

## 5 - 7 APRIL 2007 SYMPOSIUM

Sharjah Biennial 8, RSA Arts & Ecology/  
Latitudes programme in collaboration with  
the American University of Sharjah (AUS)

**Venue:** Expo Centre Sharjah

### **Symposium Organisers:**

Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna  
(Latitudes, Barcelona)  
Michaela Crimmin (Royal Society for the  
encouragement of Arts, Manufactures &  
Commerce, RSA, London)  
Roderick Grant (American University of  
Sharjah, AUS)  
Amir Berbic (American University of  
Sharjah, AUS)  
Tarek Talat Al-Ghoussein (American  
University of Sharjah, AUS)  
Jeremy Bendik-Keymer (American  
University of Sharjah, AUS)

Offset of 70 tonnes of Carbon.  
The conference language is English.

The Symposium, which forms part of  
the Sharjah Biennial, aims to explore  
specific aspects of the relationship  
between culture and ecology - not least  
the challenges and the contradictions.  
The event will profile the extraordinary  
work taking place in architecture, the  
visual arts, across new technologies, in  
design and on screen. Discussions will  
involve artists, academics and students,  
architects and designers, people living  
locally and a number of key contributors  
from other continents. It draws from  
and will build on previous discourse -  
capturing the perspectives of people who  
are addressing ecological issues on a  
daily basis. The Symposium bravely takes  
place in a country which is prepared to  
look to the future and the changes we are  
all going to have to make.

## THURSDAY 5 APRIL

**9:30 - 10:00**

Refreshments and Orientation

**10:00 - 10:15**

Welcome by Jack Persekian  
(Artistic Director SB8) and Michaela  
Crimmin (Director RSA Arts and Ecology).

**10:15 - 10:45**

Keynote speaker: 'Ecology and the Politics  
of Change', Bruce Sterling, Author,  
journalist, editor and critic. Texas & Serbia.

**10:45 - 12:00**

### **Panel Discussion:**

The lure of the 'eco'  
Eco-art, eco-fashion, eco-tourism, eco-  
politics, eco-activism, eco-village ... In  
almost every aspect of how and where  
we live, work and play, the eco has  
embedded itself. How has what we mean  
by ecology transformed and evolved  
through the practice of everyday life?

### **Panelists:**

Sarah Rich (Managing Editor,  
Worldchanging and [inhabitat.com](http://inhabitat.com), a  
weblog covering sustainable design and  
green building, Seattle)  
Sergio Vega (Artist, Gainesville;  
participating in Sharjah Biennial 8)  
Siobhan Leyden (producer and presenter  
of the daily talk show 'Siobhan Live' on  
Dubai Eye radio, 103.8 FM)  
Stephanie Mahmoud (Marketing and  
Management student, AUS)

### **Chair:**

Jeremy Bendik-Keymer (Philosophy  
teacher in the Department of International  
Studies, AUS)

**12:00 - 12:45**

### **Film Programme Excerpt:**

Riverglass: A River Ballet in Four  
Seasons. Andrej Zdravic, 1997 (41 mins)  
"Riverglass presents the 'materiality' of  
the river Soca. A symbol of importance  
in Slovenian culture, the film presents  
the force and clarity of the water from  
the point of view of the river itself, a  
Gaian perspective possibly. In its content  
and development of specialist filming  
equipment it recalls other film-makers  
landscape interventions (for instance  
Michael Snow's La Region Centrale  
(1970) or Robert Beaver's The Stoas,  
(1991-97)." – Mark Nash

**12:45 - 13:45**

Lunch Break

## THURSDAY 5 APRIL

13:45 – 15:00

### Parallel Seminars:

#### I. Emergencies and Risk

What is the role of architects, designers and artists concerning housing and communities? With increasing pressure on resources and space, and an increasingly volatile political climate how can we move from coping with aftermath: to try to mitigate risk before crises? Can design and architecture be a political act

Susi Platt (Architecture for Humanity's leading post-Tsunami reconstruction designer, Sri Lanka)  
Michael Rakowitz (Artist, New York; participating in Sharjah Biennial 8)  
Moderator: Mehdi Sabet (Associate Professor, Architecture & Interior Design, School of Architecture and Design, AUS)

#### II. Resources

Truth and Materials  
How far are recycled or sustainable materials a consideration for artists, designers and architects? How do such considerations affect our experience/ perception of materiality in art and the built environment? And how does this relate to wider questions of resources - water, energy, etc.?

Mona El Mousfi (Sharjah Biennial architect and Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Design, AUS)

Tomás Saraceno (Artist and architect, Frankfurt; participating in Sharjah Biennial 8)

15:00 - 15:30

Coffee Break

15:30 - 16:15

Feedback and Group Discussion

16:15 - 17:15

In Conversation. 'Kumar Shahani: Politics and the ecology of change'  
Mark Nash (curator of Sharjah Biennial 8 film programme; Director of the MA Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art, London) and Geeta Kapur (Critic and Curator, New Delhi, and member of the Jury for the 2007 Sharjah Biennial 8 Art Prize) in conversation about the work of Indian filmmaker Kumar Shahani.

**Venue: Qanat Al Qasba**

19:00 - 19:45

Presentation by OMA/ Rem Koolhaas and Reinier De Graaf

20:00

Film Programme  
(see page 15)

## FRIDAY 6 APRIL

16:00

Welcome by Michaela Crimmin, RSA Arts and Ecology Director, London

16:00 - 17:30

### Panel discussion:

Offsetting / Upsetting: 'Art vs. issues'  
Much work in the field of art and ecology has emerged in the field of remedial actions in industrial sites. Today carbon trading and offsetting are, more abstractly, being proposed as a way of restoring the balance of the atmosphere. How might these two motions be linked? How or should the work of some artists might generally be regarded as a form of offsetting or redressing? How do some artists desire tangible palliative results, while others offer strategies of friction or resistance? What is more important, the issues or the art?

### Panelists:

Koyo Kouoh (Cultural producer, Arts Manager and Programming Consultant, Dakar)  
Peter Fend (Artist, Berlin; participating in Sharjah Biennial 8)  
Charles Esche (Director, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and member of the Jury for the 2007 Sharjah Biennial 8 Art Prize)

### Chair:

Stephanie Smith (Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Curator of Contemporary Art, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago)

17:30 - 18:00

Break

18:00 - 19:00

Jonathan Watkins (Co-curator, Sharjah Biennial 8 and Director Ikon Gallery, Birmingham) presents Cornelia Parker's (Artist, London; participating in Sharjah Biennial 8) project for Sharjah Biennial 8: Video interview with Noam Chomsky  
Followed by Q+A from the audience.

19:30

Film Programme at Qanat Al Qasba  
(see page 15)

## SATURDAY 7 APRIL

**16:30**

Welcome back by Michaela Crimmin,  
RSA Arts and Ecology Director, London

**16:30 – 17:30**

Artists' presentation: e-Xplo with Ayreen  
Anastas (Artists US/Austria; participating  
in Sharjah Biennial 8)

**17:30 – 19:00**

### Panel discussion:

Urban Planning and the future city.  
What is the future of the city as a habitat  
for humanity? Increasingly dense housing,  
commercial, cultural, infrastructural  
and civic spaces seem to contradict our  
desire for space, openness and freedom.  
What lies ahead for the city as a living,  
symbiotic form of inanimate structure and  
animate inhabitants?

### Panelists:

Samir Srouji (Artist, Palestine;  
participating in Sharjah Biennial 8)  
Rula Sadik (General Manager, Design and  
Planning, The Design Group, Nakheel,  
Dubai)  
Samer Kamal (Founder, Bee'ah, Sharjah /  
Environmental Company, Sharjah)  
Chair: George Katodrytis (Architect;  
Professor of Architecture, School of  
Architecture and Design, Professor of  
Architecture, AUS)

**19.30**

Film Programme (see page 15)

## 5 - 20 APRIL 2007 FILM PROGRAMME

**Venue: Qanat Al Qasba**

**Curated by: Mark Nash**

This is a programme that takes a long  
view on art, ecology, and the politics of  
change. On the one hand the eloquent  
documentary *Darwins Nightmare*  
addresses the immediate issues of  
climactic and ecological change. On the  
other hand artists films address a wide  
range of issues from the sensuous and  
symbolic materiality of water, (Zdravi), the  
state of the coalmining industry in China  
(Shaobin) to more poetic meditations on  
the legacy of independence and liberation  
struggles (Shahani, & Julien).

**Thursday 5 April**

**20:00**

*The Form of the palace of Matsumae*  
- *kun's Brothers 1*, 1988 - Oki Hiroyuki  
- 17 min.

**20:30**

*Char Adhyay*, 1997 - Kumar Shahani -  
110min.

**FRIDAY 6 April**

**19.30**

*Darwin's Nightmare*, 2004 - Hubert  
Sauper - 107min.

**Saturday 7 April**

**19:30**

*The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, 2006  
- Igloodik Isuma / Zacharias Kunuk, and  
Norman Cohn - 112min.

**Monday 9 April**

**19:30**

*800 meters under, Aboveground-  
Underground*, 2005 - Yang Shaobin - 14  
min.

**20:00**

*Fantôme Afrique*, 2005 - Isaac Julien  
- 17min.

**Thursday 12 April**

**19:30**

*Darwin's Nightmare*, 2004 - Hubert  
Sauper - 107min.

**Friday 13 April**

**19:30**

*Lagos Wide and Close*, 2002 - Bregtje van  
der Haak - 60 min.

**Saturday 14 April**

**19:30**

*Riverglass - A River Ballet in Four  
Seasons*, 1997 - Andrej Zdravi - 40 min.

**Thursday 19 April**

**19:30**

*Fantôme Afrique*, 2005 - Isaac Julien  
- 17min.

**19:50**

*Lagos Wide and Close*, 2002 - Bregtje van  
der Haak - 60 min.

**Friday 20 April**

**19:30**

*The Form of the palace of Matsumae-  
kun's Brothers 1*, 1988 - Oki Hiroyuki  
- 17 min.

**19:50**

*Riverglass - A River Ballet in Four  
Seasons*, 1997 - Andrej Zdravi - 40 min.