

## Symposium

# The Common Grounds: Learning from Contexts and Communities

**Panelists: Nina Czegledy, Roger Malina, Jens Hauser, Edith Dekyndt, and Emily Gee**  
Moderator: Ryszard Kluszczyński in collaboration with Zofia Cielatkowska

**13th May 2018 (Sunday)**  
**10.30 am – 01.30 pm**

**Gdansk, The European Solidarity Centre**  
(Plac Solidarności 1, 80-863, Gdańsk / [www.ecs.gda.pl](http://www.ecs.gda.pl) )

**Nina Czegledy**

*Contemporary Art Practice: An Exploration Of Alternative Strategies*

**Roger Malina**

*If you have to plug it in, It cannot be Art?: The Expanding Edge of Art*

**Jens Hauser**

*Fruitful misunderstandings in art/science in the epistemological turn*

**Edith Dekyndt**

*Distopalia*

**Emily Gee**

*Baa Baa Baric, Collaboratively creating a quiet revolution*

## Abstracts

**Nina Czegledy |**

### **Contemporary Art Practice: An Exploration Of Alternative Strategies**

Art practice has a time-honored heritage, however due to contemporary possibilities, ubiquitous technologies and shrinking distances, fresh concepts emerged in the last decade contributing to ongoing changes. The importance of art research, alternate exhibition strategies and the transformation of public expressions and participatory audience involvement is well reflected in many projects. The case studies presented reveal some of these changes especially as curators and practitioners of interdisciplinary collaborations are aiming to examine the essence of issues with intent to look beyond the immediate future. The presentation is more of a descriptive account than an analysis of current paradigm shifts in the arts.

**Roger Malina |**

### **If you have to plug it in, It cannot be Art?: The Expanding Edge of Art**

60 years ago when the first kinetic artists tried to show their work in Paris, they were told by the museums and art critics that: "If you have to plug it in, It cannot be Art". Today artists have new roles articulated 20 years ago by Steve Wilson in his book "Information Art". Artists collaborate with scientists to use new CRISPR technology to modify genes for cultural purposes, just as horticulturists have for millennia; they divert digital technologies from their commercial purposes to appropriate them for cultural meaning making. 30 years ago Roy Ascott proposed that we stop using the word "art" because it was frozen in time by our cultural institutions. The Leonardo publications have been privileged for the past 50 years to document and promote the work of the 'art, science, technology' community of practice as artists have expanded the edges of art to create art that is appropriate for our time.

**Jens Hauser, University of Copenhagen |**

### **Fruitful misunderstandings in art/science in the epistemological turn**

The current trend of increased mutual interest between the arts and the techno-sciences can be addressed as an 'epistemological turn' resulting in not only in the production of forms and narratives, but engaged in poetic and political alternative knowledge production, hands-on practices with media, materials, and matter. Instead of being satisfied with the gilded cage of metaphor and representation, symbolic intervention, formalistic evocations, or critique from a safe distance, the specific choice of their *matter matters*, thematically speaking, while their *matters matter* as well. Whereas the techno-sciences today have themselves become powerful producers of aestheticized images, techno-science related artistic strategies call for an analysis that is not based primarily on imagery but on material media and epistemic connections. Phenomena that once assumed the form of artistic images are being translated, scattered, and fragmented into a variety of instances of mediality - they are not only means to an end but fully integrated elements of the aesthetic object.

However, these encounters and entanglements should not be seen as a new paradise of interdisciplinarity; they rather continuously provoke misunderstandings, which both actors and observers might indeed find fruitful within our world of hybrid causality, in which natural and cultural forces can no longer be distinguished.

### **Edith Dekyndt | Distopalia**

The artist talk will focus on some of her recent projects. Edith Dekyndt in her practice usually uses various object to engage the viewer on three levels: knowledge, perception, and reality. 'Although it does remain irreducible to any attempted assimilation to the subject, to a representation or a discourse, the *Object* produced by Edith Dekyndt shares nevertheless a veracity which embeds it within its own location as it does within ourselves. Her objectivism recalls this "world's solidarity" mentioned by Alfred North Whitehead, and has less to do with the connection being drawn by the movement of a hair caught in the air's fluctuations or the shape made by a ripple on the surface of water, but more with the latent action of a contamination. Like a living organism, Edith Dekyndt's *Object* is not a fixed or autonomous entity only founded on the contours of the form or discourse generated by Deleuzian "haecceities," but it rather takes a holistic dimension by associating itself to the comprehensive presence of the environment, similar to a mycelian contamination.'\*

\*Florence Meyssonier 'Edith Dekyndt, Impact of the Milieu', 2016.

### **Emily Gee | Baa Baa Baric, Collaboratively creating a quiet revolution**

A quiet revolution is taking place in St Helens in the North West of England. A work of art that recognises the power of our youngest children to take on the challenges of the world while giving older men a voice from beyond the grave. Mark Storor, an internationally renowned socially engaged artist, is undertaking an ambitious 12-year embedded residency project in St Helens, addressing inequality within the UK and posing the question: Is civilization in fact the most brutal act of barbarism? *Baa Baa Baric: Have You Any Pull?* is the collaborative creation of a story for today and a fairy tale for tomorrow. Producer Emily Gee will unpack the collaborative process and the unique set of relations, contexts and concepts that come together to question our current local and national situation and to create a shared vocabulary through which together we can articulate our own revolution, uncovering the poetic heart and shared knowledge of the town.

## Bio

**BIO | Nina Czegledy** artist, curator, educator collaborates internationally on art& science& technology projects. The changing perception of the human body and its environment as well as the paradigm shifts in the arts informs her projects She has exhibited and published widely won awards for her artwork and has initiated, lead and participated in forums and festivals worldwide. Czegledy presents internationally at academic institutions and conferences. Latest documentary artwork: Seeing the Invisible at University of Toronto 2017, latest curatorial project: SPLICE re-examining Nature, Oulu Art Museum, Finland May-December 2017. Czegledy is the Chair of, Leonardo 50th Celebrations Committee; Member of the Governing Board Leonardo/ISAST; Board Member, AICA International Association of Art Critics Canada; Chair, Intercreate org New Zealand; Adjunct Professor, Ontario College of Art and Design University, Toronto, an Independent artist, curator; Senior Fellow, KMDI, University of Toronto; Research Fellow, Semaphore Research Cluster, University of Toronto; Research Collaborator, Hexagram International Network for Research-Creation in Media, Montreal; Senior Fellow Hungarian University of Fine Arts Budapest.

**BIO | Roger Malina** is an art-science researcher, astronomer and editor. He is distinguished Professor of Arts and Technology and Professor of Physics, UT Dallas and Executive Editor, Leonardo Publications MIT Press. His UTD ArtSciLab focuses on research that involves close collaboration between scientists and artists, in particular developing data exploration and data performance. The lab also carries out research in experimental publishing in collaboration with MIT Press and Leonardo/ISAST and OLATS. He is former director of the Observatoire Astronomique de Marseille Provence (OAMP) in Marseille, and was a member of its observational cosmology group, which carried out investigations on dark matter and dark energy. He is the Executive Editor of the Leonardo Publications at MIT Press, including the new [arteca.mit.edu](http://arteca.mit.edu) art science technology platform. Roger Malina obtained his BS in physics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1972, and his PhD in Astronomy from the University of California, Berkeley in 1979. He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Polytechnic University of Valencia. 'art\*science 2017 - The New and History'.

**BIO | Jens Hauser**, born 1969 in Schwerte/Germany, is a Copenhagen and Paris based media studies scholar and art curator focusing on the interactions between art and technology, trans-genre and hybrid aesthetics. He holds a dual post-doctoral research position at both the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies and at the Medical Museion at the University of Copenhagen, and directs the (OU)VERT research center for Greenness Studies. He is also a distinguished affiliated faculty member of the Department of Art, Art History and Design at Michigan State University, where he co-directs the BRIDGE artist in residency program, and an affiliated faculty member at the Department for Image Science at Danube University Krems. Hauser is also the chair of the European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts' annual 2018 conference in Copenhagen. At the intersection of media studies, art history and epistemology, he has previously developed a theory of biomediality as part of his PhD at Ruhr University Bochum, and also holds a degree in science and technology journalism from Université François Rabelais in Tours. His curated exhibitions include *L'Art Biotech* (Nantes, 2003), *Still, Living* (Perth, 2007), *sk-interfaces* (Liverpool, 2008/Luxembourg, 2009), the *Article Biennale* (Stavanger, 2008), *Transbiotics* (Riga 2010), *Fingerprints...* (Berlin, 2011/Munich/2012) *Synth-ethic* (Vienna, 2011), *assemble | standard | minimal* (Berlin, 2015), *SO<sub>3</sub>* (Belfort, 2015) *WETWARE* (LA, 2016) and *Devenir Immobile* (Nantes, 2018) among other co-curated exhibitions and performance projects. Hauser serves on international juries of art awards such as Ars Electronica, Transitio or Vida, as well as of several national science foundations. He is also a founding collaborator of the

European culture channel ARTE since 1992, has produced numerous reportages and radio features for German and French public broadcasting services, and widely published essays in print journalism and in art books for many years.

**BIO | Edith Dekyndt** is an artist (born 1960, Ieper, Belgium). She lives and works in Brussels and Berlin. By focusing on the sculptural and painterly qualities of the mundane using time-based processes that activate change and decay, Dekyndt brings traditional formal concerns of artistic autonomy 'down to earth'. The consequences are profound, focusing on questions of knowledge, perception, and reality by engaging the fascination and empathy of the viewer rather than 'objective' analysis. If her minimal style, that isolates materials subjected to chemical and physical transformations, begs comparison to scientific procedures, her aim is thoroughly 'subjective', orientated not to results but towards mysterious occurrence. In her work, objects come alive in a way that breaks down typical subject - object debates. Recent solo exhibitions include '*Blind Objects*', Carl Freedman Gallery, London, (2017) '*They Shoot Horses*', Konrad Fischer Gallery, Berlin, (2017), '*Air, rain, pain, wind, sweat, tears, fear, yeast, heat, pleasure, salt, dust, dreams, odors, noises, humidity*', DAAD Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2016), '*Ombre indigène*', Wiels, Brussels (2016) and '*Théoreme des Foudres*', Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2015). Dekyndt participated in '*Viva Arte Viva*' curated by Christine Macel for La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (2017).

**BIO | Emila Gee** is a curator and producer based in Liverpool. Currently Producer at Heart of Glass, an agency for collaborative and social arts practice based in St Helens, Merseyside, Emila was previously Adults Learning Manager at FACT, Liverpool. She has curated exhibitions, edited accompanying catalogues and publications including *Time & Motion: Redefining Working Life* and *Group Therapy: Mental Distress in a Digital Age* and managed FACT's award-winning *Veterans in Practice*, *Digital Ambassadors* and *Criminal Justice* programmes. [heartofglass.org.uk](http://heartofglass.org.uk)