

# Beyond Binaries: Towards New Constructs of Personhood and Gender

December 9, 2017, 1-7pm



Ryan Hammond, *Open Source Gendercodes*, 2015-ongoing, digital collage



Terike Haapoja and Laura Gustafsson, *Museum of Nonhumanity*, 2016. Photo by Terike Haapoja.

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) and the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York present *Beyond Binaries: Towards New Constructs of Personhood and Gender*, a symposium that approaches the challenge of deconstructing two central binaries of Western culture: binary gender and the human-animal divide. How are the cultural constructs of gender and humanity/animality manifested and reified in science and law? How are these constructs intertwined with struggles to dismantle current day racism and cisheterosexism—bias that reinforces gender-normativity—and how can we form new ways of understanding? These questions are addressed from the vantage points of visual art, theory, and activism, by four speakers.

The first session of the symposium's three-hour seminar will focus on politics of gender through the practices of new media artist Ryan Hammond and political theorist Heath Fogg Davis. The second session will address the notion of humanity and animality through presentations by artist Terike Haapoja and researcher and author Syl Ko.

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The seminar will be followed by a workshop led by Ryan Hammond, in which participants will perform genetic modification of plants to introduce genes for human steroid hormone production as part of their ongoing project, *Open Source Gendercodes*. The workshop will be accompanied by music, drinks and snacks. It is free and open to the public.

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#beyondbinaries

This event is curated by Terike Haapoja and Ryan Hammond and co-organized by the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York and the International Studio & Curatorial Program.

This program is supported, in part, by Finnish Cultural Institute in New York, New York City Council District 34, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

## Speaker's biographies

Ryan Hammond is a new media artist living and working in Baltimore. Their work explores the myth of scientific objectivity by focusing on the often-unseen interplay between scientific advancement and cultural production, technological progress and desire. They will present research into the historical development of hormone production technologies, and their entanglements with efforts to eliminate queer, gender non-conforming, non-reproductive behaviors—as well as increase heterosexual prowess and enable lifelong performance of sanctioned masculinities and femininities.

Heath Fogg Davis is the author of *Beyond Trans: Does Gender Matter* (NYU Press, 2017), a book that offers practical guidance to individuals and organizations on how to develop trans-inclusive policies that are institutionally smart. He is a professor at Temple University, where he teaches and conducts research on antidiscrimination law and policy. He also consults with businesses, schools, healthcare providers, and non-profits on trans-inclusion.

Syl Ko is an independent researcher based in Portland, Maine and is one-half of the vegan activist duo Aphro-ism. Along with her sister Aph Ko she co-authored *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism and Black Veganism*. Ko studied philosophy at San Francisco State University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Her work focuses on the co-presence of marginalized human populations, nonhuman animals and sentient landscapes in racial oppression.

Terike Haapoja is a visual artist based in New York. Haapoja's large-scale installation work, writing and political projects investigate the mechanics of othering with a specific focus on issues arising from the anthropocentric world view of western modernism. The *Museum of Nonhumanity*, a recent ongoing project in collaboration with Laura Gustafsson examines the way the human / animal boundary and dehumanization has been used to justify abuse.

### About Finnish Cultural Institute in New York:

The Finnish Cultural Institute in New York operates in the fields of contemporary art, design and architecture, creating dialogue between Finnish and American professionals and audiences. FCINY and ISCP have an ongoing partnership with the Alfred Kordelin Foundation that enables residencies at ISCP for Finnish or Finland-based artists. More information at [www.fciny.org](http://www.fciny.org).

### About ISCP:

ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program and fourth largest in the world, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.