

PARITY TALKS IX: On Inconvenience: Learning to Listen, March 5-6-7 2024

INTRODUCTION

This year, we shift our focus to openly naming the issues which lead to disparity by finding ways to talk - from different positions and bases of knowledge. We aim for inclusive spaces, to share and – most importantly – to listen, in spite and because of the feelings of discomfort and inconvenience that come with it.

In collaboration with gta Exhibitions and ETH Wohnforum, PARITY TALKS IX will combine carefully curated lectures, discussions, and exhibitions with events and workshops coming from you – our community within – to give space and time for inconvenient yet critical questions: What does it mean to speak up even though it is inconvenient? Who is able to speak up? Why do we choose to remain silent? Where are our blind and deaf spots? Together, we will address how privilege and dominant narratives might impact who is allowed to speak and who is heard, and will set up collective experiments to expand our listening.

The programme is spread over 3 days, but the main focus lies on Wednesday March 6, starting off with a plenary programme in HIB including an opening address by Samia Henni and a roundtable relating the topics on the table back to ETH's admission policy and partnerships. After a collective lunch performance organised by Querformat, there are different workshops to choose from, for which we kindly ask you to register. We regroup at the end of the day for a collective listening session by SEKUNDOS.

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, March 5th

10:00–18:00 **Symposium. [Day of Words](#)**
by Studio Jan de Vylder

@ONA Fokushalle

With Emilie Appercé, Tibor Bielecky, Tatjana Blaser, Caspar Bultmann, Asli Cicek, Ellena Ehrl, Lida Freudenreich, Andres Herzog, Elena Lynch, Annamaria Prandi, Miro Roman and Philip Ursprung

The Day of Words is a symposium where diverse guests convene to explore the realms of writing, reading, and communicating. Each participant, guided by their unique perspectives, will impart insights into their craft and the profound significance of language. It is part of a three-day series of presentations and talks: DRAWING (20.02), NORMS (27.02) and WORDS (05.03), organised by the chair of Jan De Vylder in the frame of the BAII Studio FS24.

16:00–17:30 **Roundtable. [Beverly Buchanan: I Broke the House](#)**
by gta Exhibitions

@HIB Open Space 2

With María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Anna Gritz, Tonja Khabir, Prudence Lopp, Devin T. Mays, Siddhartha Mitter, Sarah Richter, Jamaal Sheats and Adam Szymczyk

At the occasion of the opening of the exhibition [Beverly Buchanan: I Broke the House](#)

"*I BROKE THE HOUSE*," screams Lila, the protagonist of Beverly Buchanan's artist book. "Every day, Lila walked past houses sitting on rocks." Those stacks of stones, similar to ancient cairns used as place markers, support the entire building; nevertheless, Lila suspects "they look like they could be pushed over on the ground." One can understand the temptation to challenge the seemingly precarious structure, and so, "one day, Lila decided to take away one of the small rocks... guess what happened!"

What potential lies dormant within *scenes of collapse*? How does a house as an agent of its own resonate with, respond to or resist its surroundings? As a landscape of scattered and discarded debris, the exhibition is titled after Beverly Buchanan's tale of Lila and the collapsed house, captured in her humorous, cartoonish fanzine. Drawing on the artist's attention to the notion of decay, the show raises the question: what is created when something comes apart?

17:30–18:00 **Guided tour by Samia Henni.** [Samia Henni: Performing Colonial Toxicity](#)
by gta Exhibitions

@gta Foyer (HIL D 50)

At the occasion of the opening of the exhibition [Samia Henni: Performing Colonial Toxicity](#)

The exhibition sheds light on the redacted history of French nuclear colonialism in the Algerian Sahara and draws attention to the urgency of reckoning with this history and its lived environmental and sociopolitical impacts.

Performing Colonial Toxicity presents available, offered, contraband and leaked materials in an immersive multimedia installation. It creates with them a series of audio-visual assemblages, which trace the spatial, atmospheric, and geological impacts of France's atomic bombs in the Sahara, as well as its colonial vocabularies, and the (after)lives of its radioactive debris and "stations", as Henni refers to them. Visitors are invited in to draw their own connections between what is present in the installation, as well as what is absent from it.

18:00 **Opening apéro**
by gta Exhibitions

@gta Foyer (HIL D 50)

Wednesday, March 6th

9:00–14:00 *Plenary Programme PARITY TALKS IX*

9:00–09:15 **Welcome** by Dean and PDK
Introduction by Parity Group

@HIB Open Space 2

09:15–10:00 **Opening address** by Samia Henni
invited by Parity Group

@HIB Open Space 2

Samia Henni is a historian of the built, destroyed and imagined environments. She is the author of *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (2017/19 and 2022) and *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara* (2024). She is the editor of *Deserts Are Not Empty* (2022) and *War Zones* (2018). She is also the maker of exhibitions, such as *Performing Colonial Toxicity* (Amsterdam, Zurich, 2023/24), *Discreet*

Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria (Zurich, Rotterdam, Berlin, Johannesburg, Paris, Prague, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Charlottesville, 2017–22), *Archives: Secret-Défense?* (Berlin, 2021), and *Housing Pharmacology* (Marseille, 2020).

She received her PhD in the history and theory of architecture from ETH Zurich and has taught at Princeton university, ETH Zurich, Geneva University of Art and Design, and Cornell University. Samia was an invited tutor at the first-ever Biennale College Architettura 2023 at the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale, the inaugural Albert Hirschman Chair (2020–21) at the Institute of Advanced Study in Marseille, a Geddes Fellow (2021) at Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and a member (2020–23) of the Board of Directors of the Society of Architectural Historians. Currently, she is Visiting Professor at the gta, ETH Zurich and co-chair of the University Seminar “Beyond France” at Columbia University. In the summer of 2024, Samia will join the faculty of McGill University’s Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture in Montreal, where she was appointed Graduate Programs Director.

10:00–11:30 **Whose voices are heard? Roundtable on Network, Privilege and Class at ETH**
convened by Parity Group

@HIB Open Space 2

With AAA Academic Network Working Group, Paola De Martin (Postdoctoral researcher gta), Raphaela Hettlage (ETH Diversity), Emma Kaufmann LaDuc (Architektura/Chair of Affective Architectures), Zeljko Medved (D-ARCH) and Maria Conen (IEA). Moderation: Orkun Kasap (IDB/ITA)

ETH Zurich is recognized as the most elite public academic institution in Switzerland. It also sees itself as a very international school and enjoys a high reputation worldwide for its excellence. Studying, researching, and working at ETH is a so-called “privilege”.

But are we truly all equally privileged or what does such privilege entail? Do we use this privilege as responsibly and consciously as we should? What kind of behavior and practice does such privilege enforce and enable? Why does ETH Zurich - and in particular its Department of Architecture - only engage with a small and obscure selection of first world institutions and white countries as partners? Are other schools in many other parts of the world simply “not at our level” or are we blind to the potential and genuine problems that lie outside of first world countries? What is the school doing to connect with them and bring a variety of voices into the school? Who is welcome to study and work at ETH, and who is not? Is class a big elephant in the room that we dare not talk about? Are there barriers such as language, networks and cultural codes that add to the many other glass ceilings? Do we engage with our colonial past not only in a historical but contemporary manner? What kind of institution do we imagine ETH to be and what does reality look like?

All these questions have a clear impact on a crucial question that we want to ask and start discussion with this roundtable: Whose voices are heard at the school?

11:45–12:30 **Launch Fluid Archive Parity Group**
by Parity Group

@HIB Open Space 2

With He Shen, Tatjana Blaser and Donia Jornod

The idea of the fluid archive might have existed for a long time. Across wildly divergent geographic contexts and vast time spans, communities that are willing to build resistance against oppression began to talk about alternative futures, listen to voices below the silence, and collect diverse words, talks, texts and ideas that would be otherwise neglected. Collecting not for the sake of owning, but


of listening, visibilising and empowering. Hence building such an archive is less about what a world is, but more about what it can become.

The fluid Archive is an ongoing project of the Parity Group that enables a living archiving culture through saving a space. As a curated platform to present and publish the knowledge production and methodology of the Parity Talks, it aims at creating a research tool that supports bottom-up learning initiatives, and a piece of infrastructure that supports offline events of the Parity Group and possibly the decentralisation of the Parity Talks over the course of the year. The Fluid Archive is a collective project that will grow with the community of the Parity Group.

During the launch we will take a virtual walk through the process and the space of the archive.

12:30–14:00 Community Lunch. In Your Throat
by Querformat and friends

@HIB Open Space 3

Meals serve as a cornerstone in building relationships, forming opinions through debate, and shaping cultures. Beyond necessity. It's a universal experience that can bridge divisions, whether they be political, cultural, or social. In our academic settings, lunch-breaks and apéros provide a rare opportunity for informal interactions between different bodies within the department. Are we allowed to feed you? We aim to feed you well! Querformat invites you to a not so ordinary lunch, altering the way we communicate with each other and where food serves as the common ground for 

14:00-18:30 Workshop Programme PARITY TALKS IX

14:00–16:00 Workshop. Take Nothing For Granted: Communicating with Each Other Across Disciplines and Cultures
by NCCR DFAB

@HIB Open Space 2

Max capacity: 20
Please register [here](#)

With Lea Keller, Kim Norgaard Helmersen, Kaitlin McNally & Bianca Vienni Baptista

Inter- and transdisciplinarity are notions we constantly and increasingly find ourselves writing in grant applications, reading in studio briefs and emails, and hearing in talks in lecture halls, TED and YouTube. The academic world has agreed that inter- and transdisciplinarity steers boundary-crossing collaborations towards solving the wicked problems we are facing today. We need to invite people from other disciplines - and from industry - into our design studios and research labs and involve them in our “secret” processes and ideas.

Doing this requires not only trust, readiness to collaborate and openness to critical dialogue; it also requires an awareness of the taken-for-granted – the ability to give an account of oneself. Cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and the understanding that the people participating in these collaborations aren't to be reduced to their disciplines. Researchers and students are human beings with various backgrounds and biographies, with diversity in age, gender, and race, and these all intersect with the disciplinary cultures creating a complex web of positions, potentials for innovative/creative links, but also of conflict. Join us for a guided conversation to learn to navigate in this web, by first of all, sticking with the trouble and taking nothing for granted.

14:00–17:00 Workshop. Guilt and Dream
by Studio Jan De Vylder, The Share of Architecture an(d) Attitude and Aslı Çiçek

@HIL F 41.4 (Studio Jan De Vylder)

Max capacity: 80 (priority second year students studio Jan De Vylder)

Please register [here](#)

During this workshop, we will delve into a series of 6 texts: 3 centered around the theme of DREAM and 3 exploring the theme of GUILT, these texts encompass reality, fiction, care, society, and politics. To kick off, Asli Çiçek will introduce these texts, setting the stage for our collective exploration. We'll form groups of 5, with each group selecting one text from each category (thus, 2 texts per group). In the first hour, we'll engage in group discussions about these texts, exploring how they resonate with us, why they strike a chord (or don't), and uncovering any common threads they share. Then, in the second hour, we'll dissect these texts, by extracting certain passages or by annotating them to highlight what we wish to retain or discard, the methodologies will be developed in each groups. Our aim is to craft a new narrative, whether through complete rewriting or by weaving together elements to experiment with fresh writing styles, reading experiences, and new ways of interpretations. To wrap up, we'll share our newly composed texts and engage in an open dialogue about the topics addressed.

Aslı Çiçek is architect, professor and co-editor of the magazine Oase.

15:00–17:30 **Workshop. Stories About Home. Listening to Palestinian Poetry**

by Elena Rieger, Damla Göre & Elettra Carnelli

@HIL E 71.1

Max capacity: 12

Please register [here](#)

During times of war, architecture falls short of encompassing instability. Places might get detached from the feelings of safety, arrival, and homecoming, but a single object might continue to carry these senses. Then we have to question, what truly builds a home—is it the four walls or the feelings associated with it?

Listening to poetry, this workshop centers daily objects and practices that evoke a sense of home, despite the fact that their personal histories are entrenched in the histories of diaspora, exile, and homelessness. As Audre Lorde pointedly characterized it: 'Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought.' (1985) Thus, we believe that poetry, in addition to serving as a site of resistance, may break distances by amplifying the senses and providing an alternative ground for participation, empathy, and understanding through our bodies. We will read, listen, and visualize poetry with images and drawings collectively in order to bridge our voices with the voices of Palestinian poets, writers, and artists. Inspired by a WoWA reading group session, this workshop focuses on muscular tensions and haptic vibrations as a method of listening.

16:00-18:00 **Workshop. Unlocking the Clubhouse: Women in Coding & Machines**

by Karen Antorveza & Qiming Sun

@HIL E 71.2

Max capacity: 15

Please register [here](#)

Through this encounter, we aim to uncover the hidden stories of women in technology. We will explore how advanced design and manufacturing techniques can contribute to rethinking traditional architectural hierarchies and narratives.

16:30–18:30 **Collective Reading Workshop. Reading our Otherness Together**
by the Chair of Architecture and Care

@HIL Baubibliothek

Max capacity: 25
Please register [here](#)

With Anna Puigjaner, Dafni Retzepi, Ethel Baraona Pohl, Lisa Maillard, Pol Esteve Castelló & He Shen

Books have been an essential tool to understand the world we inhabit in its wider context. The words we use, the many languages in which we communicate create a framework where the past, present and possible futures collide. And within this framework, one of the most radical ways of embracing otherness and learning to respectfully listen to other voices is by reading together. By reading aloud together we allow the configuration of new kinds of spaces where empathy, otherness and alterity prove stronger than ideologies. By selecting readings that dismantle binary understandings of society—and the world at large—a reader will be assembled and distributed through the participants. Texts gathered in the reader are read aloud by participants, intended to provoke a contagion of knowledge by learning not only from the contents, but from the nuances, the accents, and the cadence of the different voices.

17:00–18:00 **Workshop. Echoes of the Earth: Listening to a Mountain**
by Studio Maria Conen

@Siemens Auditorium

With Coco Răz, Federico Farinatti, Flurina Gradin, Maria Conen, Nora Molari & Claudio Landolt

Max capacity: 80
Please register [here](#)

Listening is always related to language and the ability to speak. The questions “how do we talk to each other” or “who do we listen to” can be cruel. Attentive listening, as opposed to passive hearing, implies awareness. And listening is always related to the understanding of a certain language and the ability to speak. However, not all humans are able to speak and certainly non-human species cannot speak, but we tend to only give agency to those who can. That is why we want to direct our consciousness to nonhuman soundscapes.

What does a mountain sound like? Together with Claudio Landolt we will experience the voice and sounds of a mighty mountain massif, its hidden corners, layers and stories. During a performative tape reading he will take us on a journey to the tonal qualities of language, inspired by beatniks and text collages. We will experiment with our ability of listening and engage with the mysterious world of the Vorderglaernisch.

18:00 **Vernissage exhibition. Unheard Voices, Unseen Spaces**
by Indiana collective with Océane Brosteaux, Paola Ak and Tim Müller

@HIL Foyer D 1-5

The exhibition takes place in one of the invisible spaces of the HIL building from which maintenance and care workers invisibly uphold our well-being. Through immersive experiences, we aim to shine a light on the vital roles of these essential workers, their working conditions and backgrounds. With sound and visual installation located in the lockers room of the cleaning staff, we seek to acknowledge their fundamental contributions, make their labor visible, and amplify their voices. This

workshop goes beyond mere acknowledgement; it's about truly listening to their experiences, challenges, and aspirations, fostering empathy and understanding within our community.

18:30–20:00 Closing Programme

18:30–20:00 **Collective Listening. Dreams For the Front: Listening to Palestine**
by SEKUNDOS, with tea and fruits by Querformat

@HIB Open Space 3

In this workshop, we want to react to the urgent ongoing war of Israel and Palestine in Gaza and give agency to people from the front to transmit messages to a larger audience. We believe sonic media can play a huge role in solidarity and raise awareness.

We invited Leila Moon, resident DJ of activist radio group Radio Alhara to play a live music set featuring her Palestinian friends Nate and Ahmad with Palestinian poetry reading. We believe sharing Palestinian music and culture at large as this critical moment has its meaning in the counter-narrative of the dehumanization of the Arabic culture and body as "human animals" and "terrorists."

We want to dedicate our workshop to spotlight Palestinian songs, poems, and voices as their dreams and projects of future are being buried with this ongoing genocide. We would also like to take a step back and reflect on how the Western communities perceive the societies of the Middle East, particularly in the context of colonialism and war.

ONGOING **12 Hour Radio Programme** by Learning Palestine
hosted by Dept. of the Ongoing

@Fluid Archive online and HIB Open Space 3

As genocide unfolds before our eyes, language falls short, it becomes obsolete and helpless. Yet we need to continue exploring ways of speaking out and organizing against the grain, against this overdose of destruction and annihilation of life, against warmongering and militarisation, against attempts to silence and immobilize. And so we return to what has been said and spoken before us to comprehend the history that precedes and informs the current political moment. We return to the struggles that we belong to and find our roots in, from Algeria to Abya Yala, from South Africa to Asia and back to Palestine. Despite the differences in our struggles, Palestine remains an embodiment and extension of these and other struggles for life and liberation, against racism, colonialism, imperialism and rising fascism.

In a 12 hour radio programme, Learning Palestine shares lectures, talks, teach-ins as well as poems, music, and chants in the hopes of expanding our political horizons and engagements through study and struggle. To imagine ways of acting together, to tear apart the walls and borders that separate us, for a life in freedom, justice and dignity for all.

Learning Palestine is a group of artists, academics, intellectuals and community members, who aim to disseminate knowledge on the history of the ongoing struggle for justice, liberation, and freedom of Palestine and the Palestinian People. Learning Palestine wishes to practice new and old ways of disseminating this knowledge, that function out with the constraints of social media and corporate controlled networks.

Exhibition. Unheard Voices, Unseen Spaces

by Indiana collective with Océane Brosteaux, Paola Ak and Tim Müller (Vernissage at 18:00)

@location TBA

[Beverly Buchanan. I Broke the House.](#)
[Samia Henni. Performing Colonial Toxicity](#)

@gta Exhibitions & gta Foyer

Thursday, March 7th

18:15–19:30 **Athena Lecture. Anna Pagani: On Housing Justice: Let's Talk About Fixes That Fail**, followed by Q&A
by ETH Wohnforum – ETH CASE

@HIL E3

This year's Athena Lecture welcomes architect and researcher Dr. Anna Pagani. In her lecture she critically examines the system structures hindering the provision of healthy and sustainable homes for all. In this context, she offers an overview of how systems thinking can help bring to light the plurality of mental models guiding the design of 'fixes' that reinforce, rather than address, structural issues - such as the exclusion of racialised and minoritised communities. In doing so, her presentation provides insights into how to transform our ways of understanding and intervening in the housing system.

19:30 **Apéro**
by ETH Wohnforum – ETH CASE

@gta Foyer (HIL D 50.05)

Parity Group is a fluid, autonomous and grassroots collective of students, staff and professors that mobilize and advocate on issues of intersectionality, diversity and parity in the Department of Architecture of ETH Zürich.

The Parity Talks are made possible with the support of D-ARCH, IEA, ITA, gta, NCCR Digital Fabrication, Chair of Affective Architectures, Chair of Architecture and Care, Chair of Being Alive, Chair of Architecture & Urban Design, Chair of Affective Architectures, Chair of Art in Space and Time, Chair of Construction Heritage and Preservation, Chair of the History and Theory of Architecture, Chair of the History of Art and Architecture, Group Anne Hultzsch, NEWROPE, Professur Mosayebi, Studio Jan De Vylder, Studio Theriot, Studio Maria Conen, Studio Tom Emerson, ETH Wohnforum - CASE and gta Exhibitions.