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10/06/2004: "Art-in-nature - A worldwide movement"



paintings etc) in a natural environment.

Since I started working as an artist in 1979 there where already artists working in nature. One of them Robert Smithson was actually making one of his major pieces close to my studio in the Netherlands. 'Broken circle, spiral hill' was located in a artificial lake near the city Emmen. But it was just an action of one artist and the piece will stay for many years. Even it is restored by time to time. Restoring of art pieces is not the idea behind the movement 'art-in-nature'. The idea is to make art at nature locations like forests, natural reservations, lakes etc. that will only be there for a limited time. The concept is to bring artists together for some time and to encourage them to realise a piece just for a choosen place. It is site specific art but mostly with materials out of the natural environment itself. It has nothing to do with exhibiting already existing art-pieces (sculpture,

My interest in this movement started somewhere in the eighties when I was involved in 'some projects in my own country and later also in Providence (RI) where I did a piece for the 'Convergence VII ' art event. The very enthusiast people of the city and the director Bob Rizzo showed me how it will work in this international atmosphere. So back home I just started to think it over and decided to try to start art-in-nature projects in the Netherlands.

And like things sometime are like pieces of a puzzle, just on that very moment I was asked to curate a project in a very beautiful location.: National Park Dwingelderveld in the province Drenthe. This province is well known as to be quiet and with lots of space. The park itself is visited every year by about 1.4 million of



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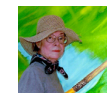
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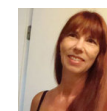
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visited every year by about 1.4 million of people. Biking, walking and also horse riding. For this show we invited artists from many different countries: USA, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Russia, Italy, Czech Republic and Senegal. A tremendous success. Even the Dutch queen came with her horses and we visited the 17 kilometer long trail by this way of transportation. After some smaller projects I was curating Peatpolis.nl. (www.peatpolis.nl) An event in the authentic bog land. Also in Drenthe. Very near to the place where also the famous painter Vincent van Gogh was working. 17 international artists were working 14 days with peat, peatblocks, sans, water, branches etc. Together we created a walking trail of about 3 kilometers through the brown golden, really flat and swampy landscape. The place near the specialised open air museum was perfect. Many of the visitors of the museum went also to the art. And, lucky we are, the Dutch queen was so kind to act on the official opening. Coming by helicopter on a very hot day, we walked together there and she was excited.



Conditions

Doing this and also participating in art-in-nature projects in different countries in Europe, in Japan, Korea and others I learned what this movement has to contribute to the visual arts. Also I learned that the success of such an event is depending of some special conditions.

The contribution to the art has two parts. There is one pointing at the art itself. Working in nature the artist has to deal with it and when it fits they are putting the border inside away. Creating pieces which have a new vision on art itself. Second is

the community. The community they are living in for a short period of time. This is the community of the artists group but also the cultural environment. Working together a new way of understanding each other is born. Exchanging ideas, but also ways of living, has a tremendous impact as well on the artists.

About the conditions I will name some very important ones. First is of course the collaboration with institutes like the owner of the location, the government, sponsors etcetera. A well-considered concept is the base for success in talking with the people of these institutes. Second is the location. This has to be one where people are used to come. Not just as art lovers but mostly for another reason. Like walking in the forest or visiting an open air museum. Visiting the museum or wandering in the nature the audience is surprised by the art pieces. And, another effect, the art lovers are surprised by the nature. A knife with two edges.



Future

In my mind this kind of art has a very bright future. People all over the world like to be surprised and they do appreciate the combination very much. Also artists from all different countries are enthusiastic and see the benefits for their own work. Benefits in developing new ways of seeing and widening up their network. In this case I have to name an important organisation. It is called AiNIN (Artists in Nature International Network) www.artinnature.org. This unique organisation (established in France) brings artists and organisers together. And has a big support to the art-in-nature movement. My dream is to start in my own country a permanent place for art-in-nature where artists from all over the world and the audience can come together to have moments of happiness and understanding. On my website www.defluiter.nl there is the button globalartfund. The name I'm working with as curator. Clicking this button one can find images of the mentioned shows and some other projects. When artists or organisers like to keep in contact, please send a mail to defluiter@planet.nl.

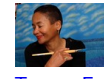
Replies: 4 Comments



Walter King: Midwest Dialog: 40 year retrospective 2nd venue



James Dinverno: Mold



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on Thursday, October 7th, [paul douglas](#) said

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Adri,Brad made some pertinent comments,about land based art,about adding to the enviroment in an enviromental way,rather than scarring it further,I myself made sculptures out of rubbish I found washed up by the river thames in London,all kinds of jetsom and flotsam is washed up there,mostly of human manufacture,metal,wood,ceramics broken,plastics,ect,I made some striking peices even if I say so myself,and used to photograph them to capture the impermanence before it all got washed away,but there is a point here,and thats I got into doing rubbish work because of my feelings that time about what we were doing to the enviroment as a society, and what we as artists were also doing to the enviroment,washing our brushes and other equimpent in water sloshing harmful pollutants down the sink,and the pollution caused by the manufacture of art materials themselves,so for a while I felt real good about myself becoming a land artist,but it didnt take long for it to dawn upon me that I was still polluting the envroment by my artistic activity,not by the sculptures themselves but by the photographic documentation I took of them,and so what about the photographic industries contribution to the pollution of the enviroment?Every step we are compromised by the way in which we as a society lives,we can do nothing without harming something or someone somewhere,so this point is still pertinent to any land artist if their raison de etre is pollution free production,also Brads point about making the sculptures or site specific works easily recoverable by nature,otherwise we can have the 'windmills'syndrome all over again,those feilds of whirling posts that are supposed to be clean,but people accuse them of ruining the enviroment,actually sitespecific works are just like any other art work,some is good, some isnt,another reason for them to be largeley impermanent,especially in nature.

Search

on Wednesday, October 6th, [jose freitas cruz](#) said

Adri, this sounds like a tremendous project. you've got me hooked now. thank you for sharing your insights into the new possibilities art has yet to explore!

on Wednesday, October 6th, [Brad Michael Moore](#) said

Adri,
I enjoyed your blog and the efforts it focuses towards in a time when we are more likely to deplete our landscapes rather than enhance them. Making art as temporal as the fragility of nature herself - is an effort best made when it centers its heart around the effecting community, more than art placed upon land created to remain well into the future. It is always worthwhile when anyone must consider their relationship, and sense of wardsmanship, towards their efforts of expression built upon living landscape previously (or recently) outside the hand of humankind. For kinsmanship towards that affinity, and with a sensitiveness given, in a caring way, to our art expressions upon the earthscape, I can mostly accept. As long as the art's remains may dissolve back into the land from which it came... If the group is working towards a project more permanent and lasting -the responsibility over their efforts should be doubly considered. We can't expect to match nature in her own position - so we better consider giving her kisses rather than bites on her neck. Better yet an idea is, a communal artist's reclamation project that takes a piece of landscape, already spent by the hand of man, and left exposed - and then regifting that landscape through a cleanup and refurbishing (in artist style & concept) - to bring about a new face that gives nature a head start towards her own recovery. A project of this sort will allow observers to watch how, with time and healing, Mother Nature may more quickly reinvent herself in a process she is so adept at.

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on Wednesday, October 6th, [Marjory](#) said

Very Interesting!!!.