MAPPING THE TERRITORY



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER II, 2018

UnionDocs 322 Union Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018

Vera List Center for Art and Politics The New School Theresa Lang Community and Student Center 55 W. 13th Street, 2nd floor, New York City

VERALIST CENTER FOR ART AND POLITICS

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics is a research center and a public forum for art, culture, and politics. It was established at The New School in 1992—a time of rousing debates about freedom of speech, identity politics, and society's investment in the arts. A pioneer in the field, the center is a nonprofit that serves a critical mission: to foster a vibrant and diverse community of artists, scholars, and policy makers who take creative, intellectual, and political risks to bring about positive change.

We champion the arts as expressions of the political moments from which they emerge, and consider the intersection between art and politics the space where new forms of civic engagement must be developed. We are the only university-based institution committed exclusively to leading public research on this intersection. Through public programs and classes, prizes and fellowships, publications and exhibitions that probe some of the pressing issues of our time, we curate and support new roles for the arts and artists in advancing social justice.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A CURRICULUM INTO STUDIES ON DARKNESS

Mapping the Territory is the first seminar in a year-long examination of Freedom of Speech. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees four specific freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and protest, and freedom of religion. With Indian artist Amar Kanwar's film Such a Morning (2017) as a point of departure, this seminar series imagines these four freedoms enshrined in the U.S. Constitution as points on the compass rose, which can be overlaid with intersectional thinking from artists, Indigenous peoples, feminists, and innumerable other perspectives, to question current circumstances, and to confront the inequities and uncertainties in our times, especially as they pertain to freedom of speech.

PROGRAM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER II, 2018

Amar Kanwar, *Such a Morning* (2017) UnionDocs | 322 Union Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

6:30 pm Reception at UnionDocs 7:30 pm Film Screening and Conversation

Introduction

Carin Kuoni, Director/Chief Curator, Vera List Center for Art and Politics

Discussion

Amar Kanwar, artist and filmmaker, New Delhi
Laura Raicovich, independent curator and writer,
co-curator of the seminar series
Nitin Sawhney, Assistant Professor of Media Studies, The New School
Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, critic and writer

The Vera List Center and UnionDocs, in association with Marian Goodman Gallery, present a screening of Indian artist and filmmaker Amar Kanwar's *Such a Morning*, in the artist's words «a modern parable about two people's quiet engagement with truth... *Such a Morning* navigates multiple transitions between speech and silence, democracy and fascism, fear and freedom. In the cusp between the eye and the mind, shifting time brushes every moment into new potencies. Each character seeks the truth through phantom visions from within the depths of darkness.»

This screening of Kanwar's film will kick off the Vera List Center's Freedom of Speech: A Curriculum for Studies into Darkness and will be introduced by Carin Kuoni, to frame the program in the context of the wider series. Following the film, Laura Raicovich, will provide a response to help guide and prompt discussion between Kanwar, Nitin Sawhney, Assistant Professor of Media Studies at The New School, and critic and writer Kaelen Wilson-Goldie. This dialogue will focus on what knowledge can be produced by art, and how the unknown can be a productive incubator in times of crisis.

Such a Morning (2017), was produced with the support of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, and Marian Goodman Gallery, and presented

by Documenta 14 in Athens, Greece, and Kassel, Germany. Such a Morning will be on view in a solo exhibition of Amar Kanwar's work at Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, from November 14 to December 21, 2018. www.mariangoodman.com.

cover image: Amar Kanwar Such a Morning, 2017

(Video still). Single channel digital video, color, sound; 85 min. looped Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018

Mapping the Territory
The New School | Theresa Lang Community and Student Center
55 W. 13th Street, 2nd floor, New York City

6:30 – 7:00 pm Introductions Carin Kuoni and Laura Raicovich

7:00 – 7:45 pm Presentations
Moderated by Svetlana Mintcheva,
Director of Programs, National Coalition Against Censorship

Presenters

Mark Bray, political organizer, historian of human rights, terrorism and political radicalism in Modern Europe, and author

Abou Farman, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, The New School Amar Kanwar, artist and filmmaker, New Delhi

Mendi and Keith Obadike, artists, VLC Advisory Committee members

Vanessa Place, artist, writer, and criminal appellate attorney specializing in sex offenders and sexually violent predators

7:45 – 8:30 pm Open Discussion with Respondents Moderated by Carin Kuoni and Laura Raicovich

Respondents

Zeshan Ahmed, MFA in Fine Arts student, The New School Christopher Allen, Founder and Executive Artistic Director, UnionDocs

Rob Fields, President and Executive Director, Weeksville Heritage Anna Keye, Development & Outreach Officer, New York Peace Institute

Quinn McKew, Deputy Executive Director, ARTICLE 19

Mapping the Territory takes as a point of departure Kanwar's meditations on the freedoms we have, and have not, and how we might use layers of darkness to illuminate what is unknown, to retrieve rights as they seemingly deteriorate in front of us, and to recuperate a sense of self and society in times of crisis.

The convening will trace the legal and social ramifications of freedom of speech, assembly, and protest as foundational to democracy; question whether these seemingly unassailable rights should have limits in today's context; and contend with the poetic and artistic articulations of these rights, all overlaid by international as well as Indigenous perspectives.

Presenters will address such questions as: What are the points of contention surrounding free speech, assembly, and protest? Is freedom of speech a universal human right or is it a utilitarian concept? What might limits on expression mean today, particularly in the context of how other nations define free speech? What is "deplatforming" and why is it an important concept? How is artistic work responding to these ideals? Why is art and poetry important in this discussion? How are Indigenous rights embedded or excluded from speech debates? The seminar will have a format borrowed from artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles's iconic work *Peace Table* (1997), a circular table around which conversations were convened both in Los Angeles in 1997 following the Rodney King beating, and in Queens in 2016, to discuss peace on a range of personal and political registers. For this VLC seminar, presenters will sit around a circular table, and concentric circles of seats will be available for both respondents and other seminar participants. While initial conversations and short presentations will be framed by the presenters, a vivid discussion will follow, engaging all in attendance.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Zeshan Ahmed is a visual artist based in Brooklyn, NY and born and raised in old Delhi, India. Imbibing in the great bodies of philosophical and mystical thought that have shaped human consciousness, his practice dwells in abstraction while using photography not just as a tool but subject matter. Ahmed most recently exhibited his work in group shows in New York, Auckland, Pingyao, Nanjing, Hyderabad and Mumbai. He is the recipient of Provost scholarship for his MFA in photography and related media at Parsons School of Design, The New School.

Christopher Allen is a producer/director of documentary media projects and a programmer of multi-disciplinary events. After graduating from Columbia University, he co-founded UnionDocs and has been responsible for the organization's growth from grassroots as the Executive Artistic Director. The collaborative projects he initiated — including Living Los Sures; Just to Get By, Documenting Mythologies; and Yellow Arrow — unite the creative efforts of hundreds of artists, documentary makers and communities. He directed the early interactive documentary Capitol of Punk, exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art. In 2014 and 2016, Brooklyn Magazine named him one of the most influential people in Brooklyn culture. Allen has served on the juries of film festivals such as RIDM (Montreal) and Doc Lisboa, and on funding panels such as NYSCA and LEF. He collaborates on live media performance projects such as Say Something Bunny! with artist A.S.M. Kobayashi.

Mark Bray is a political organizer and historian of human rights, terrorism, and political radicalism in Modern Europe. He earned his B.A. in Philosophy from Wesleyan University in 2005 and his Ph.D. in History from Rutgers University in 2016. He is the author of Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook (Melville House 2017); Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street (Zero 2013); The Anarchist Inquisition: Terrorism and Human Rights in Spain and France, 1890-1910 (forthcoming); and the co-editor of Anarchist Education and the Modern School: A Francisco Ferrer Reader (forthcoming PM Press). His work has appeared in Foreign Policy, The Washington Post, Boston Review, and numerous edited volumes. He is currently a lecturer at Dartmouth College.

Abou Farman is an anthropologist, writer, artist, and author of the book *Clerks of the Passage* (2012). He is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at The New School for Social Research. As part of the artist duo caraballo-farman, he has exhibited internationally, including at the Tate Modern, UK, and PS1/MoMA, NY, and received several grants and awards, including NYFA and Guggenheim Fellowships. He is producer and co-writer on several feature films most recently *Icaros: A Vision*.

Rob Fields is the President & Executive Director of Weeksville Heritage Center, a Brooklyn arts & culture center built on the historic site of one of the largest free black communities in pre-Civil War America. Prior to Weeksville, Fields was the marketing director for CMO Initiatives at the Association of National Advertisers, a marketing industry trade association. Over his career in marketing, he has worked for brands such as IBM, Burger King, Panasonic, and General Motors, and for arts & culture organizations such as the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute (CCCADI), the Black Rock Coalition, and the Urbanworld Film Festival. He has been a longtime proponent of progressive, left-of-center global black culture, which he highlighted through *Bold As Love*, an online magazine he actively published from 2007-2017. His writing has appeared in *Forbes, The Huffington Post, The Root, The Grio*, and *PSFK*, to name a few.

Amar Kanwar has distinguished himself through films and multimedia works, which explore the politics of power, violence and justice. His multi-layered installations originate in narratives often drawn from zones of conflict and are characterized by a unique poetic approach to the personal, social and political. Kanwar's recent solo exhibitions include: Luma Arles, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota, and Tate Modern, London, in 2018; Bildmuseet, Umeå (2017); Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai (2016); and the Assam State Museum in collaboration with Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and North East Network, India (2015). Earlier solo exhibitions include the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2008); the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2007); and the Renaissance Society, Chicago (2004). Kanwar has also participated in the first Lahore Biennale (2018), documenta 11, 12, 13, and 14 in Kassel, Germany (2002, 2007, 2012, 2017); 56th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2013); 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013); 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013); 11th Sharjah Biennale, UAE (2013); and 1st Kochi Biennale,

India (2013), among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Prince Claus Award (2017); Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change (2014); an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts, Maine College of Art (2006); the Edvard Munch Award for Contemporary Art, Norway (2005); and the MacArthur Fellowship in India (2000).

Anna Keye is the Development & Outreach Officer at New York Peace Institute. Keye has over 10 years' experience in program and event management at nonprofits, with significant experience in international human rights policy and movements for peace. Prior to New York Peace Institute, Keye was a consultant with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders where she coordinated monitoring reports and advocacy efforts on women, peace and security issues. At the International Women's Health Coalition, Keye organized campaigns on women's rights, gender equality, and sustainable development with hundreds of grassroots women's organizations from all over the world. Keye holds a degree in Urban Studies from Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School and a Master's degree in International Relations from City University of New York, City College. She was previously the Board Chair of the United Nations Association Young Professionals, Southern New York Division.

Carin Kuoni is a curator, writer and arts administrator whose work examines how contemporary artistic practices reflect and inform social and political conditions. She is Director/Chief Curator of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School and teaches there. Prior to joining The New School, she was Director of Exhibitions at Independent Curators International and Director of The Swiss Institute, New York. A founding member of the artist collective REPOhistory, Kuoni has curated and co-curated numerous transdisciplinary exhibitions including Red River Crossings (Swiss Institute, 1996); The Puppet Show (ICA Philadelphia, 2008); OURS: Democracy in the Age of Branding (Parsons, 2008); Abounaddara. The Right to the Image (Parsons, 2013); and Post-Speculation (P!, 2014). Kuoni is the editor or co-editor of several anthologies, among them Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America (1990); Words of Wisdom: A Curator's Vademecum (2001); Considering Forgiveness (2009); Speculation, Now (2014); Entry Points: The Vera List Center Field Guide on Art and Social Justice (2015); and co-edited, with Laura Raicovich and Kareem Estefan, Assuming Boycott: Resistance, Agency, and Cultural Production (2017).

Quinn McKew is Deputy Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, an international freedom of expression and information NGO. McKew leads ARTICLE 19's global programs on ICTs, protection of human rights defenders and transparency. Prior to joining ARTICLE 19, she worked for the largest non-profit management consultancy in Europe, and was a campaign manager for leading environmental organisations in the United States. McKew holds an M.B.A. from Georgetown University, focusing on global non-profit management and a B.A. in International Relations and the Environment from Stanford University.

Svetlana Mintcheva is Director of Programs at the National Coalition Against Censorship, an alliance of U.S. national organizations committed to protecting freedom of speech. She is the founding director of NCAC's Arts Advocacy Program, the only U.S. national initiative devoted to the arts and free expression today. Mintcheva has written on emerging trends in censorship, organized public discussions and mobilized support for individual artists. She is the co-editor of Censoring Culture: Contemporary Threats to Free Expression (New Press, 2006) and of Curating Under Pressure: International Perspectives on Negotiating Conflict and Upholding Integrity (Routledge, 2019 forthcoming). An academic as well as an activist, Mintcheva has taught literature and critical theory at the University of Sofia, Bulgaria and at Duke University, NC, from which she received her Ph.D. in Critical Theory in 1999, as well as at New York University. Her current research focuses on ethics and self-censorship within art institutions.

Mendi and Keith Obadike make art, music, and literature. They have exhibited and performed at The New Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and The Museum of Modern Art. Their projects include a series of large-scale, public sound art works: Blues Speaker (for James Baldwin) at The New School; Free/Phase at the Chicago Cultural Center & Rebuild Foundation; Sonic Migration at Scribe Video Center & Tindley Temple, Philadelphia; and Compass Song, an app for Times Square (commissioned by Times Square Arts). They have released recordings on Bridge Records and books with Lotus Press and 1913 Press. Their recent museum exhibitions include the group shows Electronic Superhighway (2016-1966) at The Whitechapel Gallery in London; I Was Raised on The Internet at The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965–2018 at The

Whitney Museum of American Art. They were invited by the Netgain Partnership (Ford Foundation, Knight Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Mozilla Foundation and Open Society Foundations) to perform their work *Numbers Station* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and recently performed *Cosmologies*, a sound-text work commissioned by the Lévy Gorvy Gallery. Their other honors include a Rockefeller New Media Arts Fellowship, Pick Laudati Award for Digital Art, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Fiction, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award.

Vanessa Place was the first poet to perform in the Whitney Biennial, and has published numerous books of poetry and prose. Performance venues include the Getty Villa (Los Angeles); Museum of Modern Art (New York); Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles); Detroit Museum of Contemporary Art; Mestno Musej (Ljubljana, Slovenia); New Holland (Saint Petersburg, Russia); Garage Museum (Moscow, Russia); Kunstverein (Köln, Germany); Swiss Institute (New York); Silencio (Paris); and Whitechapel Gallery (London). Her artwork has been exhibited at MAK Center/Schindler House (Los Angeles); Denver Museum of Contemporary Art; the Broad Museum (East Lansing, MI); the Kitchen (New York); Cage Gallery (New York); and Various Small Fires (Los Angeles). Place also works as a criminal appellate attorney specializing in sex offenders and sexually violent predators.

Laura Raicovich is a writer and art worker dedicated to art and artistic production that relies on complexity, poetics, and care to create a more engaged and equitable civic realm. Until recently, she served as President and Executive Director of the Queens Museum, where she oversaw an inviting and vital commons for art, ideas, and engagement. In 2018, she co-curated Mel Chin: All Over the Place (with Manon Slome and No Longer Empty), the first major presentation in New York City of artist Mel Chin in more than 20 years that occupied the entire Queens Museum and multiple public sites in the city. Prior to Queens Museum, Raicovich inaugurated Creative Time's Global Initiatives, and worked for a decade at Dia Art Foundation, where she served as Deputy Director. She began her career working at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Public Art Fund, and New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation. Raicovich lectures internationally and has published a number of books including Assuming Boycott: Resistance, Agency, and Cultural Production (OR Books/Vera List Center for Art and Politics, 2017); At the Lightning

Field (Coffee House Press, 2017); and A Diary of Mysterious Difficulties (Publication Studio, 2014). She graduated from Swarthmore College and holds a Master's degree in Liberal Studies from the Graduate Center at the City University of New York.

Nitin Sawhney is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at The New School, and Faculty Fellow with the Graduate Institute for Design, Ethnography & Social Thought (GIDEST). His research, teaching and creative practice engages the critical role of technology, civic media, and artistic interventions in contested spaces. He examines social movements and crisis contexts through forms of creative urban tactics, participatory research, performance, and documentary film. Sawhney has conducted digital storytelling initiatives with Palestinian youth in refugee camps since 2006 and directed the award-winning documentary film Flying Paper, co-produced with children in Gaza with support from National Geographic. He also directed the film, Zona Intervenida, examining historic memory through site-specific performance interventions in Guatemala. In 2016-2017, he devised Sacred Soundwalks, a sensory media project and sound installation exploring narrative memory of sacred sites in Kathmandu, Nepal and along historic pilgrimage routes to Mt. Kailash in Tibet.

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie is a writer and critic who divides her time (unevenly) between Beirut and New York. A contributing editor for *Bidoun*, she writes regularly for *Artforum*, *Bookforum*, *Aperture*, and *Frieze*. She has traveled extensively in the Middle East and North Africa to report on the relationship between art and politics, writing for newspapers, magazines, and journals including *Afterall*, *Art Journal*, *Parkett*, *The New York Times*, and *The Times of London*. She was a 2007 fellow in the USC Annenberg Getty Arts Journalism Program and won a grant from the Creative Capital Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant Program in 2013. Her first book, on the paintings of Etel Adnan (Lund Humphries), will be published in June. Her second, on contemporary art in post-war, reconstruction-era Beirut (Kaph), will be published in 2019. She teaches in the MFA Art Writing Program at the School of Visual Arts in New York.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

ARTICLE 19 works for a world where all people everywhere can freely express themselves and actively engage in public life without fear of discrimination. They do this by working on two interlocking freedoms which set the foundation for all their work:

- 1. *The Freedom to Speak* concerns everyone's right to express and disseminate opinions, ideas and information through any means, as well as to disagree with and question power-holders.
- 2. *The Freedom to Know* concerns the right to demand and receive information from power-holders, for transparency, good governance and sustainable development.

When either of these freedoms comes under threat as a result of power-holders failing to adequately protect them, ARTICLE 19, with one voice, speaks through courts of law, through global and regional organisations, and through civil society wherever they are present.

National Coalition Against Censorship promotes freedom of thought, inquiry and expression, and opposes censorship in all its forms. The Coalition formed in response to the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Miller v. California*, which narrowed First Amendment protections for sexual expression and in turn, opened the door to obscenity prosecutions. Over 40 years, as an alliance of more than 50 national non-profits, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups, the Coalition has engaged in direct advocacy and education to support First Amendment principles. NCAC is unique in that they are national in scope but often local in their approach, and they work with community members to resolve censorship controversies without the need for litigation.

New York Peace Institute provides conflict resolution services in the form of mediation, conflict coaching, restorative processes, group facilitation, and skills training. Our programs are a resource to thousands of New Yorkers facing conflict each year— whether it is between parents working out a custody agreement, a noise dispute between neighbors, diverting a misdemeanor case from court, or a conflict between a parent and school regarding a student with special needs. Our services foster listening, empathy, and communication among our clients and help them develop their own creative solutions. As the city's largest civilian peace force, our mission is to build peace and prevent violence in New York City and beyond.

We also provide vital communication and conflict management skills training to a broad range of organizations, including city agencies, non-profits, labor unions, and schools. We employ a creative, learn-by-doing approach in our trainings, drawing upon theater, visual arts, music, and kinestheticactivities

Weeksville Heritage Center is a multidisciplinary museum dedicated to preserving the history of the 19th century African American community of Weeksville, Brooklyn - one of the largest free black communities in pre-Civil War America.

Their mission is to document, preserve and interpret the history of this community, and make it relevant and resonant for contemporary audiences. They bring this history to life through innovative education, arts and civic engagement programming.

CREDITS

The seminar series Freedom of Speech: A Curriculum for Studies into Darkness is organized by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics as part of the center's 2018–2020 curatorial focus If Art Is Politics. It is directed by Carin Kuoni, Director/Chief Curator, Vera List Center, and Laura Raicovich with assistance by Gabriela López Dena. Partner organizations for the seminars are ARTICLE 19; the National Coalition Against Censorship; New York Peace Institute; and Weeksville Heritage Center. This seminar is co-presented in partnership with the National Coalition Against Censorship.

THANK YOU

To the participating artists, scholars, thinkers and makers; to Leslie Nolen and the team at Marian Goodman Gallery; to Christopher Allen and the team at UnionDocs; to our partner organizations; to Emily Donnelly and Nina Olivetti at the Vera List Center and the members of the Vera List Center Advisory Committee:

James Keith (JK) Brown, Chair Carlos Basualdo Frances Beatty Michelle Coffey Gabriella De Ferrari Ronald Feldman Andrew Francis Marilyn Greene Susan Hapgood Elizabeth R. Hilpman Norman L. Kleeblatt Carin Kuoni Thomas Lax Jane Lombard Lydia Matthews Susan Meiselas Megan E. Noh Mendi and Keith Obadike Nancy Delman Portnoy Ingrid Schaffner Mary Watson

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A CURRICULUM FOR STUDIES INTO DARKNESS UPCOMING EVENTS

SEMINAR 2: FEMINIST MANIFESTOS MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 6:30-8:30 PM

THE NEW SCHOOL WOLLMAN HALL, 65 W 11TH STREET, 5TH FLOOR NEW YORK CITY

SEMINAR 3 MONDAY, FEBRUARY II, 2019, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTICLE 19

SEMINAR 4 MONDAY, MARCH II, 2019, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

THE NEW SCHOOL

SEMINAR 5: SEDITIOUS SPEECH
SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER

SEMINAR 6: FEET ON THE GROUND

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2019
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW YORK PEACE INSTITUTE

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