

Unstable Planetary Spaces

Adenike Titilope Oladosu + Don't Follow the Wind
with Ahmet Ögüt and Eva & Franco Mattes
Kunsthalle Giessen

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Curated by Jason Waite + Adenike Titilope Oladosu

Duration: 06.07.2023 – 11.07.2023

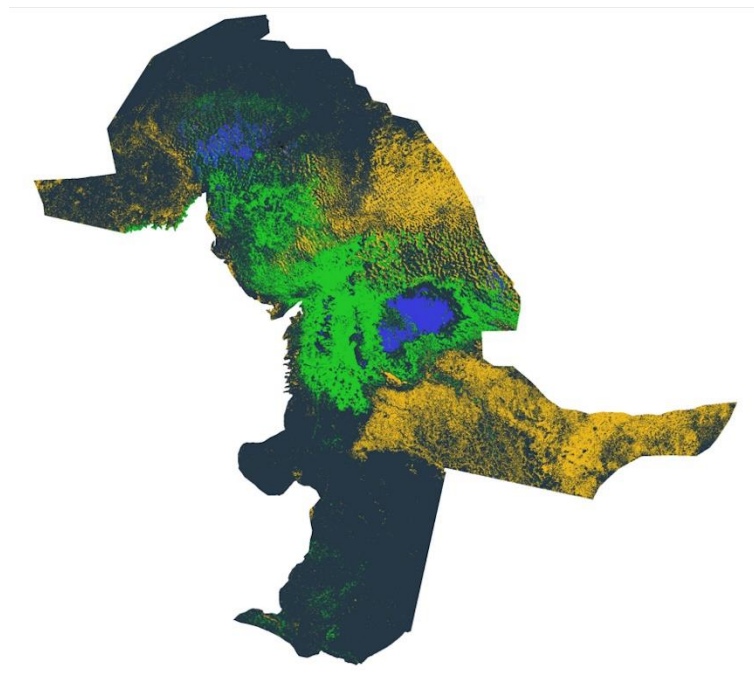


Fig.: Adenike Titilope Oladosu /I Lead Climate Action Initiative

Opening

Thursday, 06.07.2023, 6 pm, Kunsthalle Giessen

with Dr. Nadia Ismail (Director Kunsthalle Giessen), Prof. Claus Leggewie (Director of the Panel on Planetary Thinking) + Liza B. Bauer (Interim Scientific Manager Panel on Planetary Thinking)

Artist Talk

Thursday, 06.07.2023, 6:30 pm, Kunsthalle Giessen

Dr. Nadia Ismail + Liza B. Bauer with Adenike Titilope Oladosu (I Lead Climate Action), Jason Waite (Don't Follow the Wind), Nikolaus Hirsch (Don't Follow the Wind; Director of CIVAS, Brussels), Eva & Franco Mattes (Don't Follow the Wind).

From the shrinking of the mega-lake Chad due to climate change to the irradiated Fukushima exclusion zone caused by nuclear fallout in Japan 2011, *Unstable Planetary Spaces* explores how artists and activists are dealing with some of the most challenging durational disasters. Kunsthalle Giessen is collaborating with the *Panel on Planetary Thinking* (Justus Liebig University Giessen) to highlight the work of their *Planetary Scholars & Artists in Residence Program* Fellows – Adenike Titilope Oladosu (*I Lead Climate Action*) and Jason Waite (*Don't Follow the Wind*).

The exhibition focuses on two specific planetary spaces—Lake Chad in West Africa and the Fukushima exclusion zone in Japan—that highlight the ongoing radical transformation on Earth by human beings. Through a close examination of these unstable sites we can not only see how these areas are imperiled but how they are affecting Giessen and Europe.

Environmental activist and ecofeminist *Adenike Titilope Oladosu*, based in Abuja, Nigeria, shows images of her work with remote sensing to better understand the shrinking of the once Lake Mega- Chad bordering Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger is a resource for millions of residents. Its pronounced reduction since the 1970s has fuelled the loss of crops and poverty, migration to Europe, and even militant groups like Boko Haram accelerating armed conflict in the region. To face these crises, Oladosu has been using remote sensing tools in order to track the massive changes in the lake and the images these produce are being shown for the first time at Kunsthalle Giessen. The series of images show the water levels, vegetation, and the changing landscape that has profound implications for the future of the region and Europe. Oladosu asks us to imagine what a restored Lake Chad would look like and argues that making this a reality has a profound impact on not only the region but on the entire planet.

The curator and researcher *Jason Waite* is part of *Don't Follow the Wind* (Chim↑Pom, Kenji Kubota, Jason Waite, Eva & Franco Mattes), a collective of artists and curators running a long-term exhibition inside the inaccessible and radioactive Fukushima exclusion zone that asks the question—What can art do in an ongoing catastrophe? The exhibition is composed of 12 new artist commissions collaborating with displaced residents that host the projects in their abandoned homes in the zone opened in 2015 but cannot yet be seen as the zone remains closed to the public. As a living mnemonic, the exhibition shows how art can be active in zones where humans can no longer live.

Through the ongoing care and maintenance of the exhibition, Waite and the collective discovered that whereas humans have not been able to see the exhibition, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of more-than-human animals in the area. The collective has come to see

these more-than-human neighbours as their present visitors and participants in the exhibition. They began to work with scientists, researchers, and former local residents to learn more about these new inhabitants in the zone. They installed field cameras to see exactly who was using the farm and in what ways these inhabitants were participating with the art works. During the Fellowship, Waite and the collective have been analyzing these images and comparing them with new footage from field cameras installed around Giessen. *Don't Follow the Wind* is showing a new 3 channel video installation "Non-Visitor Center" (2023) about these more-than-human worlds in Fukushima and the implications for what this means for human and more-than-human adaptation to the next large-scale disaster of the twenty-first century.

New York based-artists Eva & Franco Mattes who are also part of the collective are showing their project "Fukushima Texture Packs" (2015–ongoing) where they photographed textures inside the zone such as gravel roads, dead grass, or discarded mattresses and transformed these surfaces into images that can be endlessly tiled and released them online for use by filmmakers, designers, 3D modelers, or video game designers to populate new digital spaces. These new digital textures that can then be used in films, websites, virtual environments, or even printed out and inhabit the physical world. In the exhibition a central carpet with seats for visitors are all covered in printed patterns from the "Fukushima Texture Packs". For the occasion of the exhibition, Kunsthalle Giessen is also producing a new limited edition tote bag with one of the textures that can then circulate in spaces throughout Giessen, Hessen, and beyond.

The Amsterdam, Istanbul, and Berlin-based artist *Ahmet Öğüt*, one of the participating artists in *Don't Follow the Wind*, shows a video of testing "Once Upon a Time Breathing Apparatus for Breathable Air" an eerie amalgamation of Fukushima's venerable history and its contaminated present. Öğüt developed a modified samurai radiation protection armor, consisting of a Level A hazmat suit incorporating pieces of centuries-old samurai armour donated by a former resident of the zone who is a local horseman that traces his ancestry back to Japan's feudal warriors. Öğüt's work speculates on how the tradition of the Fukushima area can produce a new sartorial imagination to protect against future disasters.

Adenike Titilope Oladosu is an ecofeminist, ecoreporter, and climate justice leader based in Abuja, Nigeria. Adenike is a first class graduate of agricultural economics from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi in Nigeria. She is also the founder of the *I Lead Climate Action initiative*, a Pan-African organization that advocates for a green democracy across Africa and the restoration of Lake Chad. She specializes in peace, security, and equality in Africa, especially the Lake Chad

region and focuses on its restoration using remote sensing tools. She has showcased her climate action in both international and local forums, and is Fellow of the Panel on Planetary Thinking.

Jason Waite is a curator, writer, and researcher focused on forms of practice producing agency. Recently, he is working in sites of crisis amidst the detritus of capitalism, looking for tools and radical imaginaries for different ways of living and working together. He holds a PhD in Contemporary Art History and Theory from the University of Oxford and an MA in Art and Politics from Goldsmiths, London. He is the editor of *Art Review Oxford* and co-editor of the book *Don't Follow the Wind* (Sternberg Press, 2021).

Eva & Franco Mattes are an artist duo based in New York and part of the *Don't Follow the Wind* collective. They explore the ethical and moral issues that arise when people interact remotely, their work has been shown at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, and will be the holding an upcoming retrospective at Frankfurter Kunstverein.

Ahmet Ögüt born in Diyarbakır, is a sociocultural initiator, artist, and lecturer based in Amsterdam, Istanbul and Berlin, he is a participating artist in *Don't Follow the Wind*. Working across a variety of media, including photography, video, and installation, Ögüt often uses humor and small gestures to offer his commentary on rather serious or pressing social and political issues. He has exhibited widely, more recently with solo presentations at Kunstverein Dresden, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Chisenhale Gallery, and Van Abbemuseum.

The **Panel on Planetary Thinking** was established in 2020 with the support of the Presidential Board of Justus Liebig University and provides scientific support for concept development and strategy formation in the field of sustainability. It functions as a research-oriented think tank that draws on the cross-disciplinary expertise of top JLU scientists and strengthens a university-wide perspective on sustainability and supports the transfer of relevant topics from research and teaching to society through high-profile events. The exhibition highlights work of the fellows on the *Planetary Scholars & Artists in Residence Program* whose projects focus on the concept of Planetary Spaces this year.

The **Kunsthalle Giessen** is an exhibition space for contemporary art in the town hall of the City of Giessen in the state of Hesse, Germany. As a venue for temporary exhibitions without its own permanent collection, it presents current trends and positions in contemporary art in a single

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space the size of 400 sqm. The Kunsthalle's role is to convey contemporary art in a variety of ways that inspire the public to engage with it, while at the same time addressing social discourse.

In cooperation with

Panel on Planetary Thinking

With the support of

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Justus Liebig University Giessen

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Katharina Endres

Lena Fries

Liza Bauer

Marlene Schlarb

Marta Dannoritzer

Meike Wiegand

Nadia Ismail

Nikolaus Hirsch

Peter Schomber



Fig.: Don't Follow the Wind

Visitor information

All the information relating to the opening, our accompanying programme of events and admission information can be found online at

www.kunsthalle-giessen.de | www.giessen.de | <http://www.uni-giessen.de/de/fbz/planetarythinking>