

After Us, The Flood

The global water-grab and its adversaries

After Us, The Flood is a symposium programmed by Vienna-based artist Oliver Ressler. It sets out to connect artistic, activist and curatorial practices addressing the exploitation, pollution and militarization of commodified water. Speakers share a determination to protect the common, uncontaminated character of the substance that renews life on Earth. Themes discussed will range from rising ocean levels caused by global warming to the ruin of rivers by irrigation projects. The ecological wars waged by oil drillers and client industries (refiners, shippers, futures traders, parapetroleum logistics, car factories and factory farms, to name a few) turn the world's water toxic or squander it. But this coalition of looters is confronted by alliances like none seen before: Indigenous water protectors with lifetime eco-antagonists, ex-military survivors with social justice movements and others unwilling to die in artificial desert or sink into an overheated sea.

Curated by Oliver Ressler (Artist, Vienna)

Participants

Katrin Hornek (Vienna), Glen Tarman/Liberate Tate (London), Maren Richter (Linz), Elena Sorokina (Paris)

Moderation: Oliver Ressler

PROGRAMME

17:00 Start

17:15 Oliver Ressler, Introduction

17:30 Maren Richter

The Island Is What the Sea Surrounds...

18:00 Elena Sorokina

Requiem for Fossil Fuels

Break

19:00 Katrin Hornek

Upstream - The Colorado River from Salton Sea to Glen Canyon

19:30 Glen Tarman

Culture Beyond Oil: Making Art Matter in a Time of Climate Change

20:00 Discussion

ABSTRACTS

Maren Richter

The Island Is What the Sea Surrounds...

The presentation exemplifies with two curatorial projects, *The Maldives Pavilion* at 55th Venice Biennial and a current project in Malta – which deals with political, economical and ecological parameters of “Islandness” in the Mediterranean Sea – the challenges of rising sea level, the logic of rapidly growing commodification of islands and the sea as a highly politicized battlefield through the lens of tangible limitations of territorial thinking. “The Island is what the Sea surrounds...” a quote by Gilles Deleuze from his early essay “Dessert Island” tries to offer new ecologies of thinking “the unterritorialized” and the topology of the de-colonized and the unfixed as a model of possible radical alternatives. Both projects intend to take a deeper look into modes of address and spaces for “Handlung” beyond representation.

Maren Richter is a curator, art critic and researcher based in Austria. She co-initiated the collaborative project “Grammar of Urgencies”, currently researching on “Fleeting Territories”, and is the curator of ECOC Valletta 2018 in Malta.

Elena Sorokina

Requiem for Fossil Fuels

Starting from the (in)famous Northern river reversal project, designed to turn the flow of Siberian rivers from the Arctic Ocean southwards, my presentation will discuss the ecology of oil and water through several examples. Among them the sci-fi novel by Tobias S. Buckell *Arctic Rising* (2012) and his scenario of “oil-rush” on the post-global warming Arctic seabed, the project “Petroliana” I organized in Moscow (2007) and the topics at its core – “extractivism”, oil spills and the oil-related water damage, oil rigs as sci-fi water architecture and others. Ultimately, I will present an excerpt of the “Requiem for Fossil Fuels” by Bruce Odland and Sam Auinger (O+A), composed by “extracting” voices of our electric culture – helicopters, jets, traffic, busses, horns, train wheels, footsteps of commuters, sirens – and organising them as music.

Elena Sorokina is a Russian-born, Paris based curator and art historian, currently working as curatorial adviser for Documenta 14 in Athens/Kassel.

Katrin Hornek

Upstream – The Colorado River from Salton Sea to Glen Canyon

The Colorado River played a major role in the conquest of the American Southwest. Driven by economic growth, numerous irrigation projects have shaped the rivers course. Tracing the Colorado from where it was constructed to serve as a Mexican-American border canal to where it forms the Grand Canyon, the essay-film travels upstream, framing the impact of water management on the political and emotional landscape.

In her presentation, Katrin Hornek will map the river as a Möbius strip, on which the organic and the human-built blend into each other. In a flowing narration, once forwards and once backwards, they each tell of the constructed “naturalness” of a constantly changing environment.

Katrin Hornek's work playfully engages with the strange paradoxes and convergences of living in the age of the Anthropocene, that is, the new geologic epoch where the effects of capitalism, colonialism, and extractivism are written into the texture of the earth. <http://www.katrinhornek.com/>

Glen Tarman

Culture Beyond Oil: Making Art Matter in a Time of Climate Change

Why do we let our cultural and other institutions be part of creating pollution and climate change? Liberate Tate is an art collective exploring the role of creative intervention in social change. The group aims to “free art from oil” and, from 2010, had a primary focus on the art museum Tate ending its sponsorship deal with BP. Liberate Tate became internationally renowned for artworks about the relationship of cultural institutions with oil companies. In 2016 Liberate Tate was victorious: Tate announced an end to its 27-year relationship with BP. How did artists win this change and create a momentous shift in the debate around fossil fuels and arts and culture?

Glen Tarman is a founding member of Liberate Tate, heads global advocacy for one of the world's leading humanitarian and development NGOs and chairs an environmental charity campaigning globally to reduce the blue water and carbon footprints of human activity.

<http://www.liberatetate.org.uk/>