

Life of Crops (Graz, 8–9 Nov 19)

Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz, Nov 8–09, 2019

Deadline: May 15, 2019

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Seeing World War II and National Socialism as the moment in which colonial practices return to the European continent enables an understanding of how this moment continues to inform realities that define current everyday practices. Evolving from the vibrant and manifold agency of soil, the conference “Life of Crops” seeks to unfold the memory of war and labor within the earth, starting from the repressed history of the labor camp Aflenz in the south of Austria, established between 1944 and 1945. The cross-analysis of soil reveals its performative agency for building ideological hierarchies of class and race through the relations of labor and property ownership. The colonial condition of the soil turns it into a living archive, a landscape bearing all layers of ambivalence, shifting between life and genocide.

The conference Life of Crops: Towards an Investigative Memorialization will take place at the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz, Austria on November 8 and 9, 2019. It is a foundational component of a collaborative, cross-disciplinary project established by artist Milica Tomić that considers memorialization as a living investigative process of reassembling, actualizing, and activating knowledge in the present.

To create such a setting we would like to bring established thinkers and practitioners working on key topics of the conference together with an inspiring younger generation of researchers. Among the confirmed speakers are Éric Alliez (Kingston University), Ivana Bago (Duke University), Brenna Bhandar (SOAS, University of London), Filipa César (artist and filmmaker), Rui Gomes de Coelho (Rutgers University), Andrew Herscher (University of Michigan), Alfredo Gonzales Ruibal (SCIS, Spanish National Research Council), Tiago Saraiva (Drexel University), Shela Sheik (Goldsmiths, University of London) and Branimir Stojanović (Center for Psychoanalysis).

Aspiring to engender an environment of unexpected alliances, the main pillars of this conference will be Soil, Labor, Property, Science/Technology, and Archaeology. “Life of Crops” strives to provide a setting for this marginally considered constellation of research across time and geographical contexts while fostering theoretical, scientific, and artistic thought along analytical practices.

With this call for papers we would like to invite researchers working in the fields of archeology, anthropology, history, art, science and technology, sociology, legal studies who are interested in discussing soil as an active agent in the establishment of ideological hierarchies, particularly in recognizing the ways in which class and race are constructed by the relations of labor and property ownership and inscribed into the different historical and geographical layers of soil.

Selected participants will present their work in the form of 20 minutes papers or artistic state-

ments as part of the general discussion as well as contributing to the working groups formed around the main pillars (Soil, Labor, Property, Science/Technology, and Archaeology) of the conference. Participation in the two-day conference and working groups is free of charge.

Convened by Dubravka Sekulić, Milica Tomić, and Övül O. Durmusoglu, with assistance of Philipp Sattler, this two-day conference will be developed in conjunction with Art in Public Space, Universalmuseum Joanneum; Municipality of Wagna, Austria; Future Fund of the Republic of Austria; and IZK Institute for Contemporary Art, Architecture Faculty, Graz University of Technology. Graphic design by Žiga Testen.

Please send your 300 word abstracts by May 15, 2019, plus a short biography (150 words max) indicating which working group or groups you think your research falls into. The working language of the conference is English. Selected participants will be informed in early June 2019.

For submissions and general enquiries please email: conference@memorialinbecoming.net

Reference:

CFP: Life of Crops (Graz, 8-9 Nov 19). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 6, 2019 (accessed Apr 29, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/20567>>.