

Symposium

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IKM
Department of
Cultural Management
and Gender Studies

Mobility: Privilege

Global Asymmetries
& in Art & Culture

Problem

Keynote speakers:
Khadija El Bennaoui,
Monika Mokre

mdw.ac.at/ikm/events

4. 5. 2023
9 am – 5 pm

Fanny Hensel Hall
Anton-von-Webern Platz 1
1030 Vienna


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What does mobility mean for artists and cultural workers?

Who has opportunities to move from place to place and who does not?

What are the working and living realities of EU third-country nationals in Austria?

How can social and ecological justice play a role in this respect?

In the joint event "Mobility: Privilege and Problem" we bring together experts – from academia, arts, civil society, politics and administration – on the topic of mobility in art & culture in the context of global asymmetries. Interactive discussions in working groups as well as two key notes and a panel talk will enable an in-depth discussion across disciplines and open up space for critical engagement with mobility regimes.

9.00 Reception

9.30 Welcome Remarks

Gerda Müller (MDW), **Martin Fritz** (ÖUK) & **Vasilena Gankovska** (IG Bildende Kunst)

9.50 Keynote by Monika Mokre

On the Right to Leave and the Right to Stay

10.30 Working groups

Group I: Visa, Employment, Residence

Group II: Data as a Policy Tool

12.00 Lunch break

13.00 Keynote by Khadija El Bennaoui

Beyond Old Geographies and New Movements

13.40 Working groups

Group I: Climate Crisis & Mobility in Art & Culture: Experience, Challenges, & Perspectives

Group II: Forced Mobilities: Arriving and Thinking Ahead

15.15 Panel discussion

Sharing and reflecting of results from the working group discussions

Moderator: Djamila Grandits

16.30 Closing

Register until April 30th at: www.mdw.ac.at

Participation is free of charge!

Keynote by Monika Mokre

On the Right to Leave and the Right to Stay

Mobility is an important theme of European integration, for which four freedoms are central - the free movement of goods, services, capital and people. These freedoms apply within the EU, or within the Schengen area. They are in the service of capitalism's greatest freedom, namely the free market.

While it is assumed that free trade and the free flow of capital are always beneficial to the free market, this is less clear with respect to the mobility of persons. For example, the free movement of persons usually only applies to EU citizens if they can sustain themselves as national social security systems should not be burdened by the freedom of persons. (With respect to the other freedoms, this concern does seemingly not exist, although the outflow of capital to other countries also threatens social systems through lower tax revenues and higher unemployment.)

For people who want to cross the external borders of the EU, the (more or less) free movement of people within goes hand in hand with the increasing impassability of the external borders of Fortress Europe. Nowadays, labour migration is only possible for a very small highly educated elite, and people fleeing persecution and misery in their home countries often face deadly obstacles at the EU's water and land borders. Even people who want to come to Europe for short periods of time and in the interest of organizations within the EU are facing increasingly more obstacles, e.g., this holds true for artists invited to work and/or present here.

At the same time, however, the free movement of people within the EU is evolving from a right to a requirement for numerous groups of people, such as young scientists and artists whose career opportunities frequently depends on stays abroad.

The lecture takes its starting point from the thesis that the contradictory question of mobility is a central element of the contemporary economic and political system but can, at the same time, form an anchor point for solidary resistance. These considerations will be developed on the basis of political theory and practice as well as of the concrete legal situation regarding migration and asylum.

PD Dr. Monika Mokre is a political scientist and political activist in the fields of asylum, migration and prison. She is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She teaches at several universities, including the Cultural Management course at the University of Music and Performing Arts.

Keynote by Khadija El Bennoui

Beyond Old Geographies and New Movements

How can we reassess "Confluences" to better understand cultural production and exchange?

The dawn of the 21st century is marked by a continuous series of violence from war on terror, armed conflicts, uprisings, to climate catastrophes. Those events have tragically affected the people of the global south, which forced millions to flee their countries towards the global north in search of safety and of a better life. Ironically, the reactions of the many authorities of these regions were all but solidarity.

Draconian visa policies were enforced to protect the "fortress", its wealth and its privileged people, while nationalistic ideologies and anti-migrant sentiments provided the narratives for the exclusion of the wretched.

This in turn has affected the mobility of artists and cultural workers from the global south who are struggling to access the well-established and extensive arts circuits of the global north, whether it be to compensate for the challenging work conditions in their own countries or simply to explore other territories for inspiration and learning, in keeping with their creative quests.

The same conditions have also marred the opportunities for connectivity and exchange by artists resident in the north. While in the south, echoes of exceptionalism and brigandage equally constrain cultural production and exchange.

Against this backdrop, civil society and the public sectors from north and south alike have invested a tremendous amount of work in fostering collaboration and in advocacy to defend the right for freedom of movement not only towards the north but also within the global south.

A milestone of this civic endeavour is the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It provides the institutional framework encouraging "developed countries to grant...preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as cultural goods and services from developing countries."

The lecture will shed light on the strategies and best practices put in motion by arts and culture stakeholders not only to address the paradoxes caused by the inflected visa regulations on the citizens of the global south, but also to go beyond the south-north rhetoric to decolonise cultural relations and collaboration patterns. Above all, this lecture will focus on "confluences" of cultural production and exchange as loci for evolving cultures regardless of their geographical locations. It will argue for reimagining locales, publics, and art as cultural productions with which people produce culture and distribute equities.

Khadija El Bennoui is a cultural practitioner, producer and curator. Khadija has contributed her expertise to missions led by international funding agencies to strengthen South-South networks and cooperation, imagine and implement new, sustainable models of funding, and support the vibrancy of independent arts spaces and networks. In 2005, she launched Art Moves Africa, the mobility fund devoted to artists and cultural operators travelling within Africa. At the same time, she played a key role in the development of the Young Arab Theatre Fund (now Mophradat), convening and managing four major symposia for members of independent arts and culture spaces in the Arab world.

Working group discussions (10.30 am)

Participants are invited to join the working groups and discuss the chosen themes in an interactive manner. After a short introduction to the topics by the table hosts, the discussion will be conducted in groups. Participants can choose one group per round. Finally, the results will be shared and discussed in plenary.

Group I: Visa, Employment, Residence - hosted by Vasilena Gankovska & Klara Košťal

The barriers in the area of visas, employment and residence for artists and cultural workers are numerous: long waiting times at the authorities, tedious and costly journeys to the respective embassy, required income limits that are incompatible with the reality of artistic work. Time, organisational and high financial costs represent a barrier for both organisers and art and cultural actors. Even for medium- and long-term residencies, the conditions are restrictive, combined with a lot of bureaucracy, delays and harassment.

Mobility barriers and entry restrictions make international exchange and cooperation with artists from EU-third countries difficult. In this working group, a 10-point plan will be used to discuss which framework conditions are necessary to reduce mobility barriers. The interdisciplinary exchange will also serve to concretise approaches to solutions with the aim of developing a joint list of demands and launching this document to relevant actors in politics and administration.

Group II: Data as a Policy Tool - hosted by Seo-Young Cho & Anke Schad-Spindler

Data is a critical source that can reveal conditions and circumstances of a subject in question in a structured way and therefore can serve as an instrument for evidence-based policymaking. Thereby, this working group focuses on the importance of data collection in addressing the mobility of international artists and discusses preparation of a survey that can evaluate international artists' socioeconomic conditions and challenges in pursuing their artistic careers in Austria particularly during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the discussions, the participants will identify key agendas and questions that should be included in the survey and suggest major target groups of the survey and methods of establishing contacts with them. The outcomes of the discussions would be utilized to design and implement a survey that can provide up-to-date assessments of life, careers, opportunities, and problems of international artists in Austria.

Working group discussions (1.40 pm)

Participants are invited to join the working groups and discuss the chosen themes in an interactive manner. After a short introduction to the topics by the table hosts, the discussion will be conducted in groups. Participants can choose one group per round. Finally, the results will be shared and discussed in plenary.

Group I: Climate Crisis and Mobility in Art & Culture: Experience, Challenges, and Perspectives - hosted by Seo-Young Cho & Vasilena Gankovska

This working group focuses on how the emerging issue of the climate crisis can be addressed in promoting mobility of artists – for instance, how artistic cooperation and exchanges across countries and continents, which often involve long-distance travels, can be facilitated in an environmentally friendly manner. While climate protection forms an utmost, relevant issue today and awareness is growing fast, knowledge and practice of achieving sustainable and environmentally friendly mobility is not yet well-established in cultural fields. To stimulate discussions and efforts among stakeholders, this working group provides a platform, in which participants share their experience, identify best practices and challenges, and exchange ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Group II: Forced Mobilities: Arriving and Thinking Ahead - hosted by Andrea Glauser & Anke-Schad-Spindler

Forced migration is a reality for many people, including artists and cultural workers. They have to flee to another country or region due to persecution, censorship, human rights violations, armed conflicts and wars, natural disasters or economic crises. In exile, in turn, the living and working conditions are often associated with a variety of challenges. At the same time, the question arises as to what can emerge from this specific situation: How is it perceived by affected artists and cultural workers? What possibilities for action and (resistant) perspectives open up? How are connections maintained or newly established? What possibilities of support for artists and cultural workers in flight or exile exist in Austria? Where are the opportunities, challenges and obstacles? How can infrastructures of solidarity be strengthened and what can be learned from international practices?

This working group is primarily intended to exchange information about the conditions, experiences and possibilities of exile as well as to network in solidarity. Looking at Austria as well as international examples of support for refugee artists and cultural workers, an open space will be created to share experiences and build alliances.

Panel discussion & sharing of results from the working groups

In the panel discussion with Monika Mokre and Khadija El Bennaoui, experts from the working groups discuss which privileges and problems current mobility regimes in art & culture entail. They will give an insight into the findings of the four working groups and discuss possibilities of how transformation processes can be set in motion.

With: Monika Mokre, Khadija El Bennaoui, Vasilena Gankovska, Sarita Jenamani, Jelena Micić and Susanne Schuda.


Moderator: Djamila Grandits

Organisational Team: Seo-Young Cho, Vasilena Gankovska, Andrea Glauser, Klara Koštal, Anke Schad-Spindler

LANGUAGE

The event will be held mainly in English and partly in German. The keynotes and the panel discussion will be held in English. In the working group discussions, participants have a choice of speaking German or English. If necessary, the organisers will provide a whispered translation. Thank you for your understanding that we will not make the entire event bilingual.

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