

# dOCUMENTA (13), 2012

*Statement by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev:*



dOCUMENTA (13) is dedicated to artistic research and forms of imagination that explore commitment, matter, things, embodiment, and active living in connection with, yet not subordinated to, theory.

These are terrains where politics are inseparable from a sensual, energetic, and worldly alliance between current research in various scientific and artistic fields and other knowledges, both ancient and contemporary. dOCUMENTA (13) is driven by a holistic and non-logocentric vision that is skeptical of the persisting belief in economic growth. This vision is shared with, and recognizes, the shapes and practices of knowing of all the animate and inanimate makers of the world, including people.

The exhibition in Kassel aims at engaging with a site and, at the same time, producing a polylogue with other places.

dOCUMENTA (13) is located in an apparent simultaneity of places and times, and it is articulated through four main positions corresponding to conditions in which people, in particular artists and thinkers, find themselves acting in the present. Far from being exhaustive of all the positions that a subject can take, they acquire their significance in their interrelation. The four conditions that are put into play within the mental and the real spaces of the project are the following:

- On **stage**. I am playing a role, I am a subject in the act of re-performing.
- Under **siege**. I am encircled by the other, besieged by others.
- In a state of **hope**, or optimism. I dream, I am the dreaming subject of anticipation.

- On **retreat**. I am withdrawn, I choose to leave the others, I sleep.

These four conditions relate to the four locations in which dOCUMENTA (13) is physically and conceptually sited -**Kassel, Kabul, Alexandria/Cairo**, and **Banff**. These places are phenomenal spatialities that embody the four conditions, blurring the associations that are typically made with those places and conditions, and which are instead constantly shifting and overlapping.

Each position is a state of mind, and relates to time in a specific way: while the retreat suspends time, being on stage produces a vivid and lively time of the here and now, the continuous present; while hope releases time through the sense of a promise, of time opening up and being unending, the sense of being under siege compresses time, to the degree that there is no space beyond the elements of life that are tightly bound around us.

Artists, artworks, and events occupy these four positions simultaneously. In Kassel, besides the traditional main venues of documenta, the Fridericianum, the documenta-Halle, and the Neue Galerie — museum spaces and white cubes — dOCUMENTA (13) takes place in a variety of other spaces that represent different physical, psychological, historical, cultural realms and realities. It takes place in spaces devoted to natural and technical science, such as the Ottoneum and the Orangerie. And it takes place in little components throughout the Baroque Karlsaue park, suggesting a particular mode of proximity by way of the spatially diffused aggregation of elements that also maintains their own singularities. Counterparts to the park are the industrial spaces behind the former Hauptbahnhof, once Kassel's main train station but now only used for local transport — a dystopian space connected to the factory world that produced the military tanks for the National Socialist regime in the twentieth century and that is still adjacent to the factories. And it takes place in a variety of "bourgeois" spaces of a different order, off the main

venues, places that are still in normal use or, on the other hand, places that have been forgotten and "removed."

dOCUMENTA (13) takes a spatial or, rather, "locational" turn, highlighting the significance of a physical place, but at the same time aiming for dislocation and for the creation of different and partial perspectives — an exploration of micro-histories on varying scales that link the local history and reality of a place with the world, and the worldly.

(From press information)