

The theme of the exhibition programme in 2011 is *IMAGINE* – towards an *ecoaesthetic*. *IMAGINE* suggests that art is a critical but at the same time positive, fruitful option that makes allowances for the surroundings and the environment. With this focus *IMAGINE* wants to put discussions of representation and negation issues on a back burner in favour of a more 'healing' aspect.

The point of departure for this year's theme is the manifesto *Ecoaesthetics* by the artist, writer and curator Rasheed Araeen, which was published in the art and culture periodical *Third Text* in the autumn of 2009. In this text Araeen mounted a frontal assault on the modern ego and the recuperation of the avant-garde. He advocated a collective artistic imagination that would function as the way forward towards "lakes and rivers with clean water, collective farming and the planting of trees all over the world".

The manifesto rejects – albeit in a slightly one-track masculine way – previous artistic attempts to step down from the pedestal of the bourgeoisie in favour of a collective commitment to the surroundings and the environment. While Araeen can be criticized for his slightly narrow aim of denigrating artistically committed experiments, this does not detract from the relevance of a debate that goes behind the current 'acuteness' one experiences today in relation to ecological and environmental issues in art.

With *IMAGINE* the Aarhus Art Building wants to take a closer look at alliances between art and sustainable development. The themes emphasize the origin of the concept of sustainability and the linkages between environmental and social problems which have been characteristic of thinking about and the development of this particular concept since the beginning of the 1970s. Through important movements that have consistently had sustainability as their primary starting point the concept has furthermore been linked conspicuously with an ethical imperative and a determined ambition to overcome inequality – understood as the concrete and symbolic construction of power relations.

The exhibitions on the programme in 2011 try to embrace this complexity in the concept of sustainability and its history from two different angles. One approach to the theme focuses on artistic views of alternative energy. The other focuses on oppressive mechanisms that affect various minorities, women and the environment on the existing premises of inequality and power relations.

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2011 IMAGINE

Kultivator  
**THE IMAGINE FARM**

2nd July - 17th August 2011



One of the 70 papier-mâché figures at *The Imagine Farm*. The picture was taken at Kultivator's farm at Öland in June 2010.

CREATE YOUR DESIRED FUTURE FOR THE WORLD AT *THE IMAGINE FARM*

*The Imagine Farm* is an exhibition for children created by Swedish artist collective Kultivator. A farm is a place where people grow vegetables and foods. In *The Imagine Farm* we cultivate ideas and visions for the future. In order to be able to create the future that we would actually wish for, we must first create a space where we can see it before us. Imagine that you are standing on a giant board game with islands and paths, which are drawn on the floor.

And that the characters are pieces that you can move around. *The Imagine Farm* is just as much a workshop as it is an exhibition. This means that, just like in a game, you are actually meant to touch and use the things. Here you are able to move papier-mâché figures around, repair them, make your own animation on one of the islands, etc. Kultivator have drawn the rules on the first wall you encounter when you enter the exhibition. Unleash your imagination and create your own desired future in *The Imagine Farm*.

#### COWS AT THE TABLE WITH KULTIVATOR

Kultivator is an artist collective that operates an organic farm in Öland, Sweden. They consist of three artists and two farmers, and since 1995 have produced vegetables and rapeseed oil, engaged in forestry and kept cows and sheep. At the same time as running an organic farm, they are also using visual art to imagine how we might do things in other ways, in keeping with the English poet William Blake's words: "What is now proved was once only imagined." In the work *Middag med køer* (Dinner with cows) (2005) people sat at the table with cows, and in 2010 Kultivator announced a marriage between art and agriculture by holding a traditional farm-wedding that lasted three days and included guests from around the world.

Kultivator means 'one who creates, grows and forms something'. It can be plants, a way of living together or a way of using the nature around us. The farm the artists from Kultivator would like to create with you is a place where things can grow, be cultivated or shaped – in so doing we will be growing the world of the future.

#### THE BACKGROUND OF *THE IMAGINE FARM* - VISIONS AND IDEAS FROM CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH OF AARHUS

In March 2011, Kultivator posed some questions to children in Aarhus, about how they would like the future to look. How should we live in the future? How should we produce food and what should we do with our waste? How should we travel, and how should we take care of the old and the sick in the future? Amongst others. About 150 school children (0-7th grade) in Aarhus have given their responses to these questions in the form of imaginative drawings and wishful texts.

These drawings and texts have now been guests at Kultivator's Farm in Sweden for two months. It is from the visions of these children that Kultivator has created *The Imagine Farm* in the basement floor of The Aarhus Art Building (Århus Kunstbygning). The exhibition takes shape as an alternative map of the world - a total

installation - which can be used to form your own desired future. Some of the drawings and texts have been enlarged by the artists and painted on the walls so that they are enormous.

#### ANIMALS AND HUMANS - A VIDEO BY FINNISH TERIKE HAAPOJA

In the small room, to the left of the stairs, a video of a chimpanzee can be seen. Its face is expressive and alive, as it sits there and looks at us. Soon you discover that it is actually a dead, stuffed museum piece, exhibited in a glass display case, behind which are reflections of the people who gaze at and walk past the chimpanzee in the glass case. The artist behind this work is Terike Haapoja (b. 1974) from Finland. In her art, she works with the basic experiences of being human, including how people relate to each other and to other animal species. It is well known that chimpanzees are one of the species most closely related to humans. More than 94% of their DNA is identical to that of humans. It is said that an adult chimpanzee's cognitive abilities are similar to those of a 4 year old child. And they certainly have other skills, that are necessary to chimpanzee life, but which remains beyond our own comprehension.

#### IMAGINE – TOWARDS AN ECO-AESTHETIC

*The Imagine Farm* is one of The Aarhus Art Building's (Århus Kunstbygning) themes for 2011: IMAGINE – towards an eco-aesthetic. With this theme The Aarhus Art Building hopes to contribute towards forging new collaborations between art and sustainable development. The theme emphasizes the concept of sustainability's origins and the connections between ecological and social problems which since the early 1970s have been characteristic of the thinking and the development of this concept. Kultivator is an example of a group who are actually living out the dream they dreamed about at the beginning of the movement in 1960-70s.



Kultivator, *Middag med køer* (Dinner with cows), video still, 2005.

#### EVENTS

In association with *The Imagine Farm* we invite everyone to participate in a variety of fun and sensory encounters with nature every Sunday throughout the summer.

3rd July, 12:00-17:00 NATURE FOR THE CITY

31st July, 12:00-17:00 WILD FOOD WORKSHOP

10th July, 12:00-17:00 MARKET DAY

7th August, 14:00 CHILDREN'S GUIDED TOUR

17th July, 12:00-16:00 RECYCLING WORKSHOP

14th August, 14:00-16:00 TALKING STICK RALLY

24th July, 12:00-17:00 EXCHANGE MARKET

See more at [www.aarhuskunstbygning.dk](http://www.aarhuskunstbygning.dk)