

Enough History كفانا حكايا Ne me raconte plus d'Histoire

Virginie Bobin, Salma Mochtari

From November 2022 to February 2023, Qalqalah قلقلة is a Research Affiliate at Tanzquartier Wien – Centre for Contemporary Choreography and Performance. During this four-month period, Qalqalah قلقلة experiments with various formats of artistic research and modes of collective study, to investigate the modalities under which art discourse uses, fabricates and embodies truth-making through specific regimes of narration. Narrative is here as much a place where legitimate power-knowledge discourse is played out, as a place where micro-modalities of collective resistance can emerge. Accompanied by artists and thinkers, we will reflect on ways of unlearning imperial approaches to the archive, of fabulating historical narratives for the future, of hearing testimonies mediated by translation and of navigating multilingualism within institutional dynamics. For this project, Qalqalah قلقلة's editorial collective is represented by Salma Mochtari and Virginie Bobin.

The detailed program is available below.

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Thursday November 3 at 6pm

Potential h/Histories

Online conversation with
Ariella Aïsha Azoulay

In her book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (Verso 2019), scholar of political theory and photography Ariella Aïsha Azoulay offers various tactics in order to refuse the narrative order imposed by the dominant, western onto-epistemological framework; and craft “nonimperial grammars”. As she writes: “Unlearning imperialism involves different types of “de-,” such as decompressing and decoding; “re-,” such as reversing and rewinding; and “un-” such as unlearning and undoing. (...) Such rehearsals in nonimperial political thinking and archival practice are not undertaken in preparation for an imminent day of reckoning, but rather as a mode of being with others differently.”

This conversation with Ariella Aïsha Azoulay inaugurates Qalqalah قلقله’s Research Affiliation with Tanzquartier and allows us to sketch some of the theoretical and methodological questions that we would like to enact during the rest of the program.

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, professor of Modern Culture and Media and of Comparative Literature, Brown University, film essayist and curator of archives and exhibitions. Selected books: *La résistance des bijoux. Contre les géographies coloniales* (Rôt-Bô-Krik, 2023); *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (Verso, 2019); *Civil Imagination: The Political Ontology of Photography* (Verso, 2012); exhibitions: *Errata* (Tapiès Foundation, 2019, HKW, Berlin, 2020), *Enough! The Natural Violence of New World Order*, (F/Stop photography festival, Leipzig, 2016); and films: *Like a jewel in the hand* (2022) and *Un-documented: Undoing Imperial Plunder* (2019).

The recording of the conversation can be viewed [here](#).

Thursday December 15 at 6pm

An infrastructural investigation
of a worldly future

Film screening and conversation between
Mohamed Abdelkarim (artist)
& Salma Mochtari (curator)

In Mohamed Abdelkarim’s recent work, fragmented fiction-narratives complicate the relationship between both notions of body and performativity by revisiting historical events and speculating future crises. He approaches moving image as a performative practice through which dissident bodies and unreliable stories come up against geopolitical infrastructures. Following the screening of selected short films, a conversation will take place between Mohamed Abdelkarim, curator and researcher Salma Mochtari (Qalqalah قلقله) and the audience.

Mohamed Abdelkarim is a performer, filmmaker, and researcher. He considers performance as a research method and a practice through which he produces texts and images. He employs and reflects on performative acts like narrating, singing, detecting, doing, fictioning, and recently, speculating. His current umbrella project focuses on the agency of the landscape as a witness of “a history we missed and a future we did not attend yet”. He is currently Ph.D. candidate at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna.



Mohamed Abdelkarim, *A Song For The Loose Destiny*, 2022, Filmstill, Courtesy of the Artist

Tuesday January 17 from 10am to 1pm

How (Not) to Disappear in Translation

Workshop with Virginie Bobin

'Interpreters are not used to speaking in their own name: it's a professional tic.'

'The interpreter disappears. Disappearing is just her expertise, her value.'

'I am not here. I must be invisible. It allows me to keep a certain distance.'

As part of a broader research on political and affective practices of translation, Virginie Bobin has been engaging in conversations with professional and volunteer interpreters working alongside people who have requested political asylum in France. In the framework of asylum rights, interpreters are daily exposed to stories of violence, which they are charged to render intelligible to the administration. They operate at the intersection of two regimes of truth: the storyteller's truth, which often 'overflows the boundaries of patriarchal time and truth' (Trinh T. Minh-ha); and the legal ears that evaluate their story according to specific criteria of credibility and evidence, in order to grant – or refuse – her access to a series of rights. Caught in-between, interpreters are expected to maintain strict neutrality, i. e. to 'disappear', a verb often recurring in the conversations. In reaction to this impossible demand, some of them explain that they learned to consider their interventions as a performance, as role play. Yet, when interpreters speak in their own name, what rather seems to emerge is a 'performance of witnessing' (Amber Jamila Musser), which exposes the mechanisms of power at play in the State management of exile.

During two workshops, Virginie Bobin invites participants to experiment with various modalities of reading, voicing, listening, and scoring around a script composed of excerpts from her conversations with interpreters. The script emphasises different relational, ethical, and political aspects of what occurs when translation intervenes to mediate and complicate processes of storytelling, witnessing and listening within the codified space of the law. The workshops will attempt to craft a space for listening together in-between the lines – to what has been silenced, unsaid or untranslated. By testing different ways of interpreting the script, we will consider how an affected practice of translation may elicit a more caring attunement to ‘impossible stories’ (Saidiya Hartman) and refuse neutrality and disappearance.

Monday January 16 from 5 to 7pm

A workshop open to professional and volunteer interpreters, as well as to persons who are active in the context of asylum rights in Vienna.

Tuesday January 17 from 10am to 1pm

A workshop open to all.

Participation is free of charge. Registration to both workshops is required. Please visit [Tanzquartier’s website](#) to register.

The main language of the workshops is English, although we will do our best to accommodate other languages and modalities of translation if necessary.

Virginie Bobin

Virginie Bobin develops collaborative projects that take the forms of exhibitions, publications, workshops, seminars, texts, translations or ongoing conversations with artists, curators, researchers, performers and art students. She is particularly interested in a feminist approach to translation as a feminist practice of unlearning with others, which is at the core of her PhD-in-practice research at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Vienna, 2018-2023).

In 2018, she co-founded QALQALAH قَلْقَلَة, an editorial and curatorial platform dedicated to the production, translation and circulation of artistic, theoretical and literary research in French, Arabic and English. Before that, she was Head of Programs at Villa Vassiliev, a Paris-based center for art, research and residencies, which she co-created in 2016. Previously, she worked for Bétonsalon – Center for Art and Research (Paris), Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam), Manifesta Journal (Amsterdam), Les Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers and Performa (New York). Recent curatorial projects include the exhibition and workshops series “Bestiario de Lengüitas,” with artist Mercedes Azpilicueta (CAC Brétigny, 2021; Museion Bolzano, 2020; CentroCentro Madrid, 2019); and “QALQALAH قَلْقَلَة: plus d’une langue,” co-curated with Victorine Grataloup (La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, 2021; CRAC Occitanie Sète, 2020). She is a member of Textwork’s editorial committee.

Salma Mochtari

Salma Mochtari is a researcher and curator based in Marseille. A member of the curatorial and editorial collective Qalqalah قَلْقَلَة since December 2020, she is since 2022 affiliated with the research cooperative of Clermont Métropole’s art school. Her research often stems from the conceptual circulations between the fields of art and contemporary philosophy. Based on the specific cases of archival absence and black studies, she works the present and future genealogies between contemporary, decolonial and queer critical studies, with the heritage of thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida or Judith Butler. In addition to discursive programming, her curatorial practice is based on forms of collective production through workshops, translation or fiction writing.

In the autumn of 2022, she is conducting with Qalqalah قَلْقَلَة a research residency on institutional disappearances jointly with artist Mounira al Solh and curator Line Ajan at the Kunstencentrum Buda (Belgium), and a discursive program with curator Virginie Bobin on the politics of truth-telling at Tanzquartier in Vienna (Austria).

She studied the management of artistic institutions at HEC Paris, and contemporary philosophy at the University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne and the University of Paris Nanterre. Between 2020 and 2022, she collaborated with KADIST Paris as discursive

curator, where she developed editorial and curatorial programming rooted in the political and societal issues of contemporary artistic practices.

<https://qalqalah.org/en/activities/enough-history>