

## **Naming**

As art making continues to undergo deep changes in terms of its mode of visibility, perhaps the most urgent challenge for curatorship is not so much to expand its repertory of exhibition making than to develop a new lexicon of conceptual vocabulary, better suited to grasping art's new modes of visibility. For in times of the emergence of the new, it is crucial as Nietzsche put it in *The Gay Science* to recognize that "unspeakably more depends on what things are called than on what they are... Let us not forget," he goes on, "that in the long run it is enough to create new names and plausibilities in order to create new 'things'." If it is to have a useful critical edge, naming must be a tool for undoing apparent self-evidences – that "misty mantle of illusion," as Nietzsche then caustically put it, "that counts as essential, so-called 'reality'." Taking its cue from this intuition, the premise for this three-day gathering, co-organised by Khoj and n.e.w.s. to be held on the Periphery in Guwahati, is a desire to sharpen the use of theory in curatorial discourse.

## **Deframing**

Our artworlds are rife with pretentious banter cloaking itself as theory (experimental this, creative that, post thingamajig) and we are well inspired to be wary of word games calling themselves "theory." "Unspeakably More" is less concerned with that branch of language use called theory than with how naming – and renaming, de-naming, ascriptions, assignations and their undoing – takes place and how it can be rethought. Hence the desire to recalibrate our conceptual vocabulary to describe simply and accurately the types of practices that are emerging today and which suffer at the hands of twentieth-century descriptions. Indeed, if we are even to perceive collectively what art practitioners are up to, and where they are investing their creative energies, we need the naming tools to grasp their originality.

## **Toward an online lexicon**

The point, of course, is not to promote some sort of curatorial newspeak, but, on the contrary to debunk the oldspeak; to propose an infinitesimal yet decisive shift in our use of terminology to more accurately grasp real practices. "Unspeakably More" will be a first step toward producing an online lexicon (hosted by n.e.w.s.) for curatorship on the cusp of a new paradigm.

## **Art after space**

Perhaps the primary self-evidence to challenge is that curating is about framing. If indeed, curating is ultimately about reframing, it is first of all about de-framing. Not about framing objects in space, but de-framing ways of looking. To put it differently, the proposal is to consider curatorially speaking "art after space," bearing in mind the performative paradox of that formula: art wants space; yet art's condition today is post-spatial. For one of the great challenges today, both in curatorship and in social practices at large, is to insist upon plural temporalities, rather than conforming to dominant timeframes. This is a crucial political issue and perhaps the deeper meaning of time-based art – and as such, an unavoidable question for curators.

## **Competence crossing**

From a logistic point of view, "Unspeakably More" will avoid both a segregated 'symposium' format conducive to academics alone and the pitfalls of 'workshopping' (comprised as it is of 'work' and 'shopping'). Instead we are venturing to imagine something more organically integrated, bearing in mind that the presentations and panels and performances are merely focal points in a longer-term project and not necessarily the places where knowledge and insights into a renewed conceptual vocabulary will be produced. The event will thus be "curated" in such a way, and with such invitees, as to foster the kind of competence-crossing conducive to producing knowledge in suitably slack conditions.