

# ‘The Breakdown Economy’: destroying things in the battle for a better life.

Visit the [online](#) exhibition till December 31st 2021.



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**Bringing the maelstrom of plastic pollution to a halt requires us to think outside the box: How do you eventually break down what you are producing right now? On April 8, Dutch art Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen launched ‘The Breakdown Economy’, a bio-based response to the pollution of the fossil-based economy. This online exhibition proposes an about-turn in economic thinking: Not growth, but balance in nature.**

You can now make a virtual visit to the online exhibition ‘[The Breakdown Economy](#)’ till December 31st 2021. At the invitation of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Studio Klarenbeek & Dros and the artists’ collective Atelier Van Lieshout present a vision for an alternative production chain. One is realistic; the other is provocative. In addition, designers Koehorst in ’t Veld have created a graphic installation that reveals the growth of the fossil- and bio-based economies over recent decades. The result is an exhibition where reflection, innovative makership and brute force are juxtaposed. In 2017, some 50 or so designers and artists already proposed a solution for the flaws in our lifestyle in the Boijmans exhibition ‘[Change the System](#)’. With ‘The Breakdown Economy’ Boijmans is digging deeper into the increasingly urgent quest for alternative solutions.

Visit ‘[The Breakdown Economy](#)’ [here](#)

With the works of these three artists/designers the exhibition presents various methods of approaching the acute environmental issues. With the triad of reflection, innovative makership and disruptive poetry, 'The Breakdown Economy' presents art and design as pioneers imbued with vision and vigour. In an era when statistics are tossed around at dizzying speed, visualisation provides an anchor. It reveals the future: a step towards real-world solutions and alternatives.

**Studio Klarenbeek & Dros** has created replicas of plastic design objects from the museum's collection in their own 'weed-ware'. This material has been developed using seaweed as its base ingredient. It is biodegradable and grows in all our waters. It is easily scalable for mass production, without releasing toxic waste runoff. Excess CO<sub>2</sub> is cleaned up by plant growth and the remnants of the production process are water and minerals, food for the earth. In 'degeneration tanks' Studio Klarenbeek & Dros demonstrates how the replicas biodegrade in water thanks to the micro-organisms and snails that are present. Follow the complete degeneration of an Andries Copier replica [online here](#).

**Atelier Van Lieshout** is showing a recent iteration of 'Disco Inferno – Happy End of Everything' (2020), an unparalleled recycling installation that couples boundless consumption with the cycle of construction and deconstruction: waste is converted into crude oil in large machines. These devices produce new energy from pulverised materials, driven by primitive diesel engines that run on our waste plastic. The work presents a perplexing image that confronts us with the need to change.

**Koehorst in 't Veld** uses the installation 'De achtergrond' – 'The background' – to compare the use of petrochemical plastic with the use of bio-plastic. Over a span of seventy years the use of plastic has increased to such an extent that nowadays the weight of the world's entire population is being produced in plastic every year. This work illustrates the inter-relationship between the bio-based and fossil-based economies and why bringing about a true revolution calls for more than just a great idea.

Annemartine van Kesteren, Curator of Design: *"Embodiment is a powerful instrument for bringing about change. It is only once we see, feel or smell what can be done differently that we start to believe in it. In the discussion that springs from this you can take a radical view and throw everything onto the same bonfire or you can adopt a more pragmatic position that entails seeking to strike a new balance with nature. However, the need to live differently is more urgent than ever before. This exhibition presents an alternative to the economy as a relentless production machine."*

## Experiment

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen may be closed to the public, but it is far from shut down: We are displaying and working with the collection in local communities, with our neighbouring institutions, abroad and now online. AVL Mundo's Kathedraal exhibition space was converted into a film set in December 2020 and Boijmans offered a preview by sharing the *making of* this project on [Instagram](#). This exhibition reveals the outcome and the visitor is free to navigate around the various works. A series of interviews alternates with close-up shots and accompanying texts.

The exhibition was produced by curator Annemartine van Kesteren and the online environment was conceived and produced in association with Koehorst in 't Veld and film-maker Roel van Tour. 'The Breakdown Economy' has been realised with the support of the Mondriaan Fund and Creative Industries Fund NL.

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### ABOUT MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN

Boijmans Van Beuningen – een huis voor verbeelding, inspiratie en creativiteit

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Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

