
CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

TALKING CITIES

an exhibition for ENTRY 2006, curated and staged by urban drift
International Architecture and Design Forum
Zeche Zollverein, Essen, Germany

1 ENTRY 2006 AND THE ZOLLVEREIN – CONTEXT FOR TALKING CITIES.

The Zeche Zollverein in Essen is a former coal mine in the Ruhr valley whose exceptional industrial architecture – inspired by the Bauhaus - has led to its designation as a UNESCO world heritage site.

As part of a large-scale transformation on the basis of a masterplan drawn up by Rem Koolhaas and OMA, the 5-storey coal washing plant – the “Kohlenwäsche” - will become a unique site for ENTRY 2006 – an inaugural international architecture and design forum comprising 4 main exhibitions and a series of events between **26th August and 3rd December 2006**. (Please see attached “Glück auf Zollverein”- Flyer for more general information.)

urban drift has been invited to curate TALKING CITIES as part of ENTRY 2006, and intends to feature innovative international design, architecture and spatial interventions in a trans-disciplinary exhibition and event platform. The exhibition will reflect a dialogue on contemporary urban conditions generated by the context: Zollverein and the Ruhr region.

The other three exhibitions within ENTRY 2006 are:

Groundswell: constructing the contemporary landscape – presently shown at MOMA, NY and curated by Peter Reed, features projects that reconfigure large-scale public spaces.

Second Skin, curated by Ellen Lupton, Cooper Hewitt, NY – focuses upon surfaces; new materials that create depth, complexity, new features and their own identifying characteristics.

“Open House – intelligent living by design” curated Vitra Design Museum and Alexander von Vegesack, examines the living space of tomorrow as one comprising complex technologies, new processes and activities.

urban drift

Urban drift is a transcultural platform for new tendencies in Architecture, Design and Urbanism based in Berlin. For more information on urban drift and past projects please visit our website: www.urbandrift.org. The latest project was the exhibition in the German pavillon at the 9th international architecture Biennial in Venice, 2004 – deutschlandscape, presenting innovative German architecture at the urban fringe. (www.deutschlandscape.de)

Ruhr Region and Zollverein

The Ruhr region, with a population of over 5.3 million, is the 5-largest conurbation in Europe, and consists of a number of former industrial towns many of which grew up as a result of industrialisation. Though one can barely detect the borders that distinguish the small and middle-sized towns that make up this conurbation, the region is a polycentric urban landscape. Though the Ruhr region offers a high concentration of cultural sites, a sophisticated infrastructure and a shared industrial past, the cities have traditionally remained fiercely independent of one another. The massive structural changes that characterise the region since the late 1950's when the coal crisis began have led to the conversion of industrial sites for landscape parks (Duisburg-nord), for cultural use (Gasometer Oberhausen, the Century hall in Bochum), and for sports activities. and the region as a whole is economically one of the weakest in western Germany, with unemployment figures at a 13.2% average (in North Essen unemployment currently stands at over 25%).

2 TALKING CITIES: EXHIBITION DESIGN CONCEPT

The space for the Talking Cities exhibition will be designed in the spirit of the planned, but never realised Fun Palace by Cedric Price – a flexible construction/scaffold, working with industrial materials and intended as a ‘social and informal architecture’ that can be adapted, added to and transformed by its users. Sound-based and 3 - dimensional interventions, architectural modules that ‘dock on’ to the main structure, and where platforms for talks and performances, screenings and workshops are designed that lead to multi-layered uses of the space. The resulting density of the contributions, overlaid with a photographic and graphic – text-based – conversation of quotes, statements, and questions illustrated by the themes, will refer to the Fun Palace’s utopian spirit of collective and social action. The space becomes a conceptual and practical model for a critical cultural aesthetic – a kind of anti-architecture, a site for multiplicity in architectural and design practice, and a form of improvisation.

3 CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

urban drift is looking for architects, designers, artists, filmmakers and writers to take part in TALKING CITIES and the unique platform that is ENTRY 2006. The themes relate to the Ruhr Region and the Zeche Zollverein: a world heritage monument in progress, and one which is seeking both a dynamic re-definition and re-appropriation by the public, and its gradual transformation to a new site for architecture and design. Zollverein symbolises a fundamental paradigm shift: from the industrial era to a knowledge-based, information economy.

Its transformation to an international design and cultural centre makes it the perfect setting for a presentation of architectural, spatial and urban design projects that in themselves represent the ‘stretching’ of the term ‘architecture’ to an architecture of adaptability, incorporating mobile and temporary structures, that accept and delight in this state of transition. Participants are therefore invited to join an exhibition that reanimates the monumental site at Zollverein by way of urban ‘micro-structures’, modular sections, installations, screens, and interventions that plug-in and dock-on to the main themes.

Talking Cities is calling upon participants who seek to extend the potentials and capacities of architectural and spatial design, including the practice of building and beyond, to include vital social and communicative tools for our contemporary cities. Contributors are invited to work with the existing scaffolding - structure in the exhibition space. The inherent message for Talking Cities: a belief in process, dynamism, flexibility reflected also in the exhibition architecture that can react to and redefine the context within the exhibition space.

THE AUDIENCE

Talking Cities is conceptually oriented towards a broad audience encompassing internationally-based architects, designers, filmmakers, scientists, researchers into new materials, urbanists, writers, students of architecture and urban planning and - most importantly - the general public interested in the future of cities and their margins - the urban sprawl. The challenge to participants is to make the contributions legible to a broad audience so that we prefer direct special interventions and clear statements rather than representations by way of plans and models.

KEY EXHIBITION THEMES ARE:

- **architecture and memory** – the juxtaposition of old and new, the reactivation of and multiple use and re-use of existing architecture, strategies for the transformation/conversion of industrial spaces, working with existing structures, confronting the ruin and redundancy, and entering the gaps between built spaces, (a theme specific to the Ruhr-area is that of nature engulfing redundant industrial areas), projects and contributions reflecting new ways of seeing urban and industrial landscapes.
- **flexible, mobile, generative, interactive and modular architecture/design** – reflecting the relevance of informal architecture and micro-systems, architectural ‘plug-ins’, designs and related strategies for temporary interventions and performative, process-based spaces.
- **new materials** – adapting/recycling materials for innovative use in spatial/architectural design, regenerating or reconfiguring existing architecture through new materials.
- **architectural/design solutions for the urban sprawl and suburbanization** – innovative designs for architectural vernacular and the urban margins, statements and strategies for regenerating/reactivating such areas, statements on the contemporary ‘edge city’ and the peripheral gaze.

4 SUBMISSION CATEGORIES / REQUIREMENTS / DEADLINES

We suggest one or more of the following categories to be indicated in the heading of your proposal:

- 3-dimensional installations (approximately 20m² in size)
- photographs / images / slides / film & video
(photographs/images might be reproduced by graphic designers for the exhibition space)
- interventions / dividers / furnishings for the exhibition space and lounge/audio area.
- audio / visual installations
- proposals for workshops, screenings and individual presentations
- texts, proposals for essays

Please define an additional category, if appropriate for your proposal.

Please submit your entry proposal either as e-mail (pdf file) with the subject heading "Talking Cities proposal" or as postal mail with

- brief profile of studio, work, projects, cvs (pdf file or printout)
- maximum 1 A4 page outlining the proposal/project (pdf file or printout)
- optional: up to 3 images/stills illustrating the proposal/project (pdf file or printout)
- optional: statement reflecting the themes at issue

Please outline the following implications of your proposal (if applicable):

- your technical requirements (power, lighting, etc.), ideal and essential
- approximate weight and dimensions of your proposal
- use of inflammable/hazardous materials
- approximate time for installation on site
(please note: we assume that the exhibitor is responsible for setting up 3-dimensional installation on site in coordination with urban drift)

Final Deadline for submissions: June 27, 2005

General questions and inquiries to: Francesca Ferguson / Ilka Schaumberg

Confirmation of all final participants will take place by mid-August 2005

We hope our exhibition concept is of interest to you and are looking forward to your proposal.

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