

2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SKOR BOARD

INTRODUCTION

The year 2008 witnessed many unexpected developments in terms of international politics and socio-economic changes all around the globe like the selection of Barrack Obama as the new president of the US, the broadcasting of a Kurdish TV in Turkey or the recent credit crisis through whose adverse effects we all have been undergoing. Certainly, the economic crisis has negative impact on arts and culture as these fields mostly are considered as “the first ones to go” in the face of crisis. However, we consider “such difficult times also as the most creative times”, as it was uttered by a young Dutch taxi-driver in Den Bosch. SKOR regards these times as a critical juncture to **encourage artistic creativity related to art in public space and reassess the dynamics of public space under transformation to bring out new formulations and strategies to promote the active, equalitarian and more democratic use of public space as well as enliven the art milieu and the possible circles of partners and commissioners.**

Besides the recent intense global changes and developments, 2008 was a dynamic year for SKOR, too: Together with the appointment of a new director at SKOR, the organizational renovations were followed by an expansion in the scope of SKOR’s goals and activities. As it was stated as the prime goal of SKOR in the policy plan of 2009-2012, public programmes and activities have been planned and realized towards establishing a balance between practice, reflection and memory. Furthermore, in order to create a transparency around SKOR organization and activities, an extensive communication plan has been developed.

In total, SKOR completed 23 projects in 2008. A considerable number out of SKOR projects have been designed as artistic manifestations, series of events and public activities to communicate the projects and the ideas behind them with a larger public. For instance, the Culture Mile manifestations and performances featuring young artists were realized in Enschede last April as part of the launching events of the permanent sound projects that planned to be realized from 2009 onwards. Similarly, the Portscape series of projects and events, which are planned for Maasvlakte 2, an area that will be reclaimed from the sea in the next 5 years, exemplifies the embodiment of the vision stated in the policy plan.

Likewise, **the final manifestation of the BEYOND long-term art programme, which can be regarded as the predecessor of SKOR’s ambitious large-scale research manifestations related to urban development, will be realized in Utrecht in September 2009 with an exemplary ‘sculpture park’ featuring 27 projects by internationally acclaimed artists.** The sculpture park, the finalizing event of BEYOND that started in 2000 and produced events like the “Parasite Paradise” and “Pursuit of Happiness” for the recently developed VINEX area in Utrecht, will be celebrated with extensive festivities and public activities programmes starting from the 11th of September.

“Wow, we should have this as well. The Netherlands are always one step ahead of us”. These words belongs to the Chair of the Belgium Alzheimerliga Bie van Waeyenberghe that was published in Het Laatste Nieuws on the 25th of June 2008 in the article about the De Coupé, a SKOR project conceived by the artistic duo Lino Hellings and Yvonne Dröge Wendel for the nursing home De Bieslandhof in Delft. The artists created an exact replica of a train compartment with six comfortable seats and windows that are fitted with screens to project moving images of an idyll Dutch polder landscape mimicking the passing-by scenery in a train trip in the Netherlands. As it was stated in the article published in De Telegraaf of 20th of June 2008, “In the ‘Alzheimer express’ demented elderly people are finding comfort in fictitious train journey”. This

humble project has been enjoyed so much by the old and mostly demented residents of the nursing home that it was highly appreciated by the media and other care institutions as well.

A genuine contribution and strategy against the adverse effects of privatization of the healthcare sector has been under development and implementation since 2008. The proposal of creating a joint “Collectie” that can be shared by different members of the healthcare sector with an accompanying publication has already been briefly mentioned in the policy plan of 2009-2012. The concept and the very first steps of the “Collectie” and the respective publication will be launched in December 2009 together with the “Niet Normaal” exhibition, an initiative by Ine Gevers, which was structured around extended national and international networks and collaborations that propose excellent publicity and communication possibilities.

During 2008 different forms of international engagement has been sought and programmed to reassess SKOR’s international profile and reputation and simultaneously develop an international network of information and experience. Through such international networks and platforms, SKOR seeks to develop dialogue and collaborations between institutions, artists and art professionals. To this end, SKOR has under preparation to realize the first of its International Series of Lectures in October/November 2009, while already begun to organize international launching events for the OPEN periodical to introduce it to the international art world more actively as it deserves more international recognition and prestige. Accordingly, three international launching of last and upcoming issues were planned and organized to take place in London in October 2008, in Brussels in April 2009 and in September 2009 during the opening events of the International Istanbul Biennial as a part of the Co-lateral Events.

Last but not the least, as a part of our goal of developing collaborations and of anchoring to the future through developing sustainable relations with the younger generations, an institutional alliance was established between SKOR and De Appel Curatorial Training Program in April 2009, through which an official collaboration with emerging curators in the form of internship became possible.

For 2009, in order to adopt and cope with the ever-changing conditions related to the working field of SKOR, namely the public domain, and moreover, to be prepared against the unavoidable repercussions of the credit crisis, SKOR endeavored to formulate new strategies and methods, which are further articulated in the revised SKOR policy plan of 2009-2012.

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