

Invisible Oil. A research project by Ernst Logar
Peacock Visual Arts, Aberdeen

Exhibition: 4 October to 15 November 2008

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Opening: Friday 3 October 6-8pm

Artist's Talk by Ernst Logar: Saturday 4 October, 2pm

A new commission by Austrian artist Ernst Logar investigates the invisible, yet vital locations of the global oil industry in Aberdeen.

"Invisible Oil" aims to make hidden locations of the oil industry in Scotland publicly visible. Ernst Logar maps some of those political, economic, technological and social spaces and reveals their interconnections and relations in new photographs, sculptures and prints. The project will be documented in the publication 'Invisible Oil.'

Two series of photographs approach the revealing of the hidden in complementary ways:

The first series is based on painstaking research and communication with companies in the oil industry to gain access to crucial locations in the production process and permission to document them. The resulting images are both unspectacular, and rarely seen. It is their status as rare images, and as records of specific locations in the wider connections of big companies and globally crucial economic and political developments, that makes them exciting. The series also forms a new contribution to the artist's long-term project 'Non Public Spaces.' 'Non Public Spaces' deals with spaces which are not open to ordinary citizens, but have a crucial political, economic or social significance. The documentation of the confrontation of the individual with the apparatus of power and its institutions, the individual's continual effort to penetrate these spaces, are another part of the work.

In the second series of photographs, Ernst Logar re-contextualizes the debris of contemporary civilization as the physically visible, but most often not consciously recognized, evidence of the permeation of all aspects of life by petrochemical substances. The photographs document various oil-rig shaped sculptures, each constituted entirely by discarded plastic objects and set, on a monumental scale, against the shore-line of one of Aberdeen's beaches. While the material of the sculptures would be more commonly seen as rubbish, the plastics actually constitute the tangible and ubiquitous form of the role of crude oil in daily life. While some North Sea Rigs have been named after Scottish birds – such as the Brent Goose – Logar's petroleum-based structures carry the names of the most deprived neighbourhoods of Aberdeen. Thus, a connection between social inequality in a city that is nominally one of the richest in the country, and the politics of oil, the source of its wealth, is suggested.

The material substance of oil and its invisibility from the public domain, is also at the centre of several works in the exhibition which employ crude oil itself. One forms a mirror of moving oil in the form of a large perspex box, filled with crude oil that is continuously pumped through. The second work, a series of prints, produced with crude oil and some of the plastic debris used for the rigs, reunites the initial material. Embossed in the black oil covered paper, the shapes and textures of the plastic objects resemble contemporary fossils.

Invisible Oil, both in its processes and in the interconnected series of works presented, focuses on issues of significance, power and visibility. Ultimately, Logar also connects this opposition between the hidden, underground crude oil, its extraction, and subsequently transformed visibility in most likely every aspect of our daily lives, to the workings of the subconscious in terms of the human psyche.

Ernst Logar, born 1965 in Klagenfurt, Austria, lives and works in Vienna, Austria. He graduated from the Institute for Media Arts at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, in 2004, and has since developed a research-based artistic practice, with works ranging in format from photography, sculpture to video and space installations. In addition to the significant long-term project 'Non Public Spaces', many of Logar's works have focused specifically on 'hidden,' repressed events in Austrian history, and in particular the resistance of partisan's in the artist's native province of Carinthia, during the National Socialist Era. Earlier this year his project 'The end of Remembrance – Carinthian Partisans' was shown at The Austrian Parliament, in an installation at the District Criminal Court, Vienna and other site-specific places. International exhibitions in the Non Public Spaces series have included Keio Research Centre, Yokohama, Japan, and Delfina Studio Trust, London. Invisible Oil is Ernst Logar's first exhibition in Scotland.

Invisible Oil is supported by BMUKK - the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture.

Peacock Visual Arts is the main contemporary visual arts organisation in Aberdeen and the North-east of Scotland and is supported by Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen. 'Invisible Oil' continues Peacock Visual Arts' focus on the context of Aberdeen within the global energy sector. Previous projects on this subject included Ursula Biemann's 'Black Sea Files' in 2007 and the ongoing 'Over A Barrel' project by Edinburgh-based photographer Owen Logan.

For more details please have a look at our website: www.peacockvisualarts.com

For more information about the artist see: www.logar.co.at

For high resolution images please contact Nina Eggens, press & marketing manager, 01224-639539, nina@peacockvisualarts.co.uk

Image Caption: Photograph, Ernst Logar 2008

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