

## Concept

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### DEBATE! Performing antagonisms

Debates are often cited as proud witnesses to our democratic order: parliamentary and political debates, classic scientific debates right up to debates in television and on talk shows, online panels and in chat rooms... Debates exist within the context of politics and media, but you can already find them in schools and kindergartens, as a means of learning self expression and fair decision making.

We hold debates, we don't perform them. However, the debate itself as well as those engaged in them are always performing, even putting on a show. Which means: debates are performative tryouts, marking shifts within a culture of speech acts, for all persons involved. These acts stand for the enactment of certain positions, for making a show of arguments and for the show-casing of eligibilities.

What relationship exist between enactment, engagement and show, between the act as such and the art and techniques of debating? These are the research objects of the thealit Lab DEBATE!

Is there even an ounce of reason in debates with their projection point of rational judgements, or are they just a cover for antagonisms? Haven't debaters always been actors in an impossible game of democracy between the present and its representation? How can we engage in debates today - or not?

DEBATE!! Performing antagonisms" especially presents performative and participatory experiments. The lab critically investigates habitual rules and stagings of debates and experiments with a new culture of conflict.

Claudia Reiche - Andrea Sick (curators)