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Task 6

## Ecological Art

In Gustav Metzger's Project Stockholm, 100 of your average 4-door commuter cars are lined up side by side facing away from a large grid of polyethylene scaffolding in the shape of a block. After reading Metzger's accompanying text I believe that the meaning behind the work is highly left up to interpretation. The way I perceive it, is that the scaffolding is meant to represent human construction, particularly the representing of an additional city block expansion. The cars surrounding it being a stronger metaphor, representing the unnatural excessiveness of human industrial expansion around the world. The cars facing all directions representing the all-encompassing human industrial intrusion that forces itself onto nature, creating what Metzger would refer to as "damaged Nature". Project Stockholm is a call for change in ecological destruction and works to raise general consciousness about human regard towards nature in general.

I'm surprised that I hadn't heard of Agnes Denes's Wheatfield in Manhattan before this presentation because it's a perfectly simple project with a great premise. The placement of the Wheatfield in Manhattan is perfect because Manhattan is a city that perfectly represents America's capitalist agenda, full of the country's wealthiest elites who are known to be generally detached from nature in general. Like Metzger's Project Stockholm the Wheatfield takes the form of an unnatural grid, juxtaposing a natural field with the baron landfill that it exists inside of. The photo of the Wheatfield being harvested alongside the former World Trade Center is all too perfect because typically those who worked in the World Trade Center would have been all too detached from the process of natural food production. I find that it is an excellent contrast to a project between the natural and built environment.

Andrea Polli's Queensbridge Wind Power Project makes me feel viscerally happy. I am passionate about the future of sustainable energy, and love wind-powered energy.

One of the things I particularly enjoy about Germany is the abundance of windmill farms because I don't see nearly enough of them in Canada. It boggles my mind that Andrea Polli found that the general public perceives windmills as ugly because I find them beautiful. Not just because of their appearance, but because of the positive purpose that they serve. This could have been a wonderful case of an artwork's ability to shift the public perception of windmills and ecology as a whole. Bringing wind turbines into the forefront of a public eye could induce deeper thoughts and considerations regarding the importance of renewable energy and nature as a whole.

Nathalie Jereminjenko's Pigeon paradise is interesting because it seemed to be entirely test-driven. I love the idea of leaving the decisions to the pigeons, and testing to see which choices they make regarding what they prefer to consume. Jereminjenko makes a great point when she says that "New York was the New York of birds before it was the New York of humans". We think of cities as being entirely designed around humans, but a few years ago I did a project centered around city design, examining how large cities are used by pigeons as well as humans, and exploring how we can better coexist in accepting them as fellow residents of our homes. I sense a similarity between that project and Pigeon paradise, where the artist also wanted to examine pigeon's city-related behavior.

Natalie Jeremijenko's Environmental Health Clinic is interesting to me because of its layers of parody, whether it's walking a politician-named tadpole down the street or meeting in the never-ending chaos of a traffic roundabout. Their numerous projects raise awareness and concern surrounding the injustices that exist in our built environment. Not just injustices towards ourselves, but the planet as well. I particularly enjoyed their experiment which found that when given the option, mice chose to take Prozac, and drink as much vodka as they did water. If the artist intended to show the abusive tendencies that can come out of our self-made world than they've certainly accomplished that.