

# Conflicting Relations



Saturday, March 11, 2023  
11:00am–4:00pm

Starr Foundation Hall,  
University Center, The New School  
63 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011

# Program

*Conflicting Relations* is a day-long program that brings together artists, curators, and institutions whose practices go beyond hospitality and act as correctives to prescribed host and guest hierarchies, on intimate and infra-structural levels. It is convened by Frame Contemporary Art Finland as part of their 2023 *Rehearsing Hospitalities* program and is co-presented with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, and the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York as part of artist Matti Aikio's 2022–2023 Vera List Center Sámi Fellowship.

Since the inception of *Rehearsing Hospitalities* in 2019, Indigenous perspectives on matters of hospitality—and acknowledging the various forms of social, cultural, and political inhospitality that Sámi people experience—have been critical to the program and the dialogues it fosters. This two-part event “re-turns” to matters of Indigeneity and hospitality in a US and Canadian context and presents Matti Aikio's practice alongside a range of practitioners to exchange resonances and resistances.

Image Credit: Matti Aikio, *Suorranaddame*, installation in Hammerfest, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

# Schedule

## 11:00 am EST Committed Relationships

This session reflects on diverse modes of hospitality and its attendant politics. Pairs of artists and host institutions discuss their long-term relationships and how they redefine practices, understandings, and engagements between them.

Artist Elina Waage Mikalsen and Karoline Trollvik, Head of Communications and External Relations, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, discuss their experience working for and in Sámi and majority institutions. Pre-recorded.

Artist and writer S.J Norman and Ana Beatriz Sepúlveda, Head of Community Access and Inclusion, at Performance Space, map out the relations powering *Knowledge of Wounds*, a series of care-oriented programs that originated at Performance Space in 2018 and other partner organizations.

Choreographer and director Emily Johnson and Ali Rosa-Salas, Vice President of Visual and Performing Arts at Henry Street Settlement, discuss the transformative power of their collaboration and its reverberation throughout the institution.

Through these and other examples, the panel considers what hospitality looks like when led by Indigenous artists and how institutions self-correct to be in good relations with artists, the land, and local communities. Introductions and moderated discussion by Yvonne Billimore, Associate Curator, Frame Contemporary Art Finland, and Eriola Pira, Curator and Director of Programs, Vera List Center.

## 1:30 pm EST Lunch

Hospitality for this program extends to include vegan lunch for all participants.

## 2:30 pm EST Matti Aikio in Conversation with Wanda Nanibush

In conversation with Anishinaabe curator, artist, and educator Wanda Nanibush, Curator of Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Sámi artist Matti Aikio presents his research on the so-called neo-Lapp movement in Finland and settler-colonial attempts at claiming Indigenous identity. Taking into consideration Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, Aikio looks past individual violations to question the structural and large-scale implications of this movement as a counter-strategy to the political mobilization of the Sámi. Introductions by Monica Gathuo, Executive Producer of *Together Again* project, the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York.

## 4:00 pm EST Closing Remarks and Reception

Jussi Koitela, Head of Programme, Frame Contemporary Art Finland, and Carin Kuoni, Senior Director and Chief Curator, Vera List Center, offer concluding remarks followed by a light reception.

# Participant Biographies

Matti Aikio is a Sámi visual artist from the Finnish side of the Sápmi. He has a background in Sámi reindeer herding culture. He holds an MA in contemporary art from Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art. Aikio's art has been exhibited in various countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. He works with mixed media, photography, sound, installations, video, sculpture, and text. His main interest as an artist is to try to shift perspectives on established dominant narratives and marginalized topics. Lately, he's been focused on the concept, idea, and image of nature and how the nation-state and capitalism's relationship with these impacts indigenous cultures. Aikio is one of TBA21-Academy's Ocean Fellows 2022 and also performs as a DJ.

Emily Johnson is an artist who makes body-based work. She is of the Yup'ik Nation, is a land and water protector and an organizer for justice, sovereignty and well-being. Emily lives on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in Lenapehoking.

Elina Waage Mikalsen is an interdisciplinary artist and musician from Romssa/Tromsø, Sápmi. She works with sound, text, textile, performance and installation. She is Sámi and Norwegian, which is a recurring theme in her artistic practice. The holes that the Norwegian assimilation process created in her family history have become a starting point for fantasizing about and discussing what these holes represent, what matter they constitute and how they affect us today. Elina is currently artist in residence at Borealis—a festival for experimental music in Bergen.

Wanda Nanibush is an Anishinaabe-kwe curator, image, word warrior, and community organizer from Beausoleil First Nation. Based in Toronto, Nanibush is the inaugural curator of Indigenous Art and co-lead of the Indigenous + Canadian Art Department at the Art Gallery of Ontario. She founded aabaakwad in 2018, which annually gathers together Indigenous artists, curators, and writers, most recently at the Venice Biennale. Wanda's latest retrospective *Robert Houle: Red is Beautiful* is touring.

S.J Norman is an artist, author and cultural worker. His career has spanned two decades and embraced a diversity of disciplines and formal outcomes, including solo and ensemble performance, installation, sculpture, text, video and sound. He is the recipient of numerous major awards for both art and literature, including a 2018 Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship, an Australia Council Fellowship, the 67th Blake Prize and the 2022 Peter Blazey Prize. His most recent exhibitions include the 22nd Biennale of Sydney and the 4th National Indigenous Art Triennial. Since 2006, Norman has lived and worked between so-called Australia, Germany, the UK, and the continent known to many Native tribes as Turtle Island (US). He is a trans-masculine Koori born on Gadigal land. His documented familial ties connect him to the Wiradjuri and Ngyiampaa-Wailwan

peoples as well as to the urban Indigenous communities of Redfern and Western Sydney on his mother's side, and to West Yorkshire on his father's. He is currently based in Lenapehoking/New York City.

Ali Rosa-Salas is a curator whose approach is rooted in the belief that curatorial practice must serve the public good. She finds inspiration from the cultural ecosystems of Lenapehoking (currently called New York City), where she was proudly born, raised and currently resides. For over a decade, Ali has served New York City arts and culture through curatorial projects in performance and visual art. She began her tenure at Abrons Arts Center/Henry Street Settlement in 2017 as Director of Performance Programs and in 2022 was appointed Vice President of Visual and Performing Arts. In her current role, Ali guides the curatorial vision of the Center's presenting, education, and residency programs. In addition to her role at Abrons, Ali is an Associate Curator of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Ali received a BA from Barnard College in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and an MA from the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance at Wesleyan University.

Ana Beatriz Sepúlveda is currently the Head of Community Access and Inclusion at Performance Space New York. Her main interests lay in the intersection between art and social justice, with an emphasis on the empowerment and inclusion of underrepresented communities in the cultural sector. Initially a journalist, Ana Bé has over ten years of experience in cultural production and arts management between Puerto Rico and New York.

Karoline Trollvik is Sámi and Norwegian from Gáivuotna/Kåfjord, Sápmi/Northern Norway. She holds a MPhil degree in Anthropology of Development from the University of Bergen (UiB). She was the artistic director of the international Indigenous festival Riddu Riddu (2014–2018), and temporarily served as museum director at the Várjjat Sámi Musea (2019/2020). From 2018 to 2022 she was a jury member on the committee for festival and event management grants at the Arts Council Norway. She currently serves on the board of Riksscenen—the national hub for traditional music and dance, and Minotenk—a minority political think tank. Trollvik is currently working as Head of Communications and External Relations at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway – OCA.

# About

[Frame Contemporary Art Finland](#) is an advocate for Finnish contemporary art. Frame supports international initiatives, facilitates professional partnerships, and encourages critical development of the field through grants, visitor programme and curator residencies, seminars and talks, exhibition collaborations, and network platforms. Frame commissions Finland's participation in the Venice Biennale.

*Rehearsing Hospitalities* is Frame Contemporary Art Finland's public programme, 2019 to 2023. It connects artists, curators, and other practitioners in the field of contemporary art and beyond to build up and mediate new practices, understandings, and engagements with diverse hospitalities. *Rehearsing Hospitalities 2023* is part of the EU-funded project *Islands of Kinship: A Collective Manual for Sustainable and Inclusive Art Institutions*.

[The Finnish Cultural Institute in New York](#) is a not-for-profit organization that works across the fields of contemporary art, design, and architecture, creating dialogue between Finnish and American professionals and audiences. The institute, founded in 1990, has grown from a residency program to commissioning large-scale projects and events that foster critical dialogue and work to build support for art professionals.

*Together Again* is an expansive art project fostering gatherings, workshops, intercultural dialogues and socially engaged art, organized by the Finnish Academic and Cultural Institutes across the world and funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Wihuri Foundation. *Together Again* presents six community-based works to audiences in Amsterdam, Brussels, Helsinki, London, Madrid, New York, Oslo, Paris, and Porto, as well as online. The project takes place throughout 2023 and culminates in a one-day festival held in Helsinki, Finland on the 8th of September 2023.

[The Vera List Center for Art and Politics](#) is a non-profit research center at The New School in New York. Through its dynamic interdisciplinary programs, conferences, artist fellowships, residencies, publications, and exhibitions the VLC imagines and supports new forms of politically engaged art, research, public scholarship, and community around the world.

The 2022–2024 Vera List Center Focus Theme *Correction\** and the programs, fellowship projects, publications, and exhibitions dedicated to it explore the tension, discomfort, potential, and sociopolitical implications of “correction.”

All programs and events of the Vera List Center are free for all to attend, physically and virtually. Public programs are recorded and shared on our website, Vimeo page, and The New School YouTube page. Our online events feature automated captions and ASL (American Sign Language) interpretation.

If you have specific accommodation questions or needs for future programs, please contact us at least five days prior to the program at [vlc@newschool.edu](mailto:vlc@newschool.edu).

The Spring 2023 programs of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics are generously supported by members of the Vera List Center Board, other individual donors, and the following institutional donors:

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
The Boris Lurie Art Foundation and the Schaina and Josephina Lurje Memorial Foundation  
Bridge Philanthropic Consulting  
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The Kettering Fund  
Mellon Foundation  
The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation  
and Pryor Cashman LLP.

We also acknowledge the support of The New School, our academic home.

For video documentation of this talk, visit [www.veralistcenter.org](http://www.veralistcenter.org) where you can also find additional information, resource guides, and documentation of all events.

## VERA LIST CENTER FELLOWSHIPS

Vera List Center Fellowships support the development and presentation of ambitious art and research projects by national and international emerging artists, writers, scholars, and activists. Since 1994, the VLC Fellowship program has supported outstanding individuals at key moments in their early- and mid-careers, especially those who are members of underrepresented communities in the art world and those who would otherwise struggle to find support because of the experimental, political, and/or research-intensive nature of their work.

VLC Fellowships include the Borderlands Fellowship, a joint initiative of the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands at Arizona State University and the Vera List Center; the Boris Lurie Fellowship, which supports the work of artists living outside the US who have faced political hardship; the Sámi Artist Fellowship, launched in 2022, a joint initiative between Frame Contemporary Art Finland, the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York, and the Vera List Center; and the ArtsLink International Fellowship, a program of CEC ArtsLink. The Vera List Center is a host organization for 2022 and 2023.

## VERA LIST CENTER FELLOWS

2022–2024	2018–2020	2007–2008	2000
Matti Aikio	dean erdmann	Marjetica Potrč	Wendy T. Ewald
Carmen	Helene Kazan		Danny Hoch
Amengual		2006–2007	Olu Oguibe
Aleksei	2015–2017	Andrea Geyer	
Borisionok	Lawrence Abu	Sharon Hayes	1999
Beatriz Cortez	Hamdan	Ashley Hunt	Susan Hapgood
Fox Maxy	Casey Gollan	Katya Sander	Kobena Mercer
Omar Mismar	& Victoria Sobel	David Thorne	Edward Rothstein
Larissa Nez			Elisabeth
Anna Martine	2013–2015	2004–2005	Sussman
Whitehead	Jill Magid	Walid Raad	
	Alexander Provan		1997–1998
2020–2022		2002	Lorraine O’Grady
Carolina Caycedo	2011–2013	Jonathan	
Etcétera	Bouchra Khalili	Weinberg	1997
Maria Hupfield	Joshua Simon		Silvan Paternostro
Adelita Husni Bey		2001	
Rasheedah	2009–2011	Margarita Gutman	1995
Phillips/	Robert Sember	Wendy Perron	Sarah Rothenberg
Black Quantum	Lin + Lam	Leslie Prosterman	
Futurism			1993
			Maurice Berger

## STAFF

Tabor Banquer, Director of Strategy and Advancement  
 Re’al Christian, Assistant Director of Editorial Initiatives  
 Carin Kuoni, Senior Director/Chief Curator  
 Camila Palomino, Curatorial Assistant  
 Eriola Pira, Curator and Director of Programs  
 Adrienne Umeh, Director of Operations and Budget

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# Notes

## UPCOMING

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### SCREENING & CONVERSATION

**Ariella Aisha Azoulay: the world like a jewel in the hand**

Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 6:30–8 pm EDT

Kellen Auditorium, The New School

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### EXHIBITION

**C& Center of Unfinished Business**

April 1–May 26, 2023

Social Justice Hub, University Center, 5th Floor, The New School

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### SEMINAR

**Correction\* Seminar 5: Lupus as an Operating System,  
with poet Cyréc Jarelle Johnson**

Monday, March 7, 2023, 6–7:30 am EDT

Online

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### PANEL

**Libraries as Correctives: C& Center of Unfinished Business, Keleketla! Library,  
and Sister Library with Asia Art Archive**

Monday, April 24, 2023, 10–11:30 am EDT

Online

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### SEMINAR

**Correction\* Seminar 6: Indigenous Cultural Revitalization: Rematriation and  
Preservation, with Borderlands Curatorial Fellow Larissa Nez**

Monday, May 1, 2023, 6–7:30 pm EDT

Online

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### PANEL

**Libraries and Liberation**

Thursday, May 18, 6:30 PM EST

Social Justice Hub, University Center, 5th Floor, The New School

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### PUBLICATION

**Maria Thereza Alves: Seeds of Change**

Edited by Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatsch

Co-published by the Vera List Center and Amherst College Press

April 2023

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### PUBLICATION

**Breaking Protocol**

Edited by Maria Hupfield

Co-published by the Vera List Center and Inventory Press

May 2023

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### DIGITAL PUBLISHING SERIES

**Post/doc: Spring 2023**

Ari Melenciano and Catalina Ouyang

May 2023

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