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Bio:

Kelly Dobson grew up in a junkyard. From the age of four she was doing odd jobs such as smashing windows and hauling machine parts from one area of the yard to another. She had machine friends. By six she was holding car funerals and secretly stashing beloved car parts in her own hidden burrow in the far side of the lot. Abandoning the instability of the lot as a teenager in 1990, Dobson began studies in medicine and art, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Cornell University's Department of Architecture, Art and Planning. The studies in medicine and art practice provide background for her interests in alternative forms of therapy. Working in the realms of art, design, engineering, psychology and society, Kelly explores the relationships between people and machines, and has received a Master of Science degree from MIT's Visual Studies Program and another from the MIT Media Lab. Currently, as a researcher and PhD candidate at the MIT Media Lab, she is developing a method of personal, societal, and psychoanalytical engagement termed Machine Therapy. Machine Therapy is in response to the overwhelmingly pervasive effects of machines in everyday life. Machine Therapy is tangentially about the parapraxis of machine design -- what machines do and mean for people other than what we consciously designed them to do and be used for. In her current work Kelly combines research in digital signal processing and machine learning, technology and society studies, and art and therapy. She builds empathic machines such as Blendie (web.media.mit.edu/~monster/Blendie), Wearable Organs such as ScreamBody (web.media.mit.edu/~monster/screambody), and organizes engagements with existing large culturally implicated machines.