

PRESS RELEASE

Harnessing the Wind

Sophie Bouvier Ausländer | Ellie Harrison | Monika Oechsler | Naomi Siderfin

7 October - 28 November 2015

Wednesday – Saturday 11am – 5pm

Open until 9pm during Frieze Week 15 – 17 October

SLAM Friday events 6-8.30pm 30 October: The Big Draw Workshop and 27 November: Process and Politics Plenary

Press Preview: Tuesday 6 October 6-7pm with curators tour at 6.30pm. RSVP essential.

Preview: Tuesday 6 October 7-9pm

'Harnessing the Wind' is a metaphor for the difficulties of capturing process: difficult but not impossible - as the image of the wind turbine embodies. Creative and political process comes together in installations that reference current affairs, whilst remaining absorbed in the languages of contemporary visual culture.

Swiss artist **Sophie Bouvier Ausländer** dwells on the destructive force of wind, imagining of populations being propelled by one wind of change into the eye of another storm in her sculptural work built in Beaconsfield's Upper Gallery. The idea recalls British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous 'Wind of Change' address in 1960 on the subject of decolonization and links with **Monika Oechsler**'s new films for Beaconsfield's Arch Gallery. Focusing on ideologically significant architecture in Germany and Britain, Oechsler's work points towards the temporal aspects of historical constructs and the shifting symbolism and politics of iconic monuments in contemporary life. **Ellie Harrison** works with embodied political activism as her form and content. Her project-in-progress, *Radical Renewable Art & Activism Fund* (RRAAF) has re-imagined the renewable energy of wind power as a regenerative source of arts funding, lending literal currency to the theme. RRAAF will be publicly launched during this exhibition, with the aim of developing a pilot scheme in the artist's home city of Glasgow in 2016/17 in partnership with the Centre for Contemporary Arts. In her role as artist-curator, **Naomi Siderfin** is interested in capturing the diverse processes and meanings embedded in creative acts of artmaking. Her own installation in the Upper Gallery references the original site that triggered the exhibition – a wind farm in Essex.

Harnessing the Wind arrests, for the space of an exhibition, the imaginations of four artists working in a range of mediums: painting, video, sculpture, social media, sound, public engagement – and memory, and, in so doing may capture a breath of *zeitgeist* – spirit of our time.

Celebrating 20 years on Newport Street, Beaconsfield welcomes in the same week, new neighbours launching with a major exhibition of works by John Hoyland – 'Power Stations' – inaugurating Damien Hirst's Newport Street Gallery.

PRESS ENQUIRIES & RSVP

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Notes for editors:

Sophie Bouvier Ausländer is represented internationally and is frequently commissioned for public art works in her home country Switzerland. Her most recent project *Ways of Worldmaking* is an open library commissioned in 2013 by the Etat de Vaud, Switzerland for a new college in Renens (VD) in collaboration with architects Dettling Péléraux and will be completed in 2016. Bouvier Ausländer's work points to heterotopias – 'other' spaces – and most recently explored through sculptural objects and installations in her 2014 solo exhibition *Hotel Ausland*, Musée d'art de Pully, Switzerland. Her interest in 'world-making' and the role of the hand in creative processes is the focus of her current research in tangibility. Through her practice, the artist takes on the issue of the *proper distance* to the world, exploring the continuity between drawing and sculpture and the continuum between physical and metaphysical dimensions. Commissioned for this exhibition, *Mare Vostrum* can be positioned in relation to Bouvier Ausländer's series referencing skin. www.hotelausland.com

Ellie Harrison has been concerned with researching, exposing and challenging the workings of our economic system, since the start of the global financial crisis in 2008. This has led her to develop an expanded practice that now encompasses both art projects / performances (see [Anti-Capitalist Aerobics](#) and [The Other Forecast](#)), and direct political campaigning (see [Bring Back British Rail](#), the campaign for the public ownership of the railways she had been running since 2009). In 2013-4 she took part in [Campaign Lab](#) – a nine-month 'economic justice' campaigning course coordinated by the New Economics Foundation in London. Since then, and in the wake of continued cuts to public funding for the arts, she has become interested in developing a model for an alternative funding system: one which can offer a real working alternative, as well as a critique of the status quo. [The Radical Renewable Art & Activism Fund \(RRAAF\)](#) will be publically launched during this exhibition and later piloted in the artist's home city at Glasgow's Centre for Contemporary Art.

Monika Oechsler's international commissions are notable for complex multi-screen video installations. Oechsler was awarded a PhD from Brighton University in 2012 for her research into the interstitial affect of virtual and actual space constituted by architecturally configured moving image installations. Her major three-screen installation *Schauspiel* (2003) was developed during a residency at Schloss Akademie Solitude in collaboration with the Staatstheater Schauspiel, Stuttgart, commissioned by Site Gallery, Sheffield, financially supported by MFG Baden Wuerttemberg and premiered in England and Austria. *Uneven Development*, Oechsler's project for the current exhibition presents a series of four new works, documentary-style vignettes filmed in Munich, Nuremberg and London, that explore the significance of contemporary historical representations. Oechsler's works have been exhibited widely among others at MoMA, New York; Tate Modern, London; Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki; Sharjah International Biennial 6, Centre for Contemporary Art, Denmark. www.monikaoechsler.com.

Naomi Siderfin is the artist-curator of *Harnessing the Wind* and is a founding director of the artist-led organisation Beaconsfield with which her personal practice has been closely aligned. The curation of an international programme of visual art projects in this context reinforced her departure from studio-based painting into a situated art practice relying on site and duration to drive it. This has most often been manifested in the collaboration of [BAW](#) (Beaconsfield Art Works), whose commissioners have included Tate Modern, Freunde guter Musik, Berlin, Stavanger Biennale and Alta Museum, Norway and TOUCH music. Appropriating public space as an extension of pictorial space - as in *Manor* (1993), *Element* (2000), or *Diluvial* (2011) - represents an engagement with the landscape tradition and Siderfin's current research interests interrogate the relationship between installation practice and exhibition conventions.

Beaconsfield remains a unique, non-profit, politically engaged, artist-led entity, placing equal emphasis on audiences and artists. Founded as an educational charity in 1994 with the desire to fill a niche between the institution, the commercial and the 'alternative', Beaconsfield's reputation rests on the staging of an influential programme of commissions (beacons) in a range of art mediums (field). The organisation's function as a primary research vehicle is particularly notable for pioneering developments in time-based, political and sound art as well as curatorial practice. For more information: beaconsfield.ltd.uk/projects

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