

## **Unworlding: An Aesthetics of Collapse**

*By Jack Halberstam*

World, in many of the major philosophical traditions of the last century, presumes a totality of things, a form of being that exists through the sorting of subjects from objects, objects from things and things from unseen forces. And while “world,” and “life” seem to offer vectors for utopian thinking (“another world is possible”), these totalizing concepts have also been predicated upon anti-blackness and from the elevation of the human above all other forms of life.

This lecture begins with the premise that world-making as we currently conceive of it can only proceed by way of unworlding, world unmaking in which concepts such as the human, subject, object, animal, vegetative are tipped out of their hierarchical formations and disordered in meaning and in their relations to one another. My talk follows a series of aesthetic experiments from the 1970’s to the present that revel in collapse, destruction and ruination.

### **BIO**

**Jack Halberstam** is Professor of Gender Studies and English at Columbia University. Halberstam is the author of seven books including: *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke UP, 1995), *Female Masculinity* (Duke UP, 1998), *In A Queer Time and Place* (NYU Press, 2005), *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke UP, 2011), *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (Beacon Press, 2012) and, a short book titled *Trans\*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variance* (University of California Press). Halberstam’s latest book, 2020 from Duke UP is titled *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*. Places Journal awarded Halberstam its Arcus/Places Prize in 2018 for innovative public scholarship on the relationship between gender, sexuality and the built environment. Halberstam is now finishing a second volume on wildness titled: *Unworlding: An Aesthetics of Collapse*. Halberstam was recently the subject of a short film titled “So We Moved” by Adam Pendleton. It is playing at MoMA until January 30, 2022.