

Sat, 16/04/2016–Sun, 21/08/2016

## Reset Modernity!

ZKM\_ Atrium 8+9, ground floor

Press conference: April 14, 2016 at 10 am

Opening: April 15, 2016

7 pm: Performance *Superpowers of Ten* by Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation

8 pm: Official opening ceremony

**To conclude the GLOBALE, the *Reset Modernity!* exhibition, curated by Bruno Latour, Martin Guinard-Terrin, Christophe Leclercq & Donato Ricci, is being opened. Throughout six different procedures, visitors will have the opportunity to experiment with “resetting modernity”. The exhibition is closely linked to the *Museum of Oil* module by Territorial Agency and *The Appearance of That Which Cannot be Seen* module by Armin Linke. The three shows which are thought in resonance with one another, deal with some stakes that the Moderns are facing at a time of deep ecological mutation.**

Michel Serres once said that in the time of Galileo people were just as surprised by the startling news that the Earth had a "motion" as we are now by the additional news that it might feel "emotion" — and that such emotion is in part due to human activity! It seems that today we do not have to absorb the novelty of the expansion to new lands in space, but instead find new ways to understand the old land under our feet. Enough to be deeply disoriented...

What do you do when you are disoriented? For instance, when the digital compass of your mobile phone goes wild? You reset it. You might be in a state of mild panic because you lost your bearings, but still you have to take your time and follow the instructions to calibrate the compass and let it reset. The procedure depends on the situation and on the device, but you always have to stay calm and carefully follow instructions if you want the compass to regain its ability to be sensitive to the signals sent by the arrays of satellites dispersed in the sky way above your head.

In this exhibition we suggest you to do something similar: resetting a few of the instruments that allow you to register some of the confusing signals sent by the epoch. Except what we are trying to recalibrate is nothing as simple as a compass, but is the most obscure principle of projection allowing us to map out the world, namely Modernity.

What we are convinced of is that Modernity was a way to differentiate past and future, North and South, up and down, progress and regress, rich and poor, radical and conservative. However, such a compass, especially at a time of ecological crisis, is spinning wildly without offering much bearing. This is the time for a reset. Let's pause for a while, follow a procedure and search for

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different sensors that could allow us to recalibrate our detectors, our instruments, to feel anew where we are and where we might wish to go.

Unfortunately, after you have done the reset you will not easily find your way since we cannot offer you a metric as straightforward as longitude and latitude. We have no vast array of satellites to send you signals and triangulate your position! Time to look for some other sort of ground, to invent some baseline, some groundline. As the saying goes, it might be time to “touch base”.

A reset is never just a question of pushing a button and waiting for the effect. It always depends on a procedure. Each section has therefore been organised like a procedure, where the viewer can move through the museum, compare the various art works, test and criticize the curator’s propositions...

The first procedure deals with relocating the global. Everything today is supposed to be global, except that in practice no one has ever had a truly global view. You always see locally, from a situated place, through specific instruments. *Powers of Ten*, by Charles and Ray Eames, is the archetype of the global, unsituated and “godlike” scientific vision of the world. The installation *Wall of Science* by Peter Galison contrasts with this representation by providing a more realistic vision. It documents a series of experiments where science cannot be understood as coming from nowhere.

This is followed by a second procedure, which proposes to be either without the world or within it. It deals with this very peculiar way in which the Moderns believe that they apprehend their surroundings: the rigid division between subject and object. Jeff Wall’s piece carefully stages an observer gazing at a situation from a single point of view and separated from his object of study. Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, in their movie *Leviathan* offer a multi-sensorial experience, which is not centred on the human perspective.

The third procedure addresses the notion of the sublime in the Anthropocene. One of the strange things about the ecological mutation is that there is no outside anymore: everything that was out, in the environment, in nature, is now back in, and it weighs on our shoulders. In such a context it is difficult to feel the 18th century version of the sublime. Humans have grown too big and their souls have shrunk too small! Suddenly they feel responsible for everything just at the time when they have become part of a geological force over which they have no control. In this regard Fabien Giraud’s use of radioactive paper taken from the Fukushima forest highlights this perverse entanglement between a tsunami, a nuclear explosion, and a contaminated territory.

Likewise, the fourth procedure directs our attention to a new way of occupying a territory. How could the Moderns absorb the discovery of limits at the time of the Anthropocene without falling back on the notion of borders and identities? This theme is especially relevant in the works of the collective of architects Folder who interrogate the limits of the Italian nation state as it is challenged

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by climate change. In a different vein, Pierre Huyghe's work *Nymphéas Transplant (14-18)*, explores a parcel of a tenuous territory, an eco-system contained within a fragile membrane.

The fifth procedure addresses the notions of politics and religion. Jean-Michel Frodon and Agnès Devictor curate a list of movie excerpts interrogating the crossing between political and religious speech, while Lorenza Mondada and her collaborators address the reactions of the public to Obama's speech in Charleston. This procedure explores the possibility of being secular in a new sense.

The sixth one deals with a shift in perception from technology as object to technology as project. As an example, Thomas Thwaites in *The Toaster Project* recomposes one by one the operations necessary to create a daily object. The "hype" provided by technology constantly hides the thousands of choices we should be able to make to fight the idea that there was a single front of irreversible modernization.

Yes, the overall experiment may be fairly disorienting at first, but after waiting a bit you might feel that you have regained some ability to reorient yourself. No guarantee, of course: this is an experiment, a thought experiment, a Gedankenausstellung.

Text: Bruno Latour

### Participating artists

Lisa Bergmann & Alina Schmuch · Jean-Joseph Baléchou · Hicham Berrada · Bureau d'Études · Kees Boeke · Emma Charles · Tacita Dean · Albrecht Dürer · Charles & Ray Eames · Folder (Marco Ferrari, Elisa Pasqual) & Alessandro Busi, Aaron Gillett, Pietro Leoni, Delfino Sisto Legnani, Alessandro Mason, Angelo Semeraro, Livia Shamir · Jean-Michel Frodon & Agnès Devictor · Peter Galison, Robb Moss & Students · Fabien Giraud · Sylvain Gouraud · Pierre Huyghe · Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation · Pauline Julier · Armin Linke · Adam Lowe · David Maisel · John Martin · Anne-Sophie Milon & Jan Zalasiewicz · Lorenza Mondada, Nicolle Bussien, Sara Keel, Hanna Svensson & Nynke van Schepen · Ahmet Ögüt · Véréna Paravel & Lucien Castaing-Taylor · Elke Evelin Reinhuber · Sophie Ristelhueber · Philippe Squarzoni · Simon Starling · Thomas Struth · Sarah Sze · Thomas Thwaites · The Unknown Field Division (Liam Young and Kate Davies) · Benoît Verjat & Donato Ricci · Jeff Wall

**Bruno Latour** is an anthropologist, philosopher and sociologist who has worked for thirty years on an anthropology of the Moderns. He has published numerous books, including *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991) and *An Enquiry into the Modes of Existence* (2012). He is now director of the médialab at the university Sciences Po Paris.

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**Curators of the exhibition:**

Bruno Latour, Martin Guinard-Terrin, Christophe Leclercq & Donato Ricci

**Concept of Scenography and Design Research:**

Critical Media Lab Basel (Institute of Experimental Design and Media Cultures of the Academy of Art and Design FHNW Basel): Jamie Allen, Claudia Mareis, Moritz Greiner-Petter, Paolo Patelli, Johannes Bruder, Flavia Caviezel, Carola Giannone, Deborah Tchoudjinoff

**Publication:**

The exhibition catalogue is published by The MIT Press and ZKM.

**Symposium:**

Fr–Sa, 15–16 April 2016

**Next Society – Facing Gaia**

Registration for Fri, April 15 is mandatory and limited to 120 persons. Please register by sending an E-Mail to [next\\_society@zkm.de](mailto:next_society@zkm.de) by Fri, April 1, 2016

No registration needed for Sa, April 16. For more information: [zkm.de](http://zkm.de)

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## Territorial Agency: Museum of Oil

ZKM\_Atrium 9

As a module of the exhibition *Reset Modernity!*

We shall need to keep oil in the ground. Of course, this intimation seems to many unattainable: As it is the very core of our world and our economy. If we would keep it in the ground, our lives would need to change radically and our institutions would need to be rethought.

With the *Museum of Oil*, designed by the *Territorial Agency*, one of these new institutions is created. It comes in an era, in which we increasingly understand how gravely the earth has changed due to our human influence and in which new fields of work, new research projects and a new breed of activism are also forming. The objective of the *Museum of Oil* can be clearly defined as follows: The oil industry is a relic of the past and has to be banished to the museum.

The *Museum of Oil* shows how the oil industry continued to expand in a brutal and exploitative manner until its scope of validity ultimately began to crumble and became untenable. It presents information, objects and data and brings us closer to the only sensible decision, which can put an end to the ever-fuelled development visions of the oil industry: We should keep oil in the ground.

**A Project by** John Palmesino and Ann-Sofi Rönnskog / Territorial Agency in Cooperation with Greenpeace

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## Armin Linke: The Appearance of That Which Cannot be Seen

ZKM\_Atrium 8 + 9

Part 2 as a module of the exhibition *Reset Modernity!*

For *The Appearance of That Which Cannot Be Seen*, scientists and theorists were invited to engage with Armin Linke's photographic archive. In close cooperation with the artist, different images have been selected to be presented in the exhibition in various combinations.

At the interface between the physical and digital world, Linke's contribution focuses our attention on such pivotal GLOBALE topics as smart technology, big data, climate change, and Industry 4.0. For the GLOBALE, scientists, theorists, and cultural anthropologists have separately selected pictures from Linke's photo archive, now comprising more than twenty thousand images, and have commented on these in texts and interviews. By making their image-selection process transparent, the project thematizes both the readability of photographic archives and the subjective treatment of GLOBALE themes, considering the individual nature of research approaches and interests.

For more than twenty years now, Armin Linke's photographs have documented the effects of globalization, the transformation of cities into megacities, and the interconnectedness of post-industrial society resulting from digital information and communication technology. In his pictures, Linke captures in an exemplary way the profound economic, ecological, and geological changes our highly technologized world is undergoing in the Anthropocene Age.

Part 1 of *The Appearance of That Which Cannot Be Seen* was shown from 04.09.2015 to 31.01.2016 as a module of the exhibition *Infosphere*.

**Curator:** Philipp Ziegler

**Concept:** Armin Linke, Jan Kiesswetter, Mevis & van Deursen, Alina Schmuck

**Sounddesign:** Giuseppe Ielasi, Nicola Ratti

**In cooperation with:** PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Mailand

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