

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 1 December 2015



Images: Museum of Arte Útil, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2013-14; photo Peter Cox, Graveyard of Lost Species, 2015, YoHa

Arts Catalyst launches Centre for Art, Science & Technology with London's first presentation of Tania Brugera's initiated project, Arte Útil alongside YoHa's artist/citizen science project, *Wrecked! on the Intertidal Zone*

Centre launch date: Thur 28 January 2016

Notes from the Field: Commoning Practices in Art and Science: Thur 28 January – Sat 19 March 2016

For over 20 years, Arts Catalyst has pioneered art that engages with science and technology, commissioning over 125 ambitious artists' projects and numerous exhibitions. In January 2016, for the first time, Arts Catalyst opens a Centre for Art, Science and Technology in London's King's Cross. The centre will provide a space for artists and scientists to experiment and create new projects, and enable vital interactions between artists, experts and audiences. Exhibitions will reflect and extend Arts Catalyst's national and international projects and the work of partners. Having this base will also allow Arts Catalyst to develop long-term projects with local communities around King's Cross.

For its opening exhibition at the centre, Arts Catalyst presents **Notes from the Field: Commoning Practices in Art and Science**. This multi-faceted project investigates the notion of art as a tool or tactic for action with communities, with a focus on projects involving science and technology or driven by ecological concerns. *Notes from the Field...* presents aspects of Arts Catalyst's ongoing art and citizen science project **Wrecked! on the Intertidal Zone** with lead artists **YoHa, Critical Art Ensemble, Andy Freeman** and **Fran Gallardo**, who are working with communities on the Thames estuary. Alongside this, it presents the **Arte Útil** archive, a project initiated by artist **Tania Bruguera**, which chronicles a history of art projects that create tactics to change how we act in society. In an archive room designed by **Collective Works** and **ConstructLab**, housing physical copies of selected Arte Útil case studies, and through exploratory workshops and discussion events, visitors will be able to

Speak with invited resident guests, undertake their own research, or propose new Arte Útil case studies. Contributing artists, scientists and experts to *Notes from the Field...* include **Alistair Hudson, Dimitri Launder, Sylvia Nagl, Graham Harwood** and **Veronica Ranner**.

YoHa is a partnership between UK artists Graham Harwood and Matsuko Yokokoji, which has established an international reputation for pioneering critical arts projects, including *Tantalum Memorial, Coal Fired Computers, Invisible Airs* and *Endless War*. Critical Art Ensemble is an acclaimed US-based collective of tactical media practitioners, focused on the exploration of the intersections between art, critical theory, technology and political activism. Their work has been shown in major museums and biennales internationally. Fran Gallardo is an artist and engineer, whose background includes studies in biochemistry, computing and space systems engineering. He is an active member of the Environmental Art Activism movement. Andy Freeman is an artist, educator, technologist and former oyster farmer, whose practice involves the combination of open data tactics and community engagement. Tania Bruguera is a Cuban installation and performance artist. Her work pivots around issues of power and control. Several of her works interrogate and re-present events in Cuban history. On 2 January 2015, she was freed having had three back-to-back detentions in three days, and after over a thousand artists worldwide signed an open letter to Raúl Castro calling for her release.

Forthcoming Programme 2016

Arts Catalyst's 2016 programme will support artistic practices that explore the reciprocal effects of art and science, of politics and machines, of communities and environments. With a focus on research and experiment, it will generate new exchanges between artists, scientists and public; involve and surprise audiences with bold art and ideas; and work with communities and groups to encourage self-determined use of science and technology for social, cultural and environmental purposes. From its new Centre in King's Cross, Arts Catalyst will work out across the city, in populated ecological sites of coasts, forests and rivers, and with partners in the UK and internationally.

In *Everyday Urbanism*, resident researchers including **Territorial Agency** and **Goldsmiths Centre for Research Architecture** will explore environmental and social issues in the city, developing 'tool kits' and 'users manuals' with and for local residents. *Don't Follow the Wind*, an unvisitable art exhibition by a group of artists in the Fukushima nuclear exclusion zone, will engage audiences in central London with ideas surrounding radioactivity, risk and deep time, alongside a residency by artist **Kota Takeuchi**. New commissions by **Thompson & Craighead, Lise Autogena, Crowe & Rawlinson**, and **Susan Schuppli** will further examine our contemporary nuclear culture. In YoHa and Critical Art Ensemble's *Graveyard for Lost Species*, an old Thames cockleboat, engraved with the names of lost species gathered from a thousand local stories, will become a poignant temporary public monument, fated to disappear gradually back into the estuary mud. In a major project, artists and engineers will re-imagine the seminal 1966 event *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering* by Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T), on its 50th anniversary, with new commissions by artists and engineers, including **Robert Whitman** (one of the original E.A.T. artists) and **Auto Italia**, and events in collaboration with **Afterall**. New research projects with partners including **Bournemouth University** will explore people/ecology relations through embedded artist and scientist residencies.

Arts Catalyst's Curator, Alec Steadman, says: "The ambition of our 2016 programme is to take risks not just with what we show, but how we work. Transdisciplinarity and situated community practice will be at the heart of what we do. We also plan to build on our strong relationships with universities and student groups, developing meaningful collaborations."

Until Autumn 2016, the Arts Catalyst's Director and founder, Nicola Triscott, is on sabbatical, based in Washington DC, where she is exploring and promoting the integration of the arts with science and technology in education, research and innovation, attending a number of strategic meetings and initiatives as an expert, and also pursuing her own research and writing. She continues to oversee the Arts Catalyst's artistic programme. Gary Sangster has joined the organisation as Interim Managing Director during this period.

Listing:

Notes from the Field: Commoning Practices in Art and Science

Venue: Arts Catalyst Center, 74-76 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8DR

Date: Thur 28 January – Sat 19 March 2016

Opening times: Thus – Sat, 12 noon – 6pm (during exhibition dates)

www.artscatalyst.org/notes-field-commoning-practices-art-and-science

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Interviews and images available on request.

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Notes to Editors:

1) **Arts Catalyst** is one of the UK's most distinctive arts organisations, distinguished by ambitious art commissions and its unique take on art-science practice. The organisation is funded by Arts Council England as part of its National Portfolio. Over 21 years, it has commissioned more than 125 UK and international artists' projects, often at pivotal moments in artists' careers, including major projects by Tomas Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Agnes Meyer-Brandis, Carey Young, Jan Fabre and the Otolith Group. Arts Catalyst works with artists and scientists to create artworks and generate new ideas exploring science and its role in society and culture: from the nature of air to environmental change, interspecies communication to the future of the moon. It aims to give audiences distinctive, thought-provoking experiences and to play a leading role in the dialogue around

interdisciplinary artistic practice. The organisation collaborates with world-class galleries, museums, universities, arts organisations, science institutions and research centres.

2) **Arte Útil** roughly translates into English as 'useful art' but it goes further suggesting art as a tool or device. Arte Útil draws on artistic thinking to imagine, create and implement tactics that change how we act in society. Whether through self-organised groups, individual initiatives or the rise of user generated content, people are developing new methods and social formations to deal with issues that were once the domain of the state. Arte Útil case studies show how these initiatives are not isolated incidents, but part of a larger historical trajectory that is now shaping our contemporary world. The notion of what constitutes Arte Útil has been arrived at via a set of criteria formulated by Tania Bruguera and curators at the Queens Museum, New York, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and Grizedale Arts, Coniston. www.arte-util.org

3) **Critical Art Ensemble** (CAE) is a collective of five tactical media practitioners of various specialisations including computer graphics and web design, film/video, photography, text art, book art and performance. Formed in 1987, CAE's focus has been on the exploration of the intersections between art, critical theory, technology and political activism. The group has exhibited and performed at diverse venues internationally, ranging from the street, to the museum, to the internet. Museum exhibitions include the Whitney Museum and the New Museum in NYC, Corcoran Museum in Washington D.C., ICA in London, MCA in Chicago, Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt and the Natural History Museum in London. The collective has written seven books, with writings translated into 18 languages. Titles include *The Electronic Disturbance* (1994), *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas* (1996), *Flesh Machine: Cyborgs, Designer Babies, & New Eugenic Consciousness* (1998), *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media* (2001), *Molecular Invasion* (2002), *Marching Plague* (2006) and *Disturbances* (2012).

4) **YoHa** (English translation 'aftermath') is a partnership between artists Graham Harwood and Matsuko Yokokoji, formed in 1994. YoHa's graphic vision and technical tinkering, has powered several celebrated collaborations, establishing an international reputation for pioneering critical arts projects. Harwood and Yokokoji co-founded the artists group Mongrel (1996-2007) and established the MediaShed a free-media lab (2005-2008). In 2008 they joined Richard Wright to produce *Tantalum Memorial* shown in nine countries and 15 cities over four years. In 2010 YoHa produced *Coal Fired Computers* before embarking on a series of works about the lived logics of database machinery including *Invisible Airs* (2011) and *Endless War* (2012).

5) ***Wrecked! on the Intertidal Zone*** comprises two projects that will run simultaneously: *Graveyard of Lost Species* and *Talking Dirty: Tongue First!* The Thames Estuary is a complex collection of objects, atmospheres and flows that cannot readily be reduced to scientific methods and models. The estuary is changing rapidly with new industrial infrastructure in construction, including the largest container port in the UK. The estuary's sea marshes, tidal flats and muddy waters are critical wilderness zones for biodiversity conservation and species migration. Simultaneously, they are also zones for leisure and tourism, fishing grounds and the sites of historic wrecks.

Talking Dirty: Tongue First! was a series of public events including citizen science workshops, involving local foods, their source, preparation and consumption. It will lead to a recipe book produced in collaboration with the situated knowledge of South Essex communities, containing instructions for cooking with estuary ingredients: from Thames fish to back garden elderflower cordial. The citizen science workshops investigated the traces of waste disposal on the 'unnatural' nature research of Two Tree Island in Leigh-on-Sea, topics covered included the impact that pollution has on sourcing ingredients.

Graveyard of Lost Species investigates the forgotten legacy of the area's industries, dialects, traditions, marine species, wildlife, landmarks and the dispossessed. Artists YoHa and Critical Art Ensemble with Arts Catalyst have recovered a wrecked cockle boat (a historic 12-ton Thames Bawley) from the Thames Estuary mudflats, and worked with local people from Leigh-on-Sea and Southend to transform it into a public artwork to record the disappearance of the marine species, wildlife, industries, dialects, traditions and landmarks that were once found along the Thames Estuary. The wreck was dredged, towed to the shore of Leigh-on-Sea, and carved with the names and stories of all that once flourished but is now disappearing, collected by the artists and local historians. The 12-ton 40ft locally built Thames bawley fishing boat will then be returned to the marshes as a permanent sculpture to evolve alongside the environment.

<http://wrecked.artscatalyst.org>