



**Research Toolbox:
Cooperation in the Arts**

Do you work mainly on your own or in a group? Does one person make most decisions, or do all members contribute equally to creative processes?

The history of the arts offers many examples of self-organisation, collectives, and democratic structures in which artists work without hierarchies or a single 'leader'. Yet leadership figures such as conductors and directors have become established in many fields, including orchestras and theatre companies.

This toolbox explores cooperative working in the arts, focusing on non-hierarchical groups that jointly prepare or produce performances, artefacts, or installations.

How do they work and communicate? How are tasks distributed and artistic decisions made? Does collaboration on equal terms affect artistic output?

We will examine historical and contemporary artists' collectives and experiment practically with creating without an 'artistic direction'.

An integral part of this toolbox is the participation in the conference ***Cooperation in the Arts*** on 12 and 13 November, with presentations, discussions, and workshops offering lively exchanges with international colleagues.

During the toolbox, you will work in groups to develop a contribution for the conference.

Organisers:

Martin Skamletz (Head of the HKB Institute of Interpretation), Iseult Andreani, Martin Danneck, Hannah Eßler, Annette Kappeler, and Katelyn King (researchers at the Institute Interpretation)

Dates:

Monday 9th to Friday 14th of November 2026, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Venue:

Ostermundigenstrasse 103, Auditorium

Languages:

Toolbox: English

Conference: German, English, French

Program Overview

Room: Ostermundigenstr. 103, Auditorium

Monday, 9.11.2026 Introduction & Historical Review

10:00-13:00 Introduction to the topic, program overview

13:00-14:00 *Lunch break*

14:00-17:00 Historical overview, presentation & discussion of selected cases

To prepare for the next day:

Prepare a short presentation about one contemporary ensemble and their way of working together.

Bring your 'instrument of artistic expression' – an instrument, your voice, or whatever else is your main creative area.

Tuesday, 10.11.2026 Contemporary Case Studies & Workshop I

10:00-13:00 Student presentations of contemporary ensembles

13:00-14:00 *Lunch break*

14:00-17:00 Workshop I with Katelyn King

To prepare for the next day:

Read selected excerpts (marked in the pdfs) from two books:

- 1) Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: *Assembly*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- 2) David Graeber and David Wengrow: *The Dawn of Everything*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2021.

For each book, write down one question and bring it to the session.

Wednesday, 11.11.2026 Readings

10:00-13:00 Group discussion of the readings, overview of the workshop program

13:00-14:00 *Lunch break*

14:00-17:00 Workshop II with Katelyn King (preparation of public presentation)

Thursday, 12.11.2026

10.00-11.15 Cooperative Ensembles of the 19th Century (Introduction and Discussion) by Iseult Andreani, Martin Danneck, Hannah Essler, and Annette Kappeler

11.15-12.00 FR: LEVAINS. Art coopératif et recherche-action participative, by Marie Preston

12.00-13.00 EN / DE: Inputs Students Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

13.00-14.15 *Lunch break*

14.15-15.00 EN: Surveillance as Cooperative Practice? On the Interaction of the Police and Theaters in Vienna and Berlin around 1900 by Jan Lazardzig

15.00-15.45 FR: La section musicale de l'École des hautes sociales (1902-1910) : un projet collectif pour un objectif social by Michel Duchesneau

15.45-16.30 DE: Interaktion und Kollaboration – Interaktives Komponieren in elektronischen Studios 1948–1971 by Marc Kilchenmann

16.30-17.00 *Coffee break*

17.00-17.45 DE: Affektive Überwältigung und inszenierte Indifferenz: Eine emotionssoziologische Analyse von *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* by Nina Zahner

17.45-18.45 EN / DE: Inputs Students Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

19.00-21.00 *Informal gathering with snacks/drinks*

Friday, 13.11.2026

10.00-11.30 EN: Between Resistance and Survival: Cooperative Practices in the German Performing Arts (Workshop) by Yana Prinsloo

11.30-12.15 FR: « Faire avec » : les pratiques participatives dans les carrières d'artistes des arts visuels en France by Tecla Raynaud

12.15-13.00 FR: Espace(s) de réunion et pratique(s) de la conversation : des dispositifs signifiants by Danaé Leroy

13.00-14.30 *Lunch break*

14.30-15.30 EN: Input Students Hochschule der Künste Bern

15.30-16.15 EN: Weiche Werke. Kollektivierung in der lyrischen Praxis (hybrid) by Daniel Ehrmann

16.15-16.45 *Coffee break*

16.45-17.30 EN: Between Self-Realisation and Commitment: On the Organisation of Collective Artistic Practice, Taking the Raqs Media Collective as an Example by Rachel Mader & Angelina Burri

17.30-18.15 EN: They cannot represent themselves, they must be present. On Cooperatively Staging Careers of and with Refugee Academics by Michael Guggenheim

Further information about the workshop:

<https://www.hkb->

[interpretation.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Veranstaltungen/2611_CooperativePractices.pdf](https://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Veranstaltungen/2611_CooperativePractices.pdf)