

PRESS RELEASE

23 October 2008

Gerald Nestler and Sylvia Eckermann

'Breathe My Air' Launch Event

7 – 9 November 2008

**An exhibition project curated by Li Zhenhua
Hosted by CPU:798**

Supported by:

Cultural Forum of the Austrian Embassy Beijing
Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture
City of Vienna Department for Cultural Affairs
L.A.B. (www.bjartlab.com)
Translation: Michelle Ding (L.A.B.)

CPU:798 are delighted to host the launch in China of *Breathe My Air*, an art project on intellectual and social environments and their relations by the Austrian artists Gerald Nestler and Sylvia Eckermann.

This launch will represent the beginning of the second phase of *Breathe My Air*, which began with a series of recorded interviews in Vienna, Austria, investigating contemporary thinking on progress, change and utopia in Europe and China, by European artists and cultural workers who have direct experience of both.

The second phase, being launched at CPU:798, builds on these interviews, soliciting input from Chinese artists and cultural workers who have experience of Europe.

This phase will culminate in May 2009 with the building of “an invisible sculpture”, a demarcated space of pure, oxygenized air and mutual communication in CPU:798.

Launch Event

The launch event takes place for three days, from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 November 2008 in CPU:798. The artists will be present throughout the event to give visitors an opportunity to learn more about the project, develop the discussions directly with them and be a part of the process of *Breathe My Air*. In the Gallery the artists will also present a selection of previous works of the last two years to give context to this new piece. The original interviews from Austria will be shown in an intimate environment to encourage visitors to linger and contemplate the issues at stake.

***Breathe My Air* – May 2009**

In May 2009, CPU:798 will host the completion of this phase of the project with a month-long show in the form of a participatory ‘paradox conversation’ bringing together the interviews from Europe in conjunction with the new material from China, that builds upon the former, in a specially constructed environment. The gallery will be sealed and provided with an air purification and oxygenation system, and entry will be by air-lock to preserve the quality of the interior atmosphere. This environment will provide a recreational as well as a metaphorical space, seemingly apart from our day to day concerns, designed to be conducive to an enlightened dialogue.

“The two basic materials of *Breathe My Air* are both invisible: air and thoughts; *air* as the basic element by which most life as we know it – including ourselves – exists, *thoughts* as the basic

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element by which we form our social and individual lives. Air and thoughts are at the basis of a potentially enriching atmosphere and trigger the vital experiences of human life and nature.

“The project examines air aesthetically as a sculpture. We are interested in its diverse and rich socio-cultural interpretations. Interpretations themselves rest in socio-cultural environments. We invite Western and Chinese artists, writers, and curators to participate in what we like to call a ‘paradox conversation’ on their personal experiences with the other, as well as on the terms Progress, Change, and Utopia in their respective cultures.

“The project aims to build a vocabulary, a method of tackling the invisible but vital aspects of our cultural and environmental economies. It addresses a common and thus forceful and imaginative approach towards influencing and dealing with the quality of our habitat.”

“The project will also exist as a website archive and forum for further development and discussion.”

Artists' Biographies

Sylvia Eckermann

www.syl-eckermann.net

Lives and works in Vienna, Austria. She has been working in the field of electronic arts since 1989. Interactive installations and media related artworks realized in Vienna, London, Mexico City, Helsinki, Norwich, London, Cairo, Beijing, Shanghai, Athens; Commissioned work for ISEA94 and ISEA04, EAST, Millennium Dome London 2000, Cultural Capital of Europe Graz 2003. Serious Games for museums and schools. Sylvia Eckermann has pioneered in the field of artistic use of game engines in various game art installations. (synworld, ISEA, games-computerspiele von KuenstlerInnen, GameArt, artgames, cyber@rt, medi@terra).

Gerald Nestler

www.geraldnestler.net

Lives and works in Vienna, Austria. He deals with different aspects of what he calls “econociety”—a more and more global economy that is shaping our world today, particularly with respect to the roles and significance of the individual and of societies. After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in 1992, he has been working as a visual artist, often in collaboration with other artists, theoreticians or scientists. From 1994 to 1997 he ‘field researched’ financial markets as a broker and trader, which resulted in art projects as well as theoretical approaches. He received an Austrian State Scholarship for Visual Art in 2003. He has exhibited internationally since 1992. His published *Yx. fluid taxonomies—enlited elevation—voided dimensions—human derivatives—vibrations in hyperreal econociety*, a book on art and economy with Schlebruegge.Editors, Vienna in 2007.

Launch Event Opening Hours

Friday 7 – Sunday 9 November 2008

13:00 – 18:00

(or by appointment)

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Gerald Nestler and Sylvia Eckermann,
Breathe My Air, video still, 2008. © the artists

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