

**The 2018 Elevate Discourse Programme – Theme: RISK/COURAGE**

The approaching 2018 Elevate Festival will once again analyze current social, economic and ecological developments worldwide. The focus lies on possible alternatives to the status quo. This year's extensive programme of workshops, lectures and panel discussions will focus on two basic concepts of modernity: **risk and courage**.

Risk-taking is part of human nature. Highly moral acts requiring exceptional bravery are considered courageous. Civil rights, peace treaties, minimum wages, women's suffrage, freedom of expression – these present-day achievements are seen as the result of courageous struggles that have advanced our society. And indeed, in many parts of the world today there is a considerable measure of peace, security, and stability.

Nevertheless, binding strategies for dealing with global crisis areas such as climate change and social inequality are still lacking. For some years now, the rise of authoritarian tendencies has been evident not only in the global financial market but also in a series of formerly fully democratic states. Do we expose ourselves to too many risks nowadays or do we risk too little? Is there perhaps a lack of courage to make necessary corrections to the course, or are there simply no appealing narratives that point the way to a better tomorrow? And how do refugees, the politically persecuted and activists from all over the world deal with the often life-threatening circumstances they expose them-

selves to and more often than not are forced to expose themselves to?

Daniel Erlacher, Elevate co-founder and discourse programme coordinator, would like to draw the public's attention to the many forms of successful resistance movements that currently exist: *"Indigenous environmentalists are forming global alliances. Whistleblowers often risk their careers to expose injustices. Some activists, journalists, and artists even risk their lives to stand up for their cause. Civil disobedience and non-violent resistance are once again the leitmotifs of people who have committed themselves to the cause."*

Together with a large number of scientists, activists and civil society initiatives from all over the world, these questions will be discussed at the Elevate Festival. Inspiration and an exciting examination of new ideas, strategies, and perspectives are in the forefront – five festival days at the beginning of March 2018 in Graz.

*"More than 50 top-notch speakers from 16 different countries are set to participate in more than 25 panel discussions, lectures, workshops and film screenings – discussing with the audience as well as amongst themselves. In a newly created storytelling format, each of the invited guests can focus on their personal experiences and their associated stories."*

Daniel Erlacher

## Noteworthy programme items:

- **Julian Assange's live webcast for the opening of the festival**
- **Wikileaks, politics, journalism, and media** as main festival themes
- **Democracy as a security risk?** Debates on current authoritarian tendencies in politics
- **Risk of climate change:** How indigenous activists from the USA, Honduras, Guatemala, Norway and other countries react to global and local threats.
- **Art, activism, physical engagement** – discussions with artists like **Oksana Shachko of FEMEN or the Voyna Group**
- **Refugee movements and people's stories, focusing on Greece**
- **Whistleblowers** – Storytelling focus with world-famous guests



## We Are Europe – The European Festival Cooperation enters its final year

Certain sessions of the discourse programme will also be co-curated by partner festivals in 2018 as part of the Europe-wide festival cooperation **"We Are Europe"**: The **Today'sart Festival** from The Hague will hold a panel discussion entitled **"Risk: Art and Activism – Taking Matters Further"**, in which risk-conscious artists and courageous art projects are discussed. The **Reworks Festival** from Thessaloniki relates the situation of refugees in Greece to the socially predominant narratives of the area. Top-class guests from Thessaloniki and many other parts of the world will be discussing this topic in Graz.

A preview of the programme will be presented at the opening show on **Wednesday 28 February**, with many international guests giving a preview of the upcoming sessions. Artistic performances and appearances by **Gerhard Haderer, Josef Zotter, Tara Houska, Sarah Harrison and Renata Avila** as well as the eagerly awaited opening speech and Q&A by **Wikileaks founder Julian Assange** (live via video stream from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London) will round the programme out. Numerous lectures, panel discussions, workshops and documentary film screenings will take place from Thursday to Sunday.

# WE ARE EUROPE



## The following programme items should be emphasized:

### *Thu 01 March*

The internationally **active anti-nuclear power activist Heather Wokusch** gives an **introduction to the psychology of risk and courage**, with initial live broadcasts to international outposts. From 12 pm onwards at Forum Stadtpark. This will be followed by two **panel discussions** on the topics of democracy, the criminalisation of activism and self-determination. For the film program in the evening, the **first cinematic highlight follows with "City of Ghosts"**, a multi-award-winning portrait of social media activists in the Syrian city of Raqqa. Even in their exile in Germany, the young citizens' journalists are still threatened by the IS. Elevate tells you why first-hand.



### *Fri 02 March*

Friday at Elevate presents itself as a star-studded international event in the discourse programme: From the enormous **potential of blockchain technology** to the question of the risks of today's communication infrastructure, the early afternoon is more technology-oriented. Another session with an **emphasis on debate** highlights the current events around **Wikileaks, US politics, and the media**. The evening's panel discussion revolves around journalism in regions without a functioning separation of powers, freedom of the press as well as the fundamental skepticism towards journalists. The **Snowden confidante and director of the Courage Foundation, Sarah Harrison**, will moderate and greet the **ARD journalist John Goetz**, the **US war photographer Kate Brooks**, the Austrian **investigative journalist Julia Herdnböck** from the dossier and via video stream from Buenos Aires, the German journalist and **filmmaker Gaby Weber**, among others.



### *Sat 03 March*

**Art, activism, physical engagement and the living conditions of indigenous people worldwide** are the main themes on Elevate Saturday. How far can or should artists go with their work? Are there any limits? What can bold art move? The format, curated in collaboration with the Today'sart Festival in The Hague, presents exceptional artists such as the **Voina Group** from Russia (currently in exile) and **Natalia Koliada** from the **theatre group "Belarus Free Theater"** (currently in exile in London). The extraordinary **playwright Angela Richter** will be connected via video stream from Cologne.



In a further session, activists and artists will once again report on their use of physical engagement. **Oksana Shachko** from **FEMEN** and **Janna Aljets** from the anti-coal movement "Ende Gelände" from Germany discuss the topic "Let's Get Physical". In the main evening programme, **indigenous activists such as Tara Houska** will talk about the global situation and concrete conflicts, like the protest movement of the "Water Protectors" against the pipeline construction in North Dakota, USA. The planned **live video conference in Honduras, Central America** is guaranteed to be deeply moving. **Bertha Zúniga Cáceres**, the daughter of **Bertha Cáceres**, an internationally acclaimed activist who was murdered in Honduras exactly two years ago, will be speaking to us live. What it means for her to step up in her mother's place after her murder, to continue and then survive an attempted assassination attempt just last year- and still not give up, she will share on Saturday at Elevate.



The cinematic end of the day will be marked by the **"Rebel Music Night"**, named after the MTV production of the same name. **MTV producer and longtime Viacom employee Nusrat Durrani** will be brought to Graz for the first time.

#### **Sun 04 March**

At noon, the Elevate Festival and Greek refugee helpers and artists open their doors to a brunch at the cultural centre <rotor>. **Vasilis Tsartsanis**, a hairdresser from Thessaloniki, is then invited to the podium at Forum Stadtpark to tell his incredible story of **tireless work surrounding the Idomeni refugee camp**. In cooperation with the Reworks Agora Festival from Thessaloniki, a focus will be placed on the people behind the refugee stories. After a further **discussion on the subject of feminism and antifeminism**, another extraordinary event will take place: In cooperation with the whistleblower protection organisation ExposeFacts.org, a host of prominent whistleblowers have been invited to Graz for the very first time: **Thomas Drake** (former NSA Executive), **Jesselyn Radack** (Nat. Sec. & Human Rights Attorney; former Ethics Lawyer Dept. of Justice), **Matthew Hoh** (US Foreign Service), **Lisa Ling** (Ret. US Air Force Sergeant), **Cian Westmoreland** (US Airman). Bearing the title **"From Pentagon to Paradise"**, these insiders talk about their experiences and reasons for their willingness to take risks – first-hand. **Bastian Obermaier from the Süddeutsche Zeitung** will also report on his experiences dealing with the Panama and Paradise Papers. This session is curated in cooperation with ExposeFacts.org and co-moderated by **Diani Barreto** (ExposeFacts Berlin)



### **International guests with an emphasis on artists**

The guest list for the discourse programme is loaded with insider's favourites as well as internationally renowned individuals.

**More than 50 top-notch speakers from 17 different countries are to set to participate in more than 25 panel discussions, lectures, workshops and film screenings – discussing with the audience as well as among themselves.**

**JULIAN ASSANGE\* - TARA HOUSKA - SARAH HARRISON - THOMAS DRAKE - JESSELYN RADACK  
BERTHA ZÚNIGA CÁCERES\* - OKSANA SHACHKO (FEMEN) - RENATA AVILA - NUSRAT DURRANI  
DIANI BARRETO - HEATHER WOKUSCH - RAUL ZELIK - CIAN WESTMORELAND - KATE BROOKS  
MATTHEW HOH - LISA LING - MARTIN BALLUCH - BASTIAN OBERMAYER\* - ANGELA RICHTER\*  
ANDROMACHI PAPAIOANNOU - PETER HARRIS - MANUEL BELTRÁN - JOHN GOETZ - VOINA GROUP  
FERNANDA SHIRAKAWA - MAHSA GHAFARI - VASILIS TSARTSANIS - JANNA ALJETS - NATALIA KALIADA  
CLARA LÓPEZ RUBI - AMANDINE LE PAPE - JUAN PANCORBO - SIMONE ROWAT - HOLGER KREKEL  
ROMANA ULL - XENIA ERMOSHINA - MAXIME FAGET - TAMARA EHS - GABY WEBER\*  
THOMAS ZEINZINGER - JULIA HERRNBÖCK - THOMAS WAITZ - MARGARITA OSIPIAN  
ANDREA KRETSCHMANN - ARGYRO BARATA  
AND MANY MORE**

\* = live via video stream



## For the full discourse lineup, visit [elevate.at](https://elevate.at)

Follow this link to view the full discourse programme - with bilingual descriptions and info for all events:

<https://elevate.at/diskursprogramm>

For bios and info on all international festival guests please visit:

<https://elevate.at/speakers>

## Tickets

The Elevate discourse programme can be attended free of charge.

Donations are welcome - also in crypto currencies.

There is still a batch of tickets left for the musical portion of the festival.

While supplies last.

<https://elevate.at/tickets>

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Further information:

<https://elevate.at/kontakt/presse>

Photos of locations, artists, guests and the recent festivals:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/elevatefestival/sets>

Links:

[elevate.at](https://elevate.at)

[weare-europe.eu](https://weare-europe.eu)

[#elevatefestival](https://twitter.com/elevatefestival)

[#WeAreEurope](https://twitter.com/WeAreEurope)

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