

FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS "THE BOAT IS LEAKING. THE CAPTAIN LIED.", AN EXHIBITION PROJECT WITH ALEXANDER KLUGE, THOMAS DEMAND AND ANNA VIEBROCK, CURATED BY UDO KITTELMANN, IN VENICE FROM 13 MAY TO 26 NOVEMBER 2017

Venice, 10 May 2017 - Fondazione Prada presents "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied." in its venetian venue, Ca' Corner della Regina, from 13 May to 26 November 2017.

This transmedia exhibition project is the result of an ongoing, in-depth exchange between writer and filmmaker Alexander Kluge, artist Thomas Demand, stage and costume designer Anna Viebrock and curator Udo Kittelmann. The exhibition unfolds on three storeys of the 18<sup>th</sup> century palazzo – the ground floor and the two main ones – and includes photographic and film works by Demand and Kluge, spatial settings by Anna Viebrock as well as loans from private and public collections.

The long process which led to the realization of this project is not only the result of discussions and exchanges between the authors involved in it, but also the outcome of a misunderstanding. The sharing of a reproduction of a painting by Angelo Morbelli *Giorni... ultimi!* (1883), generated in the three artists and in the curator different interpretations of its subject, which depicts a group of elderly destitute men within the Pio Albergo Trivulzio in Milan. More specifically, the portrayed individuals had been mistaken for retired sailors spending their old age at the hostel. This suggestion not only caused the marine metaphor in the exhibition title, inspired by Leonard Cohen's song *Everybody Knows* (1988), but also the choice to devote a monographic room to Morbelli, hosting seven of his works.

Quoting William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* "Why, now blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark! The storm is up, and all is on the hazard", Udo Kittelmann underlines how this collaboration generated out of a "shared awareness, both on an emotional and theoretical level, of the critical aspects of present times and the complexity of the world we live in". In a dialogue of polyphonic references and constellations between the contributions of each artist, the exhibition spans film, art and theatre media. The confluence of image spaces and scene settings for a variety of atmospheres transforms the historic palazzo of Ca' Corner della Regina into a metaphorical site for the identification of the worlds we live in and our personal attitudes towards them. The exhibition aims to provide comprehensive insight into the respective production of Alexander Kluge, Thomas Demand and Anna Viebrock, whose artistic endeavours have always extended beyond the aesthetic and imaginative, and were conceived with political and historical intentions. All three artists reveal themselves as pathfinders and clue seekers, witnesses and chroniclers of times past and present.

Out of this, an exhibition is generated, intended as a space for experiences and encounters. This visually powerful, multi-layered environment bestows expression and meaning on the everyday and on the worlds of yesterday and today, between apparent normality and

catastrophe, in a society divided between lust for life and loss of trust, extreme distress and never-ending hope.

As stated by Kittelmann, "It is a particularly lucky coincidence that Alexander Kluge's filmic production, Thomas Demand's photographic work and Anna Viebrock's stage settings are brought together in this collective exhibition concept, melding what are usually distinct artistic forms of expression. Until now their different creative fields have prevented them from engaging in this kind of symbiotic collaboration, even though they know one another personally and have often exchanged ideas."

In "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied." each visitor can create its own narration in complete freedom, physically and conceptually moving through the visual imagery of the three artists. Through this, three commonly accepted ideas are questioned: the traditional separation between spectators and theatre set designs, the reduction of filmic products to mere exhibited objects and the visual isolation where artworks are usually presented within a show.

The exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied." is accompanied by an illustrated book edited by Udo Kittelmann and published by Fondazione Prada. Made up of three volumes, it includes the English and Italian editions of "The Great Hour of Kong. A Chronicle of Connections" by Alexander Kluge and the catalogue of the project with essays, poems and texts by Devin A. Fore, Niccolò Gravina, Udo Kittelmann, Alexander Kluge, Rachel Kushner, Ben Lerner, Helmut Lethen, Thomas Oberender and Aurora Scotti.

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**Biographical notes**

**Alexander Kluge** (Halberstadt, Germany, 1932) is a writer, director and Phd in law. One of the pioneers of New German Cinema, in 1966 he was the first German in the postwar period to win the Leone d'argento at the Venice Film Festival for *Abschied von Gestern* (Yesterday Girl). In 1968 he was awarded with the Leone d'oro for *Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* (The Artist in the Circus Dome: Clueless), as well as a Leone d'oro for career achievements in cinema in 1982. Starting in 1988 the production company DCTP (Development Company for Television Program), Kluge cofounded, has shot thousands of hours of independent programming. Kluge also created the TV format "Kulturmagazine". His work in television draws on the filmmaker's cinematic tradition, developing new forms of dialogue in the "Facts & Fakes" genre. Kluge's more recent film works include the "Minutenfilme" (short films running several minutes long) and the 10-Stunden-Programme (10-hour programs), in keeping with the early history of cinema. Books Kluge has published include *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (co-authored with Oskar Negt), *Chronik der Gefühle* and the more recent *Kongs große Stunde - Chronik des Zusammenhangs* (*The Great Hour of Kong. A Chronicle of Connections*), which are part of the same context of his cinematic and television production. Kluge has won the Büchner Prize and the Theodor W. Adorno Prize. Today his cinematographic and literary works continue to enthrall for their experimental character, as well as their investigation of twentieth- and twenty-first-century history.

**Thomas Demand** (Munich, Germany, 1964) is one of the most influential artists in photography. His work can be found in numerous museum collections around the world, including: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Comprehensive solo exhibitions of his work have been organized by major international institutions, including: Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas (2016); Graham Foundation, Chicago (2013); DHC Art Center, Montreal (2013); National Gallery, Victoria, Melbourne (2012); Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2012); Kaldor Public Arts Project #25, Sydney (2012); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2009); Fondazione Prada, Venice (2007); Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria (2004). He also represented Germany at the 26<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo. Through his photographs, Demand investigates culture, society and contemporary life, and creates multiform works that present to the viewer a multifaceted reality that is not what it may seem. Demand currently teaches sculpture at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg.

**Anna Viebrock** (Cologne, Germany, 1951) is one of the most important set and costume designers of German theater. She has earned numerous awards, most recently the Bühnenbildnerin des Jahres recognition in 2016 for her work in opera. She has created, in close collaboration with director Christoph Marthaler, stage scenes for both theater and opera including: Volksbühne Berlin, Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, the Frankfurt

Opera, the *Opéra national* in Paris, the Teatro Real in Madrid, the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals, the Vienna and Avignon Festivals, and Schauspielhaus Zurich (where she was a member of the board from 2000 to 2004). She has worked together with the directing pairs Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito since 1994, designing stage sets for opera at the Theater Basel, Salzburg Festival, the Opera Theater in Amsterdam, the San Francisco Opera, and especially the Stuttgart Staatsoper. Beginning in 2002, Viebrock also began working as a director and focused on scene research, experimenting with new forms of theater. Viebrock conceives sets as an architecture in which life and time leave their traces. She draws inspiration from ordinary buildings and interiors, which she photographs and documents during her travels, later transforming them into images and collages for scenic design. Viebrock is a professor of set design at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna.

**Udo Kittelmann** (Düsseldorf, Germany, 1958) is director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, which includes the Alte Nationalgalerie, the Neue Nationalgalerie, the Hamburger Bahnhof and the Museum Berggruen, among others. Director of the Kölnischer Kunstverein from 1994 to 2001, Kittelmann went on to direct the Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK) in Frankfurt from 2002 to 2008. In 2001 he was commissioner of the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and curated Gregor Schneider's solo exhibition "Totes Haus u r," which won the Golden Lion for the Best National Participation. In 2013 Kittelmann curated the Russian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, where he presented Vadim Zakharov's "Danaë". Kittelmann has investigated curatorial practices and institutions' relationships with art over the course of his long career as a curator and museum director. He focuses on the processes of art, and therefore its implicit laws and potential display configurations. He has based his curatorial approach on close collaboration with artists, setting up their works, moving beyond the aesthetic dimension and focusing on the artwork's specific socio-political context. Kittelmann recently curated Anne Imhof's opera "Angst II", as well as the exhibition "George Condo – Confrontation". At present he is collaborating with Adrian Piper on her project "The Probable Trust Registry."