

Lest the world turns on – Utopias after stasis (Program)

Friday 4.6.2021

2:00-3:30 PM

Dino-Henne-Ei <Lecture Performance, dt.>

Julia Grillmayr, Christina Gruber

Friday 4.6.2021

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

We contemplate “the wild.” At best on repeat, looking back towards the geological age named after the human species. – An era in which the “the wild” is found because “the wild” has been lost. We are undertaking an “archeology of the future,” revealing uncanny contemporaries: Archosauria (birds) and Acipenseridae (sturgeons) that share this layer of earth with dinosaurs of a very different nature. We remove layers and unearth fabulous fossils. The colonial, racist, and misogynistic residues that stick to the “the wild” idea do not come clean. But the fascination surrounding this idea and why it also appears in current eco-feminisms is, to some extent, exposed.

4:00-5:30 PM

Utopien nach dem Stillstand – Stillstand der Utopien? <Keynote, dt.>

Thomas Macho

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

A sticker makes its way through southern Germany, for example, on the tiles of bathroom stalls. A friend from the art scene sent me a photo. We see palm trees, boats, the sun, the sea – not in color, but in black and white – with the question, “Where is utopia?” An answer to this question is complicated because it is not the “when” utopia is, but rather “where” it should be discovered. After more than a year since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, we can only dream of a “return to normal,” of successful crisis management with the help of tests and vaccinations, and, if necessary, of permanent periods of slowing down, of breaks, or of canceled vacation trips and family celebrations. The crisis of utopias is a crisis of imagination, creativity, and thought experiments. Not only does the world seem to stand still, but so does our mind. How can this mental lethargy, which looks surprisingly like depression, be overcome?

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Saturday 5.6.2021

12:00-12:20 PM

so nice to see you <Performance, eng.>

A K Dolven

Kunstuniversität Linz, Hauptplatz 6 (Innenhof)

1:30-2:15 PM

A Conversation on the Way. On Words and Sounds <eng.> **and Thoughts in A K Dolven's Public Art**

A K Dolven in conversation with **Gaby Hartel**

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

In 2020/2021, during winter lockdown in Oslo, A K Dolven spent much of her time reading the works of Norwegian dramatist Jon Fosse. Her latest sound piece was developed from the encounter with his play *Draum om hausten* (Dream of Autumn). In the course of her piece's twenty-minute duration, Dolven speaks variations of a single narrative entity, "it's so long ago / so very long ago / it's all so long ago / so very long ago." Taken at face value, these words sound evocative and full of narrative potential, but due to their repetition, followed by silence, the story proper seems to be stuck in limbo. This effect is in line with the artist's former minimalistic sound works, which are not so much concerned with telling a story but with making palpable a processual and fragile productiveness. The productiveness, which arises, gestures towards a different kind of narrative potential, a long and seemingly static moment, a potential that involves memory, thought, and emotion. Dolven's work focuses on a NOW which reaches deep and far by joining together reminiscence and expectation. This productive NOW travels on the airwaves and is set in motion by the artist's voice as she involves her audience in a silent polylogue.

3:00-4:30 PM

Focus and Echo - on Art and Sound in Public Spaces <eng.>

Richard Sennett and **John Bingham-Hall** in conversation with **Gaby Hartel**

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

The social philosopher Richard Sennett has been following social life in cities for five decades. Given his background as a cellist, it is perhaps not surprising that his research never fails to acknowledge the importance of the immaterial and the fleeting in his research. And so, Sennett expands on practical questions regarding the construction and organization of urban spaces, their material, and the atmospheres that they exude to an ethic of how city dwellers interact with one another. How do capitalist guidelines determine urban behavioural codes? How can these be altered and expanded upon? How can the drive to compete with another be transformed into a willingness to cooperate? Against this reflective backdrop, Sennett founded the international research project *Theatrum Mundi* at the London School of Economics in 2012, which investigates the influence of artistic interventions on the relationship between city dwellers amongst each other and on the urban space which surrounds them. One of the premises of the project is the belief that art in public spaces has a civilizing effect. Current research focuses on sound art and on practicing active listening with young residents in socially disadvantaged areas. In light of pandemic curfews and assembly bans, we want to find out, together with *Theatrum Mundi*'s director, John Bingham-Hall, the director of *Theatrum Mundi*, what role ephemeral curated "sound spaces" can play in new media and established radio after the current stasis to continue and intensify their use as responsible, open, and public places of culture.

1:00-2:30 PM

Isolated Soundscapes: The Ear and the Speaker <Discussion, eng.>

Adam Merki, Julian Umhaller, Enrique Tomás & Echo Ho

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

Isolated Sounds: The Ear and the Speaker is less about the biological process of hearing than about the isolation of sounds during listening and the production of sounds themselves. We only hear in comparison to what is audible and by no means hear the actual sound, but rather create the sound in our head. However, to accomplish this feat, we have to isolate the signal from the noise and give in to our "hearing instruments," we even have to and tend to engage in the process of naturalization. Yet, this process is not disempowerment, but empowerment, because an awareness of the pitfalls of sound

allows us to relate to sound itself. Thus, despite the moment of isolation and distance from the actual sound, sound remains a medium of participation because without hearing, isolation, and interpretation, it does not work.

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Sonntag, 6.6.2021.

2:45-4:00PM

Andere Wälder <Discussion/Video, eng. + dt.>

Barbara Marcel, Maren Mayer-Schwieger

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

The woods are dense and full of poetry. They are places full of (hi)stories. To become a hero, one must go into the woods and complete their adventures. Robbers, witches, woodsman, and other outlaws inhabit this same forest, which exists beyond the boundaries of society and, therefore, is the home of outsiders. Yet, the forest is not just the counterpart of culture. The home of lumber and paper production, the forest is associated with cultural hegemony, colonial conquest, and slavery. At the latest in the 19th century, the forest itself was regarded as a means and object of cultivation. While it is supposed to exalt the romantic soul as the pastoral ideal, forestry cultivates it as a national economic resource. Only later did folk ideology and the conservation movement come together in the "German Cultural Forest." Let us assume, the forest dieback in the 1980s became the symbol of the dark side of progress. In that case, it appears that with today's global forest fires and deforestation, the forest as topos of cultural history has come to an end.

Maren Mayer-Schwieger speaks with Barbara Marcel about her project *Golden Tone*, which explores the historical cultural landscape of the western Harz mining region and the special history of the breeding, training, and trading of canaries. Between the heavy metal-contaminated hills and fallen spruces, Marcel's video essay probes the layers of the mythological and anthropogenic forest in the iconic landscape of the German Harz region. Marcel and Mayer-Schwieger discuss the complexity of forests, their density, and the poetry of their descriptions that often thematize the forest as a counterpart to culture, a place that is simultaneously romantic and ruined. Which woodland stories can we (still) tell each other today?

4:30-5:15 PM

Nach dem Stillstand <Discussion, dt.>

Gaby Hartel, Gloria Meynen

FLUT, Open-air University, Kunstuniversität Linz, Urfahrner Marktgelände

Utopias are places you can only travel to in your mind. They often exist separate from the mainland by a sea. The pandemic, however, is the Pacific Ocean – the calm sea that Magellan crossed in six months and twenty days "seeing nothing but the sky and saltwater." Not a place, but a state of being. The pandemic is a sea without islands. It leaves behind a desolate, salty world as far as the eye can see.

"Nothing ... nothing ... and, again, nothing," Clov observes, in Beckett's *Endgame*, as he watches the ocean through the telescope. In their conversation, Gaby Hartel and Gloria Meynen travel the wastelands of standstills through conversation. Samuel Beckett meets Alexander von Humboldt; both have measured the differences and details of wastelands and the infinitesimal in different ways: in literature and science, on stage, and dusty plateaus. Gaby and Gloria will discuss the issues of waiting and boredom as well as the places, the symptoms, and self-techniques of slowness. To what extent can narratives and geographies make standstills glitter, and sound, and speak? Their conversation revolves around the open question of whether fatigue, the black bile of salty wastelands, can lead to self-technique and an active form of protest. Where does the Pacific Ocean end? And can we catch the wind and escape out of stasis?

Biographies

Julia Grillmayr is a Vienna- and Linz-based cultural studies scholar, journalist, radio maker, and science communicator. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Vienna and is currently working on her first Post Doc project, *Science Fiction, Fact & Forecast*, at Kunstuniversität Linz. She is the creator of the radio broadcast *Superscience Me*. The rest of the time, she spends in muddy Danubian wetlands and her tap shoes.

Christina Gruber is an aquatic ecologist, visual artist, and sturgeon caretaker in Vienna. She researches at the Institute of Hydrobiology at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna for the *LIFE Sterlet* project to strengthen wild populations of sturgeon in the Danube River. In 2018, she published *From Mud To Outer Space*. Her book navigates along large rivers and uses a speculative narrative to explore interspecies relationships, alternative forms of care, political resilience, and ecological pedagogy.

Thomas Macho (*1952) served as Professor of Cultural History at the Department of Cultural History and Theory, the Humboldt University of Berlin, from 1993 to 2016. In 1976, he received his doctorate at the University of Vienna with a dissertation on the philosophy of music. In 1984, Macho habilitated in philosophy at the University of Klagenfurt with a thesis on metaphors of death. Since 2016 he has been director of the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (IFK) at the Kunstuniversität Linz in Vienna. In 2019 he was awarded The Sigmund Freud Prize for scholarly prose by the German Academy for Language and Poetry and, in 2020, the Austrian State Prize for Cultural Journalism.

A K Dolven lives and works in Oslo and Lofoten, Norway. Her work is shown in exhibitions, collections and museums worldwide. Dolven's practice involves a variety of media; painting, photography, performance, installation, film and sound. She has created numerous sound installations and sound performances. Recurring themes in her production are the representation of natural forces and their resonance with human sensibilities. Interpersonal relations and interactions are central to her practice, and many of her performance-based works involve collaborations with other people.

Dr. Gaby Hartel is a curator, translator, and award-winning broadcaster based in Berlin and London. Her portfolio comprises the overlapping areas of media, literature, and contemporary art, focusing on sound art. Gaby has taught and published widely in those fields and she curated exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (nbk), Akademie der Künste Berlin, and ZKM Karlsruhe to name a few. Her work as curator and concept advisor for sound art shows includes *Art / Nature*, sound art interventions at Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (2014-2018), *Radiophonics* (HKW, Berlin 2018), *Choreography of Sound* (ZKM, 2013), and *SOUNDS. radio – art – new music* (nbk, 2010).

Richard Sennett was born in Chicago in 1943. He has taught and continues to teach sociology and history at MIT and the London School of Economics and Political Science. His main areas of research are cities, work, and cultural sociology. After his books *Cooperation* (2012) and *Handwerk* (2008), *The Open City* is the third part of his Homo Faber trilogy. His most recent publication is *Designing Disorder. Experiments and Disruptions in the City* (2020) alongside Pablo Sendra. Richard Sennett works as a consultant for various United Nations institutions and recently wrote the Mission Statement for Habitat III for the United Nations' global cities summit.

Dr. John Bingham-Hall is Director of Theatrum Mundi and an independent researcher interested in performances, infrastructures, and technologies of shared life in the city. With a background in music (Goldsmiths) and architectural theory (UCL Bartlett), he works across artistic, spatial, and critical

humanities to question and participate in the making of the urban public sphere. Since 2015, he has initiated projects with Theatrum Mundi on cultural infrastructure, urban commons, political voice, and sonic urbanism. Alongside this he has collaborated on research projects at LSE and Oxford; taught at CSM and UCL; published writing across scholarly and arts platforms, and organized queer cultural events (serving drinks whenever needed).

Adam Merki joined the master's program MKKT (Media Culture/Art Theory) at Kunstuniversität Linz in the Winter Semester 2020/21. His interests consist of modern media, the "Gesamtkunstwerk" after Wagner, and art and society from the early 20th century till today. Sound has been a preoccupation since he graduated from Berklee College of Music with a degree in Professional Performance - Bass and Professional Music in 2012. In regards to *Isolated Soundscapes*, his hope, alongside Julian Umhaller, is to strengthen sound as an area of study sound at the Kunstuniversität Linz.

Julian Umhaller has studied in the master's program MKKT (Media Culture/Art Theory) at the Kunstuniversität Linz since the Winter Semester 2019/20. Throughout his scientific development, he has been focusing his studies on sound and its vast possibilities. Thus, his focal point is sound as a divisive method of narration. Interlaced with his scientific focus on technological development and establishment is his work on experimentation and possibilities in electronic music, such as modular synthesizers and other technical musical instruments.

Enrique Tomás (1981) is a sound artist and researcher who dedicates his time to finding new ways to express himself through sound, art, and technology. The similarities between sound art, computer music, local media, and human-machine interaction are part of his research. Tomás has already had performances and exhibitions all over Europe and America. Among others at ZKM Karlsruhe, Ars Electronica, Sónar, SMAK, STEIM, and many more. Tomás currently researches new interfaces for musical expression. He collaborates with the Interface Cultures Department of the Kunstuniversität Linz and has presented the results of his research at international conferences such as NIME, ICMC, SMC, TEI, and TENOR. He has received grants for his artistic work from Telefónica Vida, Phonos Foundation, the Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna, and the Art Council of Madrid.

Echo Ho is a Beijing-born, Cologne-based interdisciplinary artist. Ho studies as a doctoral candidate at the Kunstuniversität Linz with Prof. Martin Kaltenbrunner, head of the Tangible Music Lab. Music-making through gardening and radical embodiment in post-digital contexts are central to her research. In 2003 she graduated from the Kunsthochschule für Medien (KHM) in Köln and taught there from 2007 to 2013 in the area of Sound. She also received a fellowship from the Graduate School at the UDK Berlin. Her work has been exhibited worldwide in places such as the He Xiangning Art Museum Shenzhen, Center-A in Vancouver, ZKM Karlsruhe, and ISEA Ruhr. She has held lectures and workshops at the University of Art in London, Kunstakademie Hangzhou, Konservatorium Beijing, Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien and Nationale Universität Kolumbien, to name a few.

Barbara Marcel (1985, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) is an artist and filmmaker interested in the cultural roots of nature and the troubled heritage of colonial imagery. Marcel graduated in Film Studies in Rio de Janeiro, holds an MA from the Art in Context Institute at the Universität der Künste Berlin (UdK), and is currently a Ph.D. candidate Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. She is a research fellow of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and lives in Berlin since 2009.

Maren Mayer-Schwieger is a research assistant at the Department of Media Theories at Kunstuniversität Linz. Her dissertation *Der andere (im) Oikos. Eine Genealogie ökologischen Wissens* explores the (hi)stories and practices of ecological knowledge. In addition, she researches sensor technology, environmental aesthetics, and potato beetles. Maren Mayer-Schwieger has taught at several (art) universities such as HGK Basel, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Leuphana University Lüneburg, and Ruhr-University Bochum.

Gloria Meynen is a cultural and media scientist and professor of media theory at the Institute for Media at Kunstuniversität Linz. She studied modern German literature, medieval German literature, philosophy, and cultural studies in Cologne, Bonn, Bochum, Konstanz, and Berlin. In 2004 she received her doctorate from the Humboldt University in Berlin with her dissertation *Büro. The Invention of the Writing Surface*, a history of two-dimensionality. In 2016, she habilitated in the Department of Cultural Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg with her monograph *Inseln und Meere. Zur Geschichte und Geografie fluider Grenzen*, published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin in 2020.