

CAST
CENTRE FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
IN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CULTURES

RUHR
UNIVERSITÄT
BOCHUM RUB

LECTURES

winter semester 23/24
- best futures -

Lectures will be on site and online.

online: <https://tinyurl.com/RUSTlab>
password: RUSTlab

on site: Universitätsstr. 104
room 201



more info: rustlab.ruhr-uni-bochum.de

Oct 12th '23 | 16-18

„Feminist Server Stacks and the Intimacies of Infrastructure“

Nancy Mauro-Flude, RMIT University, Australia

Nov 9th '23 | 14-16

„Stand-in. A Political Economy of Energy Reserves“

Stefan Laser, Ruhr-University Bochum

Dec 7th '23 | 14-16

„Die Zukunft Europas. Prospektive Grenzimaginationen bei Frontex“

Hannes Krämer and Dominik Gerst, University of Duisburg-Essen

Jan 18th '24 | 14-16

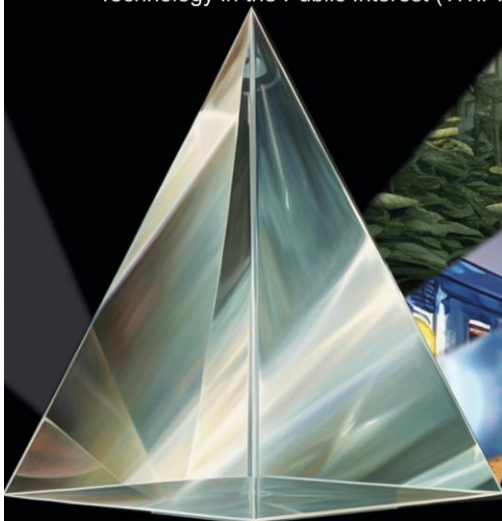
„How Visual Technologies Shape Police Oversight and Training“

René Tuma, Technical University Berlin (TU Berlin)

Feb 1st '24 | 14-16

„Counter Cloud Imaginaries“

Femke Snelling, The Institute for Technology in the Public Interest (TITIPI)



poster design by Babette Hinterleitner and midjourney

Best Futures

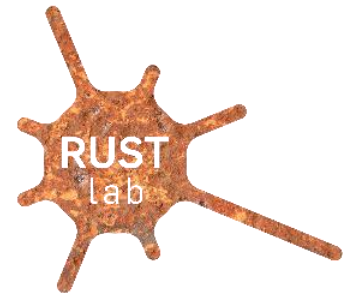
What does the future look like?

Yours?

Ours?

Possible futures are plural, but not all are equally good.

What do best futures look like?



The topic of the 2023/2024 term RUSTlab Lectures “best futures” presents a paradoxical blend, merging the superlative *best*, which sets values and claims singular superiority, with the plurality of *futures*, which remain unknown and full of indeterminacies – a topic the RUSTlab lectures attended to last term.

There are bigger-better-faster futures, business-as-usual futures, futures of technological innovation and futures of a damaged planet. What are our dreams and aspirations for the best future? What do we fear or dread? Which legacies must be trialled, tested or secured? What dilemmas should we engage with, when best futures are at stake? What responsibilities do we carry for those who come after us? What skills are needed to build futures and how do we train them? Who owns futures and how are they distributed? Which (planetary) resources of and for future-making are of concern?

These questions posed in this semester’s RUSTlab Lecture theme demand both speculation and pragmatism. Thinking about best futures is not a futile task, it invites cautious hope, not naïve to the damages already done, nor passive in engaging with the challenges ahead. Best futures try; they might fail; they will be exposed and put at stake. Our way to address what is yet to come is through questions of speculative formulations of how futures can become best.

In the winter term 2023/2024, we have invited speakers to reconcile with the making of best futures: Nancy Mauro-Flude explores intimate ways of relating with data servers, to experience otherwise ephemeral and illusive digital data. Stefan Laser unfolds contemporary processes of energy planning, where energy resources become interchangeable entities to be swapped out and stand in for one another. Hannes Krämer and Dominik Gerst explore the future-making of Europe in policy documents employed to predict future border conflicts by European law enforcement agencies. René Tuma investigates visual technologies employed in German law enforcement and how they shape police practice and training. Finally, Femke Snelting ends the lecture series with perspectives on designing alternative data infrastructures drawing on Feminist STS.

Please join us for these exciting lectures and discussions on five Thursdays in the winter term - online and on site. For more details, see <https://rustlab.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>

See you there, and welcome!