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Judith Hopf
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Leaf through any textbook of human civilization and sooner or later you'll find the familiar diagram: a circle crossed with evenly spaced diagonal lines—the primitive wheel. In grandiose rhetoric, the book informs us that this is the invention from which humanity descends. The tire, in comparison, can seem like the wheel's lesser cousin—a minor improvement, useful but nowhere near as groundbreaking. Without the creation of the pneumatic tire, however, our society's staggering complexity would be unthinkable.

In *CMYK*, Judith Hopf provides the humble tire with its much-needed due. Elevated on pedestals, the tire is the star of this show. Tilted to the side, they seem to arrest motion, their angle recalling the swerving of a car careening down a highway. But there is something ghostly about these tires. Their surfaces are pale grey, cracked and friable, as if their material was organic. Tasked with transporting goods, this delicate tire would immediately buckle.

Other tires in the show are made from a patchwork of newspaper strips. Proudly low-tech and crafty, Hopf has fabricated these tires with papier-mâché, using the final issues of *TAZ*'s printed dailies as it transitions to digital. Like the outmoded newspaper, the tire's demise may lurk just around the corner. Equal parts celebration and elegy, Hopf's sculptures prod us to conceive of a world without motorized transport, to consider that maybe a tire is best left in a museum wing, rather than amassed in ever-growing piles in immense graveyards.

The advent of the tire, and with it the car, was also the date that the horse disappeared from the city's streets. Complementing—or perhaps confronting—the venerated tires is a series of large ink drawings of horses. As a prey animal, the horse is usually on edge, poised to flee at any hint of danger. Hopf depicts the horses succumbing to drowsiness, their powerful bodies splayed out indolently across the ground. Through deep sleep, the horse seems to recover its energy lost from a lifetime of being prompted to speedily deliver people and things.

The question of energy—its generation, its conservation, its depletion—and its role in society's functioning have been at the core of Hopf's recent artistic practice. While the concept of energy, for Hopf, includes the literal energy that courses through our power grids and keeps the lights and laptops on, it also refers to something more ineffable, something that Hopf calls "social energies." This might be akin to the so-called affects, those emotional forces that dissipate through our bodies whenever we get together to try and get something done. These too take their toll, these too have to be created and maintained.

Everybody today complains about how tired they feel and simultaneously how they can't manage to get anything done. Where the hell is all our energy going? Wasn't technology supposed to liberate us from a state of constant enervation? Wouldn't it be better to forget about the road trip, turn off the engine, and lie down with those horses lazily snoozing in the grass? These questions are obliquely posed by Hopf's works as they trace energy's myriad societal manifestations—and the solution, she suggests, might lie in doing less. If life today can seem more draining than invigorating, Hopf's works invite us to think of new ways of getting together, of changing our relationship to energy so that it serves as a source of continual rejuvenation.

Text: Andrew Wagner