

# Technosphere × Knowledge

April 14–16, 2016

April 14, 7–10pm

## The Scenario Mode

With Peter Galison,  
Sander van der Leeuw,  
Claire Pentecost,  
Sebastian Vehlken  
Welcome by Katrin Klingan

FILM SCREENING · *Containment*

D: Peter Galison, Robb Moss,  
Japan/USA 2014, 81 min,  
English version

**April 15, 7–10pm**

## **Truth Measures**

**With Lawrence Abu Hamdan,  
Keith Breckenridge, Melanie Gilligan,  
Brian Holmes, Susan Schuppli  
Welcome by Anselm Franke**

April 16, 7–10pm

## Wisdom Techniques

With John Tresch, Jeremy Bolen & Andrew Yang,  
Sasha Engelmann & Bronislaw Szerszynski  
in collaboration with Tomás Saraceno,  
FORMATIONS (Alex Martinis Roe & Melanie Sehgal  
with Roman Brinzanik, Deborah Haaksman,  
Rebekka Ladewig, Julian Schubert, Hendrik Weber)  
Welcome by Christoph Rosol



## Truth Measures

Data, evidence, truth—these grades of the factual form an intricate reference system in which current social and juridical knowledge is established and maintained. More concretely, it is the meshwork of specific techniques and technologies for gathering and explicating these three categories that produce what is true and what is untrue. How is factual knowledge constituted within and through the technosphere? Can truth be measured? And what measures exist for finding, constructing, and proving legitimacy, fact, and reason? The evening examines how the concept of legal truth and truth finding is bound to the technical production of certainty, particularly in relation to the sophisticated means and practices by which truthfulness is meant to reveal itself. In current times, when quantification becomes ubiquitous, when economic and governmental systems of transparency meet a culture of excessive display, and when governmental techniques of interrogation transform human bodies into bodies of evidence, verification seems to be a matter of handling the data rightly.

7pm

Welcome by *Anselm Franke*

Audio-Essay

Contra Diction : Speech Against Itself*Lawrence Abu Hamdan*

What is the interrelationship between the human voice, governmental law and the concept of justice in the technosphere? In a live audio essay, a series of sonic manipulations and pre-recorded samples are employed to explore the concept and practice of *taqiyya*—the right to lie or a piece of Islamic jurisprudence that allows a believing individual to deny their faith or commit otherwise illegal acts while they are at risk of persecution or in a condition of statelessness. It is a form of communication and political practice forged at remote altitudes, at the fringes of failed states, in buffer zones and on cease-fire lines. Focusing on the stories of alleged mass conversions of the Druze minority in northern Syria by wahhabi groups, Abu Hamdan investigates how such minor speech acts can help re-appraising the precision of speaking, the multiple ways of remaining silent and the inherently unfaithful nature of one's voice.

LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN is an artist, "private ear" and currently a fellow at the Vera list center for Art and politics at the New School, NYC. His audio investigations have been submitted as evidence in the UK immigration and asylum tribunal and most recently his work was part of the No More Forgotten Lives campaign for Defence for Children International. The artist's forensic audio investigations are conducted as part of his research for Forensic Architecture at Goldsmiths, London, where he is also a PhD candidate. His solo exhibitions include, *Earshot* at Portikus Frankfurt (2016), *تقييت (taqiyya)* at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (2015), *Tape Echo* at Beirut in Cairo and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (2013)

Presentation

Biometric Capitalism: Infrastructures of Identification and Credit Risk on the African Continent in the 21st Century  
*Keith Breckenridge*

A new and distinctive variety of capitalism is currently taking form on the African continent. States are being remade under the pressures of rapid demographic growth, intractable conflicts over boundaries, domestic and international security demands, and the offerings of multi-lateral donors and international data-processing corporations. Much of this turns to enhanced forms of state surveillance that is common to societies across the globe, but the economic and institutional forms on the African continent are unusual. Automated biometric identification systems present former colonial states with apparently simple and cost-effective alternatives to the difficult and expensive projects of civil registration. In many African countries, commercial banks are offering to bear the costs of building centralized biometric population registers, explicitly having in mind the development of a national identification database and commercial credit risk scoring apparatus, a combination that aims to transform all citizens into appropriate subjects for automated debt appraisal.

KEITH BRECKENRIDGE is a Professor and Deputy Director at Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, and one of the editors of *The Journal of African History*. He writes about the cultural and economic history of South Africa, particularly the gold mining industry, the state and the development of information systems. His interest in the history and contemporary politics of biometrics has also drawn him in to the global institutional history of state documentation, especially the forms of birth, death and marriage registration that are ubiquitous (but very poorly understood) in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

8pm

Discussion

Technosphere Truth?

With *Lawrence Abu Hamdan*,  
*Keith Breckenridge* and *Susan Schuppli*,  
introductory statement by  
Susan Schuppli

Have we entered a different systemic quality in the production of legal truth within and through technological environments and arrangements? Does a “technospheric” agency become visible in refurbishing bodies of evidence? The discussion pins down the basis of governmental or other regulative systems in the production of truthful knowledge.

SUSAN SCHUPPLI is an artist and writer based in London. Her research practice examines media artefacts that emerge out of sites of contemporary conflict and state violence to ask questions about the ways in which media are enabling or limiting the possibility of transformative politics. Her current work explores the ways in which toxic ecologies from nuclear accidents and oil spills to the dark snow of the arctic are producing an “extreme image” archive of material wrongs. She is Senior Lecturer and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, London. Previously she was an Associate Professor in visual/media arts at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

9pm

Dialogue

The Common Sense

With *Melanie Gilligan* and *Brian Holmes*

Technologies change people—their attitudes, behavior, and bodies. Melanie Gilligan’s experimental narrative sci-fi mini-series tells a story of the future technology “The Patch”, a sort of prosthesis which makes it possible to directly experience the physical sensations and feelings of another person. After a decade of transforming the conditions of work and social life, the technology’s networks suddenly fail causing massive disorientation.

We increasingly define and shape our minds, our bodies, and the way we live and interact within a capitalist system in and through technologies. What, then, is the reverberation of such an “embodied” and intimate scenario of the technosphere? What is the speculative and critical power of its imagination?

MELANIE GILLIGAN, based in New York, works in video, performance, installation, and music. She studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, London, and was a Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program, Manhattan. She regularly contributes to publications, such as *Artforum*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *Mute*, and *Grey Room*. Selected solo exhibitions include those at *Künstlerhaus*, *Halle für Kunst & Medien*, Graz (2016), *de Appel arts centre*, Amsterdam (2015), *De Hallen Haarlem* and *Casco*, Utrecht (2014). She contributed to group shows at *Trondheim kunstmuseum*, *Museo Jumex*, Mexico City (2016), *British Art Show 8*, Leeds (2015), *Dojima River Biennale*, Osaka (2015), *Fridericianum*, Kassel (2015), and *MoMA PS1*, New York (2014).

BRIAN HOLMES is an art and cultural critic with a taste for philosophy and on-the-ground intervention. Living in Paris from 1990 to 2009, he collaborated with political art groups such as *Ne Pas Plier*, *Bureau d’Études*, *Public Netbase*, *Hackitectura* and *Makrolab*, and published in *Multitudes*, *Springerin* and *Brumaria*. With *Claire Pentecost* and the *16 Beaver Group* he co-organized the *Continental Drift* seminars in New York. His essays revolve around art, free cooperation, the network society, political economy, and grass-roots resistance. He currently teaches at the University of Illinois.



## Technosphere 2015–18

*Technosphere x Knowledge* is the second event within the framework of *Technosphere 2015–18*. In a collaborative undertaking with international scientists and artists, the project explores how technical, social, and ecological forces have become wired to create the contemporary global structure. How can this new network be understood and described? How can one live and act within it? Introduced by the geosciences as a means to understand the man-made ecology of new materials, built environments, energy and mobility infrastructures on planetary scale, the concept of the “technosphere” enables a critical examination of the omnipresence and power of technical systems whose often unintended consequences and internal dynamics have coalesced to form a quasi-autonomous power.  
→ [hkw.de/technosphere](http://hkw.de/technosphere)

## Anthropocene Curriculum Campus: The Technosphere Issue

What forms of knowledge production, education and mediation are capable of meeting the challenges of a new human geological era? From April 14 to 22, 2016, the second edition of the *Anthropocene Campus*, a transdisciplinary teaching and learning experiment, will be held. It explores and tests new and critical fields of knowledge together with 200 scientists, artists, and cultural practitioners. This time the Campus examines the technosphere as a model for understanding the interactions between human, technological, cultural, environmental, and industrial spheres.  
→ [hkw.de/en/campus](http://hkw.de/en/campus)

A new component of the Earth system is emerging today, comparable in scale and function to the bio- and hydrosphere. It is driven by the intertwining of natural environments with vast socio-technical forces and an increasingly diverse array of “technological species”. *Technosphere x Knowledge* investigates the interlacing between this technosphere and current modes of knowledge production—how both condition, sustain, and multiply each other. Without modern science there is no technosphere, without the technosphere there is no contemporary knowledge. On the one hand, contemporary knowledge allows for the theoretical understanding and technical mastery of energy and matter, and, thereby, the existence of a technosphere itself. On the other hand, it is the technosphere that arranges, shapes, and propels current knowledge, for example, through media of data pooling and processing, institutionalized evidence production, and the anthropotechniques of learning and comprehending. These three evenings critically investigate exemplary practices and modes of what might be termed “technospherical knowledge,” its reciprocal facilitation and stabilization, the self-fulfilling prophecies and dead-ends this liaison implies, as well as the urgency and utopian potential it entails. It examines the technical means to speculate about an unknowable future, questions the metrics and measures of juridical evidence, and entrains alternative techniques and practices of knowing, sensing, and experiencing.

→ [hkw.de/txk](http://hkw.de/txk)

#technosphere

Part of 100 Years of Now

Concept and Realisation: Katrin Klingan, Christoph Rosol  
with Anna Sophie Luhn, Janek Müller and Nick Houde



Haus der Kulturen der Welt  
John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10  
10557 Berlin

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