

THE OCTOPUS PROGRAMME

The logo for 'THE OCTOPUS PROGRAMME' features the title in a thin, black, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized octopus icon composed of vertical lines of varying heights. Behind the text, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent orange geometric shapes, including triangles and rectangles, creating a layered, architectural effect.

SPECTRAL ENCOUNTERS I

SUMMER SEMESTER 2021/2022

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (**Vienna**), Visiting Professor
Art and Communication Practices (KKP) Institute of Art Sciences and Art Education
University of Applied Arts Vienna

In collaboration with Anne Klontz (**Stockholm**); Bronwyn Lace (**Johannesburg/Vienna**);
Çelenk Bafra (**Istanbul**); Johan Thom (**Pretoria**); Karim Sultan (**Tunis**); Marti Manen (**Stockholm**);
Dr. Paul O'Neill (**Helsinki**); and Dr. Tina Sherwell (**Birzeit**).

SYLLABUS

SPECTRAL ENCOUNTERS is a two-semester course offered in the summer semester of 2021/2022 by Art and Communication Practices at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. It is a 3 credits course per semester (**SPECTRAL ENCOUNTERS I & II**).

The course incorporates with **the Octopus Programme** that is a guided research-based educational programme that encourages artistic research and production-based collaborations across academies and art institutions; students and professionals; diverse presentation modes; and processes of research and documentation in different geographies. 9 curators/instructors/coordinators have developed and designed a collaborative content for 30 weeks (2021/2022). The activities spread around among each node. The course includes peer to peer educational secessions, online and class discussions, research fieldtrips and workgroups both in Tunis and Vienna, collaborative production-based workshops, and lectures. The course also includes guest lecturers, collaborated academic exchanges and curated presentations of the students/artists in different cities.

The webpage is documenting the programme: <https://theoctopusprogramme.uni-ak.ac.at>

PROGRAMME

+++ 13 April 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (**Vienna**)

Introduction

Introducing the programme; introducing the participants to each other, reviewing the proposed projects, planning the tutorials, and discussing the planned activities.

+++ 20 April 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Dr. Tina Sherwell (**Birzeit**)

The Work Between Us

The lecture will be a discussion about the late Jean Fisher's text "The Work Between Us", it will also explore different ideas suggested by Jonathan Crary in "24/7". The aim of the session is to have a discussion between us all about these texts.

Reading list:

The Work Between Us by Jean Fisher

<https://www.jeanfisher.com/the-work-between-us/>

24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep by Jonathan Crary (the PDF will be provided by Senova)

+++ 27 April 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Dr. Paul O'Neill (Helsinki)

When Art Becomes Public, the Exhibition as a form of Escape

Through this performative lecture, Paul O'Neill will reflect upon his curatorial practice, collective exhibition-making and the public as a constructed readymade. Taking a recent exhibition project "We are the Center for Curatorial Studies", Hessel Museum, 2016-17 as its starting point, this lecture reflects upon curatorial studies and extends a conception of the curatorial to account for multiple public sites of contact, assemblages and gathering of diverse bodies and subjects as well as their discursive connections. In doing so, it opens up a concept of the formation of the 'exhibition' itself as a form of publicness, and as a mode of public research action in its own process of becoming.

O'Neill will further explore how different points of contact are made possible when exhibiting becomes a form of escape for the artwork as much as for the viewer. Here, O'Neill identifies escape and publicness as key concepts for the curatorial which defines itself as an act of release – from something, somewhere, someone – accompanied by the wish to be transformed. Escape implicates language itself as being complicit with our need to be able to, at least, imagine ourselves elsewhere, in the futures sense. How can a language of exhibitions, therefore enable us to think attentively about escape as a curatorial form of 'exhibiting', and as a space of transformation for art?

+++ 04 May 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (Vienna)

Perpetual and Spatial Strategies

What is the responsibility of a curator in relation to such specific places along with their loaded memory, conflicting sensibilities, and controlling entities? How does the curatorial framework correlate with spatial, physiological, ideological, historical, communicational, and informational challenges?

The lecture will focus on curatorial approaches which manifest diverse artistic methodologies, and models of collaborative engagements and commitments under constantly evolving and changing conditions and terms by navigating through some case studies including "UNCOVERED. Nicosia International Airport" project, Cyprus, (2010-2013); the 2nd and 5th Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-O ARK Underground (2013 and 2019) in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Helsinki Photography Biennial (2014), Jerusalem Show 7: Fractures (2014); and the CrossSections project (Vienna, Helsinki, and Stockholm, 2017-2019); "Climbing Through the Tide" B7L9, (Tunis, 2019).

+++ 11 May 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Bronwyn Lace (Johannesburg/Vienna)

Where Artist and Institution Meet

Reflecting on her role in the collaborative founding of The Centre for the Less Good Idea in 2016 in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa, Lace looks at archetypal yet often unacknowledged dynamics and relationships between artists and institutions. Using the Centre as an example she advocates for a culture of care, an acknowledgement of codependencies and for giving the artist the benefit of the doubt.

+++ 18 May 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Octopus participants and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (Vienna)

Workshop

Sharing ideas, projects, and the process

Marti Manen (Stockholm)

Brief

Marti Manen will brief the Octopus participants about the up-coming project of Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm.

+++ 27 May 2021, Thursday, 10:00–13:00

Jumanna Manna (Germany) in conversation with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (Vienna)

In this conversation, Basak Senova and Jumana Manna unpack some of the ideas behind Manna's current exhibition "Thirty Plumbers in the Belly" at MuKHA. Quoted from the website of MuKHA "Manna's practice in sculpture and film focuses on the power dynamics surrounding the processes through which history and places are constructed and consumed. She reanimates these dynamics to form installations that evoke landscapes, sites of labour and bodies in states of uncanny mutation. Ways of knowing and knowledge classifications have been a recurring theme in her recent works. At times this is explored in the acts of collecting, preserving or propagating material and living archives. In others, these themes are embodied in a more associative manner, drawing from the worlds of archaeology, construction, and musculature."

Renad Shqeirat (Ramallah)

Presentation: Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center

Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center is a Palestinian arts and culture organization that aims to create a pluralistic, critical liberating culture through research, query, and participation, and that provides an open space for the community to produce vibrant and liberating cultural content.

Rooting the Artist

Renad Shqeirat is in conversation with a Palestinian storyteller Fidaa Ataya, and they will discuss the artist as an individual, as a messenger and as a creator while intertwining myth with reality. While doing so, they touch upon several topics relating to our human nature and to the Cosmos.

Fidaa Atayah is a storyteller wandering to collect and tell stories. She produced and performed shows for different audiences in Palestine and across Europe, America and the Arab world. She is trained in the arts of storytelling and theatre, a holder of a master's degree in integrated arts from Plymouth state university, a bachelor's degree in education and psychology in Palestine, a diploma in drama and education from Jerash summer school/ Al-qattan foundation and a diploma in playback theatre/ Egypt and Lebanon. She founded narration and arts groups with artists, women and youth, most importantly: art and activism residency 2014, Kharrarif group 2011. She cofounded Hakaya group/Palestine, the Arabic school of playback, women theatre/Burj Al-barajna refugee camp, the rain singer theatre/Tulkarm refugee camp and the Palestinian American theatre PACT.

+++ 01 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Banu Cennetoglu (Istanbul)

On the BAS Collection: A non strategic fall —ow

*The conflict of internal forces came to a head around 2013. A recurring desire to stop, quit, break, change the confines of habit, to resist existing for the sake of existing, and unresolved (perhaps unresolvable) plaguing questions on the who-for, where-for and the why of the BAS project, caused it to almost grind to a halt.**

Initiated by Banu Cennetoglu in 2006, BAS works on the collection, exhibition, production and distribution of artists' publications and printed matter. Between May 2006 – April 2009, in partnership with artist Philippine Hoegen, Bent Artists' Books was conceived to support local

production of artists' books. Following Yasemin Nur and Seçil Yersel's collaborative presence between 2016-2019, BAS is currently run by Aslı Özdoğuran and Marina Papazyan.

* http://www.philippinehoegen.com/projecten/Body_of_Books/

Çelenk Bafra (Istanbul)

What does a biennial stand for in a city of constant crisis?

Istanbul has always been a city in flux. From devastating earthquakes to terrorist bombings, from attempts of coup d'état to sociopolitical uprisings, the city is associated with numerous traumas and never-ending crisis aggravated by the economic instability and cultural polarization. Istanbul's art scene had also experienced ups and downs, including the negligence until the mid-2000's, the boom in the early 2010's and recent recession. Despite all, Istanbul Biennial remained to be one of the most established and internationally acclaimed art institutions. Perceived as a hub for contemporary art and a port to the rest of the world, it means more than biennial to the art community. Sometimes a school, a museum or a competition, maybe a dream or a disappointment. The lecture aims to give an overview of the history of the Istanbul Biennial in relation to the local (and global) sociopolitical context and through biennial's engagement with Istanbul and its art ecosystem.

+++ 08 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Bronwyn Lace & Bongile G. Lecoge-Zulu CFLGI (Johannesburg)

Workshop

Actor, writer, flautist, performing artist and regular collaborator at The Centre for the Less Good Idea, Bongile Lecoge-Zulu joins artist and co-founder of the centre Bronwyn Lace in a guided workshop combining breath, text and voice. The duo seeks to work with fellow artists on a provocation to perform breath and to breathe again, by enacting this involuntary action and seeing what happens when we attempt to stage the ultimate source of energy, vitality and life in combination with text and our voices. Collectively and collaboratively, we will play, perform and reflect. Bongile and Bronwyn ask that artists come prepared with a piece of found text, something which holds meaning for them and that they are willing to share.

Johan Thom (Pretoria)

Exchange Programme with University of Pretoria MFA Fine Arts Programme

The programme develops research expertise across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines through a practice-led approach is followed by taking the art object and artistic production as the departure points for study and research.

+++ 15 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Larissa Sansour (Denmark) in conversation with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (Vienna)

The conversation is focusing on Larissa Sansour's sci-fi trilogy and *In Vitro* by focusing on her use of future imaginaries and the shifting of temporal spaces to address politics. Sansour is interested in memory and the blurry line between personal, collective and state memory. Furthermore, she is currently working on an opera that fuses Mahler's Kindertotenlieder and a folkloric Palestinian song from WW1 that talks about the drafting of Palestinians in the Ottoman army. The working title for the opera is *Genetics Opera* and it explores epigenetics and how much of trauma is inherited genetically. As she continues to process the ideas that have been indicated in *In Vitro*, the conversation will also take this new work in-progress into consideration.

Anne Klontz (Stockholm)

Behind-the-scenes Glimpse into Large-scale Exhibition Production

Anne Klontz currently manages the production of one of the largest exhibitions in Scandinavia—the annual Degree Exhibition at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design with 175 graduating students. Klontz will take the participants of the programme on a virtual tour behind the construction scenes and discuss the purpose for producing such exhibitions supported by a historical context and notions of identity relating not only to the institutional, but also the effects on the collective and individual.

+++ 22 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Marti Manen (Stockholm)

Exhibitions and voices: artists, curators and institutions

Using some curatorial examples and work done at Index Foundation, the session will focus on the concept of voice as a subjective approach to content. Exhibitions and the expanded idea of program with multitemporal connections will be discussed.

Martin Krenn (Hamburg)

Between dialogue and confrontation: Three art projects on politics of memory

In his lecture, Martin Krenn will present three projects, which intervene via art in historical-political discourses. Already in 2010 Krenn initiated with students at the University of Applied Arts the open call project "re-design the site of the Lueger Statue transforming it into a monument against anti-Semitism and Racism". More than 10 years later, in April 2021, the City of Vienna finally is willing to fulfil the demand of the open call and has announced to redesign the monument.

"Memorial at the Friedenskreuz St. Lorenz" is another project by Martin Krenn that is dedicated to the transformation of historically problematic legacy. The artist responds to a so-called peace cross that was erected in the 1960s to honour the former Wehrmacht soldiers of the Jokisch combat group. By installing a metal mesh with a photo montage by John Heartfield in front of the cross Krenn questions the glorification of this combat group.

At the end of the lecture, Krenn will show the film "Austria is a Wonderful Country" (33 min, Ger) for the first time with English subtitles. The film recalls the brutalities and subjugation that took place during the "Anschluss" of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938. With the participation of the Austrian population, Jewish men and women were forced to wash away political slogans by the former Austro-fascist "Ständestaat" (Corporative State). The film is based on original quotes from eyewitness reports and image descriptions of historical photos.

+++ 27 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Marti Manen (Stockholm)

Exhibitions and voices: artists, curators and institutions

Using some curatorial examples and work done at Index Foundation, the session will focus on the concept of voice as a subjective approach to content. Exhibitions and the expanded idea of program with multitemporal connections will be discussed.

+++ 28 June 2021, Tuesday, 10:00–13:00

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Basak Senova (Vienna)

Wrap-Up