

## On the Primitive Accumulation of Aesthetics (Karlsruhe, 6–7 Dec 18)

Karlsruhe, Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Großes Studio, Lorenzstraße 15,  
Dec 6–07, 2018

Isabel Koch, HfG Karlsruhe

From various theoretical and historical perspectives, eight international scholars approach the question of the role of art and aesthetics in economic violence, such as the private appropriation of collective resources, their justification, and their subsequent glorification.

"The origin of the market economy is the robber barony." Based on this thesis, the conference is concerned with the concept of 'primitive accumulation', which designates the most violent historical process that precedes the contractually regulated market society and makes it possible. It describes both the private appropriation of common goods and the separation of producers from their means of production (peasant farming, the emergence of wage-earning workers), which makes labor and natural resources accessible to the process of capital accumulation.

Classical discussion thus describes forms of colonial conquest - the appropriation of distant regions and geographies. Moreover, the figure of 'primitive accumulation' has undergone a renaissance in the recent social-theoretical debate, as it also allows to describe current developments in the redistribution and privatization of social wealth.

Based on this discussion, the conference asks to what extent art and aesthetics have a stake in issues of private appropriation of collective resources, with their subsequent glorification (as looted art and display of social wealth) or discursive justification (the 'universal' character of Western bourgeois art), or to what extent the primal histories of social inequality are also inscribed in the orders of perception (the sensual configuration of the disciplined worker, the abstraction of seeing in the success story of modernism, the exoticizing gaze of orientalism).

Speaker:

Katja Diefenbach (Merz Akademie, Stuttgart)

Zachary Formwalt (Freier Künstler, Amsterdam)

Johan Hartle (Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe)

Barbara Kuon (Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe)

Jaleh Mansoor (University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

Roberto Nigro (Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg)

Ruth Sonderegger (Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Wien)

Lioudmila Voropai (Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe)

## PROGRAM

Thursday, December 6th

15.00 Opening/Introduction

Katja Diefenbach and Johan Hartle

15.30-17.30

Ruth Sonderegger

"How did the invention of aesthetics in the 18th century contribute to the logics of primitive accumulation?"

Roberto Nigro

"Primitive Accumulation and General Intellect"

17.45-18.45

Barbara Kuon

"The Art of Fighting Expropriation through Self-Expropriation"

Friday, December 7th

10.30-11.30

Lioudmila Voropai

"Aesthetic Imperialism Today and Where to Find It"

12.30-14.30

Jaleh Mansoor

"Primitive Accumulation in Vision and Proletarianization of the senses: Abstraction 1888-2008"

Zachary Formwalt

"In the tender annals of political economy..." (Film Screening and Presentation)

15.00-17.00

Katja Diefenbach

"The Being of the Sensible and its primitive accumulation"

Johan Hartle

"Primitive Accumulation and Original Property in History and Obstinacy"

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A cooperation of the Karlsruhe University of Arts of Design and the Merz Akademie Stuttgart.

The conference language is English.

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