



**MAK**

Press Release

## **TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE**

An interactive laser installation by Process – Studio for Art and Design, Vienna, commissioned by the MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, for the London Design Biennale 2021

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| Press Preview    | Tuesday, 1 June 2021, 9–11 a.m.<br>(two time slots: 9 a.m. and 10 a.m.) |
| Exhibition Venue | Somerset House (room 28), Strand, London, WC2R 1LA, UK                  |
| Exhibition Dates | 1–27 June 2021  |
| Opening Hours    | Daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  |

Process – Studio for Art and Design (Martin Grödl and Moritz Resl), Vienna, has designed the interactive laser installation *TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE* for the London Design Biennale 2021. Austria's contribution has been organized by the MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna. It is possible to participate in the ambitious project, which is dedicated to supporting climate activism, via a website that can be accessed when visiting the installation at Somerset House in London from 2 to 27 June 2021. The interactive laser installation is supplemented by five large-format prints showing the data set, the evolution of the visual output, numerous combinations of the CLIMATE CARE vocabulary, a token in use and – in the form of a manifesto – the TERMS OF CARE.

The third edition of the London Design Biennale will take place from 1 to 27 June. As a representative and global stage for leading international contemporary design and design-oriented innovations, creativity and research, it offers countries and cities the exceptional opportunity to take a stance on socially relevant topics through their projects. Under the motto 'How can we make the world better?' Es Devlin, Artistic Director of the London Design Biennale 2021, invited submissions on the subject of 'resonance'.

For a month, some fifty nations, institutions and regions will present projects at London's Somerset House that critically and responsibly explore the impact of our actions and approach to nature, its resources and its transformation into commodities. Solution-oriented approaches are intended to encourage our future ecosocial behaviour and actions.

### **DESIGN'S TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE – CLIMATE CARE**

Austria is represented by an installation specially developed by Process – Studio for Art and Design, Vienna. The contribution is curated by Marlies Wirth, Curator, Digital Culture and MAK Design Collection, and was commissioned by the MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, on the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport. Process – Studio for Art and Design, Vienna, has realized an interactive laser installation entitled *TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE* that is intended to serve as a tool to support climate activists.

'It is high time to face up to the challenge. In our global and digitalized society, design is capable of crossing borders and building bridges between cultures. Design can positively influence behaviours and change societies. We can evolve our attitudes and improve our lives if new ideas find resonance and are adopted and shared by every individual. The MAK

– Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, advocates a holistic ecosocial approach and engages with civil society. I am delighted that the interactive installation *TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE*, conceived by Process – Studio for Art and Design, is being presented as the Austrian contribution at Somerset House in London. This participatory project fundamentally supports our engagement for climate care, our participation in Museums for Future in the context of Fridays for Future, our museum’s attitude and self-image, and further advances our agenda,’ according to Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, General Director and Artistic Director, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts.

*TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE* concentrates on the task of climate care with the aid of the transformative force of design and technology. Process – Studio for Art and Design employs a technology based on artificial intelligence (AI) to generate new and original graphic symbols using a comprehensive database of logos, signs and glyphs. The data are provisionally assigned keywords that cover a broad definition of climate care – including its social, political, ecological and economic aspects. Starting from the meanings allocated to these keywords, the AI model can design unique new symbols. The interactive laser installation visualizes the generated output data in real time.

‘For thousands of years, people have been communicating through a language of signs and symbols to express ideas, ideologies, cultural and social values. We are capable of combining symbols in infinite ways to arrive at an infinite variety of meanings. That is the basis of the concept behind *TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE*: what if an AI were to invent new symbols to create new connections between concepts and their visual representations that would unite our global society and help us to care for the planet?’ according to Marlies Wirth, Curator, Digital Culture and MAK Design Collection, and curator of Austria’s contribution to the London Design Biennale 2021.

Via the website designed by Process – Studio for Art and Design, activists around the world – as well as every single citizen – have the opportunity to generate a unique symbol, the Token for Climate Care. These tokens are free to use.

#### TOKEN – GENERATING A PERSONAL SYMBOL

*TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE* was realized using the machine learning technique GAN (Generative Adversarial Network). ‘Unlike many other algorithms for machine learning that recognize images, a GAN can produce content – in our case images. We are taking advantage of that,’ explains Process – Studio for Art and Design.

In the first step, many examples were produced of the image type – the aforementioned data set – that the technology would need to generate. Symbols and symbol-like signs from a range of free fonts and symbol sets were used. With a dedicated data set browser, roughly 7,000 symbols were selected from over 200,000 possible symbols for the first data set. To do justice to their complexity and aesthetics, they were sorted and filtered both by hand and by machine.

In the next step – labelling – a meaning was assigned to the symbols in the data set. The allocation of keywords is a key human contribution to the algorithm’s design. The CLIMATE CARE vocabulary comprises some 40 clearly classifiable terms. When generating the personal symbol (token), users can choose from four different categories: natural resources like earth, soil, water; artificial or cultural resources like electricity, labour, science; qualities like scarcity, recyclability, fairness; and activities like change, progress, care and revolution.

The neural network is trained using the generated data set and the associated keywords. To optimize it and achieve better results, several tests were fed into the network and their results evaluated. The AI learns the visual characteristics of the symbols that it sees and the allocation of keywords to these visual depictions. Training the model is time-consuming and requires considerable research to generate new symbols – the tokens.

‘By selecting three terms from the CLIMATE CARE vocabulary, users can influence the appearance of the token that will be generated and hence integrate their specific cause in the design. As at this stage the result is still a pixel image, it is vectorized so that it can be used universally in any graphic design context. The aim of *TOKENS FOR CLIMATE CARE* is to help climate activists spread their messages and promote their actions. The project aims to ensure high visibility both in real space – during individual actions and in the context of collective appearances – and in the digital space. To download and use the unique token they have generated, users have to agree to our *TERMS OF CARE*, which were intentionally kept concise and easy to understand. You can see them as a kind of guideline,’ explains Process – Studio for Art and Design.

#### PROCESS – STUDIO FOR ART AND DESIGN

Process is an experimental design studio that focuses on generative and interactive design and works in the fields of branding, web, installation and print. In addition to classic design solutions, Process designs and develops specific software that is used as a tool for clients. Run by Martin Grödl and Moritz Resl, the studio has realized projects for the Design Museum Holon, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Prodigy, Raiffeisen Bank, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts Vienna, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Sagmeister & Walsh, TU Wien (the technical university of Vienna), the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Wienerberger AG and Zurich University of the Arts and is representing Austria at the London Design Biennale 2021.

Martin Grödl: master’s at the University of Applied Arts, Institute of Fine Arts & Media Art. Bachelor’s in media informatics at the TU Wien, Institute for Interactive Media Systems. Frequent participant in Google’s Summer of Code to develop the Processing programming language. Invited artist and researcher for Motion Bank in Frankfurt.

Moritz Resl: master’s at the University of Applied Arts, Institute of Fine Arts & Media Art. Master’s in informatics at the Institute for Design and Assessment of Technology at the TU Wien. Resl works at the interface of graphic design and software development. His focus is designing new visual tools for artistic creativity and an experimental design approach to enrich and influence the process. He worked at Sagmeister & Walsh, New York.

Process – Studio for Art and Design / [process.studio](http://process.studio) / [process.gallery](http://process.gallery) / [instagram.com/process.studio](https://www.instagram.com/process.studio) / [twitter.com/studioprocess](https://twitter.com/studioprocess) / [#tokensforclimatecare](https://twitter.com/tokensforclimatecare)  
More information at [process.studio](http://process.studio).



**FUNDING AND REALIZATION:**

Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Civil Service and Sport  
MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

**SUPPORT:**

Austrian Cultural Forum London  
Austrian Economic Chambers  
Vienna Business Agency

Press Data

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| Exhibition Venue                                    | London Design Biennale 2021<br>Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA, UK<br>londondesignbiennale.com<br>twitter.com/londonbiennale<br>#LDB21 |
| Exhibition Dates                                    | 1–27 June 2021  |
| Opening Hours                                       | Daily from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.   |
| Curator   | Marlies Wirth, Curator, Digital Culture and MAK<br>Design Collection  |
| Design, Concept, Development                        | Process – Studio for Art and Design (Martin Grödl,<br>Moritz Resl)  |
| Technical Implementation<br>Exhibition Architecture | in cooperation with enliteAI<br>Some Place Studio (Bika Rebek, Daniel Prost)  |
| Press Contact                                       | Christina Werner PR<br>T +43 1 524 96 46–22<br>werner@kunstpresse.at  |

Downloadable press kit: [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press)

Project website: [tokensforclimate.care](https://tokensforclimate.care)  
online from 1 June 2021

Vienna, 20 May 2021