

#### Short Description:

The Neon Heater presents (*URC :: Utopian Recruitment Center*), a participatory installation by the Utopian Megapraxis Collective exploring the performative actions and aesthetics of a speculative para-real corporation envisioning a global Utopia.

#### Space Bio:

The Neon Heater is a contemporary artist-run gallery in Findlay, OH. Founded by curator and educator Ian Breidenbach, it opened in November of 2012 as a space providing access to contemporary art in a rural setting, while simultaneously offering artists total freedom and space for the exploration of ideas outside of the commercial concerns of the larger art world. The gallery has monthly exhibitions with a curatorial focus on conceptual and installation-based works, contemporary photography and painting trends, video and new media. The Neon Heater has since its inception hosted and engaged in various curatorial and research projects aimed at connecting with and drawing attention to the larger Artist-Run community both within the state of Ohio and around the United States.

#### Proposal:

The Neon Heater proposing (*URC::Utopian Recruitment Center*) by The Utopian Megapraxis Collective for QiPO Art Fair, 2024, Mexico City

Born of the question: What is the endgame of Civilization? The Utopian Megapraxis is a non-situated community of artists, curators, writers, educators and thinkers invested in the process of envisioning a global Utopia. A theoretical megaproject with architects spread across time zones and disciplines, their work is imaginative, speculative, and future-oriented, but with the goal of moving towards equitable reality in the present.

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(*URC:: Utopian Recruitment Center*) is a work of speculative futurity in which the Art Fair Booth will simulate a corporate recruitment event. Functionally critiquing a Job Fair, Political info session, or Military enlistment campaign, the *URC* booth will feature work and materials by members of the Utopian Megapraxis collective masquerading as a para-real corporation blurring the boundaries between Art as Work, and Work as Art (a line which all members of the collective continually straddle.) The installation will consist of commercially printed signage, corporate narratives, videos, pamphlets, posters, artworks as takeaway, vinyl text and digital ephemera.

Utopians will occupy the booth for the duration of the QiPO art fair interacting with members of the public, discussing questions such as: “How does one work towards a future which one cannot see?” “Are we settling for this lowest-common-denominator dystopia?” “Is it possible to

imagine a Utopian Megaproject outside of Capitalism?” etc. Through interactions with the members, materials, and participatory offerings the collective longs to create a fleeting sensation of Utopic action within the viewer, encouraging audience members to join up with the cause, and volunteer in the imagining and envisioning a global-scale Utopian society.

Upon completion of an introductory survey (signing up) – the members of the audience will have the opportunity to acquire official membership into the collective, and begin receiving access to all materials, discussions, and future exhibition opportunities. This opportunity reflects the para-real nature of the booth (and Utopia) itself; the recruitment center (while an artwork) is a functional tool which builds upon itself, and Utopia (while a non-place) has the chance to situate itself as a destination.