

Waste/d Pavilion, Episode 2
Temporary Academy of Arts/PAT



Episode 2 of *Waste/d Pavilion* intersects with the current historical context, even though the exhibitions and the public program of which it consists have been planned for a long time. As historians point out, a century does not begin in the first calendar year but when a shocking event occurs. For some, the 21st century began with the pandemic, for some, especially in Greece, with the economic crisis, while for others the Russian-Ukrainian war is the grim landmark of this

century. Once again humanity is facing the threat of nuclear disaster, an unprecedented energy crisis and hundreds of thousands of wasted lives, facing a «wasteland», which is added to the dystopian scenarios brought about by climate change and green capitalism.

Episode 2 of *Waste/d Pavilion* was planned to address the expanded field in which *waste/d* intersects: the environment, the human and post-human challenge, exhaustion and exploitation,

symbiosis, to see beyond a descriptive reading of the toxic. The way it intersects with history, however, sets new challenges in terms of the connections, reception, the interpretations of the exhibitions, the texts and the public program of which it consists: Oliver Ressler's solo exhibition curated by Iliana Fokianaki; the dialogue between art historian and curator Kyveli Mavrokordopoulou and visual artist Elsa Brès as part of the Bona Fide exhibition series, and the Leftwing Prepping workshop coordinated by theorist Gene Ray with the collaboration of activist and permaculture educator George Theodorakis and herbalist Konstantina Litsa.

Oliver Ressler's long-term research highlights not only the dimensions of the climate crisis but also how the climate justice movement intersects with artistic practices, raising timely questions about the commons and the organization of resistance against (climate) imperialism. «What would be at stake in a new alliance?» we read at one point in Elsa Brès' video essay Notes for Les Sanglières. Focusing on the example of the wild boar with a focus on the province of France where she lives, Brès simultaneously turns her lens on local residents who resonate with the animal species excluded from certain areas as opposed to those who feel their first concern is to defend their property. As more and more artists resonate with ecofeminist ideas and seek new types of alliances aimed at earth democracy (humans, animals, plants, seeds and all other forms of life), while powerful institutions often appropriate these initiatives superficially, ultimately engaging in an art & green washing, Chiara Bottici's penetrating analysis «Ecofeminism as queer ecology»¹ further continues a discussion that concerns us all, citizens and art professionals alike. Bottici focuses on the danger that the identification of women with nature and the feminine principle entails in trapping them within the modern/colonial gender system.

Critical moments in history create polarities and extremes are amplified. Gene Ray's new essay "Leftwing

Prepping: After the Holocene, the Commons," a short version of which is posted here, and complements the second episode of Waste/d Pavilion, raises questions about the troubling commonalities these extremes that construct 'ideologies' of risk can have, no matter how oppositely they move. As well as, about the importance of the ethical positions they take concerning responsibility towards each other and society which is the radical point of differentiation between them (individual preparation vs mutual aid/community). Reflection on Right and Left prepping confronts us with this responsibility, resists easy reductions and unhistorical equations and invites us to reflect on the differentiating agencies that wish to dislocate interconnections (struggles and claims), of collectivity, of society a priori in favor of an individualist survivalism and of the forces that resist this impulse.

We would like to thank Iliana Fokianaki and State of Concept Athens, the artists and the authors.

1 Bottici's essay was translated in Greek by Thanasis Katsigeros, with the kind support of the Public Humanities Initiative, Stavros Niarchos Foundation at Columbia University and is available for reading in the exhibition space. The translation of theoretical texts is a constant request for PAT due to a lack of relevant literature; it is a militant gesture toward dominant languages and geographies. In Waste/d Pavilion authors and artists are treated equally as participants in the project; the exhibitions, the texts and the public program do not exist without each other.

Waste/d Pavilion, Επεισόδιο 2ο Προσωρινής Ακαδημίας Τεχνών/ΠΑΤ

Το 2ο επεισόδιο του Waste/d Pavilion διασταυρώνεται με την τρέχουσα ιστορική συγκυρία, ακόμη κι αν οι εκθέσεις και το δημόσιο πρόγραμμα που το απαρτίζει έχουν προγραμματιστεί εδώ και καιρό. Όπως επισημαίνουν οι ιστορικοί ένας αιώνας δεν ξεκινά τον πρώτο ημερολογιακό χρόνο αλλά όταν ένα συγκλονιστικό γεγονός συμβαίνει. Για κάποιους ο 21ος αιώνας ξεκίνησε με την πανδημία, για κάποιους, ειδικά στην Ελλάδα, με την οικονομική κρίση, ενώ για άλλους ο ρωσοουκρανικός πόλεμος είναι το ζοφερό ορόσημο αυτού του αιώνα. Για άλλη μια φορά η ανθρωπότητα βρίσκεται μπροστά στην απειλή του πυρηνικού ολέθρου, σε μια πρωτοφανή ενεργειακή κρίση και σε εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες σπαταλημένες ζωές, μπροστά σε «έρρημη γη», η οποία έρχεται να προστεθεί στα δυστοπικά σενάρια που φέρνει μαζί της η κλιματική αλλαγή αλλά και ο πράσινος καπιταλισμός.

Το 2ο επεισόδιο του Waste/d Pavilion ήταν προγραμματισμένο να αναφέρεται στο διευρυμένο πεδίο στο οποίο διασταυρώνονται το waste/d (απωλεσθέν, πλεονάζον, σπαταλημένο, απορριμματικό, χαμένο κ.α): το περιβάλλον, η ανθρώπινη και μεταανθρώπινη πρόκληση, η εξάντληση και η εκμετάλλευση, η συμβίωση, να δει πέρα από μια περιγραφική ανάγνωση του τοξικού. Ο τρόπος με τον οποίο διασταυρώνεται με την ιστορία όμως, θέτει νέα δεδομένα ως προς τις συνδέσεις, τον τρόπο πρόσληψης, τις ερμηνείες των εκθέσεων, των κειμένων και του δημόσιου προγράμματος που το απαρτίζουν: της ατομικής έκθεσης του Oliver Ressler που επιμελείται η Ηλιάνα Φωκιάνακη, τον διάλογο της ιστορικού τέχνης και επιμελήτριας Κυβέλης Μαυροκορδοπούλου με την εικαστικό Elsa Brès στο πλαίσιο της σειράς εκθέσεων Bona Fide και το Leftwing Prepping εργαστήριο που συντονίζει ο

θεωρητικός Gene Ray με τη συνεργασία του ακτιβιστή και εκπαιδευτή περμακουλτούρας Γιώργου Θεοδωράκη και της βοτανοθεραπεύτριας Κωνσταντίνας Λίτσα.

Η μακροχρόνια έρευνα του Oliver Ressler αναδεικνύει όχι μόνο τις διαστάσεις της κλιματικής κρίσης αλλά και το πώς το κίνημα για τη κλιματική δικαιοσύνη διασταυρώνεται με τις καλλιτεχνικές πρακτικές θέτοντας επίκαιρα ερωτήματα για τα κοινά και την οργάνωση της αντίστασης απέναντι στον (κλιματικό) ιμπεριαλισμό. «Τι θα διακυβευόνταν σε μια νέα συμμαχία;» διαβάζουμε κάποια στιγμή στο βίντεο δοκίμιο της Elsa Brès Notes for Les Sanglières. Εστιάζοντας στο παράδειγμα του αγριογούρουνου με επίκεντρο την επαρχία της Γαλλίας όπου ζει, η Brès στρέφει παράλληλα το φακό της στους κατοίκους της περιοχής που συντονίζονται με τα είδη των ζώων που αποκλείονται από ορισμένες περιοχές σε αντίθεση με εκείνους που νιώθουν ότι πρώτο τους μέλημα είναι να υπερασπιστούν την ιδιοκτησία τους. Καθώς όλο και περισσότεροι καλλιτέχνες συντονίζονται με τα οικοφεμινιστικά διακυβεύματα και αναζητούν νέου τύπου συμμαχίες με στόχο τη δημοκρατία όλης της γης (ανθρώπων, ζώων, φυτών, σπόρων και κάθε άλλης μορφή ζωής), ενώ κραταιοί θεσμοί οικειοποιούνται συχνά επιδερμικά τις συγκεκριμένες πρωτοβουλίες συμμετέχοντας τελικά σε ένα καλλιτεχνικό και πράσινο ξέπλυμα (art & green washing), η διεισδυτική ανάλυση της Chiara Bottici «Ο οικοφεμινισμός ως διατομική οικολογία»¹ συνεχίζει περαιτέρω μια συζήτηση που μας αφορά όλους, πολίτες και επαγγελματίες της τέχνης. Η Bottici επικεντρώνεται στον κίνδυνο που συνεπάγεται η ταύτιση των γυναικών με τη φύση και τη θήλεια αρχή να τις εγκλωβίσει στο σύγχρονο/ αποικιοκρατικό έμφυλο σύστημα.

Οι κριτικές στιγμές στην ιστορία δημιουργούν πολώσεις και τα άκρα ενισχύονται. Το νέο δοκίμιο του Gene Ray Leftwing Prepping: after the Holocene, the Commons, μια σύντομη εκδοχή του οποίου δημοσιεύεται εδώ, και συμπληρώνει το 2ο επεισόδιο του Waste/d Pavilion εγείρει ερωτήματα για τα ανησυχητικά κοινά που μπορούν να έχουν αυτά τα άκρα που κατασκευάζουν «ιδεολογίες» διακινδυνεύσης, όσο αντίθετα και αν κινούνται. Αλλά και για τη σημασία των ηθικών θέσεων που παίρνουν απέναντι στην ευθύνη ως προς τον άλλο και την κοινωνία που είναι και το ριζικό σημείο της διαφοροποίησής τους (ατομική προετοιμασία VS αλληλοβοήθεια /κοινότητα). Ο στοχασμός πάνω στο Right and Left prepping [Δεξιό και Αριστερό προετοιμασμό] μας φέρνει αντιμέτωπους με αυτή την ευθύνη, αντιστέκεται σε εύκολους αναγωγισμούς και ανιστόρητες εξομοιώσεις και μας καλεί να σκεφτούμε τις διαφοροποιητικές δραστηριότητες των δυνάμεων που επιθυμούν την εξάρθρωση των διασυνδέσεων (αγώνων και διεκδικήσεων), της συλλογικότητας, της κοινωνίας a priori υπέρ ενός ατομικιστικού επιβιωτισμού και των δυνάμεων που αντιστέκονται σε αυτή την ορμή.

Ευχαριστούμε την Ηλιάνα Φωκιανάκη και το State of Concept Athens, τους καλλιτέχνες και τους συγγραφείς.

1 Το δοκίμιο της Bottici μεταφράστηκε στα ελληνικά από τον Θανάση Κατσίγερο, με την ευγενική υποστήριξη της Πρωτοβουλίας για τις Δημόσιες Ανθρωπιστικές Επιστήμες, Ίδρυμα Σταύρος Νιάρχος στο Πανεπιστήμιο Columbia και διατίθεται προς ανάγνωση στον χώρο της έκθεσης. Η μετάφραση θεωρητικών κειμένων αποτελεί σταθερό ζητούμενο για την ΠΑΤ έλλειψη σχετικής βιβλιογραφίας. Η χειρονομία της μετάφρασης αποτελεί μια μαχητική τοποθέτηση απέναντι στις κυρίαρχες γλώσσες και γεωγραφίες. Στο Waste/d Pavilion οι συγγραφείς και οι καλλιτέχνες αντιμετωπίζονται εξίσου ως συμμετέχοντες στο project και οι εκθέσεις, τα κείμενα και το δημόσιο πρόγραμμα δεν υπάρχουν το ένα χωρίς το άλλο.

A Manifesto of Care iLiana Fokianaki

Oliver Ressler has been for many decades working in the intersection of art and politics, closely inspired and connected with the work of various activist groups and social movements, civic society and volunteer groups. His work is characterized by themes that relate to the aftermath of globalization and turbo-capitalism, protest and democracy, the commons in relationship to labour and questions that relate to ecology and sustainability, and how all of these connect to the current period, named by some the anthropocene and others the capitalocene. Belonging to a group of artists that discuss politics and ideology mainly through photography and the moving image, he was introduced to Greek audiences, through his four film series entitled “Occupy, Resist, Produce” that is discussing the aftermaths of the economic crisis of 2007–8, that was presented in the Athens Biennial.

It is I think important to start discussing his work through this specific series of films, that tapped on an occurrence in Southern Europe that was heavily related to a. the abrupt effects of the sudden financial crisis but also b. leftist legacies of cooperatives and community building that have been cultivated and are to this day sustained in the south of Europe. The events that unfolded during the first months of the crisis – that we could say reached the peripheries of the economical centers of Europe with a slight delay – where defined by lay-offs on a massive scale, creating thousands of newly unemployed workers. In very few cases, the workers response was to occupy the factories they worked at, putting workers’ control back on the agenda in Europe. Ressler followed the development of the stories of these workers’ initiatives. The films follow the stories of factory occupations in Milan, Rome, Thessaloniki and Gémenos. The one in Thessaloniki, is the much publicized in the country case of Vio.Me, a factory that produced

plastic that after refusing to pay workers while declaring bankruptcy, was then occupied by the workers, shifted production and is to this day run collectively, producing eco-friendly cleaning products.

The films were conducted through a long process of interviews and filming on location. In Ressler's own words "each film is based on discussion with the workers. The workers' assemblies – always the main decision-making bodies – were recorded. It is fundamental to recognize the differences between the situations, contexts and practices of the four worker-controlled companies, but it is also important to understand workers' control or recuperation of workplaces as a socio-political action rather than a merely economic procedure." And they are a core example of the care under which Ressler has been approaching his subject matters, discussing extensively with the activists, workers and all other players involved in the cases he presents through his work. Furthermore, the ferocity with which he asks questions on democracy, equality, climate and social justice is certainly rare, and makes an impression.

His thinking process of questions related to these subject matters, is evident already in his very early works, such as his piece "The New Right – Materials for the Dismantling" (1995) where the artist makes a straightforward comment on the rise of right wing conservatism in his native Austria by inserting it in the public sphere: creating billboards that were hung in the metro and square or other public spaces throughout the city. That piece, can be read today as a prophetic comment, predicting that far-right ideology would permeate a variety of social classes in the country and would claim power in such extent that it would compete in the elections for the government of Austria. Revisiting this work today, it is safe to say his political analysis of what was then – sporadic-phenomena of far-right discourse and hate speech, was prophetic. Twenty seven years later, the far-right would come extremely close to taking power in Ressler's native Austria, and is a recurring phenomenon in various democratically elected countries throughout Europe such as Hungary and Poland. This insightfulness of following social phenomena in their

very onset, is evident in his series of works “Everything is Coming Together while Everything is Coming Apart” (2016–2020) where the artist follows the renewed force of a global environmental movement. The title “Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart” refers to a situation in which all the technology needed to end the age of fossil fuel already exists. Before “Extinction Rebellion” – the grassroots movement that is currently occupying front pages in newspapers throughout the globe – became a recognisable name in mainstream media, Ressler was quietly but diligently observing and recording the formations of new sociopolitical “counter-hegemonies” in the words of Antonio Gramsci, in the field of environmental activism. Today, the school strikes and city-stopping actions that pushed global warming to the top of the political priority list before the COVID-19 pandemic are now recommencing public actions and have mass participation by the general public. The Fridays For Future student movement, that has been calling for global school strikes in various countries these last years, has activists appearing and addressing the U.N. General Assemblies, discussing a younger generation’s response to climate change and urging politicians to take action.

The series is now composed of six-films, and it begins with the COP21 in Paris in 2015, where activists contest the UN Climate Change Conference, unmasking the world leader’s unwillingness to take serious measures against climate catastrophe. Like previous failed annual climate conferences before it, COP21 in Paris in 2015 demonstrated yet again that the biggest polluter – countries, will not commit to any binding agreement, presenting a Climate Agreement that clearly protects the economic interests of corporations. The second film focuses on a massive civil disobedience act, that happened in the suburbs of Berlin, where more than 4000 activists blocked the production of a coal-fired power plant, forcing the Swedish company Vattenfall that was operating it, to shut the power station.

The third film, presented in this exhibition, is the story of the ZAD, just outside Nantes in France. The ZAD, is a fascinating and unique example of grassroots, fierce and

dedicated activism that succeeded in cancelling the plans of the French government for the destruction of a vast area of land in the French countryside near Nantes. It is to this day the largest autonomous territory in Europe. The tensions in the region began when the French government, led then by President Sarkozy, decided to build a new airport outside Nantes. In the area selected, named “Zone of Deferred development (zone d’aménagement différencié)” conflict already started in 2012, led by farmers that were living in the region for generations and refused to leave their lands. And although the government tried through various means to remove them from the area (by offering to buy them out, by threatening with legal action etc), there were many that remained in the area, calling for activists to come and support them in the struggle. They renamed the ZAD into Zone A Défendre (Zone to defend) and began building a micro-society: self-organized bakeries, workshops, a brewery, medicinal herb gardens, a rap studio, a weekly newspaper and a library. And throughout the first years, although there were fierce clashes with the police, with destruction of housing the activists have built, they remained and the police never managed to enter the autonomous zone, being fought by 4000 people. There are several memorable moments from the film: discussions among the now residents of the ZAD, who point out how as newcomers they arrived in a place with various groups of people locals and others, that belonged to different social classes, and how their aim was to retain the legacies they brought in this new micro-society but in parallel to learn how to live in a new societal construction that abandons such constructions and divisions. Today 250 people in 60 collectives live permanently at the ZAD occupying the wetlands, fields and forests. The ZAD is a successful example of the way resistance and the creation of alternatives need to happen at the same time.

The fourth film highlights a civil disobedience action in the port of Amsterdam in June 2017. The blockade of Europe’s second-largest coal port draws a red line against this important fossil-capitalist infrastructure facility. The largest single source of the coal shipments is Colombia, where

coal is extracted under ecologically and socially devastating conditions. The fifth film leads us directly into the blockade of Bílina coal mine in Northern Bohemia in the Czech Republic. 280 of approximately 400 activists taking part were detained. The sixth film celebrates the Venice Climate Camp of September 2019, organized by the No Grandi Navi (“no big ships”) committee together with Fridays for Future and many more activists from all over Europe. Leaving the camp on the Lido at dawn, 200 activists forced their way into the Venice Film Festival enclosure, where they occupied the red carpet for nine hours. Making full use of the international media presence, the activists laid claim to the world attention focused on the day’s prize giving ceremony, turning it to the agenda of the climate movement. The Venice Film Festival as such was not the target of the blockade, but the activists took a sharply critical position on its neglect of an important opportunity to call publicly for climate justice.

Following this series of films, Ressler continued with the research on environmentalist actions and movements throughout the continent, and now is premiering for his solo exhibition in Athens his new film ‘The Path is Never the Same’ (2022). The film focuses on two complex, self-organizing systems: a forest and an occupation. The Hambacher Forest is one of Europe’s last ancient forests. With an unparalleled richness in biodiversity, it is home to almost a hundred and fifty species and has been named one of the last remnants of a sylvan ecosystems in Germany, since the end of the last ice age. The issues concerning the forest are well-known in the country, since for more than a decade it has been occupied by two-hundred activists that live on the trees of the forest, in an effort to stop extraction plans of the German multinational RWE. The area is part of the Rhenish Lignite Mining Area and owned by RWE who has permissions from the German state since the sixties to extract. In January 2020 pressure maintained for years by climate activists forced German politicians to order the preservation of what remained. Meanwhile, lignite extraction continues in an open-air pit; so the occupation also continues.

This is a film that departs from the familiar style of Ressler and opens up new paths for his practice. The film

puts forth the forest as its main protagonist, showing less of what we were used to from his previous film: the faces of those that participate in the struggle to slow down turbo-capitalism. Nonetheless, as always in Ressler's work, the film does not leave room for ambiguity when it comes to the philosophy, rules and politics of care that define the activists that inhabit Hambacher. This time however, the forest sets the tempo and the work departs from the classic documentary style to a proposition for the representation of human and non-human living existing together side by side.

In order to understand Ressler's work one could begin to think of it as an attempt to collect fragments of a gestural, political and embodied collective identity, one that defines many forms of activism. But one could also see it as an attempt to reconstruct the archive of social upheaval and dissent, since these last decades anti-left rhetoric has re-emerged, and all resistances to the power at play from Black Lives Matter to Extinction Rebellion have been painted negatively in mainstream media and thus non accurately recorded/archived. In a way Ressler is possibly proposing for us to think of the role of the artist as archivist, is certainly offering an alternative perspective of archiving as such and seems to question the power that the archival and documentation process of film has. Thinking of the archive and its origins from the ground here in Greece, I am reminded how the word "archive" is closely connected to power. The word derives from the Greek "ἀρχεῖον," (arkheion) which meant a house of a power, or the residence of superior leaders, of magistrates and so on. The archive itself is a form of power, and in that light, Ressler follows faithfully Gramsci's call for creating a counter-power. As Hito Steyerl mentions in her 2008 essay 'Politics of the Archive' "The archive is a realist machine, a body of power and knowledge, and it sustains itself by repetition [...] Repetition within the archive is controlled by different logics of power and of knowledge, most often enforced both by the nation-state and capital interests"¹.

Steyerl is fleshing out, what Derrida has pinpointed in his 1995 now infamous essay 'Archive Fever' that 'archivization produces as much as it records the event.' So I feel

there are more intentions in the artistic process of Ressler, I could go as further as saying that indeed his is an attempt to construct and preserve memory. The memory of “the event,” of what actually happened, of how it happened and why, that is today occurring in an era where events and memories are stored, sanctioned, proven and sustained in the realm of Google, Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. And although in the beginning these new power structures of sustaining archives and memories seemed more egalitarian and democratic, more and more we realise they also hide substantial power in changing the narrative of the event, in selecting the archive, in silencing voices, thus changing both archivization and the event. They differ little these new powerful institutions to those of the old analog traditional forms of power, that in 1975 Foucault called forces of power that establish their own “regime of truth.”

Whether the present ecological, social and economic crisis will force the powers in question – corporate and nation-state, digital or analog ones alike – to shift the current conditions of living that are becoming unbearable for humans and other living beings alike, is unknown. However, through the work of Ressler, the archive of the important moments of climate activism within EU borders form a story for a climate revolution that is definite that will definitely soon come. And it may possibly be that it is a manifesto of caring to record, archive and sustain the memory, but also a manifesto of caring enough to react. But maybe also a handbook of how it can be done for those that will follow the work of thousands of climate activists the world over, mainly: the rest of us, when we realise that really there is no more excuses and no more time left.

1 Hito Steyerl, ‘Politics of the Archive,’ 2008, Transversal Austria, (transversal.at/transversal/0608/steyerl/en)

Ένα μανιφέστο φροντίδας Ηλιάνα Φωκιανάκη

Ο Oliver Ressler για πολλές δεκαετίες δημιουργεί στη διασταύρωση μεταξύ της τέχνης και της πολιτικής, εμπνευσμένος και συνδεδεμένος με το έργο διαφόρων ακτιβιστικών ομάδων και κοινωνικών κινημάτων, αλλά και εν γένει της κοινωνίας των πολιτών και ομάδων εθελοντισμού. Το έργο του χαρακτηρίζεται από θέματα που σχετίζονται με τον απόηχο της παγκοσμιοποίησης και του τούρμπο-καπιταλισμού, τη διαμαρτυρία και τη δημοκρατία, τα κοινά σε σχέση με την εργασία αλλά και ζητήματα που σχετίζονται με την οικολογία και τη βιωσιμότητα, και πώς όλα αυτά συνδέονται με την τρέχουσα περίοδο, που ονομάζεται από άλλους ως ανθρωποκαινό και άλλους ως καπιταλό-καινος. Ανήκοντας σε μια ομάδα καλλιτεχνών που συζητούν την πολιτική και την ιδεολογία κυρίως μέσω της φωτογραφίας και της κινούμενης εικόνας, συστήθηκε στο ελληνικό κοινό, μέσα από την σειρά τεσσάρων φιλμ με τίτλο «Κατάληψη, Αντίσταση, Παραγωγή» που πραγματεύεται τις συνέπειες της οικονομικής κρίσης του 2007-8, η οποία παρουσιάστηκε στην Μπιενάλε της Αθήνας πριν περίπου μια δεκαετία.

Πιστεύω ότι είναι σημαντικό να ξεκινήσουμε την συζήτηση για το έργο του μέσα από αυτή τη συγκεκριμένη σειρά φιλμ, που περιγράφει ένα φαινόμενο στη Νότια Ευρώπη που σχετιζόταν σε μεγάλο βαθμό με το α. τις απότομες επιπτώσεις της ξαφνικής οικονομικής κρίσης αλλά και β. αριστερές κληρονομιές συνεταιρισμών και κοινοτικής οικοδόμησης που έχουν καλλιεργηθεί και διατηρούνται μέχρι σήμερα στη Νότια Ευρώπη. Τα γεγονότα που εκτυλίχθηκαν τους πρώτους μήνες της οικονομικής κρίσης – η οποία θα μπορούσαμε να πούμε έφτασε στις περιφέρειες των οικονομικών κέντρων της Ευρώπης με μικρή καθυστέρηση – καθορίστηκαν από απολύσεις σε μαζική κλίμακα, δημιουργώντας χιλιάδες νέους ανέργους. Σε ελάχιστες περιπτώσεις, η απάντηση των εργατών ήταν να καταλάβουν τα εργοστάσια στα οποία δούλευαν, επαναφέροντας

τον έλεγχο των εργαζομένων στην ημερήσια διάταξη στην Ευρώπη. Ο Ressler παρακολούθησε την εξέλιξη των ιστοριών αυτών των πρωτοβουλιών των εργαζομένων. Τα φιλμ ακολουθούν τις ιστορίες των εργοστασιακών επαγγελματιών στο Μιλάνο, τη Ρώμη, τη Θεσσαλονίκη και τον Γεμένο. Αυτό της Θεσσαλονίκης, είναι η πολυ γνωστή στους Έλληνες υπόθεση της ΒΙΟ.ΜΕ, ενός εργοστασίου που παρήγαγε πλαστικό το οποίο όταν η εργοδοσία αρνήθηκε να πληρώσει τους εργαζόμενους και κήρυξε πτώχευση, στη συνέχεια καταλήφθηκε από τους εργάτες, άλλαξε την παραγωγή και λειτουργεί μέχρι σήμερα συλλογικά παραγοντας φιλικών προς το περιβάλλον προϊόντων καθαρισμού.

Τα φιλμ πραγματώθηκαν μέσα από μια μακρά διαδικασία συνεντεύξεων και γυρισμάτων επί τόπου. Σύμφωνα με τον ίδιο τον Ρέσλερ «κάθε ταινία βασίζεται στη συζήτηση με τους εργάτες. Οι εργατικές συνελεύσεις –πάντα τα κύρια όργανα λήψης αποφάσεων– καταγράφηκαν. Είναι θεμελιώδες να αναγνωρίσουμε τις διαφορές μεταξύ των καταστάσεων, των πλαισίων και των πρακτικών των τεσσάρων εταιρειών που ελέγχονται από τους εργαζόμενους, αλλά είναι επίσης σημαντικό να κατανοήσουμε τον έλεγχο ή την ανάκτηση των χώρων εργασίας από τους εργαζόμενους ως κοινωνικοπολιτική δράση και όχι ως απλή οικονομική διαδικασία». Και αποτελούν βασικό παράδειγμα της φροντίδας με την οποία ο Ressler προσέγγιζε τα θέματα του, συζητώντας εκτενώς με τους ακτιβιστές, τους εργαζόμενους και όλους τους άλλους παίκτες που εμπλέκονται στις περιπτώσεις που παρουσιάζει μέσω της δουλειάς του. Επιπλέον, η αγριότητα με την οποία θέτει ερωτήσεις για τη δημοκρατία, την ισότητα, το κλίμα και την κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη είναι σίγουρα σπάνια και προκαλεί εντύπωση.

Η διαδικασία σκέψης του για ερωτήματα που σχετίζονται με αυτά τα θέματα, είναι εμφανής ήδη στα πολύ πρώιμα έργα του, όπως το έργο του «The New Right – Materials for the Dismantling» (1995) όπου ο καλλιτέχνης κάνει ένα ξεκάθαρο σχόλιο για την άνοδο της ακροδεξιάς και τον συντηρητισμό στην πατρίδα του την Αυστρία εισάγοντάς τον στη δημόσια σφαίρα: δημιουργώντας διαφημιστικές πινακίδες και αφίσες οι οποίες αναρτήθηκαν στο μετρό, σε πλατείες ή σε άλλους δημόσιους χώρους, σε όλη την

πόλη. Αυτό το έργο, μπορεί να διαβαστεί σήμερα ως ένα προφητικό σχόλιο, που προέβλεψε ότι η ακροδεξιά ιδεολογία θα διαποτίσει διάφορες κοινωνικές τάξεις στη χώρα και θα διεκδικούσε την εξουσία σε τέτοιο βαθμό που θα ανταγωνιζόταν στις εκλογές για την κυβέρνηση της Αυστρίας. Επανεξετάζοντας αυτό το έργο σήμερα, μπορούμε να πούμε με ασφάλεια ότι η πολιτική του ανάλυση για τα τότε – σποραδικά – φαινόμενα ακροδεξιού λόγου και ρητορικής μίσους, ήταν προφητική. Είκοσι επτά χρόνια αργότερα, η ακροδεξιά θα έφτανε πολύ κοντά στην ανάληψη της εξουσίας στην πατρίδα του Ρέσλερ, την Αυστρία, και είναι ένα επαναλαμβανόμενο φαινόμενο σε διάφορες δημοκρατικά εκλεγμένες χώρες σε όλη την Ευρώπη, όπως η Ουγγαρία και η Πολωνία.

Αυτή η διορατικότητα της παρακολούθησης κοινωνικών φαινομένων στην αρχή τους, είναι εμφανής στη σειρά έργων του «Everything comes together while everything comes apart» (2016–2020), όπου ο καλλιτέχνης παρακολουθεί την ανανεωμένη δύναμη ενός παγκόσμιου περιβαλλοντικού κινήματος. Ο τίτλος της σειράς αυτών των έργων, αναφέρεται σε μια κατάσταση στην οποία υπάρχει ήδη όλη η τεχνολογία που απαιτείται για να τερματιστεί η εποχή των ορυκτών καυσίμων. Πρωτού το «Extinction Rebellion» – το περιβαλλοντολογικό κίνημα που αυτή τη στιγμή καταλαμβάνει πρωτοσέλιδα σε εφημερίδες σε όλο τον κόσμο – γίνει αναγνωρίσιμο όνομα στα κυρίαρχα μέσα μαζικής ενημέρωσης, ο Ressler παρατηρούσε και κατέγραφε ήσυχα αλλά επιμελώς τους σχηματισμούς νέων κοινωνικοπολιτικών «αντιηγεμονιών» αν χρησιμοποιήσουμε την ορολογία του Antonio Gramsci, στον τομέα του περιβαλλοντικού ακτιβισμού. Σήμερα, οι απεργίες στα σχολεία και οι δράσεις για την αναχαίτιση των πόλεων που ώθησαν την υπερθέρμανση του πλανήτη στην κορυφή της λίστας πολιτικών προτεραιοτήτων πριν από την πανδημία του COVID-19, ξεκινούν εκ νέου δημόσιες δράσεις και έχουν μαζική συμμετοχή από το ευρύ κοινό. Το μαθητικό κίνημα Fridays For Future, το οποίο καλεί για παγκόσμιες σχολικές απεργίες σε διάφορες χώρες τα τελευταία χρόνια, έχει ακτιβιστές να εμφανίζονται και να απευθύνονται στις Γενικές Συνελεύσεις του ΟΗΕ, διαμορφώνοντας και παρουσιάζοντας την

απάντηση μιας νεότερης γενιάς στην κλιματική αλλαγή και προτρέποντας τους πολιτικούς να αναλάβουν δράση. Η σειρά αποτελείται πλέον από έξι φιλμ και ξεκινά με το COP21 στο Παρίσι το 2015, όπου ακτιβιστές διαγωνίζονται στη Διάσκεψη του ΟΗΕ για την Κλιματική Αλλαγή, αποκάλυπτοντας την απροθυμία του παγκόσμιου ηγέτη να λάβει σοβαρά μέτρα κατά της κλιματικής καταστροφής. Όπως και προηγούμενες αποτυχημένες ετήσιες διασκέψεις για το κλίμα πριν από αυτό, η COP21 στο Παρίσι το 2015 έδειξε για άλλη μια φορά ότι οι μεγαλύτερες ρυπαίνουσες χώρες δεν θα δεσμευτούν σε καμία δεσμευτική συμφωνία, παρουσιάζοντας μια Συμφωνία για το Κλίμα που προστατεύει σαφώς τα οικονομικά συμφέροντα των εταιρειών. Η δεύτερη ταινία επικεντρώνεται σε μια τεράστια πράξη πολιτικής ανυπακοής, που συνέβη στα προάστια του Βερολίνου, όπου περισσότεροι από 4000 ακτιβιστές εμπόδισαν την παραγωγή ενός σταθμού ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με καύση άνθρακα, αναγκάζοντας τη σουηδική εταιρεία Vattenfall που το διαχειριζόταν, να κλείσει τον σταθμό παραγωγής ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας.

Η τρίτη ταινία, που παρουσιάζεται στην έκθεση του Ressler στο State of Concept, είναι η ιστορία του ZAD, λίγο έξω από τη Νάντη στη Γαλλία. Το ZAD, είναι ένα συναρπαστικό και μοναδικό παράδειγμα λαϊκού, άγριου και αφοσιωμένου ακτιβισμού που κατάφερε να ακυρώσει τα σχέδια της γαλλικής κυβέρνησης για την καταστροφή μιας τεράστιας έκτασης στη γαλλική ύπαιθρο κοντά στη Νάντη. Είναι μέχρι σήμερα η μεγαλύτερη αυτόνομη περιοχή στην Ευρώπη. Οι εντάσεις στην περιοχή ξεκίνησαν όταν η γαλλική κυβέρνηση, τότε υπό την ηγεσία του προέδρου Σαρκοζί, αποφάσισε να κατασκευάσει ένα νέο αεροδρόμιο έξω από τη Νάντη. Στην συγκεκριμένη περιοχή που είχε ονομαστεί από την κυβέρνηση «ζώνη βιομηχανικής ανάπτυξης» (zone d'aménagement différencié) η σύγκρουση ξεκίνησε ήδη το 2012, με επικεφαλείς αγρότες που ζούσαν στην περιοχή για γενιές και αρνήθηκαν να εγκαταλείψουν τα εδάφη και τις περιουσίες τους. Και παρόλο που η κυβέρνηση προσπάθησε με διάφορα μέσα να προσπαθήσει να τους απομακρύνει από την περιοχή (προσφέροντας να τους εξαγοράσει, απειλώνοντας με νομικές ενέργειες κ.λπ.), πολλοί

παρέμειναν στην περιοχή, καλώντας τους ακτιβιστές να έρθουν και να τους στηρίξουν στην περιοχή. Οι ακτιβιστές μετονόμασαν το ZAD σε Zone A Defendre (Ζώνη για υπεράσπιση) και άρχισαν να χτίζουν μια μικρο-κοινωνία: αυτοοργανωμένα αρτοποιεία, εργαστήρια, ζυθοποιείο, κήπους με φαρμακευτικά βότανα, ένα στούντιο ραπ, μια εβδομαδιαία εφημερίδα και μια βιβλιοθήκη. Και όλα τα πρώτα χρόνια, αν και υπήρξαν σφοδρές συγκρούσεις με την αστυνομία, με καταστροφές κατοικιών που έχτισαν οι ακτιβιστές, οι περισσότεροι παρέμειναν και η αστυνομία δεν κατάφερε ποτέ να μπει στην αυτόνομη ζώνη, αντιμετωπίζοντας αντίσταση από πάνω από 4000 άτομα. Υπάρχουν αρκετές αξέχαστες στιγμές από το φιλμ: συζητήσεις μεταξύ των κατοίκων πλέον του ZAD, οι οποίοι επισημαίνουν πώς ως νεοφερμένοι έφτασαν σε ένα μέρος με διάφορες ομάδες ντόπιων και άλλων, ανθρώπων που ανήκαν σε διαφορετικές κοινωνικές τάξεις, και πώς ήταν ο στόχος τους να διατηρήσουν τις κληρονομίες που έφεραν σε αυτή τη νέα μικροκοινωνία, αλλά παράλληλα να μάθουν πώς να ζήσουν σε μια νέα κοινωνική κατασκευή που εγκαταλείπει τέτοιες ταξικές διαίρεσεις. Σήμερα 250 άτομα σε 60 συλλογικότητες ζουν μόνιμα στο ZAD καταλαμβάνοντας τους υγροτόπους, τα χωράφια και τα δάση. Το ZAD είναι ένα επιτυχημένο παράδειγμα του τρόπου με τον οποίο η αντίσταση και η δημιουργία εναλλακτικών λύσεων πρέπει να συμβαίνουν ταυτόχρονα.

Η τέταρτη ταινία υπογραμμίζει μια δράση πολιτικής ανυπακοής στο λιμάνι του Άμστερνταμ τον Ιούνιο του 2017. Ο αποκλεισμός του δεύτερου μεγαλύτερου λιμανιού άνθρακα της Ευρώπης χαράζει μια κόκκινη γραμμή ενάντια σε αυτή τη σημαντική εγκατάσταση υποδομής ορυκτών καπιταλιστικών αρχών. Η μεγαλύτερη ενιαία πηγή των αποστολών άνθρακα είναι η Κολομβία, όπου ο άνθρακας εξορύσσεται κάτω από καταστροφικές οικολογικά και κοινωνικά συνθήκες. Η πέμπτη ταινία μας οδηγεί κατευθείαν στον αποκλεισμό του ανθρακωρυχείου Bílina στη Βόρεια Βοημία στην Τσεχία. 280 από τους περίπου 400 ακτιβιστές που συμμετείχαν συνελήφθησαν. Η έκτη ταινία γιορτάζει την Κλιματική Κατασκήνωση της Βενετίας του Σεπτεμβρίου 2019, που διοργανώθηκε από την επιτροπή No Grandi Navi («χωρίς μεγάλα πλοία») μαζί με το Fridays for Future και

πολλούς ακόμη ακτιβιστές από όλη την Ευρώπη. Φεύγοντας από το στρατόπεδο στο Lido τα ξημερώματα, 200 ακτιβιστές μπήκαν με το ζόρι στο περίβολο του Φεστιβάλ Κινηματογράφου της Βενετίας, όπου κατέλαβαν το κόκκινο χαλί για εννέα ώρες. Αξιοποιώντας πλήρως τη διεθνή παρουσία των μέσων ενημέρωσης, οι ακτιβιστές διεκδίκησαν την παγκόσμια προσοχή εστιασμένη στην τελετή απονομής των βραβείων της ημέρας, στρέφοντάς την στην ατζέντα του κινήματος για το κλίμα. Στόχος του αποκλεισμού δεν ήταν το Φεστιβάλ Κινηματογράφου της Βενετίας, αλλά οι ακτιβιστές πήραν μια έντονη κριτική θέση σχετικά με την παραμέληση μιας σημαντικής παραγωγικής ομάδας, να καλέσει δημόσια για κλιματική δικαιοσύνη.

Μετά από αυτή τη σειρά ταινιών, ο Ressler συνέχισε την έρευνα για περιβαλλοντικές δράσεις και κινήματα σε όλη την ήπειρο και για την ατομική του έκθεση στην Αθήνα παρουσιάζει το νέο του έργο «The Path is Never The Same» (2022). Το φιλμ επικεντρώνεται σε δύο πολύπλοκα, αυτοοργανωμένα συστήματα: ένα δάσος και μια κατάληψη. Το δάσος Hambacher είναι ένα από τα τελευταία αρχαία δάση της Ευρώπης. Με απaráμιλλο πλούτο σε βιοποικιλότητα, φιλοξενεί σχεδόν εκατόν πενήντα είδη ζώων και φυτών και έχει ονομαστεί ένα από τα τελευταία απομεινάρια ενός οικοσυστήματος συλβανών στη Γερμανία, από το τέλος της τελευταίας περιόδου των παγετώνων. Τα περιβαλλοντολογικά ζητήματα που αφορούν το δάσος είναι γνωστά στη χώρα, αφού εδώ και πάνω από μια δεκαετία έχει καταληφθεί από διακόσιους ακτιβιστές που ζουν στα δέντρα του δάσους, σε μια προσπάθεια να σταματήσουν τα σχέδια εξόρυξης της γερμανικής πολυεθνικής RWE. Η περιοχή είναι μέρος της περιοχής εξόρυξης λιγνίτη του Ρήνου και ανήκει στην RWE, η οποία έχει άδειες από το γερμανικό κράτος από τη δεκαετία του '60 για εξόρυξη. Τον Ιανουάριο του 2020 οι πιέσεις για χρόνια από περιβαλλοντολογικούς ακτιβιστές ανάγκασαν τους Γερμανούς πολιτικούς να διατάξουν τη διατήρηση αυτού του κομματιού του δάσους που είχε απομείνει. Εν τω μεταξύ, η εξόρυξη λιγνίτη συνεχίζεται σε υπαίθριο λάκκο, οπότε και η κατάληψη συνεχίζεται εξίσου.

Πρόκειται για μια ταινία που ξεφεύγει από το γνωστό στυλ του Ressler και ανοίγει νέους δρόμους για την πρακτική του. Η ταινία αναδεικνύει το δάσος ως κύριο πρωταγωνιστή, εστιάζοντας λιγότερο σε αυτά που είχαμε συνηθίσει σε προηγούμενα έργα του: τα πρόσωπα εκείνων που συμμετέχουν στον αγώνα για την επιβράδυνση του τουρμπο-καπιταλισμού. Ωστόσο, όπως πάντα στο έργο του Ressler, η ταινία δεν αφήνει περιθώρια ασάφειας όσον αφορά τη φιλοσοφία, τους κανόνες και την πολιτική φροντίδας που ορίζουν τους ακτιβιστές που κατοικούν στο Hambacher. Αυτή τη φορά όμως, το δάσος θέτει το ρυθμό και το έργο ξεφεύγει από το κλασικό ντοκιμαντέρ στυλ, στο να μετατραπεί σε μια πρόταση για την αναπαράσταση της ανθρωπίνης και της μη ανθρωπίνης συμβίωσης.

Για να γίνει κατανοητό το έργο του Ressler θα μπορούσε κανείς να αρχίσει να το σκέφτεται ως μια προσπάθεια συλλογής θραυσμάτων μιας χειρονομίας, μιας πολιτικής και μιας ενσωματωμένης συλλογικής ταυτότητας, η οποία ούτως ή άλλως καθορίζει πολλές μορφές ακτιβισμού. Αλλά θα μπορούσε κανείς να το δει και ως μια προσπάθεια ανασυγκρότησης του αρχείου της κοινωνικής αναταραχής και αντίστασης, αφού αυτές τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες η αντι-αριστερή ρητορική επανεμφανίστηκε, και όλες οι αντιστάσεις στην εξουσία από το Black Lives Matter έως το Extinction Rebellion έχουν σκιαγραφηθεί αρνητικά στα κυρίαρχα μέσα ενημέρωσης και επομένως δεν καταγράφονται/αρχειοθετούνται με ακρίβεια. Κατά κάποιον τρόπο ο Ressler μας προτείνει πιθανώς να σκεφτούμε τον ρόλο του καλλιτέχνη ως αρχειονόμου, και σίγουρα προσφέρει μια εναλλακτική προοπτική της αρχειοθέτησης ως δράση και φαίνεται να αμφισβητεί τη δύναμη που έχει η διαδικασία αρχειοθέτησης και τεκμηρίωσης μιας ταινίας. Σκεπτόμενη το αρχείο και την προέλευσή του από την γεωπολιτική θέση της Ελλάδας, θυμάμαι πώς η λέξη «αρχείο» συνδέεται στενά με την εξουσία. Η λέξη προέρχεται από το ελληνικό «αρχεῖον», που σήμαινε σπίτι μιας εξουσίας, ή κατοικία ανώτερων ηγετών, δικαστών κ.λπ. Το ίδιο το αρχείο είναι μια μορφή εξουσίας και υπό αυτό το πρίσμα, ο Ρέσλερ ακολουθεί πιστά το κάλεσμα του Gramsci για τη δημιουργία μιας αντι-εξουσίας. Όπως αναφέρει η Hito Steyerl στο

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δοκίμιό της «Politics of the Archive» το 2008 «Το αρχείο είναι μια ρεαλιστική μηχανή, ένα σώμα δύναμης και γνώσης, και συντηρείται με την επανάληψη [...] Η επανάληψη μέσα στο αρχείο ελέγχεται από διαφορετικές λογικές εξουσίας και της γνώσης, που τις περισσότερες φορές επιβάλλεται τόσο από το έθνος-κράτος όσο και από τα συμφέροντα του κεφαλαίου»¹.

Η Steyerl ενσαρκώνει, αυτό που ο Derrida έχει επισημάνει στο διαβόητο πλέον δοκίμιό του από το 1995 «Archive Fever» ότι «η αρχειοθέτηση παράγει όσο και καταγράφει το γεγονός». Έτσι, αισθάνομαι ότι υπάρχουν περισσότερες προθέσεις στην καλλιτεχνική διαδικασία του Ressler, θα μπορούσα να προχωρήσω τόσο περισσότερο όσο να πω ότι πράγματι είναι μια προσπάθεια κατασκευής και διατήρησης της μνήμης. Η μνήμη του «γεγονότος», του τι πραγματικά συνέβη, του πώς συνέβη και γιατί, συμβαίνει σήμερα σε μια εποχή όπου τα γεγονότα και οι αναμνήσεις αποθηκεύονται, εγκρίνονται, αποδεικνύονται και διατηρούνται στη σφαίρα του Google, του Facebook, του Instagram και του Tik Tok. Και παρόλο που στην αρχή αυτές οι νέες δομές εξουσίας διατήρησης αρχείων και αναμνήσεων έμοιαζαν πιο ισότιμες και δημοκρατικές, συνειδητοποιούμε όλο και περισσότερο ότι κρύβουν επίσης ουσιαστική δύναμη στην αλλαγή της αφήγησης του γεγονότος, στην επιλογή του αρχείου, στη φίμωση των φωνών, αλλάζοντας έτσι και τα δύο αρχειοθέτηση και την εκδήλωση. Διαφέρουν ελάχιστα από αυτούς τους νέους ισχυρούς θεσμούς με εκείνους των παλαιών αναλογικών παραδοσιακών μορφών εξουσίας, που το 1975 ο Φουκώ αποκάλυψε δυνάμεις εξουσίας που εγκαθιδρύουν το δικό τους «καθεστώς αλήθειας».

Το εάν η παρούσα οικολογική, κοινωνική και οικονομική κρίση θα αναγκάσει τις εξουσίες – εταιρικές ή εθνο-κρατικές, ψηφιακές ή αναλογικές – να αλλάξουν τις τρέχουσες συνθήκες ζωής που γίνονται αφόρητες τόσο για τον άνθρωπο όσο και για άλλα έμβια όντα, είναι άγνωστο. Ωστόσο, μέσα από το έργο του Ressler, το αρχείο των σημαντικών στιγμών του κλιματικού ακτιβισμού εντός των συνόρων της ΕΕ σχηματίζει μια ιστορία για μια κλιματική επανάσταση που είναι βέβαιο ότι θα έρθει σύντομα. Και μπορεί να είναι ένα μανιφέστο φροντίδας για την κατα-

γραφή, αρχειοθέτηση και διατήρηση της μνήμης, αλλά και ένα μανιφέστο φροντίδας του να νοιάζεται κανείς αρκετά ώστε να αντιδράσει. Ίσως όμως και ένα εγχειρίδιο για το πώς μπορεί να γίνει αυτή η αντίδραση πραγματικότητα, για εκείνους που θα ακολουθήσουν το έργο χιλιάδων ακτιβιστών για το κλίμα σε όλο τον κόσμο, κυρίως δηλαδή: εμείς οι υπόλοιποι, όταν συνειδητοποιήσουμε ότι πραγματικά δεν υπάρχουν άλλες δικαιολογίες και δεν μένει άλλος χρόνος.

1 Hito Steyerl, «Politics of the Archive», 2008, Transversal Austria, (transversal.at/transversal/0608/steyerl/en)

Leftwing Prepping: After the Holocene, the Commons

Gene Ray

If it is a whole way of being that needs changing, then the essential question of “what is to be done?” takes on new dimensions, and ecological politics is about much more than managing the external environment. It has to be thought of, rather, in frankly revolutionary terms.... There is a big problem with these ideas, namely, that very few people take them seriously.

Joel Kovel, *Enemy of Nature*

The Planetary Imperative

Capitalist modernity has ended the Holocene.¹ This is no longer seriously disputed. The new epoch of climate chaos, mass extinction, toxified environments and bodies, and zoonotic pandemics has begun. The Global South is most exposed and vulnerable, but even the North, it is now clear, will suffer the impacts. Things can get much worse and almost certainly will. They will because for structural rather than moral reasons the politics that holds sway everywhere has proved incapable of an adequate response – to say nothing of an adequate *and just* response. A future on earth will require meeting basic social needs with far, far less energy, damage and waste. This aim will not be attainable within the current system because the economic drive that capitalism mobilizes is not containable or controllable. Capital’s drive to enclose, capture, exploit, extract and commodify everything undermines and swiftly eliminates all efforts to limit and constrain it. However, the knowledge and technologies needed for building a post-capitalist and post-carbon “world of worlds” already exist: the most dependable and reparative of these, for example agroecology and permaculture, draw on traditional practices as well as contemporary science. The problem is that capital is blocking them.

The planetary imperative, therefore and bluntly put, is to disarm, power down and abolish capitalism.² Some plural mosaic of Indigenous communes, instituent autonomist zones, cities of refuge and plurinational eco-socialist federations could replace it.³ The Left, however, reeling under successive defeats and failures, lacks the power, popular support and clarity to pull off such a “commons of commons.” And the capitalist class is not about to abolish itself. Big Tech capital promises to “solve” the climate crisis with new technologies. This promise is accepted by the ruling political classes because the alternatives entail their own political extinction. It seems also to be accepted, for the moment, more generally, by that aggregate of Northern consumers called the general public. For despite the spread of catastrophic and apocalyptic moods and feeling structures, the enjoyments of digital life are keeping the myth of automatic Progress alive.⁴

The Left will have to break decisively with the seductions and temptations of emphatic technology and magical Progress. A better relation with more-than-human nature, a radically different metabolic exchange with the planet, and the decommodification of social enjoyment are urgently called for. Further delays in the termination of the fossil economy at this point amount to genocide and ecocide. When it finally comes, this termination will be an opening for deeper transformations. The return of stolen Indigenous lands and deep de-enclosure of large capitalist land-holdings, the conversion of monopoly chemical monoculture into localized mixes of small and communally-held agroecologies under diverse forms of land-tenure, the repurposing of urban-industrial infrastructure and stranded commodities, and the recovery and free improvisation of de-commodified social enjoyment: these

are the building blocks of a future, if there will be one. The task is revolutionary because the capitalist class is hell-bent on holding their places. Dislodging and expropriating them will be incredibly difficult – hardly more difficult, however, than failing to do so. The building of a world of worlds *against* capitalism will have to begin *within* capitalism, because at present the agency to do more remains to be organized. Confrontations with the states that guarantee the reproduction of capital will not be deferrable forever. But the subtractive and constructive work of de-commodifying everyday life can begin immediately – in fact already has begun, notably in the South. The same commoning practices, attuned to local conditions, could spread rapidly across the North as well, transforming the metabolism of cities and breaking down the hard borders between urban and rural. The first task of a planetary politics is to unload the deeply held illusions of modernity and honestly admit that the continuation of everything, just as it is, is only possible as collective suicide.

Drifting toward Climate Fascism

The Holocene climate has been lost through the social structuring of extraction, capital accumulation, negligence and abuse, and the chaos has begun. In this sense, Timothy Morton is right: the world as we know it has already ended, and now even “Western white boys” will have to experience what most of the world has long been enduring.⁵ The nasty surprise makes for dangerous and desperate politics. Our masters – the billionaire capitalist class – will stop at nothing to hold on to their power. Some of them have already given the nod and in some cases a strong push to fascist turnings. It is important to realize that these turnings belong now to the immanent drift of late modernity under planetary crisis.

The problem of fossil capitalism heating and wasting the planet was well understood forty years ago. But fossil energy has been convenient and, more to

the point, remains highly profitable. When Big Oil exercised its capitalist veto on any retreat from the status quo, the Northern political class deferred the problem, handing it down to their children. Now that several years of intensifying superstorms, wildfires, floods, and droughts, as well as the global death toll and disruptions of a major pandemic, have made clear the costs of this deferral, we're all forced to go over it all again. On all kinds of leftist new media forums, from *Jacobin* and *The Intercept* to *Salvage, Uneven Earth* and *Viewpoint Magazine*, Green New Deals and degrowth have finally entered the debate.⁶ Degrowth, unthinkable and unspeakable for the capitalist class for obvious reasons, is gaining traction on the Left, but most still dismiss it as “unrealistic,” meaning unsellable. Before the pandemic broke out, Social Democratic Green New Deals, which aim to lead a transition to renewable energy and increased social rights and protections within the frame of capitalism, were deemed the maximum achievable for now. But these have everywhere run up against the hard resistance of the capitalist class, whose lobbyists and think tanks have captured the brand name GND and reshaped it more to their liking. New carbon market schemes and the mantra of “net-zero emissions” promise to square circles and “decouple” the sacred cow of economic growth from fossil fuels. In 2020, green capitalism, eco-modernism and geoengineering are the catchwords, hopes and horizons of the ruling elites, who have repeatedly taken off the table any measures that challenge capitalist power, whether or not those measures are actually necessary to arrest and reverse global heating and preserve biodiversity.⁷

But the problem for the rest of us – as distinct from the billionaires, politicians, technocrats and generals – needs to be formulated more starkly. Do we accept that capitalism can and will “solve” the planetary crises through techno-fixes and transitions led from above? Or do we conclude that the economic motor of capital accumulation

is a planet killer we cannot control and so *must* shut down?⁸ Why bother to put the question this way, if revolution is not in the cards? Indeed, that is the crux, as seen from below: is it better to imagine, articulate and advance *an adequate vision and program*, even if these are unspeakably radical by current measures, or must we accept defeat as a permanent condition, “bracket” the question of capitalism, and restrict ourselves to the moderate politics of the possible?⁹ Why should we trust those whose priority is not the preservation of life in all its bio – and cultural diversity but is merely the defense of their own power and privileges? But these questions, correct as they are, can only be posed from the North, where modernization was achieved long ago by landgrabs, genocide and slave labor in the colonies – and now maintains itself on the backs of the South. In the South itself, the planetary crises are already confronted directly as a problem of survival.

The struggle for climate justice, then, needs to be central to a leftist planetary politics. As the Red Nation, Nicholas Beuret and Max Ajl have separately shown, all Social Democratic versions of the Green New Deal that accept the frame of capitalism are a commitment to continuing imperialism.¹⁰ Whatever social redistributions they propose are redistributed *from* an extracted global surplus that overwhelmingly flows from South to North. And all the critical minerals and resources needed for a transition to a renewable energy infrastructure, battery powered public transportation and so on entail a massive intensification of extraction in the South. The Social Democratic GNDs are thus necessarily forms of “climate imperialism,” as Beuret correctly calls it.

The New Deal of the 1930s enacted a large increase in social rights and supports in the USA, but only because the attempt to build socialism in the Soviet Union offered a powerful challenge to capitalist hegemony. Capital cut deals to hold off the spread of the revolutionary example. Now that this challenge has

been eliminated, only the organization of another alternative counterpower comparably compelling could alter the presently grim balance of forces enough to again make possible a Social Democratic version of capitalism.

But history has shown that such versions are anyway not permanent: wherever they have gained ground they have been immediately put under attack. If capitalist relations are left untouched, rollback is just a matter of time – and time is what no one has. It is delusion to hope that this kind of Green New Deal offers a “solution” to planetary crisis. The Left, if it recomposes itself, must offer something more decisive. A “People’s” or eco-socialist GND would, as Ajl argues, have to confront this problem and be resolutely internationalist; it would aim at the demilitarization of imperialist states like the USA, which act as the enforcers of the current system. At the same time, a sufficiently radical GND would seek to reorganize the basic metabolism with the planet, beginning with decarbonization and food production. It would aim to convert capitalist monoculture to resilient and sustainable forms of local agroecology, through agrarian land reforms that de-enclose and return stolen lands to forms of communal land tenure – exactly what La Via Campesina, Navdanya, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST, the Landless Workers’ Movement) and other peasant Indigenous small farmers’ movements have long been struggling for. Such a program is clearly incompatible with the world of capital, but that is precisely its strength and appeal.

The Social Democratic GNDs have now mostly been taken over and rewritten by the capitalist class, or else simply scrapped. All traces of anti-imperialism have been deleted and most of the proposals to restore social rights and protections severely cut back. This means that the antagonisms indicated above – the rift between capitalist and planetary imperatives, and the class antagonism brought into the open by growing inequality – will be allowed to intensify.

The capitalist class is certainly well aware that planetary crises (climate chaos, species extinction, toxification and pandemics) together pose a “non-trivial threat” to human survival. But their wealth and power largely protect them from direct exposures to the short-term risks and impacts, and they may wager on waiting to see if theorized and fantasized geoengineering schemes will actually come to fruition. Whatever the mid – to long-term fate of the human species, the capitalist class certainly sees *the social effects* of the planetary crises as an existential threat to itself. Put differently, since they refuse to see climate chaos as the limit of a society based on an economic logic of accumulation, the capitalist class in every nation will be forced to see it as a problem of social control and security. In fact, whatever may be the conflicts of interest between fractions of the capitalist class (between Big Tech and Big Oil, for example), there seems to be solid agreement on this point.

The tendency to read all social problems as security problems was already notable as a side-effect of the long neoliberal capitalist class offensive: the short-term solution to anti-austerity and anti-enclosure uprisings was brutal militarized policing and a fascist drift. Now that the deepening planetary crises can no longer be deferred, the security approach in Northern states has focused on blocking the arrival of the tens of millions of people who will be displaced by the disastrous impacts. These are overwhelmingly people living in poor and vulnerable areas of the South, many of them from countries and regions devastated by the post-2001 cycle of imperialist wars. For states to implement the security and control adaptation plans, an appropriate politics is needed. We have seen what this politics consists in: a racialized politics of fear and what Christian Parenti has called the “politics of the armed lifeboat,” or in other words “responding to climate change by arming, excluding, forgetting, repressing, policing and killing.”¹¹

Everyone in Greece has seen how

this works, from squalid tent shanties and border walls to illegal pushbacks at sea and new razor-wired concentration camps funded by the EU. Shameful scenes on the US-Mexican border and Mediterranean seas, in camps off Australia and in the winter forests of Belarus and Poland, to name just a few, have become ordinary and no longer disturb large parts of Northern electorates. Not even images of children in cages or Texas Rangers on horseback whipping Haitian refugees into the Rio Grande lead to the resignation of security bureaucrats or the fall of governments. To sum up: the refusal to confront the real social causes of planetary crises (capitalism, in short) leads to an increase in state violence and terror and fosters fascist social movements. The immanent drift of climate imperialism is toward climate fascism.

Our protection is our mutuality.
Peter Linebaugh, *Stop, Thief!*

Leftwing Prepping

As the planet melts down, social and political antagonisms are intensifying. North and South, the violence of the Right has been increasing steadily, often with the approval of the state on the scene or in the background. In the self-declared House of Freedom, four years under Trump have well established what “making America great again” looks like: Nazi salutes and torchlight marches back out in the open, streets dominated by rightwing fight-clubs, pick-up trucks bristling with assault rifles and Confederate battle flags, and white supremacist terrorist groups openly clamoring for race war. On January 6, 2020, a lynch mob surged through the halls of the US Capitol, while an unsuccessful coup was launched from the Executive Bedroom. A month later, three white men in Georgia chased down and murdered Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man who dared to go for a jog in their neighborhood. In May, the knee on the neck of George Floyd in Minneapolis. As the pandemic hit,

revealing the deadly gaps in the neoliberal health system and capital's reflex to sacrifice so-called frontline workers, half the country erupted in outrage over the continuing police murder of people of color; the other half whipped out their weapons. Then the Kenosha teenage defender of "property" who gunned down three people, killing two – and was later found innocent and fêted as a hero. While these spectacles have astonished the world, the unseen violence, North and South, is no less alarming: a spike in domestic abuse and murder during the pandemic, femicide and violence against women, the murder of transgender people.

2020 was also the deadliest year on record for land and environmental defenders; on average, four were shot down a week since 2016.¹² Considering the increase and normalization of this violence related to planetary politics, one would have to say that today water and land defenders, Indigenous leaders, militant antifascists and critical journalists are *routinely* assassinated. Their assassins vary – some are cops, some are veterans, most are mercenaries of capital – but they are all agents and soldiers of the Right. Behind them are the extractive transnationals: Big Oil, Big Ag and, through the mining sector, Big Tech.¹³ And taking their profits are the hidden commodities traders of London and Geneva. Nor is there much doubt, for the structural reasons already discussed, that this violence against the Left will increase more in the years to come.

How might the Left prepare for this violence, in the context of planetary meltdown? How is the Right preparing? In 2018, the *Oxford English Dictionary* added the following elaboration to its definition of "prepper": "a person who anticipates a catastrophic disaster or emergency occurring on a local or global scale and actively prepares for it, typically by learning survival skills, preparing to become self-sufficient, and stockpiling food, ammunition, and other supplies."¹⁴ Rightwing prepping is now solidly established in the cultural imaginary:

rightwing preppers hoard assault rifles and freeze-dried food, and study Bear Grylls as he eats his way across demanding landscapes. While the precautionary impulse is easy to make fun of, it obviously contains more than a small kernel of truth: the situation of life *is* deteriorating, and the antagonisms *are* intensifying.

The grid, the energy flows and the supply chains that animate modernity and its digital ethers are infrastructures, not givens of nature. The whole mess of it is not likely to fail in one sudden event. The collapse of the Grid will be a slow jumpy process of local breakdowns and outages of ever longer duration, of damage from storms and neglect that more and more doesn't get repaired and back up to full speed and power. In the North at the consumer end, all those devices and vehicles profitably designed with inbuilt fragility and obsolescence and blocks to prevent repair – with "circuits and mechanisms that actively resist repair"¹⁵ – will one by one fail to turn back on, but one day the purchase of a replacement will be too expensive or otherwise no longer possible. Collective plans and skills for a local Off Grid life have of course been vividly imagined for many decades. Lauren Olamina, the wise leftwing prepper of Octavia E. Butler's *Parables*, begins where any of us might: by collecting books, tools, skills, and then practicing. "I realize I don't know very much," she tells her friend Joanne. "None of us knows very much. But we can all learn more. Then we can teach one another. We can stop denying reality or hoping it will go away by magic."¹⁶ For anyone who doubts everything will be fine and more or less just the same as it is now, reskilling and skill sharing is commoners' insurance.

If the Left consists of all those who share a "root and branch opposition to capitalism," in the North that opposition has for a long time been more feeling-structure than organized practice. The old mass organizations, evacuated by their grassroots base, have collapsed and mostly are gone – or with a few exceptions persist in deeply corrupted forms.

The new ones – Back Lives Matter, La Via Campesina, Extinction Rebellion, the new Tricontinental, the Progressive International – seem most effective as organs of education. None of these are organized to take down or take over the capitalist state, which in the imperialist North is guarded by unprecedented powers of surveillance, repression and terror. The theory and practice of dual power is once and a while discussed, but not with the sustained focus called for. Protests, temporary occupations and uprisings have been flaring powerfully for years but so far have only irritated rather than deeply disturbed or challenged the concentration of capitalist power. In the South, though, such revolts have sometimes achieved wonders: rightwing coups fought back or undone in Bolivia, Honduras and, after a half-century, at long last in Chile, the original testing grounds for the neoliberal capitalist offensive. In the North, a few actions in recent years were true feats of organization and commitment that touched the planetary imagination: Occupy; the movements of the squares and plazas; the camps against the DAPL pipeline at Standing Rock, despite their eviction; and the ZAD in France, which succeeded in derailing a new airport. The autonomous regions of Rojava, the Zapatistas in Chiapas and the long-besieged revolution in Cuba all hang on, as beacons of the Left. But it must be said again that the only serious threat to capitalism at this time is the non-linear fury of the planet itself.

In addition to its opposition to capitalism, however far that opposition finds its praxis and lifeways, the Left has understood itself as motivated by a set of values that are not shared by the Right: social justice; solidarity with the oppressed and exploited in struggle; social, gender and racial equality; an aspiration for social progress, reparation and reconciliation. These values are *potentia* and material force: they animate the worlds of the Left and transform reality when they are lived and actualized. The human part of the earth today seems riven roughly in half: the half that is the

Left, organized or not, and the other one, made up of the tiny capitalist class of self-styled apex predators and those others who identify with it. The border between these opposed worlds is a hard line – but one that is porous. Not porous in the way some people have deluded themselves into believing today – not merged to point of indistinction and indifference. It is porous, because there is always the possibility to pass through, from one to the other: to unlearn one world and, inverting all values, join the other. Those oppressed and exploited who now suffer from the malady of empathizing with the victors of history are not doomed to be stuck forever in the camps of the Right, as if people cannot change or learn from experience. Since these people belong on the Left by reason of social and material position and can potentially find their way back to it, or to it for the first time, a leftwing politics should be sure to address itself to them. In who else does the power reside to shift the balance of social forces?

After the Holocene, as the planet cooks, however, the old Left values are not enough. These values are true, but their truth is partial, anthropocentric and secretly too modernist. The “more-than-human matrix,” to borrow David Abrams’ wonderful phrase, is missing.¹⁷ Because, for the reasons already given, reorganizing the human metabolism with the planet depends on transforming the human relation to nature, this new relation must find expression in new values and feeling-structures. Leftwing mutuality must become more-than-human: care, consideration and solidarity must be extended to the other life-forms, who are no less oppressed and threatened by capitalist modernity than we are. The mutualism we need now is an expanded obligation to seek the flourishing of all, in ecological and planetary, and not merely anthropocentric, terms. I mean something like what Marshall Sahlins calls the “mutuality of being” that characterizes kinship.¹⁸ A planetary vision for the Left needs to reflect this crucial expansion of values. Agroecology and permaculture

meet this criterion: they take obligations to the more-than-human matrix fully into account in reorganizing the production of food – a core element in the metabolic interface. Commoning, I propose, is a name for the planetary practice of more-than-human mutualism.

We can now see more clearly that what differentiates leftwing from rightwing prepping is first of all a decisive difference in motivation. Rightwing preppers seek their own survival, at whatever cost to the lives of others, and secondarily seek the survival of social forms that entail the domination of others. Hence the emphasis on weapons. Leftwing preppers should seek, not mere survival, but the survival of the conditions for mutual, more-than-human flourishing. Prepping on the Left means recovering, preserving and sharing the knowledges and skills needed to build human and more-than-human refuges, spaces of sanctuary in climate chaos, spreading ecological disturbance and general biospheric meltdown. For leftwing prepping, weapons are no more than secondary tools. Basic skills of growing, noticing, caring and repairing would be the leftwing prepper's primary arsenal: quick, dependable rocket stoves and basic herbalism, grafting and coppicing, canning and brewing, weaving and pottery, beekeeping and carpentry, rag paper and bricolage, ditch medicine and navigation, the arts of the soil, the food forest, the kiln and the smithy, the boatyard and sailmaker's loft, the kindergarten, barn, lighthouse and kitchen.

The Commons

The old commons were associations and practices for mutualist local flourishing, even under the thumbs of landlords and princes. The new ones are still this, but with the expanded aim of human *and more-than-human* survival and flourishing, as befits the pressured and belated insights of epochal planetary meltdown. The object of intense theoretical reflection over the last several decades,

the concept of the commons and the political principle of the common have mapped out a zone of social struggle and construction that is neither public nor private, neither state nor capitalist economy. The renewed thinking of the commons was born of struggles against the new enclosures of the neoliberal era and inspired by the commoning practices of autonomist Zapatista communes in Chiapas.¹⁹ It is now understood as a key conceptual breakthrough in orienting visions and pathways to postcapitalist futures. The commons also marks the radical escape from the paralyzing misfire and legacies of modernist state socialisms.

The renewed thinking of the commons is plural rather than monocultural and has already generated at least three distinct tendencies. The oldest and most venerable of these has not hesitated to remember its history and honor the commoners of old. From Midnight Notes Collective, Silvia Federici, Peter Linebaugh and the radical techno-skeptics of Retort, to the "commonisation" of Massimo De Angelis and the ZAD informed, more-than-human struggle commons of Isabelle Fremeaux and Jay Jordan, these commoners have shared and explicated a deep appreciation for locally grounded associations, for tradition-inflected vernaculars, and for the inventive particularities of commoning from below.²⁰ The propositions of this essay locate themselves within this tendency.

The other two tendencies seem to me versions of modernism. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's undeniably stimulating *Commonwealth* would like to understand all production as production in common, and thereby to keep alive Marx's schema of a secretly automatic progress and agency within the forces of production: capitalism, on this view, itself produces the common and thereby digs its own grave.²¹ The third tendency is found in the rigorous, if rather immodest, theorization of Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, who in classic leftwing reflex, abjure all looking back and rooted particularities and call for a full commit-

ment to the universal. For Dardot and Laval, the common as a scalable universal principle realized in the performance becomes the keyword unlocking "revolution in the twenty-first century."²² Perhaps the commons is a large and robust enough concept to accommodate these differences in orientation, detail and tone. Time will tell.

De Angelis has helpfully outlined a possible pathway to "postcapitalism." In his theorization, the commons is a local social system comprised of common goods (de-commodified "use-values for a plurality"), commoners who produce them, and the practices of commoning by which they do so. These "commons systems" can be linked up in larger-scale "commons ecologies," in the transformation he calls "commonisation."²³ The principle of "all in common" for De Angelis is the enunciation of a communist horizon, as Marx minimally formulated it in *Critique of the Gotha Program*: "to each according to their needs and from each according to their capacities."²⁴ De Angelis is candid in acknowledging that commoners, operating between but entangled with state and capital, will have to be prepared tactically to cut deals with both, in order to hold open the autonomous zones of the commons.²⁵

His theorization suggests to me not a dual power scenario but a basic social forcefield of *quadruple power*. There are four distinct forms of organized power implicitly entailed here: (1) *capital*, which presently dominates the field, generally supported by (2) *the state*; (3) *working class and social movements* generating demands and pressure from below; and (4) *commons ecologies*, or networked associations of local commons systems. Here, then, we have a preliminary outline or framework for thinking possible *pathways* to the *vision* of an agroecological "planet of fields" or other visions of a common of commons. The quadruple forcefield is the forcefield of social transformation: it designates the social forces, antagonisms, affinities and possible alliances by and through which pathways to other visions can be

organized. The schema of quadruple power acknowledges that favorable shifts in the balance of forces can only be achieved through struggle, ultimately class struggle. These four powers are presently not equal or organized to the same degree; but this can change in the process of struggle or as a result of it. None of the four powers are monolithic or perfectly unified; all are organizations of social relations that potentially can become internally conflictual or can overcome divisive conflicts of interest. Party politics aiming to shift state policy or, to put it differently, to liberate the state from its present capture by capital, is not here mistaken for the totality of "politics." This social forcefield is embedded within and interacts metabolically with the biospheric environment and planetary biophysical systems and processes. As argued throughout these pages, these interactions cannot be ignored: the planetary, as the source of ultimately controlling systemic parameters, sooner or later impinges on the social, as it is now doing. Trickster, the nonlinear, plays last.

Commoners subvert capitalist property relations by opening enclaves and zones of de-commodified production and can reorganize the social metabolism with nature on a local level by, for example, growing food through reparative practices of agroecology. Commons ecologies potentially provide the material and metabolic base for social struggle against capital. The close affinities and associations between commons ecologies and working class and social movements drive and support the struggle to detach the state from capital and open possibilities for de-enclosure, Land Back and other radical rollbacks of capitalist property relations.²⁶ Strategy, here, would focus on building alliances between commons ecologies, working class and social movements and peoples' parties, and on coordinating the actions of allied counterpowers.²⁷ Needless to say, the capitalist class would fight ruthlessly to prevent this. The task of the Left is to organize counterpower and impose it. The alignment of leftist politics

and strategy with planetary imperatives, rather than against them, as capital's logics necessarily are, spreads advantageous disturbance and repatterning through the social forcefield. In this disturbance and repatterning, pathways to other visions of society can be opened and defended.

In recent debates and discussions, two important critical qualifications to the concept of the commons have been registered and need to be acknowledged. The first comes from Indigenous scholars and is summarized by Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz: "Most writings about the commons barely mention the fate of Indigenous peoples in relation to the call for all land to be shared."²⁸ This is a stern warning against temptations to "terranullism" that may be lurking in versions of the commons, especially in emphatically universalist ones. This temptation is also a real one in the permaculture movement. Any project of commoning that simply grounds itself on stolen Indigenous land, without acknowledging and supporting Indigenous land struggles, would clearly perpetuate settler-colonial harms.²⁹ This problem can be corrected by a planetary politics that puts Land Back first and envisions a postcapitalist social plurality that makes ample room for Indigenous self-determination. Indigenous red lines, for example those set out in the Red Nation's *Red Deal*, need to be respected and defended by the Left and its commoners.³⁰

The second critical qualification comes from Anna Tsing, who proposes the concept of "latent commons" to introduce the difficulties of accommodating the more-than-human within human political projects. Such entanglements "might be mobilized in common cause" and so can be thought of as latent commons.³¹ They in fact are already ubiquitous but are rarely noticed; they require "political listening and related arts of noticing." Latent commons "bubble with possibilities; they are elusive."³² Developing those possibilities through projects of commoning will be complicated. To clarify these complications, Tsing

elaborates four precautionary theses.

In the first, she warns that more-than-human entanglements will never be entirely symbiotic:

Latent commons are not exclusive human enclaves. Opening the commons to other beings shifts everything. Once we include pests and diseases, we can't hope for harmony; the lion will not lie down with the lamb. And organisms don't just eat each other; they also make divergent ecologies. Latent commons are those mutualist and non-antagonistic entanglements found within the play of this confusion.³³

The more-than-human commons, then, is neither a return to some imagined past of perfect symbiosis and ecological balance nor a simple leap forward into full planetary reconciliation. In the second thesis, she points out what this persistence of antagonism across species means:

Latent commons are not good for everyone. Every instance of collaboration makes room for some and leaves out others. Whole species lose out in some collaborations. The best we can do is to aim for "good-enough" worlds, where "good-enough" is always imperfect and under revision.³⁴

In the third, she notes that this need for constant feedback and revision is tough to translate into community rules:

Latent commons don't institutionalize well. Attempts to turn the commons into policy are commendably brave, but they do not capture the effervescence of the latent commons. The latent commons moves in law's interstices; it is catalyzed by infraction, infection, inattention – and poaching.³⁵

Finally, she counsels political commoners not to forget that mastery over nature is a delusion:

Latent commons cannot redeem us. Some radical thinkers hope that progress will lead us to a redemptive and utopian commons. In contrast, the latent commons is here and now, amidst the trouble. And humans are never fully in control.³⁶

I take all these warnings as excellent

advice. They don't discourage me at all. The commons clearly will be a learning process. But it is an urgent and worthy wager. No progress or redemption is pre-assured, but the minor progress and mutualist technics sketched here are not likely to make planetary blunders to match those of capitalist modernity's. More-than-human flourishing may be an impossible ideal, but it is a necessary principle for mutual livability after the Holocene. A perfect reconciliation will escape us, but the practices of commoning in conjunction with an agroecological "planet of fields" would offer ample scope for the emergence of a "good-enough" and reparative planetary justice. A plural mosaic in which the skills of human and more-than-human mutuality could be learned and honed: the Left could do worse than that. And although leftwing prepping is not in itself an adequate revolutionary strategy for collective self-rescue, obviously, the reskilling and conviviality it fosters are both useful and rich with enjoyment. As capital burns down the planet, our prospects may seem bleak and our chances slim, but to make the best of them, generously and from below, is commoners' insurgency.

× Warm thanks to close comrades, inspirators and interlocutors: Vinit Agarwal, Çağla Aykac, Anna Barseghian, Iain Boal, Ignacio Chapela, Phoebe-Lin Elnan, iLiana Fokianaki, Alex Gence, Peter Linebaugh, Eliana Otta, Yiannis Papadopoulos, Anna Papaeti, Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, George Sotiropoulos and Jonas Staal. And thanks to PAT/Temporary Academy of Arts (Elpida Karaba, Yota Ioannidou, Vangelis Vlahos and Despina Zefkili) for commissioning this text in the context of their Waste/d Pavilion at State of Concept, Athens.

1 Preliminaries: The Holocene epoch is the name geologists have given to the last 11,650 years of relatively stable and benign climate on earth. The exact end-date of the Holocene is still being debated by the Anthropocene Working Group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy, but the "golden spike" will probably be placed shortly after 1945, when radiation fallout from atomic detonations clearly appears in the stratigraphic record. This shift in planetary climate patterns and bio-geophysical processes is already altering the course of evolution; that its *causes* are anthropogenic (ie, effects of capitalist modernity) is no longer the object of scientific debate. The evidence and conclusions are documented in the reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which confirm the warnings of Indigenous elders and activists around the world, as attested in the statements of the Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council, the Indigenous Action Network, La Via Campesina and the Cochabamba Declaration.

2 By "planetary," I mean the threat to the biosphere visible in the converging crises of climate chaos, species extinction, environmental toxification and zoonotic pandemics, as well as the social crisis these produce. Capital is implicated in all of it.

3 I don't pretend to present or discuss all of these social forms, nor is this list exhaustive. It is enough that these forms indicate multiple paths beyond the limits of the capitalist economy and nation-state.

4 On the cultural signs of catastrophic and apocalyptic moods and "feeling structures" (to borrow and inflect the concept of Raymond Williams), see Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World*, trans. Rodrigo Nunes (Cambridge: Polity, 2017); Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: U Chicago Press, 2016); Sasha Lilley, David McNally, Eddie Yuen, and James Davis, *Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012); Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2016); Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future* (New York: Columbia UP, 2014); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015); Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, eds., *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 2017); *Uncivilization: The Dark Mountain Manifesto* (2009), online: www.dark-mountain.net; David Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future* (New York: Allen Lane, 2019); and The Salvage Collective, *The Tragedy of the Worker: Towards the Proletarocene* (London: Verso, 2021).

5 See Timothy Morton's 2021 BBC Radio program *The End of the World Has Already Happened*, online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000cl67/episodes/player>.

6 See especially the excellent debates in the pages of *New Left Review*, and in particular Mark Burton & Peter Somerville, "Degrowth – A Defense," *NLR* 115 (Jan/Feb 2019): 95–104; Lola Seaton, "Green Questions," *NLR* 115 (Jan/Feb 2019): 105–129; Sharachandra Lele, "Environment and Well-Being: A Perspective from the Global South," *NLR* 123 (May/June 2020): 41–63; and Nancy Fraser, "Climates of Capital," *NLR* 127 (Jan/Feb 2021): 94–127.

7 On the dangerous follies of geoengineering, see Clive Hamilton, *Earthmasters: The Dawn of the Age of Climate Engineering* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); and Frank Biermann, Jeroen Ooman, Aarti Gupta, et al., "Solar Geoengineering: The Case for an International

Non-Use Agreement," *WIREs Climate Change*, 17 January 2022, online: <https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/wcc.754>.

8 Joel Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World* (London: Zed; and Halifax: Fernwood, 2007).

9 "The question of capitalism – precisely because the system itself is once again posing (agonizing over) the question, and therefore its true enormity emerges from behind the shadow play of parties – has to be bracketed. It cannot be made political. The left should turn its attention to what can." T.J. Clark, "For a Left with No Future," *New Left Review* 74 (March/April 2012), p. 55; reprinted with modifications in *Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018), p. 239. While I take seriously Clark's arguments in this impressive essay, and especially appreciate his challenge to condescending modernist dogmas, I cannot agree with his conclusion, that a moderate politics of small steps is the only option remaining for the Left.

10 The Red Nation, *The Red Deal*, in three parts, 2020, online: <https://therednation.org/>; Nicholas Beuret, "A Green New Deal Between Whom and For What?" *Viewpoint Magazine*, October 24, 2019. Online: <https://viewpointmag.com/2019/10/24/green-new-deal-for-what/>; and Max Ajl, *A People's Green New Deal* (London: Pluto Press, 2021). See also George Sotiropoulos, *A Materialist Theory of Justice: The One, the Many, the Not-Yet* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

11 Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geographies of Violence* (New York: Nation Books, 2011), p. 11. See also Mike Davis, "Who Will Build the Ark," *New Left Review* 61 (January/February 2010): 29–46; Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Danger of Fossil Fascism* (London: Verso, 2021); and Todd Miller, *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration and Homeland Security* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2017). For a vivid fictional depiction of the armed lifeboat in its fully developed form, see John Lancaster, *The Wall* (London: Faber & Faber, 2019).

12 The data for 2021 have not yet been tallied. See Jonathan Watts, "Murders of Environmental and Land Defenders Hit Record High," *The Guardian*, 12 September 2021, online: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/13/murders-environment-land-defenders-record-high>.

13 "Agriculture and oil, gas and mining have been consistently the biggest drivers of attacks against land and environmental defenders – and they are also the industries pushing us further into runaway climate change through deforestation and increasing carbon emissions." Global Witness, Press Release, 29 July 2020: <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/global-witness-records-the-highest-number-of-land-and-environmental-activists-murdered-in-one-year-with-the-link-to-accelerating-climate-change-of-increasing-concern/>.

14 Oxford English Dictionary, "New Words Notes for 2018," online: <https://public.oed.com/blog/new-words-notes-september-2018/>.

15 Harun Siljic, "Opening this Article Voids Warranty," *Science for the People*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2021), online: <https://magazine.scienceforthepeople.org/vol24-2-dont-be-evil/opening-this-article-voids-warranty/>.

16 Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower* [1993], (New York: Grand Central Station, 2000), p. 58. See also the harrowing *Parable of the Talents* (1998).

17 David Abrams, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York: Vintage, 2011), p. 7. See also *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1997), p. 22: "We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human."

18 See Marshall Sahlins, *What Kinship Is – And Is Not* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), pp. 19–31, 38.

19 Midnight Notes Collective, "The New Enclosures," in *Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War, 1973–1992* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1992); and *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local and Global Struggles in the Fourth World War* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2000).

20 Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) and *Stop, Thief! The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014); Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004); Iain Boal, Janferie Stone, Michael Watts and Cal Winslow, eds., *West of Eden: Communes and Utopia in Northern California* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012); Massimo De Angelis, *Omnia Sunt Communia: On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism* (London: Zed, 2014); and Isabelle Freemuax and Jay Jordan, *We Are "Nature" Defending Itself: Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones* (London: Pluto Press/Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, 2021). On the ZAD Oliver Ressler's 2017 film *Everything's Coming Together while Everything's Falling Apart: The ZAD*.

21 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). Hardt and Negri are usually considered postmodernists and no doubt would be appalled to be counted as modernist. But I do so count them, in the sense I have specified: the investment in forces of production and technology as inherently and automatically (magically) liberatory, as well as the presumed irreversibility of an implicit development narrative.

22 Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century* [2014], trans. Matthew Maclellan (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

23 De Angelis, *Omnia Sunt Communia*, pp. 10–15, 77–117, 273–274. De Angelis also includes non-localized commons systems, such as online peer-to-peer networks that (p. 101) "occupy a social space rather than a physical place."

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15. The "Communism" that Morris imagines in *News from Nowhere* arguably points to the same horizon.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 273–274. "The strategic horizon is therefore not to avoid making deals, but how to make a given deal the basis upon which commons can develop new forms and outflank capital by including the issues and the people who have been excluded by it." De Angelis also makes the important argument that (p. 269): "Systems are not implemented, their dominance emerges; and their emergence occurs through the related processes of social revolution and political revolution, with the former creating the source from which the latter get their power to perturb capital while at the same time developing their autonomy."

26 Very briefly: the forcefield of quadruple power I take from my reading of De Angelis can be understood as a modifying complexification of the perpetual dual power proposed in a late essay by Nikos Poulantzas. For Poulantzas, a continuous counterbalancing of dual powers is needed for the building of democratic socialism. His version of dual power is already a revision, inspired by Rosa Luxembour's critique of anti-democratic tendencies in Bolshevik politics, of the classic moment of dual power in the October Revolution of 1917, in which the collapsing legitimacy and power of the Tsarist state and ruling class is matched and challenged by the growing power of the Soviets. Poulantzas argued that grassroots social movements must in effect perpetuate a situation of dual power, in order to check the authoritarian tendencies of the

capitalist state, as it is driven towards democratic socialism by demands from below – and must continue to do so as this state is transformed into a socialist one. "In time, dual power would involve two powers of the left – a left government and a second power composed of popular organs." Poulantzas, "Towards a Democratic Socialism" [1978], in *State, Power, Socialism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 2000), p. 264. To follow through on Poulantzas's insights, if out of a quadruple power social forcefield eco-socialism were established and capitalist class power abolished, then commons ecologies and working class and social movements could operate as allied counterpowers in a triangular forcefield working to hold the eco-socialist state accountable from below. It would then be possible to see if, or to what extent, the parts of the state itself could be replaced by commons systems and ecologies. If that transformation were successful, then a perpetual dual power of the Left would be the result.

27 I am locating the organized activity of peoples' parties and all other electoral parties within the general struggle for the governance of the state – and so within the power of the state rather than of working class and social movements. A party may be based in or connected to social movements but are nevertheless distinct from them, especially if they are successful in obtaining governance over the state.

28 Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, p. 231. She continues, on the following page: "From the Indigenous perspective, as Jodi Byrd writes, 'any notion of the commons that speaks for and as indigenous as it advocates transforming indigenous governance or incorporating indigenous peoples into a multitude that might then reside on those lands forcibly taken from indigenous peoples does nothing to disrupt the genocidal and colonialist intent of the initial and now repeated historical process.'" Dunbar-Ortiz is here quoting from Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2011).

29 The 2020 Stan and Screen Australia television series *The Commons* confirms that this terranullist temptation is quite real. The series in fact has nothing at all to do with the commons; it merely rips off the word in a clumsy attempt to discredit it. Its whitestream family dramas unfold against the backdrop of climate chaos, climate migration and zoonotic disease in the settler-colonial nation of Australia in the near future. Aside from an appalling version of the politics of the armed lifeboat, discussed in chapter 3, above, this series does not anywhere acknowledge or depict Aboriginal peoples (except as migrants and refugees) or the theft of their land. The legitimacy of Australian occupation is simply assumed. I thank Jonas Staal for alerting me to this culture industry production.

30 The Red Nation, *Red Deal*, online: <https://therednation.org/>.

31 Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, p. 135.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

33 *Ibid.*, Tsing's italics.

34 *Ibid.*, Tsing's italics.

35 *Ibid.*, Tsing's italics.

36 *Ibid.*, Tsing's italics.





The Path Is Never the Same (2022)
Oliver Ressler
film still, HD video

Carbon and Captivity (2020)
Oliver Ressler
film still, 4K, 33 min.

OLIVER RESSLER (b.1970, Austria) is a filmmaker and artist based in Vienna, who works on issues such as economics, democracy, global warming, forms of resistance and social alternatives. He has completed 34 films that have been screened worldwide in thousands of events of social movements, art institutions and film festivals. He had comprehensive solo exhibitions at Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, CAAC, Seville; Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdansk; Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz; MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest; SALT Galata, Istanbul and at Cultural Centre of Belgrade. Ressler has participated in more than 350 group exhibitions, including Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the biennials in Prague (2005), Seville (2006), Moscow (2007), Taipei (2008), Lyon (2009), Venice (2013), Quebec (2014), Jeju (2017), Kyiv (2017), Gothenburg (2019), Stavanger (2019).

Ο OLIVER RESSLER (γεν. 1970, Αυστρία) είναι κινηματογραφιστής και καλλιτέχνης με έδρα τη Βιέννη, ο οποίος ασχολείται με θέματα όπως η οικονομία, η δημοκρατία, η υπερθέρμανση του πλανήτη, οι μορφές αντίστασης και οι κοινωνικές εναλλακτικές λύσεις. Έχει ολοκληρώσει 34 ταινίες που έχουν προβληθεί παγκοσμίως σε χιλιάδες εκδηλώσεις κοινωνικών κινημάτων, καλλιτεχνικών ιδρυμάτων και κινηματογραφικών φεστιβάλ. Είχε ολοκληρωμένες ατομικές εκθέσεις στο Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, CAAC, Σεβίλλη – Wyspa Institute of Art, Γκντανσκ – Lentos Kunstmuseum, Λιντς – MNAC – Εθνικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Βουκουρέστι – SALT Galata, Κωνσταντινούπολη και στο Πολιτιστικό Κέντρο του Βελιγραδίου. Η Ressler έχει συμμετάσχει σε περισσότερες από 350 ομαδικές εκθέσεις, μεταξύ άλλων στο Museo Reina Sofía, Μαδρίτη, στο Centre Pompidou, Παρίσι, στις Μπιενάλε της Πράγας (2005), της Σεβίλλης (2006), της Μόσχας (2007), της Ταϊπέι (2008), της Λυών (2009), της Βενετίας (2013), του Κεμπέκ (2014), της Jeju (2017), του Κιέβου (2017), του Γκέτεμποργκ (2019), του Σταβάνγκερ (2019).

Colophon

This catalogue has been published on the occasion of the solo exhibition *Assets Must Be Stranded* by Oliver Ressler, curated by iLiana Fokianaki, as part of Waste/d Pavilion Episode 2, May 27—September 24, 2022

Catalogue Texts:
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The programme *Coalition of the Care-full* is part of the European Pavilion



Cover Image: Carbon and Captivity (2020) Oliver Ressler, film still

Special thanks to: Gene Ray

With the support of Federal Ministry Republic of Austria

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Arts, Culture,
Civil Service and Sport

Founder and Director:
iLiana Fokianaki

Artistic Directors 2022:
Temporary Academy of Arts/
PAT (Elpida Karaba, Vangelis Vlahos, Despina Zefkili, Yota Ioannidou)

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Production & Coordination:
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Printed Matter:
iLiana Fokianaki
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Proofreading:
Konstantina Melachroinou

Graphic Design:
Rana Karan/ranakaran.com

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First Edition
ISBN: 978-618-85954-1-5

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Temporary Academy of Arts/
PAT