



IMAGINE 2011

The theme of the exhibition programme in 2011 is *IMAGINE* – towards an *ecoaesthetic*. *IMAGINE* suggests that art is a critical but at the same time positive, fruitful option that makes allowances for the surroundings and the environment. With this focus *IMAGINE* wants to put discussions of representation and negation issues on a back burner in favour of a more 'healing' aspect.

The point of departure for this year's theme is the manifesto *Ecoaesthetics* by the artist, writer and curator Rasheed Araeen, which was published in the art and culture periodical *Third Text* in the autumn of 2009. In this text Araeen mounted a frontal assault on the modern ego and the recuperation of the avant-garde. He advocated a collective artistic imagination that would function as the way forward towards "lakes and rivers with clean water, collective farming and the planting of trees all over the world".

The manifesto rejects – albeit in a slightly one-track masculine way – previous artistic attempts to step down from the pedestal of the bourgeoisie in favour of a collective commitment to the surroundings and the environment. While Araeen can be criticized for his slightly narrow aim of denigrating artistically committed experiments, this does not detract from the relevance of a debate that goes behind the current 'acuteness' one experiences today in relation to ecological and environmental issues in art.

With *IMAGINE* the Aarhus Art Building wants to take a closer look at alliances between art and sustainable development. The themes emphasize the origin of the concept of sustainability and the linkages between environmental and social problems which have been characteristic of thinking about and the development of this particular concept since the beginning of the 1970s. Through important movements that have consistently had sustainability as their primary starting point the concept has furthermore been linked conspicuously with an ethical imperative and a determined ambition to overcome inequality – understood as the concrete and symbolic construction of power relations.

The exhibitions on the programme in 2011 try to embrace this complexity in the concept of sustainability and its history from two different angles. One approach to the theme focuses on artistic views of alternative energy. The other focuses on oppressive mechanisms that affect various minorities, women and the environment on the existing premises of inequality and power relations.

ÅRHUS KUNSTBYGNING
J.M. MØRKS GADE 13 DK-8000 ÅRHUS C
www.aarhuskunstbygning.dk

Christina Hemauer | Roman Keller

UNITED ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES

Curated by Latitudes

22nd January - 3rd April 2011

The Swiss artist duo Christina Hemauer (1973) and Roman Keller (1969) explore the theme of energy. They focus on the history of oil and the future prospects for alternative energy sources, especially solar energy. In *United Alternative Energies* Hemauer | Keller resuscitate historical events by inscribing them in a present-day context. The exhibition raises issues about the role of art in relation to energy, by balancing between humour and earnestness, distance and engagement.

Hemauer | Keller live and work in Zürich. *United Alternative Energies* is the duo's first exhibition in Denmark, their first solo exhibition in the Nordic countries and the most comprehensive presentation of their work so far.

The exhibition is curated by the Barcelona-based curatorial office Latitudes (Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna). Latitudes has been involved in several of Hemauer and Keller's artistic projects exploring art in relation to ecology.



UNITED ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES

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ENERGETIC CLEANING (2007/11)

(An MP3 player with the soundtrack can be borrowed from Reception)

During the construction of *United Alternative Energies* the spiritual energy pollution in the Aarhus Art Building's premises was investigated by an 'energy cleaner'. You can listen to an interview with the 'energy cleaner' on the MP3 player while you explore the building. This explains the techniques for evaluating energy as well as the methods of reducing the negative energies.

SLEEPING CARS (2011)

Sleeping Cars presents a selection of photographs taken in the streets of Cairo, where it is common for car owners to protect their parked cars against sandstorms with home-made cloth coverings. These tailored 'pyjamas' can be seen as a possible future scenario in a time when there is no longer a need for oil-dependent machinery, which will therefore be mothballed and protected against the ravages of time as relics.

FROM THE SERIES FREE SPEECH — FREE ENERGY: Me, the Cosmos and the United Nations (2007)

During the construction of *United Alternative Energies* the exhibition space in the Aarhus Art Building was investigated for earth radiation by a geobiologist. A copper spiral thought to intensify the energy fields in the earth is suspended at the point considered to have the greatest energy resonance. The spiral is combined with a microphone connected to a guitar amplifier. Everyone is invited to make a speech about energy and sustainability from this particularly energy-charged position.

GLOBALISING THE INTERNATIONALE (2009-ongoing)

Globalising the Internationale is a choral work that refers to historical songs from the struggles of socialism and the labour movement. The wooden stage exhibited was as part of the project back in 2009 transported along the Rhine by an oil tanker from Basel to Rotterdam. The culmination of the project was the performance of Hemauer | Keller's choral hymn *Postpetrolistic Internationale*, which took place in Rotterdam's vast industrial port. At the opening of the exhibition *United*

N°1 SUN ENGINE (2008-09)

In 1913 the American inventor Frank Shuman established the first large-scale solar energy unit outside Cairo. Even though the unit was economically viable compared with coal-fired plants, it was only in use for one year. Hemauer | Keller reconstructed two segments of this pioneering installation for the Cairo International Biennale in 2008, where they established an information stand and local residents and passers-by could explore and contribute to the history of this key point in the history of alternative energy.

END OF LIFE — Contribution to the Inefficiency of Poetry (2010)

The slow-motion film *End of Life* was made during two public events in Winterthur in Switzerland. Visitors were given the opportunity to bring in their old filament bulbs and watch them being destroyed. *End of Life* shows the last seconds of the life of the bulbs. Each bulb creates its definitive 'final performance' as the smoke rises from the broken glass.

A ROAD NOT TAKEN (2010)

The documentary video essay *A Road Not Taken* examines former American President Jimmy Carter's forward-looking efforts to raise awareness of our dependence on oil, by installing solar panels on the roof of the White House in 1979. Hemauer and Keller revisit this more or less forgotten chapter of American politics in interviews with those involved, including Carter himself. *A Road Not Taken* shows among other things Hemauer | Keller's attempts to relocate the solar panels.

DEVOTIONAL POWER (2011)

Devotional Power invites you to light a candle and place it on a sculpture in imitation of the tradition of the Catholic Church. The warm air that rises up from the candles drives a propeller that recalls a modern wind turbine. *Devotional Power* ambivalently emphasizes the relationship between physical and spiritual energy.

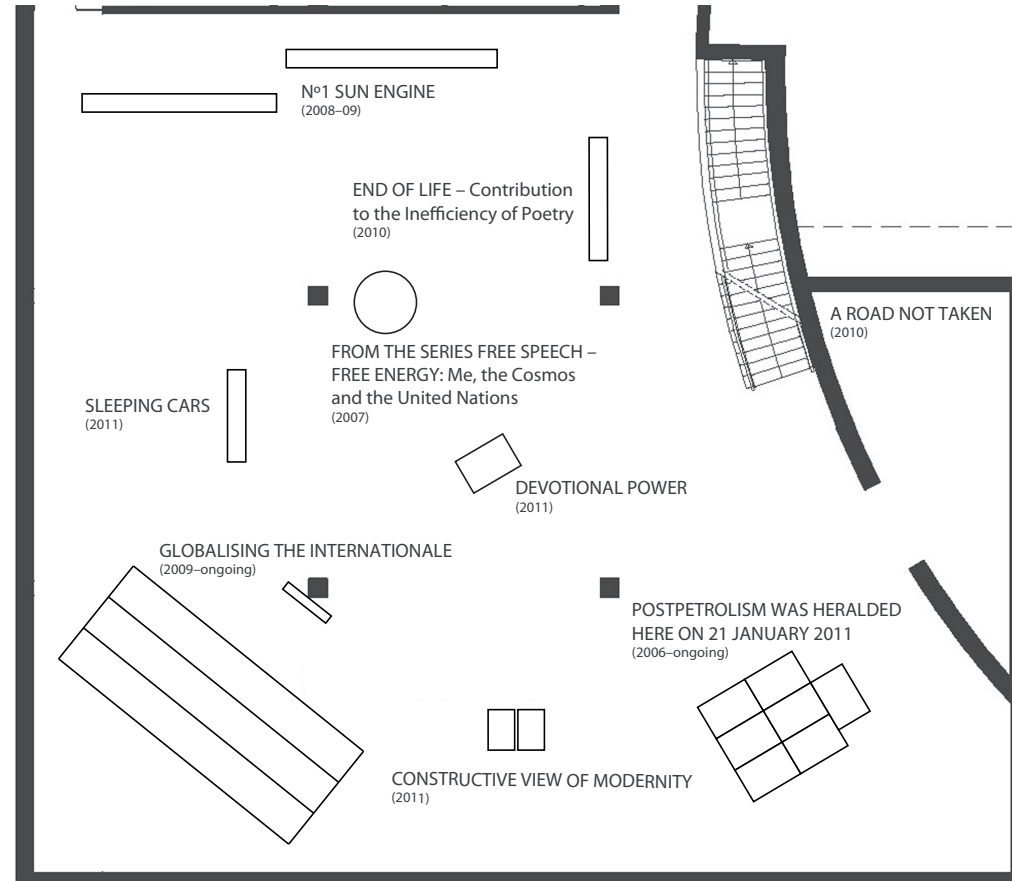
POSTPETROLISM WAS HERALDED HERE ON 21 JANUARY 2011

(2006-ongoing)

The Postpetrolism Manifesto is a manifesto written by Hemauer | Keller "in order to open a new chapter in the history of art – art in the age after mineral oil". The manifesto was originally proposed in 2006, after which festive 'postpetrolist' actions were mounted, including a presentation of solar-powered musical instruments. At the opening of the exhibition *United Alternative Energies* the manifesto was recited as a performance in the Aarhus Art Building. A small plate commemorates the launching of the manifesto in the Aarhus Art Building and the transition from an energy era to a new era beyond oil.

CONSTRUCTIVE VIEW OF MODERNITY (2011)

Constructive View of Modernity uses the geometrical form of the oil barrel symbolically to link the origins of modernist art with industrialization's exploitation of oil-based energy.



Alternative Energies the choral hymn was performed on the wooden stage in the Aarhus Art Building. Video documentation of the Rhine journey of the stage and the choral performances in Rotterdam and Aarhus is

exhibited alongside the wooden stage. With *Globalising the Internationale* Hemauer | Keller want to use the collective power of the human voice to usher in a new age with alternative energy sources beyond fossil fuels.