

Press release

02/06/09

Weak Signals, Wild Cards

An exhibition and a day of lectures and performances curated by de Appel Curatorial Programme '08/'09 in Amsterdam-Noord

For the first time in decades, the Shell Research and Technology terrain in Amsterdam-Noord opens to a wider public with the de Appel Curatorial Programme '08/'09 project *Weak Signals, Wild Cards*. The project is an exhibition of commissioned works, talks and performances. The curators have invited ten international and local artists, artist collectives, and contributors from other fields to react to the development plans for Amsterdam-Noord and to imagine a set of alternative futures. After a period of research and meetings with local initiatives, the curators have taken as their starting point the current local situation and view it under its global conditions. The new commissions made by the artists are for and from the alternative futures that they have imagined and will be displayed for one month, with an opening event on 26th June accompanied by music from Dutch DJ duo The Routines, and food from the local initiative Vrouwenbazaar.

Opening: 7pm, Friday 26th June 2009

- with music by The Routines and food by the Vrouwenbazaar

Exhibition: 12–6pm, Wed–Sun 27th June–26th July 2009

Talks & performances: 2–8pm, Sunday 28th June 2009

Venue: Shell Kantine, Shell Terrain, Tolhuisweg, Amsterdam

Artists and contributors:

YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES (KR/USA), Heman Chong (SG), Design Negation (NL), Flying City (KR), Yvonne Dröge Wendel (NL), Famed (D), Andreja Kuluncic, Alon Levin (USA), Oda Projesi (TUR), Merijn Oudenampsen (NL), Laura Oldfield Ford (UK), Maria Pask (UK), and Lee Scrivner (USA)

The title *Weak Signals, Wild Cards* uses two terms from futurology. Weak signals form a pattern of phenomena that serves as an indicator of possible future developments. Wild cards refer to events that are difficult to predict but have a high impact. Amsterdam-Noord, the largest borough in Amsterdam with a long industrial history, is undergoing a series of public and private initiatives that aim to revamp this traditionally working class area. The artworks, performances and presentations made for this project attempt to forecast the as yet unknown future of art in Amsterdam-Noord, and the result is a flush of utopias, dystopias, warning signals, and manifestos.

Through the commissioning of alternative futures *Weak Signals, Wild Cards* will compose a common body of imagination, seeking to problematise the 'usefulness' of art in city redevelopment, and the impact of regeneration on the existing population. In the current economic uncertainty where the conditions for urban regeneration may no longer hold fast, it becomes necessary to rethink what other kinds of urban structures, environments, and societies might be possible – and what artistic practices might result.

The newly commissioned art on show in *Weak Signals, Wild Cards* are a diverse array of responses. The artists have been commissioned to make new works from their concept of the future of the area and the issues arising from it, based on local visits. The unavoidability of entrepreneurship in art is made manifest by Korean urban research collective, Flying City, whose fictitious office *Creative Development Asia* exploits the buzz around intercultural exchange and ideas of nomadic global art communities. Some works, by contrast, respond directly to the Shell Kantine and its future: Maria Pask retells what might have come of the attempt of feminist and class activist Kate Millet to establish a female artist colony in the face of aggressive land developers, in a film made onsite. Alon Levin's two new sculptures echo the corporate aesthetic of the Shell Kantine, capturing an ambivalent artist's role somewhere between function and enigma.

During the first residency partnership with the new Amsterdam-Noord art space the KijkRuimte, British artist Laura Oldfield Ford will produce drawings, fly-postings and zines. These apocalyptic visions of Noord distribute the rallying-cries of a future group of people struggling to survive. Around the corner, in a partnership with Noordjes Kinderkunst, a group of local children will work together on an education project to create a time machine, projecting their hopes for the first children's museum in Noord set to open with the Tolhuistuin next year.

In parallel to the exhibition and also open to the public, is a day of future predictions by practitioners from fields related to the questions *Weak Signals, Wild Cards* poses; Amsterdam-based urban theorist Merijn Oudenampsen will take the industrial history of the area and interrogate the meaning of labour in a future creative society. The events will conclude with the inaugural performance of *Lord Garden's Masque*, a short musical satire by playwright and theorist Lee Scrivner, which spins around the central ironies of state-led artistic patronage. All documentation of the day of predictions will be presented in the exhibition.

These commissions seize the potential of art to slip through time and form itself in response to multiple possibilities. The contributions are not finished works or statements, in that they are documents of a society that is still to emerge. Relevant both to global and local situations, their arrival allows a reconsidering of the present.

Notes to editors

The Shell Kantine

The Shell Kantine is the canteen of the workers of the former Shell oil research complex. Shell are consolidating their activities and have sold large portions of land to the public-private housing development initiative Overhoeks, consisting of the municipality of Amsterdam Noord, ING Real Estate and the private social housing company Ymere Ontwikkeling. It is sited on the waterfront and in the shadow of the iconic Overhoeks tower, one of the largest and most recognised structures in Amsterdam. This 1970s canteen will form part of the arts centre Tolhuistuin, directed by broadcaster, former director of De Balie, and journalist Chris Keulemans. *Weak Signals, Wild Cards* occupies this space in between these two functions of the canteen.

de Appel arts centre and de Appel Curatorial Programme

De Appel is an internationally oriented arts centre located in Amsterdam. Since 1975 it has functioned as a site for the research and presentation of contemporary visual art through exhibitions, publications and discursive events. De Appel also functions as a platform for performances by visual artists, choreographers and theatre makers.

de Appel Curatorial Programme is a nine-month long professional programme for the development of young curators. The programme was initiated in 1994 by Saskia Bos, and has since been reshaped to have a strongly context-responsive focus by the current de Appel director Ann Demeester. de Appel Curatorial Programme '08/'09 is Clare Butcher (ZW/ZA), Lilian Engelmann (D), Mia Jankowicz (UK), Christina Li (CH), Ana Nikitovic (SR) and Ji Yoon Yang (KR).

www.deappel.nl

This project was made possible with contributions from:

Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst, de Appel, Fonds BKVB, Goethe-Institut NL, KijkRuimte, kvadraat, Arts Council Korea, National Arts Council Singapore, Projectbureau Noordwaarts, SNS REAAL fonds, Stadsdeel Amsterdam Noord, Steim, Tolhuistuin, Vedett, and Ymere

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