

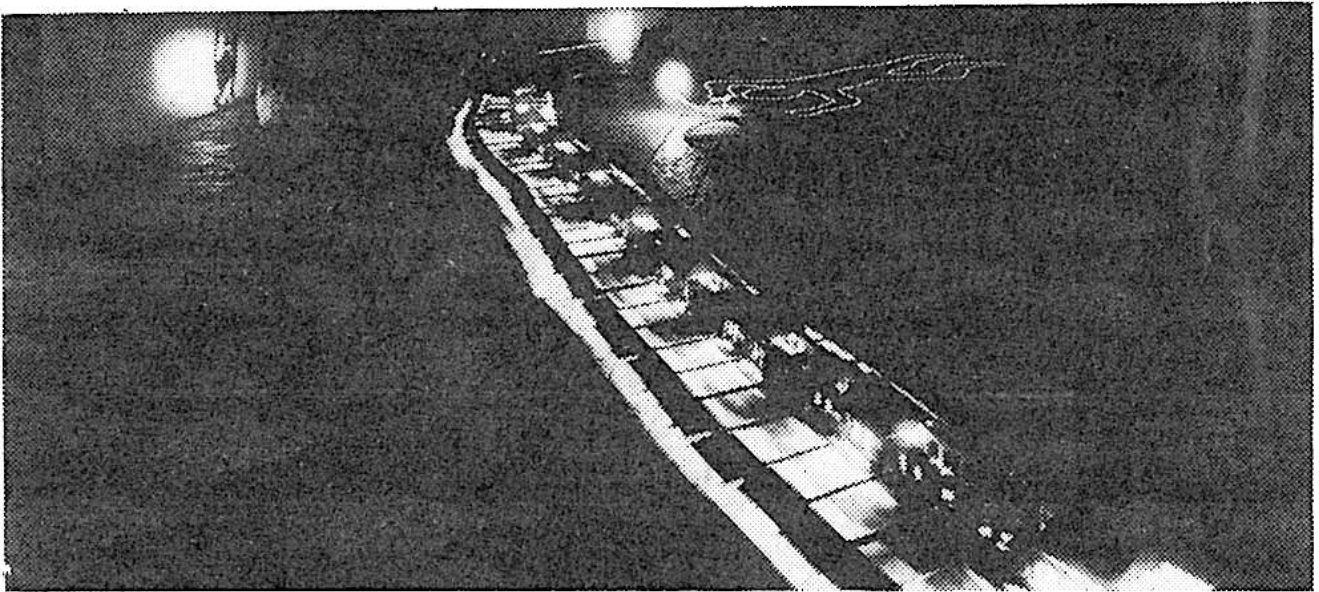
# Time Out

## London

Time Out magazine London 1989.  
*Petroleum* Unit 7 Gallery London.

### Max Couper

#### *Unit 7*



There have been several artistic incursions into the territory of the petroleum industry in recent years — Hans Haacke's interrogation of Mobil or the work of the 'BP' group in France, for instance. Max Couper had a skirmish with a multinational which ended happily and his installation 'Petroleum' questions their power in Romantic vein, unsure whether it's a monster or a benefactor. A giant caterpillar track unwinds on the floor like the spinal column of some earth-moving dinosaur. The innards of a petrol pump lie twisted in a corner, its hose and nozzle snaking just out of reach of a schematically drawn stone-age figure. The serpent ejects a spluttering gas flame. Prehistoric resonance accords well with Couper's observation of our eternal fascination with speed and locomotion, and the elemental role of fuel in the production chain. Ultimately, though, the issues of ecological violation and political exploitation are subsumed to a more seductive vision of gas stations and highways, while the installation's twilight setting and ambient soundtrack prevent its industrial detritus from transcending the aesthetic.

*Kate Bush*