



To live Together

A workshop which brings together corporate and communal players to define common objectives and future oriented guidelines

Ústí nad Labem/CZ, April 2011: The Art Of Urban Intervention is an European exhibition series dealing with the possibilities of art in public space related to the transformation processes in communities and neighbourhoods. In the framework of this project, the German artist group REINIGUNGSGELLSCHAFT (RG) makes a topic of the relations between the Czech city Ústí nad Labem and Spolchemie, a large chemical plant on the city's territory.

On Friday, April 15th 2011 there took place the workshop *Corporate Virtues* that brought together representatives from the fields of communal administration, factory management, history, education and urban planning. The workshop took place at the Faculty of Art and Design of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí and was moderated by *Michal Kolecek*, the dean of the faculty and curator of the international project *The Art Of Urban Intervention*.

Martin Keil and *Henrik Mayer*, the two German artists of REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT visited Ústí nad Labem several times in the past and started to think about how to connect the potentialities of the city and the factory in order to face the current social, economic and environmental challenges resulting from past structural changes in Ústí's industries. During their research they discovered six often ignored relief-statues at the facade of the administration building of the chemical plant. The artists learnt that the art works were created by the sculptor *Hugo Lederer* (1871-1940) in the 1930s when the building was erected. *Mr. Lederer's* list of works registers the statues without titles. Nevertheless it can be seen that they symbolize the company's values from that era: **Chemistry, Science, Liberty, Prosperity, Trade and Labour.**



The artists of RG invited the participants to the workshop to discuss the topic of new and contemporary corporate virtues and find names for the statues that would represent new approaches. During the workshop *Ms. Suzanna Kailova*, the vice major of the city outlined the positive potential of integrating the factory in the cities tourism strategies. *Mr. Lubos Knechtl*, the investment director of Spolchemie also vigorously contributed to the open discussion and expressed his strong interest in a sustainable common development. As an engineer, he claimed to be first an expert on economic issues but also he would see the need to open up corporate life to society and search for new ways to face the growing global and local climate- and energy problems in a joint way. The architect and city planner *Matěj Páral* emphasized the quality of industrial architecture and even expressed the pleasure he gains when looking from his garden over the premises of the factory. His future vision, said *Mr. Páral*, is an ideal symbiosis of the needs of the industry and the inhabitants of the town.

It was proposed to rename the statue which originally represented **Chemistry** with the new name **Coexistence**. Also the crucial role of education in future development was discussed. Therefore the statue of **Science** shall be re-named as **Cognition** in order to underline the role of interdisciplinary knowledge and the importance of the University. **Sustainability** was proposed as a new name for **Liberty**, a decision that points to the importance of the long-term nature of the necessary engagement. **Prosperity** is a word used commonly in election campaigns. In order to go beyond buzzwords, it was decided that prosperity shall be defined as the richness of resources and the new name **Diversity** was found.

Another workshop participant, the director of the city's Museum *Martin Krsek*, expressed the important need for people's identification with the city in order to avoid shrinkage of the population. The participants agreed after a lively discussion to re-name the statue of **Trade**, symbolized by the messenger Hermes, into **Identity**. Finally, it was decided that **Creativity** shall stand for **Labour**.

Work cannot be described in traditional terms any more. The fundamental change of the working world towards more self responsibility and creativity is enveloped in this new name. After two hours of lively debate *Mr. Kolecek* summarized and it was agreed that the newly defined concepts should be the basis for ongoing activities in the near future.



Further steps: public communication and materialisation

The project *Corporate Virtues* continues as an open process. The results of the workshop shall be announced in **presentations to the workers and the management board** of Spolchemie as well as to the **city council**. The aim is to sensitise and integrate an ever growing number of people in the process. During the coming weeks, the new names shall be discussed and have to be approved by the inhabitants of Ústí in a communication process open to the public. The call for contributions to this debate will be announced on **billboards** in order to raise public attention and function as an interface for interaction. Parallel to this, there could be announcements in the **newspapers** of Ústí and in the corporate journal of the chemical plant. The press campaign allows readers to contribute their own proposals or their opinions of the new names and the future developments they stand for. Also an **exhibition stand at the Museum or in another public institution** in Usti Nad Labem could serve the purpose of stimulating an open dialogue with public participation. The outcome of this communication process might be a general approval of the new names or possibly one or more adjustments related to the significance of alternative proposals.

The **final resulting names will be fixed to the sockets** of the six sculptures above the main entrance of the Spolchemie building. As *Mr. Knechtl* said, there might be the possibility to cast the letters using the products of Spolchemie. This could grow into a collaboration with the Faculty of Art and Design where students could work with the synthetic materials of Spolchemie.

The new names at the statues shall be presented to the public in September 2011. The statues are attached above the entrance porch of Spolchemie which forms a balcony. **Public access to this balcony** is important. The proposal of REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT is to build two symmetric temporary staircases that enable access to the balcony from outside. The staircases form a visible sign in the form of an architectural intervention. This sign shall stand for the openness and accessibility of the company and the exchange with the city. It will be used by employees and visitors of Spolchemie as well as by the public. In this way, the balcony is transformed into a communication platform and meeting point to discuss future issues of the chemical plant and the city.