

meer teilen: share more

Shed im Eisenwerk, Frauenfeld. July, 28 to October, 8 2016

meer teilen: share more has been developed by 15 artists from Columbia, Peru, Croatia and Switzerland and has been curated by Harm Lux. The artists formed four international and intercultural groups, each made up of members of each country. Beginning in 2015, ideas were first exchanged within these groups via skype, in July and August 2016, the participants finally met in Zagreb, later in Frauenfeld to live and work together for the course of almost four weeks. Throughout the whole project, communication proved to be the central but also the most complicated tool to establish a sense of community.

Already the title of the project *meer teilen: share more* alludes to its multilayered and multifaceted quality and its ultimate utopian component. During the project the artists generated their own strategies in pursuing the topic of share more and developed methods and ideas that went beyond the mere act of art making. By working and living together as a group for almost four weeks, the daily procedures became the ideal testing ground for the concept of share more. By questioning the basic principles of living and working together, by scrutinizing democratic processes, by testing the limits of artistic collaborations and consensus, the project rather turned into a social experiment. The constructions now shown in the Shedhalle are temporary "markers" of that ongoing process.

Petra Mrsa, Eliana Otta, Karl Steffen have built within the Shedhalle a closed and confined black box. Using various kinds of textiles, jute and tow sacks, they have constructed a make-shift shelter that strikingly alludes to the provisional structures of shanty towns. The visitor can enter the construction through a narrow passageway – once inside, the visitor is faced with three video works. While the shelter isolates the projections against the other works within the Shedhalle, the contents of the videos open the view to society outside. The videos on display are just a small condensate of an extensive field research, which the three artists had conducted in Zagreb and Frauenfeld.

Petra Mrsa, Eliana Otta, and Karl Steffen led interviews with members and representatives of various non profit syndicates and together with their interview partners they visited various public places. They discussed controversial aspects of public space, such as the future use of abandoned industrial settings, the shortage of adequate accommodation for larger families, or the various problems caused by the constant and extensive flow of traffic through city centres.

As it turned out, a responsible, future-minded and conscientious use of public space is closely linked to people, who can identify and relate to the public space that surrounds them and who have the possibility to get engaged, to influence, and to actively shape their direct environment.

The second group of artists consisting of **Christian Alarcon Ismodes, Gonzalo Fernandez, Esneider Gamboa, and Heidi Schöni** realized right from the start that communication, especially via skype with its inherent digital and technical challenges, was complicated by the simple fact of language barriers. Basic considerations about the potentials, possibilities, obstacles, and the proverbial banana skins within international art projects and intercultural relationships served as a point of departure for the development of further artistic processes.

Basic and essential routines like cooking, eating, drinking, cleaning and other daily rituals turned out to be connecting and unifying links.

By using the image of water, the group found an universal and at the same time simple and tangible icon. Using this icon as a common ground, the artists developed a setting, in which individual artistic strategies could be tested and ultimately enabled the interaction on a nonverbal level.

Tea Hatadi, Fernando Pertuz, Mirjam Wanner, Carlos Leon-Xijmenez soon discovered that further thinking about the concept of *buen vivir* ultimately leads to further questions. Notes, diagrams and doodles taken during the joined working sessions served as tools to grasp the extend of the topic and to give it an underlying structure. But the more thoughts and questions went into the process, the less secure the terrain of thoughts became.

In Zagreb, the artists turned the situation of insecurity into a performance that reflected the atmosphere of instability and confusion. But a situation of insecurity does not only convey a sense of fear but also has the potential to suggest a playful openness. The aspect of playfulness is accordingly reflected by the construction that was built in the Shedhalle. A gigantic see-saw enables an unusual view on monitors hanging above. By lying down on the see-saw right beneath the monitors, the visitor is experiencing an unsettling (or maybe comforting...) imbalance and change of perspective. Facing the monitors, one is confronted with personal and also partly quite intimate questions, which are alternated by dense photographs. The physical sensation of imbalance is further intensified by an inner alertness caused by the questions.

Obviously, it is not the artists' task to provide answers – but to pose questions and to demonstrate to all our senses the inherent insecurity and imbalance that surrounds all of us.

Various performances and actions by **Esneider Gamboa** accompanied the whole project. Reminiscent of shamanic rituals, Gamboa tried to conjure deeper levels of consciousness within an associative room. The ritual turned out to be a shared and experience – a circle drawn into the sandy ground in front of the rear entrance of the Shedhalle serves as a reminder of the performance conducted during the opening. Various elements used during the performance, such as a small baby shoe or a drinking vascular, lie seemingly discarded within the circle and conjures a slightly mysterious atmosphere – just as the performance itself.

Communication within the group of **Sylvia Jaimes, Bojan Mucko, and Reto R. Müller** turned out to be a laborious, complicated and complex process. This led to considerations about the structure of intercultural conceptual artistic projects in general. What are the basic means to enable artistic projects, what sort of setting is needed to allow the development of artistic strategies, what are the basic pre-dispositions?

The discussions and thoughts led to the intention to build a conceptual structure to further continue this project in the future. The group has planned a sequel taking place in Columbia and Peru respectively. Contracts have been set up, each participant has declared her and his intention to support the future project artistically and financially. While the other groups have build installative settings in the Shedhalle, this group has established a mental structure, (or so to say digital structure via dropbox) – a structural layout for the further development of *meer delen:share more*.

A photograph by **Mirjam Wanner** shows a momentary glimpse of a workshop situation. The whole project was not meant to be carried out in some secret artistic hide away but to and trigger an interaction with the environment and the people around. Several workshops, organized by the participating artists, were publicly announced and open to the public. One of these workshops took place in the nearby Murg Auen Park in Frauenfeld. The photograph depicts how the participants first reacted to the unaccustomed workshop situation outside in the natural environment – a shallow river bed: What shall I do: Do I take a swim, will the water be really cold, shall I get naked, where and at whom do I look at? What are the others doing?

For the opening, **Christians Alarcon** provided the setting for a dinner party. A video entitled *no me considero culpable, pausa de 5 minutos, la unión hace la fuerza* partly documents the event and a long table, covered with a dark red table cloth serves as a reminder of the dinner.

Alarcon prepared the food and arranged the dished on the table like a large mountain landscape. Heaps of risotto served as mountains, bowls of soup as mountain lakes. Plastic animals were spread all over the table. During the dinner, the guests were tied to each other, ones movement directly influenced the movement of the person sitting next to one. Having dinner together, synchronizing ones movements reflects the importance of the act of joined meals within the project but also within communities and society in general.

A small assemblage by **Carlos Leon-Xjimenez** stresses the utopian aspect of the project and alludes to its inherent (communicational) obstacles. By arranging a sketch of Vladimir Tatlin's Tower, the Monument to the Third International – a project that was planned but never executed – next to a toilet brush that is connected to a microphone, Carlos Leon-Xjimenez shows with an ironic twinkle in his eye, how easily communication can go down the drain.

During the project, a used scooter was found and used by all the participants. Now it is seemingly carelessly propped up against a wall – and declared to be an object of art, entitled as *Found – Take it if is yours or share' 25.7.-13.8.2016* .

Katja Baumhoff and Rebekka Ray. Shed im Eisenwerk, Frauenfeld. October 2016.