

VIENNA DESIGN WEEK

“Trash is omnipresent, whether it manifests in the form of a Y2K revival, a luxury bag mimicking a crisp packet, or as seen in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. We believe it’s time to take this ambivalent aesthetic phenomenon seriously.”

– Anton Rahlwes & Nina Sieverding (The Thing Magazine), guest curators

FOKUS: TRASH

In 2024, VIENNA DESIGN WEEK invited the curators Anton Rahlwes & Nina Sieverding (The Thing Magazine) to shape its FOKUS format. The theme they chose for the group exhibition: Trash.

For the third edition of FOKUS, we’re sifting through the trash: “Trash” encompasses a spectrum that oscillates between abstract stylization and material essence. It can manifest as vulgar and ironic, yet also as subtle and cerebral. What’s literal waste to one person, might be material waiting to be used by someone else – or even a meaningful cultural, aesthetic or moral asset.

The term “trash culture” originally referred to the by-products of popular culture created on a modest budget. Examples include Hollywood’s B-movies or pulp magazines, alongside reality television shows or mass-produced fashion items. Frequently, these artifacts bear imperfections stemming from their rushed production. However, the notion of “trash culture” inherently carries an intellectual devaluation, referencing not only visual stimuli and their form but also societal values and norms associated with these codes.

Ironically, “trash” has experienced a resurgence as a respectable style in art and design for several decades now. Nevertheless, this trend raises new questions about class appropriation and decolonial discourses: Who gets to draw the line between trash and treasure? Who can afford to adopt trash as a style? And who cannot?

Of course, trash also refers to the actual waste generated by our throw-away society. In a truly circular economy, no trash would exist. Confronting the climate crisis and the devastation and littering of our environment, we must contemplate how design can contribute to eradicating waste as a constant element of human civilization. Are upcycled, recycled, or repurposed objects, or the utilization of biodegradable materials, viable options that can contribute to a more positive world?

This year’s edition of FOKUS is looking for collectibles that explore the aesthetic concept of trash and/or, through their materiality or concept, engage with themes such as the circular economy/recycling or experiment with biodegradable materials. Let’s explore what lies at the bottom of our trash cans!

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Guest Curators:	Anton Rahlwes & Nina Sieverding (The Thing Magazine)
Scenographie:	Soju.Studio
Cost per accepted piece:	€ 300,- (excluding shipping)
Application Deadline:	31.5.2024
Jury selection:	End of June 2024
Festival Duration:	20.–29.9.2024 (press-preview and opening: 19.9.2024)

APPLY

Submit via this link: <https://forms.gle/j9tr8SaLW5AcYzgBZ>

- Images
- dimensions of a cohesive series of objects
- a brief text covering your work's concept and its relevance to the topic
- a CV

For any questions, please contact: fokus@viennadesignweek.at

ABOUT VIENNA DESIGN WEEK

VIENNA DESIGN WEEK is Austria's most important multidisciplinary and curated design festival. Beyond the preoccupation with the design of products, it poses the question of what role the work of designers plays for coexistence in the city and worldwide. Since 2007, VIENNA DESIGN WEEK has been a defining part of Vienna's design landscape. Organized by an independent association, the festival comprises around 200 events and welcomes 40,000 visitors each year.

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ABOUT FOKUS

Design is the conception of objects that are manufactured in industrial series. But this isn't always the case! In their work, many designers don't necessarily strive to scale up their ideas but, rather, devote themselves to the expression of an individual object. With the tools of design – but equally those of handcraft and art – they seek out the extraordinary and the poetic, and impressions that lie beyond the normal product cycle. In order to offer a home to this focus on the outstanding object, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK is launching the group exhibition format FOKUS. Every year, a guest curator will make a selection from the local and international responses to a specific subject and the selected submissions will be presented in a group exhibition in the Festival Headquarters. A key element of this process is the specially commissioned spatial presentation, which brings together these selected exhibition objects and enables them to fully express themselves.

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