



Welcome to the UN Artist Residency Program. It is your world.

Inga Zimprich
Artist in Residence
the United Nations
Headquarters New York

Subject

Artist Residency
United Nations

Date

August 26th 2008

Place

Sofia, Bulgaria

To whom it may concern.

In order to investigate the different performative potentials of arts and politics and following my fascination for the founding mechanisms initiating social organizations, I propose to install myself as the first Artist in Residence at the United Nations Headquarters. Practicing my work as an artist as an integral part of the UN's daily organism, it is the ambition of the first UN artist residency to convince the United Nations to permanently install an artist residency program, affirming the increased intertwine between artistic practices and diplomacy.

In essence, today's artistic production can, also with great individual efforts, not be separated from the role of a cultural ambassador, who operates in the wide network of internationally interrelated cultural institutions and along ties of social networks. Self-assigned productions offer an actualization of new European cultural self-understanding in varied and numerous projects allowing for personal experience and commitment. Since WWII contemporary art and its institutions have increasingly assessed themselves as universally valid formats of expression, exchange, critique and encounter. With contemporary arts reaching into social and relational contexts since the sixties, cultural production accesses new layers of cultural identity.

Coming forth from the first non-governmental movements at the beginning of the last century only with the passing of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 the United Nations established itself as a trans-national level of jurisdiction designed to circumvent war and to guarantee universal humanitarian values as peace and freedom. With the bill of Human Rights the United Nations founded its main political force in the performative power of language: issuing law transgressing national borders, which becomes universally claimable.



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In this project I would like to suggest the space between cultural agency and political diplomacy, between the ever converging fields of cultural production and international politics as the very site in which artistic practice should become productive.

Within those artistic and curatorial frameworks we bring forward, we as cultural producers open speculative and performative spaces, to trigger the questions at stake differently.

Relating the European Cultural institution, the United Nations and artistic practices within this project, means to expect these artistic practices to reveal the modes of institutionalization inherent to them. Taking place in the United Nations with its administrative procedures and political mandates artistic production will be forced to appear in its difference.

The process from drafting to passing law, is UN-internally described as "wording", a process which meticulously sums up previous agreements and thus writes forth the institution's historicity. The UN as such appears as a bureaucratic machine in the mode of constant progressive writing. The growing entanglement of art practices with international political processes and its rising administration make it necessary to question how artistic work actually institutes itself, how artistic practice takes its place and with which effects. Where could we designate a space to question potentials of artistic modes of instituting, if not in that international diplomatic structure it gradually comes to resemble?



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Alluding to the usage of language inherent to the UN institution striving to make its processes transparent, also I as UN Artist in Residence will issue my communication alike the UN's daily reports, including press-releases and communiqués. Also relating to art funding guidelines the project's communication will be edited, to be published as the UN Artist in Residence Report, marking the first residency's closure. It is the ambition of this pilot project to install an artist residency permanently at the United Nations headquarters in New York dedicated to further question artistic and political practices of instituting.

Blue Points

The inhabitants of Het Blauwe Huis, a residency for the mind, commit to sharing into an ongoing brainstorm process concerned with alternative ways of community forming. With the ending of the project's permanent residence on Ijburg, Amsterdam by 2009 the residency of the mind expands into new areas and locations. Due to the great trust and support experienced throughout the last years by Jeanne van Heeswijk and the Blue House Foundation the project Artist in Residence – The United Nations will prolong the Blue House residency for the mind as one of its several future Blue Points.