

Quantum Knowledge: States, Systems, Fictions

Spring Symposium

As part of the symposium series *Gender and Equality in the Arts*

2 – 3 April 2025

Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW

On-site and online:

Auditorium D 1.04, Tower Building, Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW

→ [LIVESTREAM](#)

With contributions by Karen Barad, Mónica Bello, Johanna Bruckner, Mayte Gómez Molina, Adam Haar Horowitz, Nicole L’Huillier, Amanda E. Metzger, Manaswi Mishra, Jenna Sutela, Spencer Topel and James Wootton, and Suzanne Treister

Moderated by Chus Martínez and Quinn Latimer

Research: Marion Ritzmann

Press: Anna Francke

The symposium is open to the public and will be held in English.
Free admission.

More information and program: dertank.ch

Quantum Knowledge: States, Systems, Fictions is a symposium dedicated to reconsidering the social and the scientific together. Beginning from those quantum discoveries and tools that allow us to sense the world in a deeper and more relational way, we might examine the inherent possibilities of quantum knowledges to preserve and expand the values we believe in as integral to a democratic society. As Karen Barad, keynote speaker of this symposium, notes: “The so-called uncertainty principle in quantum physics is not a matter of ‘uncertainty’ at all but rather of indeterminacy.” If scientific and technological revolutions are often victims of unfortunate appropriations that expose them only as a danger to the social good and our planetary contract, we believe that with the help of a good science, such nascent technologies and new forms of intelligence need not be placed in opposition to art, equity, and justice. Over the course of two days at Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW, a gathering of esteemed thinkers, physicists, artists, composers, computer scientists, curators, and technologists will discuss how quantum ideas and practices have irrevocably shaped their work and their thinking—artistic or otherwise—and how they might alter our own.

You may ask yourself: Why discuss quantum theories within the context of artistic practice? What is the meaning of “quantum knowledges”? From ancient times humans have been interested in questioning the cosmos about its existence. Many cultures have long combined observation and mathematics with the production of myths and magical narratives to create eloquent ways of describing and explaining our place in the world. Quantum names a paradigm that defies our common sense, a model that explains how space, time, matter, and light exchange information and create a network of events. These events are diverse aspects and dimensions of life that are connected in ways we are still learning to understand. Art is not physics, no, yet it can be deeply committed to illuminating a world free of the prejudices and

biases that the weak human senses have imposed upon the description of the real. We believe that it is fundamental—given the developments that technology has currently taken—to create a ground where artistic and scientific practices can be discussed and elaborated on together.

If the quantum sciences embody a continuous exploration of myriad ways of thinking oriented toward revealing new regions of reality and relationality, art practices constitute an exercise in including subjectivity, materiality, relational ontology, and the mysteries of poetry into this journey. The current state of quantum science, with the development of quantum computers less than a decade away, is facing the challenge of unveiling a new set of images of the world, while facing us with unprecedented ethical questions that deeply disrupt the social and ecological contract. For this reason, awareness of the limits of our current epistemologies equals awareness of the fact that what we know may be wrong. And the courage to accept new paradigms to explain the underlying structures of our world and our experience of them should include the courage to accept that no paradigm has the monopoly and that we need to create co-existent ways of approaching the real.

Quantum Knowledge: States, Systems, Fictions is held in conjunction with the UN's *International Year of Quantum Science and Technology*.

The symposium is dedicated to the memories of Alan Longino and Yutaka Matsuzawa.

Technical team

Emily Harries, Charlotte Horn, Katharina Kemmerling, Marco Mastrogiacomo, Daniele Praiano, Konrad Sigl

Following the first day of the symposium, on 2 April 2025, from 5.30 pm, the exhibition *The Cat in the Box* will open at Atelier Mondial in Basel/Münchenstein. The show takes up the symposium's subjects and will feature works by Shadwa Ali, Nikki Middlemiss, Elia Setiadi, Seraina Semmelroggen, and Olivia Vidovic. Curated by Filipa Ramos, *The Cat in the Box* is on view until 13 April, and is a collaboration between Atelier Mondial and Institute Art Gender Nature HGK Basel FHNW.

ateliermondial.com

Karen Barad's participation in the symposium is hosted jointly with the University of Basel's Center for Gender Studies.

genderstudies.philhist.unibas.ch

Institute Art Gender Nature
Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW
Freilager-Platz 1
4142 Basel / Münchenstein
info.iagn.hgk@fhnw.ch
dertank.ch

Press contact:

Anna Francke, anna.francke@fhnw.ch, +41 61 228 43 25