

THE STATUS OF THE POLITICAL IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

# KLARTEXT!

A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS, CURATORS AND THEORETICIANS  
KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIE AND VOLKSBUHNE AM ROSA-LUXEMBURG-PLATZ, BERLIN  
14-16 JANUARY 2005 WWW.KLARTEXT-KONFERENZ.DE

**Press release: KLARTEXT! The Status of the Political in Contemporary Art and Culture**

**Conference:** January 14-16, 2005

Künstlerhaus Bethanien and Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin

**Workshops:** January 17-20, 2005

Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, interflugs/Universität der Künste, Berlin

**Information and registration:** [www.klartext-konferenz.net](http://www.klartext-konferenz.net)

**With** (selection): Inke Arns, Berlin/Dortmund; B+B, London; Marius Babias, Berlin; Jochen Becker, Berlin; Bernadette Corporation, New York/Paris; Anita Di Bianco, New York; Sezgin Boynik, Prizren; Gerd Brendel, Berlin; Boris Buden, London; Roger M. Buergel, Vienna/Kassel; Fulvia Carnevale, Paris; Chto delat?, St. Petersburg/Moscow; Catherine David, Paris/Berlin; Susanne von Falkenhausen, Berlin; Fiabbrera Obrera/Yomango, Madrid; Alex Foti, Milano; Grupo de Arte Callejero, Buenos Aires; Hans Haacke, New York; Brian Holmes, Paris; Jakob Jakobsen, Copenhagen; Deborah Kelly, Sydney; kpD/kleines postfordistisches Drama, Berlin; Holger Kube Ventura, Halle; Maria Lind, Stockholm; Shaheen Merali, Berlin; Nina Möntmann, Hamburg/Helsinki; Chantal Mouffe, London; Francesco Jodice/Multiplicity, Milan; Marion von Osten, Zurich/Berlin; Jacques Rancière, Paris; Oliver Ressler, Vienna; Irit Rogoff, London; Hemma Schmutz, Vienna/Salzburg; Simon Sheikh, Copenhagen/Malmö/Berlin; Ilaria Vanni, Sydney; Claudia Wahjudi, Berlin; Paola Yacoub/Michel Lasserre, Berlin; Yes Men, New York.

KLARTEXT! means "straight talk" in German. The international conference "**KLARTEXT! The Status of the Political in Contemporary Art and Culture**" will be taking place over a three day period – January 14-16, 2005 – at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien and the theatre Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin. The aim of the project, initiated by Berlin-based independent curators Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel, is to explore the current use – and sometimes misuse – of the category "Political" as applied to contemporary art and culture. Especially since September 11 and Documenta 11 in Kassel, one encounters the claim that art is becoming increasingly politicised or "re-politicised" and that political questions have returned to the arena of culture and contemporary art. In a variety of ways – and with varying results – current exhibition projects and publications are taking this thesis into consideration. Is it just a new trend? Such approaches tend on the whole to neglect the inherent questions that necessarily attend such a proposal and take for granted an implicit understanding of the terms art and politics, of their social functions and effects.

The conference brings together in Berlin international artists, activists, curators, workers in the cultural sector and theoreticians to discuss the relationship between art and politics, and provides a platform and context for the exchange of thoughts, strategies and approaches. KLARTEXT! is also an exhortation to the participants and the audience to engage in the analysis of the aforementioned themes and issues. Are we really dealing with the politicisation of art or is it more a matter of an aestheticisation of political themes and contents? How influential is art? What is activism today, and how does the interchange between art and activism function? Does it make any sense to use art as a means to articulate social and political concerns? What manifestations should this kind of art assume? And in what context can it be effective?

**Concept and organization:** Marina Sorbello and Antje Weitzel

**In cooperation with:** Künstlerhaus Bethanien and Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz

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**Media partners:** The Art Newspaper, Exberliner, Freitag, Jungle World, Le Monde diplomatique, die tageszeitung, Zitty

**Press conference:** January 14, 2005, 10 a.m., Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Studio 1

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