

A two-part ICI Event in collaboration with MOMENTUM and Nordwind for the exhibition **BALAGAN!!! Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places**, 14 November - 23 December 2015 at MOMENTUM im Kunstquartier Bethanien, KühlhausBerlin am Gleisdreieck & Stiftung Brandenburger Tor im Max Liebermann Haus. [www.momentumworldwide.org](http://www.momentumworldwide.org)

**Discussion – Thursday, 19 + 26 November 2015, 19:30 – In English**

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BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY



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The global platform for time-based art

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**Trickster  
Art:**  
**Celebrating Chaos,  
Challenging Misrule**

Tricksters are folkloric figures found in numerous cultures, seemingly dreamed up – or springing out of nowhere – to provide ways of undermining, ridiculing or resisting everything that is wrong, fucked up, unfair in the world, from the tyranny of gods and sovereigns, to social inequality, to the existential injustice of mortality and suffering. As “the creative idiot, the wise fool, the gray-haired baby” (Lewis Hyde), trickster crosses every boundary and confuses every distinction. Michel Serres took the tricky god Hermes – patron of communication, but also of theft, interruption and secrets – as his guiding figure and alter ego, in order to weave together and traverse disparate cultural spheres with randoneés, “expeditions filled with random discoveries.”

Trickster circumvents the logic and techniques of power through a mixture of cunning and naivety, discovering new possibilities as much through foolishness and error as through devious shifts of identity and perspective.

The exhibition **BALAGAN!!! Contemporary Art from the Former Soviet Union and Other Mythical Places** – taking its name from a popular exclamation used in contemporary Russian to indicate a farce, a mess, chaos – features works that in one way or another engage with such unruly states. Might it be that today’s tricksters are to be found in the creative political activity of artists and cultural practitioners attempting to respond to the oppressive mess they find all around them?

Could the disarming, oblique ways in which the trickster takes on states of misrule that cannot be challenged face-on be a particularly apt strategy for resistance in times of turbo-capitalism: embracing chaos to turn it against itself? Are hegemonic oppressive forces a necessary condition for the emergence of tricksters – in fact, do the tricks and machinations of power themselves form the prototype and genesis of the trickster? As opposed to its traditionally embodied and most often male form, is the trickster of today more a mode than a figure, fragmenting and multiplying into an array of inanimate and collective forms?

Two connected events at the ICI Berlin will follow these and other leads:

The first will look for tricksters and their traces, both human and nonhuman, in contemporary art and culture; the second will consider the concept of trickery in artistic and mediatic practice, and the ways it may open up alternative possibilities for resistance and deflection of power.

**Thursday, 19 November 2015, 19:30 – In English**  
**LOOKING FOR TODAY’S TRICKSTERS**

**Keynote:** David Elliott

**Panel and discussion with**  
 Preciosa De Joya, Hillel Schwartz, and Hans Scheuer

**Moderator:** James Burton

**Thursday, 26 November 2015, 19:30 – In English**  
**WHAT IS TO BE UNDONE?**  
**TRICKERY AS POLITICAL RESISTANCE**

**Panel and discussion with**  
 Helena Bassil-Morozow, Katarzyna Kozyra, and Via Lewandowsky

**Moderator:** Rosa Barotsi