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FLORENCE'S CCCS
LAUNCHES
GREEN PLATFORM
A NEW EXHIBITION FOCUSING ON
ART ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

FROM 24 APRIL TO 19 JULY 2009

The CCCS - Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozziina - Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi is to hold a new exhibition in Florence from **24 April to 19 July 2009** entitled **GREEN PLATFORM. *Art Ecology Sustainability***.

Curated by Valentina Gensini and Lorenzo Giusti, the exhibition will be adopting a complex critical view based on an interdisciplinary approach to the **issue of the environment**, in the dual sense of a **crisis in our thermo-industrial society** based on non-renewable sources of energy and of an **ecological crisis** caused by pollution and by the worrying overheating of our planet.

Thus the problem of ecology will not be explored merely in terms of an environmental approach. It will be analysed in its myriad philosophical, psychological, environmental, economic and social implications. That way ecology can become not only the science of nature but an inter-relational science, a border and cross-border science, the link between nature and culture.

The artists whose work will be on display in the exhibition - **Alterazioni Video, Amy Balkin, Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna, Michele Dantini, Ettore Favini, Futurefarmers, Tue Greenfort, Henrik Håkansson, Katie Holten, Dave Hullfish Bailey, Christiane Löhr, Dacia Manto, Lucy and Jorge Orta, Julian Rosefeldt, Carlotta Ruggieri, Superflex, Nicola Toffolini and Nikola Uzunowski** - address the issues of the environment, ecology and sustainability in the wake of the pioneer experience that developed in the avant-garde movements of the sixties and seventies.

The exhibition will allow visitors to compare the artists' different approaches to, and ways of reflecting on, the theme. The work of some of the artists involved focuses on investigating and denouncing existing situations, forms of conduct and social practices that fail to respect the ecosystem. Their work highlights the inconsistency and responsibility of individuals and of society as a whole, yet without claiming to indicate any "right way" to resolve the problem of the environment. Rather, their work offers a detached analytical view that questions tangible elements in the difficult transformation process currently under way.

Other artists' work is based on the use of natural, perishable and recycled materials, or else it is constructed in accordance with energy-related, behavioural and structural rationales based on sustainability, in an effort to

foster an overall reduction in environmental impact. This, so as to avoid jeopardising the chance of future generations to continue to develop while safeguarding the quality and quantity of the world's natural reserves and heritage.

And then there are "eco-active" artists who are fighting a fully-fledged environmental battle, making the best possible use of the vocabulary of art in intriguingly different ways.

Designed not only as an exhibition but as a composite platform, *Green Platform* will be offering a variety of different experiences, open to visitors and the community alike, with a series of *workshops* run by artists, environmental activists and NGO members, a calendar of *lectures* by experts hailing from several different disciplines and working environments, and a programme of videos and documentaries on environmental issues.

The exhibition catalogue, edited by Moleskine, with articles by international authors from a whole range of different disciplines and cultural backgrounds (from the economy to architecture, and from the social sciences to public-sector art), is a perfect tool for prompting reflection and debate on a new concept in art and on the opportunity to foster the new and "sustainable" development of that art.

Florence, 23 April 2009

GREEN PLATFORM. *Art Ecology Sustainability*

Florence, CCCS - Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi, - Palazzo Strozzi

24 April - 19 July 2009

Opening hours: every day from 10.00 to 20.00; Thursday from 10.00 to 23.00; closed Monday.

Admission: € 5.00 (valid for 5 visits in a month, including lectures), € 4.00 schools

Catalogue: Moleskine

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FRANZISKA NORI Project director Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi CCCS

Green Platform at the CCCS *

The curatorial policy pursued by the CCCS (Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozzi) since its inauguration in November 2007 is based on the selection and presentation of projects that address issues and phenomena of major relevance for our present-day society and culture. *Emotional Systems* examined the correlations between the perception of art and the complex human emotive system in the light of the most recent neuro-scientific discoveries. The group exhibition *China China China !!!* focused on the recent boom in Chinese contemporary art. *Atlas of the Future* and *Worlds on Video* were both devoted to the production of art videos and documentaries focusing on society's visions of the future. *Art, Price and Value* investigated the growing links between contemporary art and the international economic system. The list now continues with *Green Platform – Art Ecology Sustainability*, an exhibition of works most of which were directly produced by the CCCS.

Continuing and broadening the curatorial policy of all CCCS projects, *Green Platform* is conceived not only as an exhibition but also as a composite platform. The visitors will thus be involved in various types of experience ranging from workshops run by artists and environmental associations to lectures by professionals working in different fields and a programme of videos and documentaries on various environmental issues. In connection with this event, the CCCS has initiated a process of renovation aimed at increasing the ecological sustainability of its production processes by optimizing most of its output (publishing and exhibitions), adopting environmentally sound criteria and making the greatest possible use of recycled and recyclable materials.

The project curators Lorenzo Giusti and Valentina Gensini use the basic idea of the platform to develop critical reflection taking an interdisciplinary approach to the ecological question, understood both as the crisis of the thermo-industrial society founded on non-renewable sources of energy and as the environmental crisis caused by pollution and the overheating of the planet. The overall ecological problem will therefore be addressed not only in environmental terms but also with respect to its philosophical, psychological, economic and social implications. Ecology thus becomes not only the science of nature but also the science of interrelations, borders and transversality as the nexus of the twin poles of nature and culture.

Given the dramatic ecological emergencies, however, the question spontaneously arises of whether art can really help to solve the serious environmental problems of our times. In all honesty, it is hard to believe that the work of a single artist, no matter how critical and actively committed in political and social terms, can actually influence the course of our global reality. The power of a work of art does not rest on the answers it succeeds in obtaining but on its capacity to trigger new processes, reflections and even doubts in those who see, hear and experience it. In the context of our exhibition, the works prompt a rethinking of the relationship between mankind and the environment. First, the role of artistic production will not be confined to registering or reflecting reality but expanded to constitute an active reaction capable of generating broad involvement. Second, the very idea of the environment will be reassessed not only in the strictly ecological sense but also as a complex system of the world around us combining culture and science, society and the individual, art and everyday life. One central characteristic of the works selected by the curators for *Green Platform* is a view of the role of art as a critical praxis of reflection on the world and its problems. The results and processes of artistic creativity become tools capable of stimulating awareness, prompting spectators to take cognizance of the complexity and importance of the environmental situation. The work of art thus becomes concrete in its action, which moves beyond its nature as object or example to serve as a tool establishing new relations of joint creativity, unprecedented situations of reciprocity in which everyone can be involved on the basis of his or her spontaneous but responsible personal specificity.

The CCCS has endeavoured to pursue a methodology of work and communication reflecting this type of approach ever since its creation. The aim has been to foster "living discourse" in Bateson's sense of the ecology of communication, which we

believe must be applied in all sectors so as to establish an active dialogue with creative individuals and other institutions. *Green Platform* combines a plane of global theoretical thinking and one of territorially-focused meta-reflection. This is why both Italian and non-Italian artists have been involved and space has been given to a number of workshops that will run for the entire duration of the event and involve many different local bodies. Under the supervision of Prof. Giacomo Pirazzoli, students from the Florence University school of architecture have been involved in a workshop with the art collective Alterazioni Video to produce ideas and material in connection with their project *Incompiuto Siciliano*, generating works to be put on show. In collaboration with the engineers Filippo Ginanni and Giacomo Pancani, the artist Nikola Uzunovski will hold a workshop in the months of May and June with the students of professors Antonio Glessi, Gilberto Corretti, Dirk van den Eyden and Giovanni Del Signore of the ISIA in Florence. Michelangelo Consani is now working with a team of international artists on a series of projects for solar kitchens, which he will present both at the CCCS and in a special feature in the magazine *Urban*. The Liquidcat group of Italian artists will launch the challenging idea of a "sustainable" workshop operating through correspondence. Through collaboration with the international exhibition-conference Terrafutura, it is planned to give space to associations operating in pursuit of specific environmental aims such as Greenpeace, Quadrifoglio and the WWF. Finally, collaboration with the Turin-based Festival CinemAmbiente on a networking basis will make it possible to show a number of international documentaries for the first time in Florence. The following speakers have been invited for the CCCS programme of weekly lectures: Marco Sala, director of the master's course in sustainable architecture run by Florence University; Almo Farina, an expert on the ecology of the landscape and author of *Il paesaggio cognitivo* (2006); Filippo De Pieri, the editor of the Italian edition of Gilles Clément's *Manifeste pour le Tierspaysage*, a crucial text both for the current debate and for international artistic reflection; Tue Greenfort, an artist of deep environmentalist convictions present at the *Skulptur Projekte Münster 2007*, whose work will be exhibited in *Green Platform*; the artist Piero Gilardi, founder of the PAV (Parco di Arte Vivente) in Turin; Leandro Pisano, the curator of the *Interferenze – Naturalis Electronica* festival of electronic music, addressing the relationship between new media and environmental issues; Andy Cameron, artistic director of the Fabbrica interactive department in Treviso; Enzo Tiezzi, professor of chemistry at Siena University, a leading scientist of interdisciplinary working and expert on issues of sustainability.

A crucial role is played in the dynamics of the *Green Platform* project by the publication of the catalogue, which will include articles by international authors with different cultural and academic backgrounds (from economics to architecture, from social sciences to public art). John Tackara, the founder of *Doors of Perception*, and Hans Drexler, architect and lecturer at Darmstadt University, respectively address design and architecture in connection with the new criteria of sustainability. Marjetica Potrč puts forward an operative methodology of reference for young artists active in projects of territorial and social impact. Franco La Cecla, who presented Guattari's *Les Trois écologies* to the Italian public just two years after it came out in France, gives an overview of present-day ecological thinking. Last but not least, Gunter Pauli presents the innovative concept of industrial production constituting the basis of the ZERI (Zero Emission Research Institute) philosophy, which draws inspiration from nature and rejects any idea of residual elements or waste. Finally, the *Green Platform* exhibition inaugurates a new publishing joint venture with a very special partner, namely Moleskine. The project envisages a special form of publication-catalogue encapsulating a concordance of ideas and intentions.

Drawing the attention of the general public to these issues with a view to triggering a real process of change is perhaps one of the greatest challenges now facing the human civilization of the 21st century. The state of emergency here is unquestionably even more important than the present world-wide economic crisis, in that the consequences of environmental collapse would be unstoppable and perhaps even lethal for mankind as a whole. The goal that an event like *Green Platform* pursues is to offer those members of the public wishing to participate an opportunity for involvement and debate aimed at everbroader awareness of environmental issues capable in its vital urgency of taking real and authentically contemporary shape and direction through artistic actions, everyday practices and creative products.

Florence, 23 April 2009

* From the catalogue "GREEN PLATFORM. *Arte Ecologia Sostenibilità*" (Firenze, CCCS, Palazzo Strozzi, 24 April - 19 July 2009) – Moleskine, 2009



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VALENTINA GENSINI Curator of the exposition

Through the Platform *

Conceived based on Darwinian principles, ecology was defined in the second half of the nineteenth century as the study of the interrelationships between organisms and the environment in which they live in the biosphere. Over the years, the concept has been expanded with numerous contributions and has now acquired sweeping ethical and philosophical significance. As Félix Guattari had already intuited, ecological thought today is not a notion distinctive of environmentalists tout court: ecology (*ecosophy*) is a philosophical synthesis of the profound values that affect human existence, understood in its totality of relations and dimensions, subjective individual as well as social or environmental. The decision to propose a project that investigates the relationships linking art, ecology and sustainability implies awareness of two fundamental aspects. On the one hand, the conviction that ecology represents the chief domain in the analysis of contemporary reality pushes us to restore the complexity and urgency of the current debate. On the other, artistic research – while constitutionally independent – allows the aesthetic dimension to make a decisive contribution to our interpretation of the present, offering us other ways of understanding and then processing reality.

The world agenda has made note of emergencies such as severe climate changes, the impoverishment of resources, crises of ecosystems with the drastic reduction of biodiversity, widespread economic vulnerability and great social inequality, and in addition to these issues we must remember the vagueness of ideological and religious fanaticism, and the alienation of the media society. An analysis of these problems requires a profound point of view that can consider man and the environment in which he lives based on parameters capable of responding to the current crisis and can also provide appropriate and up-to-date instruments of evaluation.

The era of globalisation, a complex and ambivalent phenomenon, has seen the progressive growth of the indicators of well-being as an index of human development, life expectancy, grain yield and the spread of information technology. However, these traditional indicators are inadequate: they do not take escalating environmental and humanitarian catastrophes into account, nor do they include important data regarding both the reduction of biodiversity – viewed also in cultural terms – and damage to the environment, some of which stems from technological innovations and scientific experimentation whose long-term effects are still unknown. GDP (gross domestic product) does not describe the general quality of life in any way, nor does it indicate the environmental sustainability of the paths that have been undertaken.

New macroeconomic indicators respond to more widespread proposals of sustainable development: promoting progress based on the multiple dimensions of human well-being, sustaining a rapid transition to renewable energy platforms, equitably distributing resources and opportunities, protecting and recovering natural capital, and localising the economy.⁴ Evaluating these objectives means highlighting facts shared by international analysts and researchers, becoming aware of relevant problems.

COP 14 (the 14th *Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*) held in Poznan (Poland) at the end of 2008, launched an imperative transition towards a new climate regime establishing international rules and instruments to prevent the harmful effects of global warming and the most serious consequences of climate change.

On a worldwide level, a great deal of hope has been invested in relaunching the economy based on new green sectors. In the face of the current crisis and economic recession, both the European Union and the United States are relying on a possible relaunch based on green technologies and the ancillary industries created by sectors involved in the environment and ecology.

Given this difficult situation, the debate is proceeding rapidly, attempting to offer analyses and reflections that can respond to the complexities involved. Indeed, we cannot ignore controversial and contradictory aspects such as ecological fraud, greenwashing and pornecology, all of which are improper and illicit recourses pursuing the "ecological fad".

While the American pragmatism of post-environmentalist thought put an end to traditional environmentalism, as the latter is inadequate for providing the answers needed today, more radical paths call for economic de-growth in favour of cultural and social growth. Other positions, such as profound ecology, instead question the anthropocentric vision in order to reestablish a more equitable relationship between man and the environment.

Many cultural and publishing initiatives have focused on the complex current reality in relation to the Man-Nature combination. First of all, we must cite the profound and constantly updated work of the *Art & Ecology Department of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts*, with the fundamental publication entitled *Land Art. A Cultural Ecology Handbook*. Secondly, there are also exhibitions and festivals specifically devoted to ecology, the environment and sustainability. There are even artist residency programmes devoted to these topics.

Green Platform reflects this scenario, contributing theoretical, philosophical and social considerations regarding the current debate and the theories that permeate the works of many artists. The goal of the decision to structure a platform as an interdisciplinary instrument is to translate – on an operative level – a problematic vision and restore it in an attitude of open dialectic. The project includes a catalogue with international scientific contributions in various fields, an exhibition that examines the most recent generations of artists committed to engaging themselves with ecological urgency, a cycle of conferences, workshops, laboratory meetings and film projections, in collaboration with CinemAmbiente, thus dovetailing with the CCCS operating approach.

Green Platform combines a plan of global theoretical thought and meta-reflection open to the territory. Consequently, plenty of space has been devoted to numerous workshops that will accompany the exhibition from preparation to conclusion, and in the exhibition project preference has been given to Italian and foreign artists active in Italy, because in addition to responding to the principle of proximity, they can create an important rapport with the public and the area that is hosting them. The exhibition, which takes a critical look at the different approaches of artists committed to issues concerning the environment and ecology, has no intention of offering comprehensive views or definitive solutions to the problems being examined. It instead attempts to analyse some of the artistic expressions that bear witness to the debate underway, cross-cutting opinions and cultural reflections that differ from the prevailing ways of thinking. It also attempts to examine how various media and expressive orientations approach this topic: there are drawings, projects, sculptures, installations, photographs, video projections, documentaries, technological experiments, laboratories and examples of relational practices.

Naturally, the art viewed in this project differs from both Land Art and ideological or shamanistic practices operating along the lines sketched out by Beuys. The artists participating in the exhibition distance themselves substantially from the methods and assumptions that inspired the generations before them, and they do it from two standpoints: in terms of activism, ideological attitudes have clearly been abandoned; in the observation of nature, they have declined all poetic and emotional mimesis in order to observe the natural world with an analytical eye.

Florence, 23 April 2009

* Abstract from the catalogue "GREEN PLATFORM. *Arte Ecologia Sostenibilità*" (Firenze, CCCS, Palazzo Strozzi, 24 April - 19 July 2009) – Moleskine, 2009



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LORENZO GIUSTI Curator of the exposition

Eco-aware
Eco-active
Eco-sustainable *

Post-environmental theories have contributed decisively to orientating a significant part of the recent cultural debate about ecology. By critiquing traditional environmentalist methods, language and rhetoric, the writings of Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger have attempted to define the standards of a new ecological philosophy that diverges from a perception of humanity and culture as an entity detached from nature and its system of relations. Aside from the specific merit of the theses posited by Nordhaus and Shellenberger, still largely to be verified, the questioning of some of the key axioms of environmentalist thought, starting with the principle of de-growth, has contributed to the development of renewed ecological sensitivity that, on a theoretical level, is tied to reviving the holistic theories of Gregory Bateson, revolving around the idea of an "ecology of the mind" and the discovery (rather recent in English-speaking countries) of Félix Guattari's ecosophy.

From an ecosophic standpoint, the global ecological crisis is defined as the manifestation of a general crisis that, while environmental in nature, is principally cognitive and social. The ecological issue raises a more pervasive problem with respect to the purely scientific one: how can our mentality be changed? How can we reinvent cognitive and social practices that will restore to humanity a sense of responsibility, not only towards ourselves but also the future of life on Earth?

From the late 1980s, when Guattari was writing, through today the plea from the art world to orient the progress of science and technology towards more human ends – ecological ends, in the triple sense that has been identified – gradually developed in a direction that was not so much a return to old lifestyles, but was rather a move towards pinpointing new ways of growth and coexistence. In recent years, in particular, the awareness of the fundamental role of ecology within the framework of human and social sciences has increased significantly, as has the desire to face the fatalistic passiveness of individuals and powers with regard to ecological issues. For a growing and increasingly aware group of artists, the ecological paradigm has come to represent the ethical grounds on which to reconsider not only the relationship between art and science, but – more generally – the set of relationships linking the aesthetic, social and cognitive levels.

Within the art system, critical debate has revolved chiefly around the subject of "sustainability". The term "sustainability" was coined by the environmental sciences to indicate an ecosystem's capacity to be regenerated. Over time, however, the word has acquired a broader meaning with a markedly social significance, emerging – according to the official definition – as humans' ability to satisfy "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". What can art contribute to the cause of sustainability? This question seems to remain unanswered today, like others that inevitably arise when "sustainable" art comes to be viewed as a critical category. Design historian Victor Margolin has posed some of them. Provided that we can talk about "aesthetics of sustainability" – as Hildegard Kurt has affirmed – what forms must an art that wants to consider itself "sustainable" assume? In the context of a culture of sustainability, what distinguishes art from other disciplines such as architecture, design and graphics?

These questions, which – at least in part – have characterised critical debate so far, actually represent an obstacle to the development of truly sustainable thought. This is underscored by Margolin, along with other international artists, curators and critics such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Max Andrews, Stephanie Smith and Jeffrey Kastner. It is only through a holistic vision of the world, which thus encompasses art along with the other elements and that, at the same time, views art itself as a set of indivisible components, that ecological awareness – to cite Bateson – and a sustainable culture can gradually become established.

Separating art from the other disciplines involved in the development of a new culture of sustainability is paradoxical. The risk is that of creating a false cultural hierarchy. It is only by demolishing some of the old historical-critical categories that we can manage to establish a fruitful dialogue about aesthetics within a culture of sustainability. It is thus essential that artists embrace shared aesthetics that are able to go beyond the search for unitary forms and strive for possible interactions between different languages and practices.

The perspective of "sustainable art" must leave room for the circulation of a broader ecological culture that, first and foremost, is presented as an ethical-aesthetic shift promoted on an environmental level and, at the same time, on a social level and in terms of mental processes. Thus, an art determined to root its rationale in profound ecological knowledge will not limit itself to facing exclusively environmental issues, tied to the crisis of the ecosystem, but will endow itself with broader aspirations, perspectives and cultural meanings.

In the area of contemporary artistic production, different approaches, goals and *modi operandi* are gradually being defined. Several artists are distinguishing themselves through their adoption of virtuous practices intended to reduce environmental impact by using natural, perishable or recycled materials and sustainable execution processes. At the same time, growing numbers of photographers, video artists and multimedia artists are focusing their research on exposing social behaviours that harm the ecosystem. In general, these works do not seek to show a "right way" to solve the environmental problem, but limit themselves to providing alternative views of contemporary reality. Other artists have quite openly taken up the path established by Land Art, showing attention to the forms and rhythms of nature in an attempt to introduce change that is consistent with the specificity of life and the timing that governs it. There are works that use the methods of investigative reporting and others that deal with environmental topics while also embarking on essentially anthropological research.

Many artists use programmatic or relational approaches, examining the public sphere and proposing new alternative development strategies for society. Some of them wage a fully fledged ecological battle, working simultaneously in the areas of art and political activism. There are works that dialogue openly with science, imagining feasible paths of research, while others go from architecture to sustainable design. And we must not overlook works that, while not directly dealing with topics tied to the environmental crisis – such as global warming, pollution, hydrogeological problems, and the consumption of land and primary resources – proceed from the standpoint of "mental ecology", working along the lines sketched out by Debord, Baudrillard, McLuhan and, more recently and in an applied form, by Kalle Lasn, who launched a true "meme" war, guerrilla tactics of information intended to breach the authoritarian, unilateral and contaminating flow of advertising and communication in general.

It is important to emphasise that the various attitudes described here do not constitute rigid categories. Contemporary artistic research enjoys substantial programmatic and linguistic liberty that allows it to move away from the use of unitary styles or forms of expression. The experimental vocation, to which the works of the artists committed to ecological knowledge seek to remain faithful, entails constant research for new modes of expression and communication. This quest for the "new", distinctive of the modernist and neo-avant-garde tradition, must necessarily be transformed into a search for "new possibilities". To do this, we need a different mentality, an eco-logic, to borrow from Guattari, that focuses primarily on the modes of production of human subjectivity – i.e. knowledge, culture and sensitivity – and that works towards reconstructing relationships on all social levels, thus divesting "ecologists" of the image of a small minority of nature lovers or accredited specialists and relaunching ecology as one of the main political and ethical challenges of our era.

Florence, 23 April 2009

* From the catalogue "GREEN PLATFORM. *Arte Ecologia Sostenibilità*" (Firenze, CCCS, Palazzo Strozzi, 24 April - 19 July 2009) – Moleskine, 2009



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JAMES M. BRADBURNE
General director
Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi

The Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozзина

The mission of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi is to revitalise the public spaces of Palazzo, one of Florence's finest examples of Renaissance architecture, and to establish it as an exciting, dynamic and international cultural destination for visitors of all ages and interests. Already the exhibitions held in the Palazzo's grand spaces on the first floor have attracted international attention. The Palazzo's courtyard now hosts a café, a museum shop and a permanent exhibition on the history of the Palazzo, as well as a varied programme of concerts, fashion shows and performances. From the outset, a key part of the Palazzo Strozzi project was to create a centre for contemporary culture at the very heart of Florence, and the Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozзина (CCCS) was created as platform for the different approaches and practices that characterise the production of contemporary art and culture. The centre is located in the beautifully restored spaces under the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi – known as 'La Strozзина' – and hosted Florence's most important international exhibitions in the years after the Second World War until the flood of 1966. The CCCS comprises twelve rooms of different sizes, approx. 850 square metres in total. The absence of natural light enables individual curators to interpret the space in new and exciting ways and makes it possible to reshape the entire environment in accordance with the requirements of each new project. The challenge posed by the Renaissance architecture of Palazzo Strozzi for contemporary art is a stimulus to treat each new event and project almost as theatre, constantly pursuing new possibilities of artistic communication, presentation and mediation. The current exhibition tackles issues at the very heart of contemporary culture – the environment, ecology and sustainability. As museum expert Robert Janes writes in his book *Museums for a Troubled World* (Routledge 2009) 'It is common knowledge that the planet earth and global civilization now confront a constellation of issues that threatens the very existence of both. These issues range from climate change, to the inevitability of depleted fossil fuels, not to mention the bewildering array of local concerns pertaining to the health and well-being of myriad communities the world over. [...] Surprisingly, museums are rarely, if ever, discussed, causing me to conclude that the irrelevance of museums as social institutions is a matter of record. Our persistent denial obviously has some shortterm adaptive value, but such denial is now assaulting our collective future.

Green Platform is an example of how cultural institutions can recognise, explore and confront the environmental issues facing us all. *Green Platform* creates a forum for debate and discussion, and shows works by contemporary artists including Alterazioni Video, Amy Balkin, Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna, Michele Dantini, Ettore Favini, Futurefarmers, Tue Greenfort, Henrik Håkansson, Katie Holten, Dave Hullfish Bailey, Christiane Löhr, Dacia Manto, Lucy + Jorge Orta, Julian Rosefeldt, Carlotta Ruggieri, Superflex, Nicola Toffolini and Nikola Uzunovski. It is not clear what role artists and art can play in addressing the challenges we will face in the coming decades. What is sure, however, is that the issues explored by *Green Platform* are ones that deserve our careful and critical attention.

Florence, 23 april 2009



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**SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION
BY YVES NETZHAMMER
IN PALAZZO STROZZI, FLORENCE
FROM 24 APRIL TO 12 JULY 2009**

The Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi's CCCS - Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozзина has asked the Swiss artist to produce a work of art designed to pay tribute to the spectacular architecture of the Florentine Renaissance

The inner courtyard of the **Palazzo Strozzi** in **Firenze** will be hosting a site-specific installation by **Yves Netzhammer** from **24 April to 12 July 2009**. The Swiss artist was born in Schaffhausen in 1970 and represented his country at the Venice Biennale in 2007. **CCCS - Centro di Cultura Contemporanea Strozзина** has asked him to produce a work of art to pay tribute to the spectacular architecture of the Florentine Renaissance.

Yves Netzhammer, celebrated for his poetic installations in 3D reflecting the human condition, has designed a multimedial installation 14.5 mt. by 7.5 mt designed to mirror the Renaissance proportions of the palace courtyard. The work consists of a number of different elements that forge a kind of parallel world in an ongoing game of hide-and-peep with the architecture of this historical Florentine palace. The installation breathes life into a journey, a labyrinth comprising structures reminiscent of a compound, at each end of which the artist has placed shapes of animals and woodland vegetation. Here too, as in his other works, the artist works with formal elements reduced to a bare minimum yet with a wealth of images and action sequences.

The compound forms an architectural framework which the visitor is urged to enter in a mood of total perception triggered by computerised animation typical of the artist's style and by atmospheric sounds created by Bernd Schnurer, a composer with whom Netzhammer has worked on several previous occasions.

New shapes generate each other to the point where a virtual and predominantly symbolic reality comes into being, prompting reflection and dreamlike associations in the mind of the spectator who is called on to build a personal path of movement based on the relationship between seeing and understanding.

This initiative, with the support of Pro Helvetia - Swiss Arts Council, is part of a project in which artists from all over the world are invited to Florence to present works of art specifically designed for the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi. The initiative kicked off with Chinese artist Wang Yu Yang's *Artificial Moon* in 2008

Yves Netzhammer was born in Schaffhausen in 1970 and lives in Zurich. After completing his studies in architecture and training initially as a draughtsman, he enrolled in the preparatory course at Zurich's Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in 1990 to 1991, going on to frequent its course for specialisation in the figurative arts from 1991 to 1995. After showing his work at personal and collective exhibitions in such important cities as Zurich, Frankfurt, Bâle, Duisburg, Bremen, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Mannheim, Lucerne and others, and after winning a number of major prizes and awards, Netzhammer represented Switzerland, along with Christine Streuli, at the National Pavilion in the Giardini di Castello at the most recent edition of the Venice Biennale, in 2007.

Since 1997 he has produced video installations, 3D animations, drawings, paintings and other objects, using the computer to create pictures and animated film sequences that offer a poetic and evocative interpretation of the world we live in. Using an extremely concise and symbolic style, Netzhammer explores the philosophical and psychological aspects of the game of relationships between man, objects, and elements from the animal and vegetable kingdoms and the transformations that they spawn.

A selection of his most recent personal exhibitions

2009 – Kunsthalle Winterthur, Germany

2008 – San Francisco MOMA, USA

2007 – Vision | Audition, Karlskirche, Kassel, Germany (programme in support of Documenta 12)

2007 – «The Subjectivation of Repetition», Project B, Karlskirche, Kassel, Germany

2007 - «The Subjectivation of Repetition», Project A, Venice Biennale, Swiss Pavillion at I Giardini, Venice, Italy

2006 - «Gefährdete Liebschaften», Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland

2005 - «Die Anordnungsweise zweier Gegenteile bei der Erzeugung ihres Berührungsmaximums», Kunsthalle, Bremen, Germany

2003 - «Die Verschiebung der Sollbruchstelle eines in optimalen Verhältnissen aufgewachsenen Astes», Anita Beckers Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany

2001 – Kunsthalle, Lophem, Belgium

A selection of his most recent collective exhibitions

2008 - «Animation in der Videokunst», Anita Beckers Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany

2008 - «Aesthetics of Terror», Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA

2008 - «China International New Media Arts Exhibition», National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China

2007 - «Swiss Made», Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany

2007 - «Moving – New Media Art »CB Collection, Tokyo, Japan

2007 - «Emotional Systems - Contemporary Artists Between Feeling and Reason», CCCS, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy

2006 - «Das Jahrhundert moderner Skulptur in Duisburg», Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg, Germany

2006 - «Satellite of Love», Witte de With und TENT, Rotterdam, Netherlands

2005 - «IBCA – International Biennale of Contemporary Art 2005», National Gallery Prague, Czech Republic

2003 - «Art Unlimited, Art Basel 34», Galerie arsFutura, Zurich, Switzerland

2002 - «Lobby-Arbeit» Swiss-Institute, New York, USA

Florence, 23 April 2009

YVES NETZHAMMER

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