
"Greenwashing"

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"Cyclus Offset," "KeayKolour Recycled May," "Shiro Alga Carta": A series of "all natural," "ecological" papers color the catalogue for "Greenwashing" in a muted rainbow of earthy greens, yellows, and pinks. Designed by the exhibition's curators—Illaria Bonacossa and Latitudes's Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna—the volume offers its own version of "green sheen." Are the Fondazione and the organizers self-consciously engaging in the same banal posturing they set out to critique? Or do they see the printing of an art catalogue on recycled paper as a step in the direction of philosopher Félix Guattari's exhortation to "think transversally," toward a reconciliation of the nature/culture dichotomy? Like most of the show's twenty-five participating artists, the organizers are uncompromising in their ambiguity: They neither propose grand solutions nor shy away in passive resignation. An ambitious project that occasionally falters, "Greenwashing" is largely successful in broadening and interrogating the narrow views that dominate environmentalist debates.



Jorge Peris, *Fairy*, 2008. Installation view.

Works by Jorge Peris, Lara Almarcegui, and Chu Yun provide the most exemplary models of this approach. For *Fairy*, 2008, Peris bolted slabs of wet clay to the walls of a back room, transforming the space's frigid architecture into a musty den of soft, sweating walls kept moist by a network of sprinklers. Like Peris's installation, Almarcegui's slide show and postcards, titled *A Wasteland: Rotterdam Harbour, 2003–2018; Genk, 2004–2014; Arganzuela Public Slaughterhouse, Madrid, 2005–2006; Peterson Paper Factory, Moss, 2006–2007*, documents microenvironments that are at once constructed and deconstructed, simultaneously additive and subtractive. In *A Wasteland*—wilderness by design—the artist negotiated with municipal authorities and landowners to preserve the atmosphere of disuse in a selection of urban lots, sparing them from the restoration and clean-up of urban planners. In Chu's *Constellation*, 2006, various appliances set to "sleep" mode are arranged in a dark room. Their twinkling red, blue, and green lights are the stars of a heaven inhabited by obsolete electronics, including VHS players and soon-to-be-outmoded technologies, like CRT television monitors. While Chu's work evokes what Andrews calls the "'What can I do?' responses to climate change," it also explores the seductiveness of the spectacular apocalypse scenarios frequently invoked in environmentalist rhetoric. Such eschatological visions aren't the province of environmentalists alone, however. As Noam Chomsky affirms in Cornelia Parker's video, *Chomskian Abstract*, 2007: "About a third of the population probably believes it doesn't matter what we do about global warming . . . because Jesus is coming and so . . . what's the difference? . . . Those of us who are saved will rise to heaven, and everyone else will be massacred—and it'll be wonderful."

—Emily Verla Bovino