

possessed

25–27 March 2026

ifk Internationales Forschungszentrum
Kulturwissenschaften
ifk Arkade
Reichsratsstraße 17
1010 Vienna

ifk

University of Arts
Linz
Kunstuniversität Linz

Conference possessed

Possession is more than having something at one's disposal. Possession is also persecution, an affliction and a salvaging of people, things and territories. This conference follows the traces of possession in spaces, bodies and relationships. We inquire into the good and bad spirits that ownership spawns and the feedback that develops between possession and obsession. Possession appears in different forms: as private property, as personal and intimate objects that bring us a feeling of security, or as a means of appropriation. Private property draws boundaries and excludes many from their means of survival, their living space and their capacity for participation. Personal objects, on the other hand, may be unsellable, but are nevertheless painful when stripped from »their« person. Gifts, relics or keepsakes become part of people and carry traces of affects and histories. Sometimes, we no longer have access to these—other times, we are unable to resist their pull. Claims of possession accompany violence and expansion, whether in the form of bodily violence or in the act of taking possession of life and land. Sometimes possession even appears trivial, in the countless anonymous objects that accumulate in our daily lives. At the center of this conference are questions of ownership and persecution, access and refuge. New approaches from cultural studies and cultural anthropology—on hauntology, new animism, Freud's uncanny, fetish, new materialism or nature cultures open up pathways to think about possession and the reciprocal obsession between things and humans.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE A HYBRID EVENT.

To participate via Zoom, you have to register for the meeting with your name and e-mail address.

You can find the links on our website in the calendar entry for the event:
www.ifk.ac.at



Wednesday,
25 March
2026

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14:00 **Welcome and Introduction**

Andreas Gehrlach and Andreas Streinzer

14:30 **Stephan Pühringer**

The Opaque Parallel-World of the Oligarchic Wealth Elite.
On the Political Economy of Wealth Concentration in Austria

15:30 **Coffee Break**

16:00 **Isabel Bredenbröker**

Haunted by »Cultural Possessions«. Contested Ownership
and Uncanny Agencies in Colonial Collections

17:00 **Judith Bovensiepen**

Empty Lands

18:00 **Drinks and Snacks**

Thursday,
26 March
2026

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- 10:00 **Victor Strazzeri**
Things Possessed. On the Object-Subjects of Reification
- 11:00 **Samo Tomšič**
Ressentiment Between Property and Expropriation
- 12:00 **Lunch Break**
- 14:00 **Andreas Gehrlach**
Stufen des Eigentums
- 15:00 **Alice von Bieberstein**
Finance as Ghosting Machine. Dispossession, Liquidation and the Afterlives of the Armenian Genocide
- 16:00 **Coffee Break**
- 17:00 **Çağla Gillis**
Block E, No. 5: An Exploration of Being Held by a Place.
Film Screening and Talk with Andreas Gehrlach
- 18:00 **Sinthujan Varatharajah**
Possessing Belonging.
Statelessness and the Material Logic of the Nation-State
- 19:30 **Joint Dinner**

Friday,
27 March
2026

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- 10:00 **Cari Maier**
Ein flüchtiges Selbst. Sorge zwischen Eigentum und Enteignung
- 11:00 **Gabu Heindl**
Vom gewaltvollen Leerstehen-Machen zum machtvollen
InstandBesetzen. Eigentumsbegriffe zur Leerstandskritik
- 12:00 **Olga Shcheblykina**
Things I Tried to Keep.
Artist Talk with Julia Boog-Kaminski
- 13:00 **Break**
- 14:00 **Iketina Danso**
Zweifelhafte Vergnügungen.
Reframing Colonial Histories in Vienna Leopoldstadt
- 15:00 **End**

Concept: Andreas Gehrlach (ifk Wien), Andreas Streinzer (Universität Wien)

Participants: Alice von Bieberstein (Berlin), Judith Bovensiepen (Wien),
Isabel Bredenbröker (Bremen), Iketina Danso (Wien), Çağla Gillis (Linz/
Istanbul), Gabu Heindl (Wien), Cari Maier (Wien), Stephan Pühringer (Linz),
Olga Shcheblykina (Linz/Wien), Victor Strazzeri (Ljubljana), Samo Tomšič
(Dresden), Sinthujan Varatharajah (Berlin)

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