

THE RISK SOCIETY

JANUARY 27 11.00 to 18.00

THE DESIGN MUSEUM The Bakala Auditorium

#risksociety

Chaired by Glenn Adamson, curator of the current edition of Beazley Designs of the Year, this symposium brings together leading international designers, artists, academics and social thinkers to discuss design's engagement with risk.

How can design help us overcome the global risks of today? How does the concept of risk intersect with political change, which in turn may have impact on design implementation? And how might a theory of risk help us to develop our understanding of design, with the aim of making a better future?

Over the last 18 months the world has experienced unpredictable and unprecedented challenges. Natural disasters, economic downfalls, ideologically-motivated violence and ecological uncertainty are some of the global risks that have come to define our time. This year's Beazley Designs of the Year reflects the ways in which design is responding to these risks through inventive acts of resilience.

The symposium borrows its name from the late sociologist and social thinker Ulrich Beck's seminal book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1986). Taking Beck's analysis as a point of departure, it questions how design as a discipline can provide cities, communities and individuals with tools to prepare for social, economic and political threats and uncertainties.

In examining recent design projects, some featured in Beazley Designs of the Year, a line-up of leading designers, artists, academics and social thinkers will reflect on topics including; globalisation, the migrant crisis, artificial intelligence and the advent of the Anthropocene.

Glenn Adamson: Guest Curator of Beazley Designs of the Year

Sumitra Upham: Curator of Public Programmes, the Design Museum

SCHEDULE

WELCOME

11.00 Sumitra Upham

INTRODUCTION

11.05 Glenn Adamson

DEFINING RISK

11.15 Presentation: Jack Self

A Real Risk

11.35 Presentation: Austin Zeiderman

Endangered Cities: The Politics of Security and Risk

12.00 Discussion

12.30 Presentation: Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg + Q&A

Designing for the Sixth Extinction

LUNCH

13.00 – 14.00

GENERATING RISK

14.00 Presentation: Helga Schmid + Q&A

The Embodiment of Digital Time

14.30 Panel Discussion: Jaya Klara Brekke, Adam

Greenfield, Mercedes Bunz, Chair: Ben Vickers

Risk is an Age of Connectivity

BREAK

15.30 – 16.00

MANAGING RISK

16.00 Presentation: Grainne Hassett

Building and Breaking Systems in Calais Refugee Camp

16.20 Presentation: Christina Varia

Saydnaya: Inside a Syrian Torture Prison

16.40 Discussion

17.00 Conversation: Aram Han Sifuentes and

Glenn Adamson

Protest Banner Lending Library

17.45 Closing comments: Glenn Adamson and

Sumitra Upham

THEMES

DEFINING RISK We are consistently told that we are at risk, whether that be at a local level (diseases, pollution, road safety) or a global one (terrorism, unstable economy, climate change, cyber threats), but where is the authority behind these messages? Is it really the case that we are collectively at greater risk today? Or has an increasingly networked society actually made the world a safer place? Whatever our risk level, how are specific risks being evaluated (and perhaps exploited)? What can design do to respond to these ever-changing dynamics?

GENERATING RISK Digital culture is constantly generating new risks for society, simply by virtue of its unprecedented and pervasive effects. In this session, our speakers will reflect on topics including the internet of things, cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence to discuss both the promises and threats – ethical and practical – raised by these technologies. Is it necessary to embrace risk in order to arrive at better design? How does risk stimulate design thinking and ultimately shape our society and environment?

MANAGING RISK Ulrich Beck argued that a characteristic aspect of late capitalism was its tendency to move risk around, in such a way as to negatively impact those who are already disempowered. This session will explore design's possible response to such inequity, with a particular emphasis on human rights and political upheaval. We will spotlight recent designs that have sought to redress the impact of risk on disadvantaged populations. How do designers understand large scale patterns and local conditions, so as to make a significant difference to the lives of ordinary people? A key focus will be on the humanitarian crisis where millions have been displaced by conflict or natural disasters. More broadly, it will explore how design has helped to build collective agency, bringing people together through solidarity at a time of need.

SPEAKER BIOS

GLENN ADAMSON is this year's Guest Curator for Beazley Designs of the Year, and is currently Senior Scholar at the Yale Center for British Art. Dr. Adamson was previously Director of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, and Head of Research at the V&A, and is a well-known writer on craft and design history.

JAYA KLARA BREKKE speaks, writes and does research on the technopolitical/design principles of blockchains and consensus protocols. She is author of the B9Lab ethical developer training module and co-author of the Satoshi (Hippocratic) Oath for blockchain developers. She is currently writing a PhD at Durham University.

MERCEDES BUNZ is Senior Lecturer in media studies and journalism at the University of Westminster. Her work combines technology and digital media, philosophy, and publishing. Recent books include *The Internet of Things* co-written with Graham Meikle. Previously she was technology reporter of The Guardian.

DR ALEXANDRA DAISY GINSBERG is an artist, designer, and writer, critically exploring values that shape design, science, and technology. Daisy is lead author of *Synthetic Aesthetics: Investigating Synthetic Biology's Designs on Nature* (MIT Press, 2014) and in 2017 completed *Better*, her PhD at the Royal College of Art. Her work has twice been nominated for Beazley Designs of the Year.

ADAM GREENFIELD is a London-based writer and urbanist. His most recent book, *Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life*, was published by Verso in 2017.

GRAINNE HASSETT is a practicing architect who teaches at SAUL school of architecture University of Limerick and is Visiting Professor at University of Sheffield. Hassett Ducatez Architects commits to architectural research through practice. In 2015, Grainne founded The Calais Builds project, designed, organised or built important community infrastructure of Calais refugee camp, exhibiting maps of the camp at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2017 as political documents.

ARAM HAN SIFUENTES uses a needle and thread as her tools to examine immigration, citizenship, race and craft, drawing on both personal experiences and shared cultural identity. Her work has been exhibited and performed all over the world. She is a 2016 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow and a 2016 3Arts Awardee. She earned her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

JACK SELF is a London-based architect. He is Director of the REAL foundation and Editor-in-Chief of the Real Review. His work explores alternative models of ownership, contemporary forms of labour, and the formation of socio-economic power relationships in space. In 2016, Jack curated the British Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. He is author of *Real Estates: Life Without Debt* (Bedford Press, 2014).

CHRISTINA VARVIA is an architect, researcher and the research coordinator at Forensic Architecture. She was previously a member of the AA School of Architecture and the Unknown Fields Division. Christina joined the Forensic Architecture team in 2014, where she develops methodologies and undertakes analysis for projects including Saydnaya (2017).

BEN VICKERS is a curator, writer, network analyst, technologist and currently Curator of Digital at the Serpentine Gallery. Ben co-runs LIMAZULU Project Space, is an active member of EdgeRyders, leads Brighton University's Professional 'Reality' Development Program and facilitates the development of unMonastery.

AUSTIN ZEIDERMAN teaches in the Department of Geography & Environment at the London School of Economics. He is an interdisciplinary scholar who specializes in the cultural and political dimensions of cities, development, and the environment, with a specific focus on Latin America. He is author of *Endangered City: The Politics of Security and Risk in Bogotá* (Duke University Press, 2016).

DR HELGA SCHMID is a designer, researcher and lecturer. She teaches at the Royal College of Art, where she completed her PhD in Visual Communication. She has worked internationally as a designer and researcher (Museum of Modern Art), exhibited worldwide (V&A, Dia Art Foundation), and is a recipient of awards and scholarships (Art & Type Directors Awards, Fulbright Scholarship).