

## Panel C2

Sala delle Colonne 1

### More Perspectives on Women and Animation

Ruth Richards

#### Animating Feminist Theory – The Body and Becoming



There has been a great deal of writing on bodies in animation, including practical guides to animation, discussions of representation, and of course, figures in motion. Animated bodies are, by the very nature of animation, transitional - in-between, and in a state of becoming. Every animated text has the potential for the disruption and transformation of bodies, although some animation utilises this potential to a greater degree than others. However, animation theory has yet to take up feminist philosophy of the body and corporeality in a significant manner. Although there have been feminist critiques of animated films, as well as intersection between animation theory and gender studies, there has yet to be a complex examination of the ways in which feminist theory of the body and becoming can inform, and operate through, animation. Feminist scholars such as Luce Irigaray, Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti have all contributed to the refiguring of bodies and of the binary associations of mind/body, male/female, culture/nature, masculine/feminine; in doing so, they have revealed the necessarily complex relations of mind and body and their parallel associations, as well as the nature of the subject. Animation, the body, woman, and the feminine have all been bound up in some form of false dichotomy (such as cinema/animation, mind/body, masculine/feminine), and their association as the 'lesser', negated half of a binary pairing has placed 'animation' and 'the body' in a parallel position: the nature of animation may offer a new way of undoing and rethinking these binaries. I propose that animation can find a way to (re)animate feminist philosophy, and that in its turn, feminist philosophy can provide a new way to think through the nature of animation. In my talk, I will discuss the current literature and discourse around the body in animation, and examine how the writings of feminist theorists such as Grosz and Braidotti allow us to move beyond feminist critiques and discussions of representation. I intend to examine how feminist philosophy of the body and becoming aligns with the capabilities (and potentialities) of animated bodies - their ability to transform, stretch, collapse, disrupt, and do that which is not possible in filmic cinema - which allows us to reconceptualise animated bodies from a feminist perspective.

#### Biography

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Ruth Richards is a PhD candidate at RMIT University, Melbourne. Her research interests include feminist philosophy, women in animation, the body in animation, and the growing complexity of the interrelations between 'animation' and 'live-action cinema'. Majoring in cinema studies throughout her Bachelor of Communications (Media), Ruth turned towards animation studies when she undertook her Bachelor of Media and Communications (Honours) in 2014. This thesis explored the relationship between animation, the uncanny, and metamorphosis, for which she received 1st Class Honours. Ruth began her PhD in 2015, and has completed her mid-candidature review as of December 2016. Ruth's PhD thesis seeks to illustrate the ways in which animation can illuminate feminist notions of the body, corporeality, and becomings.

Ruth has a background in both short film production and community television. Because of this, she works at RMIT alongside a fellow academic with undergraduate students in a TV studio environment as they produce both a live broadcast program and a comedy news program. The studios explore the concept of liveness, and the satirical/comedy news genre respectively. As well as her research and sessional work at RMIT, Ruth is also a freelance writer, with work appearing in such publications as Peephole Journal.