

imbued with soft infinities

ON THE EVENTFULNESS OF ASSEMBLAGES

SYMPOSIUM BY MASTER OF ARTS IN FINE ARTS
Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)

November 24th – 26 th, 2014

5.K12 Kunstraum

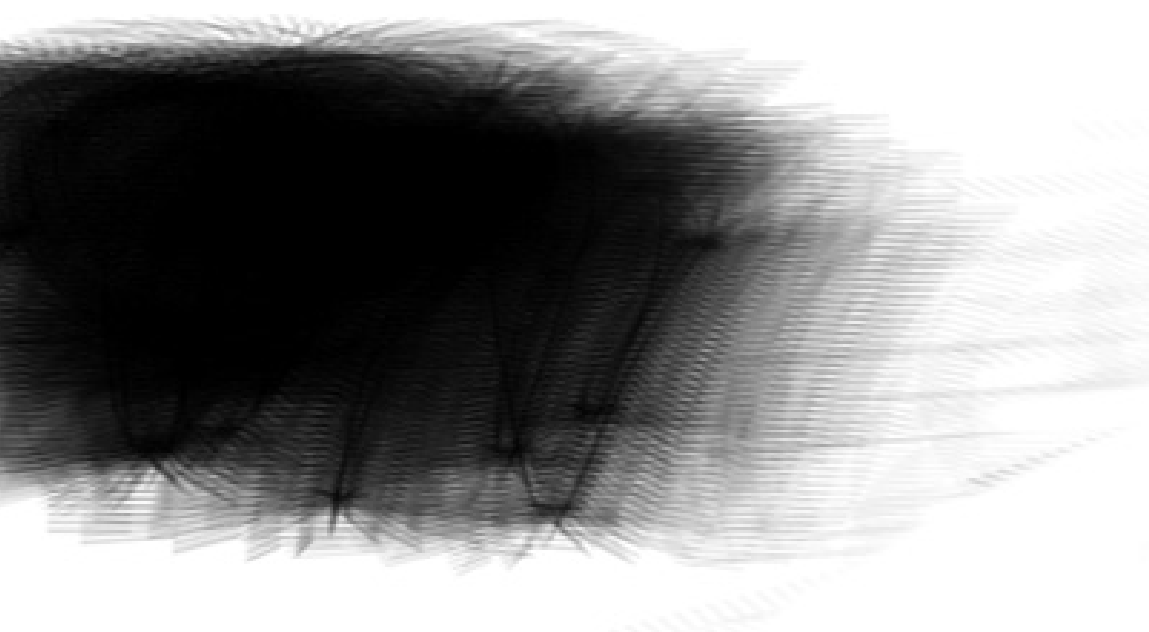
Toni-Areal, Pfingstweidstrasse 96, 8005 Zürich

Monday: 6 - 9 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 3 - 6 p.m.

Evenings: Vegan Kitchen

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with:

Pedro Barateiro, Kamran Behrouz, YoHa/Graham Harwood, Suchan Kinoshita, Leila Peacock, Johannes Paul Raether, Riikka Tauriainen, Philip Ullrich/Fabian Heitzhausen, Emily Wardill, art works by Helen Marten, Elke Marhöfer / Mikhail Lylov, Katrin Mayer, Hannah Weinberger and interviews with Jasbir Puar by Emma Hedditch and Matthew Fuller by Christoph Brunner

Moderators:

Christoph Brunner, Margarida Mendes, Romy Rügger and Kerstin Stakemeier

Concept and realisation:

Joerg Franzbecker, Christian Hübler in collaboration with Johanna Bruckner, Angi, Isabell Bullerschen, Thomas Knüsel, Philip Matesic, Jeroen Singer, Philip Ullrich, Lauren Wildbolz and Sarah Züst

In techno-environmental ecologies one could perceive how forces, functions and forms are entangling and affecting each other. Multiplicities of human and technological 'subjectivities' create a non-coordinated simultaneity of things and agents. Media, as visible in-betweens with specific uses, have dispersed and become an atmospheric supply that is no longer reliant on successful communication and that situates itself often before and beside a human production of meaning.

Can these kinds of ecological textures offer entry into an experience of assemblages in which doing, comprehending and expression perhaps "lag behind" one another, and in which division, disintegration and non-simultaneity become articulable?

In the symposium art practices that critically address the efficacy and temporality of assemblages shall be articulated and put forward for discussion. As artistic forms, assemblages crop up in contexts in which they engage, with their desire and singularized materialities, in the traversing of power relations and queering of normative spaces. Rather than shadowing subjects, objects and identities they account for events and embodied encounters, activating tensions between affect and representation. Interpreting such ecologies is a question of inventing unexpected, risky and bold articulations that make humans, non- / inhumans and their political circumstances present.

<http://soft.infinities.fish>
<http://zhdk.ch/infinities>

The symposium will be fanned out by temporal and spatial formations in which artistic contributions are assembled. Varying forms of artistic debate, discussion, orientation, deferral and interpretation should be activated and non-academic forms of undisciplined knowledge production foregrounded.

Formation 1

Monday, November 24th, 6-9 p.m.
Kunstraum 5.K12

- Katrin Mayer
Clothed, RECEPTION, installation
- Pedro Barateiro
Sad Savages, lecture performance
- Johannes Paul Raether
Protektorama, performance

Formation 2

Tuesday, November 25th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Projektraum 3.E08

- Riikka Tauriainen
A Manuscript containing Mistakes and Images, lecture performance
- Emily Wardill
When You Fall Into A Trance, video
Seminarraum 3.K13
- Hannah Weinberger
Talking, sound installation

Formation 3

Tuesday, November 25th, 3-6 p.m.
Kunstraum 5.K12

- Elke Marhöfer & Mikhail Lylov
Chromatic territories, film
- Graham Harwood/YoHa
Endless War, screening & lecture
- Katrin Mayer
Clothed, RECEPTION, installation

Formation 4

Wed, November 26th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Kunstraum 5.K12

- Johannes Paul Raether
Protektorama 2, performance
- Graham Harwood/YoHa
Tantalum Memorial, lecture
- Riikka Tauriainen
A Paradigm Of the Shadow Economy, performative installation
- Philip Ullrich/Fabian Heitzhausen
How To Build Airplanes for a Tribalized Society, Trailer

Formation 5

Wednesday, November 26th, 3-6 p.m.
Kunstraum 5.K12

- Emily Wardill
The Palace, 16mm film
- Helen Marten
Evian Disease, digital animation
- Kamran Behrouz
keep it soft and apolitically incorrect, performance

Continuously:

- *Timeline* by Suchan Kinoshita and invited participants
- *Diagrams* by Leila Peacock

Interviews:

- Jasbir Puar by Emma Hedditch
- Matthew Fuller by Christoph Brunner

Contributions

- **Pedro Barateiro**, *Sad Savages*, lecture performance

The Sad Savages refers to a serious plague affecting palm trees in Portugal and Southern Europe, caused by the red palm weevil, a beetle who's been reported to attack 17 different kind of palm trees. The text is a deconstruction exercise of the title, separating the words sad and savages, punctuated with other news taken from newspapers, intended to situate the reader on the current historical moment. Here's an excerpt of the text: "Why are palm trees a symbol of desire? And is it for that reason that they are being burned? Who are the barbarians of today? Maybe the stock brokers in Wall Street who Paul Krugman blames for the current economic crisis?" as the Mousse Magazin reviewed The Sad Savages exhibition at Parkour in Lisbon. Since then, The Sad Savages continue to develop. Since then The Sad Savages is in progress. For the symposium Pedro Barateiro present its current state in a lecture-performance.

Formation 1, Monday, November 24th, 6-9 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Kamran Behrouz**, *keep it soft and apolitically incorrect*, performance

keep it soft and apolitically incorrect presents the objects and documentations of a collective performance called "Public Poetry" which will take place simultaneously and parallel to the symposium. Kamran in his own words, "Public poetry is attempting to create a collective moment, an ongoing conversation with the public. We will make a public text in public ground. Therefore any possible reaction or discussion (or participation) of other people on our journey will be part of this poetry. In this age of emotional blockade that predominantly underlines the idea of otherness, our key word would be empathy which contrasts significantly with the concept of capitalistic narcissism."

Formation 5, Wednesday, November 26th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Graham Harwood/YoHa**, *Endless War*, screening & lecture

The Fields Festival in Riga wrote on their website: "Endless War is a real-time processing of 76,000 files from the Afghanistan War Archive. The files are categorised by algorithmic methods such as N-gram fingerprints. As the war is fought it produces entries in databases that are in turn analysed by software looking for repeated patterns of events, spatial information, kinds of actors, timings

and other factors. Endless War shows how war is thought of relates to the way war is fought. Both are seen as, potentially endless, computational processes. How do we participate in these formations and how do they participate in us?"

Formation 3, Tuesday, November 25th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Tantalum Memorial**, lecture

"Tantalum Memorial is a series of telephony-based memorials to the more than 4 million people who have perished in the complex wars that have gone on in the Congo since 1998, often referred to as the 'Coltan Wars'. Coltan ore is mined for the metal tantalum, an essential component of mobile phones and similar devices. Part of Tantalum Memorial is Telephone Trottoire, a 'social telephony' network designed for use by the international Congolese diaspora. It calls Congolese listeners, plays them a phone message on a topical subject and invites them to record a comment and pass it on to a friend by entering their telephone number. The project builds on the traditional Congolese practice of 'radio trottoire' or 'pavement radio', the passing around of news and gossip on street corners to avoid state censorship. 90% of Congolese people in the UK are refugees and their mistrust of official media has made them a particularly isolated community." The above quote is from Quote YoHa's website.

Formation 4, Wednesday, November 26th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Suchan Kinoshita** and invited participants, *Timeline*

Any project, be it a conference, a play or composition takes place within a specific time frame. The consideration that took place here, didn't start from the actual content of a play, that simply occupies time, instead it focuses on time itself as the subject of the play. By the self-selected division of time the play will be defined. One or a number of participants will define a time frame of the play. Each of them individually will carefully prepare actions and events to divide the time frame of the play. The division of time can take on many different forms, activating a variety of media. It can become something almost imperceptible or become striking. Each of the contributions can be repeated or take place only once. Dependent on the actual site of the timeline, an interplay with other events will evolve. In this specific case, the symposium.

continuously

- **Elke Marhöfer & Mikhail Lylov**, *Chromatic territories*, film

Elke Marhöfer und Mikhail Lylov write about their film: "The film aligns itself with ethnographic and anthropological filmmaking while accelerating their methods. Instead of critically examining actions, beliefs or norms of certain subjects, it concentrates on the affective side of events and follows different grades of speed, light, temperature, rotation, friction, fall-off. It inquires into the life of Chunking Mansions, shuttle traders and commerce objects and asks how humans and non-humans combine in the flows of capital?"

Formation 3, Tuesday, November 25th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Helen Marten**, *Evian Disease*, digital animation

"Evian Disease explores the relation between modern lifeforms and the environment we are living in today. To this end, the spectator is lead on an internal journey of a collusion of shape, texture, colour, and sound narrated by 6 different voices; who state through a realistic description of a modern apartment, a cartoon model-less fashion show or an animated hand holding a cigarette to name a few- how humans perpetually protect themselves from "nature" with superficial artefact. Forcing language to misbehave, making assiduous use of the collision of surfaces, the meeting of symbols and the superimposition of materials, Helen Marten ties signs together and unties them, leafing between and contaminating subjects that force public life into categories: projection, status, environment, consumption, sexiness. There is a patchwork (and seams), but the whole process is one of progressive layering, of artificial knots, foils and surface diversions. Behind the sanitized, yet ultimately seductive formal vocabulary of digital animation and the relentless omnipresence of the spoken word, a plot – whose ends only momentarily meet – begins to unfold." The above quote is from a description of Helen Marten's work when exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

Formation 5, Wednesday, November 26th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Katrin Mayer**, *Clothed, RECEPTION*, installation

referring to the history of stripes as a visual attribute for marginalization, a fold-out texture will be shaped after and within a space, inspired by Christopher Isherwood's time in Berlin, sewn in direct relation to the RECEPTION gallery floor plan by Regina Sarreiter, and in this case, shaped by a

production e.V. with Thomas Knüsel as a contribution to imbued with soft infinities at the ZHdK, Zurich.

Formation 1, Monday, November 24th, 6-9 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#), Formation 3, Tuesday, November 25th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Leila Peacock**, *Diagrams*

Leila Peacock will be drawing through and in the allotted time(s) of the symposium.

continuously

- **Johannes Paul Raether**, *Protektorama*, performance

Johannes Paul Raether writes on Protektorama, as one of his beings part of Identitecture: "In Protektorama Weltheilungswald, the world-healing witch Protektorama, a smurf-like figure equipped with a cheat sheet, a little ritual case and a ceremonial wand occupies a world healing forest. It is a dark anti-capitalistic cult spot that resembles an arena or possibly an exercise machine. It also functions as a smartphone-film-studio. The witch declares Marx a sorcerer, a Kinder surprise egg transforms into a Voodoo doll, while the film maker Maya Deren is witness to a journey through the history of markets, money and value-form. The abstract principles of the capitalist relations of production have slipped into the dead products like Japanese spirits - into all things and beings. They circle the globe in mega-commodity streams while the world-healing witch attacks this ghostly and irrational empire with her rather anti-climatic and ineffective counter-spell".

Formation 1, Monday, November 24th, 6-9 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#), Formation 4, Wednesday, November 26th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Riikka Tauriainen**, *A Manuscript containing Mistakes and Images*, lecture performance

Riikka Tauriainen writes about Manuscript containing Mistakes and Images: "It combines text taken from internet articles, wikipedia and legislative proposals, as well as a collection of pictures which were found by a thematic search on google. The work is based on the connection between possible reference points such as universal categorization, taxonomy (a categorization system

used in science), semantic networks (a form of knowledge representation), cartography, borders, state borders, border control, Schengen border code (Schengen Agreement) and deportation (the deportation law in Switzerland). In contrast to the text that is linear in narration, the images are arranged in a random, undefined or transparent chain. This is an attempt to draw associative connections and dispositions between the images and the text, as well as to reflect upon structures of existing classifications, definitions and rules.”

Formation 2, Tuesday, November 25th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., [Projektraum 3.E08](#)

- *A Paradigm Of the Shadow Economy*, performative installation

“How do you measure something which is hidden or invisible? This seems to be a contradiction in terms as the hidden economy is exactly that part of the global economy which escapes the purview of the present social measurement apparatus and the circulation of capital,” says Riikka Tariainen about her work and continues: „The installation builds on artistic research and combines appropriated images, text and diagrams re-collected and re-organized from print and mass media. The aim is to draw transversal connections between these images, diagrams and text, and reflect on the flux of the shadow economy. How it parasitises, perpetuated by the border regime, mobility, access and exploitation of the living labor and natural resources.”

Formation 4, Wednesday, November 26th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Philip Ullrich/Fabian Heitzhausen**, *How To Build Airplanes for a Tribalized Society*, installation

A deeply fragmented society, consisting of minute groups of people with no common ground. A population with completely diverging views, ideals and habits. The constricted space of an airplane is examined. It's disconnected, floating over the ground, but every minor detail thoroughly calculated. There is no place where conflicts may arise. It's a crude mixture of superficial materialities, empty references to cultural identities and paternalistically soothing design. Only the unrestrained pragmatics of a corporate language can level this out.

Formation 4, Wednesday, November 26th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Emily Wardill**, *When You Fall Into A Trance*, video

“In the world of *When You fall Into A Trance*, four characters rotate and reveal themselves in a series of interconnected relationships. The splintered narrative traces the lead character, Dominique, a neuroscientist, together with Simon, her patient, Hugo her lover and her teenage daughter Tony, a synchronised swimmer. Dominique's patient Simon, based on the real character of Ian Waterman, struggles with the loss of his proprioception, the ability to move his own body without seeing it. Throughout the film, his condition becomes a striking analogy, which intensifies Dominique's fascination with the relationship between mind and body. Wardill's use of fragmentary editing and narrative devices deliver a film that intertwines dislocation and touch to investigate the interlinked complexities of motion and emotion.” This is in parts what Index in Stockholm wrote about the *When You fall Into A Trance*, announcing their recent exhibition with Emily Wardill's work.

Formation 2, Tuesday, November 25th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., [Seminarraum 3.K13](#)

- *The Palace*, 16mm film

“The search into the sensory fluctuation of movement is inherent to “*The Palace*”. The black and white imagery is constantly moving, giving shapes to forms and shadows that recall an architectural surface, yet also giving sight to undefined shapes. The camera dictates the side to side or back to front rhythms, always oscillating and never fixed. The labyrinth-like path of architectural forms is superposed to a strict narrative, closing the gap between the challenges of monochromatic perception and the visualization of a memory palace, writes Standard from Oslo on her „*The Palace*.” Richard Birkett, curator of Artist Space adds, “The monochromatic digital space is one of matter, mediated through an abstraction in which vital data is lost. Yet equally it approximates the selectivity of a process in which the need to remember, to create a workable logic for the retention of information, centers around the imaging of equivalence between physical form and abstract information.”

Formation 5, Wednesday, November 26th, 3-6 p.m., [Kunstraum 5.K12](#)

- **Hannah Weinberger**, *Talking*, sound installation (starts 9h)

“Hannah Weinberger investigates the impact of digitization on sound, employing technologies readily available online as artistic tools. Her audio works, with early titles such as *Social Network* (2009) and *Google* (2008-

10), emphasize the ability of commerce and media to shape behavior through music, writes Frieze Art Fair about Hannah Weinberger's work. For Talking the artist incorporated different layers of "art field recordings" like a landscape of white noise from openings, art fairs and biennales, which she intertwine with composed acoustic music pieces."

Formation 2, Tuesday, November 25th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Projektraum 3.E08

Interviews:

- **Matthew Fuller** interviewed by Christoph Brunner

In this interview media theorist and head of the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths – University of London, Matthew Fuller sheds light on the post-digital conditions of contemporary culture. Based on his work on Software Studies and Media Ecologies Fuller emphasizes how our present world is infused with what he calls Evil Media. Evil Media Studies, a term and field developed together with Andrew Goffey, analysis the computerized and algorithmic operations shaping and controlling almost every domain of human life. Linking these theoretical observations to media art practices Fuller points out their potential for developing aesthetics and politics capable of critically investigating these new soft and dark assemblages. (text C. Brunner)

Christoph Brunner is a project leader at the Institute for Contemporary Art Research (IFCAR). His dissertation "Ecologies of Relation: Research-Creation and Aesthetic Practice" deals with questions of collectivity in art and philosophy.

- **Jasbir Puar** is Associate Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at Rutgers University. She analyzes the War on Terror as an assemblage of racism, nationalism, patriotism, and terrorism, suggesting that it is „already profoundly queer.“ Besides homonationalism and queer assemblages, she writes about queer tourism, sexuality and space, intersectionality and affective politics. In the interview by Emma Hedditch she discusses activists groups in New York and their translations of assemblage thinking into political agency.

Emma Hedditch is an artist and writer based in New York. Her work focuses on daily practice, materiality, and distribution of knowledge as political

action. She often works collaboratively with other artists and groups. Heavily influenced by politicized conceptual art practices and feminist politics, her work has taken on flexible forms as performances, collectively produced films, fanzines, as well as workshops, screenings, and events.

Moderators:

Christoph Brunner, see above.

Margarida Mendes has run the project space "The Barber Shop" in Lisbon since 2009. She has a Masters in Aural and Visual Culture by the Goldsmiths College of Arts in London, with a specific research on cybernetics, geophilosophy, occultism and experimental film.

Romy Rüeegg is an artist and a writer. She is interested in the conceptual, poetic and affective potential of language and writes for performances, audio works, choreographed spaces and printed matter in a mutual process between the written and the spoken word. Her work examines the socio-historical and political contexts and narratives in which they emerge and simultaneously being co-constructed by them.

Kerstin Stakemeier studied political science and art history in Berlin and London. She is working as a junior-Professorin at the cx zentrum für interdisziplinäre studien der Akademie der Bildenden Künste München. Her forthcoming book will be on de-artification and realism in contemporary art.

**‘There are numerous definitions of what assemblages are;
I’m more interested, however, in what assemblages do.’**

(Jasbir Puar)



images: Philip Ullrich

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