

Press Release

The Art of Working: Agency in Digital Modernity

An Exhibition by the Vienna Biennale Circle
at the MAK

Exhibition Venue	MAK Columned Main Hall, 1st floor, Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	11 June – 4 October 2015
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

To underscore and specifically utilize the interdisciplinary nature of the VIENNA BIENNALE, the Vienna Biennale Circle (VBC) was created as a flexible platform of prominent individuals from various disciplines who live in Vienna, chaired by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, head of the biennale. In preparation for the VIENNA BIENNALE 2015: IDEAS FOR CHANGE, the VBC discussed the projects of the biennale curators in an extended setting and provided valuable impulses. Against this background, the core team of the VBC developed an exhibition manifesto on a central sociopolitical topic of Digital Modernity: the future of human work in the context of the rapid development of digital intelligence and robotics.

In addition to the leaders of the cultural institutions organizing the biennale, the VBC core team consists of the following members in particular: Erwin K. Bauer (managing director, buero bauer), Angelika Fitz (curator and cultural theorist), Gabriela Gantenbein (curator and cultural manager), Elke Krasny (curator, professor for art and education, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna), Margit Noll (AIT Austrian Institute of Technology), Doris Rothauer (managing director, Büro für Transfer), and Inge Scholz-Strasser (author). The VBC core team developed an exhibition manifesto in a collaborative process over several months entitled *The Art of Working: Agency in Digital Modernity*.

Its starting point is the upheaval of our civilization brought about by the process of digitalization, also called the "second machine age." Digital Modernity in the 21st century has enormous potential around the world in areas such as education, but also entails great risks in light of the speed and reach of digital intelligence and robotics. It has fundamental consequences for the relationship between humans and machines, especially for human labor, both for manual and cognitive jobs. We must

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assume that in the coming decades a significant part of routine manual and cognitive jobs will be replaced by automation. However, in light of the learning abilities of digital machines, even jobs that are not yet seen as routine will become increasingly vulnerable. Human work will thus become a scarce good and must be advanced through intelligent measures.

The exhibition manifesto jointly developed by the VBC core team was designed by buero bauer and is displayed on the upper level of the MAK Columned Main Hall. It includes twelve theses on the future of work which, through the combination of the icons designed specifically for the manifesto and the explanatory texts on the theses, are fleshed out in an interdisciplinary manner and also made more easily comprehensible. In particular, the exhibition manifesto calls for the following:

- We must not allow work to become a luxury of the elite; instead, we must foster human creativity as a lever for sustainable, new work.
- We must work hard to invent new work and develop the search of new work as a new path for society.
- We need companies that do not make human beings superfluous with increasingly brilliant digital tools, but elevate them in their significance and dignity.
- We must develop a new understanding of creativity as a means for the development of personal potential and the creation of meaning.
- We must view every consumer decision also as a decision for or against the continued existence of human labor.
- We must use new infrastructures and technologies for creative design and production.
- We must not accept craftsmanship as a luxury for the few, and instead must anchor it as a necessary strategy for our entire society.
- We must place creativity and openness to dealing with new technologies, forms of work, and business opportunities at the center of the advancement of education.
- We must share our ideas, our workplace, our tools, and our contacts and build networks instead of rigid structures.
- The question of the value of reproductive work expressed in monetary terms must be socially and politically renegotiated.
- We must use the creative potential of the city even more effectively for our work.
- Architecture, design, and art must play a key role for the future of the workplace and not only operate on a functional level, but also establish identity and foster political engagement.

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In the context of the exhibition manifesto, Marlies Wirth, curator at the MAK, has organized an exhibition of contemporary art. *24/7: the human condition* opens up a broad spectrum of artistic engagement with various aspects of a cultural understanding of work and action: between longing and the pressure to perform, identification and opposition, recognition and exhaustion, the traces of humanity are inscribed in the unstoppable machinery of the information age.

Together, these theses from the manifesto open up a forward-looking panorama of guidelines for individual and collaborative action in Digital Modernity. In this sense, the exhibition projects *The Art of Working: Agency in Digital Modernity* and *24/7: the human condition* are conceived as the beginning of a broader sociopolitical discussion and as an impetus for further projects on these issues.

In particular, it remains to be determined in what way the issue of the future of human work will be addressed at the following VIENNA BIENNALE in 2017 and how we can respond to the new global paradigm of AI (artificial intelligence) with the possibilities of "artistic intelligence."

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Vienna, 11 June 2015

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