

Paris 6. April 2012

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Dear Bas Jan Ader,

we would like to invite you to join a gathering in Paris this spring.

We are two artists living and working in Reykjavík, Iceland. We have been invited to stay in Kjarvalsstofa studio, at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, in April and May. We are about to realize a project we call *the Assembly of the Holy*. As part of the project we invite selected individuals a seat at an assembly for one evening in Kjarvalsstofa. We will host four such gatherings. The concept of the project is further explained on the following pages.

It is our sincere wish that you attend one of the Assemblies.

We have composed a list of people that we wish to invite to join us in a conversation, some are fictional, some have passed away and some yet to be born. Some of the people we invite, you included, actually exist. Therefore we invite our *existing* guests to assume the roles of those not existing or not able to attend for a variety of reasons. Based on intuition, we've paired individuals who actually have the opportunity to attend, and individuals that are not able to honor the gatherings in their physical presence.

We invite you to attend the assembly on the **17. May**, accompanied by the following guests, invited on that same occasion:

**Anthony Hegard** (artist) as Isadora Duncan (dancer),

**Assata Shakur** (activist) as Klaus Kinsky (actor),

**Eric Mueller** (dancer and singer) as The Rat catcher (fairytales character),

**Geirþrúður Finnþogadóttir Hjörvar** (artist) as Jesus of Nazareth (activist and prophet),

**Helene Cicoux** (philosopher and author) as Helene Cicoux,

**Jacques Vergés** (lawyer) as Judas (disciple of Jesus of Nazareth),

**Lars Von Trier** (director) as Emmanuelle (film character),

**Milan Kundera** (author) as Rosa Luxemburg (revolutionary idealist),

**Okay Altinisik** (artist) as Sigmund Freud (psychologist),

**Slim Defalla** (musician) as Eros (god of love),

**Tibor Huszar** (photographer) as Oscar Wilde (author),

**Ruchama Noorda** (artist) as the unborn person of the future. *The unborn person of the future* will attend each assembly; this person has no presumptions of societal positions, apparent power structures or hierarchies within society. It has no concept of time, sexual definition or self.

*Your role, dear Bas Jan Ader, will be that of yourself, because it is our wish to find out if a message in a bottle will find its receiver. You are invited to let go of your own persona, partly or entirely, and approach the assembly on your own terms and those of Bas Jan Ader, to the extent preferred by yourself and in any way you choose to interpret the role.*

We, your hosts, will take turns attending the Assemblies as the *Animal* and the *Secretary*. *The Secretary* will document what goes unsaid in the assemblies, she transcends the physical plane and is not sexually defined. The secretary, quietly present with a camera, a notebook and a pen, will document whatever she detects and finds of interest, what lies between the words and actions of the participants. *Animals* are those ruled by intuition, instinct and mood, without censoring or attempting to restrain themselves. The animal is not governed by academic conduct or social

manners. The animal makes its own rules for communication and debate, has its own language, knows neither its past nor future and is ever present in the moment.

Unfortunately we cannot sustain the costs of travel or accommodation, but offer dinner and drinks on the occasion of the gathering.

If you are willing to accept the invitation but the selected date is not suitable for you we ask you to contact us, furthermore if you have questions or need further explanation please feel free to write us an email to this address;  
[samsaetihelagra@gmail.com](mailto:samsaetihelagra@gmail.com)

If the concept of this happening inspires you to take on another role than of that we have assigned to you, you are welcome to make suggestions. It will be greatly appreciated as one of the unpredictable elements inherent in the project.

Respectfully yours,

Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir & Bryndis Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir

*The Assembly of the Holy*

Paris 2012

The end game or aim of the project is to accept the animalistic in the history of the feminine. We will strive to accept and welcome the idea of the woman as an animal creature, the body of desire. At the same time we want to counterpart the animal together with the tradition of debate among thinkers and artists by creating assemblies where different characters meet and weave between them conversations.

A comparison was sited between the feminine and the physical and/or the natural around 400-600 BC. Largely originated in the ideas of Xenophanes and of Augustine of Hippo it became a dominant idea to keep the female as a phenomenon of nature, as an animal on a physical plane. Those values manifested in the Holy Trinity; man, woman, child still dominate the fabric of our society. The woman being the receiver of mans seed, the one who gives birth to a child, milks, and bears life. These ideas preach the man as the soul, the woman as body and the unity of the two as the perfection of man.

These ideas infested in the Bible nested firmly in the general values of western society over time and have historically been involved in suppressing feminine values and ways. Today the manifestation of the female body and the primal instinctual behavior are exceedingly determined by means of Capitalism. In the period from which we draw inspiration for the Assemblies, male thinkers symbolized their inner live, soul, subconscious and primal instincts using female body and presence. Their contemporary female Surrealists entered the scene presenting the subject of their own image. Their act could be considered as a double resistance. On the one hand the resistance of Surrealism, opposing the principal structure of bourgeois society, secondly that of a woman as an executive presenter of herself within a world that valued her as the muse of subjectivity. We want to address these ideas and the questions they pose within the free context of art.

By taking on the role of *the animal* we attempt to compare the status of *the woman*, *the animal* and *the artist*. The endeavor involves taking on the assigned role of woman as the representative of nature and the subject or protégé of the reigning systems' advocates. In doing so, we attempt to make an entrance into a world that holds women as subjective tokens. We seek to answer the question whether the artist that places him or herself with *the animal* and *the woman*, is rejecting the ascending order of the acknowledged system and by doing so transcends, not only outside but above it's hierarchy. The authority of the artist being that of addressing and presenting on his or her own terms what is already apparent and claiming autonomy.

We want to acknowledge the ideas of women as representatives of nature and sister of animals and reclaim them as a basis of intellect. We therefore seek to accept and celebrate this heritage rather than oppose it. Animal intellect and instinct, historically associated with the feminine, will be unveiled for one evening at a time in a holy assembly.

The gatherings will be documented in audio, video, drawings, written texts and accumulated memorabilia. The result will eventually take on the form of an art exhibition in the Netherlands coming fall, along with and followed by future assemblies and resulting exhibitions in Germany, Austria and Iceland.

G. Hauksdóttir & B. H. Ragnarsdóttir

<http://this.is/gunnhildur>

<http://this.is/bryndis>