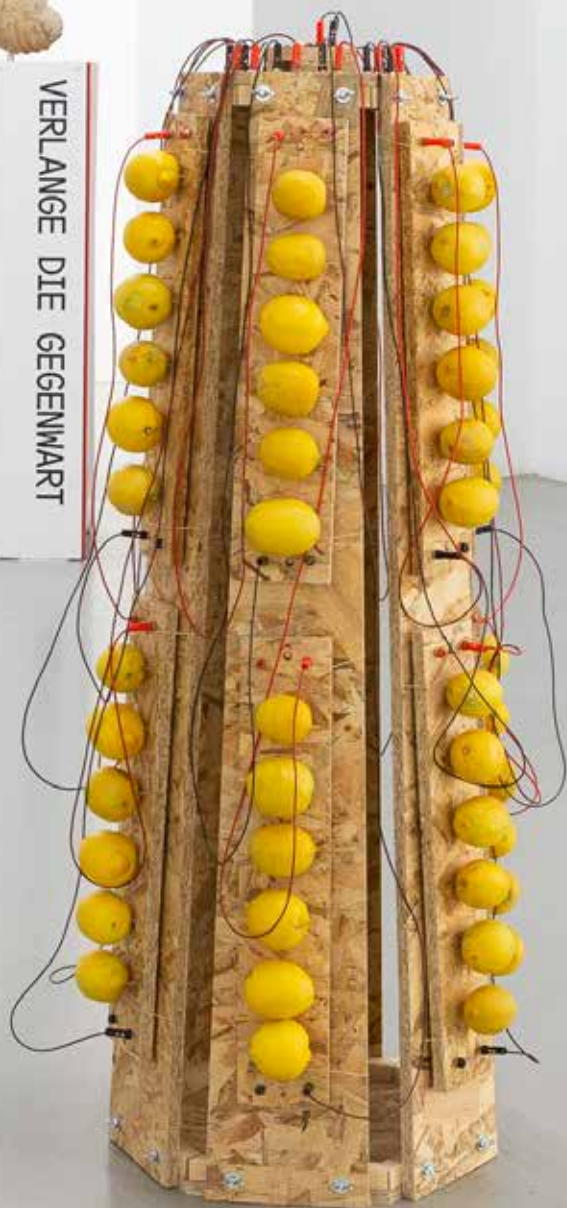




VERLANGE DIE GEGENWART



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APRIL 28 — JUNE 17, 2022

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**PREPPING FOR UTOPIA:
A Convoluted Imaginary for A Just Transition**

Dani Admiss

“The question we humans must face is that of
what do we want to happen to us,
not a question of knowledge or progress”
Humberto Maturana

In 1985, the German artist and cult figure Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) made *Capri Battery*. A smallish work, a black plastic fitting connects a lemon and an equally canary-colored lightbulb. The instructions that accompany the piece read “Change battery every thousand hours,” yet the light bulb will never run out because it can never be switched on. One of his most light-hearted sculptures, the work conveys the interminable potentiality of creative energy. It has been over thirty-five years since Beuys’ death, but he still proves to be a difficult figure to place. Throughout his career as an international artist, Beuys cultivated a private and public mythology inseparable from his work and arguably as confused as some of his aesthetic and political claims. Known as an ardent environmentalist, he is also tied to racist and reactionary ideas and connections to former Nazi party figures throughout the entirety of his career.¹ Undoubtedly, Beuys is a complex character. A person coming to terms with fascism and the war resulting from it. His attempts to obscure historical facticity in his work is something critics have suggested could only have happened during the ahistoricity of the post-war European artworld.² Here, Beuys illustrates one of the many

¹ Steinhauer, J. (2013) The Nazi Ties of Joseph Beuys. Available at: www.hyperallergic.com/7517/the-nazi-ties-of-joseph-beuys/ (Accessed 13 March 2022).

² Buchloh, B. H. D. (2001) ‘Appendix Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol Preliminary Notes for a Critique’ in Gene, R. (ed.) Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy. New York: D.A.P./The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. P. 200.

convoluted histories associated with the legacies of art and ecology that underlie our visions of nature today.

Aegina Battery is a DIY power unit by artist and writer James Bridle. A hexagonal wooden sculpture stands at just over one meter high. On top sits a voltage counter encircled by a crown of red and black connecting wires, each of its six sides vertically lined with lemons. *Capri Battery* (1985) was a reference point for Bridle while making *Aegina*. Compared to the idealistic promise of Beuys' sculpture, lemon batteries do not produce much current. In *Aegina* there is enough power to power a dozen LEDs, but this doesn't detract from the work's message. If the lemon in *Capri Battery* symbolises the potential transformation of the world through art experienced as power, *Aegina Battery*, as with all the pieces in Bridle's *Signs of Life* exhibition, are concerned with the "work" needed towards a Just Transition. The artworks are an experimentation in the relations between energy autonomy and creative, *agential* power. Historically, the rhetoric between work, efficiency, and ecology has been claimed by both committed Left environmentalists and Far-Right zealots.³ In *Signs of Life*, the amateur design aesthetic — the hand of the artist as designer is very much on show throughout the entire exhibition — connotes the urgent need for a new utopian imaginary. One that can scale the tremendous material, social, and *ideological* challenges and ambiguities involved in thinking through concepts of a truly regenerative society. There is tremendous work to be done.

When installing the work in NOME gallery in Berlin, Bridle asked that the lemons for *Aegina Battery* should come from Greece, a difficult feat to achieve in Winter but conceptually a significant one, what the artist referred to as "the transportation of Greek sunshine."⁴ In 2022, across the globe, western engineers are designing large solar energy infrastructure and dispatchment projects needed for northern consumption needs. In the North African region alone an area of nearly 4 million km² has been made "potentially

⁴ Interview with the artist. Bridle, J. (2022) Interviewed by Dani Admiss. 09 March 2022.

available" for solar power plants.⁵ Accompanied by in-built multi-regional geostrategic partnerships and agreements, forced trade liberalization and a developing narrative around energy security, many renewable plants are set to deliver low-cost power to Europe at the great cost to many in the Global South.

Tunisia's TuNur project comprises a 2,250MW concentrated solar power plant in the Sahara desert and a 2GW HVDC submarine cable that runs from Tunisia to Italy. As the power plants become operational, they will generate 9,400GWh of 100% renewable power per annum, which will be transported across the Mediterranean Sea to a landing point in central Italy where electricity generated will be transmitted to other European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, France, and the United Kingdom. In its design and execution, TuNur has involved massive land grabs (approximately 10,000 hectares) as well as the continual redirection of critical regional water resources that are needed to cool the panels⁶. It is not alone. The Noor Midelt solar project confiscated 4,000 hectares from ethnic agrarian communities, the Sidi Ayad (the World Bank is recorded to have made claims that the land was "uninhabited" and will make "no impact" on these local communities) and The Ouarzazate solar power station used Amizagh lands without permission.⁷ In addition to green grabbing, we also see green colonialism, where resource extraction fails to benefit local and often impoverished communities, life-sustaining goods are exported,

⁵ Hamouchene, H. (2015) Desertec: The Renewable Energy Grab? Available at: www.newint.org/features/2015/03/01/desertec-long (Accessed 13 March 2022).

⁶ Hamouchene, H. (2017) Another case of energy colonialism: Tunisia's Tunur solar project. Available at: www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/another-case-of-energy-colonialism-tunisia-s-tunur-solar-pro/ (Accessed 13 March 2022)

⁷ Hamouchene, H. (2021) COP26 summit: How 'green colonialism' is plundering North Africa. Available at: www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/cop26-summit-green-colonialism-plundered-north-africa (Accessed 13 March 2022)

and ecosystems are left dispossessed. Most shocking of all is perhaps Morocco's treatment of Western Sahara, where wind turbines are used on occupied land to exploit their non-renewable phosphate reserves at the detriment of the local Sahrawis.⁸

The story of energy adequacy-for-the-few and insufficiency for-the-many has endured many lifetimes of Capital-colonial relations. It is a conventional worldview that fossil fuel companies rely upon to continue their work of extractivism. But appropriation and dispossession are less expected in the green era, an age typified as supposedly abundant and regenerative, in what is (perhaps) the last energy transition.⁹ The projects in Morocco, Tunisia, and Western Sahara demonstrate how the labor of renewables is racialized, perpetuating the exclusive access of western-northern bodies to "clean" energy futures.¹⁰ The asymmetrical and unrestricted flow of cheap natural resources, including solar energy, sit starkly against the ever-growing narrative of

⁸ Allan, J., Lemaadel, M., & Lakhel, H. (2021) An unjust transition: Energy, colonialism and extractivism in occupied Western Sahara. Available at: <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2021-11-11/an-unjust-transition-energy-colonialism-and-extractivism-in-occupied-western-sahara/> (Accessed 13 March 2022).

⁹ Szeman, I. & Barney, D. (2021) 'Introduction: From Solar to Solarity', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 120(1). Pp. 1-11.

¹⁰ Here, my idea of "clean" energy and the sacrifice of billions of people, particularly black and brown bodies, for the consumption needs of a few are adapted from Françoise Vergès' work on cleaning, cleaning up and race. You can read more at Vergès, F. (2019) *Capitalocene, Waste, Race, and Gender*. Available at: www.e-flux.com/journal/100/269165/capitalocene-waste-race-and-gender/ (Accessed 10 May 2020).

¹¹ For more information, please read Allan, J., Lemaadel, M., & Lakhel, H. (2021) *Oppressive Energopolitics in Africa's Last Colony: Energy, Subjectivities, and Resistance*. Available at: www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/anti.12765/ and Hamouchene, H. (2017) Another case of energy colonialism: Tunisia's Tunur solar project. Available at: www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/another-case-of-energy-colonialism-tunisia-s-tunur-solar-pro/ (Accessed 13 March 2022).

"Fortress Europe and UK", whose border regimes prevent refugees from reaching its shores. The map of energy routes eerily replicates the pathways for migration from the African continent to Europe and beyond.¹¹

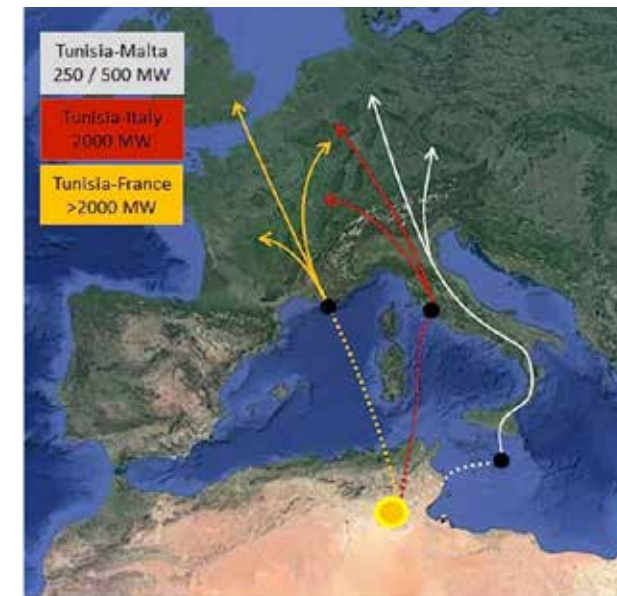


Figure 1 Three submarine cables are to connect Tunisia with Malta, Italy, and France. Source: TuNur.

The title of the exhibition is taken from Werner Herzog's first feature of the same title, *Signs of Life* (1968). The central image of the film features an extraordinary panorama across an endless valley of spinning windmills. We follow three weary protagonists, German soldiers redirected to Crete during the Second World War, as they walk through this hilly and sparse landscape, through scrub and rockery. Isolated from their unit, and the ideology that came with it, the soldiers in Herzog's film reach the crest of a hill and unsuspectingly gaze down from a height into the Lasithi Plateau and onto hundreds of thousands of rotating blades. When the main protagonist, Stroszek, sees the valley of windmills for the first time he

cannot face the immense site before him. He screams, arches his back in terror and is driven into a type of madness. Today, only a few hundred windmills are left and those that remain have mostly fallen into disrepair. Now diesel generators are used to transport water to the surface for irrigation; the unending motif of circular movements only to be found in the black and white film's grains of silver and emulsion.

When watching the scene, one cannot help but think of how colonial occupation always necessitates the destruction of landscapes. In her critical work on cleaning up and race Françoise Vergès asks us how do we fight the habit of looking away from war, settler colonialism, racism, or class war? From the siege on Palestine and dumping waste in occupied Gaza to Japan's exploitation of nearly three-quarters of Korea's forests in 35 years of occupation while protecting forests in their own country, the relations between colonialism and pollution can never be fully disentangled.¹² For Herzog, landscapes are never a backdrop, they reflect a deeper inner landscape. The hallucinatory redux of the Lasithi Plateau is a crucible of mystery that endows the viewer with some new heightened sense of relation to, what for Herzog, is the only governing principle of the universe: chaos. In Bridle's *Signs of Life* exhibition, each renewable energy structure also connects the visitor to a set of deeper cultural, social, and political possibilities. The spaces of abundance and self-sufficiency, instability and scarcity attached to the systems of renewable energy. Like the lines drawn on paper by energy companies, governments and venture capitalists, these possibilities can shift, disappear, and reconstitute future relations.

The largest work in the exhibition, *Windmill 03* (2022) is a tall, wooden structure. Eight white triangles are wound round eight spars that taper towards the center. Throughout history people have taken advantage of the wind. As far back as Mesopotamia, vessels used cloth to travel great distances,

¹² Vergès, F. (2021) talk at 'Decolonising the Anthropocene', British Sociological Association held online Monday, 29 November 2021.

along and across rivers, seas and lakes. Windmills are said to have evolved directly out of the development of sail power. The earliest devices found in Iran relied on sails, similar to those used by sail ships, to drive a mill stone for the grinding of grain. From 100AD, windmills with jib sails, like the one in the show, appeared in Cyprus and the Greek islands. The sails shaped more efficiently to capture the wind and spin vertically. Jib windmills in Greece are still used to pump water for agricultural livestock today.

Windmill 03 is a symbol of the tremendous work to be done. The concept of "work" underpins the message of the exhibition, something Bridle refers to as "prepping for utopia."¹³ To achieve self-sufficient energy means harnessing our collective political and *agential* power as much as the sun's rays, the wind's breath or the tide's pull. Renewable power is not enough; it also needs to be *regenerative*. Like the windmill, this work creates a circular motif of problem finding and framing. Renewable energy projects do not always exist as a continuation of the configuration of power and have often become something *truly* regenerative. Every battle for energy sufficiency can take the shape of and has the seed for a wider anti-systemic struggle. Co-operative energy projects from The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) in Uganda, Souladarity in Michigan, USA, or the Glasgow Community Energy Fund (originating out of the Radical Renewable Art and Activism Energy Fund by artist Ellie Harrison), have worked to build political, social, and cultural openings for other ways of being.

The last work in the exhibition exemplifies the need for regenerative as opposed to renewable power. *Solar Panels 001-005* (2022) are five monocrystalline black rectangles, each placed in a wooden frame. Etched onto the surface of every panel is a large, arresting image of unicellular plankton. The etchings are replicas of drawings by the well-known German Zoologist and polymath, Ernst Haeckel (1834—1919, whose illustrations have changed the world. Deeply

¹³ Interview with the artist. Bridle, J. (2022) Interviewed by Dani Admiss. 09 March 2022.

influenced by Charles Darwin, Haeckel dedicated his life to studying the interactions between organism and environment and embraced a type of “ecological thought.” Haeckel was the first person to term the word ecology and several scientific terms commonly found today. He made hundreds of scientific illustrations of flora and fauna with immense scientific detail and brought biological discoveries to a wide audience, notably popularizing Darwin, and evolutionary theory for the German-speaking world.¹⁴ In his relentless rationalisation, Haeckel also projected his notion of hierarchical order onto colonized bodies, lands, and the environment. He believed in Nordic racial superiority, opposed racial mixing, was a fervent nationalist, a fanatical anti-Semite, and an enthusiastic supporter of eugenics.¹⁵ This secures him a position in history as both a paternal grandfather of ecology and a “prototypical ecofascist.” Such a desire for a violent separation between humanity and nature is supported by a view of life as a teleological process, effacing the possibility of asking to whom ecological hierarchies belong.

Haeckel’s cultural prejudices and obsessions with stratification and purity are bound up in the birth of ecology. That the cosmological roots of proto environmentalism have a base in racism, antisemitism, and ableism feeds into deeper discussions about how ecological utopias are themselves, often, a precursor to fascism. From the development of Germany’s concept of Lebensraum and the notion of Germans as agrarian settlers in both the East and Africa to the theological visions of Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy movement. Noteworthily, Steiner was one of Beuys’ “philosophical masters”¹⁶ The convergence of nationalism,

¹⁴ Staudenmaier, P. (1996) Fascist Ecology: The “Green Wing” of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents. Available at: www.theanarchistlibrary.html. (Accessed 13 March 2022).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Buchloh, B. H. D. (2001) ‘Appendix Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol Preliminary Notes for a Critique’ in Gene, R. (ed.) Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy. New York: D.A.P./The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. P. 201.

right-wing populism, Romanticism, and esoteric spiritualism typified much of German and Austrian culture at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Undoubtedly these regressive themes have been intertwined into ecology’s very beginning, profoundly shaping the thinking of subsequent generations of environmentalists.

A long and difficult age of repair lies ahead. The work of reducing carbon emissions (and other toxic pollutants) is not only physical it is ideological. In *Solar Panels 001-005*, the etchings are not just for aesthetic affect, theoretically they also increase the potential current generated. One imagines the massive levels of energy needed to render the ghostly skeletal forms onto the monocrystalline surface. Haeckel’s ‘hand’ directly involved in an energy system that is naturally replenished with the rising and setting of the sun. The relations between ideology, methodology and materiality matters. How should we distribute the benefits and burdens towards decarbonisation? Who’s work is this? Who’s debt? Regenerative power offers a utopia: the distribution of energy flows to all the earth’s inhabitants. A properly reparative movement, however, needs to involve restitution, reparation, and redistribution, destabilising the social relations that are currently reproducing conditions for green grabbing, green colonialism, and eco-fascism.

James Bridle’s *Signs of Life* is a conduit to remind us that there are many ways of doing energy politics, governance, and infrastructure. In each of his three DIY power structures — through lemon, sail, and line — Bridle invites his audience into a conscientious conversation with the current realities and complex histories of renewable energy. These dialogical spaces are crucial because, collectively, society must strengthen a diverse and radical movement towards a Just Transition. In following these lines of exclusions, enclosures, and empowerment, the exhibition provides a space to

¹⁷ Staudenmaier, P. (2021) ‘Ecofascism Past and Present’ in Ecology Contested Environmental Politics between Left and Right. New Compass Press: Norway. Pp. 10-19.

contemplate the individual roles we each choose to play in the future. Any radical imaginary must consider the paradoxical aspects of the green era, its collective thought and action, and contribute to a more critical comprehension of current ecological and social crises and the range of responses to them. Every moment those realities are forged by the Capitalocene, are also moments for the potential interruption of those social relations. There is tremendous work to be done.

Dani Admiss

is an English-Assyrian-Iranian curator, researcher, educator, and soothsayer based in Edinburgh, UK. Her work explores how ideas of science, technology and capitalism show up in our lived experience and our communities. She builds public projects, investigations, and networks that bring together everyday people and in-world experts to dream and demand robust, collective futures against precarity. Currently, she is co-creating a decarbonization plan for art workers (www.sunlightdoesntneedapipeline.com) and is curator of www.toxicitysrea.ch. She has curated exhibitions, conferences, workshops, edited books, in the UK and the EU. She wrote her PhD in Curatorial Practice and World-Making. She is a visiting tutor in Design Research at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Allan, J. (2021) Renewable energy is fuelling a forgotten conflict in Africa's last colony. Available at: theconversation.com/renewable-energy-is-fuelling-a-forgotten-conflict-in-africas-last-colony-170995/ (Accessed 13 March 2022).

ASSEMBLY-AS-ECOLOGY

Jonas Staal in conversation with Filipa Ramos

Artist Jonas Staal has been making artworks that imagine and propose modes of interplanetary alliance to deal with our present-future of environmental transformation. Often collaborating with others, namely with the lawyer and social justice activist Radha D'Souza and artist Laure Prouvost, Staal declares comradeship as an artistic method to devise systems of collective regeneration. In this conversation with writer Filipa Ramos, he discusses his interests, aims, and proposals for new forms of togetherness, namely his projects *Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes* and *Interplanetary Species Society*, exploring how they bring together assembly-as-ecology and ecology-as-assembly.

Filipa: Comrades are roommates, they share a camera, a chamber. I love how with the title of this project, *Comrades in Deep Future*, you are highlighting that to be alive is to exist in spatial and physical relation to all manifestations of the living—we share the same chamber Earth. My impression is that your work has always been rooted in the critical examination of human public affairs. I am therefore curious to learn about how, why, and when nonhumans started populating it. Can you tell me more about this event?

Jonas: Having been involved in many social and liberation movements over the past ten years, I realized that whenever I created spaces to bring people together, there were always other presences assembling as well. My Kurdish friends, for example, never forget to acknowledge the mountains connecting North-Kurdistan (Turkey), East-Kurdistan (Iran), South Kurdistan (Iraq), and West-Kurdistan (Syria) in their famous saying: “Kurds have no friends but the mountains.” In decades of struggle for self-determination, the mountains were a hiding place, a source of nourishment, protectors, and, if necessary, a means of self-defence against the violence of occupying armies. The mountains are friends, comrades. Not just the place where one lives or belongs, but a place that

belongs with you, that speaks with you, struggles with you.

In my work with lawyer, academic, writer, and activist Radha D'Souza titled *Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes*, or “CICC,” we deepened this understanding of non-human comradeship further. Our project is an alternative court to prosecute intergenerational climate crimes committed by transnational corporations and states, not just in the past and present, but also in the future. Although Radha never wants to speak of “rights,” as she considers them inherently proprietary. Nature, she argues, is not an externality, but a *relation*. If you harm a river through pollution, you harm not just the river, but all plants, animals, and humans that live in interdependency with that river, as well as unborn plants, animals, and humans that would have lived with the river in the future. So interdependency and intergenerationality come to replace the notion of rights. Comradeship across human and non-human ecosystem workers becomes the paradigm to redefine our struggle for the collective regeneration of “chamber Earth,” as you phrased it so beautifully.

Filipa: Yes! The work's title declares that such relationality concerns not only the past-present but first and foremost the future. It is the preventive nature of such a Court that I find so compelling: its possibility to induce change. Working with Radha D'Souza allows you to cross the realm of the artistic with her own areas of knowledge and action and to enlarge the operativity and potentiality of your own work, and of art overall. In what ways can we envisage such a Court to activate concrete procedures beyond the fundamental ones that will be set in place through the exhibitionary apparatus?

Jonas: The first iteration of the court took place in Amsterdam, through four public hearings against Unilever, ING, and Airbus, all transnational corporations registered in the Netherlands, as well as the Dutch State itself. We gathered witnesses, prosecutors, and judges, which — together with the public jury — were tasked with evaluating the testimonies based on The Intergenerational Climate Crimes Act, the legal foundation of the court drafted by Radha, and passing judgement on the accused.

The concrete workings of the court are manifold. Our public hearings aim to strengthen existing campaigns and legal cases brought forward by our witnesses, such as Kenya Land Alliance, Oyu Tolgoi Watch and Pueblos Indígenas Amazónicos Unidos en Defensa de sus Territorios. But we believe there is also importance in the embodied performative work with the public-turned-public jury to plant the *possibility* of intergenerational climate justice. We know our court does not have the executive power of the courts that enable and legalize ecocide at present. But institutions are performative: courts are theaters and the law is a script that only operates as long as we are willing to perform its legitimacy. In other words, our CICC is as real because we are collectively willing to act it into being. In that sense, I would say my work with Radha tries to manifest in the transformative space between the real and the possible.

Filipa: I'd say that the public is not only turned into a jury but also into witnesses, as they have been given access to proof of the criminal wrongdoings of those brought to court. Therefore there is forensic performativity that constitutes a growing community of witnesses who know and can attest to what these corporations are doing.

From that moment onwards, your decision as a viewer-turned-witness is an active one: even if you decide to ignore what you know, you will still have to make that decision consciously.

This is a powerful gesture that bypasses many expectations of an encounter with art but it is a violent gesture too, as you are willingly disturbing visitors with knowledge and affects that they may have not expected to be faced with.

I guess this leads me to two different questions here. The first concerns how you deal with this ambiguity between fighting for important causes and upturning people's lives while the second relates to how you prevent these important struggles from being commodified by the institutional and commercial apparatus of art?

Jonas: Yes, you are very right — the public as jury is also the public as witness. To recognize, in the context of climate crimes, lives and times lost. To commit time to the time of

another. To carry each other's time, facing a future that might not have much history left to bear. Witnessing, in this context, is an intimate act of collective solidarity.

Indeed, my works risk immersive imposition, although I always try to propose a clear social contract at forehand. And for me there is a simultaneous violence in the idea of the "visitor" as an agent of perpetual mobility, for whom doors are always open, which they can pass without obligation or commitment. But worlds commit themselves to us just the same, we don't just choose our world, but are equally chosen, cared for, confronted, tasked with struggle, solidarity, and comradeship — if we are response-able. I think Radha and my collaborative work is driven by that paradigm of interdependency.

Your question concerning the commodification of struggle is of course one that haunts many of us, who consider themselves critical and engaged cultural workers. Working with cultural institutions in the context of neoliberalism, means that whatever engagement with the world we enter into, is translated — one way or another — into cultural capital. Simultaneously, that is never the whole story. I have had the privilege of working with many comrades in unexpected places, in museums and art institutions as well as in the political realm, who are forced to navigate the increasing influence of corporate and market forces, but try to repurpose means and infrastructures to make transformative and solidary cultural work possible. We are in between worlds: the world as it is, and the world that we try to imagine and organize into being.

Filipa: It's interesting that you mention inter-worldliness in relation to reality and desire. It takes me to another work of yours, *Interplanetary Species Society*, the environment-biosphere-assembly hall you made in the Reaktorhallen, a former nuclear facility in Stockholm.

I really like the way its architecture was intentionally conceived to bring people together, closer, to help them spend time discussing and conceiving other modes of togetherness with life on this planet in the best possible conditions. This is because when we think of coded gatherings such as tribunals,

assemblies, or parliaments, so much of their efficiency relies on spatialization: on how they were physically conceived and designed.

I would love to know more about the actual spatial arrangement of the *Interplanetary Species Society*, and in general, about your vast experience in conceiving places of collective gathering that stand across activism, design, architecture, and art.

Jonas: The *Interplanetary Species Society* was a response to our becoming-interplanetary in the coming decade or so, an endeavour led by corporate companies like SpaceX that speak shamelessly of “space colonization” and a new generation of “space pioneers,” declaring other planets and their resources a new *terra nullius*. The alternative biosphere aimed to challenge this neo-colonial, extractivist narrative, and proposed interplanetary *cooperation* and *greeting* instead. And, most of all, it tried to create a space to deepen our intra-planetary bonds on, in, and with earth. This also signifies a historical reversal: the former nuclear center was once built underground to protect the surface from radiation, but as global heating intensifies, we will be forced to go underground to protect ourselves from the radiation of the surface — becoming intra-planetary.

The installation consists of multiple interconnected spheres, each occupied by a different assembly. In the hole where the nuclear reactor used to be, three meteorites gathered, some dating to 4,5 billion years ago, preceding the very formation of the planet on whose inner surface they were now situated. Another sphere gathered images of “proletarian plants,” depictions collected from socialist posters in which it is not heroic workers that lead the revolution, but plants and crops themselves who raise the banner of revolution. And there is a sphere of neo-constructivist ammonite fossils, an extinct family of octopus and squid that perished in the fifth mass extinction, just as we are facing the sixth. They are fossils, and we are fossils-in-the-making. And they are literally the fossils in fossil fuels: millions of years of earth memories that racial capitalism burns to accelerate movement in the present, undoing the possibility of futures in the process.

I really like your use of the term “environment-biosphere-assembly,” because indeed, before any human assembly, there is an ongoing assembly already taking place, a gathering of the world within and around us through which we think and breathe, and that breathes and thinks through us. Both the *Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes* and *Interplanetary Species Society* emerge visually and spatially from this idea of assembly-as-ecology, or ecology-as-assembly, in which extinct non-human comrades — earth workers — gather across different time and space to propagate deep futures.

Lisbon-born **Filipa Ramos**, Ph.D., is a writer and curator whose research focuses on how culture addresses ecology. She is Director of the Contemporary Art Department of the city of Porto. She is Curator of Art Basel Film and founded the online artists’ cinema *Vdrome*. Ongoing and upcoming projects include the arts and science festival *The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish* (since 2018) and “*Persones Persons*,” the 8th Biennale Gherdëina (2022), both with Lucia Pietroiusti. In 2021, she co-curated “*Bodies of Water*,” the 13th Shanghai Biennale. In 2019, she curated “*Animalesque*” at Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden, and BALTIC, UK. Ramos was Editor-in-Chief of art-agenda/e-flux, Associate Editor of *Manifesta Journal*, and contributed to *Documenta 13* and *14*. She authored *Lost and Found* (Silvana Editoriale, 2009) and edited *Animals* (MIT Press, 2016). She is Lecturer at the Master Programme of Institute Art Gender Nature FHNW Academy of Arts and Design, Basel, where she leads the Art and Nature seminars.

A R T W O R K S

JAMES BRIDLE

Signs of Life

JAMES BRIDLE
WINDMILL 03 (FOR WALTER SEGAL), 2022

Wood, canvas, cable, nylon cord, dynamo, fixings
2,5 x 2 x 2 m



JAMES BRIDLE
SOLAR PANEL 001 (ANTHOCYRTIUM HISPIDUM), 2022

Engraved glass, 100W 12V monocrystalline solar panel, frame
129,5 x 62 x 6 cm
Original images CC-BY 2.0 by Picturepest



JAMES BRIDLE
SOLAR PANEL 002 (CACLOCYMA PETALOSPYRIS), 2022

Engraved glass, 100W 12V monocrystalline solar panel, frame
129,5 x 62 x 6 cm
Original images CC-BY 2.0 by Picturepest



JAMES BRIDLE
SOLAR PANEL 003 (HELIODISCUS UMBONATUS), 2022

Engraved glass, 100W 12V monocrystalline solar panel, frame
129,5 x 62 x 6 cm
Original images CC-BY 2.0 by Picturepest



JAMES BRIDLE
SOLAR PANEL 004 (HEXASTYLUS TRIAXONIUS), 2022

Engraved glass, 100W 12V monocrystalline solar panel, frame
129,5 x 62 x 6 cm
Original images CC-BY 2.0 by Picturepest



JAMES BRIDLE
SOLAR PANEL 005 (STYLODICTA CLAVATA), 2022

Engraved glass, 100W 12V monocrystalline solar panel, frame
129,5 x 62 x 6 cm
Original images CC-BY 2.0 by Picturepest



JAMES BRIDLE
AEGINA BATTERY, 2022

125 x 45 x 45 cm
72 lemons, electrical connectors, zinc nails, copper wire,
fixings, wood, LED lamp



A R T W O R K S

JONAS STAAL

Comrades in Deep Future

JONAS STAAL
OBSCUR UNIONS (FOR LAURE PROUVOST), 2021

Gouache on paper
21 x 29,7cm



JONAS STAAL
OBSCUR UNIONS (FOR LAURE PROUVOST), FLAG, 2019

Print on canvas
105 x 70 cm



RADHA D'SOUZA AND JONAS STAAL
COMRADES IN EXTINCTION (PLANTS):
OCHROSIA KILAUEAENSIS (SOUTHERN POMO), 2020-21
BLUE CYCAD (MEBÊNGÔKRÉ), 2020-21
PRADOSIA GLAZIOVII (KOREAN), 2020-21
STRINGWOOD (KAZACH), 2020-21
YELLOW FAUTU (TOK PISIN), 2020-21

Trevira CS, merino wool, linen, bio cotton and mohair
61 x 85 cm
Produced by Framer Framed, Amsterdam



RADHA D'SOUZA AND JONAS STAAL
*COURT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL CLIMATE
CRIMES, 2021*

Video, 12:32 min
Produced by Framer Framed, Amsterdam



JONAS STAAL
INTERPLANETARY SPECIES SOCIETY, 2019

Blueback print
372 x 248 cm
Produced by Public Art Agency, Sweden



JONAS STAAL
*NEO-CONSTRUCTIVIST AMMONITES:
EQUALITY OF TIME, 2019*

Ammonite fossil, steel, wood, paint, vinyl print
44 x 160 x 45 cm
Produced by Public Art Agency, Sweden



JONAS STAAL
NEO-CONSTRUCTIVIST AMMONITES:
VERLANGE DIE GEGENWART, 2019

Ammonite fossil, steel, wood, paint, vinyl print
52 x 190 x 45 cm
Produced by Public Art Agency, Sweden



JONAS STAAL
*NEO-CONSTRUCTIVIST AMMONITES:
COMRADES IN DEEP FUTURE, 2019*

Ammonite fossil, steel, wood, paint, vinyl print
63 x 240 x 60 cm
Produced by Public Art Agency, Sweden



JAMES BRIDLE

(b. 1980, London)

is a writer, artist and technologist. They have exhibited at major international institutions including the Barbican and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Serpentine Galleries, London; MoMA, New York; MAK, Vienna; Witte de With, Rotterdam; KW, Berlin; PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; HkW, Berlin; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; ZKM Karlsruhe; and National Arts Center, Tokyo. They are the author of "New Dark Age" (2018) and "Ways of Being" (2022), and they wrote and presented "New Ways of Seeing" for BBC Radio 4 in 2019.

JONAS STAAL

(b. 1981, Zwolle)

is a visual artist whose work deals with the relation between art, propaganda, and democracy. Staal's large scale exhibition-projects include *Art of the Stateless State* (Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, 2015); *Museum as Parliament* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2018-ongoing) and *We Demand a Million More Years* (Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2022), and he exhibits widely at venues such as the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; M_HKA, Antwerp; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and the Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, as well as the 7th Berlin Biennale, the 31st São Paulo Biennale and the 12th Taipei Biennale. Staal's most recent book is "Propaganda Art in the 21st Century" (The MIT Press, 2019).



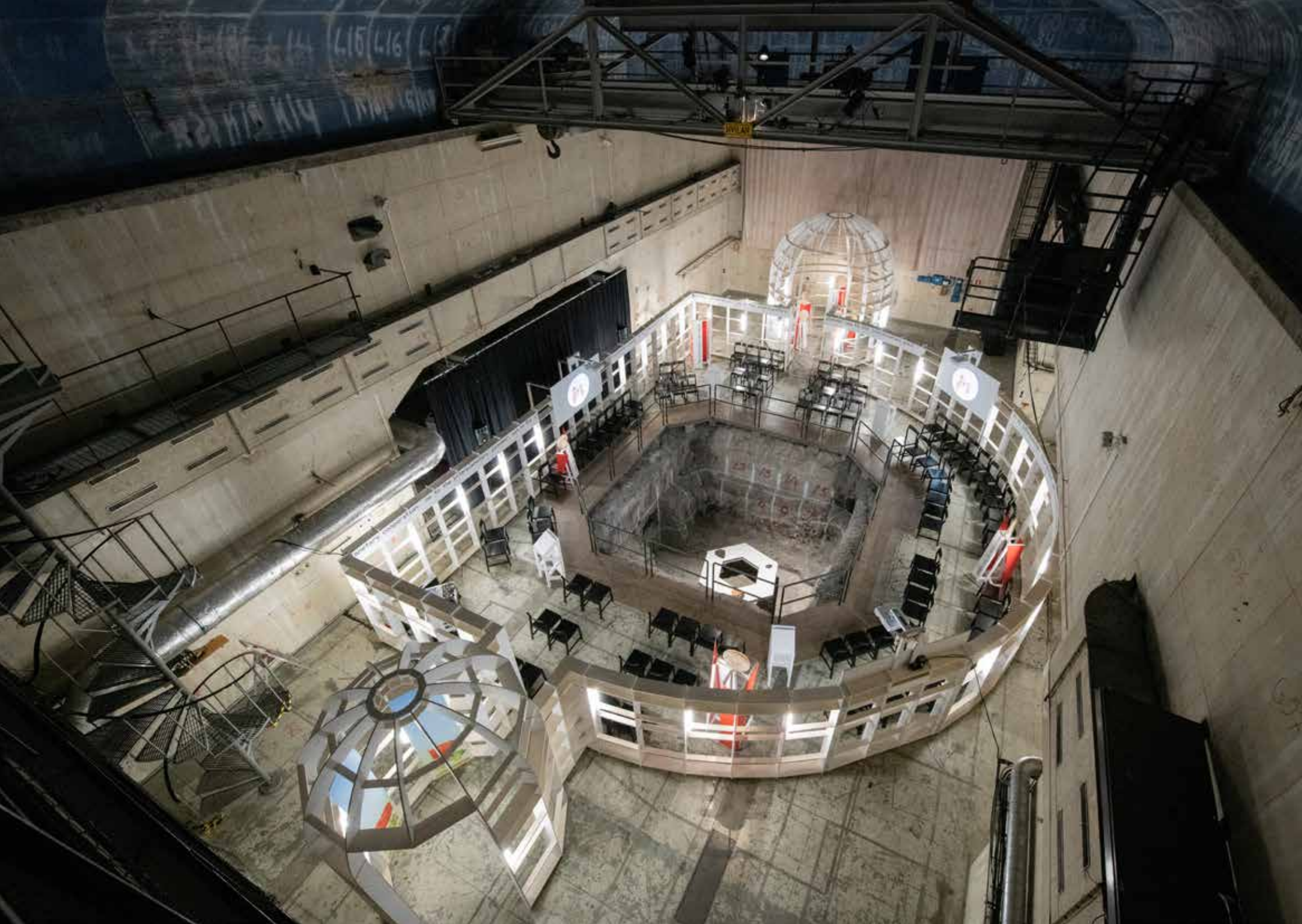




COMRADES IN DEEP FUTURE



VERLANGE DIE GEGENWART





WANTOK



DIALOGUE: JAMES BRIDLE AND JONAS STAAL

James Bridle: *Signs of Life*

Jonas Staal: *Comrades in Deep Future*

Essay "PREPPING FOR UTOPIA:

A Convoluted Imaginary for A Just Transition" by **Dani Admiss**

Essay "Assembly-as-Ecology — Jonas Staal in conversation with Filipa Ramos"

Creative Direction: **515 Creative Shop**

Design: **Matteo Barbani**

Text edit: **Jesi Khadivi**

Photography: **Billie Clarken**

This book was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Dialogue: James Bridle and Jonas Staal* at NOME, Berlin, from 27 April to 17 June 2022.

NOME

Director: **Luca Barbani**

Gallery Manager: **Olga Boiocchi**

Sales Associate: **Jesi Khadivi**

Exhibition set-up: **Nino Caltabiano**

In collaboration with **Laveronica** arte contemporanea, Modica.

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CONQUERS IN DEEP FUTURE