

FUEL

The most advanced human culture will recognize its natural status when it finally recognizes oil, when it really sees it, and when it recognizes, consequently, the limits not just to growth but to any and all room for maneuver.

- Allan Stoekl, "Oil Culture"



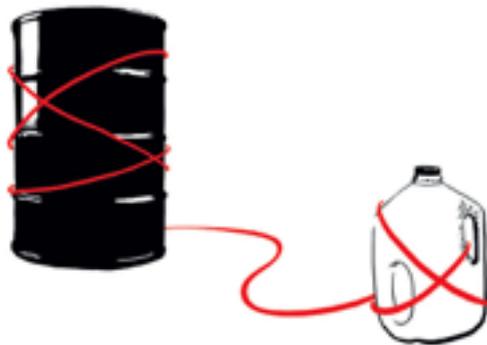
For this exhibition Lucie Stahl has left the pastures of the milkman, the Marie Antoinette-esque land of milk and honey of her recent shows and descended into the *manchine* room of petrol culture itself, where the milking machines rotate in a yin-yang vortex of raw oil and milk.

It is here where the machinist's mammary equipment is extracted from its reproductive function (i.e giving milk) and gets reproduced. Now the artist is her body, scanned, screwed to a wall, a product.

Stahl has entered this vicious cycle, where the act of taking (i.e. expropriation) and the generosity of giving have both become toxic. She has swallowed up our petro-subjectivist society to finally become a petro-subject herself, no longer the milkman nor the gas jockey/fuel ninja/petrol butler.

Lucie Stahl has become the oil.

- Henning Bohl, 2019

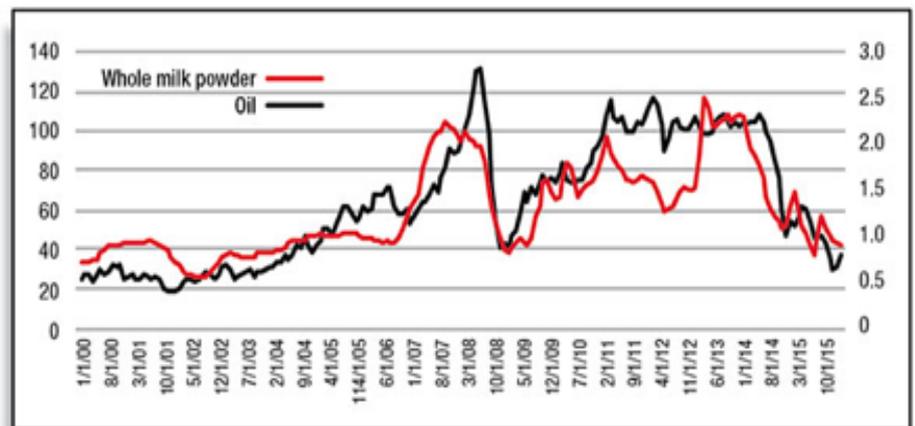


SURGE

There are significant structural similarities between the fossil fuel and dairy industries. Both involve a lot of sucking and flowing, as well as the need to refine what has been sucked and pumped into buttery, cheesy or powdered consumable products like petrol, diesel or heating oil. There is a dumb inevitability in the circular movement of extracting from mud that which drives the wheels on it to perform the extraction itself, but this doesn't explain the shared rise and decline of these two products marketwise. In fact, the similar levels of volatility milk and oil share can only be explained with the shared demand of a global and growing middle class that tends to buy regardless of the price.

McDonald's won't instantly change its menu—nobody wants to eat hamburgers instead of cheeseburgers because cheese prices doubled. Neither will it show generosity and give us a double layer of cheese when prices are low.

Figure 1 Whole milk powder compared to oil



This type of everyday Marie Antoinette'esque behaviour is mirrored in the figure of the dairyman. Having retreated from the politics and terrors of the urban metropolis to the countrified idyll of a barn this persona engages in the simple joy of pouring a glass of milk—over and over again. In a constant selfish flow, all too liberal amounts of the dairy produce exit and enter diverse vessels, while the petrochemical wheels of prayer are forever turning—evoking the slow and steady rotation of a milking carousel.

- Lucie Stahl, 2018