

CULTURE

Sustainable Culture | Wonderwater

— February 6, 2012 —

Sustainable Culture is a column by super/collider, exploring the intersection between science, culture and ecology. Please do not print



Can We Keep Up by Hal Watts and Matthew Laws *Photography by Luke Bennett*

After years of dutifully measuring our carbon footprint, a new raft of art and design projects is putting our (surprisingly large) water footprint under the microscope. Mapping the demand for urban domestic water needs in 2030 may not sound particularly gripping, but Hal Watts and Matthew Laws have transformed the figures into a beautiful visualisation showing our thirsty world. Using a basic domestic object – the humble sponge – the message is clear: five key countries are soaking up a huge proportion of water just for everyday domestic use.

Beyond these basic needs, there is also the huge burden of the world's hidden water consumption – the H2O required in the production of everything around us. Highlighting this hidden thirst, **Wonderwater** develops projects around the world that raise awareness of global water issues while presenting designs for a sustainable future.

"Combining hard facts with sleek design and tasteful presentation, the Wonderwater Café put water awareness firmly on the menu, leaving the diner to decide where their priorities lie"

Their Wonderwater Café was established for a few weeks during last year's Beijing Design Week. Taking traditional Chinese chow, they created a water footprint tasting ground, provocatively asking: "How much water do you eat?" The menu elegantly illustrated the quantities and sources of water for local favourites like roast duck – with even the beer and tea broken down by hidden water content. Combining hard facts with sleek design and tasteful presentation, the café put water awareness firmly on the menu, leaving the diner to decide where their priorities lie. This summer, Wonderwater will be setting up a Finnish-inspired sequel in Helsinki as part of World Design Capital 2012.

Closer to home, the British-born **GiveMeTap** initiative is another simple idea that could have a huge impact on the way we consume water. By purchasing a stainless steel branded bottle, you can get tap water from any of the participating "provider" cafes and shops. No plastic bottles to add to the waste heap, no leaching toxic chemicals into your water, plus the water is totally free. As if that's not enough, 70% of all profits from sales of GiveMeTap bottles help to fund independent water projects in Africa. As they say: "It's time to drink locally and think globally".

Text by Abby Schlageter

MOST VIEWED ARTICLES



[Iris Apfel](#) | [Women's Fashion](#)

READER

**A daily edit
of our favourite blogs**



[LOU REED AND NICO, 1975. PHOTO COPYRIGHT MICK ROCK. COURTESY OF...](#)
—by [Tod's No_Code Tumblr](#)



[IN WONDERLAND: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE FANTASTICAL WORLD OF WOMEN SURREALIST ARTISTS](#)
—by [What's up!](#)



[BONUS: SWEPT AWAY \(1974\)](#)
—by [I Love Hot Dogs](#)



[IN THE RICK OWENS STUDIO / PHOTOS BY FILEP MOTWARY](#)
—by [FILEP MOTWARY](#)



Abby Schlageter is a member of *super/collider*, a London-based collective which explores science and ecology through the creative industries.



[Like](#) 5 [Facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [Print](#) [Email](#)

More in Culture



Orvis 1954 Airstream

—February 3, 2012

Having spent the whole of January – which felt like the longest and most depressing month ever – daydreaming of holidays and...



The February Guide

—February 1, 2012

Sir Norman Rosenthal's February highlights include the masterpieces of Anton Bruckner on the Southbank, the Marriage of...



L'Atalante

—January 31, 2012

The reputation of French filmmaker Jean Vigo is built on the slightest of canons, with the young director making just four...

COLUMNS

Art Talks

[The Forgetting of Proper Names](#)

[Tim Barber: Untitled Photographs](#)

[Simone Lueck: The Once and Future](#)

[Queens](#)

Pronunciation Guide

[Proenza Schouler](#)

[Lanvin](#)

[Courrèges](#)

Insiders

[Iris Apfel](#)

[Eric Wilson, The New York Times](#)

[Sarah Mower](#)

[View All](#)