

IABR–2016– THE NEXT ECONOMY–

Press Release, 18 April 2016

IABR–2016 shows concrete visualizations of energy transition towards the Next Economy

In its Ateliers, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam researches opportunities created by genuinely adopting renewable energy

The exhibition IABR–2016–THE NEXT ECONOMY includes concrete visualizations of a viable green Next Economy. Nordic City explores a new future for the city and region of Groningen, and 2050 – An Energetic Odyssey illustrates the role the North Sea can play in the realization of the two-degree target once we focus on collaboration for the large-scale exploitation of wind power.

The Rotterdam biennale takes the major challenges of the twenty-first century as its starting point for the exploration and visualization of the city of tomorrow. The need to switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources in order to realize climate neutral living and working environments is an urgent topic. What are the spatial implications of this transition? What opportunities present themselves if we facilitate energy transition in the foreseeable future? The two-degree target set at the Paris climate conference is not viable without bold strategies and new forms of collaboration between large established companies, small newcomers, governments, and citizens.

The results of the research by design into the opportunities created by the transition to the Next Economy done by these two IABR–Ateliers are an important part of the IABR–2016 program. The IABR–Atelier Groningen examines how a Next Economy based on renewable energy and reduced CO2 emissions can become a new inspiring prospect for the northern Netherlands and for the Groningen-Eemshaven region in particular. In the Atelier 2050 – An Energetic Odyssey, the IABR, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, major companies, and nature conservation organizations together examine the possibilities and implications of the large-scale production of wind power on the North Sea.

The Vital Role of the North Sea in the Energy Transition

The European climate objective – 80 to 95 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2050 compared with 1990 – requires significant system changes. The IABR–Atelier 2050 – An Energetic Odyssey shows how far-reaching the energy transition from fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and gas to an energy supply largely fed by renewable energy sources actually is. It is a (spatial) task that is still largely underestimated. Even making a maximum effort on land to save energy, by central and decentral initiatives with solar panels, wind, bio mass, geothermal heat, and residual heat will prove inadequate. 2050 – An Energetic Odyssey represents a system leap that makes it possible to bridge this gap by the very large-scale production of wind energy on the relatively shallow North Sea for the countries that surround it.

Deploying research by design, IABR–2016 shows what such an ambitious approach involves, what infrastructure it requires, what it means to link up with the natural ecosystem of the North Sea, what role the entrepreneurial state plays, which innovations this requires, and especially which new economic dynamic this will generate, for instance in the offshore sector. The aim of the project is to create a reference point for a broad dialogue between public and private parties. Development perspectives are outlined on the basis of a robust future scenario.

2050 – An Energetic Odyssey shows that the production of North Sea energy can meet the demand and that the Next Economy can be a clean economy.

2050 – An Energetic Odyssey is a collaboration of the IABR with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Shell, TenneT, Van Oord, Zeeland Seaports, European Climate Foundation, RWE, Natuur & Milieu, Port of Rotterdam Authority and Amsterdam Port Authority. This condensed Atelier is guided by IABR–2016 chief curator Maarten Hajer and IABR–2014 curator Dirk Sijmons. H+N+S Landscape Architects, Ecofys and Tungsten Pro carried out the research.

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Energy transition as driving force for Next Economy growth in Groningen city and region

Both the city and the province of Groningen consider the transition to renewable energy to have become unavoidable and aim to have largely completed it by 2035. The IABR–Atelier Groningen has examined whether the energy transition can be used as an opportunity for next economy growth in the city and the region. If government, businesses, and citizens pull together and collectively, as a region, take on the transition, it could become the driving force behind the development of four powerful economic clusters that will create jobs and that will improve the quality of the character of the city and the countryside.

The work of the IABR–Atelier on Energy Port, Biobased Economy for the North, Groningen: Smart Energy City, and Sustainable and Safe Villages demonstrate how the region may profit from the energy transition. Everything comes together in the concept of the Nordic City: a constellation of a strong, complete city surrounded by a range of quality-conscious and sustainable villages, held together by a shared energy ambition and a flourishing regional energy economy. The results are presented at the IABR-2016 exhibition.

Atelier Groningen is a collaboration of the IABR with an alliance of the Province of Groningen, the Municipality of Groningen, Eemsdelta Region and the Groningen-Assen Region. The lead designer is Jandirk Hoekstra, partner at H+N+S Landscape Architects.

The IABR–2016–THE NEXT ECONOMY exhibition includes several more projects that explore the opportunities energy transition offers, such as Energy and Space 2050 (Atelier Making Projects: Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and POSAD Spatial Strategies) and Re-Energizing the Subsurface (H+N+S Landscape Architects).

IABR-Ateliers

In its Ateliers, the IABR collaborates with (inter)national governments to continuously deploy research through design to work on strategic visions, plans, projects, and innovative development models that tangibly contribute to the city of tomorrow. IABR–2016 presents the results of three IABR–Ateliers in the Netherlands – in Groningen, Utrecht and Rotterdam, and two Ateliers abroad – in Brussels and Albania: the outcome of more than two years of research by design under the auspices of IABR director George Brugmans and program manager Marieke Francke. IABR–2016 chief curator Maarten Hajer and IABR–2014 curator Dirk Sijmons teamed up and directed a condensed Atelier to map and visualize the potential for and implications of large-scale production of wind energy on the North Sea.

IABR–2016–THE NEXT ECONOMY

During the weekend of 23 and 24 April 2016, the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) will kick off its seventh edition: IABR–2016–THE NEXT ECONOMY. Under the supervision of executive director George Brugmans and chief curator Maarten Hajer, an international Curator Team once again focuses on the future of the city, investigating the relationship between urban design and tomorrow's economy. Until 10 July 2016, IABR–2016 is a platform for debate and exchange between creative coalitions of designers, administrators, businesses, citizens, and other agents of change with fresh ideas and imaginations of the twenty-first century city, culminating in a closing debate on Sunday 3 July.

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NOTE TO THE EDITOR

For more information about the program, requests for images and interviews and to register for the press preview on Friday 22 April 2016 (11 a.m. – 5 p.m.), please contact press officer Nancy van Oorschot at nancy@iabr.nl or +31-6-41684324. Visit the [press page](#) of the website for downloads.