

PROPOSITIONS FOR NON-FASCIST LIVING

PERFORMATIVE CONFERENCE

PROPOSITIONS #4: *Unpacking Aesthetics and the Far Right*

With contributions by:

Larne Abse Gogarty, Kader Attia,
Angela Dimitrakaki and iLiana
Fokianaki, Morgan Quaintance,
Ana Teixeira Pinto, Harry Weeks,
and Giovanna Zapperi

17.03.2018

Program



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap



Gemeente Utrecht

bak

basis voor actuele kunst

Propositions #4: Unpacking Aesthetics and the Far Right

Performative conference

Day passes for this conference can be reserved through [Eventbrite](#).

Propositions #4: Unpacking Aesthetics and the Far Right is part of BAK's long-term artistic research series and convening platform *Propositions for Non-Fascist Living* (2017-2020) prompted by the surfacing of contemporary fascisms. This is the fourth performative conference within the series and brings together artists, theorists, and writers to seek ways of unpacking the current relations of art and fascist-curious aesthetics.

The political landscape in Europe and North America is peppered with fascisms whose nihilism bleeds vividly into everyday life. These are fascisms—post/neo/crypto or proto-fascisms—without a (seemingly) clearly articulated ideology. Their narratives may not cohere politically with each other, but they do cohere aesthetically: they align themselves with, or attach themselves to, objects, idioms, or tropes, and open a toxic conduit between antiestablishmentarianism and outright racism and misogyny. This brings up the questions: Are present-day fascisms aesthetic or emotional in structure, rather than fully-fledged political doctrines? How to describe the nexuses between art form and far-right ideologies that take shape under the aegis of neoliberal governance? Is it possible to draw parallels with the early twentieth-century artistic movements that became ambivalent laboratories for fascisms-yet-to-come?

With contributions by: art historian and critic Larne Abse Gogarty; artist Kader Attia; writer and art historian Angela Dimitrakaki and writer and curator iLiana Fokianaki; writer, curator, and musician Morgan Quaintance; writer and cultural theorist Ana Teixeira Pinto; art historian and researcher Harry Weeks; and art historian Giovanna Zapperi.

On the occasion of this performative conference, Centraal Museum, Utrecht opens its doors to the conference participants from 10.30 till 12.00 hrs for a simple brunch in the museum café and a preview of the exhibition *Erich Wichman: Free radical* (17 March–24 June 2018). The opening of this exhibition coincides with the closing

weekend of *The World of Pyke Koch* (17 November 2017–18 March 2018), an exhibition of work by Koch who, like Wichman, was affiliated with Italian fascism during the interbellum era.

BAK's exhibition *Matthijs de Bruijne: Compromiso Político*, also featuring works by Jeremy Deller, Piero Gilardi, and Mierle Laderman Ukeles (10 February–15 April 2018) is on view and open to the conference participants.

To attend the performative conference, please reserve your place through Eventbrite [here](#). BAK offers without-cost solidarity passes to enable the participation of those who would otherwise be unable to afford a pass. If you are able, you can sponsor a solidarity pass along with the purchase of your own.

The spoken language of the performative conference is English.

A vegetarian lunch (€5) and dinner (€10) catered by Utrecht-based Rammenas and drinks catered by Koffie Leute can be purchased during the event.

Propositions #4: Unpacking Aesthetics and the Far Right is a two-part performative conference convened by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht in collaboration with ~~La Colònie~~, Paris. The event was conceptualized by Ana Teixeira Pinto and Giovanna Zapperi, in collaboration with Angela Dimitrakaki and Harry Weeks who are co-editing a special issue on the subject for *Third Text*. The second part of the conference takes place at ~~La Colònie~~ on 9 May 2018.

The realization of this project has been made possible through financial contributions by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the City Council, Utrecht.

BAK's main partner in the field of education and research is HKU University of the Arts Utrecht.

Program

10.30–12.00

CENTRAAL MUSEUM

Preview for the conference participants of the exhibition *Erich Wichman: Free radical* (17 March–24 June 2018) with the Centraal Museum Director Bart Rutten and finissage of the exhibition *The World by Pyke Koch*, with a simple brunch in the museum café

12.00–12.30

BAK, BASIS VOOR ACTUELE KUNST

Doors open, coffee and tea

12.30–12.45

WELCOME

Maria Hlavajova

12.45–13.30

MYTH VERSUS HISTORY: SOME NOTES ON ITALIAN FUTURISM

Giovanna Zapperi

Giovanna Zapperi looks at Italian Futurism as a relevant historical example of the relation between art and fascist ideology in the early twentieth century. Zapperi considers Futurism as an aesthetic laboratory for the historical rise of Fascism in modern Italy, with particular focus on Futurism's obsessions with the male body, time, and technology. The gendered dialectics between past and present, which can be observed in the writings of poet F. T. Marinetti and works of painter Umberto Boccioni, forms the core of Futurism's reconfiguration of history. Even as its avant-garde spirit was marginalized in favor of the typical monumental aesthetic of the *ventennio* during the late 1920s and 1930s, Fascism never really got rid of Futurism: its representation of myth versus history became one of Italian Fascism's fundamental features.

13.30–14.15

CAPITALIST-POSITIVE AND FASCIST-CURIOUS

Ana Teixeira Pinto

In recent years, the ethos of the tech industry has transmogrified—from the market-besotted optimism of business mogul Bill Gates to the digital feudalism represented by California Bay Area neoreactionaries and cyber monarchists. If, as philosopher Walter Benjamin has argued, “every rise of Fascism bears witness to a failed revolution,” one could say that the rise of crypto-fascist tendencies within the tech industry bears witness to the failures of the “digital revolution,” whose promises never came to pass. From this perspective, the mix of cyber-obscurantism, far-right esoterica, and paranoid ideation so popular online can be read as a morbid symptom of this ongoing transformation.

14.15–15.15

LUNCH

15.15–16.00

OUR CULTIC MILIEU

Morgan Quaintance via Skype

What are the conditions that facilitate an individual's participation in and allegiance to reactionary, fascist, and extremist groups? Conventional social, cultural, or economic dissatisfactions are often presented as the most reliable and fertile grounds for determining motivations. Morgan Quaintance considers a fourth: the cultic. By using sociologist Colin Campbell's notion of a “cultic milieu”—a social environment consisting of groups who adhere to deviant and esoteric systems of political, scientific, religious, or socio-cultural thought—Quaintance thinks through the idea that exploring the further

reaches of such arenas (arguably the activity from which much research-based contemporary art emerges) can be psychically hazardous. In short, the “cultic milieu” can function as a gateway to membership and participation in the fascist forum.

16.00–17.00

Discussion between Morgan Quaintance, Giovanna Zapperi, and Ana Teixeira Pinto, moderated by Harry Weeks

17.00–17.30

BREAK

17.30–18.30

COHERENCE AND COMPLICITY: ON THE WHOLENESS OF POST-INTERNET AESTHETICS

Keynote by Larne Abse Gogarty

In this talk, Larne Abse Gogarty periodizes and defines how elements within post-internet art, music, and fashion have apparently melded with aspects of a burgeoning fascist culture in Europe and the United States. Abse Gogarty suggests this development is at least partly reliant on the coherence of that culture, where aesthetic coordinates travel across different forms: from video art to electronic music to comedy to footwear. These continuities have afforded a strong set of stylistic and tonal foundations that makes this culture easily graspable, but also infinitely open to imitation and appropriation. Avoiding a retrospective assertion of an always-present fascism within the genre, Abse Gogarty argues that the coherence of the post-internet aesthetic is nevertheless propelled by a lack of attention to the relationship between aesthetic form and political responsibility.

Program

18.30–19.00

OMG, DOES EVERY WOMAN ADORE A FASCIST?

**Angela Dimitrakaki, didactic play read with
iLiana Fokianaki**

Poet Sylvia Plath's (in)famous words "every woman adores a fascist," appearing in her poem "Daddy" (1962), continue to give us nightmares. Is this true? Who is included in "every woman"? And, as suspected by at least one scholar, is this really a poem about Mommy? These are some of the burning questions that may or may not be addressed in this dialogue, which prioritizes fascism and sex. Here, "sex" may or may not refer to the experience of having sex or the experience of embodying differentiating sexual features, but "fascism" always and unambiguously refers to a politics. The key issues are what those "politics" are and whether such politics have anything to do with art, also known as "sublimation." The dialogue/play is inspired by various incidents and processes including: 0. The history of patriarchy as the history of sexualization of power over; 1. Fears that feminist art critic Carla Lonzi and feminist artist Valerie Solanas had about art; 2. A woman that Dimitrakaki met in Helsinki in 2016 and described in a lengthy essay on contemporary fascism in *Berlin Quarterly* 5 (Autumn 2016); 3. *Golden Dawn Girls* (Håvard Bustnes, 2017), a documentary film.

19.00–20.00

DINNER

20.00–20.30

DECOMPARTMENTALIZING KNOWLEDGE

Kader Attia

If fascism is predicated on compartmentalization—of affects, flows, territories—anti-fascism ought to entail a decompartmentalization. This is the role of the Anti-Institution. In this lecture-performance, Attia maps the intersections of colonialism, imperialism, and the far right, as well as details collective work he has been part of at ~~La Colonie~~, Paris and their attempts to bridge the gap between academia and activism.

20.30–21.30

**Plenary conversation moderated by
Angela Dimitrakaki**

21.30–22.00

DRINKS

Larne Abse Gogarty

Larne Abse Gogarty is a writer, art historian, and critic. She is the Terra Foundation for American Art Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Humboldt University, Berlin. Her research focuses on the involvement of social and political aspects with modern and contemporary art, specifically those in the United States. She is in the editorial collective for *Cesura//Acceso*, and is frequently published in *Art Monthly* and *Third Text*, among other journals and volumes.

Kader Attia

Kader Attia is an artist who explores the wide-ranging effects of western cultural hegemony and colonialism. He has thematically focused on the notion of “repair.” Among his most recent solo exhibitions are *Kader Attia*, The Power Plant, Toronto, 2018; *Kader Attia: Reason’s Oxymorons*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, 2018; and *Kader Attia. Premio Joan Miró*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, forthcoming 2018.

Angela Dimitrakaki

Angela Dimitrakaki is a writer and Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh where she co-directs the MSc in Modern and Contemporary Art and the Global Contemporary Research Group. Working across Marxism and feminism, she focuses on labor, social reproduction, the political in globalization, and the resurgence of fascism. She is working on two books, *Feminism, Art, Capitalism* and *The Economic Subjects of Contemporary Art*. Her fiction received a 2017 Academy of Athens award.

iLiana Fokianaki

iLiana Fokianaki is a writer and curator. She is a co-founder of the platform Future Climates, is conducting PhD research on the synapses between art, identity, politics, and economy at Panteion University, Athens, and since March 2017, is a curator at Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerp. Fokianaki is the founder of State of Concept Athens, Athens.

Morgan Quaintance

Morgan Quaintance is a writer, curator, musician, and broadcaster. Quaintance regularly contributes to *Art Monthly*, *ArtReview*, *Frieze*, and *Rhizome*, among other journals, curatorial sites, and blogs. His recent curatorial projects include: *Letter from Istanbul*, Pi Artworks, London, 2017; *Here Comes a New Challenger* and *Simeon Barclay: They Don’t Like It Up ‘Em*, Cubitt Gallery, London 2016.

Ana Teixeira Pinto

Ana Teixeira Pinto is writer and cultural theorist. She is a lecturer at Berlin University of the Arts, Berlin, and a research fellow at Leuphana University, Lüneburg. Her research examines the allegorical dimensions of scientific paradigms. She has recently been published in *Alleys of Your Mind: Augmented Intelligence and Its Traumas* (edited by Matteo Pasquinelli, 2015) and *Nervöse Systeme* (edited by Anselm Franke, Stephanie Hankey, and Marek Tuszynski, 2016).

Harry Weeks

Harry Weeks is an art historian and researcher. Currently, he is a Teaching Fellow in History of Art at University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh. His research centers cultural policy; performance and participation in contemporary art; the autonomy of art; and theories of community. Weeks is a co-editor of the Spring 2016 special issue of *Tate Papers* entitled “Mediating Collaboration.”

Giovanna Zapperi

Giovanna Zapperi is an art historian, critic, and Professor of History of Modern and Contemporary Art at Université François-Rabelais, Tours. Her scholarly work examines the interrelation of art criticism, visual culture, and, feminism. She has published several studies in anthologies, exhibition catalogues, and reviews, as well as critical articles. Her latest book, *Carla Lonzi: Un’arte della vita*, was published in 2017.