

CALL FOR PAPERS

IMAGINING THE SITUATION – HOW KNOWLEDGE IS RE/PRODUCED, WITNESSED AND PERFORMED

A workshop with Walid Raad from May 9 - 11, 2022, hosted by the Institute for Film, Theater, Media and Cultural Studies and SoCuM AG 3 “Techniques of Witnessing” in cooperation with Kunsthalle Mainz, organized by Yana Prinsloo, Lina Louisa Krämer and Benjamin Wihstutz.

On the occasion of Walid Raad’s solo exhibition “We Lived So Well Together” we invite academics and artists to participate in the three-day workshop “IMAGINING THE SITUATION” - HOW KNOWLEDGE IS RE/PRODUCED, WITNESSED AND PERFORMED. Walid Raad will join us for this workshop, which aims to initiate a dialogue between art and academia on the re/production, the witnessing and the performance of knowledge.

Walid Raad wears many hats: he is an artist, historian, storyteller, founder of imaginary foundations and performer. Objectivity and fiction are two sides of the same coin in his artistic work. Confronting the recent history of his homeland, Lebanon, the artist plays with contradictory political imaginaries of the so-called “Middle East”. By producing performative installations, lecture performances, photographs and documents, he exhibits the practice of thinking in multiple possibilities and celebrates the simultaneous co-existence of different perspectives instead of presenting events as linear narratives or the results of clear chains of causation (Leon Gabriel). From February 11th 2022, Kunsthalle Mainz will present Walid Raad’s solo exhibition, focusing on a new series of works.

Taking Raad's interest in the lecture performance as a starting point, this workshop will examine the performative dimensions of knowledge production and hopes to illuminate some of the ways knowledge is witnessed and observed in performance. The phenomenon of the lecture performance has been gaining international popularity in the visual and performing arts in recent years. Lecture performances are easily realised. They are flexible performance formats, which can be toured easily: Most lecture performances are solo performances, which hardly require any props, and usually feature only a speaker, a lectern or desk, a screen and a projector. However, defining what makes a performance a lecture performance is more difficult than it first seems to be. The term refers to performances that critically reflect how lectures are staged and performed (Lucia Rainer). Thus, the lecture performance is a form of art and of rhetoric at the same time and it connects the process of art-making and analytical-discursive reflection in the lecture hall. It pays attention to the performative dimensions of knowledge production and transmission, and the social and political position of the lecturer. As such, the lecture performance is a hybrid form of knowledge production and presentation.

Based on Walid Raad's work and his central working practice we want to discuss three themes, which are the re/production, the witnessing, and the performance of knowledge:

IMAGINED KNOWLEDGE – TESTIFYING TO KNOWLEDGE

In this context, 'testifying to knowledge' means the presentation of a research/event/thesis in front of witnesses. Only by their presence and an artistic and/or institutional framing does the moment of testifying and the generation of evidence occur (Sibylle Peters & Martin Jörg Schäfer). What forms of witnessing, what (counter-) strategies can be observed by the spectators? What are the possibilities garnered by the presence and complicity of the participants (Donna Haraway)?

IMAGINE THE SITUATION – WITNESSING KNOWLEDGE

Traditionally knowledge is generated through scientific methods (such as experiments), sociological practices (such as field research and witness interviews) or literary or historical analysis (such as archival work and the evaluation of sources). We ask: How does the artistic process of generating facts and producing knowledge 'work'? When is this process to be seen as a critique and not as a mere repetition of liberal gestures (Julia Schade)? And: What role(s) do the performers play in relation to these performances of knowledge? Are they artists, personas, fictional figures, or private persons? To what extent do they bear responsibility for what is said and shown?

IMAGINED PRESENTATION – PERFORMING KNOWLEDGE

In the third thematic block we want to expand the paradigm of the 'art of the lecture' via a panel about the performance of knowledge from an artistic, social, popular, and economic perspective (Jon McKenzie/ Sibylle Peters). How can boundaries shift and relations between art, economy, consumption, and everyday life be re-defined through the experience of performance knowledge? How do techniques of performance determine the medial and cultural practice of witnessing?

In addition to an in-depth engagement with Raad's work and the lecture performance, further keynotes and impulses are planned by Shulamit Bruckstein, Leon Gabriel, Julia Schade and Clio Unger. We are particularly seeking contributions from young scholars and artists who are doing research on Walid Raad's work and on the relationship between artistic and academic knowledge production. We would like to enter into an interdisciplinary exchange and experiment with workshop formats. Submissions can therefore be experimental in format. We invite showcases, presentations of performative works, interventions, and reactions to Walid Raad or one of the themes of the workshop, as well as short lectures (max. 20 minutes) in German or English.

Please send **abstracts of max. 3000 characters and a short biography** to:

kraemer@kunsthalle-mainz.de. Deadline **February 1st, 2022**. For further inquiries, please contact: Lina Louisa Krämer (kraemer@kunsthalle-mainz.de), Yana Prinsloo (yprinsl@uni-

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mainz.de). The event is planned on the premises of the Kunsthalle Mainz. If necessary, we will try to cover the travel and accommodation costs for the participants. **Please send a short note if support is needed.** After the event we will consider the option of a joint publication with the participants.