

## Critical Care. Architecture for a Broken Planet

**Exhibition: 25.04 – 09.09.2019 | Exhibition hall 2**

**Press conference: Wed 24.04., 11:00**

**Opening: Wed 24.04., 19:00**

A planet in crisis. The earth in intensive care. Man-made environmental and social catastrophes are threatening to render the planet uninhabitable. The situation is critical and, dominated by the interests of capital, architecture and urbanism are caught up in the crisis. But there is another way, as the exhibition 'Critical Care' shows using 21 current international examples, including earthquake-proof and sustainable village development in China, flood protection through traditional low-carbon building techniques in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the diverse conversion of modernist buildings in Brazil and Europe, an ecological community land trust in Puerto Rico, the revitalisation of historical irrigation systems in Spain, new concepts for public spaces and mixed city districts in Vienna, London and Nairobi. 'Critical Care' proves that architecture and urbanism can help revive the planet. The repair of the future has begun.

Capitalism has resulted in a new era on earth: the Anthropocene period, also called the Capitalocene period. "[O]ur job is to make the Anthropocene as short/thin as possible and to cultivate with each other in every way imaginable", writes the philosopher Donna Haraway. The exhibition 'Critical Care. Architecture for a Planet in Crisis', curated by Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny, is an appeal for a caring architecture. The 21 case studies demonstrate that architects and urbanists do not have to follow the dictates of capital and the exploitation of resources and labour. The relationships between economy, ecology and labour are redefined in each project. This requires new alliances, also between top-down and bottom-up. The instigators of care in architecture and urbanism also come from local administrations, NGOs, civil society, international organisations or sustainable businesses. Many fields of expertise contribute to caring architecture and urbanism, alongside the planning disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, environmental sciences, law, landscape planning, art and others besides.

Caring collaboration is always concrete. The starting point for conservation, continuation and repair of the planet in crisis is the specific local conditions. The exhibition shows this on the basis of concrete situations: flooded areas in Pakistan, lack of infrastructure for refugees in Jordan, continued use of modern architecture in Europe and Brazil, earthquake zones in China, informal settlements in Puerto Rico threatened by hurricanes and gentrification, floods and environmental pollution in Kenya, global developers dominating urban development in London.

The exhibition illustrates the projects with large-format pictorial narratives, models and objects. Films and short videos provide background information on the development processes

and allow diverse participants to have their say. Interconnecting analytical grids allow comparisons to be made and show connections between the case studies from several continents.

## 21 Examples of Care in Architecture and Urbanism for the 21st Century

The exhibition 'Critical Care' assembles 21 architectural and urbanist projects from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Near East, the Caribbean, the USA and Latin America, and groups them along five areas of care: Care for Water and Land, Care for Public Space, Care for Skills, Care for Repair, Care for Local Production. Each of the 21 case studies applies to concrete problems, whether in urban or rural space, and as a prototype simultaneously redefines the relationship between work, economy and ecology.

### Care for Water and Land

- **URBANA**, the architectural practise of **Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury**, has renounced costly filling as flood protection at the Friendship Center in Gaibandha, Bangladesh, and works with the water, not against it.
- **CICLICA** and **CAVAA**, two architectural collectives from Barcelona, together with the local allotment association, have reactivated the disused Roman irrigation system in Caldes de Montbui, Spain, and made the garden plots accessible to the public.
- **ENLACE in San Juan**, Puerto Rico, has transformed the land in the immediate vicinity of the Financial District, where the informal settlements are located, into a community land trust and has supported the ecological repair of the Martin Pena Canal in a process of more than 700 consultations over several years.
- **Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman** are developing cross-border ecological concepts and new ideas of border citizenship for the border area between the USA and Mexico.
- **Colectivo 720** transformed huge modernist water storage facilities in Medellin, Colombia, into a safe new public space for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

### Care for Repair

- Architects **de vylder vinck taillieu** have created a generous public space for patients, visitors, plants and animals from the ruins of a hospital pavilion in Melle.
- **Paulo Mendes da Rocha** and **MMBB Architekten** converted a modernist department store building in São Paulo into a social cultural, sports and health centre that offers naturally ventilated public spaces, with a swimming pool on the roof.

- **Lacaton & Vassal** with **Frédéric Druot** and **Christophe Hutin** renovated a large-scale modernist residential building, consistently featuring its qualities and adding spacious conservatories and balconies.
- **ZUSammenKUNFT**, a broad alliance from civil society together with the city administration and architects at Berlin's Alexanderplatz is transforming the former Haus der Statistik from the GDR period into a public welfare-oriented urban quarter with affordable housing, culture, education and the "Town Hall of Tomorrow".

### Care for Skills

- **Rural Urban Framework** implemented a model project for sustainable village development in cooperation with the local government in Jintai, in the Chinese province of Sichuan, following severe earthquakes and landslides.
- Architect **Yasmeen Lari** and her Heritage Foundation are training "barefoot entrepreneurs" to build flood-resistant homes and infrastructure using traditional adobe/mud and bamboo construction techniques. Over 40,000 safe, cost-effective and extremely low-carbon buildings have been constructed since 2012.
- **EAHR, Emergency Architecture & Human Rights** works with local residents and refugees near the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan to activate traditional construction methods for building schools.
- **Anupama Kundoo** uses ancient Persian clay building techniques for her volunteer home for homeless children in Pondicherry, where the building itself becomes its own kiln and so a producer of sustainable building materials.

### Care for Public Space

- For the planning of Ruskin Square **muf architecture/art** convinced the private developer of the London borough of Croydon to take public space as the point of departure in the new master plan.
- With the introduction of the Superblock model, the **city administration in Barcelona** is giving people back their street space, in connection with a 21 percent reduction in private traffic.
- **StudioVlayStreeruwitz** developed a model for the urban development area at Vienna's Nordbahnhof railway station grounds that is based on what is there rather than a tabula rasa. The Freie Mitte with its urban wilderness is the continuation of natural, cultural and social resources. In 2017, the **Care + Repair** project curated by Angelika

Fitz and Elke Krasny worked with six international architectural teams in tandem with local experts to repair the future for Freie Mitte. The resulting exhibition was the first cultural use of the Nordbahnhof, part of the three-year research project led by Vienna University of Technology, **Mischung: Nordbahnhof**.

### Care for Production

- **atelier d'architecture autogérée** is working in French cities on the R-Urban Model, networks of eco-civilian bases that rely on closed local loops of consumption and production.
- The **Kounkuey Design Initiative** is working with grassroots organisations to develop productive public spaces in Kibera, Nairobi, combining environmental concerns, sanitation, local alternative economies and security.
- Architect **Anna Heringer**, together with fashion designer Veronika Lena and NGO Dipshika, has created the local textile production in the village of Rudrapur in Bangladesh, which reverses trade flows between the global South and the global North: old saris become design products.
- Architect **Xu Tiantian** has designed a series of coherent interventions for the Songyang district of China to augment rural space, such as the tofu factory in Caizhai, which is a production site, a public space and a tourist attraction all at the same time.

**Curators:** Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny

**Exhibition architecture:** the next ENTERprise

**Exhibition graphics:** Alexander Schuh

### Publication:

A book is being published by MIT Press to accompany the exhibition, 'Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet', containing all 21 case studies as well as 12 essays by international authors on the topics of work, economy and ecology in architecture. Edited by Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny and Architekturzentrum Wien

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Price: EUR 38.80

**The press release as well as high definition rights free images and press photographs are available for download at [www.azw.at/en/articles/press](http://www.azw.at/en/articles/press).**

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### Supporting Programme:

## Critical Care – Symposium

Fri 21.06., from 13:00, Az W Podium

**Modern architecture and urban development were largely characterised by the notion of the world as tabula rasa. The consequences of the future planned by the modernists define our living conditions today. How can a radical care perspective change architecture and urbanism?**

Capitalism has resulted in a new era on earth: the Anthropocene period, also called the Capitalocene period. "[O]ur job is to make the Anthropocene as short/thin as possible and to cultivate with each other in every way imaginable", as the philosopher Donna Haraway writes. This is exactly what a Care Perspective in architecture and urbanism aims to do. Care begins in the midst of things. Concrete action and together redefining the relationships between economy, ecology and work are central. Internationally active architects, urbanists, activists and researchers present examples from different local contexts in Asia, the Caribbean, the USA and Europe.

Curators: Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny

A cooperation by the Az W and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna/akbild

13:00 Welcome address

Angelika Fitz, Director of the Az W

Andrea B. Braidt, Vice-rector for Art and Research, akbild

13:15 On Critical Care

Angelika Fitz, Curator, Director of the Az W

Elke Krasny, Curator, professor, akbild

14:30 Caring Architecture

Joan Tronto / New York – Video Lecture

15:00 – 17:00

Marta Serra Permanyer and Elena Aalbareda Fernández, CICLICA / Barcelona

N.N., de vylder vinck taillieu / Ghent  
Hélene Frichot, Professor at the KTH Stockholm  
*Break*

17:30 – 18:30

Gabu Heindl, GABU Heindl Architecture / Vienna  
María E. Hernández Torrales, Caño Martín Peña Community Land Trust / San Juan,  
Puerto Rico

19:00 Keynote

Katherine Gibson, Professor at Western Sidney University

### **Guided Tours**

#### Guided tours by the curatos

Sat 18.05., 17:30

Wed 12.06., 03.07., 14.08., at 17:30

#### Guided tours

Wed 01.05., 16:00 & 18:00 as part of „Open Door Day“

Wed 22.05., 19.06., 24.07., 21.08., at 17:30

Thu 13.06., 19:30 as part of MQ SommerÖffnung

#### Guided tours in dialogue

The projects in the exhibition "Critical Care" combine the fields of work, economy and ecology in a remarkable way. We invite selected guests to take part in „tours in dialogue“ commenting on the exhibition from their respective professional perspectives along these themes.

Wed 08.05., 17:30

Focus on Economy and Public Welfare

Elisabeth Klatzer, Economist, Member of the Board of Attac Österreich

Wed 26.06., 17:30

Focus on ecology and social cooperation

Philipp Rode, Helge Schier, Landschaftsarchitekten ZwoPK

Wed 28.08., 17:30

Focus work: Work realities as cleaning power

Jelena Micic, Cleaner and artist, including "Cleaning Painting" (in English)

Registration for the tours in dialogue required: [anmeldung@azw.at](mailto:anmeldung@azw.at)

Tickets: € 2,40 + entrance fee

Sat 11.05.

Two guided tours & Walk „CARE MATTERS.“

A cooperation between the Az W and the Kunstraum Niederösterreich  
11:00 Guided tour by the curators „TechnoCare“ in the Kunstraum Niederösterreich  
12:30 Guided tour by the curators „Critical Care“ in the Az W  
16:00 „Lost and Found“, a picnic at the Nordbahnhof area with Thomas Romm, Urban-mining-expert, and the social designers Clara Rindler-Schantl, Eva Maria Mair and Klaus Koddek  
Meeting place: Nordbahn-Halle, Leystraße/Taborstraße, 1020 Vienna

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