IKA

INSTITUTE FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Lecture Series 2018–2019

]a[academy of fine arts vienna

Institut für Kunst und Architektur
Augasse 2–6, 1090 Vienna
IKA Forum / 1st floor, core N
www.akbild.ac.at/ika

All lectures start at 7pm.

The lecture series is curated by Michelle Howard and Luciano Parodi, CMT platform for Construction, Material and Technology.

supported by

zt: Kammer der ZiviltechnikerInnen | ArchitektInnen und IngenieurInnen Wien. Niederösterreich. Burgenland.

Photo: Francisco Sá Bandeira

USELESSNESS IS THIS HUMANKIND'S MOST VALUABLE TOOL?

USELESSNESS: IS THIS HUMANKIND'S MOST VALUABLE TOOL?

Our use of tools has often been portrayed as the definitive attribute that led to our current position at the top of the animal hierarchy by provoking us to stand upright and walk. As a direct result, our brains developed at an exponential rate, allowing us to express ideas, tell stories and make objects whose uselessness still confounds us today. Uselessness rarely matches our expectations and disappoints a priori, but it can also fascinate and liberate because it contradicts the logic of use equals value. A depository of neglected ideas can also be a treasure trove, an alternative Pandora's box that can trigger creativity and free the imagination. Since the advent of modernism, we have been preoccupied with usefulness and employability, be it in terms of space, energy, production or, indeed, education. Historians predict that the rise of artificial intelligence will produce a "useless" class that will not only be unemployed, but unemployable. Karl Marx, in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts written in 1844, said that the production of too many useful things results in too many useless people. Uselessness is an uncharted phenomenon that may lead us to a better understanding of what our common values are and prepare us for a new future. If our future will be defined by our uselessness, then it is time for this state and our judgements of it to be reappraised. This lecture series brings together people with very differing approaches to uselessness and attempts to shed light on what our new future could hold.

15 OCT 2018

Ebru Kurbak / Artist, Designer

Lost Skills, Lost Potentials, and Fiberpunk

The biggest threats to the limits of what we can imagine are our assumptions.
This lecture explores confronting dominant assumptions about values of skills, knowledge and technology as a critical and artistic strategy.

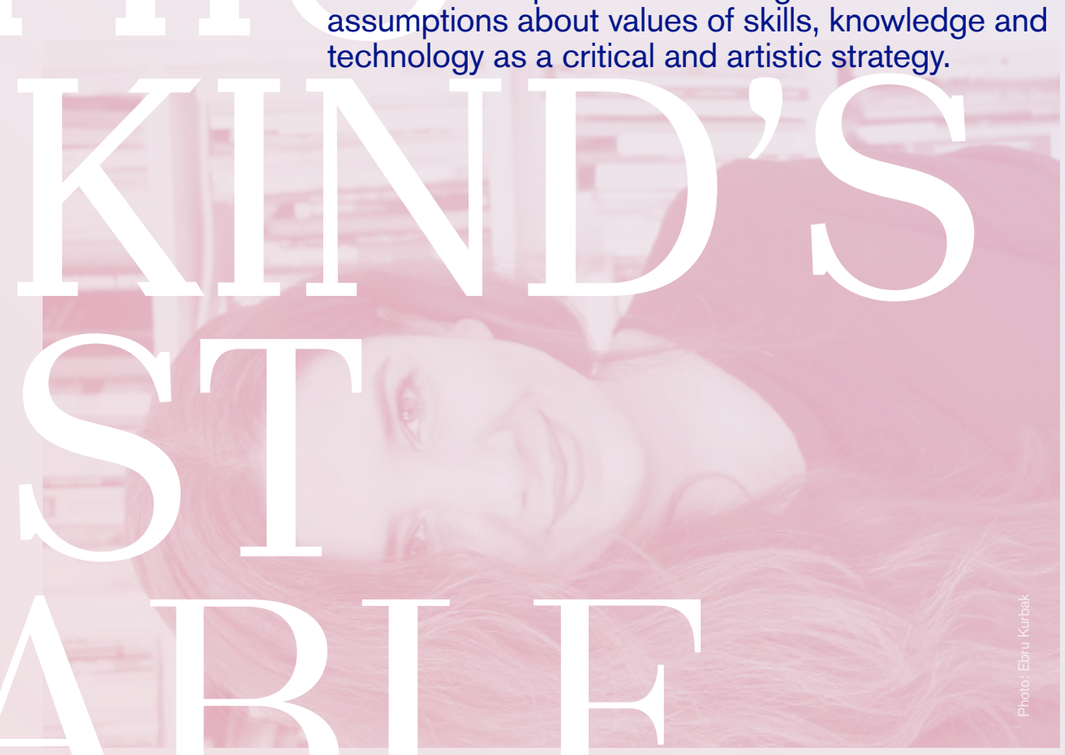

Photo: Ebru Kurbak

19 NOV 2018

Guta Moura Guedes / Curator, Strategic Designer

Useless Design?

Design is the operational tool for the 21st century and from its very beginning exists to serve humankind. Useless design is a paradox, unless the lack of use is non-existant. Some observations from a design curator's point of view and some notes from a strategic designer's perspective.

07 JAN 2019

Owen Hatherley / Author, Journalist

Superfluous Space

This talk will be about the in-between spaces of post-war housing estates, large open green areas which are traditionally treated as "useless" space with no obvious programmed purpose, and what in those spaces is attractive and valuable precisely because of their lack of clear function.

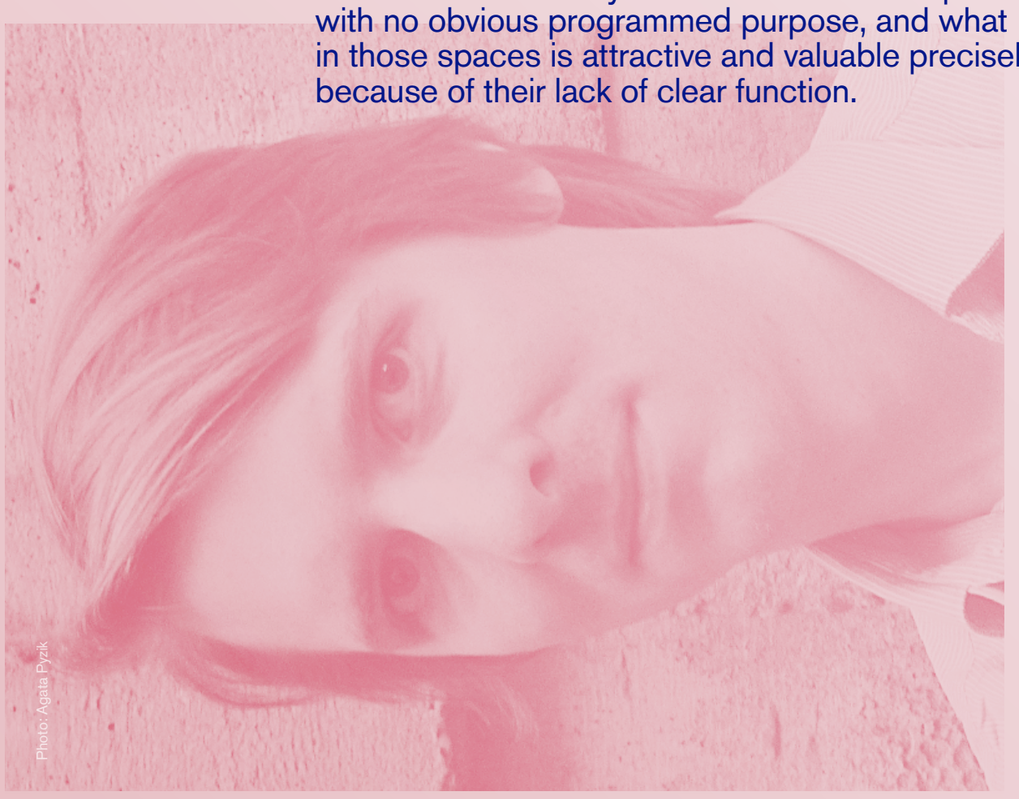

Photo: Agata Pyzik

Photo: Sven Tränkner / Senckenberg

10 DEC 2018

Friedemann Schrenk / Palaeoanthropologist

7 Million years of Uselessness in Human Evolution

Major transitions in early human history include upright walking and the earliest material cultures. Triggered by originally useless responses to environmental change, these transitions depict uselessness as the underlying cause for human biocultural evolution and diversity.

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Alle Vorträge beginnen um 19 Uhr.

Die Vortragsreihe wird kuratiert von Michelle Howard und Luciano Parodi, CMT Plattform für Tragkonstruktion, Material und Technologie.

unterstützt von

zt: Kammer der ZivilingenieurInnen | ArchitektInnen und IngenieurInnen Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland.

NUTZLOSIGKEIT: DAS WERTVOLLSTE WERKZEUG DER MENSCHHEIT?

Die Nutzung von Werkzeugen wird oft als entscheidende Eigenschaft dargestellt, die uns zu unserer derzeitigen Stellung an der Spitze der Rangordnung der Tiere verhalf, indem sie uns zu aufrechter Haltung und aufrechtem Gang veranlasste. Die exponentielle Entwicklung des menschlichen Gehirns als unmittelbare Folge befähigte uns, Gedanken auszudrücken, Geschichten zu erzählen und Gegenstände herzustellen, deren Nutzlosigkeit uns bis heute verwirrt. Nutzlosigkeit entspricht selten unseren Erwartungen und wirkt zuerst enttäuschend, kann aber auch faszinierend und befreiend sein, da sie der Logik der Gleichsetzung von Nutzen und Wert zuwiderläuft. Eine Ansammlung von unbeachteten Ideen kann auch eine Fundgrube sein, eine umgekehrte Büchse der Pandora, die unsere Kreativität freisetzt und unsere Vorstellung beflügelt. Seit Anbruch der Moderne sind wir ganz von Nützlichkeit und Beschäftigungsfähigkeit eingenommen, ob nun im Hinblick auf Raum, Energie oder Produktion, sogar Bildung. Historiker prophezeien, dass mit dem Aufkommen von künstlicher Intelligenz eine „nutzlose“ Klasse entstehen wird, die nicht nur arbeitslos, sondern erst gar nicht beschäftigungsfähig sein wird. Karl Marx schrieb in seinen „Ökonomisch-philosophischen Manuskripten aus dem Jahre 1844“, dass „die Produktion von zuviel Nützlichem zuviel unnütze Population produziert“. Nutzlosigkeit ist ein weitgehend unerforschtes Phänomen, das uns zu einem besseren Verständnis unserer gemeinsamen Werte führen und auf eine neue Zukunft vorbereiten könnte. Wenn unsere Zukunft durch unsere Nutzlosigkeit geprägt sein soll, dann ist es an der Zeit, diesen Zustand und unser Urteil darüber zu überdenken. Diese Vortragsreihe führt Vortragende mit sehr unterschiedlichen Annäherungen an Nutzlosigkeit zusammen und versucht zu beleuchten, was uns die neue Zukunft bringen könnte.

Photo: AIT Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH

NUTZLOSIGKEIT DAS WERTVOLLSTE WERKZEUG DER MENSCHHEIT?

18 MAR 2019

Eva Buchinger / Sociologist

Uselessness? From the “Unemployed of Marienthal” to the robotic age

Uselessness is a possible, but not at all necessary consequence of unemployment. This has been taught by the famous Marienthal sociography among others. So maybe the “rise of robots” together with a (possible) jobless future is nothing to worry about?

Photo: Claudia Rohrauer

13 MAY 2019

Sonia Leimer / Architect, Artist

Dear Werner Herzog

During a trip through Peru last year I read your book Conquest of the useless. Your diary of the time you spent in Peru shooting the film Fitzcarraldo and my personal impressions during my journey through the Andes overlapped.

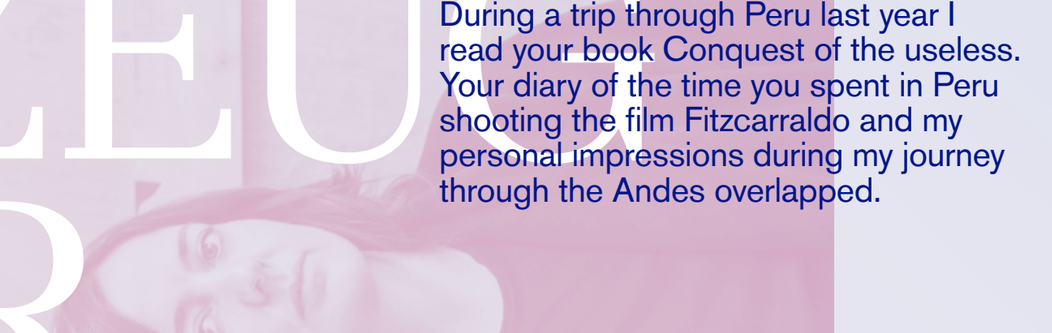

Photo: Maximilian Pramatarov

08 APR 2019

Diedrich Diederichsen / Author, Critic

A Romanticism of Use-Value and a Non-Instrumental Reason

What happens when your ideals are taken seriously. (This Lecture will be in German)

03 JUN 2019

Ruth Sonderegger / Philosopher

On the central norms and imperatives of Western aesthetics

My lecture will focus on the emergence of uselessness, purposelessness and disinterestedness as central normative concepts of Western aesthetics; of norms, that is, which came into existence during the 18th century in tandem with capitalism and its emphasis on purpose, use and interest.

Photo: Petra Vogt

29 APR 2019

Kerstin Meyer / Economist, Activist

The Provocation of the Standstill

Tempelhofer Feld, a former airfield in the centre of Berlin, is now an open space for the public to use for leisure. It may neither be sold nor built on nor designed. The story of the political fight over the city’s most valuable asset and how the public assumed its right to legislate standstill.

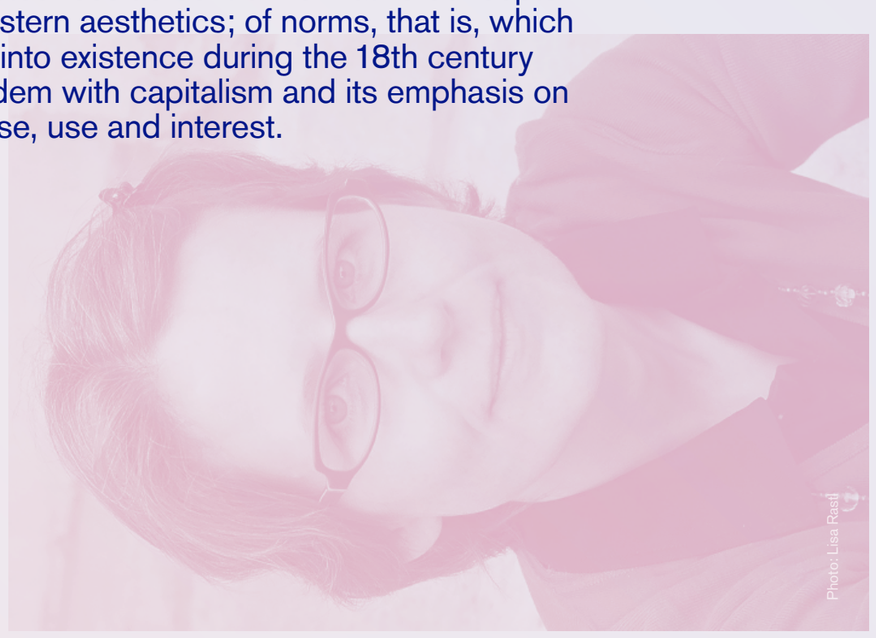

Photo: Lisa Rastl