

Conference

Alles bröckelt.
Über das Leben in Ruinen und
das Reparieren von Infrastrukturen

Abstracts

Curricula Vitae

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Abstracts

Mathias Fuchs

Sonic Ruins

Mathias Fuchs analyses sonic ruins and reflects upon the aging of sounds. In 1987 sculptor and audio-artist Chris Marcley exposed 850 vinyl records to the damage done by the visitors of the Clocktower in New York, when he invited the audience to step on the vinyls and create sounds by damaging them. Marcley's aesthetics are the rigorous opposite of audiophile obsession with »high fidelity«. When Marcley put 14.000 CDs, face down on the floor of the Jerusalem Museum of Art (1992) he commented on the allegedly incorruptible quality of the music contained on the shiny discs. The installation demonstrates a genuine fidelity to the ephemeral nature of sounds that can be created, mutilated and destroyed. From this viewpoint the distortion pedals of rock musicians, overdrive devices, fuzz units and throttle boxes, ruin the instruments' tonal purity, but they are faithful to the potential of instrumental sonority and to the »performers' intentions and the performance practice.« (Kivy 1995: 6) Both extremes, audiophile orthodoxy and grunge radicalism, share »a complicity in the enjoyment of the apparatus.« (Adorno 1977: 218) Mathias Fuchs proposes that the hopeless defensive battle against sonic contamination and the active destruction of the material meet at a point one might call »sonic ruination«: Afraid of it in one camp, and fascinated by it in the other.

Randi Slone states that »many audiophiles – those from the esoteric audiophile community, [...] and the more stuffed-shirt scientific community - have gotten so involved with the performance of the equipment that they have forgotten how to enjoy the program.« (Slone 2002: 19) Audiofidelity and Grunge might therefore be complementary strategies to cope with acoustic impurity and sonic ruination. They allow to loose focus on »the program« and to refocus on the apparatus. If this works in music – one might speculate – we could see a related habitual pattern when observing the ways we cope with a life in ruins.

Daniel Vella

Ruins and Utopia

Forgetting, Erasure, and Uncanny Enduring

If utopia presents itself as the gesture of the radically new that makes a clean break from the charnel house of history, then the ruin is its repressed, uncanny shadow. Utopian projects – architectural, social, political, or cultural – announce new spaces of futurity and possibility, but that can only do so on the basis of an attempt at erasure or amnesia of everything that came before, and of the violence of its clearing. In this context, ruins take on an uncanny role, as reminders of that which has been forgotten or repressed in the utopian project. Moreover, ruins also speak to the failures of utopia, standing as monuments to lost futures, abandoned projects, and the return of history. This presentation shall highlight both of these senses in which ruins ›return‹ to haunt the discourse of the new in utopian projects, considering a number of examples – from the Soviet-era planned new socialist city of Nowa Huta outside Krakow to the ruins of Palestinian settlements in Israel, from the utopian promise of virtual worlds as a new start and the haunting of the digital ruin to the post-2013 post-colonial Maltese context of a neoliberal speculative construction boom merged with the political drive towards short-term economic growth and the dream of a ›the next Dubai or Singapore,‹ leading to the overwriting of a historical and vernacular urban fabric.

Emma Fraser

Between the Material and the Virtual

The Multi-Valent Figure of the Ruin in Video Games,
Digital Media, and Visual Culture

Through pre-existing visual cultures of decay and destruction, urban and ruin imaginaries have become a dominant feature of open-world spatiality in the virtual worlds of digital media. Ruinous framings are a marker of our fundamentally chaotic digital forms, which can be understood against cultural contexts of chaos and disintegration, decline under capitalism, and established imaginaries of urban and everyday life. Further, the emergence of spatial, navigable, and increasingly large-scale virtual worlds demands a reconfiguration of existing and emerging notions of space, materiality, and fragmentation in media theory and culture. Here, we can consider the potentiality of digital space as both a conceptual term and increasingly prevalent shorthand for the perceived hybridity of digital

and material experience. What are ruinous spaces – and cities in particular – such potent signifiers in the digital mode? How does the multivalent spatiality and signification of ruin provide a useful inroad to the critique of emerging technologies and environments?

This presentation draws on the work of Walter Benjamin, Jack Halberstam, Doreen Massey, and others to suggest that the ruinous form of digital media reflects a wider tendency of disintegration that can be linked with modernity, post-modernity, and practices of speculative futuring.

Total Refusal

Leonhard Müllner

Ruinen bauen / Building Ruins

»To build ruins means: to decompose, to shatter, to demolish life and societal forms. And this is not happening to sabotage the existing, but to uphold it. To materially reinforce the belief that it cannot be different than it is.« (Simon Nagy, *Haunting as a Promise*)

How do the phantasmatic spaces of the hypercapitalist video game industry process their crisis-based system, within which it has become the dominant mass media? To what scripts does this entertainment medium adhere within an economy that builds ruins, invests in ruins? The video game industry is itself haunted by the logic of ruins, releasing major titles in roughcast shape, partly unplayable due to bugs and graphical errors. The gaming community partially repairs the crumbling worlds with no money in return, adds textures, fills gaps with meaning. Moreover, the mass medium obsessively engages with dystopias in its stories. The setting of the post-apocalypse is particularly predominant as it elaborates on fears of a speculative future, allowing a worried yet fascinated look back at our current crisis-ridden present. In the dystopian futures where avatars fight against mech-dinos or the living dead, Total Refusal examines the hegemonic value architecture of a ruin-obsessed mass medium, seeking to explore the fundamental question of a utopian narrative potential that has been buried within its industry.

Thomas Macho

Dark Tourism

Ruinen und verlassene Orte sind attraktiv, sie ziehen Besucher*innen an oder werden sogar in Reiseführern verzeichnet. In den Jahrzehnten nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs hat sich der internationale Tourismus als Massengeschäft etabliert, vor Beginn der Covid-Pandemie mit einem Aufkommen von mehr als 1,4 Milliarden touristischen Reiseankünften im Jahr 2019 (und inzwischen wieder – so die Zahlen von 2022 – nahezu einer Milliarde). Im Vergleich dazu wirken die UNHCR-Statistiken über Flucht, erzwungene Mobilität und Vertreibung geradezu niedrig. Im Schatten touristischer Vermarktung prominenter Reiseziele wurde folgerichtig auch ein Geschäftsfeld aufgebaut, das als *Dark Tourism* bezeichnet wird: organisierte Fahrten zu ehemaligen und aktuellen Orten des Schreckens, gleichsam für *Holidays in Hell* (Patrick Jake O'Rourke).

English version:

Ruins and lost places are attractive, they fascinate visitors or are even listed in travel guides. In the decades following the end of the Second World War, international tourism was established as a mass business, before the start of the Covid pandemic with a volume of more than 1.4 billion tourist visits in 2019 (and now – according to the statistics for 2022 – almost one billion again). In comparison, the UNHCR statistics on flight, forced mobility and displacement seem downright low. In the shadow of tourism marketing for prominent destinations, a business segment known as dark tourism has consequently been established: organized trips to former and current places of horror, as it were for Holidays in Hell (Patrick Jake O'Rourke).

Paul Dobraszczyk

How to Stop Time

Revisiting Varosha

Abandoned since 1974, after the Turkish invasion of north Cyprus, the former seaside resort of Varosha is, for urban explorers, a prized example of a time capsule: an abandoned town that, after nearly half a century, remains unsullied by human intervention. Yet, such a conception is paradoxical: for the very act of even imagining, let alone visiting, such a ruin destroys any sense of it being pristine. Drawing on his own experience of Varosha in 2013,

Paul Dobraszcyk interrogates how time is manifest in ruins, and particularly in photographs of ruins, in this case his own. What is the relationship between an image of a ruin and ruin as a process? How can we link experience (in this case an experience that happened nearly a decade ago) to the ongoingness of that experience in images? And what work might images of ruins do? At the heart of this paper is a concern with the vexed notion of agency in ruins, namely a vast array of protagonists – human and more-than-human, organic and inorganic – that may or may not even be aware of their actions. Through two distinct ways of looking at Varosha – close-up and zoomed-out – Paul Dobraszcyk draws together people (present and absent), machines (cameras), materials (inorganic and organic), and immaterial actors (for example, memories, feelings, and light) to test the limits of what mediates our experience of a ruin.

Dace Dzenovska

Neither Ruins, Nor Rubble

The Predicament of Soviet Material Remains in Latvia

When driving up to Lielciems, an emptying socialist-era settlement of an urban type near the Latvia-Russia border, one immediately sees the crumbling buildings of the clay drain-pipe factory. They are huge cement shells with gaping black holes for windows and red brick chimneys towering above them. Surrounded by lush greenery in the summer and a desolate white landscape in the winter, they make for impressive photographs. Indeed, the internet is full of images of the Lielciems's 'ghost town'. Some of them are posted by former residents who lament the passing of their childhood which coincided with the heyday of the factory. For them, it is not only buildings that have fallen apart, but entire lifeworlds. Other images are posted by 'dark tourists' who consume the ruins of socialist modernity as visually impressive manifestations of systemic endings.

In this talk, Dace Dzenovska considers how the social and political lives of the material remains of socialist modernity disrupt prevalent analysis of ruination. She argues that the remains of the Lielciems's factory and residential buildings are neither ruins, nor rubble. They are not ruins if one understands ruins to be material remains of human achievement that are imbued with transcendental value. In common representations of Soviet-era material remains, they tend to stand as monuments to human mistakes rather than achievements. And they are not quite rubble, if one understands rubble to be a generative space for critical analysis of ruination and for hopeful analysis of alternative forms of life. This is because their original material and social forms are devalued in the contemporary

political landscape. Being neither ruin, nor rubble, what do the material remains of socialism in a Latvian monotown tell us about the production and destruction of space and associated ideologies of materiality and sociality in the current historical moment?

Orit Halpern

Resilient Futures

In our present few terms have become more central to urban planning, environmental management, policy, and business management than ›resilience‹. Orit Halpern's talk will trace a history of resilience in ecology, cybernetics, and economics to ask how models of nature as constantly volatile and crisis ridden are shaping technology, habitat, and life in our present and future.

Karin Harrasser and Mina Lahlal

Decay and Repair of Healthcare Infrastructures

Omar N'Shea

Fractured Echoes from Bur Mghež

The Lives and Ruins of a Limestone Fissure in Malta

The globigerina outcrops in the southeast of Malta, an island archipelago in the Mediterranean, have served as a valuable limestone resource for millennia. Quarried for their high-quality soft stone, the limestone beds frequently reveal fissures from which Palaeolithic deposits and Neolithic human burials have been recovered since the end of the 19th century, a time when the British colonial extractivist exploration – and the attendant rhetoric of the protection of ruins in the imperial holdings – were in full swing. The story of the Neolithic burials within one of the fissures in the quarries at Bur Mghež is one marked by a complex history. Their discovery brought the fragility and vulnerability of the fissures to the attention of the fledgling Antiquities Committee. However, despite the expropriation of the land from the Bishop's holdings portfolio and the site's role in heritage preservation discourse, it was repurposed as a bomb storage facility during wartime when an aerial attack and a subsequent explosion in the quarry further devastated the site leaving ruins that are almost impossible to map. Over time,

the ruins of Bur Mghež took on various roles in the imagination of local residents. Omar N'Shea has been exploring the ruins of Bur Mghež through the memories and narratives of the village's inhabitants, the fading traces of official imperial and museological records, the fragmentary artefacts stored in museum boxes and storerooms, as well as the present-day practices of burying in the limestone ground itself. By piecing together these fragments of material, textual, oral and experiential traces, the tale of Bur Mghež offers insights into the experience of the loss of people and places, the care of the dead, and the possibility of thinking with the fractured echoes of ruins.

Monika Wagner

Ruins

Evidence and Imagination

Monika Wagner's paper is about the question of what representations of ruins in the visual arts communicate and what they conceal. As visual expressions of a process of transformation and signatures of change, representations of ruins were particularly widespread in the ›Age of Revolutions‹, in the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. As an aesthetic concept they seemed to demand the open form pioneered above all by the concept of the picturesque in England. As their very epitome, ruins became stimulators of the imagination. What needs to be examined is to what extent the reference horizon and thus also the causes for the ruinous state of buildings as well as entire landscapes were to be conveyed to and reflected upon by the viewer, and to what extent this favoured contrary interpretations and attributions to the artistic intentions.

In contrast, today decentrally organised teams of the Forensic Architecture group try to work as ›archaeologists of the present‹. They seek to understand ruins of the present as documents whose material findings themselves contain the manner of their destruction. Images of all kinds, satellite imagery, private mobile phone recordings, video footage, are not considered to be results here, but rather components that, together with other information, are supposed to generate visual evidence as a counter-investigation to official statements. Monika Wagner's contribution explores what happens when the results of these analyses of ruins – as in the case of Forensic Architecture – are presented as artworks in exhibitions.

Katharina Weinberger-Lootsma with Lisa Ackerl, Carlotta Röhl, Leon Schlesinger and Paul Paptistella

postMORTEM

The installation »postMORTEM« not only celebrates the »life«, »death« and subsequent »survival« of the former »Postverteilerzentrum« as well as the »Bahnhofspostamt«, located at the Main station next to the Westrailline in Linz, it also reflects on the consequences of neglect, when former state institutions get partly privatized.

After only 20 years of use, the »Postverteilerzentrum« has been largely empty since 2014 because the post is no longer distributed by rail but by car again. The property, which once belonged to the state, is now up for demolition since it is expected to generate high returns on the real estate market.

Various items from the history of the buildings and their uses are displayed on an altar made from postal parcels (films, interviews, images, planning material, newspaper articles, etc.).

We want to highlight the beauty, the value, the people who worked there and ask how did privatization, digitization and increased efficiency, changed postal workers working environments and their spatial surroundings? Which services and interests are being represented by the Post today, which in the past? How can participation and the pursuit of common interests, interim use and re-use be of spaces that lost their »function« come together? Which perspective do we gain by examining the term »ruin« and could we develop an architectural tool out of it?

»When its use is spent and it becomes a ruin, the wonder of its beginning appears again.«

(Louis I. Kahn, Architecture: Silence and Light, 1970)

Curricula Vitae

Paul Dobraszczyk is a lecturer in the history and theory of architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Previously he was a lecturer in Art History & Visual Studies at the University of Manchester. At present, he is working on a new book on the relationship between geology and architecture, which will be published by Reaktion in 2025. This is the final book in a trilogy of publications exploring ecology and the built environment. He is also a photographer and artist and built the photographic website www.stonesofmanchester.com in 2018, featured in both the *Guardian* and the BBC. More information on Paul's writing, art and photography can be found at www.ragpickinghistory.co.uk.

Publications (et al.):

Botanical Architecture: Plants, Buildings and Us, Reaktion, forthcoming in 2024; *Animal Architecture: Beasts, Buildings and Us*, Reaktion 2023; *Architecture and Anarchism: Building Without Authority*, Paul Holberton 2021; *Future Cities: Architecture and the Imagination*, Reaktion 2019; *The Dead City: Urban Ruins and the Spectacle of Decay*, IB Tauris 2017.

Dace Dzenovska is Associate Professor in the Anthropology of Migration at the University of Oxford and the Principal Investigator of the ERC Emptiness project. Her research interests pertain to the changing relationships between people, territory, political authority, and capital in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. To that end, she has studied how residents of Latvia were summoned to change their understandings of self and community via European Union supported tolerance promotion projects. She has also studied what it means for the Latvian nation and state when most of its subjects migrate to live and work in other states—for example, in the United Kingdom. Currently, she is researching the emptying towns and villages in Eastern Europe and Russia in order to understand what it means to live in and govern emptying places, as well as what such places can tell about how flows of capital and shifts in political authority are reconfiguring the world we live in.

Publications (et al.):

with Volodymyr Artiukh and Dominic Martin, »Between Loss and Opportunity: The Fate of Place After Postsocialism«, in: *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Ethnography* 2023 (96), p. 1–15; »The Clash of Sovereignties: The Latvian Subject and Its Russian Imperialism«, in: *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 12(3), 2022, p. 651–658; »Good enough sovereignty, or on land as territory and property in Latvia«, in: *History and Anthropology*, 31 October 2022 (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02757206.2022.2139253>); »Emptiness: Living Capitalism and Freedom in the Latvian-Russian Borderlands«, in: *American Ethnologist* 47(1) 2020, p. 10–26 (<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/amet.12867>); *School of Europeanness: Tolerance and Other Lessons in Political Liberalism in Latvia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2018.

Susanna Flock works in Vienna as a visual/media artist in the field of video and video installation and focuses on internet phenomena. Recently, she was awarded with the Cité internationale des arts residency of BMKÖS (2024), Pixel, Bytes and Film residency (2020), Viktor-Fogarassy-Price (2019), the Rote Fabrik residency Zurich (2019), start-scholarship for media arts Austria (2018), and with a fellowship at Akademie Schloss Solitude (2018). Joined Total Refusal in 2020. The artist, researcher and filmmaker collective and pseudo-marxist media guerrilla Total Refusal (Susanna Flock, Adrian Haim, Jona Kleinlein, Robin Klengel, Leonhard Müllner, Michael Stumpf) appropriates contemporary video games and writes about games and politics. They upcycle the resources of mainstream video games, creating political narrations in the form of videos, interventions, live performances, lectures and workshops. Since its foundation in 2018, their work has been awarded with more than 50 awards and honorary mentions – like the Best Short Direction Award at the Locarno Film Festival, the Diagonale Film Award for the Best Short Documentary, the Contemporary Visual Arts Award of Styria and the Vimeo Staff Pick Award. Total Refusals' work has been screened at over 300 film- and art festivals – such as Berlinale, Doc Fortnight at MOMA New York or at the Locarno Film Festival – and has been exhibited at various exhibition spaces like the Architecture Biennial Venice 2021, the HEK Basel and Ars Electronica Linz.

www.totalrefusal.com

Emma Fraser is a Lecturer in Media Studies and the Berkeley Center for New Media at UC Berkeley. She completed a PhD on video games, play, and urban ruination in Sociology at the University of Manchester, and was previously a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University. Emma received her undergraduate and research Masters degrees at the University of Technology Sydney, focusing on urban ruination and the work of Walter Benjamin. Her research examines the relation between ruin and contemporary experience, particularly in post-War Western Europe and post-industrial America. Emma has also researched the ways in which cities decline and fall apart; the relations between digital media and fragmentation, and contemporary visions of the end of the world. Walter Benjamin's work on rubble and history is central to these investigations, informing her approach to both critical media analysis, and urban field work. Emma is working on a book about ruins and digitality, with a focus on space, image, experience, and catastrophe.

Publications (et al.):

»Cities of the (digital) apocalypse – The meeting of video games, ruins and urban studies«, in: Lorenzo DiTommaso, James Crossley, Alastair Lockhart, and Rachel Wagner (eds.), *End-Game: Apocalyptic Video Games, Contemporary Society, and Digital Media Culture*, Berlin: De Gruyter (forthcoming 2024); »Scopic Regimes of Digital Ruin«, in: Enass Khansa, Konstantin Klein, Barbara Winckler (eds.), *Thinking Through Ruins*, Berlin: Kadmos, 2021; »The City's Other Face: Modern Ruins and Urban Endings«, in: Keith Jacobs and Jeff Malpas (eds.), *Philosophy and the City*, London: Rowman and Littlefield 2019; »Ruinen Spielen, zur Bedeutung urbaner Ruinen«, in: Videospiele. Culture and Gespenster, p. 269–297, 2018; »Awakening in Ruins: The Virtual Spectacle of the End of the City in Video Games«, in: *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 8(2), June 2016, p. 177–196.

Mathias Fuchs is a game artist, musician, and media scholar. He studied computer science in Erlangen and Vienna and composition in Vienna (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst) and in Stockholm (EMS). He holds degrees in Computer Science (Diplom Ingenieur), Electroacoustic Composition, and a PhD (Dr. phil) from Humboldt University in Berlin. He pioneered in the artistic use

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of computer games and has exhibited work at ISEA, SIGGRAPH, transmediale, PSi #11, futuresonic, EAST, and the Greenwich Millennium Dome. From 2002 to 2012 he has been Senior Lecturer at the University of Salford/ UK. In 2012 he became a professor at Leuphana University in Lüneburg. In the summer term of 2022 he was Senior Fellow at the ifk in Vienna and investigated new forms of labour. He currently works at the Institute of Culture and Aesthetics of Media at Leuphana University.

Publications (et al.):

Phantasmal Spaces. Archetypical Venues in Computer Games, New York 2020; »Weltentzug und Weltzerfall (World-withdrawal and world-decay): Heidegger's notions of withdrawal from the world and the decay of worlds in the times of computer games«, in: Malcolm MacLean, Wendy Russell, and Emily Ryall (eds.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Play*, London 2015; with Sonia Fizek, Paolo Ruffino and Niklas Schrape (eds.), *Rethinking Gamification*, Lüneburg 2014; therein: »Predigital Precursors of Gamification«, p. 119–140; »Gamification as 21st Century Ideology«, in: *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 6(2), June 2014, p. 143–157; with Ernst Strouhal (eds.), *Passagen des Spiels II. Das Spiel und seine Grenzen*, Vienna/New York 2010; therein: »Fair Enough! Über Spielverderber und Falschspieler«, p. 173–188.

Orit Halpern is a Full Professor and Chair of Digital Cultures at Technische Universität Dresden, originally from the USA. Her work bridges the histories of science, computing, and cybernetics with design. She is currently working on two projects. The first is a history of automating intelligence, democracy, and decision making; the second project examines extreme infrastructures and the history of experimentation at planetary scales in design, science, and engineering.

She has also published widely in many venues including *Critical Inquiry*, *Grey Room*, *Journal of Visual Culture*, and *E-Flux*. Her first book *Beautiful Date: A History of Vision and Reason* (Duke UP 2015) investigates histories of big data, design, and governmentality. Her current book with Robert Mitchell (MIT Press December 2023) is titled *The Smartness Mandate*. She is also the director of *Against Catastrophe*, a laboratory bridging the arts, environmental sciences, media, and the social sciences to envision non-catastrophic futures.

www.againstcatastrophe.net

Publications (et al.):

»Financializing Intelligence: On the Integration of Machines and Markets«, in: *e-flux Architecture*, March 2023 (<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/on-models/519993/financializing-intelligence-on-the-integration-of-machines-and-markets/>); with Robert Mitchell, *The Smartness Mandate*, MIT Press 2023; »Planetary Intelligence«, in: Jonathan Roberge and Michael Castelle (eds.), *The Cultural Life of Machine Learning. An Incursion into Critical AI Studies*, Palgrave Macmillan 2021; »Hopeful Resilience«, in: *e-flux Architecture*, April 2017 (<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/accumulation/96421/hopeful-resilience/>); *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945*, Duke University Press 2015.

Karin Harrasser is Professor of Cultural Studies and Vice-Rector for Research at the University of Arts Linz and interim Director of the ifk. After studying history and German language and literature, she completed her doctorate at the University of Vienna and her habilitation at the Humboldt University of Berlin. In addition to her academic activities, she has been involved in various curatorial projects, e. g. NGBK Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg, TQ Vienna. Together with Elisabeth Timm, she edits the journal *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*.

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Publications (et al.):

Surazo. *Monika und Hans Ertl: Eine deutsche Geschichte in Bolivien*, Matthes & Seitz 2022; with Hendrik Blumentrath, Anna Echterhölter, Frederike Felcht (eds.), *Jenseits des Geldes. Aporien der Rationierung*, Leipzig 2019; with Insa Härtel, Karl-Josef Pazzini, Sonja Witte (eds.), *Heil versprechen (= Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 1/2020)*; (ed.), *Auf Tuchfühlung. Eine Wissensgeschichte des Tastsinns*, München 2017; *Prothesen. Figuren einer lädierten Moderne*, Berlin 2016; with Susanne Roeßiger (eds.), *Parahuman. Neue Perspektiven auf das Leben mit Technik*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2016; *Körper 2.0. Über die technische Erweiterbarkeit des Menschen*, Bielefeld 2013.

Mina Lahlal is a lecturer in Global surgery and global health and was awarded the diversity prize of the Medical University of Vienna for her transdisciplinary and cross-national teaching format. She has previously worked and trained with WHO, in Sierra Leone, USA, Rwanda, UK, the border region to Myanmar amongst others. She studied medicine and international development studies. At present she is a resident in trauma surgery in Vienna, Austria. In the past she co-curated the »Medical Comics // Graphic Medicine« exhibition at Medical University of Vienna. She was invited as a lecturer at the feminist hacker space Mz* Baltazar's Laboratory. Currently she is teaching hands-on within the German national curriculum in global health. She led a workshop at the symposium »Feminismus. Wissenschaften. Dialog« at the Einstein Center for digital future in Berlin. Furthermore, she is part of the initiating team of the first »Mountain inclusion symposium« and is member of the medical team for analogue astronaut missions.

Publications (et al.):

with Christine Kerr, Eduard Navara, Franziska Laqua, Tobias Kerzenmacher, »In space no one can hear you scream. On Creating an Attractive Work Environment for Healthcare Professionals« (Poster at the 29th International conference on Health promoting hospitals and health services), 2023; with Christine Kerr and Tobias Kerzenmacher, »Unveiling the Path to Equitable Knowledge. Challenging Knowledge Monopoly: Access, Equity, and Quality in the Digital Era« (Poster at the Open Access conference Berlin), Zenodo 2023; with Ruth Kutalek, David Kaawa-Mafigiri, Marcella Ryan-Coker, Simone Böll, Sandra Parisi, Phaik Yeong Cheah & Michael Pritsch, »Putting global health high on the agenda of medical schools«, in: *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 173, 2023, p. 131–137; »Living space for Global Education: The VinziRast student and homeless co-housing project«, in: *Int. Journal of New Trends in Arts, Sports & Science*, Vol 9, No 1, 2020; with M. Cotton et al. (eds.), »Primary Surgery. Volume 1 – Non-Trauma«, in: *Global Help*, 2016 (<https://global-help.org/products/primary-surgery/>).

Thomas Macho did research and taught as Professor of Cultural History at the Institute for Cultural Studies at Humboldt University of Berlin from 1993 to 2016. In 1976, he received his doctorate from the University of Vienna with a dissertation on the philosophy of music; in 1984, he habilitated in philosophy at the University of Klagenfurt with a habilitation thesis on metaphors of death. From 2016 to 2023, he was Director of the International Research Center for Cultural Studies (ifk) of the University of Art and Design Linz in Vienna. In 2019, he was awarded the Sigmund Freud Prize for Scientific Prose by the German Academy for Language and Poetry, and in 2020 the Austrian State

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Prize for Cultural Journalism. In 2023, he was elected a member of the German Academy for Language and Poetry. His more recent monographs include: *Das Leben ist ungerecht*.

Publications (et al.):

Sehen ohne Augen, Ottensheim: Edition Thanhäuser 2022; *Warum wir Tiere essen*, Wien 2022; *Das Leben nehmen. Suizid in der Moderne*, Berlin 2017; *Schweine. Ein Portrait*, Berlin 2015; *Vorbilder*, München 2011.

Rosalind C. Morris is a Canadian anthropologist and cultural critic. She is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. Her work is addressed to the histories and social lives – including the deaths and afterlives – of industrial and resource-based capitalism in the global south. Those interests extend to the technological and media forms that attend or undergird these economies and the forms of subjectivity produced in their midst. They also encompass the racialized and sexualized political logics and structures of desire accompanying these phenomena. Morris' recent writings on these subjects are grounded in deep ethnographic research in southern Africa. Believing that ethnography is a mode of extended listening and learning from others, and that textual practice is a dimension of analytic practice, Morris's work encompasses a variety of forms and media. It reaches from scholarly articles to essayistic prose and ethnographic monographs, and also includes the documentary film *We are Zama Zama* (2021), as well as expanded cinematic installations and a narrative film. She co-authored libretti with Yvette Christiansë for the Syrian-born composer Zaid Jabri. At Leuphana Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and Society Rosalind Morris continues to work on »Anatomy Lessons of a Miner«. This project draws on her work as a filmmaker, media artist and writer. Her interdisciplinary thinking makes »Anatomy Lessons« a device for thinking creatively and ethically about the worlds that have been shaped by extractivism.

Leonhard Müllner is filmmaker and media researcher in Vienna. He completed his PhD 2023 in Game Art/Game Studies, under the guidance of professor Helmut Lethen (supervisor) and Stephan Schwingeler (external supervisor). He co-founded the media collective Total Refusal in 2018. The artist, researcher and filmmaker collective and pseudo-marxist media guerrilla Total Refusal (Susanna Flock, Adrian Haim, Jona Kleinlein, Robin Klengel, Leonhard Müllner, Michael Stumpf) appropriates contemporary video games and writes about games and politics. They upcycle the resources of mainstream video games, creating political narrations in the form of videos, interventions, live performances, lectures and workshops. Since its foundation in 2018, their work has been awarded with more than 50 awards and honorary mentions – like the Best Short Direction Award at the Locarno Film Festival, the Diagonale Film Award for the Best Short Documentary, the Contemporary Visual Arts Award of Styria and the Vimeo Staff Pick Award. Total Refusals' work has been screened at over 300 film- and art festivals – such as Berlinale, Doc Fortnight at MOMA New York or at the Locarno Film Festival - and has been exhibited at various exhibition spaces like the Architecture Biennial Venice 2021, the HEK Basel and Ars Electronica Linz.

www.totalrefusal.com

Publications (et al.):

NPCs. Die digitale Masse auf der Hinterbühne. Der Begriff, die soziale Chiffre und die Autonomiebestrebung gerenderter Menschendarstellungen in Videospiele, Hildesheim (to be published)

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2024); »Cosplaying Agency. Videospiele als Selbstermächtigungsutopien«, in: Holger Pötzsch, Thomas Spies (eds.), *Sammelband zu Kritischen Spielstudien*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag (to be published 2024); »Der Medienapparat als Utopiemühle«, in: Arno Görge and Tobias Unterhuber (eds.), *Politiken des (digitalen) Spiels. Transdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag 2023; *Fahnenflucht im Digitalen Kriegsgebiet* (Dissertation), Linz 2022; *The Glorious PC Gaming Master Race. Postkoloniale Unterwerfungsfantasien in Videospiele*, in: Malmoe Zeitung, Wien 2021; *Traum, Videospiele und Kapitalismus*, in: Malmoe Zeitung, Wien 2021.

Omar N'Shea is the director of the International School for Foundation Studies at the University of Malta where he is also the coordinator of the humanities and social sciences program. He is a cultural historian focusing on the Neo-Assyrian period in the first millennium BCE. He is currently writing a book on eunuchs in ancient Assyria as well as organizing the upcoming *Gender, Methodology and the Ancient Near East* conference (Valletta 2024). Omar N'Shea's work on Bur Mgħeż is being published on the literary journal *Aphroconfuso* together with some of his other writings on queer urban geographies in late 20th century Malta.

Publications (et al.):

»Bil-Moħbi fil-Beraħ«, in: *Aphroconfuso.mt* 2023; »Masculinity and the Hunt in the State Arts of the Assyrian Empire«, in: Davide Nadali, Lorenzo Nigro, Frances Pinnock (eds.), *Moving on from Ebla, I Crossed the Euphrates: An Assyrian Day in Honour of Paolo Matthiae*, Oxford: Archaeopress 2022, p.119–151; »Dressed to Dazzle, Dressed to Kill: Staging Assurbanipal in the Lion Hunt Reliefs from Nineveh«, in: Megan Cifarelli (ed.), *Fashioned Selves: Dress and Identity in Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxbow Books 2019; »Empire of the Surveilling Gaze: The Masculinity of King Sennacherib«, in: Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura (eds.), *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns 2018, p. 315–335; »Royal Eunuchs and Elite Masculinity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Near Eastern Archaeology«, in: Stephanie Budin and Jennifer Webb (eds.), Special volume: *Gender Archaeology* 79(3), The University of Chicago Press 2016, p. 214–221.

Daniel Vella is a Senior Lecturer and Director at the Institute of Digital Games at the University of Malta, where he teaches classes on the formal properties of digital games, player experience and narrative in games. Following degrees in Communications and English literature at the University of Malta, he pursued doctoral studies at the IT University of Copenhagen, obtaining his doctorate in 2015 with the title »The Ludic Subject and the Ludic Self: Analyzing the I-in-the-Gameworld.« His works bridges game studies, philosophy, literary and cultural studies, and his research interests include the phenomenology of player experience, aesthetic theory and digital games, subjectivity, identity and being in virtual worlds, narrativity and fictionality in games, and space, place and architecture in gameworlds. His work has been published in a number of international journals, including *Game Studies*, *CounterText*, *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, and *Baltic Screen Media Review*. He is the co-author of *Virtual Existentialism: Meaning and Subjectivity in Virtual Worlds* (Palgrave, 2020). He is also active as a writer and narrative designer for board and digital games, having worked on *Posthuman Saga* (Mighty Boards, 2019), *Valletta: Streets of History* (2023) and *Fateforge: Chronicles of Kaan* (Mighty Boards, forthcoming 2024).

Publications (et al.):

with Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone et al., »Valletta: Streets of History: Documenting the Process of Developing a Location-based Game in the Area of Maltese History and Culture«, in: *Proceedings of DiGRA 2023*; with Magdalena Cielecka, »You Won't Even Know Who You Are Any More: Bakhtinian Polyphony and the Challenge to the Ludic Subject in *Disco Elysium*«, in: *Baltic Screen Media Review* 9(1), 2021; with Stefano Gualeni, *Virtual Existentialism: Meaning and Subjectivity in Virtual Worlds*, Palgrave 2020; »There's No Place Like Home: Dwelling and Being at Home in Digital Games«, in: Espen Aarseth and Stephan Günzel (eds.), *Ludotopia: Spaces, Places and Territories in Computer Games*, Transcript 2019; »A Structural Model for Player-Characters as Semiotic Constructs«, in: *ToDiGRA: Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association* 2(2), 2016; »The Ludic Muse: The Form of Games as Art«, in: *CounterText* 2(1), 2016; »No Mastery Without Mystery: *Dark Souls* and the Ludic Sublime«, in: *Game Studies* 15(2), 2015.

Monika Wagner initially studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kassel, before turning to art history and literature at the universities in Hamburg and London. She was a research assistant at the University of Tübingen, where she qualified as a professor in 1986. From 1987 to 2009 she taught art history at the University of Hamburg and directed the Funkkolleg Moderne Kunst. At the Hamburg Seminar she built up the archive for research into material iconography. Her work focuses on the art of the 18th–20th centuries, the history and theory of perception, the design of public spaces and especially the semantics of artistic materials (»Das Material der Kunst«, Munich 2001). Fellowships at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and the Getty Research Center in Los Angeles offered the opportunity to extend material analyses to architecture (»Marmor und Asphalt«, Berlin 2018). As a fellow in the research group »Bildevidenz« at the FU Berlin, she prepared the book »Kunstgeschichte in Schwarz-Weiß. Reproduction and Method«, which appeared in 2022.

Katharina Weinberger-Lootsma is a Senior Scientist and has managed the *kulturtankstelle* at the University of Arts Linz since 2018. She In addition to her academic activities, she was involved in various curatorial projects.

Publikationen/Projekte (u. a.):

gem. mit Ludwig Engel und Clemens Bauder, »Wie wollen wir JETZT! zusammen leben?«, in: *NOW. Expeditionen ins JETZT!*, Kunstuniversität Linz 2021; (Hg.), *Urban Metabolism. Approaches on the Ecology of Cities*, Linz 2018; *Project Solana Ulcinj*, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of the Government of Montenegro, Podgorica 2016.

The project, which will be presented at the conference, was developed together with the students of »die architektur« at the University of Arts Linz: **Lisa Ackerl, Carlotta Röhl, Leon Schlesinger and Paul Patistella**

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