FRIDAY 11 MAY
Time 10.30 – 5.30 pm
Venue: Federation Hall, VCA, 234 St Kilda Road and Grant Street, Southbank
Free event – no booking required

Programme:
10.30 am to 1 pm: RESPONDING TO DERRIDA AND ANIMALS
Speakers: Elizabeth Presa, Keren Shlezinger and James Muldoon

- Elizabeth Presa (CFI), ‘Skin deep’
  Starting with Derrida’s discussion, in volume 1 of *The Beast and the Sovereign*, of a question once posed to Levinas: “Does the Animal have a face?” I explore through Levinas, Rilke and others, how one might come to understand what a face can be and how such an understanding may contribute to a more imaginative engagement with other beings in the world.

- Keren Shlezinger (Monash Univ.), ‘The Shame of Being an Animal and Yet Not One’
  In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida recounts his embarrassment and sense of exposure at being regarded naked by his cat. According an animal the status of *one who can*...
look at me interrupts the humanist project and becomes the starting point for Derrida's argument for the 'absolute singularity' of all living things. J. M. Coetzee's 'The Old Woman and the Cats' depicts a similar scene of shame. Like Derrida, the fictional philosopher Elizabeth Costello is moved by a singular encounter with a cat to reconfigure her response to others in general; however this response follows a markedly different path from Derrida's. Here I want to consider the different kinds of shame we might feel before animals. How might one be ashamed (by others) or ashamed (for oneself) for having been, in the first instance, ashamed? These questions will be explored via consideration of the Australian public's response to the recent 'exposure,' via televised images from Indonesian slaughterhouses, of the 'inhumane' practices of the live export industry.

- James Muldoon (Monash University), 'The Figure of the Animal in Hegel'
  Derrida argues in *l'Animal que donc je suis* that philosophy has been constituted since its inception by a founding exclusion and subordination of the animal. Derrida's proposition allows us to look back on philosophy and call into question that which distinguishes the 'being' of human beings from other non-human animals. In this paper I will argue that Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is an attempt to purify human beings of their animal origin and produce a universal political subject freed from instances of particularity and animality.

1 to 1.30 pm: **CONCERT** by the group *The Donkey's Tail*

2 to 4.30 pm: **SESSION AROUND THE WORK OF ANDREW BENJAMIN**

An internationally recognised authority on contemporary French and German critical theory, Andrew Benjamin has consistently explored the relationship between philosophy and the history of art in his work. Recently that relationship has allowed him to analyze what he calls the 'figure of the Jew' and the 'figure of the animal' within both the history of philosophy and the history of art. Both these figures have been constructed by philosophy as that which needs to be excluded—with philosophy, as traditionally conceived, being founded upon such a gesture of exclusion. Overcoming exclusion involves an undoing of these figures and potentially a transformation of the philosophical itself.

In the first part of this session, an analysis of Benjamin’s book *Of Jews and Animals* will be presented by:

- Adam Geczy (College of Art, University of Sydney), 'On Clothing and Interest. A short supplement to Andrew Benjamin’s *Of Jews and Animals*.'

- Andrew Benjamin will respond to Geczy’s lecture, with discussion following.

There will then take place the keynote lecture:

- Andrew Benjamin, 'On the Taming of Animals: Notes after Sophocles'.

Discussion will follow.

5 pm:

- David Shea (CFI), 'On Biomimicry in architecture and design: an overview'
  Biomimicry is the examination and study of nature—its models, systems, processes and elements—in order to emulate or take inspiration from them towards the solution of human problems. I will look at this emerging field in its application to architecture, design, business systems and sustainable city planning, to name just a few, as well as at the shift in belief taking place globally in our relationship to animals and plants. Collaborations between biologists with inventors, architects and designers have, over the past ten years, created new architectural possibilities in our human relationship with animals and plants that can be applied to solving 21st century post-industrial challenges.