Arts Catalyst announces the Nuclear Culture programme 2016/17, curated by Ele Carpenter in partnership with KARST and Bildmuseet

Building upon four years of research into nuclear culture, Arts Catalyst announces new commissions by artists Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, David Mabb, Susan Schuppli and Thomson & Craighead; an artist residency with Kota Takeuchi at Arts Catalyst Centre for Art, Science & Technology, London, UK; the publication of The Nuclear Culture Source Book and two exhibitions; Material Nuclear Culture at KARST in Plymouth, UK and Perpetual Uncertainty at Bildmuseet in Umeå, Sweden.

The Nuclear Culture Project is a curatorial exploration, led by Ele Carpenter, Associate Curator at Arts Catalyst, in partnership with Goldsmiths College, University of London, which began with considering the conceptual and cultural challenges of dismantling nuclear submarines in the UK, inviting artists to consider the aesthetic, conceptual and ethical concerns of nuclear submarines in conjunction with experts in the field. The project brings together scientists, engineers and community activists with artists and ethicists to develop new opportunities for creative practice. Specific areas of enquiry include: the invisibility of the nuclear economy, the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant meltdown, geological waste storage, the Anthropocene, and nuclear humanities.

The 2016/17 Nuclear Culture programme launches in June 2016 with Material Nuclear Culture, an exhibition exploring the material traces and cultural legacy of nuclear powered submarines in the UK.
Ele Carpenter, curator: “During the Material Nuclear Culture exhibition two important decisions will be made by the British Government: the announcement on whether to cancel the Trident nuclear weapons programme, and where the reactor pressure vessels from old submarines will be stored in the UK. Dismantling and storing radioactive waste is not a straightforward process, and the MOD’s plans are still based on the dream of burying it deep under the Cumbrian hills for a million years. The exhibition brings together different aspects of this debate and explores the political and aesthetic tensions of these long time frames, beyond human comprehension.”

Listings 2016/17

Material Nuclear Culture
Fri 17 June – Sat 13 Aug 2016, Wed – Sat, 11am – 5pm
KARST, 22 George Pl, Plymouth PL1 3NY
Nick Crowe & Ian Rawlinson, James Acord, Susan Schuppli, Kota Takeuchi, Thomson & Craighead, David Mabb, Erika Kobayashi

Material Nuclear Culture is an exhibition exploring the material traces and cultural legacy of nuclear powered submarines in the UK, within the international discourse of deep time aesthetics and memory. The exhibition highlights the complexity of archiving the cultural legacy of submarine heritage within a wider discussion of how to comprehend the deep time challenges of radioactive waste storage. A partnership between KARST and Arts Catalyst, curated by Ele Carpenter.

Material Nuclear Culture Roundtable Discussion
Sat 18 June 2016, 10am – 3.30pm
KARST, 22 George Pl, Plymouth PL1 3NY
A discussion about art and nuclear culture will take place in the centre of the Material Nuclear Culture exhibition bringing together artists, submariners, and members of the Submarine Dismantling Project Advisory Group (SDP-AG) and NsubF Nuclear Submarine Forum in the South East. Participants include: Les Netherton, Chair of the SDP-AG; Mark Portman, W01, Royal Navy (Submarines); Carien Kremer, Curator at William Morris Gallery; Ele Carpenter, Curator; Nicola Triscott, Artistic Director of Arts Catalyst and artists Nick Crowe, David Mabb, Kota Takeuchi, Thomson & Craighead.

The discussion will take place around a reconstruction of James Acord’s roundtable that he built in his Hanford studio in 1999, to bring together environmentalists and people from the nuclear industry to discuss the clean up of nuclear materials at the Hanford site.
Places are limited, booking required: http://bit.ly/1Oppvlb

Kota Takeuchi: Residency and Exhibition at Arts Catalyst
Thu 7 – Fri 29 July 2016, Thu & Fri, 12noon – 6pm
Arts Catalyst Centre, 74-76 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8DR
During his time in the UK, Kota Takeuchi will be researching the deep time concerns of monuments, site markers and memory around the UK and Belgium. He will undertake field research at the Belgian underground research laboratory for the geologic storage of radioactive waste in partnership with Z33 and the Belgian nuclear waste agency NIRAS / NIROND. On Saturday 16 July curator and writer Eiko Honda will be in discussion with Kota Takeuchi, chaired by artist Kaori Homma from Art Action UK. Kota Takeuchi’s residency has been organised by S-AIR in Japan in partnership with Arts Catalyst, supported by the Sasakawa Foundation.

Perpetual Uncertainty
Sun 2 Oct 2016 – Sun 16 April 2017
Bildmuseet, Umeå University S-901 87, Umeå, Sweden
James Acord, Shuji Akagi, Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway, Erich Berger and Mari Keto, Nick Crowe & Ian Rawlinson, Don’t Follow the Wind, Dave Griffiths, Isao Hashimoto, Erika Kobayashi,
David Mabb, Cecile Massart, Eva and Franco Mattes, Yelena Popova, Susan Schuppli, Shimpei Takeda, Kota Takeuchi, Thomson & Craighead, Suzanne Treister, Andy Weir, Robert Williams and Bryan McGovern Wilson, Ken + Julia Yonetani

An exhibition of contemporary art in the nuclear Anthropocene exploring the complexity of knowledge and the deep time of radiation. The exhibition brings together twenty-five international artists from across Europe, the USA and Japan, investigating nuclear aesthetics through the material sensing of nuclear sites and experiences. Perpetual Uncertainty is produced by Bildmuseet in cooperation with Curator Ele Carpenter, Goldsmiths, University of London.

The Nuclear Culture Source Book
Forthcoming Sept (UK) and Oct (USA) 2016

The Nuclear Culture Source Book, will serve as a resource and introduction to nuclear culture as one of the most prominent themes within contemporary art and society, exploring the diverse ways in which post-Fukushima society has influenced artistic and cultural production. The book brings together a wide-ranging collection of material from artists and writers working within the scope of nuclear culture internationally, including works by renowned practitioners such as Lise Autogena, Thomson & Craighead, Nick Crowe & Ian Rawlinson, Chim↑Pom, Franco & Eva Mattes, Trevor Paglen, Noi Sawaragi, Suzanne Treister, Kota Takeuchi, and architect Katsuhiro Miyamoto. The book has been edited by Ele Carpenter and published by Black Dog Publishing in partnership with Bildmuseet and Arts Catalyst.

All events are listed on: http://bit.ly/1Nwvk5G

ends.

Interviews, images and further information available on request.

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Notes to Editors:
1) Arts Catalyst is one of the UK’s most distinctive arts organisations, distinguished by ambitious art commissions and its unique take on art-science practice. The organisation is funded by Arts Council England as part of its National Portfolio. Over 21 years, it has commissioned more than 125 UK and international artists’ projects, often at pivotal moments in artists’ careers, including major projects by Tomas Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Agnes Meyer-Brandis, Carey Young, Jan Fabre and the Otolith Group. Arts Catalyst works with artists and scientists to create artworks and generate new ideas exploring science and its role in society and culture: from the nature of air to environmental change, interspecies communication to the
future of the moon. It aims to give audiences distinctive, thought-provoking experiences and to play a leading role in the dialogue around interdisciplinary artistic practice. The organisation collaborates with world-class galleries, museums, universities, arts organisations, science institutions and research centres.

2) **Ele Carpenter** is a curator, writer and researcher in politicised art and social networks of making. She is curatorial researcher in Nuclear Culture with Arts Catalyst, Senior Lecturer in MFA Curating and convenor of the Nuclear Culture Research Group at Goldsmiths, University of London. The research and development stage of the Nuclear Culture project was supported by an AHRC Early Career Research Fellowship 2012-13, and Arts Council of England. The Nuclear Culture Project involves field trips, commissioning new work and curating exhibitions, film screenings and roundtable discussions. The project is commissioning new work in response to the issues raised by dismantling nuclear submarines in consultation with members of the Submarine Dismantling Project Advisory Group, supported by Arts Council England. In 2014 Ele worked with S-AIR in Sapporo to curate the Actinium exhibition, forum and field trips to nuclear sites in Japan.

3) **Arts Catalyst commissions in detail:**

**Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, *Courageous*, HD film, 2016**
This subtly poetic film explores the submarine as an object within its own terms, moving beyond the powerful but familiar narratives of functionality and social context. Instead the film looks to capture the unknown ‘self’ of the submarine, a space of being that is difficult to grasp. The subject of *Courageous* is the physical qualities of particular spaces on the boat that form part of what is seen on a guided tour along with views of its exterior undergoing renovation. The artists are interested in the dual status of this submarine as a piece of history and a museum of that history. Their film aims to bring an understanding of the object as real space. Beyond its function and history there is an actual physical object that remains obscured by the narratives that surround it. Whilst there have been various documentaries about life aboard a naval submarine these inevitably focus on personal narratives, where the boat is a supporting character and never given the space to articulate itself. In addition *Courageous* will consider the submarine as an emblem of hearing and silence, an icon through which to consider the unknowability of the nuclear.

**David Mabb, *A Provisional Memorial to Nuclear Disarmament*, 2015**
David Mabb’s practice investigates the aesthetics of William Morris’ designs within contemporary political culture. In response to a visit to HMS Courageous, Mabb has created a new series of works to investigate the MOD use of the Morris Tudor Rose print (1883) that has been used to furnish the officers’ and senior ratings’ quarters in nuclear submarines. The Ministry of Defence commissioned the fabric for over thirty years, from the 1960s through to the 1990s, including the Vanguard Class nuclear-powered ballistic submarines which are armed with Trident nuclear-armed missiles. As a socialist, William Morris could never have anticipated that his designs would become the symbol of English homeliness in a nuclear submarine. Prompted by the work of British historian E. P. Thompson, whose biography of Morris was republished in the 1970s when he was a leading intellectual in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Mabb reappropriates Morris from the MOD, bringing the designs into conjunction with a range of anti-nuclear protest signs and slogans which are presented on late twentieth century freestanding projection screens. The work will be accompanied by reference materials: E.P. Thompson’s *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*; E.P. Thompson’s *CND booklet Protest & Survive*; Morris fabric samples from British nuclear powered submarines; and a HMS Courageous Museum Guide.

**Susan Schuppli, *Sound of Sand*, 2016**
Susan Schuppli is interested in how the objects, technologies, and practices of science are narrated in ways that makes them ‘consequential’ for culture and society. Her audio work for the exhibition is based on the 20 hertz frequency of sand. Following a site visit to HMS Courageous she wrote: “Our tour was conducted by a retired Officer Alan Jones who had worked for decades on various nuclear submarines overseeing their engineering and navigation systems. The Valiant-class of submarines were primarily used for surveillance, especially during the Cold War, and were tasked with trolling the waters of the North Atlantic and monitoring underwater activity that might be indicative of covert operations. Alan recounted one such sortie in which a strange new frequency was picked up by the submarine’s passive sonar technology. This is essentially a mode of sonar directed towards attentive listening as opposed to active sonar, which emits pulses that bounce echoes back to the sub where they are logged and classified according to the kinds of objects that produce such sonic-signatures. However unable to identify this particular frequency and thus its source of emission, the submarine began to chase the sound as it moved in ever-changing configurations, sometimes
disappearing altogether and then re-appearing with more intensity somewhere else. When the submarine finally surfaced and returned to its base at Faslane, Scotland it was discovered that what they had been doggedly following for weeks was the sound of granular particles of sand being rubbed by the undulating motion of the waves." Susan Schuppli, 2014.

**Thomson & Craighead**, *temporary index*, installation, 2016

Artists Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead investigate understanding of geological and planetary time through the relationship between live data and the material world. Their *temporary index* is an online database of live decay-rate counters, which operate as markers of time as well as place. The artwork utilizes live and pre-recorded data feeds which can be embedded in specific sites, syndicated online, presented in art galleries, preserved in a museum collection, and included in nuclear archives. The artwork publically presents invisible data through a series of numeric counters which countdown the probabilistic decay of radioactive materials in seconds. The design of the counters demonstrates how human measurement of time is a process of linguistic and pictorial language. The result is an animated object of contemplation; representations of time that far outstrip the human life cycle and provide us with a glimpse into the vast time scales that define the universe in which we live, but which also represent a future limit of humanity's temporal sphere of influence. The counters include: Onkalo Spent Nuclear Fuel Repository, Finland; Hallam Nuclear Generating Station, USA; Waste Isolation Power Plant (WIPP) USA; Repository for Radioactive Waste Morsleben, Germany; Schacht Asse II Intermediate Waste Store, Germany; Piqua Nuclear Power Facility, USA; Hanford, USA; Dodewaard Nuclear Power Plant, Netherlands; Chernobyl Reactor #4, Ukraine. *temporary index* was developed during a residency at HUMlab in partnership with Bildmuseet, 2015.