

SOMMERAKADEMIE PAUL KLEE

Sommerakademie Paul Klee 2019/20

Call for applications to a 16-month program hosted by the Bern University of the Arts HKB

Eight residents are invited to join the upcoming Sommerakademie program under artistic director Tirdad Zolghadr, beginning 3 August 2019. Over the summers of 2019 & 2020, the Sommerakademie Paul Klee features two series of public lectures and closed-door seminars, of 16 days each. Over an additional five days, residents are also granted access to the university's state-of-the-art infrastructure and technical support. Thirdly, over the months of December 2019 and 2020, residents are offered teaching opportunities with students of the Bern University of the Arts HKB. Additional meetings and workshops may materialize as the program evolves.

A good decade ago, the Sommerakademie im Zentrum Paul Klee introduced a landmark educational template – a tightly curated retreat for international artists – a format which was quickly established throughout Europe. This template was revisited by the new Sommerakademie Paul Klee, which kicked off on 6 August 2017. With its atypical timeline, and exceptional facilities, it sought to combine rigorous collective inquiry with the perks of production-oriented residencies.

Both in terms of curatorial theme and working premise, the Sommerakademie Paul Klee accounts for the really-existing consequences of Contemporary Art. It traces the impact artists have on the world around them, and hopes to reclaim and steer that leverage. Although the academy tradition remains important here, the aim is to transcend brief bursts of topical intensity, to the benefit of longstanding intellectual commitments. By way of example, in response to REALTY, the curatorial premise 2017-19, Sommerakademie residents forged BLOCC, a "system of learning" with long-term objectives (www.blocc.space).

Travel, accommodation, visa expenses and a per diem of 50 CHF are covered. Residents using production facilities are entitled to a modest production stipend of 500 CHF. All teaching is remunerated at standard local rates.

The Sommerakademie Paul Klee caters to practitioners working at a postgraduate level, whether or not they have an official certificate saying so. Professional experience and intellectual appetite are the necessary requirements here. Though artists will be prioritized, curators and art writers are encouraged to apply. Application deadline is 25 January 2019; successful candidates will be contacted 15 February 2019.

The Sommerakademie Paul Klee is generously supported by Swiss Mobiliar and other sponsors and donors.

Curatorial framework 2019/20: STATECRAFT

Better Governance Within, Via, and in Spite of Contemporary Art

Given the enduring rise of neofascism, it's no longer quite enough to be traumatized, critical, or cheeky. Speaking Truth to Power remains important. But proactively reclaiming the tools of governance has become a pressing imperative. To this day, art enjoys the freedoms of a court jester, as it has for millennia. But history does feature artists actually taking responsibility, every now and then. Arguably, even our own generation can grow up and learn from those examples, sometime soon.

What is statecraft; what are the entryways, terms and symbolics, tactics and prospects at stake? And in the name of which agenda might one put any statecraft to use? As far as Contemporary Art is concerned, many traditional values of the progressive Left – redistribution, regulation, accountability, social justice – have yet to regain the currency they once enjoyed within the field. Which is why our discussion of statecraft would need to include the structural realities of our field itself, in a manner that is as level-headed and consequential as possible. For any serious shift to occur, among many other things, Contemporary Art would need to rediscover the benefits of polemical lines in the sand, and to revisit the art of measured antagonism. Up to a point, our liberal investment in open dialogue has worked well. But perhaps it needs to be reconsidered as dogma, and deployed as one option among many instead.

STATECRAFT will discuss art practices that have successfully resorted to strategies of governance, whether for progressive or reactionary ends. Be it in the name of decolonization, socialism, the Right to the City or otherwise. Which forms and formats allow for a future-oriented frame of reference, limited to neither commercial success, nor process-based research, treating both these traditions as means to bigger ends instead?

Our very location is perfect for the above conversation. Bern is national capital to the most extensive model of direct democracy currently available. While on a local level, it boasts institutions with a fairly shrewd sense of strategy. The Reitschule, a onetime squat, has survived four public referenda aiming to shut it down. Though its punk aesthetic is anathema to the artworld, in terms of coalition-building, we have everything to learn. The program will also seek continuity in time, by building on the preceding edition of the Sommerakademie. This in terms of the experience of working with contributors of 2017-2019, whose BLOCC initiative easily demonstrates the massive potential of experimental teaching templates. For its part, STATECRAFT will in turn emphasize higher education as a cross-generational, public mandate, and draw on REALTY as a curatorial premise. This in terms of speakers and collaborators, as well as case studies too. Urban development will be addressed as a salient example of latter-day statecraft, from the promise of New Municipalism, to gentrification patterns across Europe and beyond.

Finally, with the turn of the Sommerakademie Paul Klee towards Bern University of the Arts HKB as its institutional partner and home base, the role of both academia and art academies is to be explored as scrupulously as possible. How does educational elite-formation feed into governance patterns on nationwide and global levels? Can the teaching machines of the humanities, social sciences, and Contemporary Art still be claimed as means to better statecraft? Possibly so.

University infrastructure at the residents' disposal:

- print workshops
- wood, plastics, metal & textile facilities
- high-tech sound studio
- audiovisual media lab for film, video & photography
- conservation & restoration facilities
- specialized libraries

Timeline

- initial summer program: 3 – 18 August 2019
- optional extra time on-site (production): 19 – 23 August 2019
- teaching sessions at Bern University of the Arts HKB: December 2019, December 2020
- second summer program: July/August 2020

Requirements

- application file to be submitted digitally by 7AM Central European Time, 25 January 2019, via www.sommerakademie-paul-kllee.ch/call-for-applications-2019/
- application needs to include:
 1. brief statement explaining reasons for applying and/or a proposal as to how you intend to engage with the program and facilities (800 words max)
 2. documentation of recent work and/or general practice
 3. CV & brief bio
 4. phone number and Skype ID
- availability for a short Skype interview 13 or 14 February 2019; second round candidates will be contacted on the evening of 12 February to schedule the interviews (jury decisions will be finalized by 16 February)
- a firm commitment over the entire span of the program – the minimal on-site presence amounts to a total of 5 weeks, over two separate sessions (Summer 2019, Summer 2020), not counting optional time windows for production and teaching

For more info:

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www.sommerakademie-paul-kllee.ch