



NEW RELEASE

Perttu Saksä Dark Atlas

Texts by Azu Nwagbogu, Perttu Saksä, Tere Vadén
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Symbolically charged photo series contemplating our relationship with energy and its significance for humanity

During his many travels to the Benin and Togo regions in West Africa, Finnish photographer Perttu Saksä became fascinated by the ubiquitous street-side petrol stalls selling »Kpayo«, low-quality petrol distilled from crude oil originating from multinational corporations – a pirated product.

With a combination of documentary photographs, still lifes, and abstract works, Saksä's *Dark Atlas* contemplates energy as a structural component of society, localizing it as a physical element on the human level. Oil and petrol become tangible, as become the problems caused by our dependency on fossil fuels.

Excerpt from the essay by **Azu Nwagbogu**:

With an intimacy and texture evoking oil painting, images in Dark Atlas embody the fundamental concepts of matter and energy. In perceiving everyday human reality, however, whether as an abstract photographer or as someone not engaged in the minute observation and transformation of visible reality (through image making), matter is perceived through the related concept of mass, for mass is the amount of matter in the volume of a tangible and visible object. And matter, on a very profound level, is equal to energy — in all possible forms.

The images of bottles made of glass and plastic, discarded protective mud shells in which these bottles have been encased to minimize exposure of the petrol they contain to sunlight and heat as they are being illicitly transported, a canary-yellow plastic jerrycan, an eagle-owl, a poised royal python, a dead turtle, a chimpanzee skull and an abandoned villa are invested with a numinous power and materiality predicated on viewing them primarily as repositories of organic matter containing mass. By a masterly use

of light, Saksä assigns three-dimensional texture to these objects on a two-dimensional surface. In doing so, he charges these items with energy as both tangible and visible objects. By highlighting their function as containers in his depiction of them as visible objects, Saksä captures their essential function, as tangible objects, of being containers of energy.

Perttu Saksä (b. 1977) is a contemporary photographer and filmmaker. Saksä's art focuses on the boundaries between humanity and nature, on our relationship with the environment, and especially animals. Saksä attended the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts (mfa), Lahti Institute of Design (ba) and the Icelandic Academy of Arts (1999). His works have been shown in numerous galleries and museums and can be found in various public collections. Saksä lives in Raasepori, Finland.

Azu Nwagbogu (b. 1975) is Founder and Director of the LagosPhoto Festival and The African Artists' Foundation. He lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

Tere Vadén (b. 1969) is a philosopher, (phd) currently working in the multidisciplinary research unit BIOS focusing on anticipation of socio-ecological transformations. He has published books on contemporary philosophy, artistic research and the impact of fossil fuels, co-authoring with Antti Salminen the book *Energy and Experience, An Essay in Nafthology*. He lives in Tampere, Finland.

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01_Petrol, Grand-Popo
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02_Petrol in Soda Bottle, Comè
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