

VILLA ROMANA FELLOWS 2019

The artists KAYA (Kerstin Brätsch and Debo Eilers), Marcela Moraga, Christian Naujoks and Rajkamal Kahlon are the 2019 Villa Romana Fellows. From February to November 2019 they will live and work in the Villa Romana in Florence. This year's Jury of the Villa Romana Prize – the artist Maria Thereza Alves and Eva Birkenstock, Director of the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf – selected them from among the thirteen nominated candidates.

KAYA is a cooperative project initiated in 2010 by Kerstin Brätsch and Debo Eilers. Both artists work independently and in collaborative projects. While Kerstin Brätsch operates with painting as a medium that is mutable and closely relates to the physicality of the body, Debo Eilers works instead with sculptural tensions. KAYA conceives of itself as a *cumulative project*: each new manifestation builds on all the previous works executed by the collaboration. Works by KAYA can currently be viewed in the Fondazione Memmo in Rome. In 2017 KAYA exhibited in the Museum Brandhorst in Munich and also gave a workshop on the exhibition in the Museo Madre in Naples. In 2015 KAYA organised *KAMP KAYA* in the KUB Arena of the Kunsthaus Bregenz.

Marcela Moraga studied in Chile and Germany and now lives in Berlin. She works with performances, video and installations, looking at the order and movement in public spaces as well as the relationship between culture and nature. In doing so, she focuses on ephemeral, undefined spaces in order to activate relationships there. Moraga also works with textiles, which she sees as woven spaces that can be read as an object, architecture or a two-dimensional image. She has held solo exhibitions in Berlin, Santiago de Chile and Hamburg, and has taken part in numerous group exhibitions in France, Germany, Holland, Brazil, Chile, Egypt and South Korea.

Christian Naujoks is a sound artist and composer. He studied in Leipzig and Weimar and has appeared in exhibitions as well as performances and concerts. He frequently cooperates with other artists, such as in his current collaboration with Ei Arakawa & Sarah Chow in the Kunstverein in Düsseldorf or last year with Ei Arakawa and Dan Poston during the Skulptur Projekte Münster. In his compositions Naujoks works with the mimicry of prototypes, which he draws into new contexts, whether those are serious music or pop, modernism or romanticism.

Rajkamal Kahlon now lives in Berlin after studying in California and New York. Kahlon references and draws over historic print graphic works from colonial propaganda, ethnography and so-called racial sciences. Using extractions, enlargements and additional details, she dissects their former illustrative function, thereby rehabilitating bodies, histories and cultures that were violated or wiped out. In 2017 the Weltmuseum Wien invited her to present her current solo exhibition *Staying With Trouble*. In the exhibition she interprets the holdings of the museum's photographic collections. The title of the exhibition refers to the biologist and science philosopher Donna Haraway, whose work has influenced Kahlon's working processes.

The Villa Romana Prize comprises a ten-month working residency in the Villa Romana in Florence, the use of an open studio as well as a monthly stipend. The prize is awarded by the association of the Villa Romana and financed through the Deutsche Bank Stiftung, the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, as well as a number of private sponsors.

The Villa Romana in Florence is a site for contemporary artistic production and international exchange. Since 1905, the core task of the Villa Romana has been the Villa Romana Prize. It has frequently been awarded to artists in the early stages of their careers and in that way has helped to write modern art history. By hosting exhibitions, inviting international guest artists and holding a broad spectrum of other events, the Villa Romana promotes dialogue with both the producers of art and their audiences, positions itself within an international artistic context and promotes communication with the cultures of the Mediterranean regions.