

CITY DREAMERS

Curators: Michal Koleček and Zdena Kolečková

Participating artists: Jiří Černický (CZ); Vlasta Delimar (HR); Richard Fajnor (CZ, SK); Pavel Frič & Lukáš Müller (CZ); Igor Grubić (HR); Barbora Klímová (CZ); Jiří Kovanda (CZ); Eva Kořátková (CZ); Kurt & Plasto (BiH); Ládví (CZ); Lucas Lenglet (NL); Petr Lysáček (CZ); Martin Mrázik & Eva Mráziková (CZ); raumlabor (DE); reinigungsgesellschaft (DE); Tomáš Vaněk (CZ)

Galerie Emila Filly v Ústí nad Labem/Emil Filla Gallery in Ústí nad Labem

SCHIFR-AC, s.r.o. building in the premises

of former Severočeská armaturka.

Jateční 1588/49

400 01 Ústí nad Labem

Czech Republic

<http://www.gef.cz/>

Duration: 24 February – 2 April 2009

The exhibition *City Dreamers* continues the longtime endeavour of the Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and the Emil Filla Gallery in Ústí nad Labem to present artistic interventions in the urban space of the industrial agglomeration at the foot of Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains), the region, which has been affected both environmentally and socially, and which is a significant part of the former Sudetenland. By its nature, the exhibition *City Dreamers* develops the previous international projects called *Public District (1999)* and *Public Dreams (2003)*. The exhibition *City Dreamers* is a part of an artistic and research project called *The Art of Urban Intervention (2009-2011)*, which interconnects activities of the following institutions: < rotor > association for contemporary art Graz, the Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, [BLOK]- Local Base for Cultural Refreshment Zagreb, The Blue House Foundation Amsterdam, the Institute of Contemporary Art Sofia, and NABA - New Academy of Fine Arts, Milan. The project *The Art of Urban Intervention* is supported by the CULTURE programme of the European Union.

The exhibition *City Dreamers* aims to present various attitudes to the phenomenon of the "public space" to the Ústí public, and also model types of artistic interventions in the urban environment. The show wants to present outstanding projects presented before, which have now been innovated and adapted to conditions of the Emil Filla Gallery; in some cases, only their original picture documentation or video presentation will be exhibited.

The specific intent of the curators is to evoke the atmosphere of a subcultural solidarity of urban residents, or to capture or directly provoke the process of (self)identification with the postindustrial urban society and primarily unfavourable vicinity. In some of the works, it is possible to feel even a demonstrative want of individualizing the group and a nostalgic desire for mythologizing and transcending a life story, in others then, engaged political proclamations are personified and visualized, and social bonds with the devastated locality are created.

The exhibition *City Dreamers* is a sort of an appetizer to attract the viewers' attention and make their minds ready for participation in new public-art projects. These will be gradually realized within *The Art of Urban Intervention* programme in Ústí nad Labem – Předlice between May 2010 and April 2011.

The Art of Urban Intervention

An innovative project designed by reputable institutions whose previous activities guarantee a high level of outputs. The project will interconnect the areas of research, production of artworks, reflection of contemporary European art, and social life.

By its nature, it focuses especially on the area of art in the public space, opening of unnaturally closed communities in suburban localities of selected towns (socializing immediate vicinity of nonfunctional units – working with the phenomenon of "neighborhood").

The goal of the project is to create an exceptional, communicative platform with a strong social dimension directly interconnecting frames of cotemporary arts and social spheres, and contributing to erosion of the "desolidarization" processes.

It asks questions about the role art can play in urban planning, in the public life, preventing excommunication (for various reasons), and also in participation in active politics. It creates an initiatory frame for cooperation between European universities, prominent nonprofit organizations, cooperation with the municipal self-government, and with inhabitants of the respective localities.

The project views the perspective of the social transformation period – it documents the social climate and analyzes it from the historical, cultural, and aesthetical points of view. It deals with e.g. the issue of minorities (life in a social ghetto), gender (e.g.

the phenomenon of a "green widow" in new residential areas), life conditions of individuals disadvantaged in any way, and criticizes the existing system of the public service. However, its primary aim is a possible transformation of an original industrial area into a culture centre and a residential locality comfortably available from the university campus, using the concept of "alternative place making" – in terms of a really active coexistence and mutual tolerance, and creating a positive relationship with the respective locality.

The project is based on cooperation between European universities in the sphere of research and development, and of international cultural exchange. The methodological frame of the project and the rate of mutual cooperation between the participating institutions are built upon the natural character of this project and reflect the enormous interest of the region inhabitants in participation in spiritual/nonmaterial criteria of the European community living standard. It perceives the local identity in connection with its basic function – the ability to create an authentic and tautological reflection of uniqueness and a social frame.

Basic topics of *The Art of Urban Intervention* project in Ústí nad Labem:

1. *Malfunction of the grey dream* – revision of a concrete block as an ideal low-cost dwelling unit; the housing estate community; socialistic housing construction; change in living standards; rising nostalgia for the socialistic egalitarianism; artistic interventions; documentation

2. *Suburban ghetto and life on the verge of (social) disaster* – social excommunication; gentrification; cultural integration; artistic intervention; mutual communication; reflection of signs of social instability and violence; condemnation of racism; multiculturalism

3. *Social potential and aesthetic qualities of industrial zones* – emphasizing the locality of Ústí nad Labem – Předlice, a city quarter with a rich industrial tradition (industrial sites built at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries). The climate of this quarter has changed significantly due to the displacement of the original German inhabitants after World War II, the intensive coal-mining activities, and the environmental exploitation organized by the communist regime, as well as the painful social transformation after 1989. All these processes have resulted in formation of a heterogeneous urban atmosphere accompanied with a number of social defects and deviations, which on the other hand provides an open structure for artistic interventions and socio-cultural participation.

The project ***The Art of Urban Intervention*** is realized by the following institutions:

< rotor > association for contemporary art Graz, the Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, [BLOK]- Local Base for Cultural Refreshment Zagreb, The Blue House Foundation Amsterdam, the Institute of Contemporary Art Sofia, and NABA- New Academy of Fine Arts, Milan.

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