

Conference: Art – Exhibition – Discourse

Art and theoretical discourse at the documenta and other venues of contemporary art

June 25–27, 2026

Venue: Fridericianum, Friedrichsplatz 18, 34117 Kassel

Opening: June 25, 6 pm, 6.30 pm Keynote: Prof. Dr. Philipp Felsch (HU Berlin)

Speaker

Bill Balaskas is an artist, theorist, and educator based in London. Drawing on his background in economics, his work explores social and political systems in the tension between contemporary utopias and dystopias. He is Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange at the School of Arts at Kingston University, where he founded the Centre for Practice Research in the Arts in 2022. His publications include *Fabricating Publics* (2021) and *Institution as Praxis* (2020).

Paul Buckermann is a sociologist and has been conducting research on art, politics, and knowledge at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen since 2024. Previously, he held research and teaching positions in Bielefeld, Lucerne, and Heidelberg, among other places. He is the editor of the volume *Die Welten der documenta* (Velbrück).

Heinz Bude is a sociologist and was Professor of Macrosociology at the University of Kassel from 2000 to 2023. Since 2020, he has served as the founding director of the documenta Institut. His research focuses on social exclusion and the generations after 1945 in Germany. He also published a biography of the art collector Peter Ludwig. In 2025, the novel *Transit 64* by BudeMunkWieland was published.

Philipp Felsch is Professor of Cultural History at Humboldt University of Berlin. His research focuses on the social life of ideas. His recent publications include “Die posttraumatische Epoche. Aufstieg und Niedergang” in *Postismen. Vom Nutzen und Nachteil eines Denkmusters für die Wissenschaften*, edited by Dieter Thomä (Berlin, 2026); the expanded paperback edition of *Der lange Sommer der Theorie. Geschichte einer Revolte 1960–1990* (Munich, 2025); and *Der Philosoph. Habermas und wir* (Berlin, 2024).

Bettina Funcke is a writer, critic, and editor based in New York who publishes on contemporary art and philosophy. Her recent texts include writings on Alice Wang, Jana Euler, and Kerstin Brätsch. Her essay “Counter Cosmology or Cosmology as Counter” will soon appear in *Le Contre Ciel* (Empty Gallery, Hong Kong), and her book *Interruption: New York Art, 1999–2024* will be published this winter by No Place Press. She is the author of *Pop oder Populus: Kunst zwischen High and Low* (Sternberg/König) and, as Head of Publications for dOCUMENTA (13), co-edited the series *100 Notes – 100 Thoughts*.

Lars Gertenbach is Professor of Sociology at the University of Osnabrück and spokesperson for the Section of Cultural Sociology within the German Sociological Association. His research focuses on sociological theory, cultural sociology, and historical and political sociology, with a particular emphasis on German and French sociology, contemporary cultural theory, and sociological diagnoses of modernity.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* is an artist, independent researcher, and author. From 2020 to 2025, she was Professor of Artistic Research at the Mozarteum University Salzburg, where she contributed to the development of the PhD in the Arts program. Her work connects artistic research with critical theory. Her recent publications include *Antisemitism, Homophobia and Contemporary Art* (2025) as well as the co-edited volume *Denialism* (2025).

Berit Hummel teaches art history with a focus on modern and contemporary art at the University of Münster. She earned her PhD with a dissertation on urban references in New York experimental cinema, which received the Dissertation Prize 2022. Her research focuses on the institutional and epistemic history of art since 1960, practices of medial translation, and cinematic and digital image strategies.

Uta Karstein is a research associate at the Institute for Cultural Studies at Leipzig University, where she heads the section “Cultural Management and Sociology of the Cultural Field.” Her research focuses on the sociology of culture, architecture, and art, as well as historical sociology. She is currently working on a DFG-funded project on the causes and dynamics of art scandals. She is also a board member of the German Sociological Association.

Marius Kemper is a research associate at the documenta Institut in Kassel. His research focuses on the sociological history of ideas as well as the sociology of culture, intellectuals, and art. His recent monograph *Kojève's verkannte Autorität* was published by Turia + Kant in 2025.

Philipp Kleinmichel is a philosopher and scholar of art and cultural studies. His work focuses on the material conditions of artistic production and critical theory in the context of social transformation. He is currently a visiting researcher at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Jasmin Kolkwitz is an art historian and independent researcher. In her dissertation, completed in 2025, she examines documenta 14 as a space of experience and analyzes the participatory practices embedded within it. Previously, she worked at the Art History Institute in Marburg and at the German Documentation Center for Art History, among other institutions. Her research focuses on contemporary art, exhibition history, curatorial practice, and socially engaged and participatory forms of art.

Christiane Kues is an artist, author, and researcher. She earned her PhD at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, where she also taught, having previously studied Fine Arts in Düsseldorf. In the winter semester of 2026/27, she will be a Research Fellow at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies (ifK) in Vienna. She is currently preparing her dissertation *Theorien der Praxis – vor und nach Artistic Research* for publication (forthcoming in 2026).

Sebastian Lederle is a research associate at the Bauhaus University Weimar. He earned his PhD in Vienna in 2016 with a dissertation on Hans Blumenberg, which was awarded the Dissertation Prize 2016/17. His research focuses on media and film theory, anthropology, and phenomenology. His publications include *Endlichkeit und Metapher* (2021) as well as several edited volumes on media philosophy.

Oliver Marchart is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Vienna. His research focuses on political theory as well as art and cultural theory, with a particular emphasis on biennials. His publications include *Die politische Differenz. Zum Denken des Politischen bei Nancy, Lefort, Badiou, Laclau und Agamben* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), *Das unmögliche Objekt. Eine postfundamentalistische Theorie der Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013), *Conflictual Aesthetics. Artistic Activism and the Public Sphere* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2019), and *Hegemony Machines. documenta X to fifteen and the Politics of Biennialization* (Zurich and Berlin: OnCurating/n.b.k., 2022).

Andreas Niegl is a research associate at the University of Kassel and the documenta Institut. In his doctoral project, he examines the conceptual history of the notion of the political in aesthetics and art theory between modernity and the present.

Gerhard Panzer is a sociologist of art and culture. Most recently, he conducted research at the Technical University Dresden on the “social birth of Western art” (DFG) and taught in Dresden, Leipzig, and Kassel, among other places. His work focuses on art, violence, and exhibition contexts.

Georg Simmerl is a cultural scholar and political theorist. At the Center for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin, he leads the DFG-funded project “Strategien der Kritik” on documenta fifteen. Previously, he worked at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and Humboldt University, among other institutions. In 2023, he received the Carlo Barck Dissertation Prize for his doctoral thesis.

Reilly Smethurst is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Philosophies of Markets at the Stockholm School of Economics and a guest artist at Elektronmusikstudion in Stockholm. His work operates at the intersection of philosophy, art, and aesthetics. He is currently working on a monograph on Friedrich Nietzsche, Alexandre Kojève, and Jacques Lacan. Originally from Australia, he has been based in Europe since 2020.

Felix Vogel is an art historian and has been Professor of Art and Knowledge at the University of Kassel since 2021, as well as a member of the documenta Institut. His research focuses on the history and theory of exhibitions, Conceptual Art, and eighteenth-century (garden) architecture.

Mi You is a curator and Professor of Art and Economies at the University of Kassel and the documenta Institut, where she leads research projects on the social, economic, and political conditions of art. She is the author of *Art in a Multipolar World* (2024). As a curator, she works at the intersection of historical and future imaginaries of society, technologies, and the political theory and philosophy of Eurasia. Her recent exhibitions include *Lonely Vectors* (2022), *Really? Art and Knowledge in Time of Crisis* (2024), and the research exhibition *The China Moment* (2026). She is a member of the transnational network Common Action Forum, a fellow of Berggruen Institute Europe, and serves on the board of the KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

Thomas Zingelmann is a postdoctoral researcher at Friedrich Schiller University Jena, where he is working on a project on the phenomenology and aesthetics of movement. He earned his PhD in 2022 with a dissertation on the aesthetics and epistemology of exhibitions, published in 2024. His research focuses on aesthetics, phenomenology, and anthropology, as well as classical positions ranging from Kant to Blumenberg.