

58TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION

Artist: Natascha Süder Happelmann

Curator: Franciska Zólyom

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All information and images for download: www.deutscher-pavillon.org

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DATES

The next press conference for the German Pavilion is planned to take place during the second half of February 2019 at the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig. The exact date will be announced in due time.

Biennale Arte 2019: 11 May-24 November 2019

Preview Biennale Arte 2019: 8-10 May 2019

Opening of the German Pavilion: 9 May 2019

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation for the preview can be obtained only through the Biennale Press Office in Venice:

<http://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/homepage-2019>

58TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
11 MAY - 24 NOVEMBER 2019

Berlin, 25.10.2018 - Franciska Zólyom, the curator of the German Pavilion 2019, is working with the artist Natascha Süder Happelmann on the design of the German contribution for the 58th International Art Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia.

Natascha Süder Happelmann is an important voice of contemporary art. In her work she unfolds the poetic, imaginary and critical potential of art. She stands for an artistic position that not only analyses or comments on aesthetic and scientific concepts and social or political conditions, but actively changes them. Within each working process the artist develops a new understanding of her role and a new approach.

For the contribution to the German Pavilion 2019, Natascha Süder Happelmann works with a personal spokeswoman, Helene Duldung, and adapts her name especially for the task. The artist has evaluated a collection of various different names that have been used by official authorities to address her over the last thirty years. After careful analysis of the variations, which have arisen due to autocorrect programmes and misspelling, she has used algorithmic parameters and social protocols to select the most suitable version: an optimal form of integration.

Disconnecting the artist from representative roles or political instrumentalisation has always been an integral part of Natascha Süder Happelmann's artistic practice. As early as 2004, the artist initiated the CV exchange platform bioswop.net, where concepts such as identity, representation, facts and self are renegotiated and the fetish of the "artist's biography" is undermined.

Natascha Süder Happelmann primarily creates works in the fields of installation and performance, text and sound. As an individual or collective artistic position, she frequently allows her practice to flow into political, social processes. She addresses the activist aspect of artistic work and reassesses the conditions and spaces for aesthetic research and artistic action.

The German contribution to the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia is realised on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office in cooperation with ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen).

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**PRESENTATION OF THE ARTISTIC POSITION FOR THE GERMAN PAVILION 2019
BY THE ARTIST'S SPEAKER, HELENE DULDUNG
(Typescript of the speech held on 25.10.2018, Zeughauskino, Berlin)**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the press, dear friends,

I would like to announce the artistic position for the presentation at the German Pavilion 2019 and introduce it to you on the basis of previous projects. I will then give you an overview of the process leading up to the presentation in Venice in May 2019.

The artist chosen for the presentation at the German Pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia 2019 is Natascha Süder Happelmann.

The first step taken by the artist in her approach to this important task is to adapt her name. She makes this adaptation taking several parameters into account. Allow me to explain this in more detail:

Over a period of around thirty years, a collection of name variations has been accumulating in the artist's memory and in other places. The different versions have arisen mainly as a result of misspelling and autocorrect when the artist was addressed by public authorities. Over time, this has led to a certain instability of the name image, which - on both a national and an international level - seems inadequate for this representative task. The artist thus decided to meet this important representative challenge - the design of the German Pavilion in Venice - by means of adaptation. The optimal form for this is integration. Following careful analysis of the variations available, a particular version of the name was selected. This choice was made with the help of algorithmic and social parameters. It is a comprehensive survey and therefore, I think, quite representative; it also covers a significant period of time.

Subsequently, the adapted name was verified by means of phonological examination and tested for its suitability. During these investigations, particular attention was paid to the relationship between word emphasis and syllable weight. The sound images or sound patterns of various syllable combinations Sö-der, Sü-der, Sa-der, Ha, Hu, Hi, Hippel, Hagel, Happel each have their own metric and onomatopoeic character, and evoke different emotional reactions.

Through the procedures described above, Natascha Süder Happelmann emerged as the right and appropriate name, ergo the proper name for this important task.

Initially, in the process of their institutionalisation, proper names were introduced primarily for taxation purposes and in order to record suitable manpower for the military. As the name was used both to identify individuals and to collect data regarding the population, it had to be clearly legible and unambiguous. Legal fiction later became a political technology that not only enabled the systematic observation and administration of the population - demographic surveys, criminal records, tax registers, electoral registers, vaccination and health registers - but also shaped the identity, and defined it as stable and permanent.

If I may make a personal remark at this point: "When I buy colours, [I do water colour painting in my spare time (text added by the speaker)] it is by the mere sight of their name. The name of the colour (*Indian yellow, Persian red, celadon green*) [...] is then the promise of a pleasure, the program of an operation: there is always a certain future in the [...] names. [...] The word transports me because of the notion that *I am going to do something with it*: it is the thrill of a future praxis, something like an *appetite*. This desire makes the entire motionless chart of language vibrate."*

But let us return to the matter at hand: the elaborations on the procedure used are provided in order to clarify that the adaptation of the name is not an arbitrary gesture. For Natascha Süder Happelmann, adaptation is an artistically imperative decision, and a necessary one. And I would kindly ask the representatives of the press to respect this and to treat it in an appropriate manner.

In 2004, Natascha Süder Happelmann initiated the biography exchange platform bioswop.net, which enables people who are active in the field of art to exchange their biographies. The purpose of the exchange initiative was to release the artist's CV from its representative role. The Curriculum Vitae, a much sought-after document in the art world, translates artistic activity into lists, economies of origin, age, performance and mobility. However, in recent years this form of the representation of success has been devalued by the algorithmic collection and evaluation of various personal data on the Internet. One could say that the Internet has made the artist's CV obsolete. In this data collection, concepts such as identity, representation, fact, self are only part of a computational accumulation, and potentially interchangeable with other concepts. Thus, these seemingly stable factors and criteria become unsteady flows that move and take shape in different directions at the same time. The data is arranged in hierarchies and processed by algorithms, not by the artists or their galleries. The fetish power of appearance searches for alternative image chains. And the formation of the "individual", previously considered significant, dissolves into data streams and condividual spaces, in search of new forms of subjectification.

One of Natascha Süder Happelmann's projects, which has been continually expanded since 2013, is the sound sculpture *psst Leopard 2A7+*. The sculpture, constructed from Euro-pallets and Lego plates, is the size of the Leopard tank. It contains a growing sound archive revolving around this particular battle tank, which is manufactured by Krauss-Maffei Wegmann. Each time the work is exhibited in a new location, new sound documents are added. The archive contains material on German arms exports, on the military armament of urban space, on the "pacification" of unrest and uprisings in cities affected by austerity policies and climate change or repressive regimes, and finally on the question of how to deal with open secrets.

How does one address a secret that is not a secret because everyone knows about it, so it cannot be brought out into the open? If I say that the Leopard tank is being used by the Turkish Government against the Kurdish population, does it result in a crisis of legitimacy? Open secrets are peculiarly resistant to exposure and the burden of proof. And why do tanks made in Germany have the names of predators? Leopard, marten, weasel, puma, cheetah, lynx, beaver, badger, dingo. What mimetic powers are at work here?

The transformative properties of sound make it conceivable to release the predator from the tracked vehicle, to turn it into a mosquito, to loosen all the screws in the tank, or simply to fall asleep to the rattling of its broken air conditioner. A radio version of *psst Leopard 2A7+* was produced for Deutschlandfunk Kultur Klangkunst. Let us listen to an excerpt from the beginning of the radio programme. ...[audio playback]...

Open secrets are increasingly occupying our collective memory and our news feeds. A process which, with the support of algorithms, leads us straight to the open sea of no consequences and invisibility. If I have proof of the fact that the European Union has abolished sea rescue and thus violated international law, does it generate a necessity? Open secrets are fundamental to the fact that conditions are understood to be inviolable and insurmountable. A cunning act of post-factual masking.

The questions relating to the open secret also apply to institutional and structural racism.

If an open secret is suddenly revealed, files have to be shredded or locked away for 120 years. This appears almost antiquated, given the potency of masking.

The Society of Friends of Halit, founded on the occasion of documenta 14 in Kassel with Natascha Süder Happelmann as one of its co-founders, approached the open secret of institutional racism by bringing counter-narratives to the attention of the public. The society, which emerged from the People's Tribunal "NSU-Komplex auflösen" ("Unraveling the NSU Complex"), unites various groups, initiatives and individuals. Its original task was to bring a counter-forensic investigation into the death of Halit Yozgat, the ninth victim of the NSU, and the presence of former secret service agent Andreas Temme at the crime scene, to international attention. The group from the tribunal had commissioned the London-based Forensic Architecture Institute to conduct a forensic investigation of Temme's presence. The documenta was used as an effective amplifier, with the visitors themselves becoming witnesses.

The fact that the testimony was extended to include an international public brought attention to a case that had been of little consequence to the German public.

The presentation of the Society of Friends of Halit at documenta 14 took place in the Neue Galerie. Photographic wallpaper and a video monitor showed the historical "No 10th Victim" protest march in 2006. The families of the victims had already pointed out racist motives for the series of murders, while the police and prosecution authorities had falsely assumed that the perpetrators were immigrants, ignoring the voices of the families until the NSU's so-called self-uncovering. Four further monitors showed interviews with lawyers and members of the victims' families, conducted by the initiative *spot_the_silence*, as well as clips produced by the Spots group of the People's Tribunal "Unraveling the NSU Complex". Finally, visitors entered the main room of the presentation, where the 28-minute video by Forensic Architecture was shown.

Today, witnessing is often supported by technology; some even claim that it is worthless without technical data. The human eye, the voice alone, do not count. The factuality of evidence must be verifiable, its visibility reproducible and technically provable. But non-human testimony can arise not only from technical formations, but also from organic ones, for example insects.

In 1990, at a time when global trade was being realigned in the Uruguay Round of the GATT, the *Aedes albopictus*, the so-called Asian tiger mosquito, migrated to different parts of the world as a consequence of deregulated world trade, and appeared for the first time in Italy. Owing to climate change escalated by human activity, the insect's habitat is expanding, spreading dangerous pathogens and diseases worldwide, including the Zika virus and dengue fever. The route of the insect not only bears witness to the globalisation of trade, but also creates new alliances.

The small Pipistrelle bat, living in Italy, eats up to 10,000 mosquitoes in one night. It uses echolocation (so-called biosonar) to locate the insects. In order to protect themselves from the diseases transmitted by the tiger mosquito, the inhabitants of the city of Florence are attempting to bond with the bat, even inviting it into their homes. It is a friendship that emerges from the necessities of a complex entanglement in which the lines of movement of climate change, deregulated trade and biotic adaptation intersect.

In the work *passing one loop into another*, which was shown at the Palazzina Reale in Florence in 2017, four tablets on red swivel arms emerge from a structure of stacked black and white yarn reels. The yarn comes from Prato, a centre of the European textiles industry that

consists mainly of Chinese companies. The yarn reels stand on a Euro-pallet. An enlarged model of the *Aedes albopictus* sits on one of the tablets. Made of the same black and white yarn, it is illuminated by the light of the tablet. Around the mosquito, the hunting sounds of the Pipistrelle bat can be heard. The other tablets show short animation loops tracing the lines of movement of globalised trade.

The works presented here clearly indicate that Natascha Süder Happelmann deals with what could be called ruinous spaces. Spaces that have created conditions or facts that are irreversible or irreparable. Natascha Süder Happelmann is of the opinion that some spaces are already ruins at the time of their creation. Their ruinous character is often already inherent in the idea behind them. It is precisely these spaces that Natascha Süder Happelmann seeks out in her quest for the unstable formations of possibility and survival.

We are sure you will understand that, at this juncture, we are unable to give you any further information concerning the presentation at the German Pavilion. In this respect, we must all be patient until May 2019. However, I would like to share some photographs of Natascha Süder Happelmann's working process to already somewhat embark on the journey together. Natascha Süder Happelmann is currently gaining a more detailed picture of various sites where ruinous concepts manifest themselves. To this end, she is on the road, looking, exploring, listening, lingering and observing. You might recognise the motif of the witness in the photographs. The pictures give you a small insight into the artistic working process, which often remains concealed.

Thank you for your attention. I hope to see you again in Venice. Perhaps even before.
Thank you very much.

FRANCISKA ZÓLYOM, CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Rethinking the world, making it accessible from perspectives that no one has considered before, drafting it in a way that does not (yet) exist is one of the fundamental potentials of art. By means of artistic work, it is possible to point out and explore connections that otherwise tend to be negated, dissolved, concealed, simply not created. The reception of art, its aesthetic effect, is as diverse as the forms of expression themselves.

The creation of physical, ideational, affective spaces of resonance in which people can experience, reflect and encounter one other in an unusual way plays an important role for me as a curator. Involvement with artistic work always has a special significance when it challenges supposedly irrevocable positions, when it allows us to gain a deeper understanding of urgent questions concerning the present, when the participants - the artists and recipients - can question their role from within their involvement, thus creating different ways of thinking and acting. Or when, within the fabric of ideas, artistic works, artefacts and actors, new references, connections and commitments emerge.

This is why those artistic approaches are particularly interesting that act simultaneously in different areas of society, and instead of merely analysing or commenting on aesthetic and scientific concepts, social, legal or political conditions, also shape and inform them.

So the question is not only what kind of world we want to live in, but beyond that, how can new ideas of community be empowered? And this question must be seen against the background of urgent issues of the present - urgent with regard to social, ecological, cultural and political aspects all at the same time: how can community be conceived beyond totalitarian unity and uniformity? Beyond essentialist ascriptions, identitarian concepts and the hierarchies, discrimination and exclusion mechanisms that follow on from them?

This is, among other things, a question of the usage and performance of language. Terms, designations, names, distinguish between different forms of existence, places and people. In so doing, they create boundaries where violent conflicts can arise. Beyond equality and equal rights, they naturalise conditions, make status allocations and create life realities - which, depending on who speaks, are reproduced or reinforced.

Breaking open hollowed out and fossilised concepts of the exercise of power, such as demarcation, appropriation and accumulation, is just as difficult as creating resonances in a world without substance. In addition to the loud, dominant speaker positions, however, there are a multitude of voices that only appear to be mute. If we make these voices audible, listen to them, they can help us to answer the questions formulated here.

The contribution for the German Pavilion 2019 is conceived by Natascha Süder Happelmann, who unfolds the poetic, imaginary and critical potential of art in a wide variety of contexts and constellations. Who confronts too hasty attempts at interpretation with friendly diversity. Her work expresses itself in text, image, space and sound. She speaks with the voice of advocacy when she files an objection. For three decades now, she has been creating a strong presence in her art in order to step into the background as an amplifier, speaking and acting with others.

NATASCHA SÜDER HAPPELMANN

Natascha Süder Happelmann (born in Budapest, 1987, or Sachsenheim, 1968, or Australia, 1979, or Munich, 1979, or Tehran, 1967, or London, 1966, or Iran, 1953) is an artist who lives and works in Berlin, Germany, or Kassel, Germany, or Gütersloh, Germany, or Santa Monica, California, USA, or the Cotswolds, Great Britain. (Source: Wikipedia)

Natascha Süder Happelmann's work investigates how the world is made, and the biopolitical and geopolitical interactions and entanglements that underlie it. She reassesses the conditions and spaces for artistic action and activates aesthetic research in political and social contexts.

The artist creates works in the fields of installation, performance, text, and sound. She repeatedly allows her practice to flow into collective processes, and addresses the collective and transdisciplinary aspect of artistic work.

Rather than providing further biographical information, the artist refers to the platform bioswop.net. This online exchange platform, which has existed since 2004, enables artists and other cultural workers to exchange CVs or compile them from existing data.

FRANCISKA ZÓLYOM

The art historian and curator Franciska Zólyom has been the director of the GfZK (Museum of Contemporary Art) Leipzig since 2012.

From 1997 to 1999, she worked as a curator at the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art in Budapest. After an internship at the Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin (2001 and 2003/04), she became the director of the Institute of Contemporary Art - Dunaújváros, Hungary. Here she worked with international artists such as Gilbert Hage, Tamás Kaszás, Tilo Schulz, Sean Snyder and Technika Schweiz, initiating numerous site-specific and context-related exhibitions and research projects. The projects *City Without a Center* and *Stalking Utopia* reflect her interest in the spatialisation of ideologies. As a freelance curator she curated the exhibitions *Agents and Provocateurs* (with Beáta Hock) on the subject of artistic expressions of protest and *Lajos Kassák. Botschafter der Avantgarde* (with Edit Sasvári).

At the GfZK she has curated the following exhibitions, among others: *Little Warsaw: Battle of the Inner Truth* and *Dainius Liskevicius: Museum* (2012); *James Langdon: School for Design Fiction* (2013); *Creativity Exercises* (with Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László) (2014); *Experimental Jetset: Provo Station* (2016); Céline Condorelli: *Wall to Wall* (2017); *Gaudiopolis. Attempts at a Joyful Society* (in cooperation with the OFF Biennale Budapest) (2018).

In addition to holding various honorary positions, she is committed to the development of educational and cultural policies.

The German Pavilion and ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)

ifa's main objective is to promote international exchange in the field of art and culture. Since 1971, ifa has been responsible for the coordination and implementation of Germany's contribution to the Venice Biennale.

Internationally acclaimed artists such as Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Hanne Darboven, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Katharina Fritsch, Rosemarie Trockel, Martin Kippenberger, Candida Höfer, Tino Sehgal, Isa Genzken, Ai Weiwei and Hito Steyerl have presented their works at the German Pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia. The German contribution has already won six Golden Lions: 1984 Lothar Baumgarten and A. R. Penck (commissioner: Johannes Cladders); 1986 Sigmar Polke (commissioner: Dierk Stemmler), 1993 Hans Haacke and Nam June Paik (commissioner: Klaus Bußmann), 2001 Gregor Schneider (commissioner: Udo Kittelmann), 2011 Christoph Schlingensief (curator: Susanne Gaensheimer) and 2017 Anne Imhof (curator: Susanne Pfeffer).

"The Venice Biennale meets the challenge of reflecting and representing the global discourse of societies on art and culture in a unique way. The presentation of the German Pavilion, in keeping with the self-conception of art, is not concerned with any form of national motivation; it is neither the instrument nor the representation of a state. This year's selection is indicative of international networking and the transcultural self-understanding of global societies", as stated by ifa's Secretary General Ronald Grätz on the occasion of the announcement of the artistic position for the German Pavilion in 2019.

By fostering biennials and exhibitions abroad, ifa has also supported the artists represented at international art biennials since 1982. As a centre of expertise for scientific research on the theme of biennials, ifa belongs to global networks of actors in the field of the biennial. It is a founding member of the International Biennial Association (IBA), founded in 2012. According to the IBA, around 400 biennials, triennials and exhibitions are currently held at regular intervals worldwide, bringing together international art positions.

About ifa

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) is Germany's oldest intermediary organisation for international cultural relations, having celebrated its centenary in 2017. It promotes a peaceful and enriching coexistence between people and cultures worldwide. Its programmes pursue five core themes: Cultural Exchange, Dialogue of Civil Societies, Migration & Culture, Culture & Conflict, and Europe. ifa supports artistic and cultural exchange in exhibition, dialogue and conference programmes, and it acts as a centre of excellence for international cultural relations. It is part of a global network and relies on sustainable, long-term partnerships.

ifa is supported by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, the state of Baden-Württemberg and its capital Stuttgart. www.ifa.de

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Biennale Arte 2019 – 58th International Art Exhibition
Statement by Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office,
for the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) press pack

Alongside documenta in Kassel, the International Art Exhibition in Venice is the world's most important contemporary art show. Every two years, artists and art aficionados from around the world meet in Venice to discover and discuss the latest trends in art. Germany has its own pavilion, which provides a showcase for its exhibits in both the architecture and art exhibitions.

We are living in a difficult period of risks and crises. Many people feel uncertain and are looking for stability and orientation. The cultural sphere has reacted astutely to the new challenges, not least at the Biennale Arte 2017. That was particularly the case for the work by German artist Anne Imhof and curator Susanne Pfeffer. Imhof's work "Faust" fascinated and at times unsettled critics and visitors alike. She was rightly awarded the Golden Lion for her work.

In cultural relations and education policy, it is particularly important to create open spaces in civil society where culture professionals can create co-productions in culture, education and science. Such open spaces are needed in order to tap into the potential of cultural intelligence. National borders at most play a subordinate and hopefully further declining role. I am certain that nationality is no longer important to the artists of today. We do everything we can to support this in the European context and beyond. In this way, we are moving ever closer to the idea of a "foreign policy of societies", in which civil-society structures are increasingly important in cultural collaboration. Our intermediary organisations, such as the Goethe-Institut, ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German Academic Exchange Service, are crucial here, as are museums, private foundations, initiatives, artists and dedicated individuals.

Art, culture, knowledge and ideas do not end at national borders. They move between the internal and external spheres. At the same time, important issues of our time – migration, digital transformation and climate change – must also be discussed from a cultural perspective. Cultural policy, which we regard as social policy, shapes our definition of culture, which in turn is based on the social power of culture.

I am thus particularly pleased that Franciska Zólyom has agreed to take on the challenge of curating the German Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019. With her connections outside Germany, Ms Zólyom is ideally placed to create a show that is open to all influences. I am very excited to see what forms of expression she will find.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), who have worked so hard for many years on Germany's exhibits at the Biennale. The Federal Foreign Office, which provides the basic funding for the German Pavilion at the Biennale Arte, is happy to be able to count on a partner like ifa.

I wish all artists, visitors and everyone involved a wonderful time at the Biennale.