

## **Waste Matters – You Are My Future: Gut Love by Kathy High**

**Related area:** Biopunk, hybridity and aesthetics of mutation

I have been researching *Waste Matters – You Are My Future: Gut Love* and producing art works concerning gut microbiota and the immune system. As a patient with Crohn's disease, my interest in gut microbiota starts with my own diseased body. Recent developments in medical gut research create a paradigm shift in the treatment of patients, extending beyond our bodies to include ecological systems.

Combining performance, documentation, scientific analysis, data mapping, and sculpture, *Waste Matters – You Are My Future: Gut Love* will ultimately produce a series of discreet investigations and dialogs around the ecology of gut microbiomes, including a history of shit. Looking at the politics of ecology, this work locates new paradigms of relationships between the biomaterials of our bodies and our environments. What if we lived on a diet including local dirt? What if we could make our own preserved super stool bank? How can you make poop? What are our family microbiome signatures (our family biome crest) and how do we change the microbiomes of our partners, our pets, our friends? Using DIY methods of bio-research, I will look at the breakdown of materials and the reconstitution of them as they are absorbed.

Waste studies is an important field at present — and human waste needs to be included in this exploration. *Waste Matters – You Are My Future: Gut Love* will open up various ways for people to think about tweaking their immune systems and feeding their internal ecologies. Through biome analysis and mapping to picturing poop, this project presents my last frontier. Having dealt with issues around shit almost all my life, I see my own attempts to make this material invisible reflects our culture's ways of covering waste. This holistic view will allow for dialog between ecologists, biologists, activists, and artists to catalyze the imaginary around the abject.

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### **Brief biographical notes**

Kathy High (USA) is an interdisciplinary artist, educator working with technology, art and biology. In her work, she considers living systems, empathy, animal sentience, and the social, political and ethical dilemmas of biotechnology and surrounding industries. She has received awards including Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Her art works have been shown at documenta 13 (Germany), Guggenheim Museum, Museum of Modern Art (NYC), Art/Sci UCLA (Los Angeles), Science Gallery, (Dublin), NGBK, (Berlin), Festival Transito\_MX (Mexico), MASS MoCA (North Adams), Para-site (Hong Kong). She has had artist residencies with SymbioticA at the University of Western Australia (2009-10), with Finnish Society of Bioart *Field Notes/Deep Time/Journey to the Post-Anthropogenic* at the Kilpsjarvi Biological Research Station (2013), with Coalesce Biological Laboratory Center at University of Buffalo and Imagin-omics Residency with the DePaolo Lab, USC (2016). High is Professor in the Arts, at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY.