

The Season of Learning

Language: from Practice to Action

September 28-30, 2018, Riga
Curated by Maija Rudovska and Inga Lāce

Participants:

Ieva Astahovska, Iliana Fokianaki, Santa Hirša, Victoria Ivanova, Anne Szefer Karlsen, Katia Krupennikova, Kristel Raesaar, Margaret Tali and others

A public programme of talks and discussions will take place on the 28th of September at Kaņepes Culture Centre.

Four workshops (co-lead by two of the participants) will take place from 28th – 30th of September. Scroll down for the schedule and further information. Apply for workshops by September 21 at seasonoflearning.lv website.

Language: From Practice to Action is the first event in a series of seasonal alternative education activities under the title *The Season of Learning*, developed to foster critical thinking and discussion about the field of contemporary art and the processes and politics surrounding it in the Baltics and beyond.

Taking the form of a symposium and a set of workshops, the event will focus on language in its broadest sense: as a means of communication that can either bridge communities and individual interactions or bring conversation to a deadlock, a tool to exercise power over the marginalized but also an instrument for possible emancipation of communities or locations.

Specific patterns of language and approaches of communication tend to repeat whenever the so-called 'local' art scenes meet with the 'international' art world. Such interactions, although certainly welcomed and even desired, nevertheless demand a closer investigation of their means and ways. Traditionally, Western institutional structures with their discursive ideologies exercise certain languages of power towards supposedly inferior groups.

What is this language, and how does it appear in the field of contemporary art? How visible or invisible is it, and what kind of consequences does this visibility or lack thereof entail? Where does responsibility lie: that of the curator, of the institution, of the local art community itself? How can we craft a healthy, mutual conversation based on equality among the involved parties? How can we look at these questions in Riga, in the Baltics, and beyond? How can we imagine possible alternative scenarios from communication to action?

— How can we recover from the particular language that is established by institutional structures and/or neoliberal ideologies? How can we seek for a new, fresh, relevant language? And relevant for whom, both locally and internationally?

— How can we be active and responsive towards the formats that are problematic? How can we bring local activism into a picture?

— How much is the local art scene involved with others, and how much it is represented, taken into account, considered, and helped by others? By whom in particular?

Schedule

September 28

12:00-17:00 — workshop by Katia Krupennikova and Santa Hirša, Art Academy of Latvia, room 16.

11:00-17:00 — workshop by Anne Szefer Karlsen, 427 Gallery.

18:00-21:00 — public program with talks and moderated discussion, Kaņepes Culture Centre.

September 29

11:00-17:00 — workshop by Ieva Astahovska and Margaret Tali, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art.

11:00-17:00 — workshop by Victoria Ivanova and Kristel Raesaar, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre.

September 30

10:00-13:00 — continuation of workshop by Ieva Astahovska and Margaret Tali, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art.

10:00-13:00 — continuation of workshop by Victoria Ivanova and Kristel Raesaar, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre.

18:00 — talk by Iliana Fokianaki and presentations of workshop results, Kaņepes Culture Centre.

Further information on workshops*

Language of Censorship

Katia Krupennikova and Santa Hirša

Venue: Art Academy of Latvia, room 16

Date: September 28, 12:00-17:00

This workshop will look at various forms censorship may take in spoken and written language. Going through various examples of censorship and the way it might be exercised, the participants will examine how to recognize censorship and find strategies to respond to censors from a strong position instead of a position of resignation and fear.

Katia Krupennikova is a curator and art critic. She is part of the team of Bergen Assembly 2017–2019 and previously worked at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. In 2015 she won the Akbank Sanat International Curator Competition. The exhibition *Post-Peace*, meant to take place in Istanbul, was censored by the host institution; it subsequently opened in an extended form at Württembergische Kunstverein in Stuttgart (2017) and in Nest in Den Haag (2017).

Santa Hirša (1988) is an art historian and critic. Santa Hirša regularly publishes articles dedicated to contemporary visual culture in Latvian and European cultural media. Currently she is enrolled in the Art History PhD programme at the Art Academy of Latvia, she also works as one of the editors of *Echo Gone Wrong*, the internet magazine for the Baltic contemporary art.

How to do things with words under neoliberalism

Ieva Astahovska and Margaret Tali

Venue: Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art

Date: September 29-30

The starting point for this workshop on the politics of language is the recurrent practice of labelling on the one hand, and, on the other, the operation of competition in the cultural scene. How does the neoliberal environment of competition shape our daily lives as professionals? What does it enable, and what does it withhold? In

staying aware of its mechanisms, how can we avoid going along with its pressures? Furthermore, what is the impact of competition on the concepts that we use? When do concepts become labels? And what is the work that labelling does? Are there generational differences in using identical concepts?

During this workshop we will analyze how language deals with these questions and think together about alternatives to labels that we recognize. We will also seek to identify creative tactics and models, how to do things differently under neoliberal pressures: for instance, how to create space for solidarity where it is not expected, and how to shift competition to cooperation or individual career-based models to the tactics of the commons.

The workshop will involve preparatory readings that participants will receive via email in advance.

Margaret Tali is a cultural theorist, art historian and occasional curator. She has written and taught on the subjects of curation, practices of collecting, and ambivalent ways of dealing with cultural difference in the art world. She is the author of *Absence and Difficult Knowledge in Contemporary Art Museums* and editor of *Archives and Disobedience: Changing Tactics of Visual Culture in Eastern Europe* (with Tanel Rander). Currently she is working on an edited publication *Hijacking History: Artists and Activists in Museum Collections*. She is affiliated with Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis and Estonian Academy of Arts.

Ieva Astahovska is an art scholar, critic, and curator. She works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art leading research projects related to modern and contemporary art from the socialist and post-socialist period, as well as the informal education projects *LCCA Evening School* and *LCCA Summer School*. She is compiler and editor of anthologies on Latvian exile curator Valdis Āboliņš (will be released in autumn 2018) and Latvian neo-avant-garde artist group NSRD and its core members Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš (2016). She has curated exhibitions *Valdis Āboliņš or How Fluxus Came to Aachen* in Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2018), *Visionary Structures: From Johansons to Johansons* in Bozar, Brussels (2015) and Latvian National Library in Riga (2014).

Fantasy Practices

Anne Szefer Karlsen

Venue: 427 Gallery

Date: September 28

Artists and curators alike are bound by the material weave that makes any project a collective operation, with consequences that might not be in line with or identical to the intention of the work. In this workshop we will draw on the participants' experiences, as well as common readings of texts, projects, and spaces, to discuss the rationality of networks and the ways in which they create forms of governmentality, along with the fantasy of non-collective undertakings by both artist and curator. This workshop is influenced by writers and practitioners including Rachel O'Reilly, Ahmed Veriava and others who have generously taken part in public debates during *Humans of the Institution* (2017).

Anne Szefer Karlsen is a curator and writer, currently Head of Research for *Bergen Assembly* (2018) and Associate Professor of Curatorial Practice at the Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, University of Bergen (2015-2021). She was Director of Hordaland Art Centre in Bergen, Norway (2008-14). She has conceived several seminars and lecture series, and her interests are in artistic and curatorial collaborations as well as in developing the language that surrounds art productions of today, linguistically, spatially and structurally. In 2017 she co-organised with Vivian Zihlerl the large scale project *Humans of the Institution*, which looked closely at who 'makes the present' by foregrounding the freelancer in the arts and more broadly in dynamics of globalisation.

Flow: Art and Finance

Victoria Ivanova and Kristel Raesaar

Venue: Kim? Contemporary Art Centre

Date: September 29-30

In 2018, financial logics permeate every aspect of our lives. The "art world" is not immune to this; in fact, globalised circulation shapes and directs any production and distribution ecology.

The aim of this workshop co-designed by Victoria Ivanova and Kristel Raesaar is to explore financialisation as the base condition

of our culture, and to acknowledge not only the limitations of its processes, which tend to diffuse resistance and co-opt critique, but also their affordances for finding innovative art forms. How can art be harnessed to give shape to new financial logics beyond representation? Can the art field become a place for speculation that is qualitatively bold and organisationally savvy?

Artists, curators, and managers looking to better understand our situation within the planetary bloodstream will gain the most from the workshop, which blends performative new-age coping mechanisms with group exploration of case studies and charting of potential new pathways.

Victoria Ivanova is a curator, writer, and consultant living in London. Her core focus is on systemic and infrastructural conditions that shape socio-economic, political and institutional realities. To this end, she develops innovative approaches to policy, finance and rights in the sphere of contemporary art and beyond. She is a co-founder of Izolyatsia, Real Flow, and Bureau for Cultural Strategies (bux), and is currently doing a PhD with Serpentine Gallery and London South Bank University as a recipient of their Collaborative PhD Studentship.

Kristel Raesaar is an artist, writer and organiser based in Tallinn, who works mainly with photography and text as well with varying performative and collaborative approaches. Kristel is a co-founder of the artist-led platform *Neanderthal Cave School* and a member and employee of *Tuleva*, a social fintech start-up and civil initiative that aims to shift the power dynamics of Estonia's financial landscape from within. From 2012 to 2016, she was the artistic leader of *Tallinn Photomonth*, where she continues as a member of the biennial's advisory board.

Talk

iLiana Fokianaki

Venue: Kaņepes Culture Centre

Date: September 30, 18:00

iLiana Fokianaki's talk will address the role of boards in the art institutions. She will take as a point of departure the institution

State of Concept, which she founded. *State of Concept* examines the institutional model of a non-profit organisation and performs “the state as such” through exhibition chapters that directly link state theory to the art institution and artistic practices. It promotes Greek and international artists through solo exhibitions, and also invites international curators to create exhibitions that comment on the current sociopolitical landscape of Greece and beyond.

iLiana Fokianaki is a writer and curator based in Athens and Rotterdam. Her research focuses on the notion of the state and the formations of power that manifest under the influence of geopolitics, national identity and cultural and anthropological histories. In 2013 she founded *State of Concept Athens*, the first non-profit institution with a permanent program and location in Athens. In 2016, together with Antonia Alampi, she founded *Future Climates*, a platform that aims to propose viable futures for small-scale organizations of contemporary art and culture. Fokianaki holds an MA in Art Criticism from City University London. Her PhD research with Athena Athanasiou at Panteion University Athens focuses on economy, identity, and politics.

*Please note that venues and times of workshops and talks may change as dates approach. Please check for updated information on social media and/or with organizers.

Language: from Practice to Action is part of the Season of Learning project, implemented by the network platform *Blind Carbon Copy*. The Season of Learning is intended as an occasional learning program with a focus on self-education and self-organisation, activating the networks of institutions and individuals from and within the Baltic countries and elsewhere.

Blind Carbon Copy is a network platform for curators and art practitioners from the Baltic and Nordic countries that initiates and supports exchange, connections and education via network infrastructures and interrelationships. More information on the platform and its former projects <http://blindcarbon-copy.org/>

Supporters: OCA, Latvian Culture Capital Foundation and the Nordic Culture Point Mobility programme. Other supporters are Art Academy of Latvia, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, 427 Gallery, Kaņepes Culture Centre.