

## Performing Protest

08 May 2014

10 May 2014

Conference

Re-Imagining the Good Life in Times of Crisis

Organised by the University of Leuven (Department of Literary Studies); University of Leipzig, LUCA - School of Arts; University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies); Verona University

### Keynote Speakers

**Franziska Schössler (University of Trier)****Lieven de Cauter (KU Leuven)****Liberate Tate (Artist Collective)****Ingolfur Blühdorn (Bath)**

In 2011, *Time Magazine* named the 'protester' person of the year, arguing that protest has become 'the defining trope of our times' and the protester 'a maker of history.'

More than anything, however, this making of history is a creative process. The post-democratic experience of disempowerment at the grass-roots level of many European societies coincides with the urgent need for new visions of social prosperity and well-being as revealed by the recent crisis of economic, environmental and social sustainability.

In the wake of this multiple sustainability crisis, unexpected forms of political and cultural activism (e.g. Occupy, Femen, Indignados, Wutbürger) have gained momentum and public visibility. Under the close scrutiny of an equally hopeful and skeptical public, these protest cultures are reconsidering older revolutionary positions and forging new cross-cultural visions of alternative well-being.

While counter-cultural protest movements had already been a motor of major socio-cultural change in Europe, they have been profoundly reconditioned by complex trends of (dis)engagement, (de)politicisation, (trans)nationalisation and (post)democracy since the mid-1990s.

The three-day international conference *Performing Protest: Re-Imagining the Good Life in Times of Crisis* draws attention to protest movements, activist arts (literature, film, performance, theatre, visual arts), theoretical considerations of protest, and the dynamic interaction between them. It discusses these modes of engagement with a special focus on artistic practices that imagine social well-being and respond to the experience of political disempowerment and democratic dysfunctionality. Fostering dialogue between scholars, arts performers and political activists it questions the extent to which artistic practice opens up new forms of protest and articulates new models of democratic participation while also testing their viability in virtual concretisation.

What will be discussed is thus the role of artistic production as a test arrangement, both probing and problematising new models of civic participation.

Since participants will include academics as well as artistic practitioners and policy makers, this event aims at fostering a true interdisciplinary and interartistic dialogue, in which the study of literature, film, visual arts and theatre goes along with theoretical and philosophical reflection on discourses of protest and visions of utopia.

In order to integrate different approaches and viewpoints, the conference will employ a variety of formats of interaction, ranging from academic papers over workshops and roundtable discussions to performances and screenings.

Click [here](#) for an overview of the debates, artists' talks, performances, lecture-performances, screenings and journal presentations.

### Registration deadline is 14 April 2014

The conference fee is € 70 for three days, or € 25 for one day. Artists and scholars without institutional affiliations are entitled to a reduced conference fee of € 40 (or € 15 for one day).

Please download the registration form for presenters [here](#); if you want to attend the conference and you are not presenting a paper, please fill out [this form](#) and return it to us either by normal mail (see the address on our contact page) or as an email attachment to [performingprotest@kuleuven.be](mailto:performingprotest@kuleuven.be) before April 14.

All Master and MLS students are very welcome to participate in the conference activities. Entrance is free. Please register by sending an email to [performingprotest@kuleuven.be](mailto:performingprotest@kuleuven.be)

### Organising Committee

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**Website**

Stien Stessens

[www.performingprotest.com](http://www.performingprotest.com)

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