

TELEPORT 2120—Decolonial imaginaries, shapeshifting and time travel with militant images, third cinema and indigenous film

Workshop with Filipa César & Diana McCarty

25.05-29.05.2020

Merz Akademie



This workshop departs from the historical assumption that contemporary Western politics and economies are corollaries of the colonial politics of extraction and accumulation, and how these have informed and shaped ruling epistemologies and systems of justice – the ways in which thinking, behaviour and understanding of the world are constructed. These also inform what it is possible to imagine. We introduce the tools of shapeshifting and time travel as a means in which to apply a decolonized lens to the contemporary. Anti-colonial struggles were, in essence, creole, gender critical and environmental projects, and this can be discerned in the intricate praxis of Amílcar Cabral as a soil scientist, poet, theorist and war strategist of African liberation movements. His own role as a shapeshifter allowed him an agency to envision things differently - as well as the tools to act on those visions.

We will look into the historical context of anti-colonial struggles of the mid 20th Century through the lenses of militant image production, engaged cinema, and related internationalist solidarity movements to understand how specific aesthetics and narrative strategies evolve from politicised artistic positions. We will also address contemporary activist film production such as indigenous filmmaking and feminist film praxis as counter-imaginaries to ongoing neoliberal colonialism forces. Here, we introduce notions from feminist science fiction that create the conditions to think and see the world as it is and as it could be. How can “worlding” a future from a position just a micro-reality away from the present create different conditions for what it is possible to imagine? How does "making films politically" and the very condition of production affects and informs moving image language? How can a slight shift of reality unlock how we imagine what the world could be and act from that position?

Over four days, we will watch films, read texts, shapeshift, travel between pandemics, discuss, perform experimental exercises and produce media - politically.

Filipa César is an artist and filmmaker interested in the porous borders between cinema and its reception, the politics and poetics inherent to imaging technologies and practices of decolonisation. Her research on cinema of the African Liberation Movement in Guinea Bissau and the resulting body of work comprises films, seminars, screenings, publications and ongoing collaborations with artists, theorists and activists. César and Sana na N'Hada established the loose knit collective, Luta ca caba inda, and with Diana McCarty she co-founded the elsewhere feminist collective. Her essay Meteorisations: Reading Amílcar Cabral's Agronomy of Liberation was published in Third Text. César premiered her first feature length essay-film Spell Reel at the Forum section of the 67. Berlinale and is currently working on the collective research project Mediateca Onshore. She is currently finishing her PhD thesis People are the Mountain, based on the militant image research project, at the FCSH New University in Lisbon, advised by João Mário Grilo and Volker Pantenburg. Selected shows and festivals include IFFR, DocLisboa, Cinéma du Réel, 8th Istanbul Biennial, Serralves Museum, Tate Modern, 29th São Paulo Biennial, Arsenal, Manifesta 8, Jeu de Paume, Kunstwerke, SAAVY Contemporary, Khiasma, Tensta konsthall, Contour 8 Biennial, Gasworks, Flaherty Seminar, MoMA, Harvard Art Museums, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Tabakalera and INCA.

DIANA McCARTY is currently a BAK 2019/2020 Fellow in Utrecht. She is a founding editor of the award winning artist run radio, reboot.fm in Berlin and of the Faces-1.net community for women in media. As a feminist media producer and activist, she produces experimental projects that utilize all forms of media. Her ongoing post-academic research revolves around technofeminist bodies of knowledge, practices and potentials she has been producing interdisciplinary projects since 1988. While varying in thematic scope, the projects all share a commitment to theory driven practice that engages participants and the public. This work includes organizing and participating in discussions, seminars, conferences, publications, film programs and a large body of innovative projects. Recent works include script writing for experimental fiction and documentary films including the Filipa César's award winning "Spell Reel," "Transmission From the Liberated Zones" and "Conakry" (with Filipa César and Grada Kilomba). As a cyberpunk in the 90's, McCarty was active in netzkultur working with the MetaForum conferences, the nettime mailing list, the emergence of net.art and co-founded one of the early "hack labs" that brought artists, activists, theorists and computer programmers together. McCarty is a proud Chicana from Albuquerque, with a long term interest in radical feminists.