

Ascina Award to the analyst of power structures

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The political theorist Claudia Leeb won the main prize for excellent Austrian scientists in the USA

The Austrian scientist Claudia Leeb (49) had brought a gift for Science Minister Heinz Fassmann (ÖVP) to the Ascina Award. Her latest book "The politics of repressed guilt: the tragedy of Austrian silence". The psychologist and political theorist shows how important an in-depth analysis of one's own history would be in order to prevent negative effects on the present. In Austria, after the Second World War, one would have gained a defensive position against any question of guilt.

However, she received the 10.000 Euro "Junior Principal Investigator Award" of the Ascina Awards for her book "Power and Feminist Agency in Capitalism: Toward a New Theory of the Political Subject" published last year at Oxford University Press. It is about power structures dominated by white men in capitalist society and the painful "moments of the limit" in which women, ethnic minorities and the working classes rebel spiritually and emotionally, drawing strength for action against subordination.

In a forthcoming project, she will look into the worldwide rise of the right and extreme right and wonder why this is possible for many followers, though they should know better because of history. Leeb works at the Washington State University School of Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs in Pullman, Washington, and emphasizes that she has the ideal conditions for her work because she has little teaching to do.

Problems with Autophagy

The two Ascina prizes for "Young Scientists", each worth 7,500 Euro, went at the Austrian Embassy in Washington D.C. on Saturday evening to Jelena Todoric (42), graduate of the Medical University of Vienna and since 2012 as a postdoc at the Laboratory of Gene Regulation and Signal Transduction of the University of California at San Diego, as well as to Andreas Pedross-Engel (36), TU Graz graduate and Postdoc for four years at the Department of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Todoric has demonstrated that disorders in the autophagy of the cell favor the development of pancreatic cancer. The corresponding work was published in 2017 in the journal "Cancer Cell". She is currently studying the development of liver cancer and is investigating how too much fructose in the diet can adversely affect certain intestinal bacteria, which then leak, circulate throughout the body and contribute to tumor development in the liver. Todoric said that too much fructose can only be consumed with soft drinks, not fruit.

Pedross-Engel is honored for a paper published in 2018 in the journal IEEE Transactions on Computational Imaging. Here he described a 3D camera system with human-safe electromagnetic magnetic millimeter waves. With these waves, which are harmless to humans, you can make hidden things in bags visible, body scanning will do without moving antennas in the future - and thus reduce the queues at airports.

The award ceremony is considered the highlight of the Austrian Research and Innovation Talks (ARIT). The network meeting takes place once a year and is organized by the Office of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA) in Washington DC on behalf of the Ministry of Science and Transport. Ascina is the network of Austrian scientists in North America (Austrian Scientists and Scholars in North America). It exists since 2002.