

EINLADUNG ZUM KOLLOQUIUM

Melanie Sehgal und Alex Wilkie

(Wuppertal und London)

„Beyond the Bifurcation of Nature: Rethinking Aesthetics in Contemporary Knowledge Practices“

What if aesthetics were no longer bound to the arts, the beautiful, sublime or even to the realm of subjectivity? In our talk, we explore the possibilities of a novel paradigm in aesthetics, predicated on rejecting the modern compartmentalisation of aesthetics into a realm separate from science, technology, law, the economy and their attendant practices. On the one hand, science and technology studies have begun to consider the role of aesthetics in technoscience, for instance concerning the role of affect in biomedicine, laboratory practices, energy demand reduction, public engagement with science and technology as well as the public production of truth in legal and mediated practices. On the other hand, within social and cultural research and philosophy a new paradigm in aesthetic thinking promises to re-invigorate how aesthetics is understood to operate as a principal aspect of existence of humans and non-humans alike. Our talk develops such a radically expanded understanding of aesthetics drawing on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and his rejection of the 'bifurcation of nature' and sketches out how such an expanded notion of aesthetics operates in contemporary knowledge practices.

Melanie Sehgal is Director of Research at the Institut für Grundlagenforschung zur Philosophiegeschichte at Bergische Universität Wuppertal. Her work is situated at the crossroads of process philosophy, the environmental humanities, STS, aesthetics and the history and historiography of philosophy. She is the author of *Eine situierte Metaphysik. Empirismus und Spekulation bei William James und Alfred North Whitehead* (Konstanz University Press, 2016). Currently, she is working on a book on the 'Arts of a New Climatic Regime'.

Alex Wilkie is Reader in Design and Social Science at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research interests combine aspects of social science, notably STS, with experimental design research which variously engage practices and politics of design, energy-demand reduction, healthcare, human-computer interaction and participation. He is co-author of *Energy Babble* (Mattering Press), and co-editor of *Studio Studies* (Routledge, 2015), *Speculative Research* (Routledge, 2017) and *Inventing the Social* (Mattering Press, 2018).

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