

GALERIE

Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst

WEDDING

A Class(y) Lecture by Elly Clarke

01.11. - 08.11.2018

Pressemappe / Press kit

Galerie Wedding

Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst

Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin
Amt für Weiterbildung und Kultur
Fachbereich Kunst und Kultur

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A Class(y) Lecture by Elly Clarke

Berlin, 26.10.2018

Eine Performancewoche von **Elly Clarke** kuratiert von **Solvej Helweg Ovesen** und **Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung** im Rahmen von UP (**Unsustainable Privileges**)

01.11.2018 Live-Performance **19 bis 21 Uhr**

02.11. bis 08.11.2018 Installation aktiviert durch Live-Performance

08.11.2018 A Class(y) Conversation mit **Elly Clarke** und **Jan Tappe** **19 bis 21 Uhr**

»**A Class(y) Lecture by Elly Clarke**« ist eine selbstreflektierende Geschichte über das Dazugehören und Nicht-Dazugehören; darüber wie Abstammung sowohl Hindernis als auch Privileg sein kann, und über die Anschauungen und Erwartungen, welche die Lebenswege von Individuen, die in bestimmte Familien hineingeboren werden, bestimmen. Wie und wo sind derartige Privilegien heute zu finden? Wo helfen sie, wo hindern sie – in Bezug auf den individuellen Kontext, als auch die Gesellschaft als Ganzes?

Clarkes Langzeit-Projekt über ihren viktorianischen Ur-ur-ur-Großvater George Richmond und die von ihm gemalten Porträts geben den zentralen Fokus. Audiosegmente und Bilder dieses Projektes werden neben Auszügen von Clarkes eigener Kindheit und Berichten aus ihrem Leben als Erwachsene gezeigt – als Versuch sich selbst, ihre eigene Familie und das ewig-anhaltende, und doch auf viele Weisen unhaltbare Klassensystem Großbritanniens im 21. Jahrhunderts, besser zu verstehen. Abstammung ist eine Form von Identität, welche die Lebenszeit des Einzelnen überdauert. Sie reicht von vergangenen Zeiten bis hinein in eine Zukunft, welche noch nicht einmal existiert, verbunden durch die Blutsbande.

Wir sind hier seit 600 Jahren.

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A Class(y) Lecture by Elly Clarke

A **performance week** by **Elly Clarke** curated by **Solvej Helweg Ovesen** and **Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung** within the frame of **UP (Unsustainable Privileges)**

01.11.2018 Live-Performance **7 to 9 pm**

02.11. bis 08.11.2018 Installation activated through the Live-Performance

08.11.2018 A Class(y) Conversation with Elly Clarke and **Jan Tappe 7 to 9 pm**

»**A Class(y) Lecture by Elly Clarke**« is a self-exposing hi/story about belonging and not belonging; about the drag as well as the privilege of ancestry, and the objects and expectations that define and determine the life paths of individuals born into certain families. How and where does such privilege sit today? Where does it help and where does it hinder – both the individual and society at large?

Clarke's long-term project about her Victorian great-great-great-grandfather George Richmond's portraits provides the central focus. Audio and images from this project are presented alongside extracts from Clarke's own childhood & adult diaries in an attempt to better understand herself, her family and the ever-sustaining, and yet in many ways unsustainable set up of the British Class system in the 21st century. Ancestry is an identity that spans beyond the lifetime of an individual. It reaches back into the past and looks forward to a future that is not yet here, with blood as the binding thread.

We have been here for six hundred years.

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Excerpts from the script of the lecture

Dear Ms Clarke

Thank you for your email. You could arrive any time after 2.0 p.m. We will have my grandchildren staying, which is why we cannot offer you lunch, I'm afraid.

I will look out for any documents which we have.

To get to from , join the M6 until 3 miles after . Then take the A7 to . In Haw follow signs for and in follow signs to . Go through and after 3 miles you come to . The gates are on the left 200 yards after the 30mph notice. Once in the park keep to the right by a yew bush and go round to the south side of the house to the front door.

I look forward to seeing 3 of you any time after 2.0 p.m.

Yours sincerely

[...]

PIC OF PONY

I grew up between two worlds. That of my state day school - where I was called 'posh' because I lived in a house that you could walk around, and which had a balcony - and pony club camp (where I was called 'common' because I didn't speak properly and my pony lived at the riding school because we didn't have a paddock.) But I did have a pony. But we didn't have a paddock. At school I would downplay my 'poshness'; and at pony club camp I would feel furious that someone could accuse someone - anyone - of not 'being' something in particular which, as far as I could see, was proven, measured, acted out, and / or performed by outside factors: the use of a particular vocabulary (Mummy rather than Mum, supper rather than tea), an accent (*especially* the accent), how one dressed, how one held one's mouth even - and what you do and don't speak about (definitely not money) and - most importantly - which school you went to (and therefore who you knew, or were likely to be friends with). *Who was your network??* Plus, crucially, what it meant and entailed to be 'a girl' or 'a boy' and the expectations that came with that - both now and in the future. My other main contact with 'the other side' was through my good friend Serena. Every 31st August I would have to go to her birthday party, which would be the 'boarding school set' who, despite many of them living only a few miles from my school, didn't know where it was, had never heard of it. "Where do you go to school" was always one of the first questions. And although Serena was one of my best friends, I always dreaded her parties.

[...]

GEORGE RICHMOND PORTRAIT AND INTRO TO GR

This lecture has stemmed out of a project I have been working on for more than ten years, - and before that actually, as far back as the last century (!) 1993-4, for my A Level History of Art project. Both projects involved researching and visiting privately owned portraits by my great great great grandfather, Victorian portrait artist George Richmond, who lived from 1809 to 1896. George Richmond is said to have produced more than 3000 portraits - of well known people such as King Edward VII, the author Charlotte Bronte, Evolutionist Charles Darwin, prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, slavery abolitioner William Wilberforce, as

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For my project I focussed on portraits that were still owned by the same families that commissioned them in the 19th century. Some of the houses I visited were the same ones where the portraits were made. The project took me on trips to big houses in remote places in England, Scotland and the Channel Islands, where I photographed both the portraits as well as their current owners (descendents of those portrayed) in situ.

[...]

SCAN OF OLD ETONIAN

And sure enough, IMAGE OF email INBOX, in response to this very small article, I did indeed have more than 60 people writing to me, many of them titled: Lords, Ladies, Viscounts & Barons. I imagined I'd have about 6 or maybe 8 people writing to me. But I had all these people. I was living in Berlin at the time, I had no idea how to respond to them all.

IMAGE OF RICHMOND PORTRAIT WITH REFLECTION OF MAN

Dear Miss Clarke

I saw the puff for your project in an OE organ. We have two Richmonds (Arthur Scott 1853 and Walter Scott 1855). Their youngest brother was my great grandfather. They had no children so I can offer you no descendants, only collaterals like me. Do get in touch if you are interested. We are in Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

[...]

E enters as HUGO

The 'boarding school people', I was exposed to were mostly children of friends of my parents, who both went to boarding school - but hated it. My father was teased for living in a house that was a house number on a street, rather than it being a Hall, or a Manor, or a Rectory. The kids I hung out with though were from my local state run schools that I went to - some of my best friends lived in council houses and had very little money - my best friend didn't have a phone at home. I went to a few schools though, because my parents couldn't quite work out what they were doing with my education. Politically they were very against the private school system, and bonded partly due to their dislike of this system they were flung into - but practically I think they were pretty much the only ones of their friends taking the plunge. In any case, this mixed class upbringing resulted in me continually having the feeling of 'not fitting in' - for a number of different reasons.

[...]

ELLY - with Derby China places it on plinth.

The first time I was called classy as a compliment was by my first boyfriend, Tom Hawthorn. He said 'you're a classy girl'. I remember feeling at once flattered, for I understood it was a compliment, and exposed.

[...]

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Although in fact, in colloquial British, the word 'classy' to describe a person, or a restaurant, or an outfit, a place, a party, a wedding, or a home, would not be used by people from the upper classes, but more by people from working and lower middle class backgrounds. People from the upper classes would not call themselves classy. It is performed and enacted, rather than announced.

[...]

I WAS BORN INTO A POSH FAMILY - with ukulele SLIDE SHOW OF DERBY CHINA ON TV

I was born into a posh family
but several generations too I
I was born into a posh family
but several generations too late

*And it comes in the form of a set of
Derby China that I will get
when my mother dies
and when I die I should leave it
to the eldest of my daughters.*

On the posh side of my family
they had a system called primogenita.
This is when the eldest son
inherits the lot.

but I have no eldest daughter
I have no daughter at all
I have no kids and I don't plan to have 'em
so what about this Derby China?

*He inherits the house, he inherits the land,
he inherits the art, and the furniture
he has no option to duck out of this:
the drag, the burden and the privilege.*

*My queerness is a blockade to the family tree
a blockade a blockade to the family tree and
having no daughter puts the fate of the derby
china into a state of uncertainty.*

But I'm not a son but an eldest daughter, plus
there's there's not much to inherit any-more
but there are some benefits of being the el-
dest daughter of an eldest daughter

what shall I do with the Derby China,
when I die?
oh what shall I do with the Derby China when
I die?

[...]

"Those of us who wish to be relevant and topical (and this is no bad wish) sometimes need reminding that the most usual explanation of why a thing is as it is, is that things happened in the past to make it so. These things might not have happened. They might have happened differently. And nothing in the present is, strictly speaking *determined* from the past; but everything is limited by what went before. Every present problem, whether of understanding or of action, will always have a variety of relevant antecedent factors, all of which must be understood before it is sensible to commit ourselves to an explanatory theory or to some course of practical action. No present problem is completely novel and there is never any single use for it but always a variety of conditioning factors, arising through time, whose relative importance is a matter of critical judgement as well as of objective knowledge."

- Bernard Crick in Editors Preface to *WL Guttsman 'The English Ruling Class' published 1969*

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Biografie/ Biography

Elly Clarke

*1976, England

Lebt und arbeitet in Berlin und Brighton/ Lives and works in Berlin and Brighton



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DE

Elly Clarke studierte Kunstgeschichte an der University of Leeds und hat darüber hinaus am Royal College of Art Curating Contemporary Art und an der Central Saint Martins School of Art in Design Kunst studiert. Seit diesem Jahr ist sie PhD Candidate at the University of Sussex. Der Arbeitstitel ihrer Promotion lautet IS MY BODY OUT OF DATE? THE DRAG OF PHYSICALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

Sie realisierte ihre Einzelausstellungen und Performances unter anderem im Everyman Cinema, King's Cross, London (2018; QUEER ENCOUNTERS KINGS CROSS), der Transmediale, Berlin (2018; HARD FEELINGS: A CONVERSATION ON COMPUTATION AND AFFECT gemeinsam mit Vladimir Bjelicic), der SOHO20 Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (2017; LINQOX CRISS ON THE RIVER ILISSUS), Brighton Digital Festival, Brighton, Kulturni Centar GRAD, Belgrade & Silver Future Berlin (2016; #SERGINA'S STIMULATINGLY SEXY SIMULTANEOUS SIMULATION OF HERSELF AT THE MARLBOROUGH THEATRE AND PLACES BEGINNING WITH B), im Lowry Centre, Salford Quays (2015-16; RIGHT HERE / RIGHT NOW) und den Techno Park Studios, Melbourne, Australien (2012; CHANGE SETTING).

Ebenfalls 2018 veröffentlichte sie einen Text unter dem Titel AN ORGY OF ALGORITHMS im Sammelband Hybride Ökologien von Marietta Kesting (Hg.) sowie QUEER ENCOUNTER WITH TWIGGY BIRMINGHAM für das Magazine »In the Pink« (Birmingham). 2016 gründete sie gemeinsam mit Julia Bell die Art School Berlin, die ein gemeinsames Lernen von Künstler*innen, Wissenschaftler*innen und Autor*innen ermöglichen soll. Seit 2016 ist sie Visiting Lecturer an der Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

EN

Elly Clarke studied art history at the University of Leeds and has also studied Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art and as well as fine Art the Central Saint Martins School of Art. Since this year she is PhD Candidate at the University of Sussex. The working title of her thesis is IS MY BODY OUT OF DATE? THE DRAG OF PHYSICALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

She has realized her solo exhibitions and performances at the Everyman Cinema, King's Cross, London (2018; QUEER ENCOUNTERS KINGS CROSS), Transmediale, Berlin (2018; HARD FEELING: A CONVERSATION ON COMPUTATION AND AFFECT with Vladimir Bjelicic), the SOHO20 Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (2017; LINQOX CRISS ON THE RIVER ILISSUS), Brighton Digital Festival, Brighton, Kulturni Centar GRAD, Belgrade & Silver Future Berlin (2016; # SERGINA'S STIMULATINGLY SEXY SIMULTANEOUS SIMULATION OF HERSELF AT THE MARLBOROUGH THEATER AND PLACES BEGINNING WITH B) at Lowry Center, Salford Quays (2015-16; RIGHT HERE / RIGHT NOW) and Techno Park Studios, Melbourne, Australia (2012; CHANGE SETTING).

Also in 2018 she published a text titled AN ORGY OF ALGORITHMS in the anthology Hybrid Ecologies by Marietta Kesting (ed.) and QUEER ENCOUNTER WITH TWIGGY BIRMINGHAM for the magazine »In the Pink« (Birmingham). In 2016, together with Julia Bell, she founded the Art School Berlin, which aims to facilitate the joint learning of artists, scientists and authors. She has been a Visiting Lecturer at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama since 2016.

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