



IKT Symposium: COURAGE !!!

*Speakers: **Costas Douzinas**, Professor of Law, Pro-Vice Master for International Relations and Director, Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, University of London | **Markus Steinweg**, philosopher | **Sarat Maharaj**, Professor of Visual Art & Knowledge Systems, Lund University & the Malmo Art Academies, Sweden | **Jalal Toufic**, artist*

*Presenter & moderator: **Chantal Pontbriand**, independent curator and critic, founder-editor of PARACHUTE, and member of the Board of Directors of IKT*

Venue: Benaki Museum Pireos Street Annexe Amphitheatre (138, Peiraios Street & Andronikou, tel. +30 210 3453111, www.benaki.gr)

Time: Saturday, May 15th 2010, 10.00 – 14.00

What is courage today? What is it to be courageous? What can qualify as a courageous act?

In the troubled and changing times we are witnessing, most values and value systems are in flux, destabilizing society as well as the individual. Courage is a value that situates itself in the midst of flux and change. It is required in order to face unusual or unprecedented situations, even more so as the world is undergoing massive changes provoked by economics, technology, and political as well as spiritual upheaval, or, at the other extreme, nihilism or comfort in the status quo. All these factors can only be dealt with by courageous acts of being.

Acts of being rather than heroic acts... strength to be found in the every day and not necessarily in grand gestures.

From the beginning of philosophy in Athens, Courage is a major concept linked to one's existence as a society and as an individual. In early times, courage is linked to warfare and heroism. What has it become today?

The Symposium will deal with different points of view with regard to the concept of courage:

- Being set in Athens, it will investigate the meaning of the Athens riots. What animates these uprisings that apparently have no precise focus? What do they tell us about the individual's plight in the face of a changing nation, a changing world? Youth culture bares the future within. How (and what) do these events make us feel for our global horizon in time? **Costas Douzinas**, a political theorist, Professor of Law, Pro-Vice Master for International Relations and Director, Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, University of London, is a close observer of the current situation in Greece and will contextualize the topic.
- Courage is a basic trope of philosophy. A philosopher will outline what this concept means to

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philosophy and life today. **Markus Steinweg**, a philosopher living in Berlin, close to Thomas Hirschorn and Rosemarie Trockel among other artists, will talk about self-determination and courage as a necessary act of recklessness. Taking risks, seeking new ways, opening new horizons are part of an “amoral” dream.

- What is it like to have courage as a curator? What are the motivations? How does one develop as a curator? How can one conceive of courage as a curator? For Pontus Hulten, it was creating trust, for Johannes Cladders, it was entertaining a process of constant creation, aside from consensus, for Harald Szeeman, keeping out of formal art history, for Anne d’Harnoncourt, making connections, creating encounters, the pedestrian bridge... **Sarat Maharaj**, Professor of History & Theory of Art at Goldsmiths, London 1980 -2005, is currently Professor of Visual Art & Knowledge Systems, Lund University & the Malmo Art Academies, Sweden, curator associated to several biennials and to Documenta 11, will outline the point of view of a curator.

- How has courage been explored in artistic practices in the post-2000 era? Is it possible to espouse the mediasphere and contemporary economy and concurrently prove to be a courageous being? What if one chooses to ignore such a context: would that be considered courageous or uncourageous? Is courage necessarily political or social? **Jalal Toufic**, “thinker and a mortal to death” and artist currently living in Istanbul, has extensively written on the question of courage and will address the question in his terms. Amongst other books, he has recently published *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (2009).

The Symposium is open to the public, free of charge. No reservation is necessary. Seating on a priority basis.

*We would like to thank the **Benaki Museum** for kindly hosting the Symposium.*

About IKT

IKT (International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art) functions as an international network for professionals working in the contemporary art field. By interchanging ideas and knowledge on different cultural activities from a variety of countries and cities through the whole world, IKT explores and widens international relations. In this way IKT finds new opportunities for artists and institutions and also investigates the ever changing position of contemporary art centres in relation to production, distribution and conservation. The aim of the organization is to facilitate, and stimulate the debate concerning the conception and realization of contemporary art exhibitions.

IKT has about 500 members. These include: directors and cultural managers from non-profit exhibition spaces and museums, as well as freelance curators from Eastern & Western Europe, Japan, Australia and America.



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