

Lygia Clark: Artistic Practice in Transcultural Contexts (Berlin, 1–2 Oct 25)

Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Berlin, Oct 1–02, 2025

Deadline: Aug 10, 2025

Mona Schieren, Hochschule für Künste Bremen

To accompany the first comprehensive retrospective of Lygia Clark (1920–1988) in Germany (Neue Nationalgalerie, 23 May – 12 October 2025), this two-day symposium invites interdisciplinary contributions that explore Clark's multifaceted practice and its resonance across art history, theory, pedagogy, psychiatry and contemporary artistic production.

Lygia Clark's approach – understanding art as a participatory, sensorial, sometimes even healing experience – establishes her as one of the most internationally pioneering and important artists of the second half of the 20th century. Her work demonstrates close links to European modernism, particularly concrete and constructivist art, while also marking her emancipation from these movements. Clark has had a lasting influence on subsequent generations through her art and remains a central point of reference for contemporary artists today. The extraordinary significance of her oeuvre lies in her ability to transcend the dominance of the visual in art, expanding the act of viewing to include other sensory perceptions such as hearing, feeling, smelling and touching. In doing so, her works invite passive viewers into becoming active participants in a subjective art experience – an approach that remains highly relevant, as direct interaction with works of art is still largely uncommon in museums today.

Despite her impact as a pioneer of participatory and sensorial art, Clark remains largely unknown to the general public in Germany. This symposium aims to intensify scholarly attention on her oeuvre, further situate her work within global modernisms, and critically engage with its enduring relevance.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Clark's relationship to concrete and constructivist art
- Transcultural dialogues in Clark's artistic practice
- Sensorial perception and embodiment in Clark's work
- Feminist, psychoanalytic, or counter-colonial perspectives on Clark's practice
- Clark's experimental teaching methods
- Contemporary artistic practices in dialogue with Clark

In addition to academic presentations (20 minutes), we welcome experimental contributions such as lecture performances and artistic-research presentations. Early career scholars and artists are especially encouraged to apply.

Conference language: English

Please send an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short biography (max. 150 words) to Prof. Dr. Mona Schieren m.schieren@hfk-bremen.de and Dr. Irina Hiebert Grun I.HiebertGrun@smb.spk-berlin.de by 10 August 2025. Applicants will be notified of the selection results by mid-August 2025. Travel expenses for speakers will be covered.

Concept and Organisation: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Hochschule für Künste Bremen

Reference:

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