Figuring Systems (Vienna, 14-16 Jan 27)

Vienna, University of Applied Arts Vienna / Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Jan 14–16, 2027

Christopher Williams-Wynn

Figuring Systems: Institutions, Infrastructures, and Ecologies in Contemporary Art and Theory departs from the premise that “institution,” “infrastructure,” and “ecology” signify three important approaches to understanding art’s social functions, as well as closely related artistic traditions and discourses. At the same time, they denote artistic and theoretical positions that are often pitted against one another. Recently, there has been a growing call to replace institutional critique with infrastructural critique. However, the canonization of institutional critique beginning in the 1970s was itself accompanied by a systematic marginalization of systemic-ecological approaches, which can be understood as an echo of the philosophical debate between critical theory and systems theory, and whose reversal under the banner of ecology is now beginning to emerge.

Figuring Systems aims to navigate a path through these debates that engages with their complex histories and legacies. It brings together speakers associated with these and other approaches and asks not only about these approaches’ respective affordances and oversights, but also—and in particular—about possible intersections, compatibilities, and convergences.

Gathering artists, curators, art historians, and art theorists, Figuring Systems includes keynote talks and discussions, as well as panels concentrated on the status of critique, methodological developments, new genealogies, interdisciplinary connections, and the relations between sites and circulation.

PROGRAM

JANUARY 14
Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien, Auditorium, Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7, 1030 Wien

17:30 – Welcome by Ulrike Kuch (Rector, University of Applied Arts Vienna)

17:40 – Introduction by Sabeth Buchmann, Jakob Schillinger, Christopher Williams-Wynn

18:00 – Artist talk with Sung Tieu (artist, Berlin) and Martin Beck (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)
Response and moderation by Burcu Dogramaci (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

19:30 – Reception

JANUARY 15
Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien, Auditorium, Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7, 1030 Wien

10:00-12:00 – Panel 1: Genealogies
Luke Skrebowski (University of Manchester): The De-Institution of Critique? Andrea Fraser's Untitled (Objects I-V) (2024)
Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra (Birkbeck, University of London): Open Field: Argentina's Agro-Export Economy and the Rise of Ecological Critique
Response by Felix Vogel (University of Kassel)
Moderated by Noit Banai (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

12:00-13:00 – Lunch break

13:00:15:30 – Panel 2: Method
Alena Williams (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna): The Rippling Wave: Method in Context
Colby Chamberlain (Cleveland Institute of Art): Sharp Legal Things: The Case of Letty Lou Eisenhauer and the Typewriter
Sam Lewitt (artist and writer, Berlin): The No-Core Method
Response by Ursula Ströbele (Braunschweig University of Art)
Moderated by Sophia Rohwetter (University of Vienna)

15:30-16:00 – Coffee break

16:00-18:00 – Panel 3: Circulation, Site, and Scale
James Nisbet (University of California, Irvine): No Chemical Romance: Nicolás García Uriburu, Flourescein, and Green Waters
Jörn Etzold (Ruhr University Bochum): Wastelands in the former core: A walk through the Zollverein World Heritage Site in Essen
Response by Sebastian Egenhofer (University of Vienna)
Moderated by Jenni Tischer (University of Applied Arts)

JANUARY 16
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Council Chamber (Sitzungssaal), Schillerplatz 3, 1010 Vienna

10:00 – Welcome: Johan Hartle (Rector, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

10:10 – Discussion

10:30-12:30 – Panel 4: Coordinates
Eric de Bruyn (Freie Universität Berlin): Drawing the Measure of Infrastructure
Katrin Köppert (Offenbach University of Art and Design): Sweatbox AI: Thermal Violence and Metabolic Media Aesthetics of Heat
Response by Christoph Chwatal (University of Vienna)
Moderated by Barbara Reisinger (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

12:30-13:30 – Lunch break

13:30-15:30 – Panel 5: Critique
Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths, University of London): Spectral Infrastructures of Study
KJ Abudu (curator, writer, and scholar-critic, New York/London/Lagos): Breaking The Aesthetic Contract: Notes on Infra/Intra-structural Critique

Response by Lisa Stuckey (University of Vienna)
Moderated by Hannes Loichinger (University of Applied Arts Vienna)

15:30-16:00 – Coffee break

16:00-17:00 – Artist talk with The Feral and Q&A
The Feral: A Thousand-Year Infancy: The Feral as Infrastructure

17:00-18:00 – Closing remarks and discussion

The conference is open to the public; no registration is required. For a detailed program please visit the conference website:

https://www.dieangewandte.at/aktuell/aktuell_detail?artikel_id=1793245338315

Organizers:
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