Symposium
FROM SOLAR FUTURES TO FUTURE SOLIDARITY

Organized by Sara Castelo Branco and Claudia Peppel

23 October 2023
16:00–21:00
ICI Berlin
In English

With
Angela Anderson
Amanda Boetzkes
Michela Coletta
Ricardo Jorge Gafeira
Gökçe Günel
Kai Koddenbrock
Michael Marder
Oxana Timofeeva

An ICI Event in cooperation with Bard College Berlin

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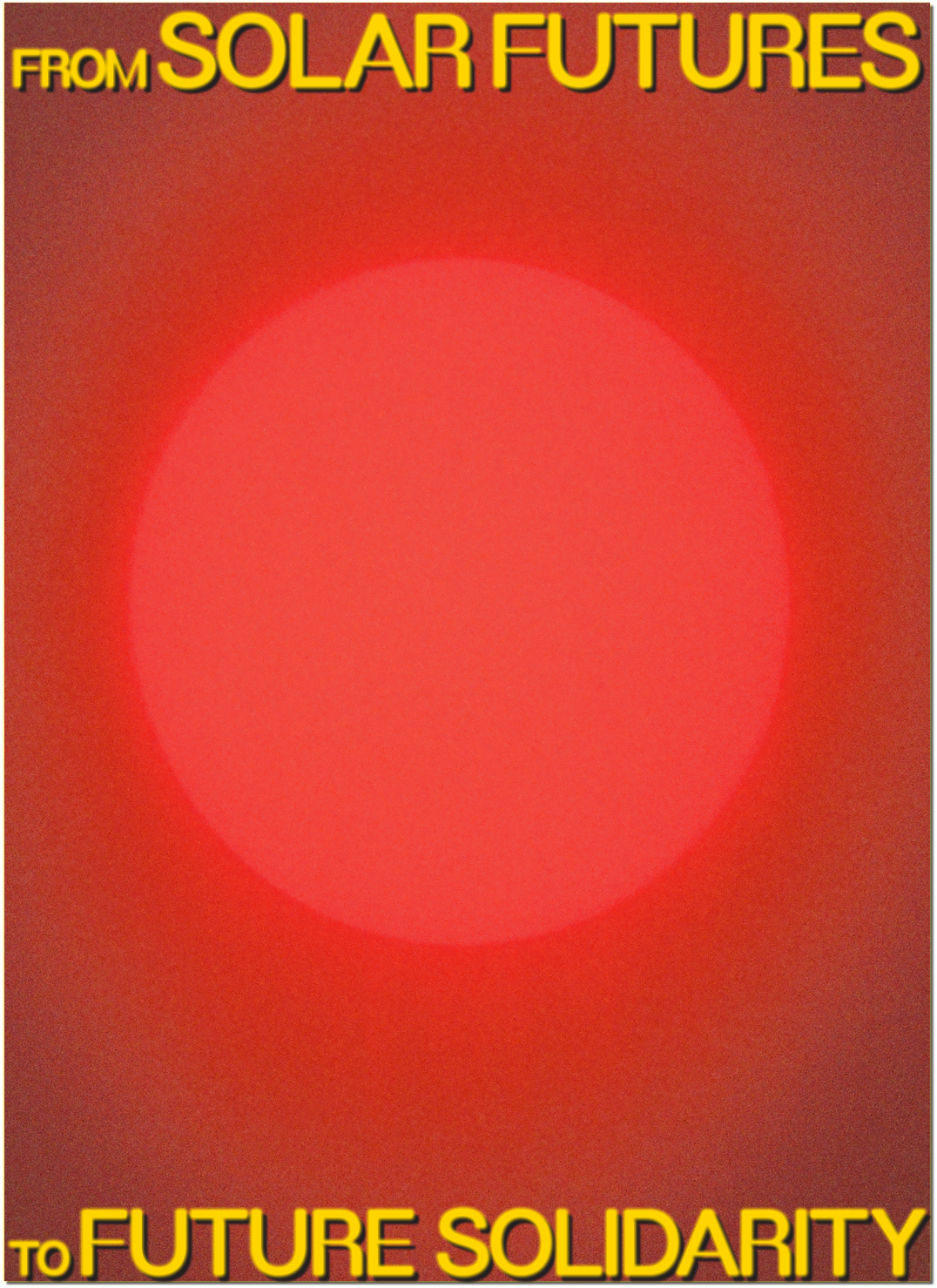
Bard College Berlin
A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

The symposium at the ICI Berlin is part of a larger project by Sara Castelo Branco entitled 'Solarity Prospects', which includes the exhibit 'Solar Capital', on show from 19 October – 5 November 2023 at ACUD Galerie – ACUD Macht Neu (by Hugo de Almeida Pinho with the sound collaboration by Manuel Sékou). At the opening there will be a lecture-performance, 'After the Death of the Sun', by Luïza Luz.

For further details please see: acudmachtneu.de/events/2018/solarity-prospects-project-by-sara-castelo-branco/.

It is further accompanied by the film screening 'Solar Influx' on 24 October 2023 at Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art, with works by Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, Jérôme Cognet, Hugo de Almeida Pinho, Christina Hemauer, Roman Keller, and Susan Schuppli.

For further details please see: www.arsenal-berlin.de/kalender/.



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The sun has been a continuous element of utopian imagination — as a cultural form, an ideological power, and a spiritual force. The energy of the sun keeps the planet functional, regulates the metabolic rhythms of plants and animals, and is part of a contemporary global capital of technological and economic power. Some theories assert that solar emissions also have a biopolitical impact on human sociology, psychology, and historical events; they present a close correlation between the periods of highest solar activity and certain revolutionary or progressive movements.

In this sense, Michel Serres (1980) once defined the sun as our energetic horizon and the 'ultimate capital' in the history of modern religion, culture, ecology, and economy. Georges Bataille (1931) also discussed the sun as a constructive and destructive force shifting between order and disorder. One of the foundations of solar politics is its relationship to energy, which in the last centuries has shaped some ideologies related to work, capitalism, progress, imperialism, and productivism; and energy was also the founding basis for certain ethical and epistemological concepts in ecology (Simon-Stickley, 2021).

Solar energy constitutes one of the most important subjects in the current context of international politics: the circulation of power between those who control energy production and those who depend on it. Given this context, it's crucial to transform solar energy into a possible mechanism of contestation against forms of authoritarianism, neoliberalism, autocratic systems, and climate crisis. Can this critical context be reassessed through concepts such as the ecosocialism of David Schwartzman (1996) or the solar communism of Michael Löwy (2011), which have their origins in the ecological movement as well as in the Marxist critique of political economy? These concepts, which are based in non-monetary and extra-economic criteria, take into account the preservation of ecological balance by opposing it to capitalist production systems. This might imply rescuing the Marxist idea of social justice and articulating it in a new relationship with nature.

Condemning forms of heliocentrism that develop procedures of marginality, appropriation, and energetic imperialism, this symposium will reflect on the complexities of solar energy. It encourages the idea that it is essential to seek solar futures and future solidarity outside of such procedures and to look for responses that promote a sustainable and equitable future in regard to the production of energy.

23 October 2023

16:00 Welcome and Introduction
Sara Castelo Branco and Claudia Peppel

16:00–18:00 Panel I

Gökçe Günel (online)
Leapfrogging to Solar

Ricardo Jorge Gafeira
The Roles of the Sun Over the Last Centuries

Kai Koddenbrock
German Africa Policy
From Eurafrican Utopias to Another Scramble for African Resources?

Oxana Timofeeva
It Is Never Too Early to Decolonize the Sun

19:00–21:00 Panel II

Amanda Boetzkes (online)
Capitalist Prize-Fighter
Solarity's Observers of Modern Life

Angela Anderson
Queer Eco-intersectional Luxury Communist Solarities
Against Capitalist Authoritarianism

Michela Coletta
Being Planetary
From Managerial Cartography to Post-anthropocentric Solidarity

Michael Marder (online)
On Heraclitus, Fr. 6:
'The Sun is New Every Day'