transmediale 2018 *face value*

transmediale 2018 *face value* aims to take stock of current affairs, to recognize things for what they are before saying how they could be different. It is an attempt to probe the values, as well as the processes of value creation, that have contributed to our present moment of political, economic, and cultural divides.

"Taking things at face value" seems to have become the norm of public discourse amidst today's reactionary and algorithmically guided communication practices. transmediale wants to challenge this impulse to judge things by their immediate appearance and instead look at less visible issues, which run deep across all sectors of society. These include power relations rarely discussed at digital culture events, such as contemporary imbalances of race, class, and gender, which are also being built into technological systems. In fact, rather than providing an emancipatory alternative, (post-)digital culture today seems to *support* hate-mongering, racist and neo-colonial powers. This, however, should not be a reason to lament a mythical past in which—supposedly—the internet was free and creativity unbound. Rather, there is a need to embrace both unsettling and uniting cultural practices, as well as daring speculative thinking, to promote auto-criticality and an awareness that nothing is ever as simple as its surface suggests. Similarly, cultural events like transmediale are made up of different political imaginaries and communities that are simultaneously resistant and complicit to the developments one so urgently needs to oppose.

With these challenges in mind, how can artists, cultural workers, and speculative theorists respond to the current politics of taking things at face value and, at the same time, face their own values? How does one name biases and exploitative mechanisms for what they are and find new ways to resist them?

The festival consists of different curatorial formats, sharing participants across all program parts, and is united in a twofold approach of interrogating value and values, looking at cultural shifts against the background of economization and changing value sets.

Kristoffer Gansing (artistic director)
Daphne Dragona (conference program)
Inga Seidler (exhibition program)
Florian Wüst (film and video program)