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# THE UNFORESEEN ON THE LURE OF RISK IN THE PARTICIPATORY ARTS

NOV 16, 2019

A CONFERENCE BY DFG RESEARCH TRAINING GROUP  
CULTURES OF CRITIQUE, LEUPHANA UNIVERSITY OF  
LÜNEBURG AND HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT, BERLIN

**HKW**  
Haus der Kulturen der Welt

  
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UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

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# **THE UNFORESEEN**

## **ON THE LURE OF RISK**

### **IN THE PARTICIPATORY ARTS**

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

Howard Caygill (Kingston University of London)  
Heba El Cheikh (Mahatat – Contemporary Art, Cairo)  
Nikita Dhawan (University of Gießen)  
Amin Husain / Nitasha Dhillon (MTL, New York)  
Monica Juneja (University of Heidelberg)  
Ines Kleesattel (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste)  
Maria Lind (Curator / Educator, Berlin)  
Patrick Mudekereza (Centre d'Art Waza, Lubumbashi)

#### **MODERATORS**

Holger Kuhn, Susanne Leeb, Boaz Levin  
(Leuphana University Lüneburg)

#### **CURATORS**

Alia Rayyan, Beate Söntgen  
(Leuphana University Lüneburg)

#### **ORGANIZATION**

Catharina Berents Kemp  
Stephanie Braune  
(Leuphana University Lüneburg)

Eva Stein, Daniel Neugebauer  
(HKW, Department of Communications  
and Cultural Education)

# THE UNFORESEEN. ON PARTICIPATORY ART

“Can I gently take my turn to speak? Can I speak without taking a turn? Without violence, without abuse? Instead, the question would be: can speech coexist amicably, fraternally, with me, with us? Very quickly, very soon, the exercise of speech becomes an exercise of power. From childhood on, obviously.”

This is how Anne Dufourmantelle describes the risk of speaking, which can imply both affection and abuse. Dufourmantelle’s praise of risk is not an appeal for heroic acts, but rather a stance towards the world: the desire to not let our present be confined by patterns of past experiences, but to give space to the unknown.

At this symposium, it is participatory art that provides the occasion for speaking. Without assuming a definitive or clearly defined form, participatory art opens itself to its viewers, who become participants or even actors. It blends itself with other artistic and even political modes of articulation, without explicitly exploring them. Thus participatory art invites us to speak in uncertainty, about the unfore-

seen, through an experience, a hunch, a feeling. In the symposium, we are inviting contributors to engage in such exercises. Art historical, artistic, political and decolonial perspectives on participatory artistic work will be discussed. We will refer to these heterogeneous references when kinds of participatory art with diverse forms, origins and functions are presented. Their respective modes of articulation and narrative will be discussed, as well as the manifold translation processes that define modes of speaking about participatory art: translations from visual and bodily actions into language, from one discipline into another, as well as between various notions about what participatory art can be and mean.

## Alia Rayyan, Beate Söntgen

### **Alia Rayyan**

holds an MA degree in international politics, with focus on the Middle East, sociology and history of art from the Universität Hamburg and School of Oriental and African Studies – University of London. She is a curator, journalist, educator and culture manager and worked in Berlin, Beirut, Amman and Ramallah. Rayyan is a co-founder of the art magazine Bidoun for contemporary art from the MENA region. 2013–2016 she led the Al Hoash Gallery – the Palestinian Art Court in Jerusalem, where she created urban interventions to confront the specific circumstances in public spaces for Palestinians in Jerusalem. Currently, Alia Rayyan is a PhD candidate at the research training group Cultures of Critique at Leuphana University Lüneburg.

### **Beate Söntgen**

is Professor of Art History and was Vice President of Research and Humanities in the Presidential Committee (2012–2019) at Leuphana University Lüneburg. She heads the research training group Cultures of Critique as well as, together with Susanne Leeb, the research program PriMus – PhD in Museums. She held a professorship in Art History at Ruhr-Universität Bochum (2003–2011), where she directed, together with Ulrike Groos, the postgraduate program Art Criticism and Curatorial Knowledge, and was Laurenz Professor for Contemporary Art at the University of Basel, Switzerland (2002–2003). She is member of the advisory board of Texte zur Kunst and of the Board of trustees of the Volkswagen Foundation. Publications includes articles on modern and contemporary art, art theory and criticism.

# SCHEDULE “THE UNFORESEEN“

NOV 16, 2019

HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT, BERLIN

11 AM	<p><b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</b> Eva Stein (Department of Communications and Cultural Education, Haus der Kulturen der Welt)</p> <p>Beate Söntgen (Institute for Philosophy and Science of Art, Leuphana University Lüneburg, DFG Research Training Group Cultures of Critique)</p>
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<p><b>PANEL 1: LECTURES</b> Moderation: Holger Kuhn, Susanne Leeb, Alia Rayyan, Boaz Levin</p>	
11.15 AM	<p><b>TO RISK RESPONSE-ABILITY: LISTENING TO NOT QUITE SO MUCH AUTHORIZED STORIES</b> Ines Kleesattel</p>
12 NOON	<p><b>RESILIENCE – A VIRTUE OR A CURSE</b> Heba El Cheikh</p>

12.45 – 1 PM	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>
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1 PM	<p><b>HAVE YOU EVER TOUCHED THE RIVER? RELATIONAL ART PRACTICE BETWEEN THE METROPOLITAN AND THE VERNACULAR – EMPLACEMENT, MUTUALITY, RE-MATERIALIZATION</b> Monica Juneja</p>
1.45 PM	<p><b>KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN ART AND SOCIAL PRACTICES IN THE D. R. CONGO</b> Patrick Mudekereza</p>

<b>2.30 – 3.30 PM</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
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<b>PANEL 2: PERSPECTIVES</b> Moderation: Alia Rayyan	
<b>3.30 PM</b>	<b>PRESENTATION OF “IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL” (IMI, 2010 – 2015) BY TANIA BRUGUERA</b> Alia Rayyan
<b>3.45 PM</b>	<b>N.N.</b> Maria Lind  <b>AESTHETIC AGENCY AND THE ART OF DECOLONIZATION</b> Nikita Dhawan  <b>TANIA BRUGUERA AND THE SILENCE OF FRIENDS AND OF ENEMIES</b> Howard Caygill  <b>FROM INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE TO INSTITUTIONAL LIBERATION: A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE CRISES OF CONTEMPORARY ART</b> Amin Husain/Nitasha Dhillon
<b>5.30 – 7 PM</b>	<b>CLOSING PANEL</b>





# PANEL 1: LECTURES

The symposium will open with lectures on participatory art of various origins: The art historian Monica Juneja will talk about the difference between city and country in relational art practices in India. Heba El Cheikh, the director of the Egyptian art organization Mahatat – Contemporary Art, will provide insights into her many years of work with political participatory projects. Ines Klee-sattel will ask what voices are heard in art history following the equally programmatic and provocative idea of a world aesthetic developed by the writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant for the Caribbean. Patrick Mudekereza, director of the Centre d'Art Waza, will discuss alternative knowledge production using the example of social art practice over the past three years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## **TO RISK RESPONSE-ABILITY: LISTENING TO NOT QUITE SO MUCH AUTHORIZED STORIES**

**Ines Kleesattel**

Based on a broad understanding of participatory art, Ines Kleesattel's presentation deals with contemporary artistic research projects that originate in the Western European art field and are concerned with (post-)colonial entanglements on a global scale. Considering Glissant's notion of an "aesthetics of the earth" that allows the "cry of the world" to speak "with so many gagged voices", she will ask: Which not quite so much scientifically authorized voices, stories and agencies make themselves noticeable for whom within the material, imaginative, discursive and affective processes involved in such art? Against this backdrop Kleesattel will discuss how such voices and stories participating entails a productive risk for the academic science of art.

## **RESILIENCE – A VIRTUE OR A CURSE**

**Heba El Cheikh**

The presentation by Heba El Cheikh offers an insight into the work of the organization Mahatat for Contemporary Art in Cairo. Speaking from the perspective of the practitioner, art manager, community and outdoor art producer, El Cheikh talks about the consequences of working against all the odds, which offers an unexpected perspective on "the unforeseen".

# HAVE YOU EVER TOUCHED THE RIVER? RELATIONAL ART PRACTICE BETWEEN THE METROPOLITAN AND THE VERNA- CULAR – EMPLACEMENT, MUTUALITY, RE-MATERIALIZATION

Monica Juneja

Monica Juneja's talk looks at a particular experiment with participatory art from South Asia that steps out beyond the domain of art institutions only to re-locate the act of co-production back into the world of art. The artist Atul Bhalla takes as his starting point a journey of "thinking with the river" to engage with vernacular practices of making, that re-materialize into co-produced museumized objects. The paper will throw light on a situation that unfolds as a journey with all its unpredictability – and yet refuses to renounce the art world. It argues for the need to rethink the canonical parameters of participatory art as "dematerializing or delegated performance" (Claire Bishop).

# KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN ART AND SOCIAL PRACTICES IN THE D. R. CONGO

Patrick Mudekereza

The presentation aims to give an overview of social practices in D. R. Congo through 3 projects: Le Groupe Amos by Thierry N'landu in the early 1990s, Tokokende Wapi by SADI Collective in the late 2000s and Revolution Room by the Centre d'Art Waza (2013–2016). In the center stands the question of how citizen engagement in political decisions, environmental crises and economic inequalities was addressed at the intersection of art, activism and academia. The talk focuses on alternative knowledge sharing processes and explores new paths for curatorial engagement and museum practices in the Congolese context by using the "sharing authority approach".



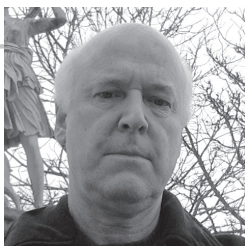
## PANEL 2: PERSPECTIVES

The second part of the symposium will focus on the work of the artist Tania Bruguera. In her recent work at the Tate Modern, *10,448,45*, Bruguera collaborates with people from the museum's neighborhood on art interventions to develop a community-based response to the global migration crisis. Based on this work, curator Maria Lind, political scientist Nikita Dhawan, historian Howard Caygill and artists and activists Nitasha Dhillon and Amin Husain will discuss perspectives from art theory, political activism, decolonialism, history and art.

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Alia Rayyan, Maria Lind, Nikita Dhawan,  
Howard Caygill, Amin Husain / Nitasha  
Dhillon

## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS



### **Howard Caygill**

is professor of Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University in London and previously taught at the Department of History at Goldsmiths, University of London. Caygill's monographs on Kant (*Art of Judgment*, 1989 and *A Kant Dictionary*, 1995), Walter Benjamin (*The Colour of Experience*, 1998), the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (*Levinas and the Political*, 2002) and Kafka (*Kafka: In Light of the Accident*, 2017) reflect his broad research interests, which range from philosophy, aesthetics and religion to sociology and cultural history. He is also author of the book *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance* (2013), which attracted international attention.



### **Heba El Cheikh**

is the founder and director of Mahatat – Contemporary Art based in Cairo. She is considered one of the important international experts on participatory art concepts in the Arab world. Through art in the public space and with different communities, she seeks to set democratization processes in motion. Since its founding in 2011, her organization has become a model for participatory art practice on an international level.



**Nikita Dhawan**

is professor of Political Science and Gender Studies at the Justus Liebig University Giessen. Her research interest focuses on transnational feminism, global justice, human rights, democracy and decolonization. Her work analyzes the ambivalent legacy of the European Enlightenment for the postcolonial world and explores an alternative postcolonial-queer-feminist history of ideas of key concepts. In 2018 she curated *Colonial Repercussions: Planetary Utopias – Hope, Desire, Imaginaries in a Post-Colonial World* at the Academy of Arts in Berlin. Dhawan is one of the principal voices in the German-speaking academic postcolonial discourse.



**Nitasha Dhillon**

has a B.A. in mathematics from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York and the International Center of Photography. She is a PhD candidate at the Department of Media Study – University of Buffalo in New York. Together with Amin Husain, she founded MTL, a collaboration that joins research, aesthetics and action in its practice. As MTL they founded Global Ultra Luxury Faction, direct action wing of Gulf Labor Artist Coalition and MTL+, the collective facilitating Decolonize This Place, an action-oriented movement that blurs the lines between art, organizing and action around six strands of struggle: Indigenous struggle, Black liberation, free Palestine, global wage worker, de-gentrification and dismantling patriarchy.



**Amin Husain**

is an artist and organizer whose works combine research, aesthetics and activism. He studied philosophy, political science and law, practiced law for five years, before transitioning to art. He has taught courses on art, activism and strategic use of media and published articles in several magazines. With Nitasha Dhillon, Husain is a co-founder of Tidal: Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy, a movement-generated theory magazine; MTL, a collective that combines theory, research, aesthetics and organizing in its art practice; Global Ultra Luxury Faction, known as the direct action wing of Gulf Labor Artist Coalition; Direct Action Front for Palestine; and, most recently, Decolonize This Place in New York City.



**Monica Juneja**

is an art historian and university teacher at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. Since 2009 she has occupied the Global Art History chair of the Asia and Europe in a Global Context Cluster of Excellence at the University of Heidelberg. Previously, she was visiting professor at Emory University, Atlanta, USA and a professor at the University of Delhi, India.





### **Ines Kleesattel**

is an art and cultural scholar. She conducts research in multi-perspectivity, artistic knowledge practices, documentary fiction and political aesthetic theory and practice. She writes for various magazines as a free-lance art critic. Kleesattel is one of the important young academic voices in terms of art-critical practice and the relationship between politics and art. Her work on aesthetics and politics focuses on finding new languages in the conflict between artistic practice, political actionism and social engagement.



**Maria Lind**  
By Bernd Krauss

### **Maria Lind**

is one of the leading art theorists and curators in the international contemporary art scene. Until 2018 she was the director of the Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm and artistic director of the 11th Gwangju Biennale. She was director of the graduate program of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College (2008–2010) and director of the IASPIS artist exchange program in Stockholm (2005–2007). Between 2002 and 2004 she worked as director of the Kunstverein München and between 1997 and 2001 as curator at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Lind is one of the principal representatives of contemporary participatory art theory.



**Patrick Mudekereza**

is director of the Centre d'Art Waza and co-founder of Rencontres Picha, Lubumbashi Biennale. Over the last ten years Mudekereza has realized a number of important art projects. He was a member of the steering committee of the Arterial Network and is a member of the cultural policy task force of the country. In 2014, he received the National Award for Art and Culture from the Congolese Ministry of Culture.

# NOTES



**NOV 16, 2019**

Conference  
In English  
Free admission

**VENUE**

Lecture Hall  
Haus der Kulturen der Welt  
John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10  
10557 Berlin  
[hkw.de](http://hkw.de)