09 2014

The University of Ignoramuses

20 years of maiz | call for papers - deadline 30.09.2014

maiz

"… mourning, we dare" -- *We refuse to celebrate our twenty years conventionally. Despite every reason to mourn … persistence of utopias, hope, ethical outrage and struggle. Never again an Austria without us!*

Exactly twenty years ago, in 1994, maiz, a self-organization for and by migrant women, came into being. Not incidentally, we began our work during a period that was characterized, on the one hand, by the expansion of neoliberal policies -- fueled by Francis Fukuyama's proclamation of the "end of history" after the collapse of the Soviet states-, and on the other hand, by the emergence of political resistance movements such as the Zapatista uprising in the Mexican region of Chiapas.

maiz is located in the heart of a city whose history and visual appearance was significantly shaped by National Socialism: Linz. To this day, the multifaceted dimensions of the National Socialist extermination policies can be seen and felt in the Upper Austrian capital. As migrants, we claimed this central and historically significant place for us. Through our presence, we have

appropriated it as a public space for participation and for the struggle against patriarchal and heteronormative structures and violence – against capitalist exploitation, unequal political power relations, racist isolation, sexism and homophobia. Migrants are forcing, broadening and inventing room for maneuver in these iconic spaces of the topography of terror.

Twenty years of maiz means twenty years of contra-hegemonic praxis, the articulation of resistance and the postcolonial incorporation in the sense of "cultural anthropophagy." maiz is borne by the strategic decision to intervene in the hegemonic production of knowledge, to seek out spaces for migrants where there are none -- fully aware of the danger of monopolization and of the conflicts that such an intervention causes, of the entanglement in social relations and thus also contradictions.
It is our intention to set impulses for displacements, bring about change and, in the process, question ourselves. We want to reject and design questions, questions that create fractures and irritation, that make paradoxes, antagonisms and the necessity of a change of perspective visible.

maiz's feminist take-over of the anthropophagic concept shifts the contexts -- it's about a displacement of borders, an emancipatory appropriation of space and thus about resistance against the exoticization of the "other." It is important to not only ask what is being spoken about, but also who speaks for whom and what is recognized when and why as legitimate knowledge.
In order to have a fundamental discussion about the current gender-specific and racist international division of labor and the migration related to it, we demand to be a part of the attempts at decolonization. In the process, we consider theory and praxis as well as education and power in terms of their entanglements.

To give more space to utopias and to the discussions surrounding the epistemic dimension of our praxis, maiz decided to found the University of Ignoramuses. The starting point of our university is the realization that everyone is ignorant, as long as bodies of knowledge are possessed and knowledge continues to be produced without a critical reflection of the power dimension and the violent processes of legitimization and de-legitimization of knowledge and without implementing the resulting consequences in praxis. Our utopia is the collaborative production of contra- hegemonic knowledge. In order to organize and continually further this attempt, it is absolutely necessary to consider violent ignorance (permitted ignorance) as well as the concept of reciprocal learning/ teaching (nobody is "tabula rasa").
With our work in and at the university, we want to inscribe our doing in the tradition of other struggles that attempt to minimize the distance between intellectual work and political activism, theory and praxis, and to produce knowledge in order to "change the world! We are going off. With our many questions. Walking, we will find one or two answers and more questions. The answers we find because we are walking" (Zapatistas).

For the opening event of the founding of our university, within the framework of "Twenty Years of maiz – Anthropophagic Week," we have invited theoreticians who connect their pedagogic/academic work with political activism and social interventions. Lecturing and discussing are:

- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
  Columbia University
- Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez
  Universität Gießen
- Shirley Tate
  University of Leeds, Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies

- Yuderkys Espinosa
  Glefas -- Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudio, Formación y Acción Feminista
- Marina Gržinić
  Slowenische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste, Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien
- Maria do Mar Castro Varela
  Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin
- Pelin Tan
  Silent University Istanbul
  Mardin Architecture Faculty
- Araba Evelyn
  Johnston-Arthur Howard University Washington, Pamoja Wien (angefragt)
- Nikita Dhawan (angefragt)
  Goethe-Universität Frankfurt a.M. (angefragt)

Who can participate and how

- Who: Anyone who is interested in contra-hegemonic knowledge productions and open to discussion and is able to participate without pay: activists, academics and non-academics, migrants, but also non-migrants, artists, revolutionaries ...
- How: With lectures and discussions, workshops, performances, film and video presentations, music, etc.

Please send a title, a short concept of max. 250 words in German, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Bulgarian or Russian as well as a short bio by September 30 2014 to maiz@servus.at
The selection of the accepted contributions will be made public by

mid-October 2014.

http://maiz.at/en/subproject/call-papers