

What Now?

ON FUTURE IDENTITIES

Beatriz Balanta
Anne Barlow
Morgan Bassichis
Daniel Bejar
Dr. micha cárdenas
Paula Chakravartty
Stamatina Gregory
Carin Kuoni
Cliff Leek
Evan Malater
Carlos Motta
Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei
Sondra Perry
Jackson Polys
Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz
Jeannine Tang
Alise Tifentale
Wu Tsang
Soyoung Yoon

MAY 20-21, 2016

ART IN GENERAL and THE VERA LIST CENTER FOR ART AND POLITICS

WHAT NOW? 2016: On Future Identities

Friday, May 20, 4pm–7pm

Saturday, May 21, 1:30–6pm

The New School, University Center
63 5th Avenue at 13th St, New York
Bob and Sheila Hoerle Lecture Hall, UL 105

What Now? 2016 is a two-day annual symposium, organized by **Art in General** in collaboration with the **Vera List Center for Art and Politics**, which investigates critical and timely issues in contemporary art. Dedicated to the topic “On Future Identities,” the 2016 symposium comprises three panel discussions spanning Friday and Saturday, a keynote delivered by Dr. micha cárdenas, as well as lectures, presentations and performances.

Bringing together artists, curators, educators, cultural theorists and psychologists, *What Now? 2016* will examine notions of “future identities” through discussions around the construction of the self, queer theory, self-determination, mutability, the body, technology and social media, and the ever-evolving relationship between the digital and the material.

The symposium will consider how this contemporary political moment differs from the kinds of activism that arose around identity politics during the 1960s-1990s, and how new thinking might shape ideas around “performing citizenship” or creating a new sense of commons in the future. Reflecting on the Vera List Center for Art and Politics’ focus theme of “Post Democracy”, the final panel will also address what this could mean in relation to the formation of identity in terms of the nation state, multi-faceted citizenship, or conversely, the increasing condition of “statelessness”.

What Now? 2016: On Future Identities continues and advances the long-term lines of inquiry and research that began with the previous 2014 and 2015 symposia. Just as the importance of “listening” came out of the discussions on *What Now? 2014: Collaboration & Collectivity*, “self-determination” emerged from *What Now? 2015: The Politics of Listening* as a lens through which to explore the symposium topic for 2016.

FRIDAY 20 MAY, 4:00-7:00 PM

4:00 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Anne Barlow and Carin Kuoni

4:15-5:45 p.m.

SESSION ONE: *Shifting Conversations—Identity Politics Today*

Moderator: Stamatina Gregory

Participants: Cliff Leek, Carlos Motta, Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, Jeannine Tang

This panel explores how the contemporary political moment is different from activism around identity politics in the 1960s-1990s, taking into account distinct definitions from a global perspective, and inquiring into how frames of reference describing this term have shifted over time. What are key questions today in terms of the relationship between identity and self-determination? How do we approach the very act of “naming” identities as fluid, mutable, and multiple constructions?

6:00-7:00 p.m.

KEYNOTE presentation by Dr. micha cárdenas: *Health Beyond Gender*

In this talk, cárdenas will discuss healing and health technologies throughout her work with virtual reality, science fiction, wearable electronics, bioart, fashion design, and creative coding. In the face of violence, cárdenas describes an approach to design and art that focuses on the survival and health of trans women of color in order to create futures of health for all people who do not fit traditional representations of binary gender.

SATURDAY 21 MAY, 1:30-6:00 PM

1:30-2:00 p.m.

LECTURE by Evan Malater, LCSW:

The Untidy Ego in the Age of the Prosthetic Gods

Malater will present a cross-genre talk on the topics of identity, technology, and the future through the lenses of psychoanalysis, philosophy, and culture. He will argue that Marie Kondo’s best selling books on “tidying” are symptomatic of a certain crisis in choice and ego formation, and discuss identity development via identification and cathexis. Through these coordinates, the Freudian model of identity formation is reflected from a contemporary point of view.

2:00-3:30 p.m.

SESSION TWO: *Technology and Presentations of the Self*

Moderator: Soyoung Yoon

Participants: Daniel Bejar, Sondra Perry, Alise Tifentale

This panel explores how new technologies are influencing, complicating, and possibly freeing notions of the self. How will technology and social media continue to affect personal and public representations of identity, including the proliferation of the “selfie”? Speakers will address how flexible identities are being performed today, and speculate on how they might manifest in the future.

3:30-3:45 p.m.

PERFORMANCE by Morgan Bassichis

Bassichis' performances draw on stand-up comedy and folktales, often engaging specific places and events, to explore the uses and abuses of history. He has developed a special artistic intervention for the 2016 What Now symposium topic "On Future Identities" as a prompt.

3:45-4:00 p.m.

BREAK

4:00-4:30 p.m.

PRESENTATION by Wu Tsang

Wu Tsang is an artist, performer and filmmaker. Her films, performances, and installations have been presented at museums and film festivals internationally. Tsang's first feature *Wildness* (2012) premiered at MoMA's Documentary Fortnight and won the Grand Jury Prize for Documentary at Outfest Los Angeles. Her recent short *You're Dead to Me* premiered on PBS and won the 2014 Imagen Award for Best Short.

4:30-6:00 p.m.

SESSION THREE: *Post Democracy and Identity*

Moderator: Beatriz Balanta

Participants: Paula Chakravarty, Jackson Polys, Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

Within the larger context of ideas around "post democracy," this panel explores how we are currently addressing individual vs. communal identity at the structural level, and in issues of governance. What does the future hold for the influence of nationhood in the formation of identity, and the umbrella of the state as a space of belonging? The rising phenomena of refugee crises and the condition of "statelessness" (whether imposed or chosen) problematize such formal modes of affiliation. Exemplary or alternative models for organizing structures of accountability in activism and movement building will be discussed.

OFFSITE EXHIBITION: *Shifters*

Art in General, 145 Plymouth Street, Brooklyn NY

Gallery hours May 20-21: 12-6 p.m.

Featuring Becca Albee, Colleen Asper, Beatriz Balanta, Cara Benedetto, Mary Walling Blackburn, Danielle Dean, Sophia Le Fraga, Jonah Groeneboer, Gordon Hall, Marika Kandelaki

Curated by Kristen Chappa

In connection with this year's symposium, Art in General presents *Shifters*, an exhibition that brings together a group of artists whose practices are engaged with language through feminist and queer perspectives. The collective works on view investigate how various systems of communication and their attendant histories and ideologies are being reconsidered through the lens of gender today. The project speaks to theories arguing that language as a social agreement is not passive or fixed, but rather, it possesses the potential to reimagine structures of power. *Shifters* inquires how conventions that organize how we read, listen, and relate to one another, have the capacity to be rethought and destabilized.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Beatriz Balanta was born in Colombia, South America. She received her Ph.D. from Duke University in 2010 and holds a BA in Sociology from Boston College. Balanta's scholarly work analyzes the photographic and literary dimensions of racial formation in Latin America. Her research interests encompass 19th century debates regarding freedom, citizenship, and nation building in Brazil, Colombia, and the United States as well as contemporary theorizations of art practices from the Global South. She is an assistant professor at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts. Balanta is currently co-teaching a course, along with Mary Walling Blackburn, that mobilizes the role of the stranger in both South and North American art production.

Morgan Bassichis is a writer and performer whose live comedic work explores history, mysticism, and just, like, being alive. Morgan has performed in New York at Artists Space, Dixon Place, La MaMa ETC, MoMA PS1, PARTICIPANT INC, the Poetry Project, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Morgan's shows include *When the Baba Yaga Eats You Alive* and *The Witch House*. Morgan's essays have appeared in the *Radical History Review*, *Captive Genders*, and other edited volumes. Morgan was a 2015 Process Space Artist with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and a 2015 Art Matters grantee. Morgan's performances have been described as "out there" (by Morgan's mother) and "intense" (by Morgan).

Daniel Bejar is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. Bejar is currently a 2015 fellow in Interdisciplinary Work from the New York Foundation for the Arts. He is also a 2014 recipient of a Franklin Furnace Grant, and a 2013 recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Visual Arts Grant. Bejar's work has been featured in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Harpers Bazaar* HK, *Magazine B*, and *Hyperallergic*, among others. Bejar's work has been exhibited internationally and was recently included in the Brooklyn Museum's *Crossing Brooklyn* exhibition in 2014. Additional exhibition venues include El Museo Del Barrio, NY; SITE Santa Fe, NM; Georgia State University, GA; Artnews Projects, Berlin, Germany; and Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY. Bejar is a 2007 MFA recipient from the State University of New York, New Paltz, and received his BFA from the Ringling College of Art & Design, Sarasota, FL.

Dr. micha cárdenas directs the Poetic Operations Collaborative, a design research lab at the University of Washington Bothell applying technological creativity to advance social justice. She is Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences and Interactive Media Design at the University of Washington Bothell. cárdenas is an artist/theorist who creates mobile media to reduce violence and increase health. cárdenas' forthcoming book, *Shifting Poetics* uses practice-based research to understand trans of color movement in digital media, where movement includes migration, performance, and mobility. cárdenas has been described as one of "7 bio-artists who are transforming the fabric of life itself" by io9.com. She is a member of the artist collective Electronic Disturbance Theater 2.0. Her solo and collaborative artworks have been presented in museums, galleries, and biennials around the world.

Paula Chakravarty is Associate Professor of Media, Culture and Communication (MCC) at the Gallatin School, New York University. Her publications include *Race, Empire and the Crisis of the Subprime* (with Denise Ferreira da Silva, Johns Hopkins Press, 2013), *Media Policy and Globalization* (with Katharine Sarikakis, University of Edinburgh Press and Palgrave, 2006), *Global Communications: Towards a Transcultural Political Economy* (with Yuezhi Zhao, Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). She is the co-editor of a recent special issue on "Infrastructures of Empire" in *Media, Culture and Society* (2016). She has worked with the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) on Media Activism and the New Political in the Inter-Asia program since 2013. She is also a member of the Gulf Labor Coalition and the NYU Coalition for Fair Labor.

Stamatina Gregory is a curator and art historian. A doctoral candidate at The Graduate Center at the City University of New York, her work focuses on the interrelationship of photography and politics. She is the co-curator of *Bring Your Own Body: transgender between archives and aesthetics*, which is traveling this fall to Haverford College. In 2005-2006 she participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program, and from 2007-2009 she was the Whitney Lauder Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, where she organized several ex-

hibitions including “Carlos Motta: The Good Life,” and “Tavares Strachan: Orthostatic Tolerance.” Her retrospective of the work of New York photographer and activist Brian Weil (1954-1996) at the ICA in Philadelphia recently traveled to the Santa Monica Museum of Art: the catalog is published by Semiotext(e). She was Deputy Curator of the inaugural pavilion of The Bahamas at the 55th Venice Biennale. She is the Associate Dean of the School of Art at The Cooper Union.

Cliff Leek, MA, is a PhD candidate in sociology at Stony Brook University, Managing Editor of the journal *Men and Masculinities*, member of the Board of Directors for the American Men’s Studies Association, and Research Fellow with Men Advocating Real Change. He has served as Program Director of the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities and his research examines global efforts that engage men in feminism.

Evan Malater is a writer and psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City. His essay, “Eigentime: Time in the Writing of Michael Eigen” was published as a chapter in *Living Moments* by Karnac Books in 2014. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the European Graduate School. He is currently completing a book titled *The Impossibility of Free Association*, a deconstructive reading of various Freudian texts concerning free association.

Carlos Motta was born in Bogotá, Colombia in 1978 and currently lives and works in New York. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the New Museum, New York; MOMA/PS1, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Tate Modern, London; Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg; PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; and Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, México City. He has also been included in group exhibitions at: Guggenheim Museum, New York; SF MoMA, San Francisco; Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Witte de With, Rotterdam; Jeu de Paume, Paris; and Castello di Rivoli, Turin. Motta was also included in the X Lyon Biennale; X Gwangju Biennale; Gothenburg International Biennale of Contemporary Art; International Film Festival Rotterdam; and Toronto International Film Festival. In 2016, Motta has several solo exhibitions including Mercer Union, Toronto; PPOW Gallery, New York ; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen; and MALBA-Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires. Motta won the Main Prize for the Pinchuk Foundation Future Generation Art Prize (2014), was named a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow (2008), and has received grants from Creative Capital (2012), Art Matters (2008) and Cisneros Fontanals Foundation (CIFO) (2006).

Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei is a philologist with a background in music composition, linguistics, conceptual art, and philosophy. He studied under Avital Ronell at the European Graduate School and Christopher Fynsk at the Centre for Modern Thought. Recent publications include *Cross-Examinations* (Gent: MER. Paper Kunsthalle, 2015), *Allegory of the Cave Painting* (Milan: Mousse, 2015; co-edited with Mihnea Mircan), both awarded with a 2016 Best Dutch Book Design Award, and *Lapidari*, 3 vols. (Brooklyn: punctum books, 2015). As a translator, he has worked on Jean Daive, Alessandro De Francesco, Hervé Guibert, Dick Raaijmakers, Avital Ronell, and Nachoem M. Wijnberg, among others, and his writings have appeared in journals such as *continent*, *Frakcija*, *nY*, *Parmentier*, *postmedieval*, and *Theory & Event*. Van Gerven Oei is co-director of punctum books, and directs project bureau for the arts and humanities, The Department of Eagles in Tirana and multilingual publishing house Uitgeverij. He is also founding editor of the journal *Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies* and editor of the New World Summit.

Sondra Perry (born 1986 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey) is an interdisciplinary artist whose works in video, computer-based media, and performance explore black stuff and the digital abstraction of subjecthood. In 2015, the artist’s work appeared in the fourth iteration of Greater New York at MoMA/PS1. Other exhibitions include *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle (2015) and Brooklyn Museum (2016); *A Constellation*, Studio Museum in Harlem (2016); the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2016); and has participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Vermont Studio Center, Ox-bow, and the Experimental Television Center. Perry holds an MFA from Columbia University, New York City’s 12th largest employer and the number one cause of gentrification in the neighborhood of Harlem, New York, a BFA from Alfred University, and is currently based in Houston, Texas as part of the artist-in-residence program (CORE) at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Jackson Polys is a visual artist who lives and works between what is currently called Alaska and

New York. His work reflects examinations into the limits and viability of desires for indigenous growth and for the future of indigeneity. He began carving with his father, Tlingit artist Nathan Jackson, in high school, and has worked as a visual artist based in Ketchikan, Alaska as Stron Softi, with solo exhibitions at the Alaska State Museum and the Anchorage Museum. Exhibiting in Zurich and Brussels, he has also worked variously with museums seeking replacements for works that were repatriated under NAGPRA (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), before pursuing his undergraduate education in New York. As Stephen Paul Jackson he obtained a BA in Art History and Visual Arts from Columbia University in 2013, and subsequently went on to receive an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University in 2015.

Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz is a married and single, zinester, archivist, writer, and black-dyke-participant of intentional, community-specific, collective spaces. A coordinator at the Lesbian Herstory Archives, and Head of Reference, appointed as Assistant Professor at the Graduate Center, CUNY. From (the people's republic of) Brooklyn, Shawn founded the Queer Housing Nacional List, and has since purchased a home designated for queer women of color (QWOC) with her wife in the Bronx. Shawn is a co-editor of upcoming special issue of *Sinister Wisdom*, a lesbian literary and art journal on Honoring the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Shawn often speaks on black lesbian communities in NYC and is currently organizing the archive for the women of the Salsa Soul Sisters, the first black lesbian organization in the country. Learn more about Shawn on her commons page: <http://shawntasmith.commonsgc.cuny.edu/about/>

Jeannine Tang is an art historian who teaches at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College as Senior Academic Advisor and LUMA fellow. Previously a fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and a Critical Studies participant at the Whitney Independent Studies program, her writing on contemporary art and exhibitions has appeared in numerous books and publications such as *Artforum*, *Art Journal*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, *Afterimage*, and the *Journal of Visual Culture*. Jeannine is currently working on a book on contemporary art, information and profiling in the 1970s; and co-curating a major exhibition and research project on the New York City galleries American Fine Arts, Co. and Pat Hearn Gallery, to open at CCS Bard's Hessel Museum in 2017.

Alise Tifentale is an art and photography historian. She is a PhD candidate in Art History at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and a researcher at the Software Studies Initiative, a research lab focusing on photography in contemporary social media led by Lev Manovich. Recent projects include a study of selfies in five global cities *Selfiecity* (2014) and *The Exceptional and the Everyday: 144 hours in Kyiv* (<http://www.the-everyday.net>, 2014). Tifentale is the author of *Photography as Art in Latvia, 1960-1969* (2011) and co-curator of *North by North East*, the pavilion of Latvia at the 55th Venice Art Biennale (2013), together with Anne Barlow and Courtenay Finn. Tifentale is the founder of photography magazine *Foto Kvartals* and served as its editor-in-chief (2006-2010). Her articles have appeared in journals such as *Networking Knowledge*, *ARTMargins*, *Russian Art & Culture*, *Art History & Theory*, and others.

Wu Tsang's films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly among documentary, activism, and fiction. Her projects have been presented at museums and film festivals internationally, including Tate Modern (London), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), MCA (Chicago), Berlinale Film Festival, South by Southwest Film Festival (Austin), and Hot Docs Festival (Toronto). Her 2012 film *Wildness* premiered at the Museum of Modern Art's Documentary Fortnight, and her work was also featured in the 2012 Whitney Biennial and in "The Ungovernables" New Museum Triennial. Recent solo exhibitions include Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst (Zurich) and Spring Workshop (Hong Kong).

Soyoung Yoon is Program Director and Assistant Professor of Art History & Visual Studies at the Department of the Arts, Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, The New School. She is also a Visiting Faculty at the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program [ISP]. In 2015-2016, she was a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Pembroke Center at Brown University, under the annual theme of "Fatigue," the first installation in a five-year series on "War." Yoon received her Ph.D. from Stanford University, and holds a B.A. from Seoul National University. Yoon is at work on two book projects: *Walkie Talkie*, regarding the rise of cinéma vérité amidst the struggles for decolonization and new techniques of policing; and *Miss Vietnam: The Work of Art in the Age of Techno-war*, a project on feminist mediation, which reframes technological reproducibility via the framework of reproductive labor.



THE VERA LIST CENTER FOR ART AND POLITICS THE NEW SCHOOL

Art in General and the Vera List Center thank all participants in this symposium for their contribution. Program directed by Anne Barlow and Carin Kuoni, with concept development by **Anne Barlow, Lindsey Berfond, and Kristen Chappa**. Special thanks to *What Now? 2016* program advisers: **Claire Barliant**, Managing Editor of Publications at Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Massachusetts; **Carin Kuoni**, Director and Curator, Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School, New York; **Thomas Lax**, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and symposium respondents: **Dita Birkensteina, Natasha Marie Llorens, Gela Patashuri, Joel Sanders, Wendy Vogel, and Tina Zavitsanos**.

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What Now? 2016 Committee: Frederieke Taylor, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, Chair; Michael Cohn, Michael Cohn Fine Art Consultants; Elizabeth Jacoby, BSJ Fine Art; Todd Levin, Levin Art Group; and Liz Parks, Parks Fine Art.

A new book series relating to the *What Now?* symposia from 2015 through 2017 will be produced with Black Dog Publishing Ltd., a project that was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (MA-10-14-0304-14).

Founded in 1981, **Art in General** is a nonprofit organization that assists local and international artists with the production and presentation of new work, primarily through its New Commissions Program and its International Collaborations program with numerous arts organizations around the world. It informs and engages the public about artist's work, through public programs and the annual symposium *What Now?* on critical and timely issues in artistic and curatorial practice. www.artingeneral.org

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics is an idea incubator and a public forum for art, culture and politics. It was founded at The New School in 1992 – a time of rousing debates about freedom of speech, identity politics and society's investment in the arts. A pioneer in the field, the center serves a critical mission: to foster a vibrant and diverse community of artists, scholars and policy makers who take creative, intellectual and political risks to bring about positive change. We champion the arts as expressions of the political moments from which they emerge, and consider the intersection between art and politics the space where new forms of civic engagement must be developed. We are the only university-based institution committed exclusively to leading public research of this intersection between art and politics through public programs and classes, awards and fellowships, publications and exhibitions.

www.veralistcenter.org

