

MA CT+CR

CRITICAL THEORY AND CREATIVE RESEARCH

HANNAH ARENDT PRIZE APPLICATION FORM

Please print or type. Email application form and essay to ctcrprize@pnca.edu

THE FIRST SECTION IS REQUIRED

RHIZOM Art Collective

(Applicant) Last Name		First Name	Middle Initial
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Are you interested in receiving information about PNCA's Graduate Programs?

Yes

No

If you are currently a student, are you enrolled in:

High School College-Undergraduate Graduate School

Which graduate programs are you interested in?

MFA in Visual Studies

MFA in Collaborative Design

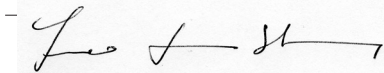
MFA in Applied Craft and Design

Low-Residency MFA in Visual Studies

MA in Critical Theory and Creative Research

How did you hear about the Hannah Arendt Prize in Critical Theory and Creative Research?

[edu-news@mail.e-flux.com: PNCA announces The Hannah Arendt Prize, call for submissions]



Leo Kreisel-Strausz per pro. RHIZOM+

(Applicant) Signature

Graz, 30.05.2013

Date

MAILING INFORMATION:

Anne-Marie Oliver and Barry Sanders, Critical Theory and Creative Research Program
Pacific Northwest College of Art, 1241 NW Johnson St., Portland, OR 97209

For questions, please contact the CT+CR Co-Chairs at amoliver@pnca.edu and bsanders@pnca.edu

Desde aquí. From here on.

Nicaragua-Austria 1988-2013

„Work in the middle of everything and with everybody.“

(Alexander Rodchenko, Slogans, 1920/21)

As an art collective, our objective has been to shape our own cultural concepts in a more permeable way, to perceive the Other, to find new points of contact, and to connect what has not yet been connected in that specific way. The artistic approach follows a process-oriented, open conception. In the end, it is the content that determines medium and form. We consider this essay an exercise in applied philosophy, and as a practice oriented approach to our own history.

In the beginning there was the gaze.

Why Nicaragua? It begins in **1988** with the radical perception we had during an international solidarity brigade in Nicaragua. Entering this reality completely unknown to us and developing an awareness for the way disparity between a very rich and a very poor country materializes itself awakens the desire to convey a different outlook on Nicaragua.

In 1988 something else happens: We found the art collective RHIZOM as a structure for autonomous cultural work and engage in critical artistic practices and analyses of the art system and its economic logics, while in Nicaragua the mural manifests as a form of translation of social change after the revolution. We wonder if both is possible: involvement in political struggle and artistic development amidst postmodern ambivalence. We decide to do the one as well as the other. All that is important is possible!

Leonel Cerrato Jirón is invited to Austria in **1989**. He designs a mural painting for the front façade of a cinema. The mural purports the current developments in Nicaragua in the years following the revolution and the Somoza dictatorship's downfall.

2008: The mural's imminent demolition, the loss of something we hold dear as part of our public space, triggers the impulse to deal with our own history. The questions *What is Nicaragua now?*, *20 years later*, and *where we can find continuity and consistency in our work* leads to the project *my space in global slices* with Ernesto Salmerón.

The work is presented as part of a festival for contemporary art in Austria, yet the accompanying promotion material lists a gallery in Managua, Nicaragua as the only physical exhibition space. The opening takes place in Managua in the absence of the Nicaraguan artist and his works, who is at that point residing in China. The only physical object in the Nicaraguan exhibition space is banner stating that „The exhibition is opened“. In Austria, the communication about the contents and genesis of the project is limited to three call centers in immigrant communities, where a homepage explaining the project set-up can be accessed.

This transcontinental set-up does not bring objects and persons together. A corporate appearance – which could indicate „the event“ on the spot – does not arise as a result. The parameters constituting an exhibition do not bear up against the distances. On the contrary, they remain at their very own place/the other place and correspond with each other and within the contexts and shifts of time, capital and meaning.

This paradox, talking about the impossibility of transporting meaning, persons, and objects over distances, links several aspects: For one thing, both „here“ and elsewhere the capital's distribution follows the global art markets' regularities and their connections – the „embedded arts“ – to economy and national politics, and thus only permits adapted production. For another thing, European entry regulations allow theoretical residence only for people coming from certain continents.

2009/2010: After two years of struggle for the mural's preservation, we arrive at *mural final*. We don't attain the necessary support from the public authorities to publicly save and preserve the mural painting. Thus, it is demolished along with the cinema. Amidst the polylemma of cross-references concerning responsibilities and of value and non-value analyses, RHIZOM creates the next paradoxical space: The mural's pieces are given over to the public for the private archiving of individuals, creating a popular archive and an alternative historiography, in turn retaining the possibility of the pieces being reassembled as a necessarily fragmented symbol of public memory.

The collective circular process of RHIZOM's Nicaragua involvement finds another beginning in *desde aquí, From here on*.

2010–2013. The story continues with a journey from one of the 1988 solidarity travellers back to the country, reconnecting with his own history. The story also begins in a tent city in the center of the capital Managua, built and inhabited by

hundreds of male and female plantation workers and their families in 2004. Nemagon City: a city against oblivion, named after the pesticidal agent Nemagon (DBCP/Dibrom-Chloropropan) produced by Dow Chemicals, Shell Oil and Occidental, used by Standard Fruit (Dole Food Company), Del Monte and United Fruit (Chiquita) on banana plantations in Nicaragua. Continuous contact with the substance affects the hormonopoeitic organs, causes loss of vision, kidney cancer, stomach cancer, breast and uterine cancer in women, and male sterility.

During the 1970s and 1980s, up to 22.000 workers were deliberately exposed to the pesticidal agent in Nicaragua. Although Nemagon has already been outlawed since 1979 due to known health damages in the the US, it was still used in several countries in Latin America up to 1985. As of today, all protests, all redress cases, all lawsuits carried on in American courts have led to no dignified compensation for the victims.

What is left to do, when things are over and done with?

The stories have to be told by the victims over and over again. Telling them will always reveal different trails and new possibilities. Starting the narration anew is a strategy against oblivion, against death. These stories have to be told over distances; and global collaborative action can develop from the desire to understand – as a new perspective for all participants.

Together with Nicaraguan artist Consuelo Mora Benard and Roberto Guillén, we establish a connection and a base of confidence with the plantation workers. We try to tell their stories and break the cycle of reiterated storytelling and renewed suffering. Based on these stories, all participants, here and there, engage in a discourse supposed to lead to a collaborative intervention/installation in open spaces in Austria and Nicaragua – as a narrative and as translating installation, and finally as a book that is presented in our communities. In April **2013**, the plantation workers present their first artistic video „El funeral“, a symbolic farewell to a companion whose death was caused by Nemagon.

This is a history of development grounded in a specific HERE and NOW. There are encounters in public, social, cultural, artistic, and political spaces. And there is corresponding action between two places – Nicaragua and Austria.

We work by artistic means which take up current issues on site and develop them immediately. By circular communication, translation und action something takes shape – via all the participants' interplay and in the knowledge that many perceptions of North and South (and vice versa) are formed by fractions, shifts, reflexions and prejudice. „Here“ and „there“, participants contribute their own experiences, perceptions and notions that will be translated in terms of artistic intervention into public space, including the internet – by and with those people directly affected.

RHIZOM Art Collective and Consuelo Mora Benard*, Roberto Guillén, the plantation workers – the families López Meza, family Morales, Jerónimo Lira, Francisco González a.o., Moisés Mora*, Juan Carlos Mendoza*, Darwin Andino*, José Montealegre*, Reni Hofmüller, Jogi Hofmüller, Florian Sorgo, Milo Strauß, Leo Kreisel-Strausz, H.J. Schubert, Angelika Thon, Ed Gfrerer, Mirko Maric, Ernesto Salmerón, Leonel Cerrato Jirón/Nicaragua–Austria

*Colectivo Veinti3