

## WRITING LETTERS TO EXTRATERRESTRIALS

### ICI BERLIN

#### SPEAKER BIOS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

**COVEN BERLIN** is a queer art collective focused on feminism, love, gender, and sexuality. Founded in 2013, it blossomed when some queers answered a Craigslist ad. Current members are Harley Aussoleil, Frances Breden, Lorena Juan, Judy Landkammer, Kiona Hagen Niehaus, and Louise Trueheart. As a group, COVEN BERLIN wants to create an open sphere to defy systemic violence and inequality, and is devoted to emotional processing, collective healing, political reassessment, paying fairly, and supportive time management strategies. The collective nurtures cultural work, in Berlin and online, in the form of embodied affective research and digital hybrid curatorial approaches, always with a breath of humor. COVEN BERLIN puts on exhibitions, events, and runs an online magazine and newsletter. Our work has been shown at: ICI Berlin *Writing Letters to Extraterrestrials* (2021), Kunspunkt, Berlin Art Week *SOMABOG* (2021), feldfünf e.V. *DANK MEMES 4 DANK TIMES, AN INVITATION TO SINK INTO THE BOG* (2021), Galerie Im Turm, Berlin *BURLUNGIS* (2020); GMK Galeria, Zagreb *EXTRA+TERRESTRIAL* (2019); Project Space Festival, Berlin *PROBAND WERDEN* (2019); nGbk, Berlin *LUCKY* (2018); Schwules Museum, Berlin *EXTRA+TERRESTRIAL* (2018); Municipal Gallery Arsenal, Posen, Polen *BEDTIME* (2018); Hybrid Art Festival, Madrid *Labor or Labor* (2018). Their next project about adolescence as a queer metaphor, *Axe Pulse*, takes place in Villa Merkel, Esslingen, in May 2022.

**Adriana Knouf** PhD (she/her/hers, sie/hir/hirs) works as a xenologist, as an artist-scientist-writer-designer-engineer. She engages with topics such as space art, satellites, radio transmission, non-human encounters, drone flight, queer and trans futurities, machine learning, the voice, and papermaking. She is the Founding Facilitator of the *tranxxeno lab*, a nomadic artistic research laboratory that promotes entanglements amongst entities trans and xeno. Adriana is formerly an Assistant Professor of Art + Design at Northeastern University, Boston, MA, USA, and previously taught at Wellesley College and Ithaca College. Adriana is currently based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Adriana is the author of *How Noise Matters to Finance* (2016) and numerous other journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers dealing with topics as varied as bioart, queer and trans existences, papermaking and electronics, weird temporalities, radio, and surveillance. She has recently completed a text “Fragments of Xenology” that sets out her own approach to “xenology”, or the study, analysis, and development of the xeno (strange, alien, other). Adriana writes extensively about xenology in the context of contemporary theory, poetics, and artistic practice. Adriana has been selected for a number of prestigious residencies, including a Biofriction residency at Kapelica Gallery and Kersnikova Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia; participation in Field\_Notes supported by the Bioart Society, Helsinki, Finland; and a project at the Wave Farm in Acra, NY, USA. Her research has been funded by fellowships from the Mellon Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). Past work has been recognized by a number of awards, including an Award of Distinction at Prix Ars Electronica (2021), an Honorary Mention from the Science Fiction Research Association’s Innovative Research Award, a prize winner in The Lake’s Works for

Radio #4(2020), an Honorary Mention by Prix Ars Electronica in [the next idea] category (2005), the Leonardo Abstracts Service (LABS) for her dissertation (2013) and master's thesis (2008), a memefest Award of Distinction (2008), and a special transmediale "Online Highlight" (2009). She has presented her research and projects at national and international conferences and festivals such as transmediale (DE); Píksel (NO); ISEA(SG, CA); DIY Citizenship (CA); TEI (JP); CHI; CAA; Tuning Speculation; the Society for Literature, Science and Art (SLSA); and the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S). Additionally, her work has been discussed in print and online media, including Makers.info, Motherboard, The Creator's Project, ID Magazine, the Boston Globe, CNN, Slashdot, and Afterimage. Adriana has a PhD in Information Science from Cornell University, an SM in Media Arts and Sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a BS in Engineering and Applied Science from the California Institute of Technology.

**Irina Gheorghe** (b. Târgoviște, Romania) works primarily with performance, in combination with installation, collage, photography or video, to address the tensions inherent in the attempts to speak about things beyond our possibilities of observation, from extraterrestrial life to hypothetical planets. Irina has also been working with Alina Popa as part of the artist duo The Bureau of Melodramatic Research (BMR) to investigate how passions shape contemporary society, as well as our affective relationship to an unhuman universe. Since January 2019 she is also part of the Psychedelic Choir. Forthcoming solo shows include "Methods for the Study of What Is Not There" at Künstlerhaus Bremen and "Heartbeat Detection Systems" at Suprainfinit Gallery Bucharest (BMR). Irina Gheorghe's work was previously shown at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest (2020); Project Arts Center, Dublin (2020); Swimming Pool, Sofia (2019); Changing Room, Berlin (2019); Zona Sztuki Aktualnej, Szczecin (2018); CCA Derry (2018); Chapter Thirteen/Glasgow International (2018); TRAFO, Budapest (2017); Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York (2016); Times Museum, Guangzhou (2016); HOME Manchester (2015); Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest (2015); Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius (2014); BAK, Utrecht (2014); DEPO, Istanbul (2013) and Galeria Posibila, Bucharest (2009), among others.

**Alison Sperling** is an IPODI Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Frauen und Geschlechterforschung at the Technische Universität Berlin, and an Affiliate Research Fellow at the ICI Berlin. She works on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century American fiction with a focus on the science-fictional in literature and in the arts, feminist and queer theory, and the Anthropocene.

**Edna Bonhomme** is a historian of science, interdisciplinary artist, and writer. She earned her PhD in the history of science from Princeton University and a Master of Public Health from Columbia University. Her dissertation "Plague Bodies and Spaces" examined the commercial and geopolitical trajectory of epidemics in North Africa. Working with textual archives and oral testimony, Edna explores contagion, epidemics, and toxicity through decolonial practices and African diaspora worldmaking by excavating the conditions that fuel modern plagues and how people try to escape from them. Her current project "Cartographies of Care" explores the representation of African diasporic health and healing and her critical multimedia projects have been featured visually and textually in North America and Europe. Edna co-hosts the Decolonization in Action Podcast and is a member of the Dekoloniale Network in Berlin. She has written for Al Jazeera, Esquire, The Guardian, The Nation, The New Republic, ISIS History

of Science Journal, Journal for North African Studies, and more. Her first book "Tending to our Wounds" which explores the global history of restitution and reparations for the African diaspora will be published with Haymarket Press in 2022 and is conducting research on her second book, "Captive Contagions" which examines the role that captivity has played during epidemics.

**Regina Kanyu Wang** is a writer from Shanghai, China and currently a PhD fellow of the CoFUTURES project at the University of Oslo. Her research interest lies in Chinese science fiction, especially from the gender and environmental perspective. She writes both science fiction and non-fiction in both Chinese and English, and have won multiple Chinese Nebula Award. Her stories can be found in *Harvest*, *Shanghai Literature*, *Flower City*, *Galaxy's Edge*, *Clarkesworld* and more. Her analytical essays can be found in *Mithila Review*, *Broken Stars*, *Korean Literature Now* and more. She has published two science fiction story collections, *Of Cloud and Mist 2.2* and *The Seafood Restaurant*. She has also co-edited *The Way Spring Arrives and Other Stories*, an all-women-and-non-binary anthology of Chinese speculative fiction, forthcoming in 2022 by Tor.

**Simon(e) van Saarloos** (1990, Summit, New Jersey) is a writer and maker based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. They published several books in Dutch including a novel and a collection of columns. Their most recent book, [Herdenken herdacht](#), is a non-fiction work about queer forgetfulness, whiteness and embodied commemoration. Their book [Playing Monogamy](#) is available in English. In collaboration with Kübra Uzun, Simon(e) recently created an audio installation work called [Cruising Gezi Park](#) (Amsterdam Museum). Together, they also hosted a symposium titled "[The Architecture of Sex](#)," as well as co-initiating [Through the Window](#), a solidarity project between queer artist in Turkey and the Netherlands. From May to October 2021, Simon(e) is the guest curator of the Abundance [exhibition](#) at Het HEM. Simon(e) also hosts the [Asterisk Conversations](#) podcast. Van Saarloos obtained two bachelor degrees at the University of Amsterdam (Comparative Literature in 2011, Philosophy in 2012) and graduated cum laude with a Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design from the Dutch Art Institute. In 2020-2021, they've been teaching a theory research seminar at the Ecology Futures MA at AKV|St. Joost. In the fall of 2021, they started their PhD in the Rhetoric department at UC Berkeley, California. [www.simonevansaarloos.nl](http://www.simonevansaarloos.nl)

**Margaret Rhee** Margaret Rhee is a poet, scholar and new media artist. Her debut poetry collection, "Love, Robot," was published in 2017 and awarded the Elgin Award by the Science Fiction Poetry Association and the Best Book Prize by the Association of Asian American Studies. She has published widely in academic publications such as *Cinema Journal*, *Amerasia Journal*, and *Barnard Scholar Feminist Online*. Other works in progress include "How We Became Human: Race, Robots, and the Asian American Body," a scholarly study of robots, media and race, and "Poetry Machines," a collection of lyrical essays on electronic literature, currently under review at Duke University Press. She is an assistant professor in Media Study at the University of Buffalo SUNY and co-leads the Palah 파랑 Light Lab, which fosters poetry, participation and pedagogy through technology and equity.

**Ashon T. Crawley** is a writer, visual and sound artist, and an associate professor of religious studies and African American and African studies at the University of Virginia, and the author

of *The Lonely Letters* and *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*. He is at work on a book and a short story collection, both about the Hammond B-3 organ, the Black church and sexuality.

**Mary Maggic** (b. Los Angeles, 1991) is a non-binary Chinese-American artist currently based in Vienna, Austria. Their work spans amateur science, public workshopology, performance, installation, documentary film, and speculative fiction. Since 2015, Maggic's research has centered on hormone biopolitics and environmental toxicity, and how the ethos and methodologies of biohacking can serve to demystify invisible lines of molecular (bio)power. Completing a Masters from MIT Media Lab (Design Fiction research group), their work has exhibited internationally including Philadelphia Museum of Art (US), Science Gallery London (UK), Migros Museum of Contemporary Art (CH), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (DE), Jeu de Paume (FR), MOCA Tuscon (US), Haus der elektronischen Kunst (CH), Institute of Contemporary Arts London (UK), Art Laboratory Berlin (DE), Jogja National Museum (ID), and Spring Workshop (HK). In 2017, their project "Open Source Estrogen" was awarded Honorary Mention at Prix Ars Electronica Hybrid Arts, and in 2019 Maggic completed a 10-month Fulbright residency in Yogyakarta, Indonesia investigating the role of Javanese mysticism in the plastic pollution crisis. Maggic is a current member of the online network [Hackteria: Open Source Biological Art](#) and the laboratory theater collective Aliens in Green, as well as a recent contributor to the radical syllabus project [Pirate Care](#).

**Jenna Sutela** works with words, sounds, and other living media, such as *Bacillus subtilis natto* bacteria and the "many-headed" slime mold *Physarum polycephalum*. Her audiovisual pieces, sculptures, and performances seek to identify and react to precarious social and material moments, often in relation to technology. Sutela's work has been presented at museums and art contexts internationally, including Guggenheim Bilbao, Moderna Museet, Serpentine Galleries, and, most recently, Shanghai Biennale and Liverpool Biennial. She is a Visiting Artist at The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) in 2019-21.

**Emilija Škarnulytė** (b. Vilnius, Lithuania 1987) is an artist and filmmaker. Working between documentary and the imaginary, Škarnulytė makes films and immersive installations exploring deep time and invisible structures, from the cosmic and geologic to the ecological and political. Her blind grandmother gently touches the weathered statue of a Soviet dictator. Neutrino detectors and particular colliders measure the cosmos with otherworldly architecture. Post-human species swim through submarine tunnels above the Arctic Circle and crawl through tectonic fault lines in the Middle Eastern desert. Winner of the 2019 Future Generation Art Prize, Škarnulytė represented Lithuania at the XXII Triennale di Milano and was included in the Baltic Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale of Architecture. With solo exhibitions at [National Gallery of Art](#) 2021 and CAC, Vilnius in 2015 and Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin in 2017, she has participated in group shows at Ballroom Marfa, Seoul Museum of Art, Kadist Foundation, and the First Riga Biennial. Her numerous prizes include the Kino der Kunst Project Award, Munich (2017); Spare Bank Foundation DNB Artist Award (2017), and the National Lithuanian Art Prize for Young Artists (2016). She received an undergraduate degree from the Brera Academy of Art in Milan and holds a masters from the Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art. Her films are at IFA, Kadist Foundation and Centre Pompidou collections and have been screened at the Serpentine Gallery, UK, the Centre Pompidou, France and in numerous film festivals including in Rotterdam, Busan,

and Oberhausen. She is a founder and currently co-directs Polar Film Lab, a collective for analogue film practice located in Tromsø, Norway and is a member of artist duo New Mineral Collective, recently commissioned for a new work by the First Toronto Biennial.

**Juliana Huxtable** (Shock Value / New York) Using the structures of music as mediums in her multi-media universe, Juliana Huxtable is a DJ and musician singular in her approach. Where Her visual art and poetry navigate the complexification of desire in a life increasingly mediated by technology, her music utilizes the sounds of technology itself to construct parallel realities to be inhabited and embodied in rhythm and harmonic tableaux. Her sets skillfully deploy the notion of sampling, and re-blogging as DJ strategies, ecstatically mixing an array of influences that frolic at the boundary of genre-intuition and experimentation. At once an assertion of freedom and an ode to the evolutionary structure of electronic music subcultures, she aspires to the sublime in what can often only be described as witchcraft behind the decks; séance from the stage. Her sets skillfully deploy the notion of sampling, and re-blogging as DJ strategies, ecstatically mixing an array of influences that frolic at the boundary of genre-intuition and experimentation. At once an assertion of freedom and an ode to the evolutionary structure of electronic music subcultures, she aspires to the sublime in what can often only be described as witchcraft behind the decks; séance from the stage.