

PRESS RELEASE

February 2022

ZKM and Artists at Risk (AR) host a symposium in defense of artistic freedom Online, February 11–12, 2022

**Symposium: “Institutions and Resistance – Alliances for Art at Risk!”
11.-12.2.2022**

Location
Digital

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Lorenzstraße 19
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Founders of ZKM



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Where would you go if the world collapsed?

*“Institutions and Resistance: Alliances for Art at Risk” is the title of a two-day, international livestream symposium, which the ZKM and the network Artists at Risk (AR) are organizing to discuss the need for new alliances in view of the threat to artists in many of the world’s countries. Participants include activist and performance artist Masha Alekhina of Pussy Riot and British archaeologist David Wengrow, who makes the case for the power of direct action in the groundbreaking, recently published book, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, coauthored by anthropologist David Graeber.*

Afghanistan, Belarus, Syria, Russia, and many more: in far too many countries artists face threats to their very existence. Together with the networking institution at the intersection of art and human rights, Artists at Risk (AR), the ZKM invites you to join an online symposium to form new alliances and create perspectives for threatened artists. Further, the symposium is about the responsibility of cultural institutions and their potential to act together in the face of global risks and threats.

Peter Weibel, artistic director of the ZKM, says: *“Art and artists all over the world are increasingly the victims of political systems. It is a matter of resilience that have to take action. The symposium is a way to strengthen solidarity.”*

For two days, the program will bring together live-streamed globally active artists, activists, theorists, and representatives of institutions. The symposium is divided into three thematic sections and there will be keynotes, panel discussions, video statements, and artistic interventions. The symposium will be opened on Friday, February 11, 2022, at 5 p.m. by Peter Weibel and Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky, codirectors of Artists at Risk (AR). At 5:30 p.m., the first section on the themes “Threats and Risks” will follow with a keynote address by Masha Alekhina, performance artist, political activist, and member of Pussy Riot.

The second section “Institutions as Resistance” will address the attitudes and self-image of cultural institutions, and will include a contribution by the Ruangrupa collective, the curatorial team of

Documenta 15. In the third and last section, a vision will be developed of how networks could be constructed across borders in the future in order to work against these threats.

The highlight of the symposium is the lecture by David Wengrow on Saturday, February 12, 2022, at 6 p.m. In their recent book *The Dawn of Everything*, archaeologist David Wengrow and anthropologist David Graeber describe the history of humankind, and how the beginnings of our civilization can be rethought and connected to the future of humanity — a draft of a plea for the power of direct action.

The symposium “Institutions and Resistance — Alliances for Art at Risk” is a collaboration between Artists at Risk (AR) and the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe within the framework of the EU Creative Europe project Artists at Risk (AR): A European Network of Safe Havens (AR-ENSH). In addition to the ZKM | Karlsruhe, partner institutions include Artists at Risk (AR), Art Veda, Tunis, and CCCB, Barcelona.

This symposium is the third event in the series “Art Institutions in the Age of Existential Risks” at the ZKM.

The symposium language is English and the event will be streamed live: <https://zkm.de/de/livestream>. For further information, visit www.zkm.de.

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AR Residency Program:

AR Safe Haven ZKM | Karlsruhe hosted its first residents in 2019 in collaboration with Artists at Risk (AR) and with funding from the Martin Roth Initiative. Soon after, ZKM became a key partner of Artists at Risk — A European Network of Safe Havens (AR-ENSH): an EU program that was officially launched in January 2021 at AR’s live-streamed #RiskandRebellion symposium. This three-year European Union network program, funded by Creative Europe, supports residencies for artists at risk at the ZKM and other AR-ENSH partner institutions: AR Safe Haven Helsinki, CCCB-Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, and Art Veda, Tunis.

About Artists at Risk (AR):

Artists at Risk (AR) is a networking institution active at the intersection of human rights and art. As a platform that advocates for persecuted artists, AR’s work includes mentoring and advocacy for artists at risk through artists’ residencies, as well as providing active support for their artistic practice. The Artists at Risk (AR) Residencies program arranges shorter or longer residencies at host institutions for carefully selected AR residents: [//artistsatrisk.org/](http://artistsatrisk.org/)

gather.town:

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Baden-Württemberg
MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND KUNST

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Parallel to the live stream, there will be a public meet-&-greet on the virtual platform gather.town. Complete versions of the artistic interventions will also be available there.

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