

**Discussion – Tuesday, 17 October 2017, 19:30, in English**

In Plato's famous vision of the perfect state the free expressions of artists should be censored. It is common therefore to read Plato's political 'art theory' as a blueprint for totalitarian and fascist states. But is it not also possible and more productive to regard modern and contemporary art as a systematic investigation of 'Platonic questions'? One may, for example, regard the 19th century romantic interest in questions of the beautiful and the sublime as investigations into how aesthetic practices unleash and direct what Plato would call human erotic and spirited energies. Likewise, the move toward abstraction and the conceptual impulses in 20th century modernism can be seen as an attempt to escape the ontological conundrums of representative art first delineated in Plato's *Republic*, while artists of the so-called 'picture' and 'post-internet' generations have been reconsidering the ontological order of representation from within a very different media landscape.

The event – in the form of paired conversations between artists and theorists – aims to not only ask whether Plato's thought can shed light on artistic practice today, but also how contemporary art may illuminate and complicate our understanding of Plato.

**Rosa Barba** is an artist interested in film and the ways in which it articulates space. Composition, physicality of form, and plasticity are important aspects of this articulation, but Barba also interrogates the industry of cinema with respect to various forms of *mise-en-scène* as she takes them out of their contexts and restages them.

**Yngve Holen** is a Norwegian-German artist whose work is made from the combination of materials and technologies that define today's industries and our everyday surroundings. Holen works in sculpture and research-based publishing in order to explore replaceability, boundaries, and the human body's imbrications in the culture of consumption.

**Matt Mullican** is an American artist. He grew up in Santa Monica, New York, Caracas, Rome, and Santiago de Chile. He studied at the California Institute of the Arts with John Baldessari. Mullican's work was represented at documenta 1982, 1992 and 1997, the Venice Biennial 2013, Skulptur Projekte 2017, and in major museum exhibitions around the world.

**Cristina Baldacci** is an art historian and current fellow at ICI Berlin. Her research interests include the archive and atlas as visual forms of knowledge, treated in her *Impossible Archives. An Obsession of Contemporary Art* (2016); montage and re-enactment strategies; contemporary sculpture; the relationship between art, new media, and society.

**Thomas Bartscherer** is the Peter Sourian Senior Lecturer in the Humanities at Bard College, a Senior Fellow at Bard's Hannah Arendt Center, and a research associate with the Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes. He is co-editor of *Erotikon: Essays on Eros Ancient and Modern* and *Switching Codes: Thinking Through Digital Technology in the Humanities and the Arts* and currently editing *The Life of the Mind* for the critical edition of Hannah Arendt.

**Philipp Kleinmichel** is a philosopher and art critic specializing in aesthetics, art and media theory. He was a research fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Akademie Schloss Solitude and has lectured at institutions including UDK Berlin, University Hamburg, and University Giessen. His *Im Namen der Kunst. Eine Genealogie der politischen Ästhetik* appeared 2014.

**Geoff Lehman** is an art historian whose research interests include the theory and history of perspective, Renaissance landscape painting, and the phenomenology of art. He did his doctoral work at Columbia University and now teaches at Bard College Berlin. His forthcoming publication is *The Parthenon and Liberal Education* and is co-authored with Michael Weinman.

# The Wandering Image

**Plato and Contemporary Artistic Practice**

With  
Rosa Barba – Cristina Baldacci  
Yngve Holen – Philipp Kleinmichel  
Matt Mullican – Thomas Bartscherer  
Moderated by Geoff Lehman



Organized by Bard College Berlin in cooperation with the ICI Berlin

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