

Symposium
CONCEPTUAL ACTIVISM
ENGAGING QUEERLY IN CONFLICTUAL TIMES

This symposium explores the possibilities and limitations of conceptual activism. What does it mean to engage in politics through concepts? Does 'conceptual' imply that this kind of activism has less practical relevance or lacks material power? To what extent do concepts imply embodied practices and material relations? Which concepts are interesting from queer and trans theoretical and political perspectives?

The focus is on how the dynamics of queering and transing, or intersectional, decolonial practices, challenge the separation of academia, art, and activism. Inspired by Davina Cooper's work, conceptual activism is seen as a way of imagining otherwise, involving the materialization and embodiment of concepts. Bringing marginalized concepts into practice can help to create alternative futures.

In today's conflictual times, when the risks and dangers posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, and extractivist racial capitalism are often overlooked, with authoritarian politics and regimes acting as the driving force behind these issues, the symposium interrogates conceptual activism as a counter-hegemonic ontology and epistemology. The objective is to fight the normalization of material, symbolic and epistemic violence as *modus operandi* in everyday life and doing politics. The question is: Can queering and transing as a dynamic interweaving of power and desire advance trans*versal justice and sustain critical movements against domination?

Organized by Sagniquee Banerjee, Antke Antek Engel, Karolina (kasu keys) Heck, Friederike (Fred) Landau-Donnelly, Rafael Baioni, Samu/elle Striewski

The symposium is part of *Queer Cohabitations*, a series of events celebrating the Institute for Queer Theory's 20th-anniversary (March-October 2026).

ici KULTURLABOR
BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

QUEER
INSTITUTE FOR QUEER THEORY

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SYMPOSIUM **30 MARCH 2026**

IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN
ICI BERLIN **11:00 - 21:00**

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Programme			
10:30	Morning Coffee		
11:00 – 11:30	Welcome Antke Antek Engel & the Organizing Team		
11:30 – 12:15	Collective Reading Davina Cooper's Article on Conceptual Activism		
12:15 – 12:30	Coffee Break		
12:30 – 14:00	Workshop I Navigating Conflictual Consensus: A Playful Approximation to a Conceptually Activist Term		
	Friederike (Fred) Landau-Donnelly, Alexandra Papademetriou, Sifen Wibell	17:15 – 18:15	Video Tour through the Exhibition (live-stream available)
	How does conflict move through bodies, minds, and politics? This workshop invites participants to explore conceptual activism as a reconfiguration of their relationship with conflict. Through trauma-informed somatic exercises and analytical tools such as the Conflictual Consensus Matrix, participants will engage with this concept.		Desbatismos/Debaptisms: Dissident Cartographies and Artistic Practices of Deprogramming
14:00 – 15:30	Lunch Break		Co-Curator Fer Nogueira in Conversation with Rafael Baioni
15:30 – 17:00	Workshop II Becoming the Chimera: Trans*Ecology in practice. Rethinking nature, bodies, and metamorphosis	18:15 – 19:00	The exhibition challenges homogeneous thoughts and experiences, establishing connections between the past, present, and future, even if the future is only virtual. It creates a space where gender, sexuality, neurotypicality, and ethnic/racial multiplicities can continue to transform and foster critical, pluriversal flows within bio-sociodiverse conceptualizations.
	Asmae Ourkiya		
	In Trans*Ecology, participants explore how transness is ecological and enmeshed in the same adaptive, hybridized, and ever-transforming metamorphosis that species have been experiencing since the dawn of time. In this workshop, they step into nature's refusal of the binary. This is an embodied workshop called The Chimera Exercise.	19:00	Time for a Cup of T, Cool Down & Time to Recover
17:00 – 17:15	Coffee Break		Discussion (live-stream available) Conceptual Activism: decolonial – trans_ecological – queer
			Aylon Cohen, Gergana Mineva, Yv Nay, Asmae Ourkiya, Rubia Salgado, Alexandra Papademetriou, Ferdiansiyah Thajib, Sifen Wibell, and the Audience
			Conceptual activism is a way of imagining otherwise, involving the materialization as and the embodiment of concepts. Transforming marginalized concepts into practice can prefigure alternative futures. In this discussion the invited guests will present concepts – like confluence, queer gestures, Trans*Ecology, or conflictual aesthetics – that inform their professional, activist, or artistic practices. These are intended to inspire reflection and exchange on conceptual activism. There will be a particular focus on queering and transing, and how these approaches support decolonial, ecological, and feminist perspectives, while being open to conflict.
			Open Fish Bowl: The discussion is participatory. Audience members are invited to join the speaker's circle. There will be continuous movement between the inner, in-between, and outer circles of chairs, as well as between languages (German, English).