

SCHINKEL PAVILLON e.V. AUSSTELLUNGSRAUM FÜR ZEITGENÖSSISCHE SKULPTUR

HUMAN IS – SYMPOSIUM
23. JUNE 2023

Filippo Andreatta, Shumon Basar, Theresia Enzensberger, Timo Feldhaus, Dehlia Hannah, Iyad Rahwan, Nadim Samman and Elvia Wilk

Where has the future gone and when was it abolished? For some time now, this question has indicated a certain paralysis of our political imagination. The general idea of the ultimate triumph of liberal capitalism has settled as a broad consensus in our cultural unconscious and is amplified by the ramifications of inexorable ecological and technological upheavals.

Today, dystopia and reality seem hardly distinguishable. Our contemporary present serves as vast material for speculative narratives. Have we reached a historical end? Are there ways out of the permacrisis? Since the 19th century, the myriad-genre of Science Fiction has held up a mirror to the respective »conditio humana«, its values, fears and limitations. Can Science Fiction offer tools to navigate through our uncertain times, towards alternative horizons and new forms of being human? The decentering and dissolving notion of being “human” today, harbors discomforts and dangers, but also potentials and hopefulness.

TIME SCHEDULE

5.00 – 5.45 pm: *Hello darkness, my old friend* with Theresia Enzensberger and Timo Feldhaus

Starting off from their respective novels *Auf See* and *Mary Shelley's Room*, Theresia Enzensberger and Timo Feldhaus speak about novel forms of humanity, broken utopias, alternative futures and Mary Shelley.

5.45 – 6.00 pm: break

6.00 – 7.00 pm: *Frankenstein's Legacy* with Filippo Andreatta, Dehlia Hannah and Nadim Samman

In light of an increasing climate anxiety, Filippo Andreatta, Dehlia Hannah and Nadim Samman talk about the contemporary relevance of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* – notably the first Science Fiction horror story, created in the Year-without-Summer, a dystopian period due to a volcano eruption and the sulphurous fog that obscured the stratosphere and turned the

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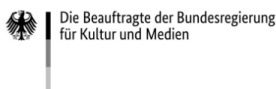
sky yellowish – as well as science fiction’s potential to re-imagine humanity’s perspective towards earth and more-than-human forces.

7.00 – 7.30 pm: break

7.30 – 8.30 pm: *Ex Machina* with Shumon Basar, Iyad Rahwan and Elvia Wilk
Shumon Basar, Iyad Rahwan and Elvia Wilk discuss the dystopian and utopian potential of AI, the nature of its intelligence and virtuosity, as well as its representation in Science Fiction vis-a-vis the social and scientific status quo and outlook.

from 8.30 pm: open conversation / bar

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BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Filippo Andreatta is a theater-maker and curator, with a degree in Architecture from Politecnico di Milano (BA) and Visual and Performing Arts from IUAV University in Venice. Notably, he pioneered the staging of “Delirious New York”, Rem Koolhaas’ renowned book of contemporary architecture. From 2015 to 2020, Andreatta was co-curator for the international festival of Performance and Performing Arts at Centrale Fies.

In 2008 Andreatta founded the OHT [Office for a Human Theatre], research studio and theatre company whose work deals with landscape, daily personal politics and public spaces. OHT has achieved national and international collaborations such as La Serre Arts Vivants (CA), Venice Biennale (IT), NYC Artists’ Salon (USA), Romaeuropa festival (IT), Triennale Teatro Milan (IT), the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation (USA), Whitechapel Gallery London (UK), Italian Cultural Institute of Vienna (AT), MAXXI museum of the arts of the XXI century Rome (IT), among the others.

Andreatta's last production, *Frankenstein*, takes the source material of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* and reconfigures it in such a way as to mimic the titular character’s monster – examined, stitched together, reassembled parts. Conscious of the acute climate anxiety that pervaded the period in which Shelley was writing, OHT’s *Frankenstein* recognizes the creature’s subjectivity, giving him voice in words for the first time, and allowing us to recognize him “as the creator of our imaginary, as one of our fellow citizens, as one of our monstrous peers”.

Shumon Basar is a writer, editor and curator. He is co-author of the books *The Extreme Self* and *The Age of Earthquakes*, both with Douglas Coupland and Hans Ulrich Obrist. Other roles include Commissioner of Art Dubai’s Global Art Forum; founding member of Fondazione Prada’s “Thought Council”; Chief Narrative Officer and co-founder at Zien; and editorial roles at the magazines TANK, Bidoun, 032c and Flash Art. As Curator-in-Residence at Zora Zine, Basar has been publishing a trilogy around his concept of “Lorecore.”

Theresa Enzensberger is an author living and working in Berlin. In 2011, she graduated from Bard College with a BA in Film. She writes essays, reportages and reviews for different newspapers and magazines. In 2014, she founded BLOCK Magazine, which two years later went on to win the title of “Best Newcomer Magazine” at the Lead Awards. Her first novel, “Blueprint”, was published in 2016 and was translated into English and Italian. It won the Alfred Döblin Medal. “At Sea”, her second novel, was published in 2022 and was nominated for the German Book Awards.

In “Auf See”, Yada grows up as a citizen of a floating city in the Baltic Sea. Her father, a libertarian tech entrepreneur, designed the Seestatt as a salvation from the chaos engulfing the rest of the world. In the years since it was founded, the luster has faded, and algae and moss have grown over the once reflective surfaces. Yada's father fears that his daughter will have to

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face her mother Helena's fate, who suffered from a mysterious illness before she died. And one day, Yada makes a discovery that changes everything. Theresia Enzensberger's novel tells of the utopian promises of new communities and happiness in the face of all encompassing doom.

Timo Feldhaus is a journalist and writer who has lived in Berlin for over 20 years, witnessing and tracing a period of transition in the city. His incisive writing encompass diverse subjects such as the fields of art, music, literature, fashion, and political and social concerns. Feldhaus' articles and essays have appeared in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Monopol*, *De:bug*, *032c*, and *Frieze*, among others. In 2022, his widely acclaimed book „Mary Shelleys Zimmer“ („Mary Shelley's Room“) was published by Rowohlt Verlag.

The book recalls the year 1816, which became known in history as the “Year Without a Summer”, when a volcanic eruption led to a worldwide climate catastrophe. Timo Feldhaus follows the huge ash cloud that darkened the world, and observes what happened during this fateful moment in time; Caspar David Friedrich painted his poison yellow and red sunsets, Goethe discovers the science of clouds, eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley started working on her first novel: the story of Frankenstein and his monster, generally regarded as the world's first science fiction novel. Timo Feldhaus describes a sky and a world in turmoil – which is surprisingly similar to today.

Dehlia Hannah Ph.D. is a philosopher and curator based at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen. In September 2023 she will join the faculty of the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences at the University of Copenhagen as Associate Professor of Environmental Aesthetics. Her current project *Rewilding the Museum* examines the art museum's status within the fragile ecologies of the Anthropocene. She is editor of *Julius von Bismarck – Talking to Thunder* (Hatje Cantz, 2019) and *Julian Charrière – Toward No Earthly Pole* (Mousse, 2020), and the *Routledge Handbook of Art and Science and Technology Studies* (Routledge, 2021) and *Charles Stankievech The Desert Turned to Glass* (Hatje Cantz 2023).

Hannah is the editor of a collection of science fiction short stories *A Year Without Winter*, inspired by the climatic context of the writing of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and selected as one the *New York Times* 'Best Art Books of 2019. Hannah draws together writing that seeks to frame contemporary imaginaries of climate change by revisiting the environmental conditions under which *Frankenstein* was written and the global aftermath of the 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora: How can artistic and literary engagements with destabilizing natural patterns summon new planetary imaginaries – reorienting perspectives on humanity's position within the environment?

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Iyad Rahwan, born in Aleppo, Syria, is the managing director of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, where he founded and directs the Center for Humans & Machines. He is also an honorary professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the Technical University of Berlin. Until June 2020, he was an Associate Professor of Media Arts & Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Rahwan also has an interdisciplinary artistic practice. His art explores the evolution of Artificial Intelligence and its relationship to the human condition.

With the Max Planck Institute he considers the guiding concept of “Science Fiction Science” which calls on researchers and practitioners to combine a scientific-analytic approach to the study of human behaviour with speculative and creative imaginings as to what the future may hold. Taking these points in combination, he argues, assists us in accurately anticipating the impact of future technologies on human beings.

Nadim Samman read Philosophy at University College London before receiving his PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art. He was Co-Director of Import Projects e.V. in Berlin from 2012 to 2019 and, concurrently, Curator at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2013-2015). He curated the 4th Marrakech Biennale (with Carson Chan) in 2012, and the 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art in 2015. He co-founded and co-curated the 1st Antarctic Biennale (2017) and the Antarctic Pavilion (Venice, 2015-). Widely published, in 2019 he was First Prize recipient of the International Award for Art Criticism (IAAC). He is currently Curator for the Digital Sphere at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin.

Elvia Wilk is the author of the novel *Oval* and the essay collection *Death by Landscape*. Her essays, criticism, and fiction have appeared in publications including *The New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *The Atlantic*, *n+1*, *The Paris Review* online, *Artforum*, *Bookforum*, *BOMB*, *Frieze*, *WIRED*, and *The White Review*. She received a 2019 Andy Warhol Arts Writers Grant for short-form art writing and a 2020 fellowship at the Berggruen Institute. She teaches widely and is currently a contributing editor at *e-flux* journal