



# PASS newsletter

Center for Practice-based Art Studies

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## Dear reader,

PASS has celebrated its one-year anniversary and can reflect on a first season (and two semesters) where teaching formats and partnerships have been tested, seminars, workshops, and conferences held, dialogues with collaborators started, and the recruitment of scientific staff for the center has filled up the calendar and our minds. It has been a busy year without full staffing, so I apologize for not being able to respond to all the (wonderfully) many inquiries we have received, inviting dialogue and exchange. I can, however, reassure you that I haven't even had the time to create my own personal profile on the University of Copenhagen's website. It is in the works now. Please feel free to send a new email if you have been waiting too long for a response from me.



## Museum Why?

In a successful collaboration with the Museum Why? network, we organized a conference in May with the same name as the network and subtitled: Practice, Agency, and Knowledge in the Art Museum. [See event page](#). With around 40 presentations from both experienced and younger researchers and practitioners, many with backgrounds in museum professions and curation, the conference revolved around the question of how the art museum as an institution today can give voice and space to a more diverse user group than traditionally assumed and can facilitate encounters between perspectives, works, and materials that speak from a broader context than just the narrowly Western one. The conference also addressed how art museums can better highlight and use the diverse knowledge production that takes place here, rather than accepting universities' standards for research evaluation. Discussions also covered working with children and youth in museums, the role of the artist in the museum, conditions for and experiences with decolonizing museal and archival practices, as well as perspectives on environmental sustainability in both operations and curation. With 120 participants and three parallel sessions among keynote speakers, it turned into three enriching days.

## Oceans and Blue Humanities

With the latest workshop on art and oceans held in May, we delved deeper into an extensive and profound topic. Many artists, curators, and museums are currently captivated by water, particularly the ocean, as a non-human element that has been overshadowed by the culture and geography associated with land for extended periods. Four 3-hour sessions with curator, author, and researcher Jacob Lillemose, visual artist Marie Kølbaek Iversen alongside curator Susanne Østby Sæther from the Henie Onstad Art Center, visual artist Rikke Luther, and Kathrine Richardson, professor in Earth Systems Science at KU, as well as insightful participant presentations, took us on a diverse journey. The background context included Henie Onstad Art Center's ongoing exhibition on the Atlantic Ocean and Louisiana's upcoming exhibition HAVET, opening in October; along with a wealth of humanistic research literature on ocean culture, both exhibitions underscore the timeliness of the subject.



## Readings

In our reading seminar, *Implications*, we have so far explored six academic works by authors such as Silvia Federici, Kathryn Yusoff, Anne L. Tsing, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. If there has been a common thread running through these readings - unintentional as it may be - it has been the historical and current entanglements between human cultural and economic activities and the foundation - the space, bodies, work, and materials - that form, mostly silently and unacknowledged, the basis for what we call prosperity, progress, and civilization. The rewriting of both art history and general history considering these complex planetary interconnections within what is termed the critical zone is underway, and we have been reading and discussing it.

At times, I am asked what a seminar involving readings of theoretical academic literature is doing at a center for practice-based art studies. A valid question. Firstly, we are situated at a university. Naturally, theory and method development are of interest to us. It is here we can discover new concepts and understandings articulated in a way that is broad enough to help us understand more than just a specific empirical field. Secondly, it's worth noting the title - *Implications*. Central to our discussions in this seminar, attended by researchers, visual artists, and individuals with diverse practical backgrounds, is the question of how what we read can influence the work each of us does - whether it's an artistic project, a theoretical PhD thesis, a historical analysis, urban development, a high school curriculum, sustainable landscape development, or something entirely different. *Implications* is open to all and is occasionally announced - sometimes a bit late, for which I apologize - on social media and the center's website. The next three reading sessions will take place in October, November and December of 2024.

In the upcoming *Implications* program (cf. the PASS website) 'readings' will also encompass exhibitions and films.



## **New appointments**

I am pleased to announce that on 1.9., we will welcome two highly skilled individuals to a shared associate professor position at the center: art historian, curator, Stine Hebert, and collection researcher, visual artist, Martha Fleming. Over the next almost four years, they will divide their time between working at the center with all its responsibilities and another practice outside the university. For Stine, this will involve, among other things, the operation and development of HEIRLOOM – Center for Art and Archives, with which PASS has previously collaborated; as for Martha's external engagement beyond PASS, it will initially focus on completing her research project titled Field/Work in the Archive: Herbaria as Sites of Cultural Exchange, carried out at the National History Museum at UCPH.

I am equally proud to announce that starting 1.9., visual artist Rosa Marie Frang will join the center in a half-time position. Rosa will be producing a podcast about art and research, and we can certainly expect a unique outcome with Rosa as the unmistakable host of discussions with researchers and creators of new knowledge, both within and outside universities.



## A PASS profile and strategy

Until recently, I had refrained from developing a research profile for PASS. It has been essential to me that the clarification of our 'identity,' which must inevitably come, is the result of contributions from those employed at the center. Now that we are fully staffed, the time has come to progress. We are in the process of defining a variety of topics and research areas that we will particularly emphasize and that will be clear in our study programs, our partnerships and collaborations, and our other initiatives. We intend to publish this profile on our website in a few weeks.

## Program

This semester we will among other things organise two two-day workshops, primarily for PhD students, but with a few places for other interested parties. One workshop will be led by postdoc Kathrine Bolt Rasmussen and is titled "Gestures towards 'commoning' the art institution". The other workshop will be about freedom in practice - freedom of movement, artistic freedom, freedom of research - and will be led by myself together with postdoc Anne Jule Arnfred. [Find out more about this at our website.](#)

### Mikkel Bogh

Professor and Director of PASS

### Newsletter illustrations:

The illustrations are from the conference *Museum Why? Practice, Agency, and Knowledge in the Art Museum* 22-24 May. Photos by Christian Brems.

