

ASCINA Swords for Excellent Austrian Scientists in the USA

12/10/2018

Washington (APA) - Three Austrian scientists working in the US were awarded the ASCINA Awards on December 8th by Austrian Federal Minister of Education Heinz Fassmann (ÖVP). The psychologist and political theorist Claudia Leeb, the physician Jelena Todoric and the electrical engineer Andreas Pedross-Engel received the awards at the end of the Austrian Research and Innovation Talk (ARIT) in Washington DC.

The prizes are awarded by the Ministry of Science and the ASCINA Association (Austrian Scientists and Scholars in North America) after being evaluated by the Austrian Science Fund FWF. The prize is awarded to young researchers for excellent publications that have been created at North American research institutions.

"Junior Principal Investigator" Award

The \$ 10,000 "Junior Principal Investigator" Award went to Claudia Leeb, 49, for her book "Power and Feminist Agency in Capitalism: Toward a New Theory of the Political Subject" published last year at Oxford University Press. Leeb holds a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of Vienna and a PhD in Political Theory from the New School for Social Research, New York. She is currently working at the Washington State University School of Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs in Pullman, Washington.

In her book, Leeb analyzes power structures in capitalist societies. In it, she coined the term "moments of the limit", which describes those few moments when power structures fail to fully subordinate the working classes, women or minorities. In such moments, action becomes possible. "These are often moments of pain where you think, that's really not how I'm treated, and instead of submitting, you try to organize with other people to do something about it," Leeb told reporters.

This year, Leeb's next book, *The Politics of Re-pressed Guilt, The Tragedy of Austrian Silence*, has already appeared. It shows how important it is for nations to deal with their past. Otherwise, it will have an impact on contemporary democracy and the danger is high that the past will repeat itself.

Awards for Todoric and Pedross-Engel

One of the two 7,500 Euro ASCINA awards for "Young Scientists" went to Jelena Todoric (42). The graduate of the Medical University of Vienna works since 2012 as a postdoc at the Laboratory of Gene Regulation and Signal Transduction of the University of California in San Diego (California). She is honored for a paper published in 2017 in the journal "Cancer Cell", in which she demonstrated on the animal model that a disruption of the waste cells of the cells (autophagy) of precursor lesions in the development of pancreatic cancer is involved. Autophagy is the process by which cells degrade or recycle proteins and cellular wastes.

The second prize for young researchers went to Andreas Pedross-Engel (36). The graduate of Graz University of Technology (TU Graz) has been working as a postdoc since 2014 at the Department of Electrical Engineering of the University of Washington in Seattle (Washington). He is honored for a paper published in 2018 in the journal "IEEE Transactions on Computational Imaging," in which he introduces a 3D camera system based on active illumination with millimeter-wave electromagnetic waves. With these waves, which are harmless to humans, you can make hidden things visible. The development could be in the future, for example, waive the moving antennas in body scanners at the airport. It would be enough for passengers to just pass the antennas and be scanned. On behalf of the US Transport Security Agency (TSA), a prototype of the system was manufactured.

The ARIT is an annual network meeting between Austrian experts and Austrian scientists working in North America organized by the Office of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA) in Washington DC on behalf of the Ministry of Science and Infrastructure. The ASCINA network was founded in 2002 in Washington D.C. founded and has over 1,200 members worldwide.