

PONTBRIAND W.O.R.K.S.

| We_Others and myself_Research_Knowledge_Systems |



CHANTAL PONTBRIAND, is a contemporary art curator, critic, and art consultant, whose work is based on the exploration of questions of globalization and artistic heterogeneity. She has curated numerous international contemporary art events: exhibitions, international festivals and international conferences, mainly in photography, video, performance, dance and multimedia installation.

She founded and directed PARACHUTE contemporary art magazine (1975-2007). In parallel, she co-founded and directed the FIND (Festival International de Nouvelle Danse) in Montreal (1982 to 2003). In 2010, she was appointed Head of Exhibition Research and Development at Tate Modern in London; in 2012, founded PONTBRIAND W.O.R.K.S. [We_Others and myself_ Research_ Knowledge_Systems]. She became Associate Professor in Curatorial Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris (2012-2015).

Since 2017, she is developing SPHERE(S), a new type of international art event, based in Montreal, and writing a book titled *EXIL(E), Migration and Aesthetics*.

In 2013, she received the Governor General of Canada Award for an Outstanding Contribution in the Visual and Media Arts, in 2014, an Honorary Doctorate from Concordia University, Montreal, and the distinction of Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in France (Officer of the Arts and Letters Order of France). She is President of AICA-Canada since December 2018.

Chantal Pontbriand

Statement about the congress topic

In an era in which populism seems to be gaining ground, it is urgent to question what role art can play, or what effect it might have in enlightening the situation. Critical art strategies and protocols counter any form of obscurantism, fear and intimidation. Bringing forth the value of art writing at

this time is a necessary move. We must cultivate and experience the 'wind of thought', as said Hannah Arendt. 'Blowing in the wind' is the only possible attitude at this time.

How many roads must a man walk down

Before you call him a man?

How many seas must a white dove sail

Before she sleeps in the sand?

Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly

Before they're forever banned?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

The answer is blowin' in the wind. - Bob Dylan

Synopsis of lecture

THE WAY OF CONVERSATION

Ethics and aesthetics are inseparable. There is an ethics of aesthetics and aesthetics of the ethical. In a world in crisis, which should be seen as a positive thing, the many changes happening could only be productive if they bear an ethical stance. This can be driven from a different view of democracy than that of acting only after a consensus has been reached. It is possible that democracy only truly stems out of allowing dissonance to occur and play itself out in the open. What is truth today? The only thing it is not is on the side of lies, of purposefully inducing faith in the unlawful, in the devious, in risk, which leads to danger and violence. Truth is essentially manifold as it stems from a sincere venture into the unknown, unto the possible, into what the future holds. Populism, which flirts with false truths and banal consensus, is miles away from an ethics of the present. An ethics of difference (*une éthique du passant*), as Franz Fanon claimed was the necessary attitude to maintain. An ethics that admits change, movement, and new avenues to open up an ethics that admits the unforeseen and even seeks it out purposefully. For many, change or crisis is akin to risk or danger. Invention cannot avoid crisis or risk, or danger. Learning to deal with the upcoming future, a new world to be is learning to cope, and admit that democracy is change.

I feel that the most compelling artists of our times very well understand that reinventing the *demos*, the Greek agora is the only way to go. Seeing the world as a challenging place and finding ways to better understand change, transformations, and shifts. Art is akin to what tectonic plates are for the globe, a way to shake up ideas and ways of seeing and doing. A way to deal with major concerns and issues of our times by facing reality with imagination. And enabling conversation to exist, mature, and evolve. The only way to go in order to meet the future ahead of this new world the XXIst C is bringing about is the way of conversation, a place where ethics and aesthetics meet.

Two case studies will be articulated in this context, the work of Dora Garcia, and that of Kapwani Kiwanga.