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VERNACULAR LIVED CULTURES

Guest Talk: Nathalie Olah on 'Bad Taste'

May 7, 2024, 10:15 AM



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When: Tuesday May 7th 2024, 10:15am

Where: University of Berne, main building, room 105

Public event, no registration necessary

Language: English

Nathalie Olah is a writer and cultural critic. She holds a BA in English Literature and an MA in Global Political Economy. She credits witnessing the humiliation of the Greek people by EU bureaucrats, along with the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis in Britain, as shaping her politics and the disillusionment with neoliberal economics. In her own words, her "main interest today is media spectacle and propaganda, and the quaint exceptionalisms of the western psyche and those of the upper/middle class in particular". *Bad Taste* is Olah's latest book, published in 2023.

Bad Taste (2023) is an interrogation of the importance we place on seemingly objective ideas of taste in a culture that is saturated by imagery, and the dangerous impact this has on our identities, communities and politics. This book is dedicated to understanding the industries of taste. From the food we eat to the way we spend our free time, Olah exposes the shallow waters of 'good' and 'bad' taste and the rigid hierarchies that uphold this age-old dichotomy.

How did minimalism become a virtue, and who can afford to do it justice?

When did blue-collar jackets become a fashion item?

Who stands to gain from the distinction made between beauty, and sex?

Bold, original and provocative, *Bad Taste* is a revelatory exploration of the intersection between consumerism, class, desire and power, and a rousing call-to-arms to break free from the restrictive ways we see those around us.

Nathalie Olah will hold a guest talk on *Bad Taste* as a part of the seminar of writer and photographer Johny Pitts, who currently holds the Friedrich Dürrenmatt Guest Professorship at the University of Berne. All interested parties are cordially invited to come to listen and to take part in the subsequent discussion.