

Atlantik Walk

INTRODUCTION

The vision of a European Open Port as counterpart to the ‚Festung Europa‘ serves as focal point for the various modules of ‚Atlantik Walk‘. Bunkers, being the relics of the Atlantikwall and built in order to fortify the Norwegian coastline, will serve as starting points for a complex reflection on the implications of Europe, on its changing borders, the idea of a European identity and on a contemporary Europe of migration characterised by diversities and communities.

THE MODULES

‚Atlantik Walk‘ is based on the coherent combination of modules, which will operate on a local, regional, national and international level: The Art Walk, a curated arts programme of thematic artistic works covering the fields of visual and performing arts. The art project ‚Centre Float‘, a swimming platform in the port of Stavanger, will provide a permanent basis for ‚Atlantik Walk‘. Being located at the heart of the European Capital of Culture, it furthermore finds itself at a place, which is defined by the idea of exchange and will represent the project’s pulse. Bunker Walks, tours to explore the bunkers and their surroundings are the second instrument to mediate knowledge and to generate questions, which inspire an ongoing occupation and reflection. Atlantik Talk (working title) is a film project based on interviews and carries ‚Atlantik Walk‘ beyond the borders of Norway. Open Port (working title), the international and decentralized discourse programme multiplies the project and its audience and produces insights and material. Atlantik Walk Documents (working title), a series of publications, which will be both a documentation of ‚Atlantik Walk‘ as well as a unique contribution to the complex discourse and will round up the three year project. As can be concluded from the enclosed list of contacts, the cooperation with partners for the planning and realisation of the various modules is as much intended as the acquisition of project-specific sponsoring.

Within the framework of ‚Atlantik Walk‘, three thematic focuses will be pursued: ‚solid concrete facts‘ for 2007, ‚floating shifting meanings‘ for 2008, ‚disappearing fragile memory‘ for 2009. The start of ‚Atlantik Walk‘ is marked by a detail-ed survey and an attending to the facts (to register, to copy, to archive, to highlight etc.). This phase will be followed by an investigation into the shifting of these facts and the changes of their significance, triggered for example by the „expansion“ of Europe (change, movement, shifts etc.). The project will close with a move of perspective towards the subjective, the disappearing, the fragile and memory (documenting disappearance, issues of conservation vs. elimination, repression, monument, memorial).

THE VISION

Based upon this differentiated rhythm of continuous, temporary and one-time elements, which were established throughout the three-year activities of ‚Atlantik Walk‘ and shaped its various modules, the region of Stavanger / Rogaland will be able to profit from the multifaceted projects far beyond 2009: The lasting artistic interventions, the European dialogues and horizons, which find expression in the film, as well as the publications representing this spirit and the aspired continuation of the artistic and discursive programme, will keep ‚Atlantik Walk‘ alive for both the people of Stavanger and their guests from all over the world. Thus, ‚Atlantik Walk‘ will contribute towards the sustainable alliance between Stavanger and its guiding vision of the Open Port and support its anchorage in the public’s awareness.

‘ART WALK’

In the context of ‚Atlantik Walk‘, art and the arts will serve towards addressing a wider public in order to communicate aspects, facets and questions in connection with the project. Internationally known artists of a variety of disciplines will be invited to develop art projects

for specific sites of the Atlantikwall; a process, which will be initiated and supervised by the curatorial team. The interplay between long-term interventions, installations of limited duration and singular events, including live performances, will create a fascinating programme, based upon a comprehensive artistic exploration of theme-related issues and phenomena.

These buildings, which are at the same time repelling and mysterious, offer a nearly unlimited range of possibilities for their reuse and appropriation. They can be utilised as interior spaces, can be transformed into labyrinths, serve as pedestals for a variety of activities or function as surfaces for projections of visual media of various kind. The bunkers can both host activities or can become themselves the object of artistic investigation. The selection of projects and artists will respond to each specific location and architectural feature. Hence, these ubiquitous concrete constructions, which nevertheless go so often unnoticed, will transform into vivacious spaces of manifold use and will thus establish an exceptional line-up of cultural events.

Throughout 2008, 'Atlantik Walk' will move into 'Centre Float', being designed by an artist and located at the heart of Stavanger. In contrast to the bunkers, it is a mobile and floating space, which will thus allow for a change of perspective of programmatic insinuation and will be located in the midst of an Open Port. The 'Float' will not only be home to the project's office but will equally serve as a place for events, as a ticket counter, a provider of equipment and will accommodate a media library and bar.

'BUNKER WALKS'

Taking the port of Stavanger as point of departure, a number of guided tours will be offered and information material will be provided in order to enable independent explorations in the region of Rogaland. The tours will enable an intensive experience of the bunkers and their atmosphere with the entire range of sense perception – the spatial restriction, the darkness, the look-outs, the bunkers' acoustics, temperature and humidity. The enormous dimension of this architectural structure as a whole, with a total length of 2500 km, will start to become imaginable. As the bunkers were designed according to the given topographic situation, the borderline between nature and architecture presents itself as a blurred division. The tours offer the possibility to use the authentic places for an on site engagement with their history, their shifting meaning, their aesthetic qualities and their visual presence or disappearance. A variety of means of transportation (boat, bus and foot) and of thematic focuses will offer a diverse programme of considerable attraction for a broad range of target groups. Volunteers as well as contemporary witnesses can work as guides. By combining competent guidance with well-prepared information material and the possibility of exploring the sites, a unique form of knowledge transfer is provided. Furthermore, these tours will be linked to the arts programme in form of 'Art Walks', which will combine an exploration of the site-specific artistic interventions with the content-based perspective of the 'Bunker Walks'. The visitor will thus be offered two levels of mediation, enriching each other in a fascinating way.

'OPEN PORT'

Based upon its various modules, 'Atlantik Walk' will communicate its issues, questions and information with events of varying geographical and temporal range. In order to materialize the vision of the Open Port and to support the generation of a wider international audience and potential multipliers right from the project's start in 2007, the format of discursive dialogues in all its variety is considered an appropriate instrument. A decentralized programme of discourse, taking place on an international basis, will take the format of lectures, workshops and symposiums and addresses a broad audience. Lectures will serve as a platform to present specific project related themes and promote their careful discussion, taking place in towns situated along the Atlantikwall and elsewhere. In difference to this, workshops will primarily focus upon Stavanger and will include the participation of artists. They will offer a platform for dialogue between the public, international multipliers and experts and will contribute towards the establishing of a network. As a third format, symposiums will be located at universities and other institutions of higher education and will encourage an occupation with the subjects in question on an academic level. The

symposiums can stimulate international exchange on current issues in the fields of aesthetics, philosophy, art theory etc. Taking the Atlantikwall and its bunkers as examples, relevant topics such as 'space' and 'border' can become the subject of discussion as well as issues of current political debates on Europe, its shifting role and its dealing with migration.

'ATLANTIK TALK'

As a consequence of the Atlantikwall being obviously located along the shores of the Atlantic throughout five European countries, this historical fortification has become an unavoidable feature of an environment, which is largely defined by its use as a site of leisure activity and holiday. This is the location where holiday makers, locals and visitors will be interviewed around issues of border and identity, investigating ideas of Europe or of European vs. national identity etc. A travelling film crew will appear along the shores of the Atlantic and function as ambassadors of Stavanger2008. They will attract attention on site as well as within the media and will represent and illustrate the European dimension of the Capital of Culture.

After having completed a questionnaire and synopsis as well as the research into necessary equipment and the acquisition of sponsoring and partners, the interview project will enter into an intensive stage of development in 2007; the precise itinerary will be decided upon and test-travelled. During a number of consecutive weeks in summer 2008, the film team will travel along the Atlantic coast, conducting interviews. From the material thus compiled audio files for broadcasting can be produced as well as film sequences and film stills, to be used as photographic impressions and portraits. Although still in production, 'Atlantik Talk' can thus be used to generate short introductory features for Stavanger2008, which present the film as a work in progress and provide a taste of the final product. Towards the end of 2008, the documentary 'Atlantik Talk' will be presented to a wider audience and will be submitted to suitable festivals the following year.

The given situations at the beaches will serve as starting points for interviews, which will approach the more complex subject matter via questions about the experience of foreignness or familiarity etc. The shore is a site of timeless leisure activity, where an atmosphere of holiday prevails and people find themselves in an exceptional situation but akin to each other. While talking, the beach itself can be reflected upon as a European phenomenon: as a borderline, a zone of holiday and war, as a 'melting pot' of temporal existence, as a location with a variety of different faces. The beach can be used to depict the merging of horizons and dialogues in a vivid manner, formulating a project, which follows the vision of an Open Port.

'ATLANTIK WALK DOCUMENTS'

For the documentation of each of the art projects, a separate publication will be published. They will present the development of the site-specific projects of 'Atlantik Walk' and will focus upon the artist in question as well as include pictures of the realised work of art. Together, artist, curator and graphic designer will develop the content, structure and layout of the book. In the course of three years, a series of twenty publications will be completed and together they will form the exhibition catalogue 'Atlantik Walk'.

Furthermore, a trilogy will be published with one volume per year. Each of the three publications will partly include the publications of that year as well as additional material. They will represent the close connection between art and discourse representative for 'Atlantik Walk': The commissioned art projects will be related to the theoretical positions having been addressed as part of the discursive programme and can thus document the entire project in its multifaceted complexity. Besides, key texts of different disciplines and literary texts will be included. By being interrelated elements, the three publications merge into an entity and beyond being a documentation and catalogue, they will represent a comprehensive and interdisciplinary presentation of a far-reaching subject matter.

THE DRAMATURGY 2007 – 2009

From spring 2007 onwards, the discursive programme will undertake the continuous and

international preparation and promotion of 'Atlantik Walk' and Stavanger2008. At the same time and as counterpoint, artists of international reputation will realize five art projects in Stavanger. Right from its beginning, the project will thus develop a differentiated rhythm, which will combine and compose elements of different spatial and temporal characteristics. During the year 2007, Stavanger will be the center of the art projects and the 'Bunker Walks' will serve towards an intensive occupation with the starting points of 'Atlantik Walk'; in form of discourses, the project will travel through Europe. Due to the activities of a theme-specific network of lectures, workshops and symposiums, their participants will function as multipliers, which can thus reach a large number of people on an international basis as well as attract journalistic attention. During the year 2008, there will be a total of ten art projects. In this case, they will not only be located in Stavanger, but also in a number of European countries along the Atlantikwall. Furthermore, the film team of 'Atlantik Talk' has started travelling, providing Stavanger with material and functioning as a mobile ambassador. In 2008, the project's various treats will find their point of culmination on the 'Centre Float', as an attractive and lively space, where the modules of the project are united and will be present in various forms. However, 'Centre Float' will not only be a platform to collect the recent outcomes of discourse and film. It will furthermore serve as home for lectures and performances and is the point of contact for the press and the public; a bar, as well as a media library, invite the audience to spend time at a place, which will become perceptible as the pulse of 'Atlantik Walk' and of Stavanger2008 in equal measure.

In order to provide and support the structure of a biennial, five art projects will be realised in 2009, similar to the year 2007. Once again, the discursive programme will be on its way and the documentary 'Atlantik Talk' will be submitted to suitable festivals. 'Atlantik Walk' and Stavanger2008 traverse the regional borders anew, but will stay in close connection with Stavanger by means of the site-specific art projects, focusing upon Stavanger. Together with the monographic publication for each of the realised art projects, the three-volume catalogue, which provides comprehensive documentation of art and discourse as well as additional material, will guarantee the journalistic presence of the project. To facilitate the communication with an international audience, as well as to enable the swift accessibility of the materials produced and in order to enable the discussion of any of the relevant issues, the site www.atlantikwalk.org will be a crucial instrument. Subverting the idea of a border, the internet is a most suitable medium to communicate the vision of an Open Port and to accommodate discussions on the subject of the border.

THE TEAM

Initiated by Maria Nome Doyle, a Stavanger born architect living in Berlin, 'Atlantik Walk' was developed by the interdisciplinary 'Atlantik Walk' team:

Rose Apple, graphic designer of numerous exhibitions and publications

Matthias Brettschneider, experienced project manager with background in cultural studies

Dr. Des. Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer (chezweitz), curator, MA in history and comparative literature

Maria Nome Doyle, architect, worked in Scotland, Germany and Norway

Patricia Schon, director and author

Detlef Weitz (chezweitz), scenographer with many years of experience in the conception and realisation of cultural events