

# "Vacuum of the present"

-awareness by art-

Structure document for professional art project development in the Babayan Culture House art-residency, Turkey.

Research and art making within the environment of Cappadocia: to bring into focus the influences of the PRESENT on its inhabitants/visitors: the figures and facts, to use / solve or to ignore / pass by.

Cappadocia is a rural farmer area on the list of UNESCO World Heritage. The unique volcanic landscape with historical rock churches attracts nowadays many tourists from over the world. There is the 'glass wall' experience (a feeling of distance) between tourists and local inhabitants.

**'Past'** (Early history till 20 years ago) - Everything stayed the same for ages based on 'cradle2cradle' production methods and natural economic recycling: no waste.

**'Present'** - From ± 20 years ago until today, many things have changed:

- A period full of changes.
- Lots of garbage due to modern production methods.
- Lack of drinking water in Anatolia due to climate change.
- Open wastewater systems.
- Full global information sources by open Internet.
- Non-understanding by locals of the present developments.
- The on going destruction (by nature and human) of historical Cappadocia.
- And recently: the international research of how to protect it.

**'Future'** - From ± 2015 on Cappadocia will start to relate itself to the world and stabilize in a global way. 'Cradle2cradle' methods have to be newly introduced, based on the old ones: ecological garbage recycling systems and wetland methods for wastewater. Environmental protection. Raising awareness (by Art) has priority.

## Research

- Research for the artist personally:
  - Objective <> inter subjective <> Subjective (which starting point?).
  - Formulate values/specifics \*
  - Formulate project assignment.
- Research of the environment of Cappadocia:
  - Historical/cultural/natural.
  - Communication:
    - How to research without speaking the language?
    - How to communicate the results?
    - How to give shape to communication within the research.
  - How to relate to:
    - The landscape (protect or change).
    - The present (as activist or observer).
    - The inhabitants (educate or by natural/slow - awareness/understanding).
  - Practical:
    - Perception/realizing.

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- Registration (painting/drawing-, photography-, video sketches etc.).
- Aim: to provoke or to communicate? \*
- Define project.
- With who to co-operate, bring active into the project
- Search the possibilities for transformation of that specific garbage and waste water into specific art.
- Research future plans (sustainability):
  - Give shape to:
    - Personal views/comments.
    - Communication of found assets with: locals <> whole world (whom it might concern...).
  - Awareness:
    - Focus: locals, tourists, researchers, artists, students, etc.
  - Continuation project(s):
    - First project plan implementation.
    - Exchange with Turkish students/artists & invite response.
    - Perform/exhibit/lecture/workshops.

### \* Values & Specifics

- Values of:
  - Inhabitants – who are they, what do they do, why, etc?
  - Import people – fortunate people who buy old historical houses/ruins (Turkish & Foreigners) and restore them within the standards of today. Why do they settle? Do villagers and import except each other?
  - Tourists – consumers or guests? What do they experience (glass walls)
  - Researchers – aliens or useful (communication)?
- Specifics:
  - Landscape - volcanic stone/ground, salt lakes, fruit & nuts.
  - History traces - cave towns (underground), caravanserais, painted cave churches/monasteries.
  - Cultural traces of nations – Hittite, Seljuk, Ottoman, Christian (Greek/Roman), Persian etc.
  - Actuality of traditions:
    - village reading- (*kıraathane*);
    - oral history in history telling cultures (poems, songs etc.);
    - square (public space/men) courtyard (*avlu*) (private space/women);
    - costume, gender, food habits etc.;
    - past & present: inhabitants' relation with history through "rejection".
  - The effects of a land climate – cold in winter (-20), dry hot in summer (+40): hard life conditions / climate effects political aspects (nationalism, conservatism in Central Anatolia).
  - Traces of traveling – by foot, horse car, donkey, horse, and modern-world transports (telephone, mobile, mail, internet).
  - Religion – peace and war.
  - Politics – Turkey <> World, Turkey <> Netherlands, Turkey <> Neighbor Countries.

**\* To provoke or to communicate with the results (art works/designs)?**

- Effects of provoking with art.
  - Controllable or not?
  - Can art be guilty?
- Communicate and what to reach from it?
- Both – possible

**Useful General Study points:**

- (1) Art and social relevance: under which circumstances is art an option? In what forms can art initiate and participate in social discourses?
- (2) Image and representation: how can concepts of visual culture be re-thought – through images?
- (3) Rural or urban space as a subconscious system: how do the historical layers, the narrative traditions, and the social affiliations of daily life interact and create a sense of cultural identity?
- (4) Beyond exoticism and xenophobia: in what ways does a system based on categorization lead to (potentially unnatural) polarizations – for example, east/west, inclusion/exclusion, center/periphery? Where are the subtler points of transition in between?

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Concept presented in cooperation with:

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and

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