

PRESS RELEASE

New Narratives: THINKING ECONOMICS DIFFERENTLY

A Summit on Art, Theory, Politics and Civil Society

March 30 – April 2, 2017

Venue

Kunstgebäude Stuttgart, Schlossplatz 2, 70173 Stuttgart

Press conference

at Kunstgebäude, Wednesday March 29, 2017, 12 a.m.

Contributions by

Nabil Ahmed, Rheim Alkadhi, John Barker, Keti Chukhrov, Katja Diefenbach, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Gulf Labor Coalition / MTL Collective, Mohammad Abu Hajar, Srećko Horvat, Schorsch Kamerun, Hilary Koob-Sassen, PeterLicht, Neue Dringlichkeit, Boris Ondreička, Dan Perjovschi, Elizabeth A. Povinelli, David Quigley, Simon Sheikh, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Tools for Action, Enrique Matías Viale, We cannot build what we cannot first imagine (a. o.)

Moderators

Peter Haury, Florian Malzacher, Katrin Mundt

A Project by

Akademie Schloss Solitude

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

Schauspiel Stuttgart

Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart

Theater Rampe

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

New Narratives ... A New Project in Stuttgart

On the basis of a broad network of local cultural institutions— and strongly supported by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg—the establishment of a new annual “summit meeting” is planned for Stuttgart. It will be dedicated to the main sociopolitical lines of conflict and negotiate them in the spheres of the visual and performative arts, theory, and activism. The perspective here is expressly global.

The first edition of this new project will take place from March 30 to April 2, 2017 under the title Thinking Economics Differently at the Kunstgebäude in Stuttgart. It encompasses more than twenty lectures, performances and music or film contributions. The main focus during the four days is on a joint debate.

In view of climate change, the neo-feudal drive of financial capitalism, increasingly strong nationalism and racism, as well as a populism that deliberately operates on the basis of disinformation and demagoguery, our concern is to initiate a long-term reflection on both political and aesthetic conceptions of societal change.

In so doing, we need to deal with the problem that a disturbing wave of political change is going on at present. With the growing number of demagogues who have been democratically elected (Donald Trump in the USA, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, Vladimir Putin in Russia, etc.), we are facing a shift toward societies in which nationalism, racism, sexism, and homophobia are politically implemented, and in which pluralism and freedom of speech are massively restricted. Thus, it is not a matter of fighting against neoliberal conditions only, but also against anti-democratic and neofascist tendencies, and it seems as if new languages, imaginations, and collective forms of agency are called for in such fight.

For this reason, the New Narratives summit focuses on approaches and models that not only express criticism of and present counter-models for existing conditions, but that also highlight the importance of imagination and esthetical means for a reinvention of history, reality, and the future.

Another main concern of the summit is to both structurally and spatially reconceptualize formats like workshops, plenums, lectures, conferences, etc. The furnishing, spatial distribution, chronology, and rhythm of the summit are designed in such a way that they will facilitate open, dehierarchized forms of gathering and debate.

New Narratives 1: Thinking Economics Differently

30 March – 2 April 2017

Subjects

The first edition of this new project will discuss alternative approaches to neoliberal financial capitalism that is based on algorithms, debt, and the myth of unlimited growth. How can such abstract structures be read, understood, and reinterpreted in face of their own contradictions? Which collective and individual forms of resistance are necessary in order to counteract the existing injustices and the mechanisms of exploitation and destruction? Which special potentials are harbored by poetry, imagination, and fiction for the concept of a different economy?

The main thematic areas at the summit will include the globally operating structures of economy, labor, and finances, but also the present-day societal, institutional, and political crises in democratic societies: a Europe that nowadays is only negotiated as an economic partnership of convenience, as an arrangement of credit-lending and debtor states, and that is increasingly defined by nationalism, racism, and populism; and a US-American superpower that heads for an ultra-right-wing autocracy.

The complexity of the current political, societal and economic conditions requires a reconsideration of concepts such as class, solidarity, law, and justice, but also of our forms and tools of critique and resistance. The summit aims at offering a forum for exactly these concerns.

Structure

The structure of the summit meeting will feature more than twenty lectures, performances as well as music and film contributions from various academic, artistic, activist, and civic contexts. e.g.:

Syrian rap artist and economist Mohammad Abu Hajar who had been arrested and incarcerated in his country because of the political content of his songs, investigates potentials for an international solidarity movement. Brazilian theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva explores a plan for the realization of a liberal program of justice through decolonization; Iraqi artist Rheim Alkadhi references ongoing research interests along the lines of transgender and queer sexualities, migration and displacement, and urgent bodily economies of belonging-in-transit. Amin Husain and Nitasha Dhillon, members of the international Gulf Labor Coalition sketch the possibility of a practice in which the artist's work becomes a practice of resistance, building and training in the practice of freedom. Croatian philosopher Srećko provides a roller-coaster ride through "Europe: The Coming War or the Coming Insurrection?"

These diverse contributions will be followed by several workshops the next day – amongst those is also a special workshop for pupils. The ideas, reflections, and questions in the workshops conducted in parallel will then, in turn, be put up for discussion in various plenums.

The lectures will be **translated simultaneously (English-German)** and address a broad audience interested in politics, society and art.

Further central elements are the Mediatheque-in-progress, which is to make materials on the various topics accessible, and a platform for local and international initiatives that wish to introduce their projects here and discuss them with others.

Results + Continuity

The discussions, results, and experiences from the summit will be documented through various media-based formats—all of which will be integrated into the planning process during the upcoming summit meeting.

Idea and Concept: Christine Peters, Iris Dressler

in Cooperation with Marie Bues, Hans D. Christ, Klaus Dörr, Martina Grohmann, Jan Hein, Jean-Baptiste Joly, Elke aus dem Moore, Katrin Spira

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Language:

German, English (simultaneous translation)

Entrance:

Free

Press Contact:

Birgit Gebhard + Maximilian Lehner

gebhard_lehner@wkv-stuttgart.de

Birgit Gebhard: 0049-157-30323135, Maximilian Lehner: 0049-152-08819867

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