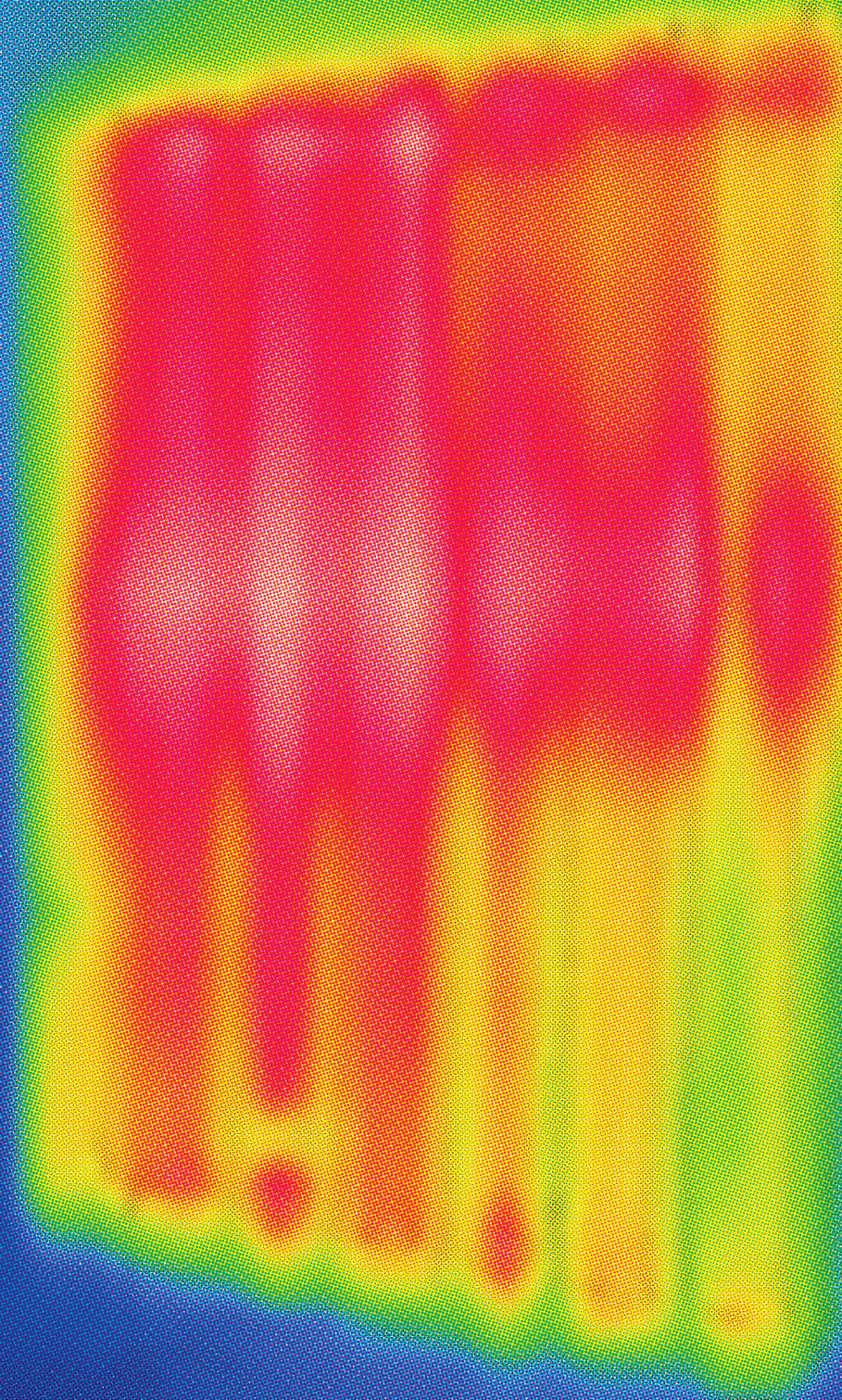


Press File



POWER

13.10.23 — 17.03.24

C I.II.III.IV. A
Culture — Architecture

civa.brussels
Rue de l'Ermitage 55 Kluysstraat
1050 Brussels

POWER connects energy and politics. The exhibition challenges to think about how infrastructure relates to life across political institutions, citizen participation, geopolitics, climate justice, architecture, landscape design and engineering.

From oil and gas pipelines to microchips, from wind turbines to recycling hubs, infrastructures govern life in myriad ways. Objects of intense political, social, and economic contestation, these infrastructures impose a design of power in both senses of the word: as energy and politics.

Energetic Transformation

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the energetic transformation – and with it systemic change – has only accelerated. This is demonstrated in a large installation by Armin Linke, which documents gas pipelines in Siberia, LNG terminals in the North Sea, and energy control rooms in Brussels. As monthly electricity bills for private households have exploded, legislative initiatives and new building codes, such as those by Oana Bogdan and Antoine Crahay, or *HouseEurope!* by Arno Brandhuber and his colleagues at ETH Zurich, are reinventing the roles of architects, engineers, and landscape designers.

Building Carbon Europe

The link between energy and politics is nothing new. The exhibition at CIVA in Brussels takes the European capital and the genesis of the European project as a starting point. The very idea of a European union after the catastrophe of WWII started with energy and building materials: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Encouraging the massive use of steel, large housing projects involved protagonists such as Fritz Haller, Cedric Price, and Willy Van Der Meeren, which are here shown alongside the ECSC's founding document drafted by Robert Schuman.

Atom

Expo 58 in Brussels marked the initial optimism of the nuclear era: in its center energy-related pavilions such as the Congolese Pavilion on Uranium and an unrealized nuclear power plant on the grounds of the fair. Long before the nuclear disasters of Chernobyl and Fukushima gave birth to a dark aesthetics of catastrophe, the atom was embedded in an optimistic aesthetic program, spearheaded by Claude Parent in his designs for the French nuclear program in their reaction to the oil crisis in the early 1970s.

Renewables

The turn to renewable energy coincides with the beginnings of the Green movement, whose early political campaigns were illustrated by Luc and François Schuiten. It was quickly translated to XL-scale by OMA/AMO and their scenarios for the North Sea (2005/06), a precursor to the April 2023 Ostend Declaration, which aims at transforming the North Sea in the largest powerhouse on earth. The massive scale of the new design of power is exemplified by the film “The Great Endeavor” by Liam Young that fictionally describes the infrastructures needed to reverse climate change. The contradictions of the green revolution are documented by Sammy Baloji, Jean Katambayi, and Daddy Tshikaya from the artistic research collective On Trade Off, who demonstrate how the recent race for lithium continues a history of extraction.

Circularity

Since buildings are responsible for around 40% of the global CO2 emissions, grey energy and circularity are becoming key areas of debate. Pioneered by early ecologists such as Paul Duvigneaud and his *écosystème urbain*, as well as thinkers such as Bruno Latour and his plea to Reset Modernity, architects today are confronting a paradigmatic shift: from the fascination of the new to the logics of the pre-existing. The project for the Stadsatelier de Ville in Brussels by BC Architects / Babinigeysen / Schenk Hattori stands for a new practice in which architect, client and contractor merge into a single new profile.

Heat

To reach the goals of the Paris Agreement, environmental control becomes a key tool in design. On an urban scale, landscape architect Bas Smets “cools” the public spaces around Notre-Dame in Paris, literally reducing the felt temperature. On a smaller scale, CIVA itself, which is situated in a former electric power station like Tate Modern in London or the Power Station of Art in Shanghai, faces the challenges of a sustainable museum. Isn’t it a contradiction to make an exhibition on power systems while spending energy on controlling museal temperature and humidity that guarantee the conservation of art objects in the exhibition? Philippe Rahm, The New Open / TU Delft, and Chris Pipe have developed site-specific installations that speculate on the contradictions and potential of a sustainable museum.

Architects, landscape designers, engineers, artists and urban practitioners, toiling daily at the coalface of economic expansion, have been complicit in the perpetuation of the fossil era. This is shown in Bernd and Hilla Becher's photographs of the Belgian coal industry and Monira Al Qadiri's film on the petro-industry in the Gulf region. But they are also in a unique position to contribute to shift discourse and practice toward large-scale energetic transformation.

POWER is an exhibition that brings together historic references, contemporary practices, and speculations on the future. The contributors are comprised of a transdisciplinary field of architects, landscape designers, artists, philosophers, historians, scientists, legislators, and nongovernmental organizations:

Monira Al Qadiri, Rachel Armstrong / Rolf Hughes / Anna Vershinina, Sammy Baloji / Jean Katambayi / Daddy Tshikaya (On-Trade-Off), BAUKUNST, BC Architects / Babinigeysen / Schenk Hattori, Bento, Bernd & Hilla Becher, Oana Bogdan & Antoine Crahay, Jochen Brandi, Constantin Brodzki, City Mine(d) / Fanny Monier, Pierre Coulon / André Noterman, Eugène Delatte / Robert Maquestieau, Emile Devreux, Paul Duvigneaud, Feddes Olthof, Buckminster Fuller, Fritz Haller, HouseEurope! / B+ / Fosbury Architecture, Bruno Latour, Armin Linke, OMA/AMO/ Rem Koolhaas / Reinier de Graaf, Claude Parent, André and Jean Polak, René Pechère, Cedric Price, Chris Pype, Philippe Rahm, Georges Ricquier, François & Luc Schuiten, Karl Schwanzer, Bas Smets, Territorial Agency, TU Delft / The New Open, Willy Van Der Meeren / Léon Palm, Hugo Van Kuyck, Hans Wieser Benedetti, and Liam Young.

In parallel to the exhibition, the project organizes *POWER Talks*, a public program of lectures, roundtable discussions, and film screenings which among others features Rachel Armstrong, Thomas Auer, Nick Axel, Alice Babini, Daniel Barber, BC Architects, Oana Bogdan, Kristiaan Borret, Arno Brandlhuber, Citymine(d), Antoine Crahay, Koenraad Danneels, Ludwig Engel, Feddes Olthof, Olaf Gravert, Andrés Jaque, Stephan Kempelmann, Alina Kolar, Jeanette Kuo, Armin Linke, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Sabine Oberhuber, On Trade Off, Marina Otero Verzier, Véronique Patteuw, Dennis Pohl, Philippe Rahm, Tomàs Saraceno, Ruth Schagemann, Bas Smets, Ola Uduku and many more.

Intergenerational workshops will be held in collaboration with Auranne Leray, BC Materials, City Mine(d), Louise Lainiez and V+.

TU Delft Design,
Data and Society
Group & The New
Open project
in collaboration with
Meta Office, 2023.

[illegible]

Courtesy of
Armin Linke

ECI, 2023,
HouseEurope!

Courtesy of
HouseEurope!,
Station + (DARCH), b+,
Fosbury Architects

Photo by Filip Dujardin



Xenomorph Energy:
Necromantic Orchid
(XENO), 2023

Rachel Armstrong,
Rolf Hughes,
Anna Verschinnina

Photo by Filip Dujardin



The Great Endeavor,
Humanity's Largest
Construction Project,
2023

Liam Young

Costume by
Ane Crabtree

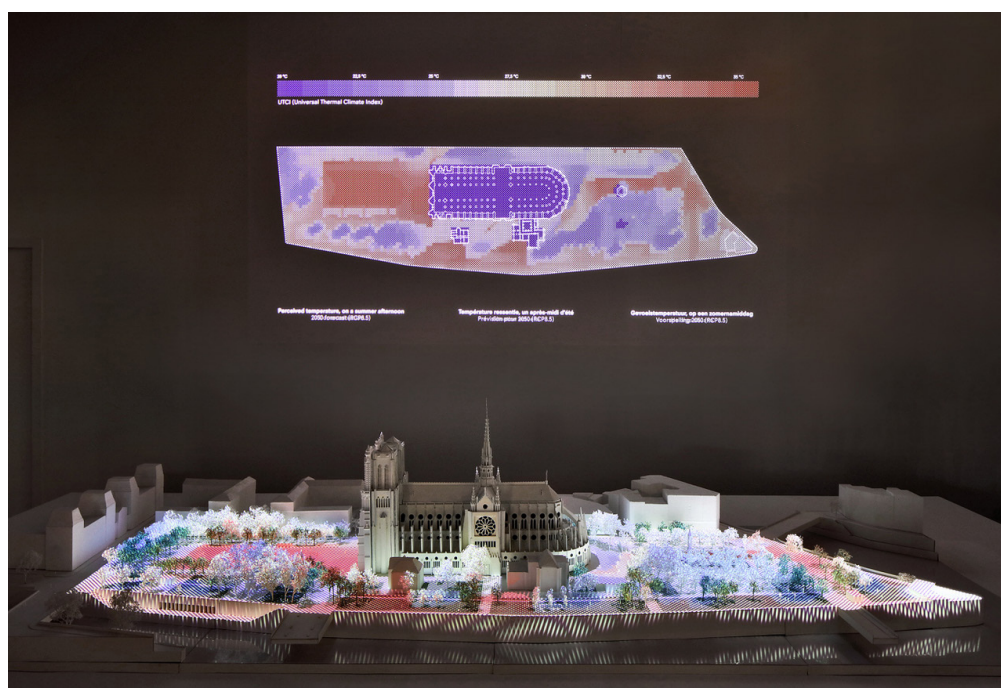
Photo by Filip Dujardin



Paris Notre-Dame:
A Microclimatic
Approach, 2022–2023

Bureau Bas Smets,
Team Leader
With: GRAU,
Neufville-Gayet
Architectes, Ingérop
& Les Éclaireurs,
Franck Boulté
Consultants,
BLD Waterdesign,
Cronos Conseil

Photo by Filip Dujardin

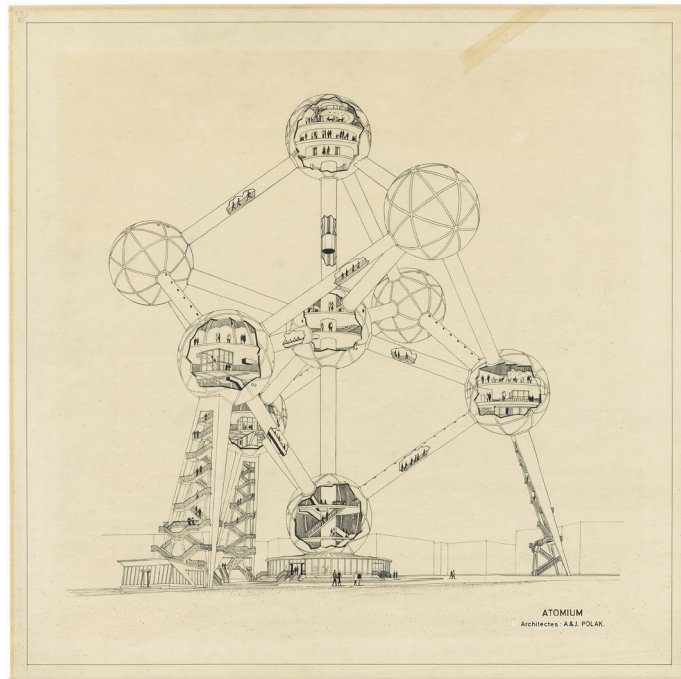


Expo 58

Atomium, interior
of spheres and
connecting escalators

André & Jean Polak

Civa Collections,
Brussels

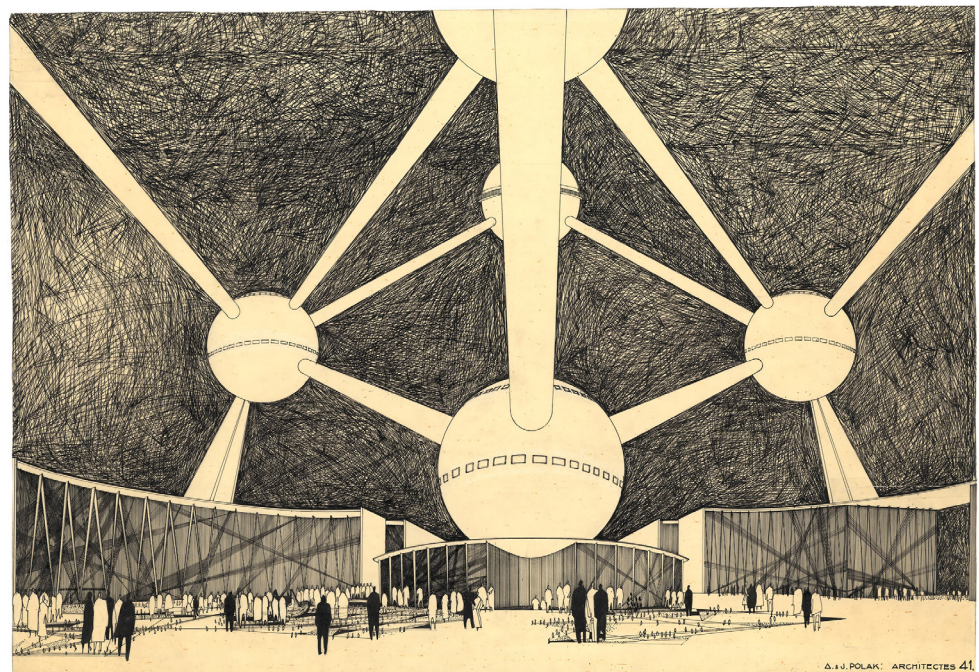


Expo 58

Atomium, bottom view
from the esplanade

André & Jean Polak

Civa Collections,
Brussels



Tesla Crash,
A speculation, 2019.

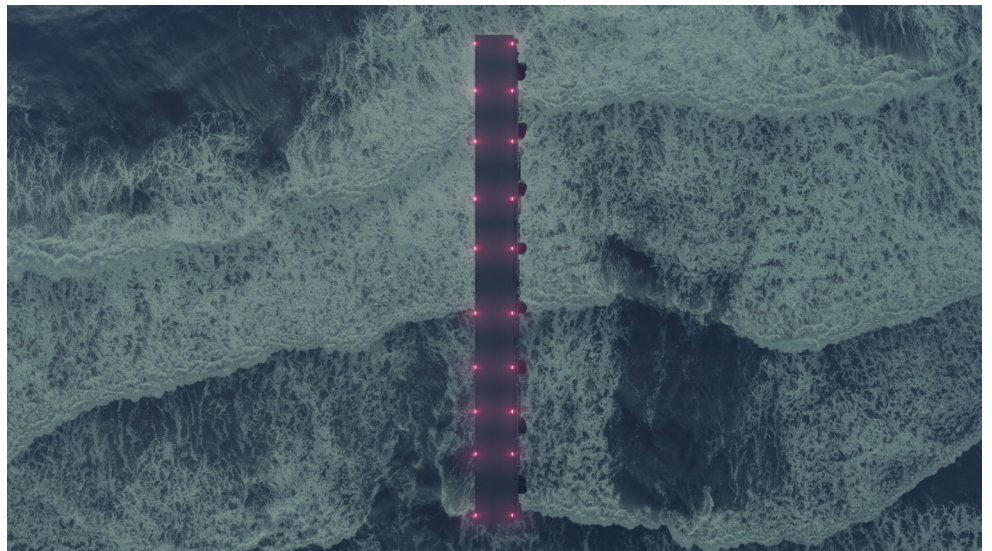
Sammy Baloji,
Jean Katambayi
Mukendi, and Daddy
Tshikaya (in the
framework of OnTrade-
Off),

Courtesy of the Artists,
and Waldburger
Wouters



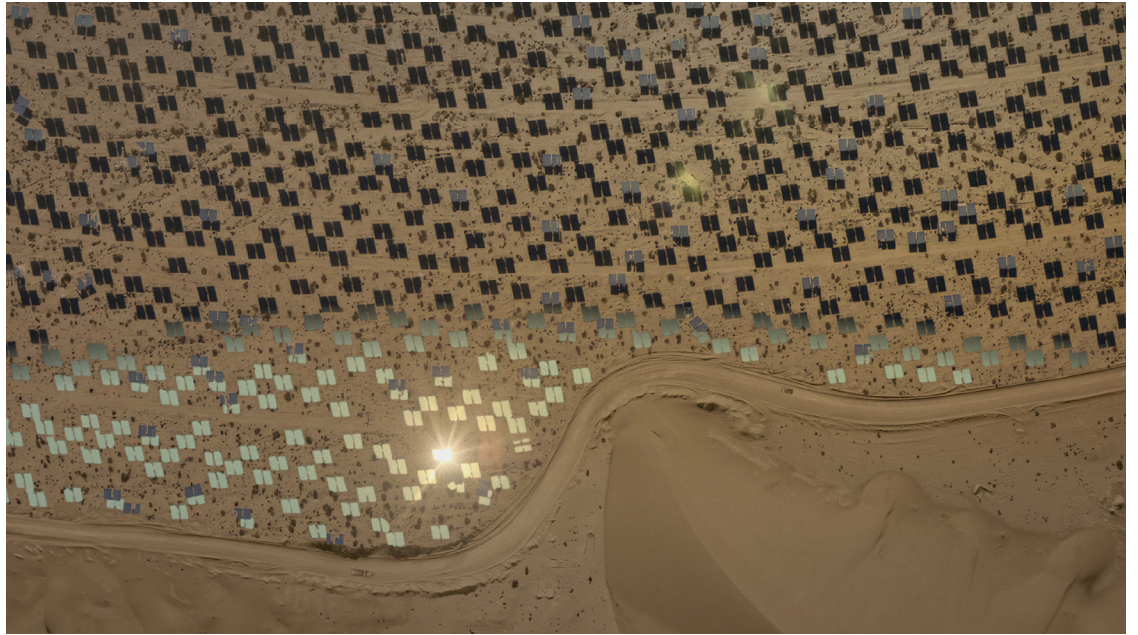
The Great Endeavor,
Humanity's Largest
Construction Project,
2023

Liam Young



The Great Endeavor,
Humanity's Largest
Construction Project,
2023

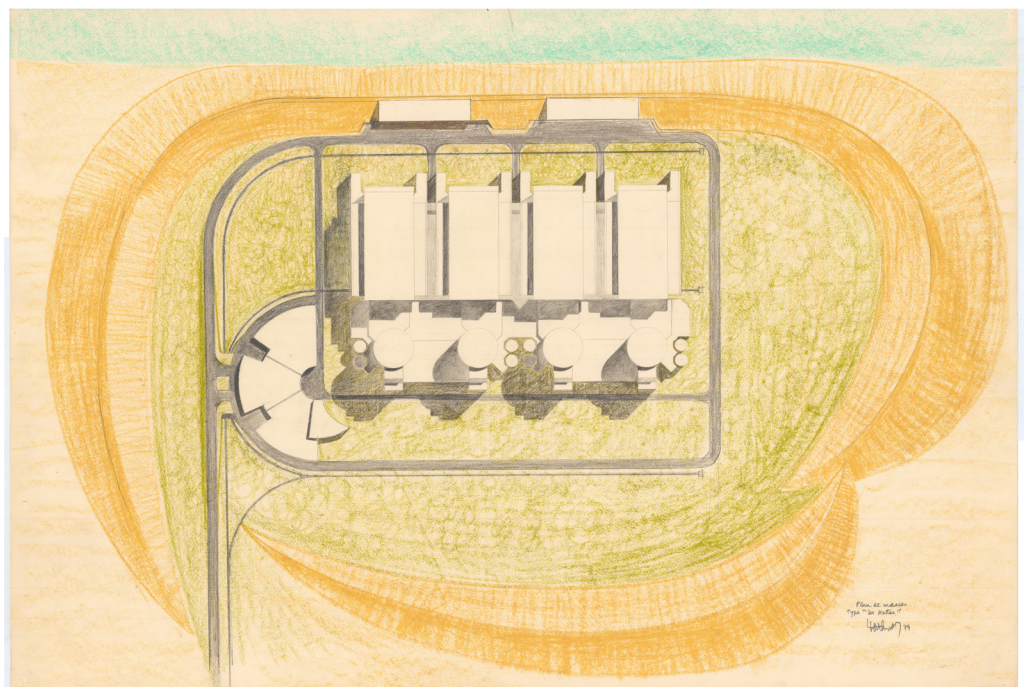
Liam Young



Exploratory studies
for the “Les Hottes”
nuclear power station,
1974.

Claude Parent

SAIF / Cité de
l’architecture et
du patrimoine /
Archives d’architecture
contemporaine
– Fonds Parent, Claude
(1923–2016)



Roadmap 2050:
A Practical Guide
to a Prosperous,
LowCarbon Europe
and Eneropa Map,
2010

AMO (in collaboration
with Imperial College
London, KEMA,
McKinsey & Company,
Oxford Economics).



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Jeremy Uhr

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**An exhibition organized by CIVA with the support of
Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, urban.brussels, Goethe Institut,
Star Progetti, Istituto Italiano di Cultura,
Vorarlberger Architektur Institut, ULB La Cambre.**

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Bruzz, Le Soir