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Title, Phase I: Symbolic Actions for Our Present Time

A Lungomare Project, Bolzano

Fall 2010 – Spring 2011

With **Brave New Alps, Jacopo Candotti, Helmut Heiss, Eva Mair & Katherina Putzer, and Maja Malina**

Curated by Angelika Burtscher and Daniele Lupo

Advisors to the Stammtisch (Round Tables): Christine Helfer, Giorgio Mezzalira and Waltraud Mittich

A monument is, as a rule, an object that commemorates, immortalises, is inactive and demands a place in the public sphere. It occupies space. It ordains and defines from its own unique perspective. A monument strengthens the representation of political power and legitimises events of the past, often from a unilateral perspective. It is an expression of iconographic symbolism: a monument takes often an absolute view of historical events without questioning them or pausing for public or critical discussion.

What if a monument had a manifold and divergent function, and represented a space that was against any type of specific ideology? What if the monument would demand "action and counter-action" 1 and would be aware of the objective facts of history yet analyse them critically, comparing their relevance to and consequences for how we live now. What if it was a space that consciously initiates public debate and discussion and that provokes people to rethink their views: a place that would not portray a one-sided and static historiography, but that would become an active and participative mental space? What about a monument that is flexible, constantly redefines itself, and adapts to its surroundings? What if it was a monument that does not state but doubts: a monument that does not simplify, but demands complexity and diversity? What if the monument would lay down no borders, claim no territory for itself, and represent no particular ethnic group or national integrity? What if it stood instead against ethnic divisions and homogeneity and for "contamination" 2 and collectiveness? What about a monument that would see identity as something that mutates, that becomes perpetually more mutable and more varied; a monument that sees human beings as open and free?

1 Mihnea Mircan, *As Big As: Polemic Strategies for the Contemporary Monument*

2 Siegfrieds Baur, *Identity in South Tyrol, based on Alexander Langer's Ten Theses for Living Together Peacefully*

We would like to experiment with developing a contemporary monument as a symbolic representation of our time. The site would be Bolzano, the capital of South Tyrol and the northernmost autonomous province in the Republic of Italy. The theme of the monument would be various ethnic groups living together. The relevance of the monument would not be geographically limited: Bolzano would merely be a point of departure.

The city has already become a role model in the field of ethnic conflict resolution and a model city for the peaceful coexistence of several linguistic groups. Where are we really, though, and where would like we to go in the future? When would be the right point in time to dream up such a monument? Is there such a thing? Is it now: in the year 2010? Will we think back and consider the question of coexistence to be passé? Or will we find ourselves in the middle of a quest for commonality and unity? If so, what characteristics would a monument based on these assumptions have, and will it become a counter monument?

The project is divided into two phases:

PHASE 1 – RESEARCH, October
October 24th – 31st, 2010

The artists, architects and designers involved in the project spend about a week in Bolzano. There are lectures and discussions with international and regional experts on the subject of monuments, history, and the concept of living together in South Tyrol. Everyone involved thus has intensive research time on site.

Event Series 1: Three Round Table Discussions (Stammtische)

We bring intellectuals from South Tyrol together at three Round Table discussion groups, called Stammtische, within the framework of the research week. The overall theme is how various ethnic groups coexistence politically and culturally in South Tyrol. Every Round Table has one main talking point to be discussed by five guests, together with the artists, creators, and organisers.

Every Round Table is documented. The findings of the Round Tables are published in the public media, and serve as a foundational document for all subsequent steps of the project.

Event Series 2: Three Lectures

International philosophers, architects, curators and cultural commentators give lectures about subjects such as public space, contemporary monuments, processing of history, and opening a “space of action” for our times. The Round Tables connect these subjects to our immediate milieu.

The goal of the common week is to bring together the individuals involved in the project right from the outset, in order to experiment with finding an alternative way in which to structure the project and its subject matter. Many open questions should be resolved during the collective discussion.

The discussion week is taped, transcribed, and documented using photographs. They become part of the blog that accompanies the project, as well as the publication that is issued when the project appears.

After the common week in Bolzano, the participants flesh out the proposals for the monument project.

PHASE 2: REALISATIONw

March / April, 2011

The project is brought to fruition in a public space of the city of Bolzano. The purpose of the project is to find a single, collective action / project proposal—as a product of the collaborative effort of the invited artists and creators—for the development of the monument.