

## Letter of Mission: "Where do I stand ? What do I want?"

Dear Fellow, dear Participant of the Sommerakademie Paul Klee 2016,

With this 'Letter of Mission' I want to clarify – as Guest-curator and as an artist – what we will be doing during the Sommerakademie this summer in Bern. Essentially, we will discuss the question enunciated in the title: "Where do I stand? What do I want?". I think that those are crucial questions for an artist. I accepted with pleasure to be Guest-curator of the Sommerakademie because I saw it as an occasion to propose and share with you the important problematic "Where do I stand? What do I want?". I am committed to this question, directed towards me and my work, but also directed towards you and your work. I consider – as an artist – that it is important to ask oneself: How can I take a position? How can I give form to this position? How can this form – beyond cultural, political, aesthetical and cultural habits – create a truth? And how can I create a universal truth? As well, it is important to me – as an artist – to ask myself: How can I do a work which resists – in all cases – historical facts and reaches beyond the history I am living in? And how – in my historical field today – can I do an A-Historical work? Therefore I consider it my mission to implicate, to interest and address you with the question "Where do I stand? What do I want?".

In practice, the Sommerakademie will be focused on this problematic at all times. Every encounter, every lecture, every visit will be highlighted by this question that shall be discussed together with Guest-speakers Yasmin Raymond, Tania Bruguera, Marcus Steinweg and the Speakers of the Bern Institutions. The Sommerakademie 2016 is a 'critical workshop' which means that we are reflecting and discussing – through sharing (showing, speaking). As Fellow and Participant, you will present your work and share with us your plan, your position and your will, with the concern and criteria of defining and clarifying for yourself and for us: "Where do I stand? What do I want?" You can do this in words, you can make a map or a schema or you can also consider that your response comes across the form of your work and your presentation. This will also be our criteria to judge what we are receiving from you and engage in discussion with you.

All presentations (of Fellows and Participants, Guest-speakers, Speakers of the Bern Institutions) are public and free of access, therefore I really do hope that interested people will be joining us for the presentations and our program. By opening the Sommerakademie 2016 to a wider public I hope to include the 'non-exclusive audience' and hope that our interrogations will crystallize beyond interests of the only art-involved. I also hope that this opening towards the public will provoke and create encounters, and lead to an event. All presentations and discussions of the Sommerakademie 2016 will take place at the mythical and lively Kunsthalle Bern for contemporary art. I am very happy about this, since – years ago – I, myself had the chance of exhibiting in this graceful space dedicated to art.

This 'Letter of Mission' is written with the hope that you will/we will work together and achieve my goal to make the question "Where do I stand? What do I want?" and its response, the hardcore of this Sommerakademie Paul Klee 2016. This is what interests me. My mission – our mission – and ambition will be accomplished if, beyond the Sommerakademie session, the question of position and will become a main interest and main behaviour related to your work – and if you can use it in the future as a tool or instrument to progress – as I try to do.

I hope we will have an intensive time together, with a lot of thinking and a lot of fun – which is the same. See you soon,

Thomas Hirschhorn, Aubervilliers, June, 2016