

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

THE ARTS CATALYST in association with SCAN and the RSA
presents

NUCLEAR: art & radioactivity

New commissions by Chris Oakley and Simon Hollington & Kypros Kyprianou

Exhibition runs: 14 - 16, 20 - 23, 27 - 30 November 2008, 12 – 6.30pm

Preview: Thu 13 November (private view 6 – 8.30pm, open to press from 4pm)

Admission free

Nicholls and Clarke Building, 3-10 Shoreditch High Street, Spitalfields, London E1

Nuclear power is re-emerging as a concern for our times, both as a generator of energy and as part of a defence strategy. Today it seems to stand for the failed utopian promises of modernism and a fresh hope for a carbon-free future. The contradictions that lie at its core have provided a rich source of questioning for artists, scientists, ecologists and activists for many years. The Arts Catalyst's exhibition **NUCLEAR: art & radioactivity** explores these intricacies through two new commissioned works by **Chris Oakley** and **Simon Hollington & Kypros Kyprianou**. It opens in the Nicholls and Clarke Building in London on 14 November and runs for three successive weekends.

Last year, high court judge Jeremy Sullivan caused an apparent setback to the government's nuclear energy ambitions by ruling that public consultation into the creation of a new fleet of nuclear power stations was 'misleading', 'seriously flawed' and 'procedurally unfair'. The content presented to the public was considered so insubstantial that the judge ruled it would be 'wholly insufficient for them to make an intelligent response'. Soon after these events, **Simon Hollington & Kypros Kyprianou** started a residency at The British Atomic Nuclear Group (B.A.N.G) as part of a public perceptions programme initiated in response to the 2007 ruling.

Hollington & Kyprianou's work in **NUCLEAR: art & radioactivity** is the outcome of this residency, particularly their work within B.A.N.G's wide-ranging public consultation process into the possibility of siting a nuclear power facility in the heart of London. Their new installation, *The Nightwatchman* takes the changing perceptions of the nuclear power industry over its 50 year history into a single immersive narrative environment. Combining the concerns of two different eras (that of the mid-80s and that of the present day), *The Nightwatchman* blends fact and fiction into a darkly humorous journey from hard-nosed PR to a logical hysteria.

Chris Oakley's new film *Half-Life* looks at the histories of Harwell, birthplace of the UK nuclear industry, and the new development of fusion energy technology at the Culham facility in Oxfordshire. Oakley has gained the cooperation of both these organisations in his research and filming. The film examines nuclear science research through a historical and cultural filter. It includes live action material alongside archive sources and animated sections drawn from scientific diagrams. With the recent widespread

acceptance of the reality of climate change driven by carbon dioxide emissions, the work explores the realities and myths surrounding the nuclear sciences.

Two discussion events accompany the exhibition.

A 'Talkaoke' event is being hosted by The People Speak on the afternoon of Friday 14 November within the exhibition in the Nicholls & Clarke building (please visit www.artscatalyst.org for the confirmed time). A mobile chat-show, the format allows all visitors to comment on the work and the issues around it in an informal and entertaining way. Admission is free and there's no need to book, however anyone wishing to bring a group of people to the exhibition and Talkaoke, or those with special access needs, should contact Lala Thorpe at The Arts Catalyst on 020 7375 3690.

In partnership with the RSA's Art & Ecology programme and SCAN, The Arts Catalyst presents a forum at the RSA on Friday 28 November (10am to 6pm) exploring the impact of nuclear power in art and culture. Prominent artists, writers and experts will discuss their work and engagement with the issues around nuclear energy, from Hiroshima through the 50s' 'white heat of technology' and the Cold War nuclear tensions to present day energy debates. Speakers include the controversial American 'nuclear sculptor' James Acord, whose work caused huge public and media attention as the highlight of The Arts Catalyst's ATOMIC exhibition in London ten years ago. The RSA, 8 John Adam Street, WC2. Nearest tube Charing Cross/Embankment. Admission is free, registration at admin@artscatalyst.org.

ACCESS: The Nicholls and Clarke Building and the RSA are accessible to people in wheelchairs. Please note there is no on-site toilet at the Nicholls & Clarke Building. For other access enquiries, contact The Arts Catalyst on 020 7375 3690.

NOTES TO EDITORS

NUCLEAR: art & radioactivity is an Arts Catalyst event, in association with SCAN, the Southeast's new media art agency, and the RSA, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce. The Arts Catalyst is funded by Arts Council England.

About The Arts Catalyst

The Arts Catalyst commissions art that experimentally and critically engages with science. It brings together people across the art/science divide and beyond to explore science in its wider social, political and cultural contexts. It produces provocative, playful, risk-taking projects to spark dynamic conversations about our changing world.

Chris Oakley has exhibited at a number of major international media arts festivals and exhibitions, including Transmediale in Berlin, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and a prize at the Media Forum of the Moscow International Film Festival in 2005.

Simon Hollington & Kypros Kyprianou have been working together since 1999, as well as having individual practices. They work in a wide range of media, particularly video and installation. Their work has been shown at the Venice Biennale 2005, the ICA, London, New Forest Pavilion, Artsway Hampshire, and at exhibitions and film festivals internationally.

Listings details

Exhibition venue: Nicholls and Clarke Building

The exhibition runs 14 - 16, 20 - 23, 27 - 30 Nov 2008, 12 – 6.30pm, admission free.

3-10 Shoreditch High Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6PG

Tube: Liverpool Street, Old Street.

www.artscatalyst.org