

public seminar / kunsthall aarhus

28.10.2022



organization,
artistic agency
and lived utopias

nora sternfeld & grégoire rousseau, jeppe ugelvig
kunstteater (mathias dyhr w/ michiel tange van
leeuwen), peter borum, the pawn broker
(villiam miklos andersen, m.b. pedersen &
lauge floris larsen), honza hoeck, sally dalgaard

this seminar, presented in collaboration between kunsthall aarhus and jutland art academy, offers new perspectives on organizational strategies in contemporary art. following this summer's much debated documenta fifteen in kassel the seminar program gathers artists, curators, theoreticians, educators and students in an effort to reflect on the business of collaboration and organization in relation to questions of artistic agency and notions of the utopian.

the seminar is supported by salling fondene and aarhus kommune.



introduction

with the collectivist indonesian artist group ruangrupa's curation of documenta fifteen having taken place in kassel this summer, questions regarding organizational work as artistic strategy have been on the agenda in quite a few contexts in the field of contemporary art in recent years. as outlined in the opening remarks of "collectivity", an issue of the german art magazine *texte zur kunst*:

"cooperation and collaboration are buzz-words in the globalized art world. it's no wonder, then, that artist collectives seem to be everywhere at the moment: from documenta to the turner prize to the protest movements at museums, one is hard-pressed to find a major art event that isn't characterized by collaborative practices and the invocation of solidarity." (katharina hausladen and genevieve lipinsky de orlov, december 2018, p. 4).

besides the recent attention given to artist collectives, this text demonstrates an assumed imperative which is in play when perspectives of collaborative artistic practices are discussed: that organizational types of artistic work are seamlessly connected to explicit struggles for social justice. in recent decades, a different perspective on the relation between organization and contemporary art has emerged, particularly in the academic field of art and management. this approaches artistic practices as models which can be tapped into in order to renew management strategies in the field of business.

both of these discourses focus on changes in the social fabric. however, they have very different areas of application and varying allegiances in regard to their political standpoint. what they do share, though, is a postautonomous perspective on their hopes for the outcomes of art: namely, that art

should function in the service of either communities or businesses. in fact, in sebastian olma's text art and autonomy, this is expressed as a central feature of contemporary art: "[...] while the idea of the genius as the personification of autonomy might have survived until recently in some (warholesque) form or another, today it is being thoroughly exercised by the increasing emphasis placed on collaboration, participation, technology, and indeed entrepreneurship. in light of these developments, isn't it only logical to conclude that art has moved into its postautonomous period?" (s. olma, art and autonomy, v2_publishing, rotterdam, 2018, p. 7)

the seminar program aims to shed light on types of artistic practice which utilize organizational strategies that don't strictly identify with the ideas most often associated with organizational artistic strategies; namely, the distinctly collectivist/activist or the business-oriented focus of art and management research. such practices follow different strategies of action that seem to blur the distinction between art and society by means of organization, and in that process also question assumed models of autonomy and utopia.

within the broad spectrum of the presentations, the seminar intends to identify and explore dynamics applying to practices where individual artists dissolve under the umbrella of a group and/or re-organize in other ways and examine which spaces of agency these strategies propose for artworks, other artists, and audiences, and in turn how these shape the relationship between contemporary art and society.

the seminar is organized and chaired by honza hoeck, professor and director of studies at jutland art academy.

program

- 09:30 *registration*
- 10:00 welcome & introduction
- 10:15 - 11:30 **nora sternfeld & grégoire rousseau** / keynote:
take a deep breath in. "museum as praxis" inaugurated in
october 2035. a lecture-sound-performance with lumbung radio
- 11:45 - 11:55 **kunstteater** / baby's show and tell extravaganza (part I)
- 11:55 - 13:00 *lunchbreak*
- 13:00 - 13:45 **peter borum** / institution and programming - different logics
- 13:55 - 14:25 **the pawn broker** / the rise and fall of the pawn shop
- 14:40 - 14:50 **kunstteater** / baby's show and tell extravaganza (part II)
- 15:00 - 15:45 **honza hoeck** / pre-individual action and spectral agency
- 15:45 - 16:15 *break*
- 16:15 - 16:35 **sally dalgaard** / logistique - no show without a flow!
- 16:45 - 16:55 **kunstteater** / baby's show and tell extravaganza (part III)
- 17:00 - 17:45 **jeppe ugelvig** / the business of collectivity
- 17:55 - 18:40 panel discussion
- 18:40 *thank you and goodbye*

presentations

nora sternfeld & grégoire rousseau

*take a deep breath in. "museum as praxis"
inaugurated in october 2035. a lecture-sound-performance with lumbung radio*

what would happen if one day we were to not only occupy this museum, but also direct it? ever since we occupied the small museum from the year 2025 onwards and after the authoritarian turn, we have discussed this question time and time again in working groups. however, we decided to back down from the idea, because we did not want to or, rather, could not bring ourselves to take part in the turn and perhaps because we did not have enough courage to fight against it. nonetheless, we were agreed that our occupation of the museum should not simply be about constantly reacting to news about which we despaired. so we set up our working groups and ensured that they addressed speculative questions that we wanted to answer—not exclusively, but primarily on the basis of historical research. one of these questions was simply: what would happen if one day we were to not only occupy this museum, but also direct it? in the lecture-sound-performance with *lumbung radio* a narrative prefiguration meets moments of real utopia recorded at documenta fifteen.

kunstteater (mathias dyhr)

baby's show and tell extravaganza

in kunstteater's new work *baby's show and tell extravaganza*, we meet the three meter tall infant, baby, who has only just learned to walk. baby is a born dandy who loves to look in the mirror and dress up chique. in front of the mirror, baby always meets new

friends; they are also well dressed and just as talkative as baby, despite the fact that they don't have any language either. toys are displayed and dances are exchanged. laughing and crying are contagious when there are two of you! based on the infant baby's show and tell extravaganza plays with how innate personality or character traits operate before a child's self-awareness, ego and language are developed.

concept & director: mathias dyhr
performer: michiel tange van leeuwen
costume: michiel tange van leeuwen & mathias dyhr

**the pawn broker
(villiam miklos andersen, m.b. pedersen & lauge floris larsen)**

the rise and fall of the pawn shop

in the winter of 2020, the two indonesian curators iswanto hartono and reza afisina moved with their families to kassel to initiate an artistic experiment in a discontinued shopping center, which would eventually become the focal point for the development of documenta fifteen. in the same winter, we traveled to kassel, where we presented our visions of establishing a pawn shop inside the centre.

this is a presentation about how a conceptual artwork developed into something completely different from the original idea.

peter borum

institution and programming - different logics

of the difference between institutions and laws, gilles deleuze wrote in 1955 that whereas laws were basically limitations on

action, institutions were basically models of action. since then, the proliferation of a cybernetic model of organisation - organisation as programming - has spread a notion of organisation in which action is exhausted in the act of programming.

jeppe ugelvig

the business of collectivity

this presentation will consider art-historical examples of artist collectives from the past 40 years who have organized following business structures. from artist-run shops to pr-type agencies and fashion brands, the presentation will reflect on the critical, performative, and materialist concerns underscoring the mimicry of non-art business, and how artists are uniquely positioned to not only interrogate, but prototype forms of work as it develops in broader cultural economies.

honza hoeck

pre-individual action and spectral agency

this presentation argues that the agency of the artist can be seen as having always been an outcome of collaborative processes. as in the genius artist that functions as a medium communicating the insights of higher powers and thus becoming a delegate of these, or through a more contemporary consultant mode of cultural producer, whose network of colleagues affords them the position from which they speak. through gilbert simondon's concept of the pre-individual a speculative notion of spectral agency is developed, attempting to locate artistic work as being a-priori in between individuals.

sally dalgaard

logistique - no show without a flow!

logistique is a consultation service that is specialized in dealing with art-related logistical situations. it is hard to describe the work of logistique in general terms; partly because each logistical solution provided by logistique is as specific as its problem - partly because there seems to be some fundamental issues with our way of understanding logistical "solutions" and "problems" whatsoever.

speakers

nora sternfeld is a curator and an educator publishing on contemporary art, educational theory, exhibitions, politics of history and anti-racism. she is professor of art education at the hfbk hamburg and co-director of /ecm – master program in exhibition theory and practice at the university of applied arts vienna. sternfeld is part of free-thought, a platform for research, education, and production based in london w/ irit rogoft, stefano harney, adrian heathfield, mao mollona, louis moreno.

grégoire rousseau is an artist and educator based in helsinki. he graduated both as an electrical engineer and master of fine arts, and is currently, a doctoral candidate at aalto university with the research project »commoning education, educating the commons«. in 2020 he initiated station of commons – a platform of commoning practices within the technological space. station of commons is coordinating lungung radio, an online community radio project that has its starting point at documenta fifteen.

kunstteater is an interdisciplinary project founded in 2018 by visual artist and performance director mathias dyhr, who creates and stages productions with various artistic actors in a crossroads between visual art and theater.

mathias dyhr is a danish visual artist and theatre director who works and lives in copenhagen. in 2018 dyhr founded kunstteater – a interdisciplinary project where he creates and stages productions with various artistic actors. dyhr is also part of the artist duo mathias & mathias together with mathias toubro.

michiel tange van leeuwen is trained as a nouveau cirque performer and works with aerial acrobatics and ballance art as a spe-

cialty. in addition, michiel is a self-taught costume designer and creates visually strong overall expressions that lean on both fashion and historical costumes. with his unique physical abilities, he gives life to various characters on stage.

peter borum studied french language and literature, wrote a ph.d. on individuation and morphogenesis, translator, study lecturer at jutland art academy. he has notably worked with questions of the relation between the singular form (an oxymoron) of the individual artwork, its field of conditions and the ensuing virtual transformations of that field (effects of reference, expression, territorialization, problematization).

the pawn broker is a community for people and things, connecting things with people, things with things, and people with people. the pawn broker was established by villiam miklos andersen, m.b. pedersen & lauge floris larsen on the occasion of documenta fifteen.

m. b. pedersen is a visual artist, educated at the jutland art academy in aarhus and the hochschule für gestaltung und kunst in basel. in his work, he investigates various phenomena and the ambivalence of objects, and forms' connections between fragmented narratives.

villiam miklos andersen is a visual artist who lives and works in frankfurt am main. he is educated at the jutland art academy, the academy of fine arts' school of architecture and the städelschule. on a general level, his practice is characterized by an interest in the logistical systems of post-industrial society - how personal and private spheres of life are woven into and shaped by systems created by an economic logic. he wants to depict the life lived in large network systems and exponentially optimizing practicalities.

lauge floris larsen is an architect who is entangled in the dimension between reality and utopian dream worlds. lauge works both independently and participates in various collaborations around politics, architecture and art. his latest work has been exhibited at the oslo architecture triennale.

honza hoeck is an artist and educator engaged in questions of the infrastructures of arts' institutions, the organizing of the artist subject and of image circulation. he was a co-director of the artist run exhibition space and production unit TOVES from 2010-2017. since 2018 he is a professor of contemporary art and director of studies at jutland art academy and a board member of the museum of contemporary art in roskilde.

jeppe ugelvig is a curator, historian, and cultural critic based in california. he is a current ph.d. candidate at uc santa cruz. his criticism appears regularly in artforum, frieze, and spike art quarterly, where he serves as contributing editor. he has contributed texts to various exhibition catalogs for mit list center, pro helvetia, the hessel museum, the macro, and kunsthall charlottenborg. he is the founding editor-in-chief of viscose, a journal for fashion criticism and analysis. his first book fashion work: 25 years of art in fashion was published by damiani in 2020.

sally dalgaard is based in aarhus and is a graduate student at jutland art academy. she has been involved in a number of groups, projects and spaces based on art and sociopolitical work. logistique, dalgaard's organization involved in the logistical issues of the artfield, was established in 2021 and storage, an exhibition space located in a closet in dalgaard's apartment, has been running since 2018.

academy seminar / excursion
29.10.2022



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site visits at primer & weekend trampoline house

program

- 10:20 *kunsthall aarhus - meetingpoint*
- 11:05-12:25 *ferry aarhus-odden / lunch on board the ferry*
- 14:00-16:00 **primer**, aquaporin
- 16:00-16:30 *bus*
- 16:30-18:00 **weekend trampoline house**, kvarterhuset jemtelandsgade
- 18:30-20:25 *bus*
- 20:40-22:00 *ferry odden-aarhus / dinner on board the ferry*
- 22:15 *kunsthall aarhus - thank you and goodbye*

primer

primer is a platform for artistic and organizational development. it is located in the headquarters of aquaporin. primer is developed by diakron, by invitation from christina wilson art advisory.

aquaporin

aquaporin is a global water technology company, dedicated to water purification through the use of biotechnological techniques and thinking. a key component of aquaporin's technology is the water channel protein aquaporin which "facilitates rapid, highly selective water transport". in short, it provides an energy efficient method of separating water from x. aquaporin employs an open innovation business model, which in practice means that they allow for external partners and collaborators, to develop technologies, products and other application types on top of their fundamental innovation. the headquarters of aquaporin in kgs. lyngby, denmark, spans 7000m² of open factory space, laboratories, meeting rooms and offices.

artistic development

artists are invited to utilize primer and aquaporin at large as an occasion to develop their practice. with this emphasis we intend to facilitate an open model where artists can utilize the situation for developmental purposes as well as display. the outcomes have previously been exhibitions of new work, complemented by a selection of material and works curated by primer. going forward the collaborations will consist of long-term dialogues with open-ended effects and forms. primer is intended as a platform for production, development and support for artists and the field of art in general, exploring its introduction into new spaces and professions.

projects

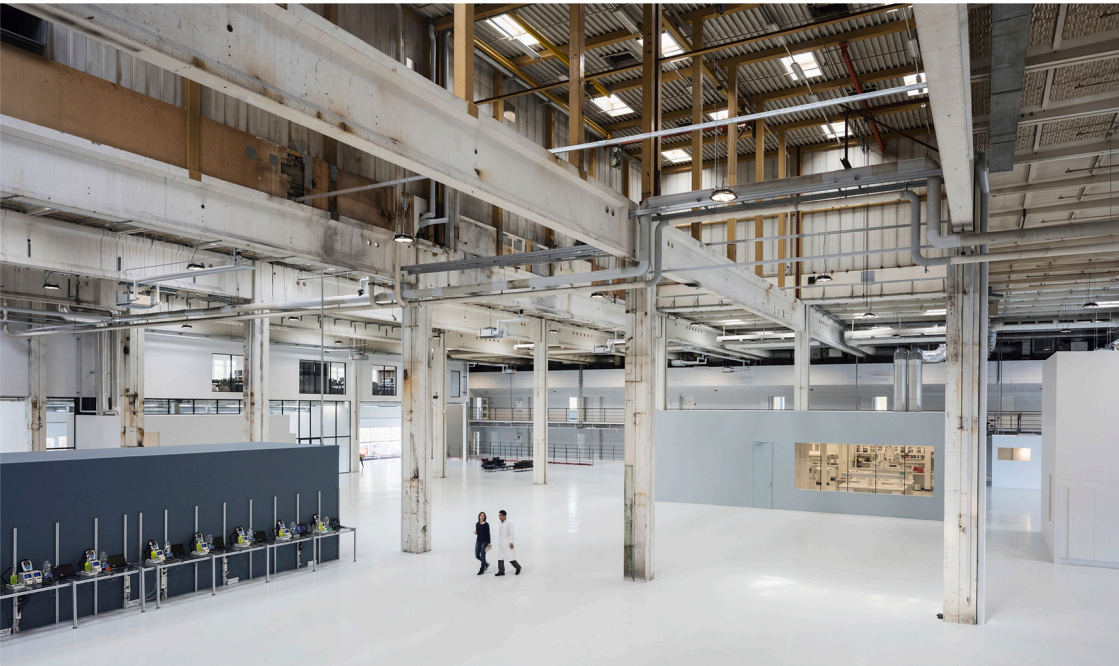
primer instigates thematic projects that take place across multiple formats. developed for the site of aquaporin, each project spans exhibition, conversations, partnerships, research, and events. the work centers on the convergence of climatic, scientific and technological developments and their societal effects, both present and future. this includes engagements with water scarcity, ecological extinction, the relation between computation and biology, the history of technology, existential risk, new organizational practices and imaginaries of the future. drawing together disparate fields and knowledges, the projects intend to create new connections, meetings and proximities around urgent systemic developments. the thematic engagement is thought long-term, traversing all of primers activities to create a continual production of knowledge that evolves across multiple formats and organizational setups.

organizational development

primer is an effort to develop a new type of organization. we believe that renewing relations between artistic, scientific, technological and business practices necessitates novel organisational forms. primer accepts the inherited differences between said practices as a starting point, for exploring possible links and unexpected commonalities between them. our hope is to create sustained proximity between otherwise disparate fields of practice. what this will lead to, is one of the main questions behind primer. at present, primers engagements include the aforementioned artistic development and thematic projects, as well as contributions to exhibitions, teaching, writing and collaborations with aquaporin and other

partners. the development of primer as an organization is an experiment that will be documented, discussed and communicated.

bjarke hvass kure is an artist and a curator. he has a master's degree from the royal danish academy of fine arts and hochschule für gestaltung karlsruhe. hvass kure is member of diakron, a studio for transdisciplinary practice and research and primer, a platform in collaboration with water technology company aquaporin.



weekend trampoline house

trampoline house was formed in 2010 by a group of artists, curators, refugee rights advocates, and asylum seekers as an antidote to denmark's asylum, refugee, and immigration policies.

for more than ten years, it was a space where people who have escaped war, poverty, or human rights abuse could find ways to participate in their new host country and feel a sense of belonging again. the house offered legal counseling, language classes, job counseling, programs for women and children, workshops, debate events, art exhibitions, and weekly house meetings, where members and staff shared news and discussed urgent issues related to the house and refugee conditions. due to lack of funding, the house had to close at the end of 2020.

in january 2022, trampoline house re-opened in a smaller version under the name **weekend trampoline house**. the volunteer-run house is located in the apostle church's parish house in copenhagen's vesterbro neighborhood.

weekend trampoline house is coordinated by a staff of four part-time employees and a volunteer, who reports to the association trampolinhuset 2021's board. so far, the project is running a 12-month trial period until december 2022.

the house is open fridays and sundays from kl. 14–20 and offers a selection of the old trampoline house's most popular activities: legal advice, language teaching, workshops, women's and children's club, house meetings, café and folk kitchen.

trampoline house also housed **camp**, a nonprofit exhibition space for art discussing questions of displacement, migration, immigration, and asylum.

the center was operative from 2015–2020.

camp produced exhibitions, events, publications, and education programs about migration and the questions this phenomena gives rise to today. the center worked with renowned international artists as well as less established practitioners, most with refugee or migrant experience, and gained international recognition for breaking new ground in exhibiting and communicating art that makes the human and societal challenges posed by migration present and relatable.

camp took its point of departure in the fact that more people than ever before are displaced from their homes because of climate change, war, conflict, persecution, and poverty. the center worked to increase insight into the life situations of displaced and migrant persons, and to discuss these in relation to the overall factors that cause displacement and migration. the objective was, through art, to stimulate greater understanding between displaced people and the communities that receive them – and to stimulate new visions for a more inclusive and equitable migration, refugee, and asylum policy.

for the complete story of camp's foundation and program, download or purchase the recollective book *camp status!* seven years of engaging art on migration politics, published in september 2020 on the occasion of camp's closure: <http://campcph.org/camp-status-2020>

camp was the first center of its kind in scandinavia and was directed as a self-governing institution by danish curators frederikke hansen and tone olaf nielsen, who also founded the center in 2015.

tone olaf nielsen is a copenhagen-based independent curator, whose practice is based on a firm belief in the ability of artistic and curatorial work to contribute to social and political transformation. with projects such as *democracy when?! activist strategizing in los angeles* (lace, los angeles, 2002) and *minority report: challenging intolerance in contemporary denmark* (different locations in aarhus, denmark, 2004), nielsen has made significant contributions to the politically engaged 'project exhibition' of the late 1990s–early 2000s, advancing a conception of the curated exhibition as a transnational-transdisciplinary platform from where to address the root causes of social, economic, and environmental inequities and to present other ways of organizing the world.

in 2005, she formed the transnational feminist curatorial collective, *kuratorisk aktion*, with feminist curator frederikke hansen. working internationally out of copenhagen, *kuratorisk aktion* produces exhibitions, publications, and discussions that probe into the complex relations between historical colonialism and capitalist globalization from a postcolonial-transnational feminist perspective.

nielsen holds a cand.phil. in art history from the university of copenhagen (1994) and an ma in critical and curatorial studies from ucla (2002). from 2005-06, she was curator at nifca, nordic institute for contemporary art in helsinki (together with frederikke hansen as *kuratorisk aktion*), and from 2007-11, she was lecturer in applied theory at tromsø academy of contemporary arts, norway.

