

ASAP/8
Tartu, Estonia
Round Table Session
Sunday, 4 September 2016
15:30

Session Abstract/Proposal “Competencies: from Habitus to Hyperstition”

The panel/performance will be a multi-media discussion about “competencies,” which we explore in its range of technical and conceptual guises. Proceeding from habitus—the structuring dispositions of expertise—to hyperstition, a term coined by the CCRU (Cybernetic Culture Research Unit) to describe a kind of magical thinking that functions virtually to transform fictions into truths—we explore the practical and temporal vicissitudes of how creative expertise accumulates. How can the arts of the present conceptualize—and accommodate themselves to—the “magic” of creation and creativity without resorting either to suspicion or hagiography? Whereas traditional notions of discipline, training, practice, habit, and hard work certainly invoked labor practices consistent with art-making, such work-like modalities always seemed to fall short of the creative act itself, which always seemed to take on metaphysical guises, whether conceived as event, sublime encounter, inspiration, or genius. This panel/performance seeks to ask new questions about the forms and modes of competency that emerge in the unfolding of an artistic project, whose origins may not necessarily presuppose “expertise” or “talent” in advance of its undertaking. To what extent does competency accommodate itself to creativity, precisely in its vagueness and distinction from discipline or expertise? And if so, what is the temporality of “competency,” when such a term suggests a set of capacities that are never fully synchronous with creativity—sometimes preceding it (as in the case of a proposal such as this one), and sometimes suspended in the indefinite future of the accumulation of experience. In our presentation, “Competencies: from Habitus to Hyperstition,” we consider—as well as perform—the problem of competency in its asymptotic relation to the “magic” of creativity, which it approaches but ultimately can regard only from a temporal or ontological remove.

In an effort to address/perform/evade/defer/recall/enact the central problematic of this session, the presenters (Jonathan P. Eburne, Edgar Schmitz, Pieternel Vermoortel, D. Graham Burnett, and Joanna Fiduccia) will use the round-table session on Sunday, 4 September 2016 as a forum for the drafting of an abstract/proposal for the 2017 ASAP/9 to be held in Berkeley, California. The proposed session will be entitled: “Competencies: from Habitus to Hyperstition.”