

Planetary Breakdown: automomous infrastructures for a sustainable future

Baltic Wednesday 10 March Symposium Schedule

Following Helen and Newton Harrison's notion of the 'Force Majeure' – that we should be preparing for different forms of governance following radical blows to the existing infrastructures by inevitable climate change – Autonomous Infrastructures looks at the many models created by artists and by communities of people operating semi-autonomously in society in intentional and utopian communities. The event examines the symbolic nature of many of these initiatives and propose the future realisation of unrealised artists infrastructures.

Rob La Frenais, The Arts Catalyst

Planetary Breakdown: automomous infrastructures for a sustainable future investigates artistic strategies for sustainability and survivability following impending climate change. It is a collaboration between Intersections, The Arts Catalyst, AV Festival and Baltic.

The symposium has three panels looking at alternative approaches to: communities, trade and energy. The panels will give impetus to our discussions through brief presentations and dialogue between artists and people working with new approaches to our themes. The structure of the day is a dynamic momentum between small discussions and broader debate to enable space for all the voices at the symposium.

The Symposium is followed by a talk in the evening by Gustav Metzger.

Schedule

10.00-10.30am	Registration/Tea & Coffee
10.30-11.00am	Intro
11.00-11.30am	Presentation 1
11.30-12.15pm	Discussion 1
12.15-12.45pm	Tea/coffee
12.45-1.15pm	Presentation 2
1.15-2.00pm	Discussion 2
2.00-3.00pm	Lunch
3.00-3.30pm	Presentation 3
3.30-4.15pm	Discussion 3
4.15-4.45pm	Tea/coffee
4.45-5.30pm	Open Forum
5.30-6.00pm	Close
6.30pm	Gustav Metzger's talk

Presentation & Discussion 1: Trade

Chair: Sally Jane Norman

Panel: Kate Rich, Ashok Sukumaran

Sally Jane Norman, www.sussex.ac.uk/acca/

Kate Rich will speak about **Feral Trade** – a public experiment trading goods over social networks. The use of the word 'feral' describes a process which is wilfully wild (as in pigeon) as opposed to romantically or nature-wild (wolf). The passage of goods can open up wormholes between diverse social settings, routes along which other information, techniques or individuals can potentially travel.

<http://www.feraltrade.org>

Ashok Sukumaran *Wharfage* – a project on the creek in Sharjah, from where a large number of ships leave for 'Somalia' – offers an opportunity to think about how 'business' and the spectral lives of commodities are related to global trade, and the current economic situation in the UAE. With war up ahead and crisis at its tail (with pirates in between), this movement of goods and their sailors may trace old trade routes, but maps out something new: a contemporary landscape of new and used objects, labour, charcoal (the only bulk item on the return journey), Asian and African diasporas, and giant wooden ships being built in Salaya, Gujarat. <http://Out.in/>

Presentation & Discussion 2: Alternative Communities

Chair: David Butler

Panel: Lise Autogena, Malcolm Miles, Nicola Triscott

David Butler, *Intersections* <http://www.intersectionspublicart.org.uk/>

Lise Autogena will speak about the 'free state' Christiania in Copenhagen, a different way of living and organising society in an urban context, and she will speak about her imminent Channel crossing, to moor her ship as part of a new floating community on the river Thames in central London.

<http://www.autogena.org/>

Malcolm Miles

The dominant economic system is not sustainable, but neither is the dominant social system - in which power-over replaces power-to, and authority as power replaces authority as knowledge. Alternative social forms exist, however, and have increased in the past 40 years. These tend to develop consensus decision-making, and recognise that people cannot be empowered by others but can empower themselves. <http://www.malcolmmiles.org.uk/>

Nicola Triscott

The Arctic Perspective Initiative aims to empower local citizens of the North via open and free media, communications and environmental monitoring technologies. An international group of artists, media workers, architects and designers - including Marko Peljhan (Projekt Atol), Matthew Biederman (C-TASC), HMKV and The Arts Catalyst - is working with the community of Igloodik, Nunavut, Canada, to design and create a mobile media lab and living unit that can be used to support nomadic lifestyles. <http://www.artscatalyst.org/>

Presentation & Discussion 3: Energy

Chair: Rob la Frenais

Panel: HeHe, London Fieldworks, Bryony Worthington

Rob La Frenais, The Arts Catalyst <http://www.artscatalyst.org/>

Bryony Worthington set up Sandbag, a campaigning organisation focused on emissions trading. Sandbag gives people the power to easily remove tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere and campaigns for tighter caps on emissions. <http://www.sandbag.org.uk/>

HeHe is a Paris based art and design partnership set up in 1999 by Helen Evans and Heiko Hansen. Using a language based on light, sound and image, their practice explores the relationship between the individual and their architectural and urban environment.

For the Autonomous Infrastructures event HeHe will present Train, a project situated on the intersection of urbanism, DIY culture, vehicle design and automation. Train is a research into the aesthetics of movement and travel. To locate the work we are using real, existing past, present and future, abandoned or at times unused transport infrastructures – to deconstruct the ‘machine ensemble’ of rail mass transportation from an artistic point of view.

<http://hehe.org.free.fr/>

<http://www.hehe.org>

<http://www.nuagevert.org>

<http://www.vihreapilvi.org>

Jo Joelson will present the **London Fieldworks** projects Outlandia, as an off-grid space for interdisciplinary exploration, and Polaria as an example of unplugged methodology. Opportunity or compromise?

<http://www.londonfieldworks.com/>

Speakers

Lise Autogena is a Danish artist, based in London and Rotterdam and a lecturer in the department of Fine Art at University of Newcastle. She has collaborated with Joshua Portway since 1999, exploring new ways of accessing, mapping and visualising complex global data systems. Usually ambitious in approach and scale, her projects explore how our human experience is affected by the economies, technologies and societal structures we have created. In 2004 she co-founded CRIR; an international research facility enabling research into the free town Christiania in Copenhagen. She is among the co-founders of a new floating community on the river Thames in London.

David Butler is Co-Director of Intersections, Director of Engagement for the School of Arts & Cultures and Coordinator of LifeWorkArt, a professional practice programme for Fine Art students at Newcastle University.

LWA has strong partnerships in the cultural sector in the region, both with organisations and individual practitioners, enabling students to establish a wide range of projects working networks before graduation. LWA maintains contact with students after graduating offering advice and mentoring and feeding their working experiences back into the teaching programme. Previously he worked in the cultural sector for 25 years as a freelancer, as Development Director of A-N The Artists

Information Company and with organisations such as Sunderland Arts Centre, Action Space Mobile and Globe Gallery.

HeHe is a Paris based art and design partnership set up in 1999 by Helen Evans (Gb) and Heiko Hansen (De).

Work themes: emissions, transport, light, energy, security...

Format: interventions in public space.

Most known for: In 2008 they illuminated an emission cloud of a power plant in Helsinki with a fluorescent green outline, which was awarded three prizes, including a Golden Nica in Hybrid Art at Ars Electronica.

Most unknown for: seriousness

London Fieldworks (co-founded by artists Bruce Gilchrist and Jo Joelson in 2000) is an artist led organization for cross-disciplinary collaboration at the art science and technology intersection. Imaginatively sited projects typically engage with technology and the methods of science within a wider cultural context in order to explore the notion of ecology as a complex inter-working of social, natural, and technological worlds. London Fieldworks recently returned from a British Council artists' residency in the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest and are currently developing Outlandia, a project in the Scottish Highlands. <http://www.londonfieldworks.com/>

Dr Rob La Frenais, Curator of The Arts Catalyst (www.artscatalyst.org) since 1997, is a curator and critic who has curated and produced interdisciplinary and visual art projects since 1987. Before joining The Arts Catalyst, he was a freelance curator and organiser working in a European context in various countries, including being the Chief Executive of the Edge Biennale Trust in London and Madrid and the Artistic Director of the Belluard-Bollwerk International in Switzerland. In 1979 Rob founded the groundbreaking Performance Magazine, which continued as an authoritative cultural voice in Europe until 1992. He has a PhD in curatorial practice across disciplines from Brunel University and is an honorary Doctor of Arts at Dartington College of Arts (University of Plymouth).

Malcolm Miles is Professor of Cultural Theory at the University of Plymouth, UK, where he convenes the Culture-Theory-Space research cluster. He is author of *Urban Utopias* (2008), *Cities & Cultures* (2007), *Urban Avant-Gardes* (2004) and *Art Space & the City* (1997), co-author of *Consuming Cities* (2004, with Steven Miles), and co-editor of the *City Cultures Reader* (2nd edition 2003, with Tim Hall and Iain Borden). He has contributed to journals including *Space & Culture*, *Urban Studies*, and *Parallax*. His current research is on the writing of Herbert Marcuse and aspects of late modern and contemporary art. Website: www.malcolmmiles.org.uk

Sally Jane Norman, citizen of Aotearoa/ New Zealand and France, is a cultural theorist/ practitioner whose research is focused on live art and technology, author of studies for UNESCO, the French Ministry of Culture, and the French National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS). Docteur d' état (Paris III), co-/organiser of workshops, performances, and seminars exploring human interactions in digital environments at institutions including the International Institute of Puppetry – Charleville-Mézières, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie – Karlsruhe, Studio for Electro-Instrumental Music - Amsterdam, IRCAM - Paris. Engaged on EU Framework projects since 1997. From 2001-2004, Director General of the Ecole supérieure de l'image (Angoulême/ Poitiers). 2004-2009 founding Director of Culture Lab, a new interdisciplinary research facility at Newcastle University which hosts creative practice-led collaborations that extend and challenge uses of digital tools. Currently Director of Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, University of Sussex. www.sussex.ac.uk/acca/

Kate Rich is an Australian-born artist and trader. Her practice includes sound art, video art, hospitality and sport art. Notable works include Feral Trade, a grocery business trading along social networks, and her work as video-engineer and co-founder of the Bureau of Inverse Technology (BIT) with Natalie Jeremijenko. Her collaborative projects also include Cube Cola, an open source cola laboratory; and 8 years as bar manager, system administrator, banker and driver at the volunteer-run Cube Microplex in Bristol. <http://www.feraltrade.org/cgi-bin/courier/courier.pl>

Ashok Sukumaran studied architecture (School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, 1998) and media art (University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), and since 2005 has been working principally as an artist. His recent projects are nestled amidst 'the networks', overlapping global systems of communication, exchange and transfer. Recent subjects in his work have included electricity, materialist media histories, sea trade, cycle-rickshaws, and 'the neighbour'. His public projects, films and installations have been shown widely in recent years, and have received several awards, including the 1st prize of the UNESCO Digital Arts Award for 2005, a Golden Nica at the Prix Ars Electronica 2007, and the first Jury Prize at the 9th Sharjah Biennial, 2009 (as CAMP), among others. Sukumaran is a co-founder of CAMP, Mumbai, a space for research and artistic practice based in Mumbai, India.

Nicola Triscott is a cultural producer, working in the visual, interdisciplinary, and performing arts. She is the founder and Director of The Arts Catalyst. In this role, she has built alliances internationally between artists, scientists and other experts, exploring science in its social, political and cultural context and expanding new territories for artistic practice. The Arts Catalyst has commissioned and produced more than 70 new artists' projects. Nicola writes and lectures widely in the UK and internationally on intersections between art, science, technology and society. Nicola is a visiting research fellow at London South Bank University. She received a Clore Leadership Fellowship in 2007.

Bryony Worthington is an experienced climate campaigner who has worked for Friends of the Earth, the government and in the private sector. Bryony developed the concept of 'carbon budgets' whilst at FOE and was a key member of the team that drafted the UK's Climate Change Bill. She has a detailed understanding of emissions trading policy and has experienced first hand the lobbying that surrounds this important policy which is why she was inspired to set up sandbag.