

Isabel Matthias is a doctoral candidate at the Technical University of Berlin in the field of Feminist STS /Gender and STEM in Planning. She has graduated in European Studies (University of Bremen) and Gender Studies (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin). Next to her dissertation, she is currently working as a research associate at the Center of Excellence Women in Science and Technology, University of Bremen. There, she is co-organizing the international summer universities Informatica Feminale and Ingenieurinnen-Sommeruni for Women in STEM as well as working on integrating gender related issues into STEM fields within academia.

Isabel Matthias' research is focused on the analysis of Human-Robot-Relationships from Decolonial and Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies. Coming from the analysis of sex robots by considering power relations and the impact of their existence on relationships in an intimate sphere, she is now taking a closer look at border robotics. Her main aim is to queer the field of Human-Robot-Relationships by thinking beyond binaries and envision livable futures for all beings.

Project at IAS-STIS: Re-Thinking Border Robotics via Decolonial and Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies

Who develops border robots, who uses them and whom are they used against? Robots force us to scrutinize our understanding of subjects, of being alive, of living – of whose existence counts and whose does not. Concurrently, there are numerous illegal pushbacks as well as countless violations of human rights in the context of border crossing processes. Therefore, there is an urgency to accompany the development and operation of border robots from a critical perspective. Border robots function as a burning glass: They represent the exploitative, hegemonic and exclusionist way some humans are treating other humans and most of their surroundings. In addition to that, border robotics point out the necessity to re-discuss subject-object-relations – or if this separation is necessary at all. In the current political climate around borders, being subjectified, de-subjectified and objectified could decide about life and death. Approaching from different theoretical streamings within Decolonial and Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies, it needs to be figured out how to intervene in the temporary conception of Human-Robot-Relationships and develop an idea how all entities on this planet (and beyond) could live together sustainably.

Selected Publications:

Matthias, Isabel (publication planned for the end of 2022): Human-Robot-Relationships. Eine feministische Intervention am Beispiel von sex robots. Gender-Bulletin. Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin