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# The Polonsky Salon

The Polonsky Salon is a new digital public platform at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. Polonsky Fellows and alumni will host inspiring and internationally renowned academics to discuss new ideas and cutting-edge research from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

Opening Remarks:

**Prof. Shai Lavi**

Director, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the Polonsky Academy

A conversation with

**Prof. Bernard E. Harcourt**

Columbia University

on his recent book

***Critique and Praxis: A Critical Philosophy of Illusions, Values, and Action***

Hosted by

**Dr. Carmen Lea Dege**

Polonsky Academy Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Karl Marx famously argued that philosophers had only interpreted the world, but that the point was to change it. Indebted to Marx and his critique of an ideal *vita contemplativa*, critical theory has always challenged the division between theory and practice. But has it lived up to its own demands? Bernard Harcourt is skeptical. In his recent book, *Critique and Practice: A Critical Philosophy of Illusions, Values, and Action* (Columbia University Press, 2020), he challenges us to move beyond the contemplative detours of critical theory. In this conversation we will discuss Harcourt's turn to political action and the ways it can form a response to the intricate problems of violence and illusion. We will explore the vision he charts when, in a personal move that testifies to his own activism and social-justice litigation, he turns the Marxian question, "What is to be done?" back onto ourselves and asks, "What more am I to do?"



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