

*"As you walk up close, you can see that the collective is only made up of lots and lots of individuals. There is no public out there who needs to change. It's each one of us."*

*Chris Jordan (artist of the Green Movement)*

## Raise Your Voice

July 30-September 26, 2010 / Ars Electronica Center &  
September 2-11, 2010 / Ars Electronica Festival

(Linz, July 27, 2010) A "garbage slick" four times larger than Germany is now floating in the middle of the Pacific. The Rio Grande, Ganges, Nile, Mekong and others of the world's most important river systems are on the verge of ecological collapse. Worldwide, 40% more CO<sub>2</sub> will be emitted this year than in 1990—CO<sub>2</sub> that further exacerbates climate change. And day after day, up to 150 plant and animal species die out, which means that we're experiencing the greatest mass extinction since the dinosaurs disappeared! And that's not all: there's our untrammled exploitation of natural resources, unscrupulous speculation to profit from tumbling security prices, burgeoning corruption, the rollback of civil rights and, of course, our political "leaders"—devoid of ideas, spineless, lobbyists' lackeys ...

We've all got our reasons to scream "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!" Nevertheless, amidst this state (of emergency) of our planet, few of us can escape an oppressive feeling of utter impotence and helplessness. Ars Electronica's response is: Raise Your Voice! We emphatically direct your attention to the artists who—some quite vociferously, others in more subtle fashion—are making their dissatisfaction evident. These are exemplary efforts meant to encourage all of us to make ourselves heard loud and clear. "Raise Your Voice" will run July 30-September 26, 2010 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Upper Level of the Ars Electronica Center.

## Raise Your Voice / Works & Artists

### Midway - Message from the Gyre (2009)

Thousands of albatross chicks die a slow, agonizing death every year on Midway Atoll, a tiny stretch of sand and coral near the middle of the North Pacific. Fed with plastic garbage their parents find floating in the waters surrounding this island located more than 2,000 miles from the nearest continent, these animals end up with so much plastic in their bellies that there's no more room for actual food. They literally starve on a full stomach. Chris Jordan (US) has documented this annual tragedy with impressive photographs. They don't show the chicks' struggle for survival—only the inevitable remnants: sun-bleached skeletons, feathers, and a pile of plastic junk where a dead bird's stomach would have been. To document this phenomenon as faithfully as possible, not a single piece of plastic in any of Chris Jordan's

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at  
www.aec.at/press

photographs was moved, placed, manipulated, arranged, or altered in any way. The exhibit includes a documentary film about this series of photographs.

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Images and video: Chris Jordan, [www.chrisjordan.com](http://www.chrisjordan.com)  
Music: Christen Lien, [www.itsnotaviolin.com/music](http://www.itsnotaviolin.com/music)

### Plastic Planet (2009)

We all have plastic in our blood. This isn't a metaphor or a provocative hypothesis; it's a scientific fact. Plastic is cheap and practical. But plastics in the soil or water take up to 500 years to break down, and the exotic additives they contain do long-term damage to our endocrine system. This state of affairs should give us pause in light of the explosive growth of the piles of garbage on land and at sea. In his documentary entitled "Plastic Planet," Austrian filmmaker Werner Boote shows that plastic has become a global threat, and follows that up with pointed questions. Why don't we change our behavior as consumers? Why doesn't the private sector react to the dangers? Who's responsible for the tons of garbage littering the world's deserts and seas? Who are the winners here? And who are the losers?

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Werner Boote / Plastic Planet: [www.plastic-planet.at](http://www.plastic-planet.at)  
"Plastic Planet" will go on sale at retail outlets in September 2010.

*"Nobody wonders where, each day, they carry their load of refuse. Outside the city, surely; but each year the city expands, and the street cleaners have to fall farther back. The bulk of the outflow increases and the piles rise higher, become stratified, extend over a wider perimeter."*

*Italo Calvino (Author, October 15, 1923-September 19, 1985)*

### SENSEable City Lab (2004)

"Out of sight, out of mind" are often our watchwords in dealing with the mountains of garbage we produce daily. But no matter how far away we transport our trash or how deep we bury it, its toxic residues inexorably make their way back into the food chain and are reunited with us in the end. The MIT Media LAB's SENSEable City Lab is a first step into the future of waste management. Its guiding principle is to accord equal importance to the supply chain and the so-called removal chain. In order to let us observe our everyday household waste products' trip to their so-called "final resting place," refuse was equipped with tiny sensors. At locations in New York and Seattle, volunteers pitched in to affix sensors to 3,000 pieces of garbage—mostly normal household trash and outdated office equipment. Then the tagged articles were sent on their way into the usual waste disposal channels, with the sensors reporting on their route, how long it took, and the final destination. The bottom line: the core problem of waste disposal is the great distance that garbage has to travel, which exacerbates the ecological footprint of the entire process and obscures the attribution of responsibility.

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SENSEable City Lab: <http://senseable.mit.edu/trashtrack/>

With queries, please contact

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Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at](mailto:christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at)  
[www.aec.at/press](http://www.aec.at/press)

## Urgent Evoke (2010)

Where does hunger prevail in my immediate surroundings and what's being done about it? In "Urgent Evoke," questions like this have to be answered and proposed solutions documented online. Developed by top game designer Jane McGonigal, "Urgent Evoke" might be described as a crash course in interacting in digital communities. Each player has to carry out 10 missions, each of which has to do with acute problems such as poverty, worsening economic conditions, hunger, water shortage, human rights, sustainable sources of energy, health care and violence. Players implement their proposed solutions in real life and document this in the form of photos, videos and blog articles. This documentation can then be viewed and evaluated by all the other players. Bonus points are awarded for creativity, cooperation, sustainability and courage.

The object of the game is to promote an exchange of views about the most pressing problems we now face and to collaboratively come up with solutions. The best players are being singled out for recognition during summer 2010. The prizes being bestowed upon them include an online mentoring program with social innovators and business executives, support in starting up new projects, and travel grants to enable them to present their visions for the future at the EVOKE Summit in Washington, DC.

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World Bank Institute, Robert Hawkins, Jane McGonigal, Kiyash Monsef / Urgent Evoke: [www.urgentevoke.com](http://www.urgentevoke.com)

*I want my money back,  
My job is like a cul-de-sac,  
And the bus is too infrequent at 6.30!*

*Why don't they pay me more,  
Life was good before,  
And I am thirsty!*

*(Refrain of the Birmingham Complaints Choir, 2005)*

## Complaints Choir (2005)

A Complaints Choir is exactly what its name implies: a chorus that delivers a loud-and-clear musical expression of its members' grievances. What's so special about it is that anyone can take part. The only criterion for admission: You have to have something to complain about.

The very first Complaints Choir was organized by Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen and Tellervo Kalleinen (Finland & Germany) in 2005 in Birmingham, UK. The basic idea is simply this: Everyone, without exception and regardless of ethnic origin, creed, gender or age, likes to bitch about something or other. So why not tap this inexhaustible source of energy and commitment, and transform its manifestations into something creative? From the moment

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of that brilliant insight, it wasn't long before their first song entitled "I want my money back" became an Internet hit. Shortly thereafter, Complaints Choirs were being formed in Helsinki, Hamburg and St. Petersburg. And there's no end in sight.

Ultimately, it was the massive number of views of the videos they had made available online that convinced Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen and Tellervo Kalleinen to make an open source project out of Complaints Choir and to encourage people all over the world to organize their own ensembles. Today, there are Complaints Choirs in more than 70 locations from Alaska to Tasmania. Sweden has the most; the highest concentration is in the Vancouver area. Canada is also the proud home of the world's first one-man Complaints Choir.

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Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen & Tellervo Kalleinen / Complaints Choir: <http://www.complaintschoir.org>

### The Plastiki (2006)

12,500 plastic bottles went into the construction of the Plastiki, a 20-meter-long, seaworthy trash-catamaran on which skipper David de Rothschild (UK) and his five-person crew sailed from San Francisco to Sydney in early 2010. These environmental activists—including a grandson of Thor Heyerdahl, who gained fame with his 1947 voyage on the Kon-Tiki—staged this three-month Pacific crossing to call attention to all the plastic garbage polluting the world's oceans.

David de Rothschild got the idea for this undertaking from a 2006 United Nations Environment Programme report that plastic bags & bottles make up approximately 80% of the garbage in the seas of the Blue Planet. The Pacific alone is the site of a plastic garbage dump that would cover Central Europe. A similar situation prevails in the North Atlantic—not far from the Caribbean islands, scientists recently measured up to 200,000 floating plastic objects per square kilometer.

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The Plastiki: [www.theplastiki.com](http://www.theplastiki.com)

### Plastic Bag (2009)

"Plastic Bag," a short film by Ramin Bahrani (US), tells of the Plastic Bag's epic journey in search of its lost Maker, and of the worsening pollution of our planet. Being casually tossed into a trash bin is the beginning of the Plastic Bag's odyssey. During its wind-blown course, it encounters strange creatures, brief love in the sky, a colony of prophetic torn bags on a fence, and the unknown. At the end of its journey, the Bag goes deep under the ocean into 500 nautical miles of spinning garbage known as the North Pacific Trash Vortex where, thousands of kilometers from the nearest coastline, it meets up with millions of its own kind. With impressive images, Ramin Bahrani lets us behold the hideous dimensions that environmental pollution has now assumed. Another outstanding facet of this superb film is Werner Herzog's voice-over narration.

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Ramin Bahrani / Plastic Bag: [www.noruzfilms.com/films/plasticbag.html](http://www.noruzfilms.com/films/plasticbag.html)

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### The Urban Prospector (2009)

Back in the 1800s, it was gold fever that set off a get-rich-quick rush. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can we expect (or must we fear) that the slow but sure depletion of the Earth's oil deposits will trigger similar dynamics? What seems to be in the making is a race to secure the last reserves of black gold. The competitors include governments and multinational corporations. But now, thanks to the efforts of Jon Cohrs (US), John & Jane Doe can get in on the action too. On Cohrs' website, he's posted instructions for assembling an Urban Prospector out of an old metal detector, commercially available electronic components and a combustible gas sensor. With this device, would-be wildcatters can scan their home turf for oil. But since the Urban Prospector registers not only Texas tea but lots of toxic substances in the ground too, what Jon Cohrs' device actually does best is to make treasure hunters aware of the soil's horrendous levels of contamination.

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Jon Cohrs / The Urban Prospector: <http://urbanprospecting.net/>

### SAM10 (2009)

SAM10 is a robot. And not just any robot, since SAM10 consists strictly of electronic scrap parts. But if you think this is some cute little artsy-craftsy project, than think again. SAM10 can perceive its surroundings and avoid obstacles. Soon, it will also be able to greet the people it meets. SAM10 was created by Sam Todo. He studied at XXXX University (Togo), and his aim is to get young people in Africa fired up about science. His robot is meant to illustrate the fact that knowledge, skills and creativity have a bright future in Africa too—in fact, above all there.

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AfriGadget: <http://www.afrigadget.com/2010/04/11/a-homemade-robot-in-togo/>

### 3sat InfoPool

Phasing out nuclear energy, climate change, electrosmog, the plight of the educational system and stem cell research—since December 1, 1999, “nano” has been spotlighting issues of importance to every one of us. It's the only TV program on any German-language public broadcasting station that reports on the latest developments in the world of science, and does so in a way that informs, enlightens and makes leading-edge R&D understandable by general audiences. In going about this, “nano” intentionally features a wide-ranging spectrum of topics and presents findings in many areas of pure & applied science as well as the social sciences. Selected “nano” broadcasts can be viewed at the “Raise Your Voice” exhibition:

**Electricity from Wind Power – The first German offshore wind farm goes on stream (April 27, 2010, 2:31 min)**

Germany's first offshore wind farm located 45 kilometers north of Borkum in the North Sea went into operation this year.

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**Desertec: Electricity from the Sahara – Energy from the desert is bound for Europe  
(May 10, 2010, 1:33 min)**

Up to 20 gigawatts of energy could be delivered to Europe by as early as 2020. This corresponds to the output of 20 conventional power plants and would cover 15% of the continent's energy needs.

**Clean Energy from an Osmosis Power Plant – Producing electricity where salt water and fresh water meet (November 24, 2009, 4:48 min)**

The world's first osmosis power plant opened in 2009 in the vicinity of Oslo.

**Cornerstone Laid for the First Industrial Hybrid Power Plant (April 21, 2009, 1:39 min)**

The facility near Prenzlau, Germany combines wind power, biogas and hydrogen to produce electricity. Beginning in 2010, it will deliver electricity to 2,000 households and heat to 300.

**Consumers Contribute to Climate Protection. Carrotmobs: A modern form of protest  
(December 10, 2009, 1:38 min)**

Doing something for the climate while you're shopping or going out to eat is the latest trend in San Francisco, where restaurants promise to spend money on energy-saving measures when their dining rooms are full.

**Prize for a Committed Environmental Activist (October 26, 2009, 5:02 min)**

Angelika Zahrt has been fighting to protect nature and the environment and to foster a sustainable lifestyle for more than 20 years. Her volunteer work was recently honored with the 2009 German Environmental Prize.

**Oceans Full of Plastic (February 26, 2010, 52 sec)**

Compacted into gigantic "carpets" by oceanic currents, millions of tons of garbage litter the high seas. American researchers recently discovered enormous stretches of ocean full of plastic trash in the North Atlantic. The highest concentration is just north of the Caribbean islands.

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3sat / nano: [http://www.3sat.de/nano/nano\\_titel.html](http://www.3sat.de/nano/nano_titel.html)

**Making Abstract Information Come Alive (2010)**

Two interactive installations let you physically experience abstract figures and statistics. These works were created by Stefan Kuzaj and Jochen Winker to complete their bachelor's degree requirements at the University of Applied Sciences in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany.

**WATER POLLUTION**

"We drink 90% of our illnesses," stated Louis Pasteur, co-inventor of the milk purification process named after him. In fact, water pollution worldwide has now reached a critical point. While giant carpets of plastic garbage are afloat on the Earth's oceans, portions of 10 of the world's most important river systems—the Rio Grande, Rio de La Plata, Ganges, Indus,

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Salween, Nile/Lake Victoria, Murray, Danube, Mekong and the Yellow River—teeter on the verge of ecological collapse.

This interactive installation by Stefan Kuzaj and Jochen Winker shows the contribution that various countries make to global water pollution (and thus each one's degree of responsibility for it). Small cylinders—stylized smokestacks or oil barrels—represent each state. When a cylinder is immersed in a shallow basin of water, smoke suddenly starts to billow out of the smokestack or a dark liquid begins to seep out of the leaky barrel, whereby the output is proportional to the state's share of responsibility for global water pollution.

### **BIG MAC INDEX**

A Big Mac is a Big Mac is a Big Mac. It can be purchased (almost) anywhere in the world, and no matter where you order one, it's always made the same way. In short, the Big Mac is one of those standardized consumer products that serve as an excellent basis for an international comparison of purchasing power. The BIG MAC INDEX put together by Stefan Kuzaj and Jochen Winker lets you experience how much work has to be done in various countries around the world in order to earn the price of a Big Mac there. The respective purchase price of a Big Mac is expressed in relation to the median income in the particular country; this relationship is then translated into the corresponding time spent working. And this is the exact amount of time an installation visitor has to spend "working out" on a stair climber (whereby one step on the stair climber corresponds to one minute of work). In these terms, the burger calls for only 12 steps in Tokyo and no fewer than 158 in Nairobi.

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[www.stefan-kuzaj.de](http://www.stefan-kuzaj.de)  
[www.jochenwinker.de](http://www.jochenwinker.de)

With queries, please contact

Christopher Ruckerbauer  
Tel: +43.732.7272-38  
[christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at](mailto:christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at)  
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