

Making Climates Present: The Atmospheric Imaginaries of Klaus Schafler and Karolina Sobecka

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Short Abstract

This paper tracks the sociotechnical imaginaries of two contemporary artists, Klaus Schafler and Karolina Sobecka, each experimenting with global systems, working through novel modes of atmospheric intervention. It considers the relationships between models, experience, and atmospheric artifice.

Long Abstract

"You can't study global systems experimentally," writes Paul Edwards: "they are too huge and complex." For this, one needs models. And models we have. Commenting on the pervasiveness and affective significance of such knowledge infrastructures, Wendy Chun recently emphasized the material embeddedness of imaginaries within climate models. If relationships to climates, to atmospheres, and to weather are now overdetermined, in large part, by the artifice and horizons of "hypo-real" models, Chun asks, ". . . how can we inhabit the world that technology has built?" In response to Chun's provocation, this paper tracks the sociotechnical imaginaries of two contemporary artists, Klaus Schafler and Karolina Sobecka, each experimenting with global climate systems, working through novel modes of atmospheric intervention. I consider their distinct art practices as modes of climate engineering that open questions about the knowledges produced through climate experimentation. I think with Edwards and Chun to read their art as "model inversions," ones that bracket knowable futures to recast the apparatus of engagement.