

Contingent Agencies


Cross-Disciplinary Symposium

19–25th
September
2022

Zentrum Fokus Forschung
University of Applied Arts Vienna

Rustenschacherallee 2–4
1020 Vienna, Austria

| www.contingentagencies.net



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We all live in and with atmospheres. We all inhabit worlds that appear to us first and foremost in a perceptual and emotional way. We all dwell in the atmospheric, enveloping, sensuous and senseful presence of our surroundings. We all perform our lives in and with atmospheres.

The artistic research project *Contingent Agencies* led by Nikolaus Gansterer and Alex Arteaga explores the coming-to-be of atmospheres. The fundamental hypothesis of this inquiry is that atmospheres are all-over, non-objectual presences that arise by virtue of the entanglement of contingent agencies—the agencies of the human and non-human, living and non-living components of the situations in which atmospheres appear.

In order to investigate how contingent agencies relate to the emergence of atmospheres this project has developed a methodical approach based on practices of notation and reflection and tactics of showing and sharing.

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This symposium is conceived as a practice-based forum to critically address both the conceptual framework and the research practices proposed by this artistic research project. Our goal is to make a significant contribution to understanding—in the broadest sense—the emergence of atmospheres and eventually, how to live in and with atmospheres.

Program

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Public program*

Monday 19.09	19:00 – 20:30	Tim Ingold. Impulse lecture
	20:30 – 22:00	Get together in the garden
Tuesday 20.09	19:00 – 20:30	Lambros Malafouris. Impulse lecture
	20:30 – 22:00	Get together in the garden
Wednesday 21.09	16:00 – 17:30	Erin Manning. Online impulse lecture
Thursday 22.09	14:00 – 18:00	Gerhard Dirmoser. Impulse lecture and panel discussion with Dieter Mersch and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (in German)
	18:00 – 19:00	Break
	19:00 – 21:00	Public sharing: artifacts of notation and reflection (no live streaming)
Friday 23.09	19:00 – 20:30	Karen Barad. Online impulse lecture
	20:30 – 22:00	Get together in the garden

Saturday 24.9	19:00 – 20:30	Closing panel with Arno Boehler, Emma Cocker, Alexander Damianisch, Gerhard Dirmoser, Mika Elo, Sabina Holzer, Paula Kramer, Dieter Mersch, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, Andreas Spiegl, Nikolaus Gansterer, and Alex Arteaga
	20:30 – 22:00	Get together in the garden
Sunday 25.9	11:00 – 15:00	Brunch & open house

Internal program

Monday 19.9 to Saturday 24.9	Internal micro-workshop with the core research group: Alex Arteaga, Arno Boehler, Emma Cocker, Mika Elo, Nikolaus Gansterer, Sabina Holzer, Paula Kramer, and Andreas Spiegl
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*Free admission and live streaming via YouTube:
www.youtube.com/user/DieAngewandteWien

This symposium is articulated in two interconnected parts—a series of public lectures, panel discussions, and public showings, and an internal program comprising micro workshops and practice sessions.

The public program consists of the following events:

→ Tim Ingold.
Impulse lecture

In his talk, “Landscape, Atmospheres and the Weather-World,” Tim Ingold asks: What is the relation between landscape and atmosphere? There can be no landscape without things, no atmosphere without air. To aerate the things, to let them breathe, is to re-enter a world of wind and weather. A focus on the weather-world could open up a new synthesis of aesthetics and meteorology.

→ Lambros Malafouris.
Impulse lecture

In his lecture “Thinking as thinging,” Lambros Malafouris will draw on examples from his study of creative gesture in pottery making to show how focusing on the temporality of touch and tactility of making can help us disambiguate the varieties of agency and attentive engagement active in the dialogue between maker and material.

→ Erin Manning.
Online impulse lecture

A vocabulary for engagement with anarchival aesthetic yield cannot operate from the perspective of a reflective consciousness. A series of propositions will be shared that mobilize a vocabulary for engaging with what refuses to take notational form yet opens the way for future-formings.

→ Gerhard Dirmoser.
Impulse lecture and panel discussion
with Dieter Mersch and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger

Gerhard Dirmoser’s contribution, “Developing atmospheres,” follows from Gernot Böhme’s concept of atmospheres. Beginning from “traces” and “intensity,” Dirmoser deals with a mode of awareness that can also be applied to the performative arts. Addressing the representability of atmospheres, he will present different forms for viewing “density” and “liquefaction” from the perspective of diagrammatic representation.

→ Karen Barad.
Online impulse lecture

In this impulse lecture, Karen Barad will elucidate central concepts of their theories in relation to the thematic and research practices of Contingent Agencies. This encounter will contribute to disclose new perspectives on the relationship between agencies, atmospheres, and practices of artistic research.

→ Closing panel with Arno Boehler, Emma Cocker, Alexander Damianisch, Gerhard Dirmoser, Mika Elo, Sabina Holzer, Paula Kramer, Dieter Mersch, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, Andreas Spiegl, Nikolaus Gansterer, and Alex Arteaga

This panel will allow the group of researchers to share their experience-based reflections on Contingent Agencies and its practices with the symposium's attendees and draw conclusions on the work developed during the week as a basis for further investigations.

In the internal section a core group of guest researchers (Arno Boehler, Emma Cocker, Mika Elo, Sabina Holzer, Paula Kramer, and Andreas Spiegl) together with the key researchers Nikolaus Gansterer and Alex Arteaga will perform different practices of notation and reflection and experiment with and implement various tactics of showing and sharing. Furthermore, together with guest researchers Gerhard Dirmoser, Dieter Mersch, and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, the group will discuss the conceptual framework of the project. The results of these internal working sessions will be presented in the public assemblies.

Researchers

→ Alex Arteaga

is an artist researcher who combines and hybridizes aesthetic, phenomenological and enactivist research practices through an inquiry into embodiments, environments, and aesthetic cognition. He lectures in different universities and art centers and develops long-term artistic research projects, such as *Architecture of Embodiment* and *Contingent Agencies*.

→ Nikolaus Gansterer

is an artistic researcher interested in the links between drawing, thinking, and action. Since 2007 he has taught at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Previously he was developing new systems of notation between drawing, writing, and choreography within the PEEK project *Choreo-graphic Figures*. He is leading key researcher of the *Contingent Agencies* project.

→ Karen Barad

is Professor of Feminist Studies, Philosophy, and History of Consciousness and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Social Justice at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Barad is the author of *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), and numerous articles drawing from the fields of physics, philosophy, science studies, poststructuralist theory, deconstruction, and feminist and queer theory.

→ Arno Boehler

teaches philosophy at the University of Vienna, Department of Philosophy and at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Max Reinhard Seminar. Together with Susanne Valerie Granzer, he has developed formats such as arts-based-philosophy, philosophy-on-stage, and field-performances to return the materiality and bodily field character to philosophy.

→ Emma Cocker

is a writer-artist and Associate Professor in Fine Art, Nottingham Trent University, where she co-leads the artist research group, *Performing Process*. Her recent books include *Choreo-graphic Figures: Deviations from the Line* (2017); *Live Coding: A User's Manual* (2022), and the solo collections *The Yes of the No* (2016) and *How Do You Do?* (2022).

→ Alexander Damianisch

is the director of the Zentrum Fokus Forschung at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. His aim is to support the transformation of understanding and the understanding of transformation. He was inaugural manager for the Program for Artistic Research (PEEK) of the FWF. He studied literature and history in Vienna and Paris, holds a PhD in Literature and a Master of Advanced Studies in Arts Management.

→ Gerhard Dirmoser

is a system analyst, diagram researcher, University of Art and Design Linz, Austria. Since 1980 he has been involved in projects in the arts (studies on Ars Electronica and performance art). Since 2002, research on diagrammatics and development of an extensive diagram collection. 2001–2006 research project *The World of Atmospheres*. 2018 exhibition project, *Art Diagrams in Context*.

→ Mika Elo

is Professor of Artistic Research and Head of the Doctoral Program in Fine Arts at the University of the Arts Helsinki. His research interests include theory of photography, media aesthetics, and epistemology of artistic research. He is participating in the discussions in these areas as a visual artist, educator, curator, and researcher.

→ Sabina Holzer

is a performance artist, author, and movement facilitator. Her performances and texts immerse in the ecologies of human and more-than-human bodies and agencies. She teaches at various institutions and her texts have been published in manifold media since 2007. Advocating gestures of poetry & care, she connects with international artists and theoreticians. Together with the media artist Jack Hauser, she develops collaborative performances in galleries, museums, and theaters.

→ Tim Ingold

is Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. He has carried out fieldwork among Saami and Finnish people in Lapland, and has written on environment, technology, and social organization in the circumpolar North, on animals in human society, and on human ecology and evolutionary theory. His more recent work explores environmental perception and skilled practice.

→ Paula Kramer

is an artist-researcher based in Berlin. She works on parking lots and in woodlands, focusing on tracing, investigating, and replenishing inter-materiality in site-specific movement practices and choreography. How do sites make themselves known in our bodily practices? How could we co-imagine a post-anthropocene in and through dance? What kind of a practice would this be?

→ Lambros Malafouris

is Professor of Cognitive and Anthropological Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Fellow at Hertford College, University of Oxford. Among others, he is the author of *How Things Shape the Mind* and coeditor of *The Cognitive Life of Things* (with Colin Renfrew) and *Material Agency* (with Carl Knappett). Malafouris is currently PI of HANDMADE funded by the European Research Council.

→ Erin Manning

studies in the interstices of philosophy, aesthetics, and politics, and is concerned with alter-pedagogical and alter-economic practices. Recent monographs include *The Minor Gesture* (2016) and *For a Pragmatics of the Useless* (2020). Her current artistic research consists in an exploration of the three ecologies, focused on how collectivity is crafted in a more-than human encounter with worlds in the making.

→ Dieter Mersch

is Professor Emeritus at the Zurich University of the Arts. He studied mathematics and philosophy in Cologne, Bochum, and Darmstadt. He has been Full Professor of Media Theory at the University of Potsdam and Director of the Institute for Critical Theory at Zurich University of the Arts. His latest publications include *Epistemologies of Aesthetics* (2015) and a *Manifesto of Artistic Research* (2020).

→ Hans-Jörg Rheinberger

is director emeritus at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. He studied philosophy, linguistics, and biology in Tübingen and Berlin. He is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. His most recent book is *Spalt und Fuge. Eine Phänomenologie des Experiments*, Suhrkamp, Berlin 2021.

→ Andreas Spiegl

studied art history at the University of Vienna, Austria, and completed his PhD in philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. He is currently a Senior Scientist, teaching and doing research at the University of Fine Arts' Institute for Art Theory and Cultural Studies, and has been Head of the Institute since 2015. He also served as Vice-Rector for Research and Teaching at the University of Fine Arts Vienna from 2003 to 2011. He has published numerous texts on contemporary art and art theory.

Contingent Agencies is an artistic research project by Nikolaus Gansterer and Alex Arteaga, hosted by the Zentrum Fokus Forschung at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, and funded by the Programme for Arts-based Research (PEEK) of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).



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