

CURATING, RESEARCH AND THE POLITICAL

Workshop by Katerina Gregos

Looking into questions such as democracy, rights, the legacy of colonialism, historiography, suppressed narratives, and politically contested issues such as the limits of freedom of speech and the recent refugee crisis, the seminar will examine problems of representation and methodological strategies in relation to curating the political from a critical, research and process-based perspective. This module will also look into the ethics of socially and politically engaged practice, the different ways how research translates into artistic praxis and visibility, as well as how this content is organized and mediated curatorially. Gregos has invited two guests, artists Johan Grimonprez and Adelita Husni-Bey to contribute to the workshop. Grimonprez brings his own special perspective into research, film and politics while Husni-Bey will provide a perspective stemming from radical pedagogy and performativity.

Monday 14th November

AM: Katerina Gregos

1. CURATING THE POLITICAL

Over the last fifteen years Katerina Gregos' curatorial practice has explored the relationship between art and politics with a particular view on questions of democracy, human rights, capitalism, crisis and changing global production circuits. In this workshop Gregos will present a series of case studies on some of her exhibitions which have tackled a series of seminal political issues: from the limits of freedom of speech to the refugee crisis, exploring the methodologies underlying socially and politically engaged curating. How do we understand the 'political' in this sense? What are the responsibilities underlying critical curatorial practices? How independent of wider art world structures and hierarchies can socially and politically engaged independent curating be?

PM: Johan Grimonprez

2. THE FIGURE OF THE ARTIST AND THE TERRORIST

The main question tackled here would be: "Who owns history?" This workshop will focus on the themes embodied in Grimonprez's seminal film *diàl H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1997). The module will examine the methodology of the archive; both of that of the artist versus that of the mainstream media corporations. The question 'who owns history' gives rise to a host of other questions such as: who has access to storytelling and the political game, and who is silenced and written out of

history. The module will also explore the boundaries between politics and poetics, storytelling, masquerading, lies and the complicity of the storyteller and/or the media inscribed as a tool of war or either as the figure of the terrorist at the other end of this spectrum.

Tuesday 15th November

AM: Johan Grimonprez

3. MAYBE THE SKY IS REALLY GREEN, AND WE'RE JUST COLOURBLIND:

This module will take a closer look into how the mainstream media constructs itself through intertwining the global with the intimate, through the idea of the 'other' and the interjection of fear. We used to be consumers of happiness, and now we have turned into consumers of fear. Embodied in Grimonprez's film *DOUBLE TAKE* (2009) through the symptom of the double in what Freud has analysed in his work on the uncanny, and the projection of fear, be it through Hitchcock's films through love stories by way of male hysteria (e.g. *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*), or via the rise of the culture of fear by way of the TV box beaming the political spectacle of the cold war. How does a mainstream storyteller such as Hitchcock fit in there? How can one own (political) storytelling as an auteur?

PM: Johan Grimonprez

4. TO LIVE IS TO BE OTHER

This module will focus on dialogue, the commons versus the cult of privatization that is being propagated by the political hegemony. Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once said: "Poetry chooses the side of love. If I write love poems, its because I resist the conditions that don't allow me to write love poems." This last and third module by Grimonprez will revolve around the themes embodied in the film *SHADOW WORLD* (2016): the privatization of war as a symptom of our crisis in politics versus re-imagining a new commons as a potential alternative. The point of departure here would be the question by neuroscientist Raymond Tallis: "Why can't we tickle ourselves?" This question constitutes a point of departure to talk about community.

Wednesday 16th November

AM: Katerina Gregos

5. ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND THE RESCUSCITATION OF HISTORY

In recent years there has been a surge in socially and politically engaged research-based practice as part of a drive to reclaim history, to challenge the so-called 'end of history' and in order to engage in a correctional historiography by privileging marginalized, suppressed or alternative histories that are at odds with historical master narratives. This workshop will look into how artist and curator work together in order to bring these narratives to the fore. Where do research, knowledge production and aesthetics meet? What are the methodologies by which documents and archives

are transformed into artworks?

PM: Adelita Husni-Bey

Through the three modules conceived by the artist Adelita-Husni Bey, students will be guided through questions pertinent to collaborative process-based practice, focusing on radical education methodologies and histories. The module will include readings, screenings and theatre exercises based on Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed. Participants will have the opportunity to look through the archives of Francesc Ferrer y Guardia's Modern School as well as familiarize themselves with Bell Hooks, Paulo Freire and early anarcho-collectivist theory.

6. UNLEARNING SPEECH: ON PEDAGOGY, WHAT IS RADICAL EDUCATION?

The first module will be dedicated to foundational ideas around radical education, examples of histories, methods and uses of radical pedagogical models. Husni-Bey will use her projects Postcards from the Desert Island (2012) and I want the Sun I want (2011) both workshops and films shot in experimental public schools in France as the point of departure to discuss these issues.

Thursday 17th November

AM: Adelita Husni-Bey

7. UNLEARNING METHOD: WHAT SPECIFIC PROCESSES ARE USED IN COLLABORATIVE PROCESS-BASED PRACTICE?

This module will focus on speech, care-work and the haptic as pedagogical practice. Looking at excerpts of Agency: Games of Power (2015), a workshop and film based on citizenship and Story of the Heavens and our Planet (2007), which chronicles the life of activists in treating camps, the focus will be on representational work that fosters prefigurative political spaces through notions of care-work as well as non-oral methods of learning, such as touch, through theatre exercises.

PM: Adelita Husni – Bey

8. QUESTIONS AROUND ACCOUNTABILITY, VISIBILITY AND COLLABORATION: WHAT CONSTITUTES THE 'POLITICAL' IN COLLABORATIVE PROCESS-BASED PRACTICE?

This seminar will focus on two works, After the finish line (2015), a workshop and film produced in collaboration with a group of teenage competitive sports players and the Convention of the Use of Space (2015-ongoing), a publicly drafted legal document on the use of space. The three-part module will end by attempting to answer central issues around this kind of practice and its curation, such as 'who benefits from the cultural and financial capital produced?' 'How do

institutional time-limitations hamper process-based work?’ ‘How is the ‘political’ constituted in this kind of practice?’

Friday 18th November

AM: Katerina Gregos

9. WHAT IS ART FOR? MEDITATIONS ON THE SOCIAL ROLE OF ART AND CONCLUSIONS.

In recent years there has been much debate about the purpose and function of socially and politically engaged art practice. Often there is an implicit assumption that art has to be of some ‘use’ to society, and that it somehow has to contribute to ‘changing the world’. Art as activism has also generated questions about the limits of what art can do as well as questions about the kinds of audiences that art speaks to (the problem of ‘preaching to the converted’). This module will generate a discussion about what art can or might do as well as perhaps what it shouldn’t or can’t.

BIOGRAPHIES

Katerina Gregos’ curatorial practice over the last 15 years has focused on the relationship between art, politics and social issues. She has curated numerous large-scale exhibitions and biennials, including, more recently: the Belgian Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, *Personne et les autres*, an international group exhibition which explored the legacy of colonial modernity and the persisting phantoms of colonialism; the 5th Thessaloniki Biennial, entitled *Between the Pessimism of the Intellect and the Optimism of the Will*, based on a reading of Antonio Gramsci’s well-known aphorism (both exhibitions 2015); *No Country for Young Men: Contemporary Greek Art in Times of Crisis* at BOZAR, Brussels, 2014 (which was selected by the German art magazine *Monopol* as one of the best exhibitions of the year); *The Politics of Play* for the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art in Sweden, and *Liquid Assets: In the Aftermath of the Transformation of Capital* for the *Steirischer Herbst*, Graz, Austria (both in 2013); *Newtopia: The State of Human Rights*, at several venues in Mechelen & Brussels; and *Manifesta 9: In the Deep of the Modern* (as co-curator), in Genk, Belgium, (2012). In 2011 she curated *Speech Matters* the critically acclaimed exhibition on freedom of speech for the Danish Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennial. This summer she curated *A World Not Ours*, an exhibition on the refugee crisis, for the Schwarz Foundation on the Greek island of Samos.

Johan Grimonprez’s critically acclaimed work dances on the borders of practice and theory, art and cinema, documentary and fiction, demanding a double take on the part of the viewer. Informed by an archaeology of present-day media, his work seeks out the tension between the intimate and the bigger picture of globalization. It questions our contemporary sublime, one framed by a fear industry that has infected political and social dialogue. By suggesting new



narratives through which to tell a story, his work emphasizes a multiplicity of histories and realities. Grimonprez's works are in the collections of Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa; and Tate Modern, London. His feature films include dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y (1997 – featured at Documenta X) and Double Take (2009). Traveling the main festival circuit from the Berlinale to Sundance, they garnered several Best Director awards, the 2005 ZKM International Media Award, a Spirit Award and the 2009 Black Pearl Award at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, and were also acquired by NBC Universal, ARTE, and BBC/FILM 4.

Adelita Husni-Bey stages workshops, seminars, publications, radio broadcasts, archives and exhibitions focused on using collectivist and non-competitive pedagogical models within the framework of urban studies. In her 10 years practicing as both an artist and a pedagogue Adelita has worked with activists, jurists, schoolchildren, spoken word poets, students and teachers on unpacking the complexity of collectivity. To make good what can never be made good: what we owe each other. She participated in Undiscovered Worlds, the New York High Line, 2015; Really Useful Knowledge, Reina Sofia Museum, 2014; Utopia for Sale?, MAXXI Museum, 2014; and Playing Truant, Gasworks, 2012, among other group exhibitions. She recently produced a film with a group of young athletes at the Kadist Foundation in San Francisco as part of the solo exhibition Movement Break, and is currently developing a Visible Prize nominated project, the "Convention on the Use of Space," a publicly drafted legal document on the commons and the allocation of space in cities. She is a 2016 recipient of the Graham Foundation grant and a 2012 Whitney Independent Study Program fellow.