

Tariq Ali „The Extreme Centre. A Warning“ A reading group

TUE 28 3 2017 / 19:00

ACADEMYSPACE, Herwarthstraße 3, 50672 Cologne

“Since political differences are minimal, power becomes an end in itself and a means to acquiring money and well-paid consultancies after leaving office. Today the symbiosis between power and money has almost everywhere reached unbelievable extremes. The cowed and docile politicians who work the system and reproduce themselves are what I label the ‘extreme centre’ of mainstream politics in Europe and North America.”

Tariq Ali, *The Extreme Centre: A Warning*

Recent studies have shown that our increasingly digitized lifestyles cause us to lose concentration after roughly eight seconds, which is shorter than the average attention span of the notoriously ill-focused goldfish. In order to fight this state of being the Academy is introducing a new (self-)educational initiative in the form of a reading group, founded with the goal of deepening and intensifying a discussion of the themes broached in the Academy’s program. The reading group meets one Tuesday a month at 19:00 at ACADEMYSPACE, in the hospitable setting of our newly arranged entrance lounge. The first meeting prefaces *Pluriversale VI* by looking at Tariq Ali’s book *The Extreme Centre*, one of the inspirations for the symposium *The Extreme Centre – Pluriversale VI* of the same name in April.

During the meeting, moderated by the Academy’s curator Aneta Rostkowska, we will reflect on the diagnosis of the current situation provided in the book (chapter 1) as well as possible ways of transforming it (chapter 6).

If you would like to participate and receive the text, please send an email before the meeting to readinggroup@academycologne.org.

During the subsequent meetings of the reading group we will ask if leftist populism is possible and explore the potential of critical education as well as alternative knowledge production (20 4 2017); analyze how contemporary artists reflect upon the rise of right-wing political parties in their works (23 5 2017); and trace how popular culture expresses antifascist political ideas (4 7 2017). The topic of the final meeting on 18 7 2017 will be determined by the participants.

Join us in a collective effort to stay focused in an informal and nonhierarchical environment!

In English

With drinks and snacks

In cooperation with:

Fellows Network Cologne / NRW

Universität zu Köln, Institut für Kunst und Kunsttheorie & Institut für Medienkultur und Theater / Project Arts Education in Transition

Temporary Gallery – Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst e.V. / Centre for contemporary art

“The need for discussion and its important function does not come from the desire or craving to push someone’s views on any matter (though it is true that many discussions are held for this reason), but from the limitations and imperfections of the creative and, in particular, cognitive powers of an individual.”

Roman Ingarden, *A few words on a fruitful discussion*, 1961