

AN ECO-FEMINIST SUMMER SCHOOL AT WEST DEN HAAG

FOR: INDIVIDUALS AND STUDENTS IN ARTS, ACADEMY, SCIENCES AND BEYOND! (AGES 18-75)

INSTRUCTORS

Suzana Milevska (MK), Sibylle Peters (DE),
Melissa Steckbauer (US/DE), Ji Yoon Yang (KR),
The Zangles (BE), Baruch Gottlieb (CA/DE)

LEARNING GOALS

This programme is intended for artists, theorists, thinkers, movers, actors, and others who want to explore how to grapple with complex circumstances and find ways to bridge disciplinary boundaries, build alliances and take action.

VISION

The 6th in our series of radically transdisciplinary summer schools transforming theory into practice through embodied thinking, situated knowledge and engaged criticality. This year we will explore the physical dimension of care, care for oneself, for Others, in groups and in modes which transcend social urgency.

Touching and being touched, takes place on touchy territory. The expression 'touchy-feely' verbalizes the vexed and complexed feelings associated with physical closeness and contact in a world of modern individuals. At once, touch is desired and needed, but preferably under conditions that one oneself determines. Touch can also arouse unexpected or inconvenient feelings which need time and space to feel out and learn from. Or, the desired touch is not available, or inhibited by socio-political conventions or conditions, can become awkward, shamed, or emotionally overloaded.

The pandemic brought an acute awareness of the importance of touch. Artists are responding to this new urgency and need. Physical care is stigmatised in its relation to persistent capitalist extraction and becomes, on one hand disdained and disparaged, and on the other fetishizes and hypersexualized. As Amia Srinivasan has described it, physical intimacy is conditioned by prevailing distributions of power, what bell hooks has named 'white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy.' No matter where one finds oneself in the prevailing hierarchy, Srinivasan argues, one's perceived desires and needs are not fully one's own as long as one does not recognize this political conditioning.

Troubled and alienated, physical touch, contact, care become commodities. Care work undergirds hypermodernity, often overlooked and unpaid, happening close at hand and around the world. Historian Silvia Federici argues that without this component of human productivity, which she calls 'reproductive labour', all societies would cease to function. Reproductive labour is practised throughout society, from workplaces to the home, comforting, caring and sustaining the productivity of the labour force. Reproductive labour has become a global commodity that exploits households from the Global South in order to sustain the households from the Global North. Today it is professionalized and outsourced and subjected to the pressures of the labour market. Working with the concept 'captive maternal' from Joy James we will examine how care takes place even under the most dire and hopeless circumstances.

In this summer school we will care about the tactile, somatic, felt dimensions of reproductive labour and its significance for contemporary art practices. We aim to share art practices as prototype transgressive modes of attending to urgent social unease around physical care which threatens to destabilise and debilitate communities. Through methods from visual arts, performance, theater, therapeutic methods such as Reiki, and more, we will resonate our impressions through new disciplinary frameworks and approaches. Some sessions feature performative exercises designed to provide an opportunity for participants to feel out and synthesise their ideas and thoughts and share with the group. There will also be sessions designed to provisionally externalise new knowledge and ideas individually and in groups.

The summer school is open to all ages from 20-75 who are interested in developing their practices in a radically transdisciplinary framework, working through their own bodily sensibilities and their social imbrications in an environment of mutual respect and support. This school is convened by Baruch Gottlieb and Ji Yoon Yang.

REFERENCES

Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, bell hooks, Jane Elizabeth Fisher, Virginia Wolff, Silvia Federici, Joy James, Amia Srinivasan.



BIOGRAPHIES OF SPECIAL PRESENTERS

Dr. Sibylle Peters is a researcher, performance artist, studied literature, cultural studies and philosophy. As a freelancing performance artist she realized lecture performances and performance projects focussing on participation and collective research (often in cooperation with geheimagentur performance collective). Peters is the founder and director of the Forschungstheater/Theatre of Research situated at the Fundus Theater Hamburg, a theatre, where children, artists and scientists meet. In this PhD program she is head of cultural education and research.

Dr. Suzana Milevska is a theorist and independent curator based in Skopje, North Macedonia. Her theoretical and research projects employ postcolonial, feminist, and institutional critique of the regimes of hegemonic power and their bearing on arts and visual culture. She focuses on the deconstruction and decolonisation of contentious heritages in art institutions, collections, and public spaces, as well as community-based projects in solidarity with marginalized and disenfranchised communities on the other. Milevska published the books *Gender Difference in the Balkans*, 2010, *The Renaming Machine: The Book*, 2010, *On Productive Shame, Reconciliation, and Agency*, 2016, and *Participatory Art: A Paradigm Shift from Objects to Subjects*, 2024. In 2012 she won the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory. Milevska holds a Ph.D. in visual cultures from Goldsmiths College University of London.

Melissa Steckbauer has studied at Utrecht University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is the founder of the Sensorium Institute in Berlin. Her work has been featured in Castello di Rivoli, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rivoli; KW, Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Deutsch Bank KunstHalle, Berlin; Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga; Teatr Studio at the Palace of Culture & Science, Warsaw; District, Berlin; Le Salon Du Dessin, Paris.

The Zangles is an Antwerp-based motley group of female artists who like to sing. The combination of their various artistic backgrounds leads to visually strong multidisciplinary shows with singing as an infectious binding agent, lately adding rapping to their repertoire. During these sessions, we invite you to feel free and join The

Zangles energy zone, warming up our voices humming and singing along in search of harmonization, resulting in a major Zangles group Karaoke. The Zangles are Mia Price, Johanna Trudzinski, Michèle Matyn, Tina Schott, Eva Van Deuren, Jøhanna Kristbjorg Sigurdardottir, Jessie Schietecatte, Valentine Kempynck and Liesbet Swings.

Ji Yoon Yang currently works as a director of Alternative Space LOOP, Seoul. Yang completed her master's degree at the Graduate School of Communications at Yonsei University and participated in de Appel Curatorial Programme 2008/2009. Her interest lies in communication with the public for new social comments through artists and works that experiment with radio, sound, performance and media art. Curated projects include: *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Sound Effects Seoul 2017* (Arko Art Centre, Seoul, 2017), *Plastic Myths* (Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, 2015).

Dr. phil. Baruch Gottlieb is a practicing transdisciplinary artist specializing in embodied practices and methodologies, kunst am bau, art for public space, interactive and generative art, and sound art. He is currently lecturer in digital aesthetics at UdK Berlin and at FH Potsdam. He has a doctorate in digital aesthetics from the University of Arts Berlin and author of 'Gratitude for Technology' (Atropos 2009), 'A Political Economy of the Smallest Things' (Atropos 2016), and *Digital Materialism* (Emerald 2018). Since 2017, he has been working as a curator at West programming a wide range of activities and events, including exhibitions, discussion events, and schools.

INFORMATION

The West Summer School 2024 is limited to 25 participants. There is a participant fee of € 175,- incl. lunches (student € 95,-). The program will be held in English. We will gather in the garden and auditorium at West in The Hague. To apply, please e-mail Kevin Jansen: kevin@westdenhaag.nl before July 15th with a short motivation. If successful, you will receive a confirmation before the end of July. The Summer School is for participants only.

For more info about the application process email: kevin@westdenhaag.nl