

page 1 of 3 **Atlantikwalk** – a project for Stavanger European Capital of Culture 2008

'Atlantik Walk' is a project dedicated to the rediscovery and reanimation of widely ignored sites of the Norwegian coast: the bunkers of the Atlantikwall will become apparent as spaces for cultural activities.

The Bunkers

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 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. The spectre of artistic interaction might include subtle illuminations, public readings, architectural interventions and the staging of theatre and live art performances or of spectacular multimedia installations.

Equally rich and multifaceted will be the visitor's experience when promenading along the popular beaches of Stavanger.

The Walks

The bunkers close to Stavanger will serve as starting points for a range of 'Walks', which vary regarding the activities they offer and obtain a distinctive character of their own in response to their specific surroundings and the experiences made along the way. The category 'Special Event Tour', centred around a series of particular events, will be just one option alongside the classical 'Guided Tour' or 'Minimal Walks', where bunkers will be animated by using the most minimal means.

The dialogue between these bizarre spaces and a scenography, which is especially designed to interact with them, will create a unique art project of international significance, which will have the potential to attract media coverage and public attention. 'Non-spaces' will re-emerge as centres of attraction. The bunkers' neglected abundance will give rise to a chain of events, which will be of interest on a European scale and could be extended beyond the region of Stavanger.

Such a program of diverse events will enable the inquiring visitor to gain an awareness for the historical and political dimension of these architectural features, which suddenly reveal their surprising variety and become apparent as finds of European history.

Project History

Since 1996 the Norwegian architect Maria Nome Doyle has been exploring the coast around Stavanger on innumerable walks. These exploratory tours ignited her lasting fascination with the bunkers of the Atlantikwall and consequently led her to pursue intensive research. Similar to Doyle, the visitor will explore the environment by walking, thus gaining access to even remote locations, which will reveal their unique atmosphere. These tours will offer transitions of various kinds: they touch upon the limit between the sea and the land, between nature and culture and between the past and the present.

To complement the information gained on her walks, Maria Nome Doyle undertook archival research and extensive reading; she interviewed contemporary witnesses and conducted intensive in situ documentation. Throughout the years, Nome Doyle has thus compiled detailed material on the Norwegian bunkers (please see 'Index of materials').

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European Bridging

Within the context of Stavanger European Capital of Culture 2008, 'Atlantik Walk' understands itself as a starting point for re-approaching European past and present in a new and positive way by inviting the visitor to explore the Atlantikwall with his or her eyes, ears and mind. We would like to offer an alternative approach towards the difficult burden of World War II, which appears here as implemented into the built environment. This approach does not choose the options of demolition or repression but wants to transform remnants of the past into platforms of dialogue for the present. With the help of a versatile scenography and artistic appropriation, these historically hostile spaces become a symbol for a European dialogue without losing their importance as places of commemoration.

The different events and installations vary regarding their duration and scope: Deriving from the bunkers' geographical and political dimension, the project's potential can develop within a local, a national and an international perspective. Firstly, the bunkers are of local relevance for the residents and tourists, who have already started to adopt the buildings for their own usage (e.g. as climbing wall or kiosk). Beyond such local impact, the bunkers are an integral part of the Norwegian coast line and shape its appearance throughout the country. And finally, the coastal fortification of Norway is part of the much larger Atlantikwall, which continues throughout Denmark, the Netherlands, France and thus transcends national borders. Consequently, the bunkers of the Atlantikwall are a European phenomenon; they form a European connection, cross line and a border which is to be newly defined.

Regional - National - International

In response to the three geographical scales mentioned, the artistic events will show a similar diversity regarding their origin: artists from the region of Stavanger, as well as Norwegian and international artists will be invited.

The threefold structure repeats itself on the level of time and duration of the commissioned activities. There will be one-off performances and readings, just as well as temporary exhibitions and permanent installations, e.g. the 'Sculpture Path'.

By combining spectacular singular events throughout the year 2008 with the inauguration of permanent installations, 'Atlantik Walk' aims for a lasting and long-term reevaluation of the Stavanger region.

chezweitz scenographers

The crossing of borders is an element central to chezweitz scenographers. Being based upon an interdisciplinary team, chezweitz develops, curates and produces projects, which explore the transitional area between architecture, art and design.

Centred around our intensive preoccupation with the Museumsinsel in Berlin, a listed World Heritage Site, chezweitz developed a complex, site-specific concept of interaction, which set out to (re)discover spaces and to pursue their transformation into platforms for stage events, into locations for temporary exhibitions or into unconventional cinema- and concert halls. On the occasion of the 'Museumsinselfestival,' this concept is annually revived.

page 3 of 3 Another important point of interest of chezweitz focuses on issues of 'urban scenography' and explores the possibilities to establish urban spaces as organs of communication. The staging of the urban space, as to be seen in the outdoor text projection 'Writing the City', planned for 2006, forms part of this field of interest, just as well as the recently inaugurated project 'Hybridwall', being commissioned by the Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA). 'Hybridwall' consists of a multifunctional wall-installation and seeks to respond to the phenomenon of the 'shrinking city'. International large-scale exhibitions, such as the show 'Human', which was part of the EXPO 2000, are included in our range of projects, as well as ambitious art exhibitions, e.g. 'pOes1s. Aesthetics of Digital Poetry', which was curated and designed by chezweitz and took place at the Kulturforum Berlin in spring 2004.

We also develop and realize projects in close collaboration with artists such as Jenny Holzer, John Bock, Martin Honert, Tazro Niscino and Micha Kuball. E.g. in celebration of the reopening of the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, chezweitz planned and organised the project 'SCAN' by Stefan Sous in collaboration with the artist (2001). On the occasion of the 'Long Night of the Museums' (2000/2001), the two theatre performances 'Mythen draussen' and 'Amphytrion in Concert' were put on stage at the Ehrenhof of the Pergamonmuseum, attracting and involving an audience of 20.000 visitors. Furthermore, chezweitz co-operated with the Schauspiel Stuttgart, the Schaubühne Berlin and the Dramatische Theater.

Last but not least, chezweitz is dedicated to an involvement with issues of recent history. We successfully participated in competitions on the Berlin Wall memorial site and the redesign of the memorial site at the concentration camp Hinzert. Commissioned by the Shoah-Foundation, chezweitz planned and produced the video installation 'Tolerance', based upon audio-visual material collected during interviews with Holocaust survivors. chezweitz sustains an enriching and frequent dialogue with academic institutions such as the Schools of Design and Art in Basel (FHBB) and Zurich (HGKZ), the Bauhauskolleg at the Bauhaus Dessau, the Department of Northern European and Scandinavian Languages and Cultures at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Academy for Fine Arts Dresden (HfBK).

chezweitz scenographies are based upon the rare symbiosis of profound research and sensual richness. Such amalgamation is a result of the interdisciplinary make-up of our team. In addition to our experience and competence, and grown throughout the years, we have established an international network, which enriches each of our projects.

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