



## **LASERZURICH: RECLAIMING URBAN ECOLOGY**

**ARTISTS, SCIENTISTS AND ACTIVISTS MERGE TOGETHER IN ONE EVENING**

**LASERZURICH** -The Leonardo Art, Science, Evening Rendezvous (LASER)

[www.laserzurich.com](http://www.laserzurich.com) Connected to *Leonardo: The Journal of Art and Science*, MIT Press.

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2018**

- 14.30 Panel-Introduction with each panel member (10 minutes)
- 15.00 Film- 72 minutes: *Natura Urbana/The Brachen of Berlin*
- 16.30 Online interview with the Director- **Mathew Gandy** by the panel
- 17.00 Break: Drinks and Lebanese snacks in the cafeteria
- 17.30 Thematic discussion with panel members and Audience
- 18.00 Finish

### **PLACE**

**This event will take place at the WWF (snacks and drinks will be included)**

**WORLD WILDLIFE FUND** Volunteers

Hohlstrasse 110

**8010 Zurich**

(for attendance registration please send an email to [adriana.puente@wwf.ch](mailto:adriana.puente@wwf.ch))

## **RECLAIMING URBAN ECOLOGY**

Today there is a perceived lack of public space that is open to unplanned developments in contemporary cities in affluent countries. Matthew Gandy calls these places Unintentional Landscapes, others call them "terrain vague" or wastelands. How can we protect and regain these spaces of the unplanned, for those that are neglected or under-privileged in our cities? How are we supposed to save modern cities from many of their problems: climate change, unsustainable lifestyles, loss of life quality, or lost connectivity to nature and animals? Are green cities a real opportunity or misguided romanticism? How can this complex relationship with urban spaces be re-appropriated by humans? Can artists and scientists collaborate here to offer open, exploratory and experimental solutions? How could citizen science help?

IN THIS EVENT WE PREMIERE A NEW FILM *Natura Urbana/The Brachen of Berlin* BY MATTHEW GANDY AND THESE QUESTIONS ARE DISCUSSED BY A TRANS-DISCIPLINARY PANEL: Christoph Kueffer, Mathew Gandy, Bárbara Mações Costa and Jill Scott

## **PANEL WITH PRESENTATIONS:**

**CHAIR Christoph Kueffer**, urban ecologist and environmental scientist, HSR Rapperswil and ETH Zurich (moderator). Christoph Kueffer is Professor of Urban Ecology at the Department of Landscape Architecture of the University of Applied Sciences Eastern Switzerland and senior lecturer at ETH Zurich. He studied Environmental Sciences at ETH Zurich, and completed his PhD in plant ecology and habilitation in plant and global change ecology at the same university.

<http://www.geobot.umnw.ethz.ch:8000/~kueffer/personal/CV.html>

**Mathew Gandy** was born in Islington, North London. He is a cultural, urban, and environmental geographer at the University of Cambridge with particular interests in landscape, infrastructure, and more recently bio-diversity. The historical scope of his work extends from the middle decades of the nineteenth century to the recent past. His research ranges from aspects of environmental history, including epidemiology, to contemporary intersections between nature and culture including the visual arts.

<http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/research/fellows/matthew-gandy.html>. **Matthew Gandy** will be available for a commentary after the presentation of his film and Q&A by skype.

**Kevin Vega**, urban ecologist, PhD student at ETH Zurich. Kevin is interested in how wild plants live in cities: how they spread, self-propagate and whether their populations exchange genes. He spent the last two summers surveying the vegetation of Zurich but also uses latest genetic techniques at the Genetic Diversity Center (GDC) at ETH Zurich. Through the citizen science project “Wo Samen fallen” in collaboration with Juanita Schläpfer (Zurich-Basel Plant Science Center) he involves citizens of Zurich in his projects and observes with them where seed of wild plants fall and where they establish. He investigates the biological processes that drive the patterns of wild urban vegetation documented in the film ‘Natura Urbana’.

<http://www.ibz.ethz.ch/groups-units/people/person-detail.html?persid=231014>

**Bárbara Mações Costa** graduated in 2008 from the Univ. of Porto Faculty of Architecture (dipl. Arch.) and in 2016 from the Univ. of Lisbon Faculty of Fine-Arts (MFA). Between 2009 and 2011, she was project architect for the Belgian landscape architecture office Bureau Bas Smets. She is currently employed at the EPFL's Laboratory Basel (LABA) as doctoral assistant and lecturer of the Teaching Unit U – Cartography. Her research focusses on environmental aesthetics and representation in architecture, with an emphasis on cartography as a situated language. More broadly, she is interested in issues of justice and political ecology within the built environment (eco-feminism, eco-socialism, nature rights). Fields of expertise include cartography and drawing, landscape theory and environmental aesthetics. <https://people.epfl.ch/cgi-bin/people?id=245459&op=bio&lang=en&cvlang=en>

**Jill Scott** Media artist, Professor Emerita ZhdK, Zurich. Dr. Jill Scott is lecturer, professor and context provider with years of experience the unique field of Art and Science research. In 2000, she founded the Artists-in-Labs Program at the ZhdK. She was the Vice Director of the Z-Node program- at the University of Plymouth, UK (2000 to 2016). Her own artwork spans 40 years of art production and in the last 16 years she has focused on creative media art experiments about neuroscience, ecology and sensory perception. Her latest work involved

working on the theme of climate change with visually impaired dancers in Umlazzi, an urban township of Durban, South Africa. <https://www.jillscott.org>

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**THE FILM:** *Natura Urbana/The Brachen of Berlin* (UK/Germany, 72 mins 2017) tells the post-war history of Berlin through its plants. The film takes us from the *Trümmerlandschaften*, and their unique ecologies, to the abandoned roofs of the Friedrichshagen Waterworks on the edge of the city. We encounter an extraordinary variety of spontaneous vegetation from all over the world that has sprouted along railway lines, on street corners, and in the distinctive *Brachen* of Berlin. In *Natura Urbana* the changing vegetation of Berlin serves as a parallel history to war-time destruction, geo-political division, and the newest phase of urban transformation. In addition to stunning urban landscapes, and unknown or rarely seen archive footage, the film also features interviews with leading cultural and scientific figures from Berlin (Herbert Sukopp and Hanns Zischler) Post-war Berlin became the leading centre for the study of urban botany in the world and the city has played a pivotal role in the emergence of “urban ecology” as a distinctive scientific field. <https://www.naturaurbana.org>

Writer & Director: **Matthew Gandy**

Executive Producer & Co-author: **Sandra Jasper** Editor: **Wiebke Hofmann**

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**Please Join Us. We look forward to this great afternoon with lively discussions international presentations and encourage local activists from the “wastelands” of Zurich to attend.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND MAPS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE:**

**[WWW.LASERZURICH.COM](http://WWW.LASERZURICH.COM)**

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