

This talk rethinks national citizenship as “technology of the will.” And it reflects on willfulness as political art – a political art which deals in the field of the ongoing difficulty of speaking about racism, as well as queer of colour activism. According to national citizenship the “would be” citizen must be willing to will what the nation wills; to make their will conditional on the national will. More specifically the talk reflects on the national will as the general will which is defined against the particular will, or the will of the part. The general will creates parts, and demands that those who are part not only participate but are willing to reproduce the whole. I suggest that when parts are willing, they recede from view. The parts that are not willing to reproduce the whole are attributed as willful – and become the potential agents of the art of willfulness.

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The talk is organized in cooperation with Professor Beate Binder (Institute for European Ethnology and Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies, Humboldt University Berlin).

The lecture is part of the series **The Subtle Racializations of Sexuality: Queer Theory, the Aftermath of Colonial History, and the Late-Modern State** organized by Antke Engel, Institute for Queer Theory, in cooperation with the ICI Berlin.

Western states happily turn to gender and sexual politics in order to demonstrate their presumed progressiveness. They find support from some parts of feminist and LGBTI activism that regard (neo)liberal state and diversity policies as instrumental for achieving integration and recognition. Such alliances have recently been criticized for fostering new social divisions and endorsing occidentalist and sometimes racist premises. Interested in the nuances of this critique, the lecture series brings together theoretical and political considerations developed from anti-racist, queer of color and/or migrant perspectives on late-modern and neoliberal state policies. The speakers will analyze the sexual imaginaries that organize Western publics and develop queer counter narratives. Fatima El Tayeb, Antonia Chao, Drucilla Cornell, and Cathy Cohen will be among the next speakers.



Sara Ahmed On Not Becoming a National Part

Willfulness as Political Art

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