

GRASP PROJECT / EXPO DUBAI – AUSTRIAN PAVILION  
CONCEPT DRAFT



studio Asynchrone

# DOUBTFUL PRACTICES / PRACTICES OF DOUBT

ZWEIFELHAFTE PRAKTIKEN / PRAKTIKEN DES ZWEIFELS

EXHIBITION CONCEPT: GRASPnetwork  
CURATOR & PROJECT MANAGER: Martin Baasch



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# DOUBTFUL PRACTICES / PRACTICES OF DOUBT

Dec. 16th 2021 - Jan. 6th 2022  
Austrian Pavilion, EXPO Dubai

## ARTISTS:

STUDIO ASYNCHROME  
ABIONA ESTHER OJO  
OCTO-R  
SIMON OLUBOWALE  
MICHIKATZU MATZUNE  
ERNST LOGAR

INITIATED BY: GRASPnetwork

CURATED BY: MARTIN BAASCH

## GRASPnetwork

is an international research platform to reflect and bring forth new forms of knowledge through “artful thinking” and artistic practise. The underlying assumption is that the current state of affairs has to lead to new requirements in the development of abilities and competences. The importance of art in this context is not only its ability to express (im-)material ideas, but most importantly that certain artistic practices are designed to better grasp the correlations of our time.

The objective of the GRASPnetwork is to open a conversation on - and eventually prepare us for - what is expected to come.

## CONTACT

Martin Baasch (curator & project manager)  
martin\_baasch@gmx.net  
0043 (0)664 2110124

# DOUBTFUL PRACTICES / PRACTICES OF DOUBT

Dec. 16th 2021 - Jan. 6th 2022, Austrian Pavilion, EXPO Dubai

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Artistic research and working methods to investigate and describe the world have often been disregarded - too unscientific, too subjective and too little oriented towards the parameters of political and economic interests. But artistic approaches open up new perspectives and take up relevant discourses much earlier than others. Precisely because they work from a radically subjective perspective, they come up with solutions that go far beyond conventional patterns of action.

Against the background of the world economic event EXPO Dubai, the exhibition "Doubtful Practices / Practices of Doubt" brings together artistic positions that deal in different ways with the topics of work, exploitation, science and belonging. The exhibition presents selected works by Austrian artists. Accompanied by a symposium in digital space, it critically expands the program of the Austrian Pavilion at EXPO Dubai.

The aim of the exhibition is to open up perspectives within the framework of the world economic event EXPO Dubai and to question the logics of the power interests presented there. The exhibition directs the attention of the international visitors to political, ecological and social issues and entanglements that are often pushed aside during those kinds of events.

The positions range from ERNST LOGAR's scientific and artistic explorations of a (post)oil society to the meticulously crafted, large-format drawings by STUDIO ASYNCHROME which examine the future of work and production as well as contexts of exploitation. The research-based installation project "Le Trésor des Salaires" by OCTO-R focuses on paid and unpaid labour, while ABIONA ESTHER OJO deals in her contribution with the craftsmanship of hair braiding and questions of cultural belonging in the Austrian society. SIMON OLUBOWALE is working on his Austrian-Nigerian family history with all its loose ends, struggles and benefits, while MICHIKATZU MATSUNE starts from his own passport photo to address idealised global mobility and international border regimes.

## ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

"The Future of Live, Work and Education"

11/01/22 THE FUTURE OF LIFE - knowledge huddle

13/01/22 THE FUTURE OF LIFE - symposium, talks and round table

18/01/22 THE FUTURE OF WORK - knowledge huddle

20/01/22 THE FUTURE OF WORK - symposium, talks and round table

25/01/22 THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION - knowledge huddle

27/01/22 THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION - symposium, talks and round table

[www.graspnetwork.net](http://www.graspnetwork.net)

GRASPnetwork addresses the current challenges of our time through strategies of "artful thinking". The online symposium "The Future of Life, Work and Education" will intertwine participatory work sessions (Knowledge Huddles) with keynotes, lectures and round table discussions.

The GRASPnetwork's unique approach is to "invent futures" by applying the catalytic power of art as an inspirational driver. The talks, discussions and interactive sessions will draw inspiration from various contemporary art practices and bring together keynote speakers, experts and participants from around the globe to share their insights on the three topics.

## OCTO-R

(Ulrich Reiterer & Christina H. Romirer)  
"Le Trésor des Salaires"

With "Le Trésor des Salaires", the interdisciplinary project OCTO-R examines the general understanding and perception of what is understood by the terms "work/labour" in society. For this purpose, they researched the daily sum of all hours worked in the city of Graz on a single day - paid and unpaid work. This outcome was reproduced by OCTO-R in the form of hand-made salt bars, each representing 2,300 hours of work.

Salt was one of the first global commodities and currencies. Its extraction became one of the earliest industrial productions and a precedent for state monopoly. The word salary goes back to the Latin word *salarium*. The 'salarium' was a salt ration that was used in ancient times to pay workers and soldiers, as salt was a particularly valuable raw material at that time.

### Bio

OCTO-R consists of Ulrich Reiterer and Christina Helena Romirer and works between Vienna and Graz. In their work they are combining sociological research with spatial installations and community-based art practices.

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## STUDIO ASYNCHROME

(Marleen Leitner & Michael Schitnig)

"We cannot know who will be with us"

studio Asynchrome has been known for years for their complex large-scale drawings that examine a wide range of different contemporary discourses. With their latest project studio Asynchrome extends their theoretical interest in cutting-edge technologies by using electronically controlled, translucent film as a surface for their research in the fields of labour, surveillance and exploitation as well as smart devices and the so-called "internet of things". With their work studio Asynchrome playfully examines our relationship with a world not only surrounded and predicted but also controlled by interactive surfaces.

### Bio

studio ASYNCHROME is a transdisciplinary experiment, founded by Marleen Leitner and Michael Schitnig. Their main focus is on the intersection of artistic, political and urbanistic topics. Their forms of expression range from drawing to photography and installation. studio Asynchrome is based in Graz.

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## ABIONA ESTHER OJO

"There is Magic in every Strand"

Abiona Esther Ojo's profound installation „There is Magic in every Strand“ unfolds the social and political implications of Black hair through the lens of cultural history, but from a very personal perspective. Combining sculptural, analogue-reproduced and digital media, she deftly connects the practice of creating Afro hairstyles, which is bound up with knowledge, collective memories, rituals, and intimate processes, to general questions of identity and representation—from the message as a signal of protest to a well-established code of community membership. In her series of sculptures Ojo is intertwining ideas about interconnectedness, intimacy and softness as well as resistance and empowerment.



### Bio

Abiona Esther Ojo studied sculpture and spatial strategies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. While her practice manifests itself in different media like photography and textile art, Ojo's inspiration is often autobiographical and connects her personal experience with wider, socially relevant themes. With "There is Magic in every Strand" Ojo won the Kunsthalle Wien Preis in 2020.

Abiona Esther Ojo was born in Hellmonsödt in Upper Austria and lives currently in Vienna.

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## ERNST LOGAR

„Crude Oil Experiments“

The world was fundamentally changed in the 20th century by oil. This transformation affected all fields of life and ranging from mass mobility to food production and goods such as cosmetics and clothing. But the ubiquity of oil in everyday life was hardly reflected in the cultural imaginary. It is only in the 21st century that our dependence on oil has become apparent, given the dwindling reserves of crude oil and the already noticeable climate effects of carbon emissions.

In cooperation with the E.C.O. - Institute for Ecology (Klagenfurt) and the Department for Petroleum Engineering at the Montan University (Leoben) and funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the artist transfers oil experiments into public performances, semi-scientific objects and photography to give insights into the material, geo-social and symbolic dimensions of petroleum and to raise ideas of a democratic future without oil.



### Bio

Ernst Logar studied at the University of Arts in Linz and University of Applied Arts in Vienna. His practice ranges from photography, video and sculpture to spatial installation works, and addresses historical, socio-cultural, ecological power relations.

Ernst Logar, born in Klagenfurt, lives and works in Vienna and Leoben.

## MICHIKATZU MATSUNE

„On Borders, Around Borders, Behind Borders“

The installation combines three series of works developed between 2008 and 2020, that examine the topics of international travel, idealized globalization and border regimes in various ways. Michikazu Matsune's art works are firmly anchored in his performance practice, which takes his own body as a starting point to investigate social topics in a highly personal manner. In his objects and installations, he extends his performance practice into gallery space as a different lens through which to examine the dark side of globalization paranoia, racial profiling and surveillance.

### Bio

Michikazu Matsune utilizes diverse approaches, which range from stage-performances and interventions in public spaces to installation and photography. His personal approach, characterized as both critical and playful at the same time, examines the tension around our cultural ascriptions and social identifications.

Michikazu Matsune is originally from the seaside town of Kobe in Japan and has been based in Vienna since the 1990s.

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## SIMON OLUBOWALE

(in collaboration with Hannah von Eiff & Janna Pinsker)  
"Cassiopeia"

"Cassiopeia" is a multi-disciplinary project combining theatre, installation, collages and video work, anchored in Simon Olubowale's own childhood memories. Born in a small village in the countryside of Upper Austria as the son of a Nigerian father and an Austrian mother, Olubowale grew up between Lagos, Vienna, Graz and London. In a long dream-like video sequence, he recalls moments between 'Heimatifilm' idyll and Fela Kuti, as well as sadness, glam and anger. Beside the personal impact, "Cassiopeia" reflects on the process of remembering itself.



### Bio

Simon Olubowale is a professionally trained theatre actor but his practice also includes music, performance, film and installation. He joined forces with the stage and costume designer Hannah von Eiff and the performance and video artist Janna Pisker to realise the "Cassiopeia" project. Simon Olubowale works between Marburg, Salzburg and Lagos.