Out of the Blue.
From the provisional to improvisation: strategies for action in an uncertain age

27-29 October 2017 in the HKW - House of the cultures of the world (Haus der Kulturen der Welt)
Berlin

We improvise in all contexts and on all scales: in small, manageable situations (provisional actions in our everyday lives), and with regard to serious, multi-state issues in public contexts and under precarious conditions. The scope is broad, ranging from a stopgap solution to high art forms; from preparing/pre-empting to enhancing/refining.

The symposium “Out of the Blue” creates the framework for a cross-disciplinary dialogue between art and society. The aim is to draw attention to the characteristic features of improvisation or provisional activity, to define them more clearly and to make them visible for everyone in the sense of a generally applicable strategy for action. Here, we define three horizons of improvisational activity, which are reflected in three levels of consideration: 1. The level of the specific conditions under which provisional activities arise, and specific forms that they take; 2. The level of the socio-political circumstances, which generate insecurity from within the system, whereby people are forced to produce at their peak creative performance in work and life; 3. The level of the expansion of conventional concepts of action through to other notions of situative, environmentally aware and intuitively anticipatory behaviour.

Improvisation/work with provisional activities will be presented as a basic strategy of action on different levels of scale. The extent to which this strategy is capable of handling the risky challenges of our age, and furthermore to fundamentally lead to greater awareness and a more careful treatment of our environment as a whole is the subject of debate.

During a three-day event, guests from different academic, artistic and social spheres will give presentations on their approach to issues relating to improvisation. In parallel, workshops and working groups will offer the opportunity to gain inspiration and exchange views. Moving between plenary sessions and smaller, concentrated groups creates a dynamism, as a result of which constellations and communication can change constantly.

The symposium is oriented to all interested individuals: professional groups who always improvise or work with provisional activities, as well as artists, scientists, practitioners and theoreticians who wish to take a closer look at the multifaceted, interesting cultural technique of the improvisational.