

PART SIX

New Stories, New Knowledge:
Research Creation

Creative interventions into petrocultural production call into question how we have arrived at the current moment. In doing so, they open up conversations about where we go from here and how we might extricate ourselves from petroculture's dangerous complexities. This section consists of two creative pieces – a radio play and an account of an artist's residency – that invite readers to engage imaginatively with the social and political issues raised throughout this collection.

Geo Takach's "Live from Alberta! Radio Petro Presents *A Scary Home Companion*" pastiches together the great minds of Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Adam Smith, Henry Ford, Catherine the Great, Matsuo Bashō, and Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin, along with sundry others, to debate the case of Alberta's oil sands. In this play, Takach combines scholarship with satire, making visible the cultural and historical materials undergirding the narratives that mediate relationships between people and resources, history and politics, regions and the world.

Allison Rowe's "*The Tar Sands Exploration Station*" details how she spent three weeks on a self-directed artist's residency immersed in the spaces and communities of Fort McMurray, Alberta. Her time in Northern Alberta produced a travelling multimedia exhibition, the *Tar Sands Exploration Station*, that entices visitors into a tactile, experiential engagement with the oil sands industrial project. Interactive elements of the installation are intended to inspire discussion and debate with the host artist and among visitors who meet on site. The political project is to create dialogue about the ethical dilemmas associated with our current petroculture in general and the oil sands in particular.

To reinvent our societies around new forms of energy and in newly defined relationships with the environment and one another will require rigorous interdisciplinary thinking mobilized by a diverse constituency of people with a range of worldviews, political commitments, scholarly and professional expertise, and lived experiences. It will also require engaging wider publics in environmental scholarship on a deeper and more visceral level through artistic forms, as Takach argues in his book *Scripting the Environment: Oil, Democracy and the Sands of Time and Space*.¹

Creative production and research-creation² projects like these and others build new knowledge around a range of twenty-first-century questions that evade simplicity, and do so in accessible ways that invite participation from students, citizens, community members, and even policy-makers. What should our post-carbon futures look like? It is time to read and create new stories.

NOTES

- 1 Geo Takach, *Scripting the Environment: Oil, Democracy and the Sands of Time and Space* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
- 2 Natalie Loveless explains that

[r]esearch-creation, while endogenous to the field of contemporary art, is an *academic* category. It is a category produced within, with, and for an ever adapting university landscape, one that, while crucially informed by new and historical directions in the field of the professional fine arts (that is, grounded in a history of social, pedagogical, dialogic, conceptual, and institutional critique work in the visual arts), is not synonymous with these non-academically oriented practices. This is because research-creation does not aim at visibility and circulation within the professional art world. Rather, its aim is the production of new pedagogical and research modalities and outputs within the academy.

Loveless argues: “Research-creation is also the logical outcome of interdisciplinary, conceptual, institutional critique and activist legacies in contemporary art ... it is [an] extension of what Irit Rogoff first noted as a ‘pedagogical turning’ in the arts.” *Haraway’s Dog, or How to Make Art at the End of the World (A Manifesto for Research-Creation)*, forthcoming 2017.