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Dread Scott, Still from *Money to Burn* (2010), Courtesy of the artist

**The  
Austrian Cultural Forum New York**  
presents

**IT'S THE POLITICAL ECONOMY, STUPID**

An International Group Exhibition

**JAN 24 - APR 22, 2012**

Opening Reception: Monday Jan 23, 6 – 8 PM

Artists: Linda **BILDA**, Julia **CHRISTENSEN**, Yevgeniy **FIKS** / Olga **KOPENKINA** / Alexandra **LERMAN**, **FLO6x8**, Melanie **GILLIGAN**, Jan Peter **HAMMER**, Alicia **HERRERO**, **INSTITUTE FOR WISHFUL THINKING**, Zanny **BEGG** / Oliver **RESSLER**, Isa **ROSENBERGER**, Dread **SCOTT**

New York - The **Austrian Cultural Forum New York** (11 East 52 Street, New York, [acfny.org](http://acfny.org)) is pleased to present a new group exhibition titled *It's the Political Economy, Stupid*. The show, which was curated by the Austrian-American team of Oliver Ressler and Gregory Sholette, derives its name from the slogan which in the early 1990s came to define then presidential candidate Bill Clinton's campaign, "It's the economy, stupid".

The economic crisis that we face today has also become a major crisis for representative democracy. The very idea of the modern nation state is in jeopardy as the deterritorialized flow of finance capital melts down all that was once solid into raw material for market speculation. It is the social order itself, and the very notion of governance with its archaic promise of security and happiness that has become another kind of modern ruin.

*It's the Political Economy, Stupid* brings together an international group of artists who focus on the current crisis in a sustained and critical manner. Rather than acquiesce to the current calamity, this exhibition asks if it is not time to push back against the disciplinary dictates of the capitalist logic and, by use of artistic means, launch a rescue of the very notion of the social itself.

The exhibition includes documentarian approaches, such as works by Julia **Christensen**, who explores the transformation of defunct Big Box stores throughout the U.S. as an example of the resilience and resourcefulness of those affected most by the crisis. A piece by Yevgeniy **Fiks**, Olga **Kopenkina**, and Alexandra **Lerman**, documents those who have the experience of working in the corporate environment, the field of finance, as well as several professors of economics as they participate in a discussion about Vladimir Lenin and his ideas about finance capitalism. Films by Jan Peter **Hammer** and Melanie **Gilligan** reflect the artists' fictionalized takes on the crisis, by drawing historical parallels and showing the microcosmic point of view of those directly involved, respectively.

Quite a few artists and collectives took a performative and decidedly actionistic path, all of which represent artistic precursors to the Occupy Wall Street movement: Performance artist Dread **Scott** literally burned money on Wall Street, until he was stopped by the police. The **flo6x8** group staged flamenco-dancing flashmobs in Spanish banks to protest against the financial system, while Alicia **Herrero** staged public fora at the National Bank of Argentina, in which experts, artists, and activists discussed theoretical models and ideas for economic and political change. The collective known as the **Institute for Wishful Thinking** (IWS) tackles the eternal recurrence of the capitalist crisis with a series of site-specific visual commentary on the infamous 1975 New York Daily News headline: "Ford to City: Drop Dead".

Austrian artist Isa **Rosenberger's** piece, *Espiral - A Dance of Death in 6 Scenes*, takes a 1930s Weimar-era political ballet, and transposes it to reflect the present-day crisis. **Zanny Begg** and **Oliver Ressler** employ the medium of animation to explore how governments in the United States, and other places in Europe such as Ireland, managed to turn a banking crisis into a budgetary crisis.

As a tangible complement to these video works, Austrian artist Linda **Bilda** was commissioned to produce a wall mural for the exhibition. Her graphic series *The Golden World* is a point of departure, as it explores themes such as greed and competition in the monetary world.

The **opening reception** for *It's the Political Economy, Stupid* will take place on **Monday, January 23, 2012, from 6PM to 8PM**. Barbara Prammer, the President of the National Council of Austria, will be present to support and officially open the show. The opening will be preceded by an artist talk featuring participating artists Linda Bilda, Melanie Gilligan, Alicia Herrero, Olga Kopenkina, Alexandra Lerman, Dread Scott, and the curators Oliver Ressler and Gregory Sholette. The talk will take place in the auditorium of the Austrian Cultural Forum from 5PM to 6PM (Free admission. Due to limited seating, rsvp is req'd for the talk. For tickets, please visit [acfnyc.org/event/726](http://acfnyc.org/event/726)).

Several special events will take place in conjunction with the exhibition throughout the course of its run, including performances and readings (e.g., by Reverend Billy, Dread Scott, Larry Bogard, Pablo Helguera, Martha Rosler, The Yes Men. TBC). Details TBA. Please visit [acfnyc.org](http://acfnyc.org) for up-to-date information.

Press images are available at: [acfny.org/press-room/press-images-texts/its-the-political-economy-stupid](http://acfny.org/press-room/press-images-texts/its-the-political-economy-stupid)

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### **About the Austrian Cultural Forum New York**

With its architectural landmark building in Midtown Manhattan the Austrian Cultural Forum hosts more than 200 free events annually and showcases cutting-edge Austrian contemporary art, music, literature, and academic thought in New York. The Austrian Cultural Forum houses around 10,000 volumes in its state-of-the-art library, and enjoys long-standing and flourishing partnerships with many venerable cultural and academic institutions throughout New York and the United States.

Visit [acfny.org](http://acfny.org) for more information.

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M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to 53rd Street