’NOT THE END OF THE WORLD’

I would like to create a site-specific installation on the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Many of the islands face an imminent from rising sea levels. Five islands have already succumbed and gone below water. The installation will sit on a threatened island, the site is relevant as many islands in the Pacific are vulnerable recipients of sea level rise.

Although the Solomon Islands and others are low in terms of carbon emissions, they are on the receiving end of changing climatic conditions.

The trees on the islands provide strength and stability and in a sense the islands together. Sadly, the trees have begun to give way as they are uprooted and the sea flows in further upon their shores. This leads to the island’s extinction. I would like to collect the fallen down, dead trees and along with local wood carvers and sculptors, construct the base or pole for wind turbines.

The turbines themselves with moving parts would have to be constructed off site. The turbines will then be erected on a beach, partially submerged in water. The turbines will act as a yardstick or measure for rising sea levels as they slowly begin to go below water themselves if efforts are not made to alter our current path.

The concept is based on the Melanesian cargo cults on the islands. A cargo cult is an indigenist millenarian belief system, in which adherents perform rituals which they believe will cause a more technologically advanced society to deliver goods. In World War II the cults came contact with allied military forces. The islanders would make airplanes from wood like the ones they saw in the sky to attract the technology. This modern-day cargo cult is a call or message from these endangered islands to larger economies and the developed world to reduce carbon emissions and increase the use of renewables.

One thing all cargo cults have in common is a series of mythological beliefs. These start with the idea that a terrible event would occur, causing the end the world as they know it. When the Westerners arrived, they were heralded as the people who save them from the prophesized natural disaster. To complete the message, large 3-dimensional sculptural letters made out of solar panels spelling the words, ‘NOT THE END OF THE WORLD’ will be erected on the island further up from the wind turbines on the beach below. The phrase is an idiom, meaning things are not as terrible as they seem to be or can be fixed. The solar panel letters will absorb the energy from the sun by day and with large batteries to store power (I am looking into non-lithium or cobalt alternatives). The power generated will light up the letters in the evening with small LED rechargeable lights laid over and covering the solar panels like a veil of sorts.

The result will hopefully be a beautiful, flickering 3 dimensional, NOT THE END OF THE WORLD, light sign in the evening on a quiet yet threatened little island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

At the back of the letters would be solar panel opening doors in which we would place beehives. The LED lights would be laid on the front and side of the letters so as not to affect the activity or wellbeing of the bees. Following the destruction of the entire bee population by parasites in the 2000’s. The Solomons have restarted honey production, in particular women are accessing this agricultural opportunity and thriving. An appropriate island will be selected as not to interfere with a wild bee population or cause an imbalance in the natural ecosystem. The project will increase pollination on the island and increase local crop yields as a rural development and small business enterprise with low environmental impact, the entire installation with a honey business could set a good example of sustainable practice and how we should be looking to act in the future. The solar energy would provide basic power for an enthusiastic young person to run their own honey business.

A videographer and photographer will film the process and making of the fallen, dead trees into wind turbines and plans to film an opening ceremony by local, traditional dancers and masked performers. The ritual performances occur during monsoon season and will accompany the cargo cult wind turbines rather fittingly.

The installation aims to create an uplifting and hopeful message with an opening ceremony of joy to celebrate the hope for change to come.

Title: NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

Technology used: Wind turbines, Solar panels, Beepak Beehives

Social co benefits: Independent honey business for local islanders and drawing attention to the wider danger faced by many Pacific Islands through a documentary, filming the building process and opening ceremony.

UN sustainable goals: The project will support the goals by highlighting and drawing attention the sea level rise and climate action. Provide a startup business, skills and training in environmentally sustainable bee keeping practices to the rural community.

Estimated cost of the project: 50 000 USD

List of system inputs: Large slow power release batteries, inverter, solar panels, wind turbines, heat resistant beehives, LED blanket light system.