

Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

Critical Conversations: Paul B. Preciado with Jack Halberstam
21 February 2020, 7pm



Paul B. Preciado. Photo: Marie Rouge

The Institute of Contemporary Arts is pleased to present a public conversation with Paul B. Preciado, one of the leading figures in the study of gender and sexual politics, who will be joined by renowned queer theorist Jack Halberstam. Their conversation will address agency, gender, dissent and subjectivity. Building on Preciado and Halberstam's respective bodies of work, this conversation expands on forms of living beyond the constraints of encoded gender.

Following the ICA's previous public Q&As with technologist Chelsea Manning in 2018 and postcolonial theorist Professor Homi K. Bhabha in 2019, this discussion forms part of the ICA's newly titled series Critical Conversations. Featuring globally renowned figures who have contributed to social change within the worlds of culture, philosophy and activism, this regular series of landmark lectures and conversations addresses the most pressing issues of our time.

Preciado's contributions to queer theory and gender studies have expanded the critical landscape foregrounding biopolitics and its intersections with gender, capitalism and heteronormativity. His book *Countersexual Manifesto* (Columbia University Press, 2018) is a key text for contemporary queer activism, deconstructing the naturalisation of normative identities and behaviours. The publication *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (Feminist Press, 2013) is a 'body-essay', framed by his experience of self-administering testosterone. In the book, Preciado proposes the term 'pharmacopornographic' to describe the reproductive, bodily and social control imposed by the pharmaceutical and pornography industries and late capitalism.

Halberstam is a queer and gender theorist whose work on queer failure, subcultures, pop culture and trans identity has unpacked the position of queerness in contemporary culture. In *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (NYU Press, 2005), Halberstam proposes a conception of time beyond a heteronormative familial structure. More recently, in *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability* (University of California Press, 2018), Halberstam examines the effects of trans hypervisibility, exploring the recent shifts in gender embodiment and its contemporary regulations while proposing possibilities of nongendered or gender-optional queer futures.

The conversation also marks the UK publication of Preciado's most recent book, *An Apartment on Uranus* (Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020). The book chronicles Preciado's transition while drawing on socio-political issues including the rise of neo-fascism in Europe, the migrant crisis, the Zapatista struggle in Mexico, the fight for Catalanian independence, sex work, Trump's America, the harassment of trans children, and the technological appropriation of the uterus to make a radical argument for a new gender politics. Preciado proposes to move from identity politics into a large 'transfeminist' alliance against colonial patriarchal capitalism.

For further information, images and to request interviews, please contact:

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VISITOR INFORMATION

Critical Conversations: Paul B. Preciado with Jack Halberstam
21 February 2020, 7pm
Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London, SW1Y 5AH

Admission: £16.66 Full

£13 Green Members and those aged under 18 or over 65, disabled people, job seekers and unwaged people, Westminster residents and education groups

£11 Blue Members

Free for Red Members

Priority booking is available for Red Members from 12pm Tuesday 7 January.
General tickets on sale from 12pm Thursday 9 January.

For information about tickets and membership, please contact:

sales@ica.art / +44 (0) 20 7930 3647 / www.ica.art

NOTES TO EDITORS

Paul B. Preciado is a writer, philosopher, curator, and one of the leading thinkers in the study of gender and sexual politics. He is the author of *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (The Feminist Press, 2013), *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics* (Zone Books, 2014) and *Countersexual Manifesto* (Columbia University Press, 2018). He was previously Director of the Independent Studies Program at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona and Curator of Public Program at documenta 14 (Athens/Kassel). He is currently Associated Philosopher at the Pompidou Center in Paris.

Jack Halberstam is Professor of Gender Studies and English at Columbia University. Halberstam is the author of *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke University Press, 1995), *Female Masculinity* (Duke University Press, 1998), *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (NYU Press, 2005), *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011) and *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (Beacon Press, 2012) and, most recently, *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variance* (University of California Press, 2018). Halberstam is currently working on two books on 'wildness': the first, titled *WILD THINGS: THE DISORDER OF DESIRE* will be published in autumn 2020. The second, which is in progress, is titled *THE WILD BEYOND: ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ANARCHY*.

This event is part of **Critical Conversations**, an ICA series of lectures and conversations with internationally recognised figures from the worlds of culture, philosophy and activism. Critical Conversations focuses on the voices of individuals who have made substantial contributions to both the idea and practice of social change.

Founded in 1946 by a collective of artists, poets and their supporters, the **Institute of Contemporary Arts** is an independent organisation and registered charity which supports the most pressing debates in contemporary culture. The ICA stages groundbreaking exhibitions, performances and keynote lectures by many of the world's leading thinkers. Previously home to the Independent Group, the ICA played a pivotal role in the development of pop art and charted the course of punk, performance art and independent cinema. The ICA staged the first institutional exhibitions

by Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Tacita Dean, Damien Hirst, Mike Kelley, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Gerhard Richter, Dieter Roth, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, and Cosey Fanni Tutti and early exhibitions by Bernadette Corporation, Robert Mapplethorpe, Steve McQueen and Tino Sehgal; many historic performances including those by Laurie Anderson, Einstürzende Neubauten and Yoko Ono; legendary concerts by The Clash, Throbbing Gristle, The Smiths, David Bowie and The Beastie Boys; and critical discussions by the likes of Kathy Acker, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha. The ICA Cinema and its dedicated artist's film programme continue to showcase independent film and support pioneering filmmakers including Chantal Akerman, Kenneth Anger, Matthew Barney, Derek Jarman, Ken Loach and Laura Poitras. From its home on The Mall – the geographic heart of the UK establishment – the ICA is an organisation in which different modes of cultural production thrive on the mutual engagement with one another, and a programme that speaks to the challenges of the 21st century. www.ica.art



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