

FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS THE FILM PROGRAM "ARTISTS UNDER THE BIG TOP: PERPLEXED 2018-1968 (WITH NEW FILMS)" BY ALEXANDER KLUGE AT ITS VENICE VENUE ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

Venice, 30 August 2018 - Fondazione Prada presents the film program "Artists under the big Top: Perplexed 2018-1968 (with new films)" conceived by German film director and writer Alexander Kluge on 4 September 2018. The screenings will take place from 10 am to 4.30 pm on the first floor of Ca' Corner della Regina, in the context of the exhibition "Machines à penser", curated by Dieter Roelstraete and currently on view until 25 November 2018. Admission to screenings is free and includes the visit to the show, exceptionally open on Tuesday 4 September from 10 am to 6 pm. The event will be introduced by Alexander Kluge at 10 am.

The first part of the program (123 minutes) titled "50 years of *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed*" explores the legacy and the importance of Kluge's film *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* awarded with the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1968. The movie is interpreted by its director as "an analysis of the 1968 protest movement. The circus as medium is a metaphor of the conflict between the philosophical interpretation of the Critical Theory ('the Marx Brothers of Frankfurt') and the student uprising". In the film, the main character, Leni Peikert, inherits the family circus and tries to update the show by turning it into a "reform circus," which consists of socially-relevant entertainment. Unfortunately, it fails to attract new audience, and her circus goes bankrupt. Her efforts are then directed towards the mass medium of television. At the end of the film she declares: "With great steps we make ourselves ridiculous, but with many small steps I can become the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs". *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed* is combined with five other short films realized by Kluge in 2018, in order to create a constellation of polyphonic perspectives on the issues addressed by the 1968 cinematographic work.

The second part (123 minutes) of the program includes two new filmic forms recently experimented by Alexander Kluge: the so-called "minute-films" and "minute-operas". One minute-film pays homage to the Venetian venue of Fondazione Prada, Ca' Corner della Regina and to the noblewoman Caterina Cornaro, who became queen of Cyprus in 1468. The minute-opera *All Russia's souls point their roots heavenwards* creates a link between two musical compositions by Modest Petrovič Musorgskij and the historical figure of Ivan the Terrible's guard. Two other films investigate the themes of pathos and learning, also in relation to the exhibition "Machines à penser" which explores the correlation between conditions of exile, escape and retreat and physical or mental places which favor reflection, thought and intellectual production, focusing on three major philosophers of the 20th century: Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). The second part will be completed by *Winter of love* (60 minutes) which documents the contrast between intellectuals and thinkers, such as Theodor W. Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, and the student movement in Frankfurt in 1968.

Alexander Kluge's film program will be anticipated by two events taking place in Venice in the upcoming days. Kluge will present his new film *Happy Lamento*, featuring Khavn De La Cruz, on 30 August and 2 September 2018 at the Giornate degli autori during the Venice Film Festival. The event "The Snows of Venice - Theory like swimming in the storm", devoted to Kluge's literary and cinematographic work, will be organized by Goethe-Institut Mailand in collaboration with S.a.L.E. Docks in Venice on 3 September 2018 at 11 am. On this occasion, the book *The Snows of Venice* by Ben Lerner and Alexander Kluge will be launched. It originates from the collaboration between Alexander Kluge, Ben Lerner, Thomas Demand and Anna Viebrock and it is one of the results of the exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.", on view at Fondazione Prada in Venice in 2017. The publication includes 21 photos by Gerhard Richter on Venice, 4 artworks by R.H. Quayman on "the angel of history" by Walter Benjamin, and 4 photos by Thomas Demand on "the highest level of verisimilitude".

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PROGRAM

Part 1 (10 am -1 pm) - 50 years of *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed*

1. The circus enters the town (4 min)
2. Police-triptych (5 min)
3. The artists at the top of the big top - perplexed (100 min)
4. Where have all the flowers gone? (12 min)
5. On the death of my sister (2 min)

Part 2 (2 – 4.30 pm) - New Minute-films and Minute-operas

1. "Weep with summer houses and ruins" / "Venice's golden hair" (3 min)
2. Love/ Intrigue /Poison. Verdi's Luisa Miller (3 min)
3. All Russia's souls point their roots heavenwards (3 min)
4. "Opera with hammer and junk" (3 min)
5. Super Heroes und the sopranos of Bellini (6 min)
6. Homage to Anselm Kiefer / "In the rock of signs" (4 min)
7. Mondrian-machine no. 1 (2 min)
8. The Russian female teacher of 1920 (1 min)
9. "Tend to the snow on the fields" (3 min)
10. I am a "bookworm" with Helge Schneider (35 min)
11. Winter of Love. Student movement in September 1968 in Frankfurt (60min)

Alexander Kluge – biographical notes

Born in the town of Halberstadt in 1932, Alexander Kluge is one of the leading intellectual voices in Germany today. His huge body of work can be regarded as a continuation, in words and moving images, of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. He is described, as a young man, as Adorno's favorite son (Oskar Negt). The motives, themes, and formal strategies of Kluge's radical *cinéma impur* raise questions on representation and gender, history and memory, theory in its relation to practice, and the ongoing vitality of modernism. Adorno introduced him in 1958 to Fritz Lang for whom Kluge worked as an assistant on the making of *Der Tiger von Eschnapur, 1959*. He became one of twenty-six signatories to the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, which marked the launch of the New German Cinema. His first feature film *Abschied von Gestern* won the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1966, the first German entry since 1945 to garner the prize. His film *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed* won the Golden Lion in 1968. In 2008 Kluge presented the almost nine-hour film *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike: Marx/Eisenstein/Das Kapital (News from Ideological Antiquity: Marx/Eisenstein/Capital)*, a reinvention of Eisenstein's unfinished project of filming *Capital* by Karl Marx, and one of the most complex and monumental films of recent film history. Kluge is also one of the major German fiction writers of the late-20th century. His literary works are significant for their formal experimentation and insistently critical themes. As Fassbinder wrote in 1982, his prose *does* "document, after all that it is one of his chief aims to call every kind of institution into question, particularly those of the state." Alexander Kluge's major works of social criticism include *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, co-written with Oskar Negt and originally published in 1972 (*Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*), and *Geschichte und Eigensinn (History and Obstinacy)*, also co-authored with Negt. His most important exhibitions include: *dctp - Alexander Kluge. The Interview as Artistic Form* (ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2008), *"The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied."* (Fondazione Prada, Venice, 2017), *Pluriversum* (Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2017), *Gardens of Cooperation* (Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart and La Virreina, Barcelona, 2017) and *The poetic power of Theory* (Belvedere Haus 21, Vienna, 2018). His last books *Geschichten vom Kino (Storie del cinema)* and *Kongs große Stunde - Chronik des Zusammenhangs (The Great Hour of Kong. A Chronicle of Connections)* have been published in Italy in 2017. At the beginning of September 2018, the newest book with Ben Lerner *Snows of Venice* will be released.