Petro-Logic/Machine Intimacy (Leicester, 28 Jun 23)

De Montfort University Leicester (UK), Jun 28, 2023
Deadline: May 19, 2023

Carina Brand, De Montfort University

CALL FOR PAPERS

Symposium: Petro-Logic/Machine Intimacy

Petro-Logic/Machine Intimacy navigates the internal combustion engine, petro-machines, fossil fuels, and the everyday violence they enact. Are we are living under total petro-logic? A logic that has subsumed violent extraction, explosions and combustion under a veneer of banality. The ubiquity of the internal combustion engine means that it is harder to imagine a world without vehicles and planes than it is to imagine a full ecological collapse. Can a commonplace object like the car ever be reified as a piece of history? Once the car becomes an object in a museum the everyday violence of the combustion engine could become exceptional.

The symbiotic ascent of petroleum and the car happened in the short span of 30 years. These decades saw the unstoppable rise of petro-logic and petro-totality: in 1950 there were under 5 billion barrels of crude oil produced a year, but by 1980 this had risen to 25 billion barrels, and by 1971 half of UK households owned a car. Petro-logic and the car penetrated not just our transport but cultural phenomena and relationships. The car's ongoing ubiquity and fetishization continues to structure daily machinic intimacies and familial exchanges from dropping the kids off to having sex in the back seat of a car, paying for petrol, eating at a drive through, children's plastic trucks, and sleeping in the car.

Whole cities and navigation systems are designed around the flow of traffic, as well as the production of the machines that contribute to it. In the Midlands, Solihull's Land Rover factory continues to produce large machines that punctuate urban landscapes. Our lives are contingent on fossil fuels with petro-machines in our homes and on our bodies, but this energy relationship is not reciprocal, it's destructive. In making fossil fuels and the combustion engine exceptional we can alienate them from their everyday form and provide a space for imaginaries beyond petro-totality.

The symposium and exhibition will interrogate the relationship between energy, machines and our cultural lives, both with, against and amongst petro-totality. The exhibition will be housed in the Leicester Gallery, curated by Gino Attwood to bring together a range of works connected with the themes of the symposium.

We invite proposals for traditional conference papers, panels, screenings, and artists talks that address any petro-machines and fossil fuels, and their auxiliary components and infrastructures. We are particularly interested in research, art, and discussions around the relationship between

the personal, the intimate, the ritual and the fossil machine, that is related to the field of energy humanities. Proposals that look at specific historical or cultural events associated with vehicles and petroleum and the Midlands are especially welcomed.

Please email petrologicevent@gmail.com with a 300-word proposal or abstract, and a short bio, by Friday the 19th of May.

Date: 28/06/23
Location: De Montfort University, Leicester, Vijay Patel Building
Contact: petrologicevent@gmail.com

Reference:

CFP: Petro-Logic/Machine Intimacy (Leicester, 28 Jun 23). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 31, 2023 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/38921>.