SPECULATIVE ENERGY FUTURES

FUTURE ENERGY SYSTEMS THEME 4: PROJECT 1

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BACKGROUND

The extractivist world-view that has contributed to climate change through the exploitation of land and resources, likewise allows for the exploitation of gendered, classed and racialized bodies, and the erasure of knowledge held by those bodies. Art and storytelling are key to the recovery of past knowledge and the co-creation of new knowledge that can inform more feminist decolonial energy transition politics and more equitable and socially just futures.[1]

COLLABORATION: Speculative Energy Futures, using established research-creation methods, will cultivate deep interdisciplinary engagement between artistic researchers, scientists and policy experts, to produce a large-scale evidence-based art exhibition, and other forms of creative and scholarly publication.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH: An underlying premise of this project is that artistic, literary and intermedia research and dissemination methods are uniquely suited to envisioning future imaginaries. Adding the A (arts) to STEM, this project will demonstrate the value of STEAM research within the academy and beyond, as public intellectual engagement mobilizing social innovation.

METHODOLOGICAL PRECEDENTS: Speculative Energy Futures takes its methodological cue from the recently completed Vaccines Project, where participants researched key issues and developed an arts-based engagement with their chosen topic for a series of high profile exhibitions culminating at the UNAIDS conference in Geneva in May 2017. More information on the project and exhibition venues is available here: http://www.thevaccineproject.com/

PROJECT OVERVIEW

SPECULATIVE ENERGY FUTURES (SPECULATION AS METHOD)

Energy humanities represents and grapples with the social life of energy, and its social and cultural impacts. Energy humanities critically addresses the social and cultural impact of energy systems; past, current and a range of future systems-wide models.

Speculative Energy Futures is a multi-year, collaborative, interdisciplinary research project that will investigate the challenges and potentials of energy transition as a necessary response to addressing climate change.

By bringing together a select group of humanities and artistic researchers with science, social science, and policy experts, the project aims to envision new futures; based in evidence and research, the participants will speculate on the shape of our future communities, looking to existing and potential technologies and policies.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Develop new perspectives on intersectional energy futurity, as realized through research-creation, artistic exhibition, and community engagement
- Create public facing, evidence-based, research-creation art exhibitions
- Contribute to public discourse around energy futures
- Enable truly integrated interdisciplinary dialogue
- Publish an exhibition catalogue and a literary anthology

PHOTO CREDITS (LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM):
Images are examples drawn from two previous research-creation projects from which SEF will draw its inspiration.

1. Monica Geingos, The First Lady of Namibia fighting and playing with *Shadowpox*, an interactive art installation by Alison Humphrey, Caitlin Fisher, Steven Hoffman, and Lalaine Destajo at UNAIDS, Geneva. (photo: Alison Humphrey). Website: http://www.thevaccineproject.com/
2. Sean Caulfield's *The Anatomy Table* installed at Galleri KiT, Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, NTNU. (photo: Yanir Shani). Website: http://www.thevaccineproject.com/
3. Exhibition opening for *New Maternalisms Redux* (photo: Michael J.H. Woolley). Website: http://newmaternalisms.ca/

WORKS CITED:

1. Wilson, Sheena. 2017. "Energy Imaginaries: Feminist and Decolonial Futures." *Materialism and the Critique of Energy*, Eds. Brent Ryan Bellamy and Jeff Diamanti. Chicago: MCM Press, forthcoming.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration among constituencies interested and invested in energy transition
- Enable new ways of imagining energy transition and energy futurity
- Promote education in EH, and interdisciplinary engagement, among emerging researchers from undergraduate onward levels

THEME OVERVIEW

L'Université de l'Alberta reconnait respectueusement qu'elle est située à ᐊᒥᐢᑲᒻᑖᐦᐊᐢᑲᑊᐃᑲᐤ (Amiskwacîwâskahikan) sur les terres du Traité 6, le territoire du Papaschase, et les territoires de la nation Métis. / The University of Alberta respectfully recognizes it is located in ᐊᒥᐢᑲᒻᑖᐦᐊᐢᑲᑊᐃᑲᐤ (Amiskwacîwâskahikan) on Treaty 6 territory of the Papaschase, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Energy systems shape social life. Transitioning away from a predominantly fossil-fuel global energy system, to new more complex integrated energy systems composed increasingly of renewal forms, demands that we reimagine the social and the shape of our future communities. To overcome practices, processes, guiding attitudes and policies that impede a transition to new energy systems response to local and global demands, we must transform myriad aspects of social and cultural life, and render our institutions and social infrastructures more responsible: things that may seem unrelated to energy. Examples include political systems, built environments, educational programs, business operations, policy positions, gender and race relations, social power dynamics, and artistic and cultural practices that shape all of the above. EH researches the historical and political significance of technologies, their potentials and limitations, including their modes of social implementation and institutionalization. As such, the EH projects in FES will explore how new sources and integrated systems may respond in socially equitable ways. EH helps to articulate ways to implement the technologies and systems required by a future energy system, with communities and colleagues alike. As one of its most significant contributions, EH explores the complex, multi-scalar dimension of energy transition so as to understand more fully how we can design integrated future energy systems, starting now, locally here in Alberta, making Alberta a leader in Canada and a contributor on a global scale.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — https://www.ipcc.ch/
- Intermedia Research Studio (IRS) — http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/irs/
- Research Creation and Social Justice Collaboratory (CoLab) — http://www.researchcreation.ca/
- Arts Research Center (ARC)
- University of Alberta Libraries
- The SSHRC-funded *Feminist Energy Futures: Power Shift and Environmental Social Justice* project
- Petroculture Research Group — http://petrocultures.com/

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