

The New Alphabet

Opening Days

The New Alphabet. Opening Days
Thu–Sun, Jan 10–13, 2019
Free admission

As of Jan 10, 2019
Subject to change

HKW

Haus der Kulturen der Welt

Press Release

**The New Alphabet
2019–2021**

Opening Days

Performances, Discussions, Installations, Concerts

Jan 10–13, 2019

Opening: Jan 10, 2019, 4.30 pm

(Un-)Learning Place

International Campus

Public plenum and performance

Jan 13, 2019, 1.30 pm

The **program leaflet** and **short interviews** with Julia Voss, Dirk von Lowtzow (Tocotronic), Slavs and Tatars, Johannes Krause and Lorraine Daston can be found [here](#).

Berlin, Jan 10, 2019

Are binary codes, algorithms, and DNA the alphabets of today? The current explosion of knowledge is accompanied by the segmentation of the world into the smallest units. The binary code – with only two elements the greatest abstraction of the alphabetical principle – reduces the polymorphism of the analog and makes it calculable. From 2019 until 2021, *The New Alphabet* will spell out both utopias and dystopias. In performances, concerts, talks, films and installations, the *Opening Days* from January 10 to 13, 2019 will explore moments of alphabetization from the Baroque era to the present day.

Curator and HKW director **Bernd Scherer**: “Against the background of extractive, digital capitalism that permanently transforms expressions of life into commodities, thus changing the knowledge society into a collecting society, we must focus on recovering the diversity of perspectives on both a social and personal level.”

Projects in synthetic biology and artificial intelligence are based on an interpretation of life as code that can be decrypted and thus manipulated. How objective are data? What social structures of power and ownership reasoning do they reproduce? What linguistic developments are accompanied by the data shape of knowledge? What is suppressed? Who dominates the new order of knowledge? And what ethical questions are raised by these “alphabetizations”? What happens between 1 and 0?

At HKW, artists, researchers and musicians will deal with these questions from January 10 to 13. The *Opening Days* will begin with an evening about the willfulness of human expression and the poetic power of theory. In a walk-in theater with five panels, **Alexander Kluge** presents conversations on the invention of writing, on DNA and on molecular coding. Is linguistic diversity possible in the age of digitization? How diversified are today’s technological developments? **Emily Apter, Kate Crawford, Yuk Hui, Luc Steels, Hito Steyerl** and many others will question what is untranslatable, what is suppressed or rationalized away. What does it mean to be multilingual in a digitized world? Is there one language of art, poetry, music or law? And what writing systems can still be discovered aside from discrete characters? From **Sandeep Bhagwati**’s two-day musical composition, from resistant acts of weaving to countering virtual dispossession, **Ivonne González** and the **Black Guiris Collective, Diana McCarty, Olivier Marboeuf, Yucef Merhi, Éric Sadin, Odete Semedo** and other participants will probe examples of subversive alphabet production in anticolonial contexts.

Press Release

Throughout all of HKW during the *Opening Days* video installations by **Kader Attia, Giulia Bruno & Armin Linke** and **Filipa César**, films by **Alexander Kluge** in scenic images by **Thilo Albers**, cocoons by **knowbotiq** invite visitors to navigate the infrastructures of new alphabets.

Alongside this, the *(Un-)Learning Place* (January 9-13) brings together 80 international scholars and eight Berlin-based collectives in order to develop transdisciplinary, decolonial and anti-hegemonic strategies in relation to data-based knowledge systems, translations, archives, institutions and physical formations in a scenography by Raumlabor Berlin.

Following the long-term projects **The Anthropocene Project** (2013–2015) and **100 Years of Now** (2015–2019), the project **The New Alphabet** (2019–2021) will close the circle of the trilogy of present-day analysis at HKW.

With **Emily Apter, Kader Attia, Joana Barrios, Sandeep Bhagwati, Filipa César, Ann Cotten, Kate Crawford, Lorraine Daston, Simon Denny, Karin Harrasser, Yuk Hui, Alexander Kluge, Sybille Krämer, Armin Linke & Giulia Bruno, Yucef Merhi, Trevor Paglen, Odete Semedo, Helge Schneider, Slavs and Tatars, Felix Stalder, Hito Steyerl, Yoko Tawada, Joseph Vogl** among others.

Curated by **Bernd Scherer** in collaboration with **Olga von Schubert**

Interviews and further information: presse@hkw.de
Press images ready for download hkw.de/en/pressphotos

More about the project: hkw.de/en/DNA

The New Alphabet (2019–2021) is supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media based on a ruling by the German Bundestag. **Haus der Kulturen der Welt** is supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media as well as by the Federal Foreign Office.

Service Info

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Interview requests and further information: presse@hkw.de

Press photos ready for download: hkw.de/pressphotos

Photos from the opening will be ready for download on the next day from 11am onwards:

hkw.de/pressphotos

Further images upon request

Further information can be found daily at hkw.de/en/dna

Facebook: www.facebook.com/hkw.de

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#TheNewAlphabet