

The Publishing Sphere – Ecosystems of contemporary literatures

13-14 June 2017

An event proposed by Lionel Ruffel and Annette Gilbert

in cooperation with Haus der Kulturen der Welt

1. Abstract

A tale haunts western modernity. The tale of a literary public sphere. It places literary communication via the book as the idealized model for a democratic society on the march towards rationality. Our contemporaneity disrupts this imaginary, especially the very notion of publication, which has again become central during the digital era, which is also an era of hyper-visibility. Publishing is returning to its original meaning: to go public, from a private expression intended for specific correspondents to one intended for more and more diverse audiences. The whole of human communications is producing a publishing sphere, thanks to the democratization of tools formerly limited to privileged authorities, notably the publishers.

If it is true that the imaginary of modern literature is constitutive of the fantasy of a “good” public sphere of democracy then we must find what kind of societies are emerging from the publishing sphere. And if it is true that the literature embodied in the book is merely the modern actualization of the literary cultures, then how could we define contemporary literary cultures, superimposing practices in and outside of the book (performances, public readings, sound and visual work, fieldwork, literary residencies and festivals, salons, groups, diverse digital spaces, creative writing courses)? These are the main lines of inquiries this conference will follow in inviting scholars and practitioners of this new publishing sphere. Investigating four keywords (sites, protocols, attention, imaginaries), it intends to map the contemporary literary ecosystem within the publishing sphere, and rethink forms of collective assemblies.

Combining a live event, the publication of a reader and a radio show, this event will be in itself a literary publishing sphere.

2. Format

Participants are asked to submit pre-reflexions, research notes, image materials, literary references or lists of titles emblematic of the transformations of the publishing sphere by April 2nd. These documents can be drawn from the histories of the book or of the mediasphere, the analysis of cultural and literary public spaces, or more broadly the anthropology of literature. They can be samples of one's own productions, or images, texts, lists or references discussing or performing these transformations of the publishing sphere. We particularly invite participants to have in mind the four keywords (sites, protocols, attention, imaginaries) we have chosen.

“Sites” to investigate the different locations of contemporary literatures; “protocols” to understand what constitutes a literary work beyond the materiality of the book; “attention” because literary cultures are themselves specific cultures and captures of attention; “imaginaries” because literary cultures are understood by the imaginary of publication that they themselves put in place.

This is a way to critically engage the traditional image used to describe literature and the book: the triangular form represented by the author, the publisher and the audience (for more details, see developed proposal).

These documents will be edited within the HKW and then designed and layouted by the students of Prof Franziska Morlok (FH, Potsdam) as a reader for the Workshop. The reader will serve as the material basis for the conversational workshops organized for the 13th and the 14th of June at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt for contributors and invited speakers.

The two days, structured by four workshops will alternate between roundtable discussions, performative miniature elements, workshop reach-outs, prologues or literary readings.

3. Radio Brouhaha

Radio Brouhaha, launched during the event, will convene and live-stream a three-hour evening public program on the literary publishing sphere on June 14th. Radio Brouhaha will also cover the two-day workshop and publish audio documents related to the topic. “The publishing sphere” will be the first issue of Radio Brouhaha as the audio collective history of the contemporary. The radio as medium can be emblematic of our understanding of the “long contemporary”, from the massive production of simultaneity and nation-building to a non-linear, multiple and globalized symbol of the publishing sphere.

Radio Brouhaha is a project developed by Lionel Ruffel and continent (<http://www.continentcontinent.cc/>) following Ruffel's essay *Brouhaha, Worlds of the Contemporary* (Univocal, 2017). This book, playing with the sound metaphor, nevertheless as a book, is condemned to offering only a silent archive of the contemporary to the eyes and to the ears. Radio Brouhaha will not only resound it but adapt it to the necessity of another medium: the radio.

4. Preliminary Schedule

Location: Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, John-Foster-Dulles Allee 10, 10557 Berlin

April 2nd	Deadline for the documents submission
April-May	Franziska Morlok's student workshop designing the reader
June 13th-14th	Conference "The Publishing sphere"
Day 1	2-6 PM Speakers workshops
	7-10 PM Socializing format: Salon
Day 2	10 AM-6 PM Speakers workshops
	7-10 PM Public event: Radio Brouhaha

5. Invited speakers

Hannes Bajohr (Writer, researcher at Columbia University), Caroline Bergvall (Artist, writer and performer), François Bon (Writer, ENSPAC, Cergy), Vincent Broqua (Writer, translator, Université de Paris 8), Yves Citton (Université Stendhal-Grenoble), Dora Garcia (Artist), Mathias Gatz (Writer and publisher), Mara Genschel (Writer and composer), Guido Graf (University of Hildesheim), Julika Griem (Goethe-University Frankfurt), Desrimais (Director at Jean Boîte Éditions, Digital Manager at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain), Margaret Hillenbrand (University of Oxford), Hanna Kuusela (University of Tampere), Geert Lovink (Researcher and web activist), Alessandro Ludovico (Artist, media critic and publisher, Winchester School of Art), Wu Ming (Writing collective), Kirill Medvedev (Poet), Kathrin Passig (Writer, journalist), Paul B. Preciado (Philosopher and queer theorist), Leif Randt and Jakob Nolte (writer, founder of Tegel Media), Gerald Raunig (Philosopher and art theorist, European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies), Sabine Scholl (Writer and teacher), Danny Snelson (Writer, publisher, and archivist), Frank Smith (Writer and artist), Marcello Vitali-Rosati (University of Montreal), Binyavanga Wainaina (Writer and journalist), Gregor Weichbrodt (Writer, artist and designer)