

Floating Utopias

Exhibition and supporting program

27 April – 24 June, 2018, daily 12-7 pm, Wed-Fri 12-8 pm

Opening: 26 April, 2018, 7 pm

Press preview: 26 April, 11 am

Participating artists: Ant Farm, Artúr van Balen, Theo Botschuijver, Eventstructure Research Group, Anna Hoetjes, Franco Mazzucchelli, Ahmet Ögüt, Marco Barotti and Plastique Fantastique, Tomás Saraceno, Anika Schwarzlose, Graham Stevens, The Yes Men, Tools for Action, Huw Wal, UFO

Ever since the first hot-air balloon ascended in 1783, inflatable objects have inspired the imagination of alternative worlds. In the nineteenth century, aerial towns colonized the skies and floating labs surveyed the world. Flying cameras popularized the view from above. Starting in the 1930s, gigantic floats set the stage for socialist and capitalist mass parades. Along with the ideals of the generation of 1968, inflatable spaces and performances entered into architecture and tested new forms of coexistence.

Floating Utopias presents the diversity of pneumatic media in an exhibition and accompanying interventions in urban space. The project juxtaposes historical and contemporary works and raises questions as to their potential for artistic and activist practices. Inflatable objects still serve as tools for aesthetic and political interventions today: artists and activists situate their works between surreality and functionality, fiction and fact. Inflatables entice us into play and disobedience, they forge communities and prompt participation, generate attention and agency.

26 April, 2018, 11 am-10 pm

On the opening day, the artist **Ahmet Ögüt** will stage a participatory performance for *Floating Utopias*. The stationary installation »The Castle of Vooruit«, which was on view for the first time in Gent in 2012, floats over the Oranienplatz in Berlin-Kreuzberg for one day. Starting at 5 pm, Ögüt's performance »Speakers Corner« invites guests and random passers-by to talk about the theme of utopias in the shadow of the inflatable object.

26 April, 2018, from 9 pm

At the opening, the Dutch artist **Theo Botschuijver**, a former member of the **Eventstructure Research Group (ERG)**, will realize a new version of the »Pneu Show« that took place for the first time in Bern in 1968. ERG's inflatable film installations and participatory, and at times deliberately disturbing, happenings in urban space theorized the 'event' as an open, experimental situation. In their search for commonalities between art, architecture and technology, they allowed participants to determine the course of events. The exhibition will additionally feature archival material of ERG in the form of photographs and construction sketches. They document the enthusiasm for the pneumatic medium in the 1970s.

27 April, 2018, from 4 pm

Since 1964, **Franco Mazzucchelli** has been making inflatable objects that he understands as interventions in everyday situations and leaves to random users. For *Floating Utopias*, the Italian artist will produce an inflatable object titled »Elica« from his series »A. to A.« at Berlin's Osthafen. As a new artistic experiment, the object will float through Berlin on the River Spree. In the exhibition Mazzucchelli's Film 'Alfa Romeo' (1971) will also be screened, showing factory workers playfully reacting to an inflatable sculpture and simultaneously positioning it against car traffic in Milan.

26 April – 1 May, 2018

In their piece »Woodpecker from the Datablase«, the Italian artist **Marco Barotti** and the architecture collective **Plastique Fantastique** cover the entrance area of the nGbK with an inflatable membrane. Inside the bubble there is a sensor that registers electromagnetic radiation produced by mobile communication technologies. The radiation is translated into sounds and transmitted to the exhibition space in real-time. A bird-like object plays the frequencies of the electromagnetic spectrum by translating waves into movement patterns resembling those of a woodpecker. The data bubble, which makes reference to both the interventions of the Viennese group of architects Haus Rucker and the first inflatable antenna dome of the engineer Walter Bird, lets us audibly perceive the electromagnetic radiation surrounding us.

Date to be announced:

A part of the exhibition's events program, an 'Aerocene Explorer', built by the Argentine artist **Tomás Saraceno**, will be launched on the Tempelhofer Feld. The »Aerocene Explorer« is a backpack consisting of a solar balloon, a GPS tracker, a thermometer, and a camera. Saraceno's vision of cities in the clouds is based on emission-free air traffic. Since the event is weather dependent, it will be announced at short notice. Please get in touch with us if you would like to participate.

Supporting programme (overview):

26 April, 2018, Oranienplatz, Berlin-Kreuzberg
11 am-10 pm
Ahmet Öğüt, »Castle of Vooruit«, Intervention in public space
5 pm
»Speakers Corner«, Participatory performance

26 April, 2018, 9 pm, nGbK
Theo Botschuijver (formerly Eventstructure Research Group), »Pneu Show«, Performance

27 April 2018, 4 pm, Osthafen, Zobelstraße, Berlin
Franco Mazzucchelli, »A. to A. (Elica)«, intervention in public space

4 May, 2018, nGbK (EN)
7 pm
Dr. des. Hannah Zindel (Lüneburg), lecture: »Google Balloons and other Histories of Unmanned Ballooning«
8.30 pm
Tomás Saraceno (Berlin) and Graham Stevens (London), Artist talk

19 May 2018, nGbK (EN)

Symposium »Floating Ideologies – Material Disobedience«

The interdisciplinary symposium brings together choreographers, artists, media scholars and philosophers to investigate the potentials of inflatable technologies. Artistic and activist positions are presented and questioned as to their ethical dimensions.

3-8 pm

Lectures:

- > Tom Ullrich: »Fying Barricades«
- > Artúr van Balen "Tools for Action"
- > Anika Schwarzlose: »Disguise and Deception - inflatables and their use for military operations«
- > Moritz Frischkorn: »Choreography of Things, from 1968 until now«
- > Shailoh Phillips: »Floating Ideologies: Ethical Dilemmas for the Politics of Direct Action«

8 pm
Huw Wahl, »Action Space« 1968-1978, Film screening & discussion

nGbK project group: Artúr van Balen, Fabiola Bierhoff, Alexander Dunst, Anna Hoetjes, Jantien Roozenburg, Hannah Zindel

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