



Eco-Visionaries: Confronting a planet in a state of emergency

23 November 2019 – 23 February 2020

The Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries

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In November 2019 the Royal Academy of Arts will present an exhibition examining humankind's ecological impact on the planet. As early as the 1950s, scientists started raising serious concerns about the damaging effects of modern life on the environment. Since then, experts have been joined by creative practitioners in an effort to draw wider attention to the fragility of the planet and to stabilise its endangered ecosystems for future generations. Tackling issues from climate change to food shortage, species extinction and resource depletion, *Eco-Visionaries* will bring together artists, designers and architects from across the globe who are confronting these environmental issues through their practice. At a critical moment in the history of the planet, the exhibition will present innovative works that reconsider the relationship between humans and nature and offer alternative visions for the future.

The exhibition will feature works by 21 international practitioners in a wide range of media, including film, sculpture, immersive installation, architectural models and full-scale prototypes, all interrogating how art and architecture can help us respond to a rapidly changing world. Highlights will include the UK debut of *win > < win* (2017) by the artist collective **Rimini Protokoll**. This immersive installation will explore ecological empathy by confronting audiences with a tank of live jellyfish, one of the few species who actually benefit from the effects of global warming. **Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's** new project *The Substitute* (2019), which draws upon rare zoological archival footage as well as experimental data from artificial intelligence company DeepMind, will enable visitors to come face-to-face with a life-size digital reproduction of a northern white rhinoceros. The last male of the subspecies died in 2018.

Work by artists with a long-standing environmental agenda will include *The ice melting series* (2002) by the renowned Danish-Icelandic artist **Olafur Eliasson Hon RA**. This photographic series showing the process of ice melting evokes the impact of small human actions on the shrinking polar ice caps. The artist **Tue Greenfort**, from Denmark, will present *Tilapia* (2017), a series of black-and-white prints arranged as a shoal of tilapia fish, one of the most consumed varieties of fish in the world but also one of the most invasive and predatory species.

The exhibition will include work by designers and architects from around the world, including the New York-based architecture studio **WORKac**, who will present *3.C.City: Climate, Convention, Cruise* (2015), a speculative project for a floating city designed to facilitate dialogue and debate between people and marine species, inspired by the work of the legendary multidisciplinary collective

Ant Farm in the 1970s, which will also be on display. In *The Breast Milk of the Volcano* (2016–18), the research studio **Unknown Fields** will present findings from an expedition to Bolivia and the Atacama Desert, source of over half the world's reserves of lithium, questioning the sustainability of the lithium-based batteries that power most contemporary electronic devices. The London-based architect and researcher **Nerea Calvillo** will present *Madrid In The Air* (2019), a new film specially commissioned for the exhibition, that monitors the skyline of Madrid over a 24-hour period, uncovering the almost invisible veil of pollutants in the air.

The exhibition will be designed by **Delvendahl Martin Architects** and the graphic design studio **Daly & Lyon**, who are following a sustainability strategy, making use of reclaimed materials and avoiding single-use plastics in order to reduce the exhibition's carbon footprint and minimise the amount of waste it generates.

Exhibition participants

Virgil Abloh (Rockford, US)

Ant Farm (Chip Lord, Doug Michels and Curtis Schreier) (California, US)

Nerea Calvillo (Madrid, Spain)

Carolina Caycedo (London, UK)

Dunne & Raby (London, UK / New York City, US)

Olafur Eliasson Hon RA (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Futurefarmers (San Francisco, US and Gent, Belgium)

Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg (London, UK)

Tue Greenfort (Holbæk, Denmark)

HeHe (Le Havre, France)

Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation (Madrid, Spain / New York City, US)

Basim Magdy (Asyut, Egypt)

Malka Architecture (Paris, France)

Philippe Rahm architectes (Paris, France)

Rimini Protokoll (Berlin, Germany)

SKREI (Porto, Portugal)

Unknown Fields (London, UK)

Ana Vaz and Tristan Bera (Brasília, Brazil / Paris, France)

WORKac (New York City, US)

Pinar Yoldas (Denizli, Turkey)

Organisation

Eco-Visionaries will be jointly curated by Gonzalo Herrero Delicado, Architecture Programme Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, Pedro Gadanho, architect, curator and author, and Mariana Pestana, architect, curator and co-founder, The Decorators.

A project initiated by Fundação EDP/MAAT (Lisbon, Portugal), Bildmuseet (Umeå, Sweden), HeK (Basel, Switzerland) and LABoral (Gijón, Spain), in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Arts (London, UK) and Matadero Madrid (Madrid, Spain).

Publications

The exhibition will be accompanied by two publications: *Eco-Visionaries: Conversations on an Uncertain Future*, a new book published by the Royal Academy of Arts and edited by Gonzalo Herrero Delicado and Rose Thompson, with contributions from Dame Dr Jane Goodall and Timothy Morton, and featuring conversations with selected participants; and an illustrated book of essays *Eco-Visionaries: Art, Architecture, and New Media after the Anthropocene*, published by Hatje Cantz in 2018.

Architecture Studio

Running alongside the exhibition, the Royal Academy's Architecture Studio will host *Algae Platform* a project by **Atelier Luma**, the design research programme of Luma Arles. This new pilot developed in partnership with the Royal Academy will explore the potentials of London-grown algae as a bio-sourced material, and its application for architectural design.

About Octopus Energy

Octopus Energy launched to the public in April 2016. It supplies 100% renewable electricity and gas to nearly 800,000 UK homes. Octopus Energy is the only Which? Recommended energy supplier for a second year in a row, has been awarded the company who has done the most to advance renewables in Britain and was voted the UK's best company to work for. Founded by e-commerce entrepreneurs, Octopus Energy has different starting point to other suppliers, aiming to redefine what is possible for consumers and the system by using technology and data to deliver the best products and experience. Octopus Energy is backed by Octopus Group, a financial services and energy firm, which manages more than £8.6bn of funds. Octopus has invested more than £2.7bn in renewable assets across Europe, while its ventures arm has backed UK success stories like Zoopla, Depop, Secret Escapes and SwiftKey. Octopus was founded in 2000, and invests in the people, ideas and industries and that will help to change the world.

Dates and Opening Hours

Press View: **Wednesday 20 November 2019, 10am – 1pm**
Open to public: Saturday 23 November 2019 – Sunday 23 February 2020
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening: Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

Full price £12 (£10 excluding Gift Aid donation); concessions available; under-16s go free ([T&Cs apply](#)); Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets are available daily at the RA or by visiting www.royalacademy.org.uk.
Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email adultgroups@royalacademy.org.uk.

Images

Publicity images for *Eco-Visionaries* can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

Social Media

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:

Facebook /royalacademy

Instagram @royalacademyarts / @architecture_ra

Twitter @royalacademy

#EcoVisionaries

Sustainability and the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts is committed to reducing the environmental impact of its activities by creating a more sustainable model by which to operate. The RA's 'Sustainability Taskforce' has been looking into what we can do to improve our practises across the organisation and become more environmentally responsible. While we realise we have a long way to go, we are making a commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and improve sustainability across all of our activities.

What have we done already?

Immediate steps the RA has taken includes switching its energy suppliers this year so that it is now powered by 100% renewable energy. The RA is also reducing its single use plastic, for example by introducing compostable take-away cups and cutlery in the cafes and restaurants, and reviewing its use throughout the institution.

For the *Eco-Visionaries* exhibition, the RA has implemented a more sustainable exhibition design and management system. The exhibition designers Delvendahl Martin Architects and the graphic design studio Daly & Lyon have made use of reclaimed materials from within the RA and avoided single-use plastics in order to reduce the exhibition's carbon footprint and minimise the amount of waste it generates. Following this exhibition, any new materials that cannot be re-used will be offered for re-use to other institutions and organisations using the Museum Freecycle marketplace. Works in the exhibition have been transported via part-loading, meaning the transportation of art works have been shared with other objects rather than individually delivered. Across exhibition design and management, we will continue to work with our suppliers to find the most sustainable business practices possible.

What are we working towards?

The RA is working towards an internationally recognised Environmental Management System accreditation; ISO 14001:2015. This is the first step in our commitment to becoming environmentally more fully sustainable with further certification to follow in the future. The accreditation will help the organisation identify the environmental impact of its activities and understand what it needs to do to improve its environmental sustainability further. In the longer term the RA also intends to align its activities as much as possible with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

About Architecture at the Royal Academy of Arts

Architecture has always been at the heart of the Royal Academy. From William Chambers, the RA's first Treasurer, to John Soane, Edwin Lutyens and Ernő Goldfinger, to Zaha Hadid, Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, the Royal Academicians have comprised the leading architects of their generation.

Building from its unique position within an artist-led institution, the Architecture Programme aims to both inspire the profession and deepen the public's understanding of architecture. Overseen by architect Royal Academicians and curated by a specialist team, the programme, which was made possible through the Drue Heinz Endowment for architecture in 1993, has grown to encompass a regular series of talks, an awards scheme, curated displays and publications.

Architecture holds an important place in the RA Collection, with work gathered from Academicians since 1768 and architectural casts and books acquired for the teaching of students in the RA Schools. Architectural works have always featured in the Summer Exhibition and are now given a dedicated room, each year curated by a Royal Academician. Architecture has also been the subject of major exhibitions at the Royal Academy such as *New Architecture: Foster, Rogers, Stirling* (1986); *Living Bridges* (1996); *Richard Rogers: Inside Out* (2013), *Sensing Spaces: Architecture Reimagined* (2014), and *Renzo Piano: The Art of Making Buildings* (2018).

There are currently 24 architect Academicians: David Adjaye, Ron Arad, Gordon Benson, Adam Caruso and Peter St John, David Chipperfield, Peter Cook, Edward Cullinan, Trevor Dannatt, Spencer de Grey, Norman Foster, Piers Gough, Nicholas Grimshaw, Thomas Heatherwick, Louisa Hutton, Michael Hopkins, Eva Jiricna, Paul Koralek, Níall McLaughlin, Farshid Moussavi, Eric Parry, Ian Ritchie, Richard Rogers, Alan Stanton and Chris Wilkinson.

For more information on the RA Architecture Programme visit: www.roy.ac/architecture

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts and architecture through exhibitions, education and debate.

The Royal Academy launched a new campus as part of the celebrations of its 250th anniversary year in 2018. Following a transformative redevelopment, designed by the internationally acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the National Lottery, the new Royal Academy of Arts reveals more of the elements that make the RA unique – sharing with the public historic treasures from its Collection, the work of its Royal Academicians and the Royal Academy Schools, and its role as a centre for learning and debate about art and architecture – alongside its world-class exhibitions programme. royalacademy.org.uk

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