



How to Have a Good Airtime by Julijonas Urbonas during the 5th Inter-format Symposium on Time, 2015. Photo by Andrej Vasilenko

[Call for contributions to the 9th Inter-format Symposium on the Fluidity of Humour and Absurdity](#)
June 28–30, 2019

Curators: Lívía Páldi (Hungary/Ireland) & Vytautas Michelkevičius (Lithuania)

The [symposium](#) this year is going to bring together around 50 artists, practitioners, and researchers who explore as well as question the role and critical potential of comedy, humour and the purpose of the absurd within contemporary art and related theories.

The Symposium will reflect on how we employ humour as a medium to ponder social, ecological, (cultural)-political complexities as well as the absurd situations they generate. It seeks to analyse humour and its various mechanisms, their ability to transform perception of ‘reality,’ break down stereotypes, challenge taboo subjects, and mainstream assumptions. It is going to test humour as a tool to raise and discuss sensitive issues regarding race, gender, class structure, ethnicity, sexuality, violence, and personal identity.

Comic communication (irony, satire, absurd humour, etc.) can often be undervalued, misplaced by sheer silliness or made difficult due to politically correct sensibilities. We believe that comic genres are often the best tools to lay bare the various absurdities in the art and academic world, to drive us out from our ‘professional bubble’, and have a different approach to the reality governed by populism. We propose challenging the often overserious character of conversation and reflect on the potential of humour as a tool of self-critique as well as self-reflection.

The participants will investigate the ways artistic and curatorial work can work around limitations of traditional comedy by bringing in references from art and cultural history as well as explore jokes as 'innovative actions' commenting on cultural, political and social complexities.

The idea of the Symposium also includes a regional touch. We wish to reflect on local post-socialist and post-soviet condition and various humorous and absurd situations that happen when the past meets the present, East meets West, periphery meets centre, art meets life, local meets global, e.g. when various contexts, narratives, temporalities meet. The sessions will partially be held in Lithuanian or other languages than English as humour is most often context-based and language-specific.

The Symposium hosts participants from different disciplines at Nida beach resort town in a relaxed atmosphere to rethink and transcend various strategies of humour and bridge genres that seem incompatible at first sight. Some possible activities are comic strip sculpture, stand-up comedy as academic lecture, satirical walking, absurd hiking, 'Humour SPA', etc.



Artist's walk / performance / talk *Unbecoming Sea* by Kira O'Reilly during the 6th Inter-format Symposium, 2016. Photo by Andrej Vasilenko

NATURE OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Over three days and nights, the transdisciplinary symposium engages in a dialogue between artistic, humorous, and scientific research with presentations and performances in the woods, in-between the moving dunes, inside various spaces of the Colony or on the coast lines (the seaside and lagoon). Different locations stimulate a further critical discussion of the topic and provide the ground for a relaxing and holiday like atmosphere where anything can happen.

The Symposium fluctuates between the forms of conference and festival, however, due to the remoteness most of the participants are active contributors. Some of the evening programme will be open for public, but the audience is rather limited. Besides, we are going to host 3–4 invited residents for up to 4 weeks to create new work. More information about the concept and format you may find in a documentation on previous symposia here:

<http://nidacolony.lt/en/projects/symposium>

FACTS

Confirmed participants: Žygimantas Kudirka (LT), Lissette Olivares (USA), Julijonas Urbonas (LT), Olav Westphalen (DE/SE), Gernot Wieland (AT/DE), and others.

Support: Selected participants receive limited travel support (up to 200 EUR), accommodation, and catering.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send your proposal with CV and/or portfolio to info@nidacolony.lt, indicating in the ‘participant symposium 2019’ by 15th of March.

Please indicate in your proposal (up to 388 words plain text and 3 images) preferred format, location and length of your contribution. Please consult the documentation of previous symposiums

Please link URL to your CV and portfolio if relevant (if needed attach 1 PDF file).

Symposium is organized by NGO MENE in collaboration with Nida Art Colony of VAA.

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