How we work together (Ottawa, 8-10 Oct 19)

Korean Cultural Centre/Carleton University Ottawa, Oct 8–10, 2019
Deadline: Sep 15, 2019

Dr. phil. Franziska Koch

Call for papers
“How we work together: ethics, histories and epistemologies of artistic collaboration”

November 8, 2019, panel chaired by Franziska Koch (Heidelberg University) in the framework of the 1st TrACE Academy “Worlding the Global: The Arts in an Age of Decolonization,” organized by the Centre for Transnational Analysis (CTCA) of Carleton University, Ottawa; panel venue: Korean Cultural Centre Canada, Ottawa.

This funded panel will critically engage with issues of collaboration within the larger framework of the 1st TrACE Academy (Transnational and Transcultural Arts and Cultural Exchange) “Worlding the Global: The Arts in an Age of Decolonization,” November 8-10, 2019, Carleton University, Ottawa. The international call invites researchers at every career stage, from early career to senior, to share new research on collaboration, which stresses transnational and/or transcultural perspectives and complicate existent (master) narratives of collaboration. Although the conference itself focuses on the age of decolonization, the panel is open to include earlier case studies as well.

Collaboration is fundamental to and characteristic of many artistic endeavors not only in our contemporary, technologically wired and heavily mediated times, but has also marked artistic practices throughout the ages and in many places of the world. Indeed, we might argue that artworks – shaped as objects, performances, or concepts alike – more often than not come into being by engaging many hands and relating more than one (master) mind. Still, the modern European romantic notion of the singular (white, male) genius who “fathers” and authoritatively signs a masterpiece continues to inform art historical narratives, serves as a strong identitarian figure in the art market and haunts curatorial practices. However, post-colonial, feminist, queer, Indigenous and network theoretical discourses have successfully questioned this convention in the last decades, while artists have taken collaboration more seriously than ever.

This becomes particularly evident in the field of socially engaged art practices as demonstrated in catalogues such as “Get together” (Kunsthalle Wien 1999), “Collaborative Practices in Contemporary Art” (Tate Modern, London 2003), “Kollektive Kreativität” (Kunsthalle Friedericianum Kassel 2005), “Living as form” (Thompson, 2012) or the “Coop” exhibition at Bangkok Biennale 2017. Yet, the cultural implications of this seemingly global “participatory” (Kravagna 1998) or “collaborative turn” (Lind 2007 and 2009) have only recently come under scrutiny. Critically building on a debate that discussed activist versus antagonist strategies as characteristic for the turn (Bourriaud 2002

and 2006, Bishop 2004 and 2012, see summary by Miller 2016). Grant Kester's "The one and the many" (2011) deliberately introduced case studies from the "global South" to the debate in order to un-pack and undermine the prevailing theoretical approaches and regional specific genealogies. Significantly, he questioned the deconstructivist paradigm, which pervades the debate and ignores the cultural as well as historical specificity of an originally French strand of aesthetic discourse that has increasingly been taken as universal.

The panel aims to bridge earlier inquiries into cultural and historical differences and entanglements with more recent transcultural and transnational perspectives (e.a. Juneja 2018 and 2017, Tomii 2016, D'Souza 2014, Kravagna 2013) when discussing artistic collaboration in an age of decolonization and globalization. As part of the TrACE Academy "Worlding the Global" which seeks to relate long separated discourses of settler-colonial, Indigenous, migrant, diasporic, and other transnational and transcultural histories and ways of knowing in art, the panel aim is to understand how these perspectives enact and (co-)constitute the global when "we work together." The panelists are asked to move towards understanding decolonization as a multi-sited and collaborative engagement with histories, epistemologies, power, migration, capital, and culture. Given the International Indigenous Art Exhibition "Àbadakone / Continuous Fire / Feu Continuel" at the National Gallery of Canada as a starting point, the four speakers should engage at least with one of the following questions:

- How to write and present art history in ways that critically acknowledge and distinguish collaborative authorship (auctorialités) and local as well as global cultural entanglements?
- How do collaborative artists/works address issues of situatedness in spatial as well as temporal regards? In other words: how do collaborative strategies contribute to "worlding the global" beyond dominant binary narratives?
- Does artistic collaboration serve particular functions in the process of decolonization? What roles do collaborative practices play in the expression of Indigenous voices?
- What are the conditions and limits of artistic collaboration?
- How are ethics, epistemologies and histories of collaboration (in-)formed by cultural contexts? What role does transculturality play in artistic collaboration?

The funding of most of the travel and accommodation costs is secured by the organizer thanks to a grant from the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung. To receive the grant, selected applicants need to provide a short presentation of 15 min. length based on a longer manuscript, which will be circulated among the speakers one week before the panel. They have to commit to submitting the revised full paper (ca. 5.000- max. 8.000 words) before the end of February 2020. Together with other written contributions selected by means of this call, the panel organizer will publish a theme issue in the peer reviewed and open access journal "Transcultural Studies" (Heidelberg University).

Applicants should send an abstract of max. 500 words and a short CV to Franziska Koch (koch@hcts.uni-heidelberg.de) until 15 September 2019. The selected applicants will be informed until 20 September 2019.

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