

## Too big to scale (Zürich, 8–9 May 2015)

Deadline: Feb 15, 2015

Julie Harboe

### Call for Abstracts

too big to scale

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An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Questions of Scale

8.–9. Mai 2015

May 8th–9th 2015

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste/Zurich University of the Arts

Forschungsschwerpunkt Transdisziplinarität / Research Focus in Transdisciplinarity:

Prof. Florian Dombois, Julie Harboe

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(For full call German and English go to <http://www.zhdk.ch/index.php?id=88186>)

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Zurich, January 15th 2015

### Symposium

The Symposium too big to scale will focus on scaling in terms of space, time and energy.

Why should one today, 2015, dedicate a symposium to the topos of scaling? Is it possible within the frame of such a small symposium to contribute something meaningful on this much too large theme?

Techniques of scaling accompany human history. Children playing with models of the world encounter scale in dolls, model cars, building blocks etc. Likewise the free scaling of sizes can be found in some of our oldest works of art; there is specific attention to dynamics of proportions for instance in the Hohlefels Venus and the earliest cave paintings.

In the 19th and 20th centuries issues of scale have leaped into both different areas and variations of extremes. With the industrialisation mass production multiplies, enlarges and diminishes in all dimensions.

As a hypothesis we can for instance follow the implications of scaling through the photo and film camera, where a) the lens scales the object onto the negative, and b) the scale of time is encountered in the time loops and 'fast forward' of movies. Moreover c) the scale of energy can be found when the light sensitive film reacts to the exposure.

What are the implications when today a concentration of financial energy makes institutions and multinational corporations 'too big to fail' in contrast to such initiatives as the 'microcredit'? How can one interpret scaling in the context of knowledge production where state financed scientific systems encounter developments of 'citizen science' and 'open sharing'?

Scaling of energy plays an equally interesting role in human history as that of size. It was the Invention of the forge, the construction of the bellows, concentrating wind unto fire that enabled the melting of ore and brought the Stone Age to an end.

#### The Palaver as Setting

The symposium will take place on the 8th & 9th of May 2015 in Zurich. The venue is the Toni-Areal, Pfingstweidstrasse 96. The setting is defined by the so-called Palaver: A given space is divided into two areas by a double paravent; one side for presentation one side for discourse. The two spaces are optically but not acoustically separated. Cameras transfer the action on one side to the other and vice versa.

The conference languages are German and English. Participants are free to choose which language they find appropriate for their contribution.

#### Speakers & Call for abstracts

For the two day symposium we plan three times four slots of 30 minutes presentation and an equal amount of time for discussion. The set up allows for different formats such as lectures, performances, concerts or installations. Four contributions are invited speakers, four are selected from this international call and four contributions are from the research project Size Matters.

The four international speakers are:

Prof. Dr. Juliet Koss, Associate Professor of Art History, Scripps College, USA

Prof. Dr. Olivier Chazot, Head of Aeronautics / Aerospace Dpt., Van-Karman-Institute, Belgium (to be confirmed)

Dr. Andrew Fisher, Lecturer in Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths College, UK

Prof. Dr. Frank Schweitzer, Systems Design, ETH Zürich, Switzerland

Invited guests and the contributors from this call are offered the same conditions: We cover the cost of travel, a maximum of three hotel nights, as well as a fee of CHF 250.00.

If you are interested in contributing to one of the four open slots please submit an abstract of maximum 250 words (references may be added) before February 15th to [julie.harboe@zhdk.ch](mailto:julie.harboe@zhdk.ch). If accepted for the symposium, a short paper (not more than 5 pages including images and technical specifications) should be delivered to the same email address the latest April 10th 2015.

With this call we mainly address the following disciplines: Visual Arts, Art History, Media- and Cultural Studies, Economy, Ethnology.

Timeframe:

February 15th; Deadline for abstracts

March 1st; Notification on abstracts

April 10th; Deadline for full description

May 8th-9th Symposium

August 10th; Deadline contributions for the publication

#### Publication

The contributions will be published as a book in either English or German. After the presentation the authors have three months to adjust and develop their contributions. Deadline for the completed manuscripts is August 10th 2015.

#### NSF Research Project Size Matters - On Scale and Size of Models

The symposium is part of the research project Size Matters - On Scale and Size of Models. The project interrogates models in the arts and sciences understood as the transdisciplinary object par excellence. A central issue is scaling as an epistemological technique. The focus of the project's activities is the wind tunnel, which was constructed for the project, and is now situated on the roof of Zürich University of the Arts. The wind tunnel is a site defining forms; it is an aerodynamic laboratory, it reflects scientific method, and is an artistic metaphor machine. The project revisits the concept of György Kepes who in the 1960ies referred to a 'crisis of scale' as defining for the change of society in the 20th century: „We may suffer from the new scale, but we have to go forward and meet it."

Wind Tunnel Bulletin: <http://windtunnelbulletin.zhdk.ch>

Wind Tunnel Log: <http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/56777/56778>

Blog: <http://blog.zhdk.ch/windkanal>

Head: Prof. Florian Dombois

Collaborators: Julie Harboe, Haseeb Ahmed, Sarine Waltenspül, Dr. Reinhard Wendler (till 06/2014) Support: Swiss National Science Foundation 01/2013-12/2015

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<http://fsp.trans.zhdk.ch>

(Feel free to further distribute this call)

Reference:

CFP: Too big to scale (Zürich, 8-9 May 2015). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 19, 2015 (accessed Feb 2, 2026),  
<<https://arthist.net/archive/9277>>.