



## KASSIA & THE NEW ISTANBUL CONVENT(TION) DIGITAL CONFERENCES

KAINKOLLEKTIV/BOCHUM – BURAK OZDEMİR & MUSICA SEQUENZA/BERLİN – İSTANBUL WOMEN'S MUSEUM/İSTANBUL  
PRACOWNIA KURATORSKA/POLAND – TAK THEATER AUFBAU/KREUZBERG BERLİN – KAMPNAGEL/HAMBURG  
in cooperation with universities worldwide

**Kassia** (810-865): considered as the first female composer worldwide whose works have come down to us. Kassia: beautiful, intelligent, educated - and so emancipated that she dared to contradict Emperor Theophilos of Constantinople showing theological acumen during the “bride show” organized for him in 823. When in 843 Kassia was 33 she founded a monastery, which she presided over until her death in 865. 300 years before Hildegard von Bingen, she composed hymns that are still sung in Eastern Church today. Although biographical data are hardly available and only a part of her writings has survived, her personality is particularly evident in her non-liturgical poems. These poems suggest that Kassia was a highly educated and intellectually gifted woman. A person who writes a poem where every line starts with “I hate” cannot have been a shy person. She knew how to Express her thoughts to demonstrate her position. In a time and a society where women should be silent, Kassia was not silent. As a result, in her writings we have a unique female voice that has endured over ages.

**From** Turkey, Germany and Poland, a women's museum, a theatre company, a composer with his orchestra, a women's initiative, and the departments of graphics, animation and art history from two universities and many individuals have come together to celebrate Kassia's 1211th birthday. We hear Kassia's voice and carry it on into the present so that women's voices get louder across the borders. As a hymnographer, Kassia is celebrated in general for her piety and profound expression of religious devotion. We believe that she deserves to be remembered in her entire personality: as a composer, poet, philosopher, campaigner, networker, activist, innovator, even as a feminist. In dialogue with Kassia we want to talk about our lives, our political and social interference for a self-determined life, and encourage and empower one another. Our project is an encounter through music, dance, stories, poems, illustrations, graphics, animations. This variety opens up space to express our dreams and life plans for a just society and makes feminist debate visible beyond the borders. Especially in a year when Turkey announced her withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and when a similar step is being discussed in Poland, such communication is imperative and important.

**Finally** the project planned includes several premieres: for the first time since her death Kassia's birthday will be celebrated; the first opera in honour of Kassia is being composed; the first videos and graphics are being created that reinterpret her secular poems as artwork; professional actors will interpret her poems in (Byzantine) historical places, the performance will be made available as a documentary; and for the first time researchers on Kassia will come together for scholarly exchange.

## KASSIA CONFERENCE PROGRAM FALL 2021

**09 September 19.00 (CEST)** **KASSIA AND THE FALLEN WOMEN. AS OVERTURE OF THE CONFERENCE SERIES**  
Host: kainkollektiv & friends, Bochum  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided

**23 September 19.00 (CEST)** **FEMINIST WORK. THINKING THROUGH METHODS, FIELDS AND CONDITIONS**  
Host: Pracownia Kuratorska, Krakau  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**30 September 19.00 (CEST)** **THE RECEPTION OF KASSIA**  
Host: Swedish Research Institute, Istanbul  
- English  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**14 October 19.00 (CEST)** **IMAGINING KASSIA'S NEW ISTANBUL CONVENT(ION)**  
Host: Havle & Pracownia Kuratorska & kainkollektiv  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**21 October 20.00 (CEST)** **ON SPEAKING & BEING. FEMALE SPACES OF LANGUAGE**  
Host: kainkollektiv, Bochum  
- German/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**23 October 16.30 (CEST)** **KASSIA REVISITED, RESEARCHERS ON KASSIA'S POEMS AND MUSIC**  
Host: İstanbul Women's Museum  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**19.30 (CEST) ACT LIKE YOU CARE** – Talk with Sasha Waltz, Burak Özdemir, Yeşim Güner Oymak  
Host: kainkollektiv & friends, Bochum  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

**24 October 14.00 (CEST)** **SEARCHING FOR KASSIA – PROTEST POEMS YESTERDAY AND TODAY**  
Host: İstanbul Women's Museum  
- English/Turkish/Polish simultaneous translation provided  
Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=1&zoom-join-qr-code=1>

Event to be announced in October

✧ **IMAGINING KASSIA** A student graphic artwork/storytelling project inspired by Kassia's poems  
A joint production of İstanbul Women's Museum and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University  
Graphic Department, İstanbul  
A physical exhibition

✧ **Premiere of the short video KASSIA IS WITH US –**

A joint production of İstanbul Women's Museum and Tiyatro Boyalı Kuş (*Theatre Painted Bird*), İstanbul  
✧ **Book presentation ■ KASSIA – GÜÇLENDİREN SÖZLER // WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT**, ed. Meral Akkent,  
ISTOS Publishing, Turkish-English, 300 p.

Events in March -Mai 2022

✧ **MARCH ■ BRINGING KASSIA BACK TO LIFE. IF KASSIA WAS ALIVE TODAY** A multidisciplinary performance and animation project with Kassia's poems (2021-22)  
A joint production of İstanbul Women's Museum, Bahçeşehir University Cartoon & Animation Department and Bahçeşehir University Conservatory

✧ **MAI ■ „SONGS OF CARE(VOLUTION)“** (post) feminist opera, Musica Sequence  
Composer: Burak Özdemir, Berlin  
Premiere in İstanbul at Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall

## INSTITUTIONS CONTRIBUTING CONTENT TO THE PROJECT



### From and with

Meral Akkent • Burak Özdemir • Anna Majewska • Zuzanna Berendt • Wanda Künzel  
Hannah Busch • Melissa Müller • Mirjam Schmuck • Fabian Lettow • Burcu Özdemir  
Martina Bengert • Ingela Nilsson • Mithu Sanyal • Kübra Gümüşay Aylin Vartanyan  
Milan Vukasinovic • Liz James • Niki Tsironi • Merve S. Öztürk • and many more

### A coproduction

Kainkollektiv • Burak Özdemir/Musica Sequenza Orchestra • İstanbul Kadın Müzesi  
Pracownia Kuratorska • Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

### For more information

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### ISTANBUL WOMEN'S MUSEUM

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