous coil. Thinking this way, Vortex Weaving becomes an inquiry into the potential energy generated through art-life processes.

I began weaving The Vortex a sculptural experiment in 2016. The work began using 2880 feet of rope to weave a 10' tall vortex on a loom I built inside a 10' square space. While working alone I envisioned how others might become engaged in constructing a collaborative work of public art based on the woven torus. The next phase of the project is weaving a social fabric in community, sharing skills, and envisioning the kind of future we strive to collectively shape.

In 2019 I facilitated two communal Vortex Weavings. The first on February 23rd 2019 at The Three Phase Center in Stone Ridge NY with ten visionary women. We dissolved time by performing a group action/ritual in which three hours became a dance of no time creating a technicolor torus. The second communal Vortex Weave happened at Arts, Letters, and Numbers in Averill NY during the summer residency/workshop entitled "REVOLUTION". Over 30 people created the Communal Vortex Weave @ ALN. I am currently scheming, organizing and looking for communities to create Communal Vortex Weave Social Fabric.

I will discuss, *Remedy*, 2018, a permanent public commission that was created for the Breast Imaging Clinic at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. This artwork brings together my interest in herbal remedies and natural treatments and drawing and acts as series of images meant to both subvert big pharma, empower patients and bring a sense of beauty to the women that wait in the clinic often in a state of negative anticipation. This commission comes on the heels of a research based project about the toxic waste in the Buffalo landscape.

Roswell Park is a comprehensive cancer center as was one of the first three comprehensive cancer centers in the United States, a fact that correlates with the high rates of cancer in the region. The drawing depicted in the window panels are of herbs that are found to fight cancer and support women's health.

## JOAN LINDER

Known for drawings packed with thousands, even hundreds of thousands of tiny, energized marks, Linder's large-scale images of quotidian subjects find inspiration from her immediate surroundings. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions at venues including Kunstahallen Brandts, Odense, Denmark, Gwanjgu Art Museum, Bronx Museum, Queens Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Her curatorial practice includes co-curating *Hot Spots: Radioactivity in the Landscape*, on display at the Krannert Museum at University of Illinois Urbana Champaign through March 2020. Linder is Chair and Professor of Drawing in the Department of Art at the University at Buffalo SUNY.

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## JUDE ABU ZINEH

Jude Abu Zaineh (MFA, University of Windsor) is a Palestinian-Canadian multidisciplinary artist and cultural worker. Her practice relies on the use of art, food, and technology to investigate meanings of culture, displacement, diaspora, and belonging. She's interested in ideals of home and community while working to develop aesthetics rooted in her childhood and upbringing in a muslim environment in the Middle East. Abu Zaineh has exhibited her work internationally across: São Luis and Lisbon, Portugal; Mexico City; NYC, USA; Toronto, London, and Windsor, Canada; and was one of the first artists to participate in collaborative residency with the Ontario Science Centre and MOCA Toronto (Canada). She is currently pursuing her PhD in Electronic Arts at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

*judeaz.com*

Palestinian-Canadian artist Jude Abu Zaineh uses a multidisciplinary approach to discuss nostalgia, home, and place-making. Maqlouba (a traditional Palestinian dish) is at the heart of her work in an attempt to understand transnationalism and cultural identity. Abu Zaineh's research into immigrant food practices allows her to further explore what it means for Palestinians to exist in a migratory space of "in-betweenness"; attempting to conform and adapt to the cultures and traditions of their new homesteads while maintaining a connection to their Palestinian heritage and identity.

Her socially engaged work examines the use of traditional Palestinian foods as an alternate platform by which people can enter into an informal conversation around personal and collective stories, memories and shared experiences surrounding cultural, historical, political discourse, and community. Home is Where the Maqlouba is: An Overview of a Bioart workshop is a retelling of a project started in Windsor, Canada (2018) at the INCUBATOR Lab, and the impact of this multidisciplinary approach. In the workshop, participants were introduced to Maqlouba, an overview of bioart within the discourse of contemporary art, and followed approaches similar to Abu Zaineh's own practice in the bioart lab to produce their own petri-dish artworks using leftovers from their Maqlouba lunch.

Gurgles, Guesses, and Ghosts in the Machine: Art  
and 'Artificial Ignorance'

In this talk, Katherine Behar will present a selection of her recent artworks that continue her low-fi critique of high-tech culture under an umbrella project called "Artificial Ignorance."

By positing that ignorance in AI is a feature not a bug, "Artificial Ignorance" theorizes the unprecedented capacities of digital technologies together with the fuzzy analog irregularities that persist—and even proliferate—in them. This reonymic approach to understanding AI technologies inverts expectations that "intelligence" and knowledge production would be core functions of digital computational practices. Instead, "Artificial Ignorance" asks such questions as: of what to remain willfully ignorant? How do AI-enabled interactions script humans into ignorance? How do AI technologies overlap with and differ from the autonomic filtering capacities of human cognition? Approaching these questions in their ethical dimension, "Artificial Ignorance" explores specifically how AI-enabled systems are perhaps most human-like in implementation; that is when, like us, they fail to live up to intelligence's ideals, and behave ignorantly.

In this short presentation, Behar will discuss a public performance on ferry boats in which an artificial neural network exchanges water-logged messages with the Atlantic Ocean, a blockchain guessing game between two Alexas, and a new robotic installation that transforms empty office chairs into despondent driverless vehicles.

**KATHERINE BEHAR**

Katherine Behar's interactive installations, videos, performances, and writings explore gender and labor in digital culture. Her work appears regularly throughout North America and Europe, and received a comprehensive survey exhibition at Pera Museum, Istanbul, in 2016. Additional solo exhibitions include Backups (2019), Anonymous Autonomous (2018), E-Waste (2014, catalog/traveling), and numerous others collaborating as "Disorientalism." Her books include Object-Oriented Feminism, Bigger than You: Big Data and Obesity, and And Another Thing: Nonanthropocentrism and Art. Based in Brooklyn, she is Associate Professor of New Media Arts at Baruch College and the CUNY Graduate Center.

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## **KATHLEEN MCDERMOTT**

Kathleen McDermott is a media artist with a background in installation and sculpture. She holds a BFA in Sculpture from Cornell University, an MFA in Creative Media from City University of Hong Kong, and a Ph.D. in Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). She is currently an Industry Assistant Professor of Integrated Digital Media (IDM) at NYU Tandon, in the department of Technology, Culture, and Society (TCS).

Her work has been featured in a range of major publications, including The Wall Street Journal, Huffington Post, and Dezeen, and has been exhibited internationally.

Urban Armor is a series of playful wearable electronic pieces combining craft and sculpture techniques with open-source electronics to build video-based narratives of a strange present and future. A recurring theme in the series is the relationship between technology, the body, and personal and public space, grounded in the belief that absurdity can be an appropriate response to technologically-enabled feelings of anxiety and alienation.

My experience performing, documenting and sharing videos of these works has included moments that eluded control, such as when Urban Armor #2: The Personal Space Dress, a dress that opens when someone comes too close to it, was picked up by major news outlets and presented as a product. This and other first-hand experiences of presenting work in the public-sphere, has led me to further consider the role of narrative and the media in building myths around technology. I'm increasingly interested in the stories we tell about technological objects, and their ability to do the same about us. My recent work investigates the relationship between technology, family, and memory, particularly the ways in which remote communications penetrate our homes and intimate relationships.



Relational Autonomy: Towards a Feminist  
Ethicopolitics of Harm Reduction

I study harm reduction as a practical philosophy of everyday life. I would enjoy speaking with feminist theorists and artists about the feminist potentials of this ever-changing social movement. Harm reduction is becoming pervasive, anchored in drug-user unions and self-organized collectives; but it is also being absorbed into public health and criminal (in)justice governance. This talk stages some of the dilemmas of harm reduction for feminists, and invites a conversation about the limits and possibilities of collective care, trauma-infused treatment, and harm reduction infrastructure.

**NANCY D. CAMPBELL**

Nancy D. Campbell is Professor and Department Head of Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer in Troy, New York. Her books are: *OD: Naloxone and the Politics of Overdose Prevention* (MIT Press, 2020); *Gendering Addiction: The Politics of Drug Treatment in a Neurochemical World* (co-authored with Elizabeth Ettorre; Palgrave, 2011); *Discovering Addiction: The Science and Politics of Substance Abuse Research* (University of Michigan Press, 2007); *The Narcotic Farm: The Rise and Fall of America's First Prison for Drug Addicts* (co-authored with JP Olsen and Luke Walden; Abrams, 2008); and *Using Women: Gender, Drug Policy, and Social Justice* (Routledge, 2000).

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## RYDER COOLEY

Ryder Cooley is an inter-disciplinary artist, musician and performer. Weaving together chimeric visions with music, movement and imagery, her work places themes of hybridity, human-animal relations, and environmental awareness within contemporary juxtapositions of wilderness and urban decay. Based in Catskill NY, Ryder performs with the dark carnival band Dust Bowl Faeries and with Hazel, a disembodied taxidermy ram who is summonsed to life through music and performance.

Ryder holds an MFA from Rensselaer Polytechnic and a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Ryder has performed, exhibited and practiced internationally at organizations including: Museum of World Culture (Sweden), El Paso Museum of Art, Robert Wilson Watermill Center, NY MOMA-PS1, White Box & Exit Art galleries, Basilica, Hudson Hall, Dorsky Museum, PS21, Proctors, EMPAC, Yerba Buena Center, Theater Artaud, El Visio Theater (Mexico), McDowell Colony, Blue Mountain Center & Yaddo, with additional public art projects in Indonesia, El Salvador, France and the Czech Republic.

## Re-Framing Parasitism

At FEMeeting I would like to present photos and videos from my bio-art performance project Leech House, followed by a conversation about human parasitism and how we can move through the world leech-fully as generous parasites. Leech House is a symbiotic transference ritual whereby the human parasite becomes guardian host to the hermaphroditic leech, inviting the leech to feast upon and thereby cleanse her blood with hirudin venom and gender neutralizing verve.

In this ritual, the performer subverts her gender by opting to feed vampiric leeches with blood, suggesting a departure from the conventional gender mandate to nurture/feed the human infant/parasite via lactation. In exchange, the leech offers the medicinal hirudin peptide in this re-presentation of parasitism as symbiotic practice.

Hirudo leeches are unisex aquatic creatures who feed upon mammalian blood. They have been utilized since ancient times in Ayurveda (along with turmeric) and a number of natural medical practices/treatments for their anti-coagulant, anesthetic and anti-inflammatory salivary secretions. Medicinal leeches were harvested to near extinction throughout Europe in the early 1800's until modern medicine replaced them with synthetic variations. Leech House is a work-in-progress collaboration with Dina Shirin (performance/photography), Sarah Pezdeck (photography), Elise Passavant (videography), Annette Bragas (make-up/photo assistant), Corey Aldrich (photography/production), Lee Free (sound), Kahn-Selesnick (photography). If selected for FEMeeting, would be happy to invite one or more of my collaborators to participate in the conversation.

I would like to present an overview of my work, centering on the transformational potential of listening and the premise that listening engenders responsibility. To listen, whether to another, or to the sound of wind moving through the branches of a tree, is to enter into an embodied, physical relationship with that other, and such a relationship implies – demands – responsiveness.

As a sound artist, I believe that listening and sound are uniquely suited areas in which to ground creative re-imaginings of the world around and within us.

In one ongoing performance-research project, I explore interspecies listening through a process of “vocal becoming.” Beginning with field recordings of plants, insects, and other animals, I use digital investigation and vocal performance to playfully re-embody the sounds of these non-human others. Listening is also central to my long personal engagement with instruction scores, via printed booklets, mediated soundwalks and a generative website. Recently, I co-authored a mobile web-app for mindful listening that guides users to open their ears as they move through public spaces via text-based prompts and strategies for listening. In all of my work, I aim to develop audiences and participants’ sensorial attunement to their surroundings, and themselves.

In the context of FEMeeting Troy, I would like to further explore what can be uncovered through embodied and technological practices of listening to (and with) the soundscapes of North Troy.

## STEPHANIE LOVELESS

Stephanie Loveless is a sound and media artist whose research centers on listening and vocal embodiment. Her recent projects include a mobile web-app of listening prompts, and sound works that channel the voices of plants, animals, and musical divas. Her sound, video, and performance work has been presented in festivals, galleries, museums and artist-run centers worldwide.

She holds a certificate in Deep Listening, and MFAs from Bard College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Currently, she teaches courses at the intersection of Deep Listening, well-being, and ecologically-oriented art at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

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## STEPHANIE ROTHENBERG

Stephanie Rothenberg's interdisciplinary art draws from digital culture, science and economics to explore relationships between human designed systems and biological ecosystems. She has exhibited throughout the US and internationally in venues including Eyebeam (US), Sundance Film Festival (US), Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art / MASS MoCA (US), House of Electronic Arts / HeK (CH), LABoral (ES), Transmediale (DE), and ZKM Center for Art & Media (DE).

She is Associate Professor in the Department of Art at SUNY Buffalo where she co-directs the Platform Social Design Lab, an interdisciplinary design studio collaborating with local social justice organizations.

Soft, fleshy and viscous, the oyster is a magnificent and extremely talented creature of the sea. Almost extinct by the mid 20th century, one tiny 2-inch organism can filter up to 50 gallons of water per day. Its shell reefs provide natural shoreline armoring against sea level rise. And legends speak wonders of its euphoric powers. So what if we bioengineered this magical species to filter all our polluted waters and convert that toxic liquid into an aphrodisia-inducing fluid for pesky humans?

For FEMeeting, I will present "Aphrodisiac in the Machine," a multiplatform project that explores the contradictions of "natural capital" and how it is produced into ecosystem services through the commodification of nonhuman life. Merging fact and fiction, the project plays on the libidinous myth of the oyster, a hermaphroditic organism, being bioengineered in a futuristic aquaculture farm. In the narrative, technology is eroticized as the intersexual cyborg oysters convert toxic water into an aphrodisia-inducing fluid that is piped into municipal water sources.

For my talk I will give a brief overview of two projects: The first is in inquiry into the practices of pioneering electronic music composers Pauline Oliveros, Maryanne Amacher and Daphne Oram. With this project I propose that each engaged feminist strategies that emphasized the body and situatedness to create groundbreaking electronic music-making techniques. I argue that their practices were an early articulation of feminist materialisms. Through a feminist materialist lens, we can see that each pointed to the importance of corporeal situatedness in the development of technical knowledge and research creation, and blurred subject/object and naturecultural binaries with their work.

I will also present my organization TECHNE. TECHNE seeks to engender inclusivity in the technology and music-making fields. To achieve our goals we have designed a curriculum that emphasizes the feminist principles of speculation, relational knowledge, corporeal contextualization and coalition building. I propose that adhering to these principles, and adopting curricula that embodies them, allows us to intervene upon practices that perpetuate toxic, techno-masculinist learning environments and reinforce hegemonic structures.

## SUZANNE THORPE

Suzanne Thorpe, Ph.D., is a sound artist, researcher and educator. She creates site-situated compositions with a variety of media and technology, and performs electroacoustic flute. Thorpe's work draws upon traditions of acoustic ecology, soundscape, land art, and improvisation, and her research intersects feminist materialisms and systems theory. She is also a Deep Listening instructor, having studied in depth with American Composer and Deep Listening Founder Pauline Oliveros.

Thorpe has performed, published and exhibited her work internationally, and has earned numerous awards, grants and residencies. She is also co-founder of TECHNE, an initiative that promotes inclusiveness through creative-driven technology projects.

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## TAMAR GORDON

Tamar Gordon is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Communication and Media. Her research and teaching broadly encompass ethnographic methods; religious globalization through media and the history, theory and production of documentary film.

For the past 2 years I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork on the trans-Atlantic Euro-American community of spiritualist mediums, specifically how mediums and adherents are achieving visibility, creating community and collaboratively producing evidence of consciousness after death, through digital media and in person. Contemporary Euro-American spiritualist practice is a comprehensive, cultural methodology that is part of a continuous tradition dating from the mid-19th century. This western version iterates the universal human capacity to achieve altered states of consciousness that enable communication with the unseen world of the afterlife.

Spiritualism has enthusiastically endorsed 21st century technologies and scientific research, just as it did in the 19th and early 20th centuries. While faithfully maintaining original methods and paraphernalia (photography, cabinets, trumpets, instruments, luminescent paint, the ectoplasmic body), 21st century mediums also embrace online platforms like Skype, Messenger, Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook to produce evidence of afterlife communication. Presence is a concept that works both culturally, in the sense of spirit presence, and theoretically in virtual reality studies as a concept in which the body is anchored in the haptic sense of physical location and "being-there." In the spiritualist worldview, the internet is another ethereal realm, a technology of spirit sui generis that is equally capable of tapping the vibrational energies of participants to produce multi-sensorily experienced evidence of spirit.

By immersing myself in virtual and in-person sittings, seances and trance mediumship trainings, I submit myself to the same situations as developing mediums, learning to reproduce their embodied responses to phenomena - phenomena that are considered impossible, exotic and intransigent within western frameworks. In the spirit of radical spectral immersion do not approach supernatural truth claims as a skeptic. Rather, I view Spirit as taken for granted reality that requires specific conditions and qualities to bring about the border-crossing.





GUEST SPEAKERS

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## Being "Oneself"

### MARTA DE MENEZES

Marta de Menezes is a Portuguese artist with a degree in Fine Arts by the University in Lisbon, a MSt in History of Art and Visual Culture by the University of Oxford, and a PhD candidate at the University of Leiden. She has been exploring the intersection between Art and Biology, working in research laboratories demonstrating that new biological technologies can be used as new art medium. In 1999 de Menezes created her first biological artwork (Nature?) by modifying the wing patterns of live butterflies. Since then, she has used diverse biological techniques including functional MRI of the brain to create portraits where the mind can be visualised (Functional Portraits, 2002); fluorescent DNA probes to create micro-sculptures in human cell nuclei (nucleArt, 2002); sculptures made of proteins (Proteic Portrait, 2002-2007), DNA (Innercloud, 2003; The Family, 2004) or incorporating live neurons (Tree of Knowledge, 2005) or bacteria (Decon, 2007). Her work has been presented internationally in exhibitions, articles and lectures. She is currently the artistic director of Ectopia, an experimental art laboratory in Lisbon, and Director of Cultivamos Cultura in the South of Portugal.

<http://martademenezes.com>

Being "Oneself" is inextricably connected to the impossibility of not changing, about the perpetual impermanence and the process of becoming. As we become aware of the need to change in our world, in our planet, in our lives, it feels to me, that it is necessary to remember that life is a dynamic process. Sometimes things happen to us and have an impact comparable to a transformation. A transformation is an extreme, radical change. The unavoidability of changes is a constant awareness we have throughout our lives. We may not always be aware of it, and often just expend so much energy avoiding this "law of nature" that we forget that it exists and start thriving for stability. Life is a consistent process of transformation and adaptation, of becoming. Art, more than any other human endeavour is a reflection of this aspect of life and therefore the best way to remember the process of being something different, something else, something more, or something less, even while becoming ourselves.

The unavoidability of changes is a constant awareness (maybe unconscious) we have throughout our multiple lives. We are a composite, of things, of beings. We are ourselves, we are others. We are cycles, in perpetual transformation and becoming something else, something that will, hopefully encourage growth and new beginnings, better beginnings.

## Menopause Batteries and Endocrine Piracy

In the realm of mainstream cultural commentary menopause is enjoying a moment, an important one that dares to speak its name, discuss and parlez its vicissitudes but generally in terms that do little to change imposed traditional constructions of female corporal experience, ie, symptomising and medicalising. The stoppage of menses and the complex cascades of physiological, psychic and expressive effects and affects are little acknowledged or explored.

My project is one of reframing menopause, a utopian vision and enactment, an extant, celebratory articulating that revels in re-cognising the energetic potentialities of the marvelous shift by holding an embracing and inclusive purview.

### **KIRA O'REILLY**

Kira O' Reilly is a London based artist; her practice, both willfully interdisciplinary and entirely undisciplined, stems from a visual art background; it employs performance, biotechnical practices and writing with which to consider speculative reconfigurations around The Body. But she is no longer sure if she even does that anymore. Since graduating from the University of Wales Institute Cardiff in 1998 her work has been exhibited widely throughout the UK, Europe, Australia, China and Mexico. She has presented at conferences and symposia on both live art and science, art and technology interfaces. She has been a visiting lecturer in the UK and Australia and U.S.A in visual art, drama and dance. Most recent new works have seen her practice develop across several contexts from art, science and technology to performance, live art and movement work.

*<http://www.kiraoreilly.com/>*



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