

Air Condition: an Exhibition of Work by the Artist Ana Rewakowicz

Ana Rewakowicz's artistic production draws upon a range of disciplines including technology, architecture, research and art. Her fascination with the theories of Buckminster Fuller and the futuristic, visionary worldview of the 1960s group Archigram, are reflected in her work. She is also interested in the current relationship between the various components of air, growth, environment, ecology, mobility and existence.

In his paper "*How Big is Big*," 2010, philosopher Peter Sloterdijks discusses Buckminster Fuller's concept "Spaceship Earth," from the "*Operation Manual for Spaceship Earth*," published by Fuller in 1969. Here Fuller argued that the Earth could no longer be thought of as a natural object, but instead must be recognized as a gigantic constructed speeding island or spaceship. A half century later, his theory doesn't seem so far-fetched, as it is acknowledged from all four corners of the Earth that knowledge and technologies are the key to the Earth's success. However, this same technology does not prevent us from polluting our biosphere with a century worth of poisonous gases. It appears that growth and progress is more important to the world than researching ways to protect the Earth's atmosphere and environment from pollution. Although Nature is made up of many individuals, humankind is still able to influence, control, rape and disarm Nature for its own purposes. Therefore Fuller poses the question, "who is really overseeing the wellbeing of planet Earth?"

In her 2011 work "*Cloud*," Rewakowicz references Fuller's metaphor by giving humans control over the weather and air. Moving the "clouds" indoors is thought provoking enough, but through audience interaction, the cloud is capable of producing rain. This utopian scenario shows the potential relationship between human-controlled weather and the completely uncontrollable atmosphere. The "cloud" as metaphor represents infinite possibilities in terms of meaning. The metaphor of "dark clouds" and "thunder clouds" are used in many art forms and disciplines, including literature "swinging on a cloud," "as light as a cloud" and so forth. In the 1980s, the "Western-produced" acid rain spewing from clouds was the foremost environmental concern, but today it is global warming.

In the history of art, clouds have been used by artists from different periods and in various styles. However, it is perhaps the Belgian Surrealist artist Rene Magritte who uses them most profoundly, as seen in the painting "*Catapult of the Desert*," 1926, where he has interwoven clouds between the interior and exterior spaces, producing a dark and threatening atmosphere. On many levels, the painting is about contrasts and social issues and this viewpoint is shared by Rewakowicz. Her fascination with functionality and materialism in terms of opposites such as light/airy and heavy/dark, are reminiscent of Magritte's concerns in the painting "*Clear Ideas*," 1958, where heavy stones and light clouds float elegantly beside each other in the sky.

Relatively similar in both structure and theme, is the work "*(LSS) Life Saver System*," 2013, where Rewakowicz uses mechanisms from cybernetics, to create a hydroponic system to cultivate vegetation. In other words, this is a system for cultivating plants in water, with no need for soil. Again we see how important audience interaction is to the artist's work, as it is the audience's contribution of CO₂, which aids in the well-being and growth of the plant. "*LSS*" is also about control, but in this case it is about being environmentally friendly, whereby the "*LSS System*" could be used by contemporary architecture and could be applied to local food production and air filtration in urban settings. The title "*(LSS) Life Saver System*," comes from the International Space Station, where they have successfully created a fully functioning biosphere on board.

Air quality is also a theme in the work "*SR-Hab (Socially Responsive Habitat)*," 2010, which is a pedal-bike habitat, made self-sufficient through the use of solar powered energy. The bicycle can be used for commuting to and from work, or for recreation. The solar panels generate electricity, which make it possible for the user to plug in electrical equipment and make food.

Solar energy and the discovery of environmentally friendly mobility is the theme of the work "*Sleeping Bag Dress Prototype*," 2003-4. Once again Rewakowicz has been inspired by Archigram and more specifically their project "*Clothes for Living*." "*Sleeping Bag Dress*" functions both as a garment and when inflated, a mobile home for travelers.

In the fields of climate and meteorology, there have been many attempts to control Nature. On a local level, there has been much discussion and documentaries produced regarding the consequences of not protecting Nature and instead being more concerned about economic growth and expansion. This dilemma is shared by politicians and finance people alike from all over the world, and not just the oil-rich nation of Norway. The urge for growth is massive, despite the costs to our biosphere in "blood, sweat and tears." At the same time, we are aware of more environmentally-friendly alternatives which will hinder global expansion, but are we willing to change? In the "*Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*," 1969, Buckminster Fuller argued that the time was ripe for a power shift and the new powerbrokers should be made up of designers, engineers and artists. He believed our understanding of reality is too segmented and should be more holistic.

It appears that Ana Rewakowicz has adopted this manner of thinking and through her world view and art production, attempts to find another solution for the contemporary global human condition.

The artist has taken the exhibition's title 'Air Condition' from the article "Air," 2004, written by the sociologist Bruno Latour.

Pia Torgersen, 2013