

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR COMPUTER INTO AN OASIS

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR MESS INTO CLEANLINESS

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR BODY INTO A SHELL

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR CRUSH INTO A DATE

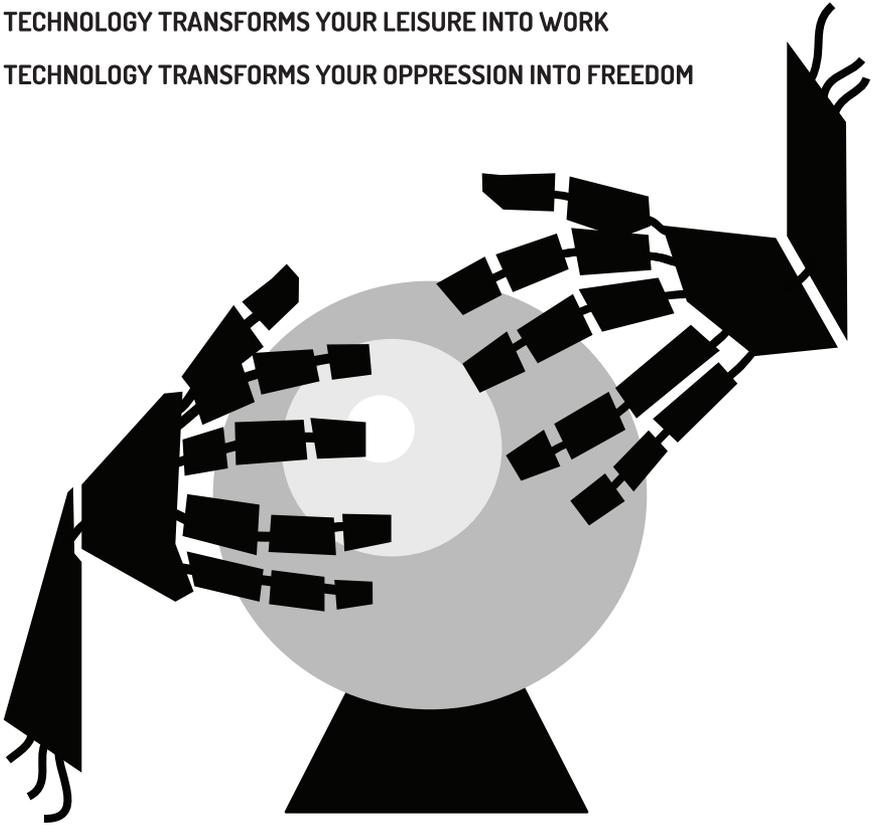
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR LONGING INTO LUST

TRANSFORMS YOUR EXPECTATIONS INTO ENTITLEMENT

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR SCREEN INTO A STAGE

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR LEISURE INTO WORK

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS YOUR OPPRESSION INTO FREEDOM



# FEMBOT

Friday • August 24, 2018 • 7-10 pm • The Back of the Hand



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## Part One

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Trailer for NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism  
by Hyphen-Labs (00:54)

Killin It Sells  
by RAFiA SANTANA (02:52)

Screen Bodies  
by Sweatmother (06:31)

Happy Ending (Onegai, Onegai, Onegai, Let Me Get What I Want)  
by Son Kit (05:37)

Linqox Criss on The River Ilissus  
by Amanda Turner Pohan (09:47)

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## Intermission

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Build the Love You Deserve  
by Fei Liu (15-20:00)

Touch  
by Sweatmother (loop)

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## Part Two

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You Are Now Running On Reserve Battery Power  
by Jessie Stead (11:28)

Make a Computer  
by Saki Sato (03:38)

Her Type  
by Masha Vlasova (04:28)

A Tour of the Self Cleaning House  
by Lily Benson (11:07)



# Fembot

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## Videos About Technology by Women and Non-Binary Artists

### Curated by Saki Sato

More than half a century ago, early video pioneers like Joan Jonas and Dara Birnbaum used nascent video technology to liberate themselves from the male-dominated, commodity-driven art world.

In our ever-changing technological landscape, how do women and non-binary artists use this medium today? What can technology do for them and how can it transform them – for better or worse?

Through video and performance, ten artists show us how technology acts as their savior, oppressor, and/or banal source of entertainment.

## Artists

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### Hyphen-Labs

#### NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism

2016, Trailer for a Virtual Reality Experience, 1 min.

#### STATEMENT:

“NeuroSpeculative AfroFeminism” is a transmedia exploration told through speculative product design, emerging technologies, cognitive research, and transhumanism. Created by and for women of color, Hyphen-Labs presents a multi-layered possible future that transcends the constraints of the present; a realm which The New Yorker has called “another plane of consciousness.”

Hyphen-Labs and its collaborators designed a roster of products —such as earrings that can record police altercations and clothing that thwarts facial recognition— thematically rooted in security, protection, and visibility. The virtual reality experience is the first chapter of a science fiction story placing you in a “neurocosmetology lab” where black women are the pioneers of

brain optimization. Here, instead of ordinary braids, customers are fitted with transcranial electrodes that allow access to a surreal digital temple blending the physical with the digital.

**BIO:**

Hyphen-Labs is an international team of women of color working at the intersection of technology, art, science, and the future. Through our global vision and unique perspectives we are driven to create meaningful and engaging ways to explore emotional, human-centered and speculative design. In the process we challenge conventions and stimulate conversations, placing collective needs and experiences at the center of evolving narratives.

**RAFiA SANTANA**

**Killin It Sells**

2018, Music Video, 3 min.

**STATEMENT:**

October - December 2017. RAFiA exhibited animations in the Museum of the Moving Image x GIPHY Arts installation: The GIF Elevator. She requested to document her work in the space with Jovon Outlaw. They shot a little extra footage...

**BIO:**

RAFiA SANTANA is a Brooklyn-based multimedia artist specializing in graphic design, photography, animation, wordplay, music production, vocal performance, and multi-sensory stimulation as means to bend perception and deliver comedic honesty.

Her images and musical performances tackle topics of gentrification and the regularity of white violence while hypnotizing her audience with vibrant looping animations and catchy rhythms because she understands that the deepest learning happens when you're engaged and entertained.

RAFiA also operates a fundraising initiative #PAYBLACKTiME that challenges people to individualize Reparations. Using her marketing skills and online network of followers, friends, and supporters she raised \$10,000 she then used to send food orders and various means of support to Black & Brown people across the United States.

RAFiA has exhibited her work at the Schomburg Center for Research in

Black Culture, MoCADA, Tate Britain, and the Museum of the Moving Image. She has been featured in Teen Vogue, Paper Magazine, VICE, Topical Cream Magazine, and other leading publications. She has performed & participated in panels, discussions, and events at Pratt Institute's Department of Digital Arts, Newspace Center for Photography, Afrotectopia at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, & MoMA PS1.

## **Sweatmother (Sarah Brown)**

### **Screen Bodies**

2018, Video, 7 min.

#### **STATEMENT:**

Screen Bodies: when technology that has a screen begins to construct a form of a body and personhood, storing information and communicating with you via its form and functions - retaining fragments of yourself and others that leave remnants of digital identity behind long after their physical extinction.

#### **BIO:**

As a moving image artist, Brown experiments with various mediums, including found footage, performance and video. Browns moving image works re-evaluate cinematic conventions and explore alternative narratives to queer identities, feminisms and womxn-identifying representations. Working primarily in their bedroom, they use green screen effects, Internet found footage and performance to construct new spaces and environments in which these under-represented identities can be visible within a safe space of exploration. By using audio-visual disjunction in their work, Brown reclaims the often misplaced voice, body and gaze by repurposing femme and gender non conforming identities in spaces where objectification is removed, and the agency and difference in the otherness is celebrated.

Presently, Brown is employed as a Director of Photography for an array of artists as well as studying internationally in London, earning their M.A. in Experimental Film at The Kingston School of Art.

## **Son Kit**

### **Happy Ending (Onegai, Onegai, Onegai, Let Me Get What I Want)**

2016, Video, 6 min.

**STATEMENT:**

“Happy Ending (Onegai, Onegai, Onegai, Let Me Get What I Want)” examines the two-fold nature of East Asian fetishism: that of the Asian Female Body™ and that of Asian technologies. The external presentation of the Asian Female Body™ encases, obscures, or sabotages a fully-fledged internality, a discrepancy mirrored by the sensory deprivation tank, whose primary purpose is to isolate its user from the outside world. The machine’s eventual subsummation of its user collapses weaponization and imprisonment, allegorizing the inseparability of lived and perceived experiences.

“Happy Ending” also seeks to complicate the monolith of Asian identity. The video offers what is understood to be a “Japanese” tableau, whether in the language of the audio or in references to anime culture. For decades, Japan has served as a stand-in for a collectivist, feminine East, alternately deified and condemned as an advanced state marked by robotics, sexual deviancy, and robots used for sexual deviancy: a digital-scape to be “jacked into.” However, any viewer with working knowledge of Japanese will hear that the audio is a poor translation—syntactically illegible, ham-fisted and algorithmic. The saleswoman’s voice remains pleasant, even as it threatens. “Happy Ending” is a techno-orientalism that complains, an A.I. uprising where the Artificial Intelligences are Actually Existing Humans who have been denied the entirety of their humanity.

**BIO:**

Son Kit is an artist and curator originally spawned in Los Angeles, CA. Utilizing video, illustration, installation, and text, Kit leverages climate change fantasy to explore non-binary second-gen yellow narratives in pursuit of a New Canon of Korean-American Science Fiction Authored Entirely by Them. Common themes include evolution, anthropomorphization, war/machines, mythology, and translation.

Recent exhibitions include “Anthropiscine War Machine” at SOHO20, “OUR GREAT LEADER WILL NUKE YOU” at SPRING/BREAK Art Show 2018, and “Speculative Skins” at the Naughton Gallery in Belfast. They are a co-founder of Codify Art, a multidisciplinary collective of, and platform for, QTPOC artists; and of EST, a research collective investigating the intersection of Asia, technology, and racialized futurisms.

**Amanda Turner Pohan**

**Linqox Criss on The River Ilissus**

2017, Video, 10 min.

**STATEMENT:**

This project is the second iteration in a four part series of installations that follow Linqox Criss – a female presenting avatar created in 2005 by a queer, cis-male user in the online world Second Life. At its peak, Second Life was robust with 21.5 million users, which has since dwindled to 60,000. Linqox Criss has since remained in the purgatory of digital ghosts within the server room, a revenant detached from the body of her user.

For “Linqox Criss on The River Ilissus,” the avatar has been reactivated and teleported to the Second Life location known as “Ancient Greece,” where she encounters Phaedrus, another avatar, who narrates the origin story of the cicada – a cautionary tale of pleasure and obsession, as told to him by Socrates. A ubiquitous symbol of immortality, the cicada finds a mirror in the digital perpetuity of Second Life, where avatars can be created but never die.

Expanding on how gender can be perceived vocally, Linqox Criss is embodied in the voice of artist Oli Rodriguez, a queer trans man whose hormonal balance has been altered by testosterone. The voice of Phaedrus is played by Amanda Evans, and includes her original translation in ancient Greek of the Platonic myth, creating a parallel between the dead language and the computer code that has allowed for the generation of this online world. The video also features an original score by vocalist Kamala Sankaram – an interpretation of the continuous drum of the cicada’s song. Through this project, Pohan plays with both the definition of gender, as well as the definition of a body – what it is to be assigned or assumed, and blurring the physical and conceptual limitations of each.

**BIO:**

Pohan (Amanda Turner Pohan, b.1985, New Jersey, USA) received a BFA from The School of Visual Arts and an MFA from Hunter College. Pohan is currently working on “The Linqox Criss Cycle,” a five-part series of installations detailing the journey of Second Life avatar Linqox Criss as she slips between digital and physical embodiment. In addition, Pohan is founder of TWOFORTY, a loft apartment project space and publishing house in South Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

## **Fei Liu**

### **Build the Love You Deserve**

Live Performance, 15-20 min.

#### **STATEMENT:**

The “Build the Love You Deserve” performance is a peek inside the relationship between the artist and her do-it-yourself robotic boyfriend, Gabriel2052. It takes place in an intimate setting and audience members are encouraged to interact with the story and manipulate its plot. By using such techniques, the artist invites the participants to consider and challenge the future of a smart robotics industry centered on male pleasure. She proposes an alternative trajectory – one that empowers female knowledge and embodiment through making.

#### **BIO:**

Fei Liu is a designer, artist, educator, and writer investigating the opposing realities of our techno-social everyday. Her work questions how digital interfaces and networked technologies construct new futures, facilitate and fragment intimacy, and create opportunities while maintaining inequality.

Fei is currently an artist-in-residence at Nokia Bell Labs and an adjunct professor at Parsons, MFA Design and Technology. Previous residencies include Researcher in Residence at NEW INC, IdeasCity x Athens, and Akademie Schloss Solitude in Germany.

## **Jessie Stead**

### **You Are Now Running On Reserve Battery Power**

2011, Video, 12 min.

#### **STATEMENT:**

An unidentified non-tagonist hazily shares a waking dream with her power-deprived personal computer. A desktop noir co-starring users of the Chatroulette.com™ site in a random parade of webcam field recordings. Like hitchhikers in an old-fashioned road movie, these strangers born of mouse clicks briefly inhabit a sequence of overlapping zones in various states of undress and intoxication. This low battery neo-nocturne is a late-nite spin-off of the Today! episodics.

“You Are Now Running On Reserve Battery Power. Please connect your computer to AC power. If you do not, your computer will go to sleep in a few minutes to preserve the contents of memory.” (Apple Inc.)

**BIO:**

Jessie Stead (NY, Bard MFA '07) works in overlapping patterns of cinema, installation, music, collaboration and other forms of cross-disciplined art. Stead is the experimental percussionist in the art-band Hairbone (formerly Haribo).

## **Saki Sato**

### **Make a Computer**

2018, Video, 4 min.

**STATEMENT:**

A fictional story with real-world concerns: two unseen characters devise a way to create a newer, better computer named “Genesis.” The video is composed primarily of a subtitled conversation between these characters and a loose cover of “November Rain” by Guns N’ Roses. Trying to tell a story about people, without people, the video relies on music, dialogue, and a few choice stock images to create a mini-drama.

**BIO:**

Saki Sato is a co-founder of The Hand, an artist-run exhibition space based in Brooklyn, NY. She attended the Cooper Union School of Fine Arts (BA '10) and participated in the CCA Kitakyushu Research Program in Japan (2012-13). Besides making video and sculpture, she works as a web developer and is the guitarist for an all-Japanese girl band called Hard Nips.

## **Masha Vlasova**

### **Her Type**

2017, Video, 5 min.

**STATEMENT:**

“Her Type” opens with my mother loading a selfie of me into FaceApp—a smartphone application that generates realistic transformations of

photographic portraits. She adds a “male” filter to the picture. With the “male” filter, my selfie resembles a portrait of my Russian father, now deceased, when he was my age. The image creates an opportunity for my mother to express her desire for me (via the image of me as my father), while my camera frames my mother’s image, fetishizing it. “Her Type” explores submerged sexual desire between camera and her subject, image and her viewer, mother and her daughter.

**BIO:**

Masha Vlasova (b. Saratov, Russia; lives Denton, TX) is an interdisciplinary artist, who often works at the intersection of visual art and documentary. She is a recipient the Fulbright Fellowship in Film-making awarded for research toward the production of a film-essay “Monuments and Other Things that Change.” In 2015 she was awarded Alice Kimball Fellowship and the JUNCTURE Art and Human Rights Fellowship at Yale Law School to pursue an ongoing research project focused on poetry and protest in contemporary Russia. In collaboration with the Center of Documentary Research at Indiana University and IU Cinema, she is co-curating a film screening series titled “Women Filmmakers at the Intersection of Documentary, Video Art, and Avant Garde,” programmed for Fall 2018. Her works have been exhibited and screened at Smack Mellon, Anthology Archives, and Abrons Arts Center in New York, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, and Leeds College of Art, UK. Her forthcoming essay about monument rotation in the Kyrgyz Republic will be published in Monument Culture in 2018.

## **Lily Benson**

### **A Tour of the Self Cleaning House**

2015, Video, 11 minutes.

Written, Directed, & Animated by Lily Benson

Music: Doron Sadj, Voiceover: Kellie Fitzgerald

**STATEMENT:**

The Self Cleaning House is a patented invention by Francis Gabe of Newberg, Oregon, USA. The house has been widely celebrated and recognized as an accomplishment for women’s role in science and as a clever method to liberate women from housework. It was even partially reconstructed in the Women’s Museum in Dallas, Texas.

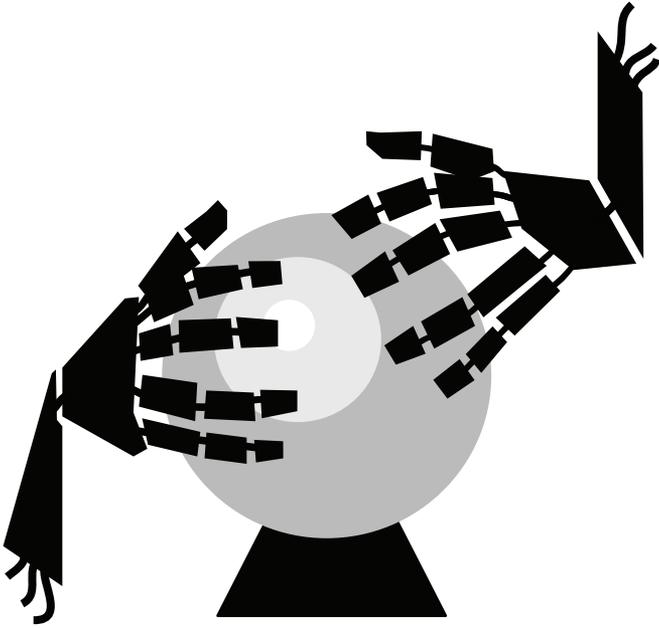
When I visited the prototype that Francis Gabe was still occupying in 2007, I discovered that the actual realization of the invention idea was a minor disaster. It was cluttered and hazardous, which made it difficult to believe that the home had ever been a working invention.

In this video, 3D rendered environments were constructed to create the fantasy version of the Self Cleaning House as a fully functional home, based on the ideas laid out in its patent. There is an odd disparity between the importance of The Self Cleaning House as a concept, versus its condition in reality.

**BIO:**

Lily Benson is a filmmaker and visual artist. Her work examines feminist history and reconstructs it into new narrative forms. She currently works on special projects for The New York Times and recently launched a creative agency, Genic. Her moving images have appeared at places like the Louisiana Museum, CPH:DOX, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and Nicolai Wallner Gallery.





## Credits

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Screening Program for “Fembot” published by The Hand, 2018

Cover design and illustration by Maren Miller



The Hand is an artist-run exhibition space in Brooklyn, NY founded by Maren Miller and Saki Sato. We show the work of emerging and under-represented artists, with particular emphasis on experimental, unfinished, and unsellable projects.

For more information, email us at [info@thehand.space](mailto:info@thehand.space).

We are located at 601 Wilson Ave., Brooklyn, NY.