

22.01.2024

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION / **Power Up, Technical Imaginaries and Social Utopias** 16.02 – 28.04.2024

Power Up: Technical Imaginaries and Social Utopias tackles the theme of energy infrastructures via a feminist approach. Conceived by Géraldine Gourbe and Fanny Lopez, this collaborative project questions the connections between large-scale technical worlds, communal assets and the imaginaries associated with them through the lens of contemporary art. A unique project to discover in exhibitions at two national contemporary art centers, Le Grand Café in Saint-Nazaire and La Kunsthalle Mulhouse starting in February 2024.



Visual identity and graphic design by Alethia studios in collaboration with Le Grand Café

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

In 2023, La Kunsthalle invited Géraldine Gourbe and Fanny Lopez for a residency of several months to observe Mulhouse and the surrounding area through the prisms of their respective research. Art-based research is a major focus at Mulhouse's contemporary art center.

The genesis of the exhibition emerged from these research activities within the current context of environmental collapses and climate change. How should we consider our relationship with technology and with the infrastructure that produces and manages communal assets such as fresh water and greywater, energy and air? How can we free technology from its sole association with the so-called modern history of progress? How can we steer it away from its quest for productive profitability linked to demands for innovation?

To answer these questions, *Power Up: Technical Imaginaries and Social Utopias* combines visual arts and technical history, confronting the notions of infrastructure and social utopia. The project also seeks to highlight local specificities and impacts on the surrounding area. In a collaborative approach, La Kunsthalle has partnered with the Le Grand Café art center in Saint-Nazaire to provide an east-west perspective on these themes during two simultaneous exhibitions.

The exhibition at La Kunsthalle will shed light on a coexistence between the all-powerful electrical order and the social utopia. It will showcase resistance movements and collective projections in the remarkable story of the Rhine basin in order to regenerate the history of European social utopias. Broadening the range of energy transition possibilities, the exhibition uses the regional history of electrical municipalism to explore feminist futures.

Both *Power Up* exhibitions will be accompanied by a series of events, including screenings, performances and roundtable discussions, which will provide multiple opportunities for the audience to understand the works, themes and artists. A detailed program will be available at www.kunsthallemulhouse.com

ASSOCIATED ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS

Carla Adra, Jeanne-Marie et Georges Alexandroff, Jessica Arseneau, Richard Buckminster Fuller, Marjolijn Dijkman, John Adolphus Etzler, Hilary Galbreath, Hermann Honeff, Le Corbusier, Maya Mihindou, Jürgen Nefzger, Claude Parent, Christian de Portzamparc, Richard Rogers, Liv Schulman, Suzanne Treister, Félix Trombe, Tomi Ungerer, Henri Vicariot, Frank Lloyd Wright



THE CURATORS

Géraldine Gourbe

Author and exhibition curator dedicated to historical reparation, ranging from Southern Californian feminist countercultures in view of the minimalist canon to the history of European pop art (exhibitions include *Los Angeles, les années cool* featuring Judy Chicago at Villa Arson in 2018, and *SheBam Pow POP Wizz: les amazones du pop* at Mamac in 2020). She has also provided a perspective on the relationship between art and industry with a counter-narrative of the so-called Trente glorieuses of the post-WWII period (*Gigantisme, un trait d'esprit*, exhibited at the first art and design triennial in Dunkirk, 2019). Gourbe has collaborated with the University of Metz, Sciences Po Paris, art schools in Marseille and Annecy, the FRAC Lorraine, Grand Large, Aquitaine and Brittany, museums in Dunkirk, MAMAC (Nice), Villa Arson, and the Mécènes du Sud Montpellier-Sète-Béziers. Over the past 20 years, she has taught in higher education as well as at technical and agricultural high schools and provided training in education and mediation. Gourbe currently teaches art philosophy at the Angers School of Art.

Fanny Lopez

Fanny Lopez is a historian of architecture and technology (University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne), full professor and co-director of the LIAT research group at the ENSA Paris-Malaquais. Her research and teaching activities focus on the spatial, territorial, and environmental impact of energy and digital infrastructures, as well as the associated technical imaginaries. She has published *Dreams of Disconnection: From the Autonomous House to Self-Sufficient Territories* (La Villette Editions, 2014, translated by Manchester University Press, 2021); *L'ordre électrique, infrastructures énergétiques et territoires* (Métis Presses, 2019 - AARHSE Prize); *À bout de flux* (Divergences Editions, 2022); and *Le feu numérique: spatialités et énergies des data centers* (Métis Presses, 2023). In 2023, she co-created a festival on technical imaginaries, *La machine dans le jardin* in Mellionnec and participated in the Venice Architecture Biennale with the project Prospect Station.

Sandrine Wymann

Exhibition curator and director of La Kunsthalle, Mulhouse's nationally recognized contemporary art center. For the last fifteen years, she has been working to give art its place at the heart of the city, inviting artists to situate their research and work in the multicultural and emblematic setting of Mulhouse, known for its 19-20th century industrial development. Her programming includes both French and global artistic expressions. With concern for creating initiatives that enrich the local area and provide personalized support to artists, she promotes long-term collaborations through residencies that encompass research, production, and public engagements. She regularly collaborates with artists, other curators and academics to achieve an ideal of shared and cross-disciplinary research. Previously head of visual arts at the French Institute of Casablanca, she was also co-chair of the Plan d'Est - Pôle Arts Visuels Grand Est.

PARTENAIRE

Le Grand Café, National Center for Contemporary Art, Saint-Nazaire

Power Up: Technical Imaginaries and Social Utopias is a collaborative artistic project carried out in two distinct and simultaneous exhibitions. The exhibition at Le Grand Café will take place from February 9 to May 12, 2024.

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

Opening

February 15th at 6pm

Exhibition

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse
La Fonderie, 2nd floor, free admission
wednesday, thursday, friday 12pm -6pm
saturday, sunday 2pm - 6pm

Press briefing

February 15th at 10.30am

Press contact

Sophie Janski-Ruch
Communication officer
sophie.janski-ruch@mulhouse.fr
+ 33 (0)3 69 77 76 89