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Cover image:

# Amy Cutler: 'Fossa' and feminist speculative fiction

by Paula Burleigh • June 2025 • Journal article

## Introduction

In our contemporary political climate, what are the stakes of imagining a community entirely populated by women? Since the early 2000s the American artist Amy Cutler (b.1974) has done just that. Minutely detailed drawings and paintings on paper depict women – and, sometimes, animals – in ambiguous, even unsettling scenarios: scenes of everyday subsistence activities rendered slightly off-kilter, undertaken in the absence of both men and the comforts of urban infrastructure [FIG. 1](#). Set in unidentified locales, Cutler's visual narratives are likewise difficult to anchor in time: figures appear clad in ostensibly historical garments, which conjure an indeterminate yet resolutely bygone era. Viewed in the wake of the overturning of *Roe v Wade* in the United States – and the attendant loss of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy – Cutler's work undoubtedly carries a broadly utopian charge in its vision of a world without men to exercise unchecked power. At the same time, the rise of so-called 'tradwife' aesthetics complicates a wholly progressive interpretation. Typically social media influencers, tradwives stage a return to an imagined past in which gender roles were strictly codified and binary.<sup>1</sup> Their performance is often signalled through vintage clothing and homemaking tasks – motifs that pervade Cutler's compositions, albeit with no husbands in sight. With this in mind, the artist's communities could, theoretically, be read as existing in a similarly retrograde, or even dystopian, sphere. What rules govern these enclaves and what freedoms have these women gained or sacrificed?



**FIG. 1** *Reclamation*, by Amy Cutler. 2020. Gouache on paper, 104.1 by 139 cm. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

This article adopts speculative fiction as an interpretive framework for Cutler's practice, a literary genre that encompasses science fiction, fantasy, Afrofuturism, weird fiction, utopian and dystopian fiction. Within this conjectural field, authors imagine realities that are subtly or radically other than our own. Feminist speculative fiction introduces an additional element, interrogating how gendered power dynamics animate and structure these altered realities.<sup>2</sup> In literature, feminist speculative fiction has been shaped by such writers as Margaret Atwood, Ursula K. Le Guin and Octavia E. Butler, now widely regarded as canonical figures. The legacies of those writing in dystopian or apocalyptic modes experienced a significant resurgence and growth during Donald Trump's first presidency in the United States. For example, many commentators observed Butler's prescience in her 1998 novel *Parable of the Talents*, which features a political zealot running for office with the slogan 'Make America Great Again', while Atwood's dystopian classic *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) was adapted in 2017 by Bruce Miller into a long-running television series depicting a theocracy in which women's rights are brutally suppressed.<sup>3</sup>

Examples of the influence and ethos of feminist speculative fiction on the visual arts abound. *The Milk of Dreams*, the International Exhibition at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, curated by Cecilia Alemani, included myriad references to the genre. One section titled 'A leaf a gourd a shell a net a bag a sling a sack a bottle a pot a box a container' directly quoted Le Guin's foundational essay 'The carrier bag theory of fiction' (1986), in which the author

contrasted the phallic instruments wielded by early human hunters with the concave, open-ended vessels used by the gatherers, who made it possible for society to flourish.<sup>4</sup> She proposed this carrier bag as a new kind of narrative container: a feminist model of writing science fiction that eschewed the masculine, individualistic hero's journey in favour of stories exploring the more messy, lived realities of imagined communities. As Le Guin wrote:

If [...] one avoids the linear, progressive, Time's(killing)-arrow mode of the Techno-Heroic, and redefines technology and science as primarily cultural carrier bag rather than weapon of domination, one pleasant side effect is that science fiction can be seen as a far less rigid, narrow field [...] in fact less a mythological genre than a realistic one. It is a strange realism, but it is a strange reality.<sup>5</sup>



**FIG. 2** *Fossa*, by Amy Cutler. 2015–16. Interactive installation with sound by Emily Wells and hair by Adriana Papaleo, dimensions variable. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York; photograph Emily Gilbert).

While accounts of Western Modernism have typically sidelined narrative in favour of formal innovation, complex and other-worldly storytelling has become commonplace in contemporary art. Yet, despite its ubiquity in exhibitions, scholarship about worldbuilding and speculative storytelling strategies in visual art remains relatively limited. It has been confined largely to the catalogues for *The Milk of Dreams* and numerous shows revisiting the legacy of women associated with historical Surrealism. This renewed attention to Surrealist women has, directly or obliquely, influenced

the proliferation of contemporary artists exploring intersections



**FIG. 3** *Fossa*, by Amy Cutler. 2016. Graphite on paper, 140.3 by 119.3 cm. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

among fantastical, feminist, ecological and non-human motifs.<sup>6</sup> Cutler's work is exemplary of this. Specifically, *Fossa* – the title of both a multimedia installation **FIG. 2** and a large-scale graphite drawing **FIG. 3** – addresses themes central to feminist speculative fiction, including alternative kinship structures, technological entanglements and interspecies relationships. These explorations amount to a counterfactual narrative that runs parallel to established histories, inviting viewers to consider how things may have been – and still could be – otherwise.

## Hair and history

In both the two- and three-dimensional versions of *Fossa*, Cutler deployed human hair as architecture, tool and conduit for sound. The installation functions as a life-size environment made of wood, wallpaper, textiles, chocolate bunnies and 800 feet of braids comprising both human and synthetic hair.<sup>7</sup> In a method that echoes the communal labour pictured in the drawing version of *Fossa*, the installation was a collaboration between Cutler, the hair stylist Adriana Papaleo and the musician Emily Wells. On a central wooden platform, the audience was invited to sit on textile-covered bundles around a tower of densely woven hair, which culminated in a plethora of braids extending outwards, like tree branches, suspended from the ceiling. Headphones were affixed by braids to the central tower **FIG. 4**. Cutler has likened her audience-participants to old-fashioned telephone switchboard operators, suggesting that the braids represent larger networks of sonic communications.<sup>8</sup> For the audio, Wells drew from recorded conversations with her father on the subject of concealed burdens, which was layered into two separate musical compositions heard solely through headphones connected to the central tower of braids. A distinct ambient sound composition also echoed throughout the space, emanating from hidden speakers. This was based on discussions with friends about the subject of unburdening, from which Wells removed all speech, leaving only the breaths and sighs found between the words – residual sounds that proffered a sense of intimacy without specific narrative content.<sup>9</sup>

Cutler explained that while the word ‘fossa’ refers to a physical depression or hollow, she likewise conceptualises it more metaphorically as a space where emotional unburdening occurs.<sup>10</sup>



**FIG. 4** Detail of *Fossa*, by Amy Cutler. 2015–16. Interactive installation with sound by Emily Wells and hair by Adriana Papaleo. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).



**FIG. 5** *Siloing*, by Amy Cutler. 2016. Graphite on paper, 75.6 by 56.5 cm. (© Amy Cutler; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

Similar motifs of bearing and releasing burden drive the two-dimensional, graphite composition *Fossa*, and other related drawings that Cutler completed in 2016 **FIG. 5** **FIG. 6**, all picturing vignettes that take place in a universe where hair assumes monumental proportions. At over 140 centimetres in height, *Fossa* is among Cutler’s most ambitiously scaled drawings and provides a glimpse into the lives of the installation’s hypothetical inhabitants. The drawing depicts a community of women living in giant, hollowed-out trees. Wood platforms divide the trunks’ interiors, with compartments connected by fantastically long, interlacing ropes of hair, which in some instances are still attached to the

inhabitants' heads.

Laundry hangs from attenuated braids and individuals engage in activities of labour, leisure and rest. Large, industrious coils of hair suggest the presence of an elaborate pulley system, which may also serve as a network for communication. Perched on seats of piled braids, two women plug hair-ropes into a switchboard, a direct reference to the installation. While this technology gestures towards the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, the precise period depicted remains ambiguous.



FIG. 6 *Celeste*, by Amy Cutler. 2016. Gouache on Japan paper, 33 by 26.7 cm. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

Initially, the anachronistic aesthetic of Cutler's work – especially her drawings and paintings – appears anathema to recent feminist art practices, which tend to be more future-orientated in both content and media. Consider, for example, the psychedelic CGI mythologies of Tai Shani (b.1967); the interspecies sculptural bodies of Andra Ursuța (b.1979), which draw on both recumbent nudes in art history and the film *Predator* (1987); and the extensive video and digital explorations of gendered cyborgs by Lynn Hershman Leeson (b.1941). These artists engage in feminist speculative worldbuilding, sharing a

loosely futuristic aesthetic and a focus of technology – whether through the selected media itself or thematic concerns with technology's impact on gendered bodies.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, Cutler's work is resolutely analogue: she often works on paper in a minutely detailed, illustrative style, and her references to technology evoke earlier eras, such as that of telephone switchboards.

However, speculative fiction is not exclusively futurological, as certain well-known examples illustrate, such as Butler's novel *Kindred* (1979) – an account of a modern-day Black woman who is transported back in time to the Antebellum South, where she must grapple with the horrors of slavery. Likewise, the cultural theorist Saidiya Hartman has written extensively on critical fabulation, a term she coined to describe the process of using storytelling to redress absences and omissions in historical archives – a process that necessarily plumbs the past.<sup>12</sup> Cutler's methodology is more overtly fantastical than the kind of fabulation

Hartman engages – and to be clear, Cutler does not directly address racial injustices – yet the artist undertakes a related practice of creating speculative counter-narratives. These, much like critical fabulation, unsettle received ideas about history as an inexorable march towards the present. Myriad histories inform the world imagined in *Fossa*, including that of the American Cascade logging industry; the role of women as early telephone switchboard operators; and women Buddhist acolytes fashioning large-scale ropes out of their own hair. Rather than picturing an imagined Luddite, utopian idyll of women living in the forest, *Fossa* posits a complex counter-factual narrative of what another kind of industrial trajectory might have looked like.

Although narrative ambiguity is a hallmark of Cutler’s work – viewers can never be sure of the ultimate purpose of the women’s toil – the setting of *Fossa* points toward alternative, fantastical possibilities embedded within otherwise well-known histories of industry and technology. The artist has cited photographs by Clark and Darius Kinsey documenting the lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest of the United States between 1890 and 1940 as a historical touchstone for *Fossa*.<sup>13</sup> The Kinsey brothers photographed loggers at work and living in temporary encampments. They also developed a successful market among the loggers themselves, who purchased the pictures as mementos for friends and family.<sup>14</sup> The Kinseys’ photographs FIG. 7 FIG. 8 show groups of men perched on tall, wooden railway trestles still under construction and standing proudly next to enormous, felled trees.



FIG. 7 *Fallers with large tree, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company Camp no.4, Vail, Thurston County, Washington*, by Clark Kinsey. c.1893–1945. Photograph. (Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries).

Taking the Kinseys’ photographs as a point of departure, Cutler reimagines the forest encampments, supplanting the crowds of men with women. The plywood constructions in the photographs become ropes made of human hair – a material that suggests, albeit mythically, a level of reciprocity between the human inhabitants and their giant tree dwelling. There is, however, a surprising historical precedent for ropes fabricated from human hair roughly contemporaneous with the early logging industry. When the Higashi Hongan-ji temple in Kyoto was rebuilt in 1895 following an earlier fire, its reconstruction



**FIG. 8** *Construction crew with pile driver on trestle under construction, Schafer Brothers Logging Company, probably in Grays Harbor County, Washington, by Clark Kinsey. c.1893–1945. Photograph. (Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries).*

required the relocation of prohibitively large wooden beams. With no rope strong enough available, female devotees of the temple's doctrinal subsection of Shin Buddhism cut off their long hair to create braided ropes capable of bearing the load. Sections of the hair rope remain on display as part of a tourist attraction at the temple.<sup>15</sup> By assimilating a remarkable, if isolated, incident of hair deployed as a tool into the archive of the American West's lumber industry, Cutler constructs a speculative history that eschews logging altogether. Instead, women employ innovative, self-sustaining strategies to live in and with the forest, rather than treating it as a material resource for extraction.

## **A kind of human machine**

It would be simple to dismiss Cutler's women as acting out an escapist fantasy to return to an imagined, Luddite life off the grid. However, the presence of technology in both the drawing and installation complicates such a reading. In the United States, during the same period that the Kinseys documented the all-male world of logging, the relatively new position of telephone switchboard operator was held almost entirely by women. Following the first transmission of the human voice over wire in 1876, the role of telephone operator was initially held by teenage boys. By the 1880s, however, operators were almost exclusively women, based on the belief that they were more suited than their male counterparts to perform the requisite duties of courtesy and patience.<sup>16</sup> But what began as a novel and emancipatory opportunity for women to be wage earners outside the home soon devolved into an abusive industry. Employees were expected to work long, physically demanding shifts for low pay, while subject to increasingly intrusive standards of personal grooming and comportment. In 1930 the first woman supervisor of America's national Bell telephone system described the company's expectations of female employees as 'a paragon of perfection, a

kind of human machine'.<sup>17</sup>



**FIG. 9** Detail of *Fossa*, by Amy Cutler. 2016. Graphite on paper. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

The women who preside over a switchboard of hair in *Fossa* are quite literally human machines **FIG. 9**, cyborgian in their physical entanglement with the networks. Viewers are given little knowledge of the precise social conditions that govern *Fossa*. However, the absence of men and the surreal setting suggests a parallel, imagined history in which women are not regarded as a temporary, expendable workforce expected to abandon their public-facing jobs for a domestic life. In Cutler's tree-world, spaces are tantalisingly interwoven for and by the bodies that inhabit this

community – one on the verge of industrial development, but seemingly for purposes other than profit or expansion.

*Fossa*'s porous boundaries between public and private space – and less directly, between human and non-human actors – derives from a history of feminist speculative fiction. When conceiving the installation, the artist asked her collaborators, Wells and Papaleo, to read Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novel *Herland* (1915), which is written from the perspective of a man encountering a previously undiscovered, isolated society of women who reproduce by parthenogenesis.<sup>18</sup> In *Herland* there is no single-family home or distinction between public and private life: women collectively rear children in shared spaces. A similar, communal spirit informs *Fossa*, where the trees appear to host domestic life, labour and leisure. While the reproductive methods of *Fossa*'s inhabitants remain a mystery, the seemingly narrow range of the figures' ages suggests a kinship structure that is lateral rather than generationally hierarchical.

Facets of the installation likewise gesture towards kinship structures that exist outside of the heteronormative nuclear family. Wells's source material for the sound composition was recorded conversations with her father about their respective experiences of coming out as queer.<sup>19</sup> Although the conversations were not audible, it remains significant that words reflecting on the unburdening of one's same gender desire was, effectively, embedded into the fabric of the installation. It metaphorically coursed through the hair-wires that connected human visitors to

non-human environs, a small cacophony of former secrets became simply other ways of operating in and with the world.

There is little drama or conflict on display in *Fossa*. The drawing illustrates vignettes suggestive of repetitive labour and social rituals; the tree dwellers carry out everyday tasks with neither an overt sense of relish nor disdain. Cutler's literary source material shares a predilection for the mundane: paradoxically, a noteworthy aspect of *Herland* is its banality. Although there is some degree of plot and resolution in the book – instigated by the male explorers, who are eventually expelled – its primary focus lies in detailed, anthropological descriptions. While Cutler's attention to the routine tasks required for a community's survival and social cohesion may be specifically inspired by *Herland*, the underlying strategy also pervades feminist speculative fiction more widely. Le Guin's 'carrier bag' was effectively an argument for an anti-climactic, character-driven style of storytelling over the traditional hero's journey.<sup>20</sup> Writing against the technophilic space operas that proliferated within the historically male-dominated genre of science fiction, Le Guin's rhetorical approach reflected a feminist politic. In contrast to the spear – the phallic weapon of choice among primeval hunters – Le Guin conceptualised the feminist story as a bulging, capacious sack wielded by a gatherer of stories. Instead of incapacitating prey, the sack acts as a 'medicine bundle of words', overflowing with a disparate collection of people, critters, aliens and spaceships, with all their attendant failures and misunderstandings. In Cutler's work, bundles, burdens and sacks are common motifs: braided coils, bound roots of tree saplings and other undisclosed loads shouldered by women. The *Fossa* installation invited viewers to sit on soft, bulbous bundles while listening to audio derived from intimate, shared stories – references to both the formal device of the carrier bag and its narrative content.

As with most of Cutler's work, the drawing of *Fossa* is populated by women whose features are uniform enough to read less as individuals than as facets of a collective. Cutler describes *Fossa*'s inhabitants as 'worker bees or even like drones [...] I don't think of them so much as individuals, but as a unit'.<sup>21</sup> Arranged in patterns that alternately evoke entrails or veins, the elaborate hair designs visualise an inner connectivity that transcends mere proximity, suggesting syncopated, collaborative structures of kinship and subsistence. This sense of interconnection, along with Cutler's remark that the women are part of a hive, conjures organisations that are more typically animal than human. Elsewhere in Cutler's oeuvre, women both interact with and emulate animals. In *Castoroide Colony* [FIG. 10](#), for example, Cutler depicts 'extremely skilled buck-toothed women' who adopt the habits of beavers, using their teeth to fell trees as well as transporting logs in their braided hair to build a dam.<sup>22</sup> The humans depicted in *Fossa* behave much like colonies of bees or ants, both of which follow

matriarchal organisational patterns to engineer hives or nests.



**FIG. 10** *Castoroide Colony*, by Amy Cutler. 2003. Gouache on paper, 138.4 by 102.9 cm. (© Amy Cutler; courtesy the artist, DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York).

The fantastically long braids that wend through the trees – seemingly human in origin and yet belonging to no specific body – depict physical continua between humans and trees, bodies and nature, human and non-human. These entanglements reflect interdependence rather than extraction or exploitation.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the most compelling reason to articulate the connections between visual art praxis and traditional literary contexts is to highlight the political utility of art in times of crisis. Feminist speculative fiction occupies an epistemological position within posthuman feminism, serving as a tool of knowledge

production by imagining alternatives to naturalised identity categories – such as gender, race and dis/ability – and exploring strategies for living with and through climate change. The posthuman theorist Rosi Braidotti traces a lineage of feminist speculative fiction beginning with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Her account encompasses a range of authors who sought to 'liberate humans and nonhumans from the earth by conjuring alternative worlds'.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Donna J. Haraway has emphasised how feminist speculative fiction pictures radical possibilities for abandoning human exceptionalism in favour of more egalitarian, interspecies approaches to, as she described it, living through and 'staying with the trouble' of environmental degradation and mass extinctions.<sup>24</sup>

Econarratology, a branch of literary criticism that combines ecocriticism and narratology, has generated scholarship attentive to how narrativising the non-human can help readers adopt the emotional states of others and understand themselves as embedded within trans-species networks of environmental ethics and care.<sup>25</sup> Echoing critics of econarratology, who analyse how ecological narratives complicate historical conventions of so-called 'nature writing', Fossa counters traditional representations of landscapes by revealing the wilderness to be less unspoiled and pastoral than a site of active intertwining with human cohabitants.

This representational space in turn invites viewers to contemplate their own positions in such relations. To return to the questions posed at the beginning of this article: the ways in which the women in *Fossa* operate – symbiotic with trees and electrical energy – propose a model that is counter to human exceptionalism, in which machine, plant and human occupy shared contingencies and, perhaps, precarities. Although Cutler’s compositions do not evince a straightforwardly utopian distribution of power, they nonetheless invite viewers to imagine alternative histories that could lead to different futures.

## Acknowledgments

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## Footnotes

- 1 See C. Sherman: ‘Sundresses and rugged self-sufficiency: “tradwives” tout a conservative American past ... that didn’t exist’, *The Guardian* (24th July 2024), available at [www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/ng-interactive/2024/jul/24/tradwives-tiktok-women-gender-roles](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/ng-interactive/2024/jul/24/tradwives-tiktok-women-gender-roles), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 2 There is extensive literature on feminist speculative fiction. For an account of its history (specifically with roots in science fiction), see L. Yaszek: ‘The women history doesn’t see: recovering midcentury women’s SF as a literature of social critique’, *Extrapolation* 45 (2004), pp.34–51, [doi.org/10.3828/extr.2004.45.1.5](https://doi.org/10.3828/extr.2004.45.1.5); and M.S. Barr: *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*, Iowa City 1992. For an excellent overview of feminist speculative fiction and its relationship to race and dis/ability, see S. Schalk: *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women’s Speculative Fiction*, Durham NC and London 2018.
- 3 See for example A. Aguirre: ‘Octavia Butler’s prescient vision of a zealot elected to make America great again’, *The New Yorker* (26th July 2017), available at [www.newyorker.com/books/second-read/octavia-butlers-prescient-vision-of-a-zealot-elected-to-make-america-great-again](https://www.newyorker.com/books/second-read/octavia-butlers-prescient-vision-of-a-zealot-elected-to-make-america-great-again), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 4 ‘A leaf a gourd a shell a net a bag a sling a sack a bottle a pot a box a container’, in exh. cat. *The Milk of Dreams*, Venice (various locations) 2022, p.367.

- 5 U.K. Le Guin: 'The carrier theory of fiction', in *idem: Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*, New York 1989, pp.165–70, at p.170.
- 6 *The Milk of Dreams* also devoted significant gallery space to women associated with Surrealism, but the resurgence had been ongoing since the early 2010s, see P. Epps: 'A slew of shows celebrates Surrealist women', *Frieze Masters* (17th September 2020), available at [www.frieze.com/article/slew-shows-celebrates-surrealist-women](http://www.frieze.com/article/slew-shows-celebrates-surrealist-women), accessed 11th June 2025. On the resurgence of women Surrealists and the political landscape, see S. Chambers: 'The women Surrealists helping me through our new political reality', *Literary Hub* (12th May 2017), available at [lithub.com/the-women-surrealists-helping-me-through-our-new-political-reality](http://lithub.com/the-women-surrealists-helping-me-through-our-new-political-reality), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 7 The Fossa installation has been exhibited in three distinct iterations, each of which slightly varied in their components and layouts. The account here describes the installation as it appeared in the exhibition Amy Cutler: Past, Present, Progress at Ruby City, San Antonio (6th April 2023–25th February 2024). Fossa was commissioned by SITE Santa Fe in 2015 and subsequently shown at Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York, in 2016.
- 8 'Amy Cutler: telling stories', PBS (4th December 2020), available [www.pbs.org/video/amy-cutler-telling-stories-ipev82](http://www.pbs.org/video/amy-cutler-telling-stories-ipev82), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 9 K.G. Gerbracht: 'A community of women bound together by braids', *Hyperallergic* (23rd May 2016), available at [hyperallergic.com/300536/a-community-of-women-bound-together-by-braids](http://hyperallergic.com/300536/a-community-of-women-bound-together-by-braids), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 For more on a recent futuristic aesthetic emerging among feminist artists, see A. Hale: 'Communist witches and cyborg magic: the emergence of queer, feminist, esoteric futurism', *Burlington Contemporary Journal* 6 (June 2022), [doi.org/10.31452/bci6.witches.hale](https://doi.org/10.31452/bci6.witches.hale).
- 12 S. Hartman: 'Venus in two acts', *Small Axe* 26, no.2 (June 2008), pp.1–14, [doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1](https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1).
- 13 Amy Cutler, in correspondence with the present author, 10th February 2019.
- 14 S. Kismaric: 'Rise of the modern world', *MoMA* 3, no.1 (January 2000), pp.2–5, esp. p.4.
- 15 E. Rutland: 'Hair rope of Higashi Hongan-ji temple, Kyoto, Japan', *Atlas Obscura* (30th November 2015), available at [www.atlasobscura.com/places/hair-rope-of-higashi-hongan-ji-temple](http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/hair-rope-of-higashi-hongan-ji-temple), accessed 11th June 2025.
- 16 M. Levine: "'A kind of human machine": women's work at the switchboard', *The Palimpsest* 74, no.1 (1993), pp.2–13, [doi.org/10.17077/0031-0360.22471](https://doi.org/10.17077/0031-0360.22471).
- 17 *Ibid.*, p.8.

- 18** Cutler, *op. cit.* (note 8).
- 19** B. Schaefer: 'Emily Wells, turning coming out into art', *Out* (17th March 2016), available at [www.out.com/art-books/2016/3/17/emily-wells-turning-coming-out-art](http://www.out.com/art-books/2016/3/17/emily-wells-turning-coming-out-art), accessed 19th June 2025.
- 20** Le Guin, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.170.
- 21** Amy Cutler, quoted in Gerbracht, *op. cit.* (note 9).
- 22** Amy Cutler, quoted from 'Interview with the artist by Aimee Bender', in A. Cutler: *Turtle Fur*, Ostfildern 2011, pp.16–25, at p.22.
- 23** R. Braidotti: *Posthuman Feminism*, Cambridge 2022, pp.216–17.
- 24** D.J. Haraway: *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham NC and London 2016, pp.117–20, [doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cw25q](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cw25q).
- 25** See E. James and E. Morel: 'Introduction: notes toward new econarratologies', in *idem*, eds: *Environment and Narrative: New Directions in Econarratology*, Columbus 2020, pp.1–26, [doi.org/10.26818/9780814214206](https://doi.org/10.26818/9780814214206).

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