

## Universal Receptivity. Über Formen entgrenzter Partizipation

Termine: 22.10. 14-18Uhr, 10./11.11.2018, je 13-18uhr, 03./04.12.2018, je 13-18Uhr (Berlin), 25./26.01.2018, je 13-18 Uhr, je Raum 63.2.)

Lehrende: Bill Dietz, Kerstin Stakemeier

*Universal Receptivity. Über Formen entgrenzter Partizipation* is collaboratively taught by Bill Dietz and Kerstin Stakemeier. After the introductory session in October, the seminar takes place in three week-end workshops, one in collaboration with Dr. Jenny Nachtigall's "(Digitale) Identitätseffekte" course at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste München. **Each workshop is dedicated to discussing reception and participation as two modes of human (aesthetic) experience associated with the modern figure of the audience: a group of receivers not usually seen as self-modeled or form-giving, but more often thought of as recipients of something existing autonomously from them.** *Universal Receptivity* considers historical as well as contemporary examples in which the receiver is conceived as an aesthetic starting point. **What if participation were the model of how we conceive of our own production? What if reception were to supersede production? What if we come to see ourselves as receivers?**

To raising these questions with the group, **Dietz and Stakemeier begin each of the sessions with a scripted lecture (also distributed to the participants)** that maps out the vast implications of this shift in perspective as it traverses popular culture, the sonic and visual arts, and as it reconfigures aesthetic and political theory. **With a notion of empowered receptivity, institutionalized boundaries of reflection and production are rendered necessarily permeable.** Accordingly each week-end is also dedicated to looking closely at case-studies of such trans-versions, including both the docents' and students' works and influences.

Prioritizing reception also determines the form of the seminar itself. **Designed to enhance all participants' reflection on their own work, each is asked, after each session, to produce a protocol of the proceedings (in English or in German) from her reception of them.** Dietz and Stakemeier will review and comment on the protocols from the previous session and isolate aspects of them to concentrate on in the following sessions - aspects chosen to heighten the viability of the protocol as a means to think further about one's own work. **In addition, participants may suggest materials to be included in or considered by Dietz and Stakemeier for their introductory lectures in the sessions to come.** What thus develops in the course of the term is a praxis of mutual reception and participation.

### Structure of the Course

–for each session, the **scripts** of Dietz' and Stakemeier's lectures will be distributed to the participants.

–for each session, a dropbox folder will be shared by Dietz and Stakemeier containing **suggested readings or materials** for the session. (There will also be an extra, general folder for additional resources.)

–after each session, participants are asked to **(re)write a protocol**: this is not so much thought of as a successive series of new texts following each session, but more as an ongoing revision of one developing text.

–taking their cues from the sessions, these additive protocols are imagined to evolve into **individualized narrations** of a possible *Universal Receptivity*.

–in relation to the development of this investigation, an additional folder will be created in which the participants can upload their **suggested readings or materials** for the upcoming session (one each).

## Question for the Students:

- Would you prefer to receive comments on your responses individually, or are you ok with sharing your protocol and our comments on it with the class?

## Sessions

### 22.10. 14-18Uhr Introduction

**Bill Dietz, "Feelings Are Alternative Facts" (2018)**

**Kerstin Stakemeier, "Disorganizing Aesthetic Experience. A Comment." (2018)**

The first session is the most speculative and widely ranging as it attempts to lay out entry markers onto the conflicted field of production and reception that we wish to investigate. Bill Dietz' lecture "Feelings Are Alternative Facts" (2018) and Kerstin Stakemeier's response "Disorganizing Aesthetic Experience. A Comment." (2018) both approach the question of *Universal Receptivity* in light of destabilizations that were/are recurrent in modern narrations of autonomous (aesthetic) human productivity. Historical and contemporary occurrences and sensations, complexes of receptivity and participation, are revisited in both papers, neither of which discriminate in the choice of thematic foci in terms of affirmability but rather by bare significance. Historical moments of reception's institutionalization are paired with those of its transgression.

Material Bill Dietz:

**Yvonne Rainer**, from *Feelings Art Facts*, MIT Press 2006.

**Michael Burden**, 'Pots, privies and WCs; crapping at the opera in London before 1830,' *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 23, 1-2, 27–50, 2012.

Material Kerstin Stakemeier:

**Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari**, from *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1972

**Gilles Deleuze**, "The Method of Dramatization" ,

**Lisa Jeschke**, (From) *The Anthology of Poems by Drunken Women*, in: in: *Group for Conceptual Politics*, Danny Hayward, Anthony Iles, Lisa Jeschke, Benjamin Noys, Erik Steinhoff, Marina Vishmidt (eds.), *Look at Hazards. Look at Losses*, 2017 (Mute, London), p.122f., 127-129.

### 10./11.11.2018, 1-6 pm Receptive Materialism

*Note: send protocols by 1.11.2018*

**10.11. Kerstin Stakemeier, "Metamorphotic Sociomorphisms as revolution and disaster..." (2018)**

**11.11. Bill Dietz "A slippery, unsecured exchange between what was 'known' and what would otherwise not be heard" (2018)**

In the second session, the lectures by Dietz and Stakemeier that kick off each of the two days will focus on proposing a materiality that we perceive not only in our surroundings, but which actively traverses and shapes (our) bodies and the sensations they are built from.

In the 19th century, Karl Marx tried – against the philosophical idealism of his times – to establish an understanding of human life based on the material imprints it left in nature, imprints institutionalized and systematized as human labor. Early Marx defines humanity by its metabolisms, its forms of generating productive labor, and thus by the material realizations of a voluntaristic subject in the world: the anthropology of a (hu)man at work. By the end of the same century, discussions in art, philosophy and physics arose that put this

voluntarism into question and opted for a more empiricist, phenomenological approach to humanity, in which the perception of the world surrounding us not only forms our thinking (as in Marx' famous dictum, "Being determines Consciousness"), but also shapes our bodies (one might say, "Being configures Senses").

The turn of the 20th century philosopher-physicist Ernst Mach's theory of sensations argued that, "bodies do not produce sensations but complexes of sensations (complexes of elements) constitute bodies" (1897), and that therefore, "the I is unsalvageable". For Mach the (hu)man at work is but a disciplined remainder of a receptively metamorphic humanity. Mach's influence can be traced through writings of novelist Robert Musil (1908), Alexander Bogdanov's co-founding of the Russian Prokult organizations (1917), Solomin Nikritin's abstract paintings and theater of "Projectionism" (1920s), and in the revolutionary and art historian Carl Einstein's later novel, "Die Fabrikation der Fiktionen" - a work that devised a subjectivity based on a reading of Mach which abandoned bourgeois intellectualism to become "metamorphic" (1930s).

After unearthing and outlining the shape of this materialist trajectory that never came to the prominence that its generative potential suggests, we retrace this trajectory in the examination of a particular materiality: that of timbre - of "tone color" - of the sound or body of sound. We trace the pre-20th century and early 20th century denigration of such materiality as base, animal, and profane, in its racialized and gendered terms and implications into contemporary valuations. Along the way we chart out a path from Arnold Schönberg's "Klangfarbenmelodie" (a musical technique of composing timbre that emerged roughly in parallel with Freud's major work on the unconscious), to another moment Bogdanov's materialism, into structuralist attempts to imagine grammars of musical materiality (the work of the music theorist Robert Cogan), and finally into the aesthetics of the Black radical tradition and its conceptions of musical grain & materiality.

Within the field of contemporary artistic productions after the 1960s such material metamorphoses have been mainly relegated to the metaphorical in use, or the symbolic in outcome. The field has charted its own de-socialization quite effectively. However, "prototyping" like that of Sarah Oppenheimer, or "world making" in Natascha Sadr Haghigian's sense, might be tested for their potential to recompose the receptive complexes of the field in its entirety.

Material Stakemeier:

**Alexander Bogdanov**, "What is Materialism?" in: Alexander Bogdanov, The Philosophy of Living Experience, [1911/13], Brill: London, 2017.

**Ernst Mach**, "Antimetaphysische Vorbemerkungen", in: Ernst Mach, Die Analyse der Empfindungen, [1886], Xenomoi, 2008.

Material Dietz:

**Robert Cogan**, from: New Images of Musical Sound, Harvard University Press 1984

**Simone White**, Dear Angel of Death, Ugly Duckling Press 2018.

**03./04.12.2018, 1-6 pm (Berlin) Psycho Receptivity / Social Receptivity**

*Note: send protocols by 22.11.2018*

**03.12.2018 two short lectures by Dietz & Stakemeier**

**04.12.2018 two short lectures by Dietz & Stakemeier**

## Psycho Receptivity

In the second two-day workshop, taking place in Berlin, we will look closely at the psychological constitution of the modern subject. On the one hand condemned to measure its own realization within the terms of a capitalized productivity, and on the other bound to receive the perpetual impossibility of such a realization, the modern subject exists in a state of receptive (un)productivity. And while conceptualizing one's very constitution as that of perpetual reception within this schema would appear defeatist, it might – our suggestion – also open up another communality, a collectivity of active, embodied receivers.

Based on the work of Jacques Lacan, Samo Tomšič has authored a forthcoming book in which he attempts a renewed understanding of the libidinal life of the modern, productive subject, its desires and drives, within our present. Tomšič proposes a structural reading in which the position of the given subject within the social system called 'modern life' appears as the limiting but also form-giving means and end of desire. While the sexes of the two-gender model take the stage here as each other's alienating scourge, it is Sigmund Freud's introduction of the death-drive, which for Tomšič makes a re-entrance as "something in this individual or organism (that) wants to live more than the individual." Together we want to read Tomšič to understand our body of limits and the desires that might unsettle and endanger it – for good.

Aesthetic dealings with the expansions and confinements of the libidinal delimitation that constitutes the modern subject while at the same time rendering it as a pathology, will be at the center of this session's lectures and joined discussions, and as such, consideration of masochism becomes of crucial import. From Freudian and post-Freudian primary sources (including Serge Leclair & Leo Bersani), a consideration of the aesthetic capacity to "shatter" the subject becomes central. Further, the positional status of the subject to be shattered further complicates this constellation: both in relation to those subjects that modernity has consigned to the status of absolute other - the Slave, & in the case of music & torture (in which the overwhelming or "sublime" power of the aesthetic is enacted non-consensually against) the prisoner.

### *Reading:*

**Samo Tomšič**, *The Labour of Enjoyment. Toward a Critique of Libidinal Economy*, forthcoming, August Verlag: Berlin, 2018. (Chapter VII. Sexuality and Resistance of the System)

### Material Stakeholder:

**Gilles Deleuze**, *Masochism*, Zone Books, 1991.

**Juliana Spahr**, *witness*, 1996 (Sun&Moon Press)

**Rhea Anastas, Michael Brenson** (Ed.), *Witness to her Art: Art and Writings by Adrian Piper, Mona Hatoum, Cady Noland, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, Daniela Rossell, and Eau de Cologne*, CCS Bard 2006.

### Material Dietz:

**Sigmund Freud**, *Selections on Masochism*

**Frank B Wilderson**, "The Narcissistic Slave", in: *Frank B Wilderson, Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonism*, Duke University Press 2010.

**Suzanne Cusick & Brandon Joseph**, "Across an Invisible Line: A Conversation about Music and Torture"

**Catherine Christer Hennix**, "Lá Séminaire" & works

## Social Receptivity

Tracing the realm of the social within which the individuation which the previous session examined, this second day of the Berlin workshop will look more closely at the production of our social and/or aesthetic communions. Undercutting the privileging of labor and production as collectivizing experiences that were championed in the traditional Marxist identifications of

the modern white European working classes as lever to any form of systemic change, we will, again, instead try and understand the various and not infrequently mutually exclusive forms of socially implied modes of reception as the starting point of this session.

Establishing this starting point entails seeking out an understanding of (mass) cultural reception that does not distinguish its objects by their terms of (re)producibility, and thus by their value (form), but by their potential to open up their being transgressed by different forms of and limits to receptivity. How can we shift registers from desiring to transgress toward desiring to be transgressed?

Recent writings by authors such as Frank Wilderson have (re)introduced what one could call a Black receptivity of modern society: a receptivity of systemic isolation, a position of "social death", "of the unthought". In the consideration of the constitutive role that this radically non-participatory receptivity has played in the establishing of 'the modern anthropology of the (hu)man at work,' in Europe, one central question arises: how, if at all, can an expanding receptive sociomorphism of our lives rise from a sociality built on such radical, ontological exclusion? How can social receptivity form in a solidarity that does not void itself of being a transgressor?

The mass cultures that developed with the 'civilization' of acculturated audiences and the standardization of genre specific formats of reception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the industrialization of culture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century ventured into all aspects of modern life. This culture, within which art is a sub-category, developed as what Bogdanov in the 1910s called "organizational experiences," and was (and remains) traversed by the racialization and sexuation, in short the power structures, implied in reception. The result is an aesthetic praxis and reflection that understands art as but one historical example on a broader terrain of aesthetic praxis that traverses all parts of human life in highly unequal terms.

In the second half of the 20th century, such endeavors are taken up both in branches of political theory such as CLR James' (in his conceptualizations of cultural production oriented to a collective receptive subject) & James C Scott (in his examination of the "infrapolitics" of everyday life), but also by artists and aesthetic practitioners whose work takes them beyond the boundaries of art proper (both toward speculative forms of post-art aesthetics such as Henry Flynt's experiments of the 60s, and in interventionist practices such as the UP AGAINST THE WALL MOTHERFUCKER-collective and its perversions of activism). Finally, building on James' notion of the "revolutionary creativity" of the collective receptive subject, we look to examples of radical aesthetic practices of daily life as narrated by Alice Walker and Saidiya Hartman.

#### *Reading:*

**CLR James**, "Popular Art and the Cultural Tradition" & "What is art?", in: *Third Text*, Volume 4, 1990 Issue 10

#### Material Dietz:

**Ben Piekut**, "Demolish Serious Culture! - Henry Flynt and Works World Party", in: Robert Adlington, *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties*, Oxford, 2009.

**Henry Flynt**, on "Brend" & other activities other than art", on: <http://www.henryflynt.org/index.html>

**Saidiya Hartman**, "The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner", in: *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Volume 117, Issue 3, July 2018.

#### Material Stakemeier:

**Lu Märten**, *Kunst und Proletariat* (1925), in: Lu Märten, *Formen für den Alltag. Schriften, Aufsätze, Vorträge, Auswahl und Kommentar Rainhard May*, Dresden, 1982

**Stephan Dilleuth**, *Etwas Besseres als die Nation. Die Wohlfahrtsausschüsse auf einer Tour durch Ostdeutschland* (Rostock, Dresden, Leipzig), video: 1:12 std. (transcript dtch/engl), 1993

<http://societyofcontrol.com/outof/sdwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Downloads#wohlfahrtsausschuss>

**titre provisoire**, *How surprising that you are you*, Photo/Film-Installation, HD-Video 32 min., 2018

<http://www.titreprovisoire.de/projects/how-surprising-that-you-are-you.html>

## **25./26.01.2018, 1-6pm Reception as Life and Destruction**

*Note: send protocols by 31.12.2019*

**25.01.2019 short joint lecture by Dietz & Stakemeier recapitulating (also) for our guests from AdbK Munich  
+ two short individual lectures by Dietz & Stakemeier introducing the last weekend's topics**

**26.01.2019 lecture by Jenny Nachtigall**

## **Reception as Life and Destruction**

In the first session, one insight that emerged between Dietz & Stakemeier's lectures was that the receptive, non-heroic abolition of the modern subject could only be enacted collectively. What if, however, the collective subject of that abolition were not a vanguardist avant-garde (artistic or otherwise), but instead the already present but unrepressed mass cultural subject itself? That is: if the motor of normative sociality and mass culture is always already the death-drive, how might we consequently rethink critique?

The final session brings together the cumulative references of the entire seminar with the third-stage of students' protocols. In closing, Dietz & Stakemeier hand off the lead of the Seminar to Jenny Nachtigall, themselves resituated as listeners.

## **Additional Material (status Oct. 2018)**

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- Boris Arvatov**, "Materialized Utopia" (LEF Vol1), "Utopia or Science?" (LEF Vol4)
- Boris Arvatov**, Kunst und Produktion (1925), in: Anke Hennig (eds), Über die Dinge. Texte der russischen Avantgarde, 2010, Fundus:Hamburg.
- Lucy Beynon & Lisa Jeschke**, David Cameron: A Theatre of Knife-Songs, 2015 (ShitValley)
- Johannes Büttner**, <http://www.johannes-buettner.com/#news>
- Bill Dietz**, L'école de la Claque (2017), OnCurating.Org: Zürich
- Sigmund Freud**, „*Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia.*“ In: *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*. III, 1. Hälfte. Franz Deuticke, Leipzig / Wien 1911.
- Friedrich Engels**, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, MEW III, Zürich, 1884.
- Rainer Werner Fassbinder**, Filme befreien den Kopf. Essays und Arbeitsnotizen, Fischer, 1986.
- Rainer Werner Fassbinder**, Die Anarchie der Phantasie: Gespräche und Interviews, Fischer, 1986.
- Melanie Gilligan**, The Overt and the Obstinate, in: Josephine Pryde. The Enjoyment of Photography, 2012 (Catalogue Kunsthalle Bern/Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf)
- Danny Hayward**, "Class Separation vs Separation Anxiety", and "Description with no argument" in: Group for Conceptual Politics, Danny Hayward, Anthony Iles, Lisa Jeschke, Benjamin Noys, Erik Steinhoff, Marina Vishmidt (eds.), Look at Hazards. Look at Losses, 2017 (Mute, London).
- Stewart Home**, The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrism to Class War, 1991, AK Press-Stirling.
- Laure**. The Collected Writings, City Lights San Francisco 1995, (translator Jeanine Herman),
- Paul Man**, Masocriticism, in: SubStance, Vol.23, No.3, Issue 75 (1994), pp.3-29
- Karl Marx**, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, 1959 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing).
- Karl Marx** *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, [1852] 1964, New York: International Publishers
- Gabriel N Mendes**, Under the Strain of Color. Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of antiracist Psychiatry, Cornell University Press 2016.
- <http://www.sarahoppenheimer.com/>
- <http://possest.de/category/natascha-sadr-haghighian/>
- Daniel Paul Schreber**, "*Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken, nebst Nachträgen und einem Anhang über die Frage: ›Unter welchen Voraussetzungen darf eine für geisteskrank erachtete Person gegen ihren erklärten Willen in einer Heilanstalt festgehalten werden?‹*", Mutze: Leipzig, 1903.
- Daniel Paul Schreber** „*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*“, New York: New York Review of Books, 2000.
- Verity Spott**, Trans\*Manifestos, ShitValley, 2018
- Andrew Webber (translator); Colin MacCabe (contributor), **Sigmund Freud**, *The Schreber Case*. New York: Penguin Classics Psychology, 2003.