

Inquiries into the Political and the Aesthetic (IPA)

Short introduction:

The IPA research unit investigates current intersections and formations taking place between politics and aesthetics framed within a global context. We aim to stay attuned to dialogical relations between locally situated practices of politics and aesthetics and global questions of social transformation. The organizers of this group invite researchers on all levels and from all departments with an interest in the field of aesthetics and politics to participate.

Organizers:

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Expanded Description and Mission Statement

This research unit investigates current theoretical, practical and conceptual intersections and formations taking place between politics and aesthetics framed within a global context. The group asserts that the relationship between aesthetics and politics needs to be understood not as two separate spheres but rather as a mutually interdependent relationship generating a transformative potential.

Therefore, it is our aim to investigate the relationship between politics and aesthetics through the lens of social transformation. Social transformation is here understood as not only a singular, 'revolutionary event' but as a spatio-temporal process in which specific artistic expressions and political utterances engage with each other. We aim to stay attuned to how locally situated practices of politics and aesthetics are formulated and contested within, against, and together with urgent, global questions of social transformation.

The organizers of the unit invite researchers on all levels and from all faculties with an interest in the field of aesthetics and politics. Besides the scholarly community of interests, the group seeks to explore inspiring ways of understanding not only our own research projects but the general practice of research within the field of aesthetics and politics on a global scale. We want to create an open space informed by enthusiasm for and the joy of discussion, the exchange of ideas, reading and analysing artworks. The group seeks to explore communal research practices and deliberately ensure diversity when inviting speakers, choosing texts and works of analysis for our sessions.

Areas of interest:

- Understanding the role of aesthetic practices as sites of potential resistance towards globally, nationally and locally established systems and structures of power, violence, governance, visibility, citizenship, subjectivity etc.
- The relationship between political activism and aesthetic activism.
- Exploring analytical approaches that are attuned to understand both the local context of aesthetic practices and their transformative potential in a global perspective.
- Discussing canonical works of theory on the relationship between politics and aesthetics in a global perspective.
- What does social transformation mean and how does its meaning differ according to context? Can it unquestionably be understood as something "good" (eg. generating individual freedom for citizens, democratic power structures, intercultural understanding etc.).

Activities:

- Sessions of focused reading and discussion of theoretical excerpts relevant to the individual projects of the participants.
- Sessions with joint work-analysis: together we discuss and analyze works of art or literature from our individual projects.
- Longer seminars with invited speakers.
- Open sessions focused around student participation or a broader public (in student bar or other outside locations).