

Petrosalon – Grieving the End of Fossil Fuels

Start Time: Friday, November 24, 2023

End Time:



Last month, Dr. Benjamin Steininger, a cultural theorist and postdoc in UniSysCat, cohosted a “Petrosalon” at the Goethe Institute in Rotterdam with his colleague Alexander Klose. They are both part of the research collective “Beauty of Oil”. The Petrosalon took place in the context of the exhibition “Petromelancholia” at Brutus Rotterdam, curated by Alexander Klose. Through conversations and exchange, they explored the concept of petromelancholia as a way to understand our current times at the end of the era of fossil fuels. The Süddeutsche Zeitung published [a nice review of the Petrosalon and the exhibition](#).

The era of fossil energy is over – not only is it bad for the environment, but oil and gas are simply limited resources that are running out. We need new and sustainable means of creating energy, which is also a major research avenue in UniSysCat. But paradoxically, the more society becomes aware of the necessity to transition away from fossil fuels, the tighter it seems to cling to it, and the actual use of fossil fuels doesn’t really go down.

The literary scholar Stephanie LeMenager coined the term “petromelancholia” as “the grieving

of conventional oil resources and the pleasures they sustained”. It shows the deep-rooted connections between societal identity, economic structures, and the energy sources we use. The research in UniSysCat is intricately entwined with these complex dynamics, contributing to the ongoing discourse on forging a sustainable energy future.

If you are interested in the topic, here are some further links:

[Beauty of Oil](#)

[Article on this website about Petromelancholia documentary on arte](#)