Mundus Maris Initiative

Sciences and Arts for Sustainable Protection of the Seas
www.mundusmaris.org

PROJECT PROPOSAL by Carla Zickfeld

MARE NOSTRUM - Space for Dialogue and Diversity

*On the Road to an EsthetIcal Formation -
Together with a Global Spread School Network*

Collective Memory & Collective Consciousness

A - APPROACH ON A WIDE HORIZON -
   On the Road to an Aesthetic Formation

I - MARE NOSTRUM

1) The Intention

When we think about **Mare Nostrum**, we Europeans invariably think of the identification with the Mediterranean as a multi-facetted cultural space . But there are many more seas with other cultural identities in the all-connecting global ocean – the common denominator is always the identification with the surrounding sea to which we are related.

By collecting memories about 'our seas', this specific project aims at lifting up the different forms of identification into conscious experience, so as to generate the formation of a fertile ground for collective consciousness. This should also increase awareness of the fact that the all-connecting global ocean and source of multiple identities is our common life-support that is under threat from diverse sources.

Experience tells us that a sense of responsibility and care develops particularly when something or somebody gets very close to us and when we make an intimate, even existential connection to our own lives.

2) The Awareness

- The PIK - Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Back in 1996 PIK wrote:

"Humans have changed the Earth. In an unprecedented success story, civilisation has come to dominate nature. At the verge of the 21st century the costs of this with unbridled dynamic ongoing process become visible: the ozone hole and species extinctions, large-scale destruction of forests, the increase of global greenhouse effects and desertification are visible signs of the fact that the natural balance of our planet is reaching the limits of its capacity. 'Global change' is announcing itself which may affect system Earth as a whole and will thus have repercussions on humanity." (unauthorised translation)

- The United Nations Foundation - Sigma XI
'The Scientific Expert Group Report on Climate Change and Sustainable Development 2007' :

"…The world is warming, and the climate is changing. Temperatures are rising in all seasons and over land and in the ocean … Sea level is rising, and the rate of rise is apparently increasing. Projections indicate that much greater climate change lies ahead …
Humanity must act collectively and urgently to change course at all levels of society. There is no more time for delay."

- Centre for Maritime Research
'People and the Sea V - Living with Uncertainty and Adapting to Change - 2009'

"…Social and natural scientists strive to understand the implications of coastal change for human society, and to integrate new knowledge into the policy arena …
In the many transformations of people and the sea, the needs for economic growth, environmental conservation and human development often profoundly collide. This collision is particularly severe in the global south, where a growing human population competes with other sectors for limited coastal resources. Worldwide, the growing vulnerability of coastal people to resource collapse, livelihood abandonment and coastal risk is increasingly evident, and throws into doubt global capacity to meet several of the Millennium development Goals …"

II - *ESTHETICAL FORMATION - Approaching the wide Horizon*

In the first face to face meeting of the Initiative in Amsterdam,
in July 2009, Stella Williams, a scientist from Nigeria, told us
that she gave many years of her life to sustain the women
in West-Africa's agriculture; now she is loving the children
in Nigeria, and by giving them a pencil in the hand, she hopes
that they will not take the gun.

1) Aesthetic Formation - Flash on the Objective

From the short version of the dissertation of Gabriele Lieber on arts pedagogy as human formation, at the Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, 2004:

"Arts pedagogy as kind of human formation is based on the assumption that arts pedagogy can influence human characteristics and expressions by placing the entire person at the centre of the aesthetic process. The roots of forming humans reach back into humanistic pedagogy. Images and formation of humans are steeped in their time and culture.
Aesthetic thinking is an autonomous dimension of human thinking. The objective of each formation is the critical **view on the surrounding world**." [unauthorised translation]

2) Knowledge and Consciousness

Bill Viola, artist - The sound of One Line Scanning:
"In the late twentieth century, the Unknown, 'the other side of the mountain' so central to the structure of our thoughts, has ceased to exist in geographic spatial terms. By the early 1980s the entire surface of the earth had been satellite-mapped down to a resolution of thirty feet or

more.
This 'Known' of everything creates some bizarre new models of consciousness, like the military's computer navigation system where there is no direct sensory link to the outside world. Here, a jet rocket can travel at high velocities hugging the landscape while relying solely on information of the precise terrain and features ahead stored in the on-board computer memory; data gathered from satellite remote sensing. Memory replaces sensory experience; a Proustian nightmare."

3) Memory and Mind

"Memory: The representation of something that exists in the mind and is preserved in the mind" - Dante

- Carla Zickfeld, artist, in the CdA Project 1993 "The Future of Memory":

The question about the Future of Memory emerges from the intent of contemporary artists to delve deeply into the fund of traditional culture as well as the domain of technological and biological conquests, in order to explore the way in which they condition our view of the present and the decision to be taken about our future. The future is never the product of the past...
But where is the category future today, in an era when not only civil wars are raging world-wide, but civil war in a molecular form has been infiltrating already into our cities? Aggression caused by imponderable purposes, since the fight is no longer fought with a view to a better future…

- Friedemann Malsch, art historian and art critic, in the CdA Project 1993 "The Future of Memory":

"Europe is collapsing. First the iron curtain fell, then the consensus of the Slav countries dissolved into nothing … Nationalist movements in politics, individual interests in the economy, exploitation, xenophobia, civil war. And all in the name of cultural identity. Culture however is memory in solidarity, identity is not limited to differences in dialect, art is not the expression of territorial frontiers. Art is the possibility of understanding beyond the frontiers. Art today is the future."

- Paul Groot, writer and art critic, in the CdA Project 1993 "The Future of Memory":

"... Memory is part of our present, because not the past itself, but its saving determines – be it photographically accurate, full of holes or even distorted. This way our memory preserves memory strata on memory strata of passing, experienced time as a shining mirror – an endless reservoir of experiences from which we can learn for the present... " (unauthorised translation)

- Daniele Pieroni, poet, in the CdA Project 1993 "The Future of Memory":

"Memory has a future, it must have one. The collective memory that History re-ignites. The memory of the individual that life nourishes and hands down. The memory of beauty that art preserves in time and renews in its masterpieces.
But memory must not sacrifice itself. To promise itself a future, it must also forget, become as light as Donatello's figures.
"To stay young is to forget" said the great Italian poet, Camillo Sbarbaro. And the future wants a young memory."

4) Collective Memory

- Viana Conti, art historian, in the CdA Project 1992
"Collective Memory - Collective Consciousness":

"Human and non-human collectors of Memory
The collective memory of the year two thousand is a mutant which annexes new spaces of action daily. What does it feed on? All the devices set in motion by systems of information, persuasion and advertising. What does it put in circulation there? Impersonal thought, namely that thought which cannot be circumscribed by the boundaries of a single system and cannot be motivated by an individual logic. Passed over by death the first time and by the living the second, what is the collective memory but that sort of nebula pregnant with forms and images experienced elsewhere by others? Transformation. The technological evolution has resulted in the fact that increasingly fewer depositories of the collective memory are human places and more and more are non-human places, and hence structures outside the body…"

- Heidi Grundmann, art historian and art critic in the CdA Project 1992
"Collective Memory - Collective Consciousness" :

„When the hard disk of the computer („memory") replaces the sensual experience, thus when we call up from the computer and receive via the monitor and earphones what we experience and on what we base our actions, what will our memories recall later? Data displayed on the screen, synthetic voices, background noise, the noise of the keyboard keys, which we touched, the click of the mouse, the movements of our fingers in the data glove? And this independently of whether we transferred money via pc-banking or wrote a love letter, programmed the alarm or threw a bomb?" (unauthorised translation)

5) Sciences and Knowledge

"Humanity must act collectively and urgently to change course at all levels of society.
There is no more time for delay." (Sigma XI)

Knowledge and Mind must come together otherwise society will not change.

We know all very well - the power of the Sciences is to produce Knowledge.
We all know as well that the fast transport and communication means contributed to the fact that today we have access to an unprecedented amount of knowledge. The accumulation of knowledge and facts conversely has weakened our experience. Our chances have diminished of documenting and organising our own experiences beyond the stereotypes such that they can be crystallised and continued as unique memories …

6) Arts and Mind

Massimo Carboni, philosopher in "Notes on Nature, Technology and Art", in the CdA Project 1990 "Nature":

"…Sciences and Technology are necessities, they cannot be presented and removed at will; they had become self-sufficient, independent. If we realize this, without illusions, perhaps the task of art - a task, we should remember, that is without real power - is to show the possibilities contained within these necessities…

Art embodies the ***dimension of the Possible***, the universe (or rather the multiverse) of what is possible. It makes us understand that reality does not have more value than the possible, only because it exists, because it can be perceived by the senses. Therefore art saves the very dimension of the Possible keeping it separate from the entities, that have taken form…
For this reason, it goes beyond the means through which it is expressed. It is a power that which the Greeks called '***nous***', the ***mind.*** And the mind, or thought, is continuous, incessant, regulated modification…"

7) Art and Society

Reinhard Pfennig in Education for visual thinking

„... when asking about the relationship between the arts and society this relationship seems disturbed …

In the context of this disturbed communication between the arts and society in our present times arts education has the responsibility to teach thinking. Its task is to *make **visual thinking** a shared experience in society....*

So long as there is no communication, a society can not appreciate the educational value of the arts and will only judge the classic ideals of human education from the perspective of their historical pedagogical aspects. This not only locks the following generations out of their artistic present, but also deprives them of essentials of their history. This is because history teaches us an unfathomable sequence of changes and breaks in style. These testify to the richness of fantasy inventing forms and creative power, to the restlessness of creative minds which drives forward to ever new creations of form..." (unauthorised translation)

B   THE OBJECTIVES - THE TRANSFORMATIONS

„When... man advances that much into the power sphere of Gaia
that she does not function any more he will wake up one morning
and find that he now has the life-long task of maintaining the
planet with technological means... Then we finally have to steer
this strange mechanism, this 'space ship Earth' and whatever is
then still left of the tamed and domesticated biosphere would then
indeed be our 'life support system'.“
* (unauthorised re-translation - as soon as possible the original)*
James Lovelock, Gaia
in Tim Flannery: "Wir Wettermacher", 2007, p.324

I - *THE CULTURAL CHALLENGE*

To start the journey towards an aesthetic formation, to set in motion an interaction between the sciences and the arts – with the goal not to loose the dream, to protect and conserve the oceans as our lifeline – is such an enormous cultural challenge that we can not respond by an ordinary approach of analysing objectives and then establish and with confidence a programme to achieve this objective.
We need to be ready to join young people on their journey to new spaces, to open door after door, even if we are as ignorant as they are on how to navigate through these spaces. All we can do – we, scientists, artists and teachers – is to help overcome the different obstacles with

greater ease thanks to our specific experiences and insights. What constitutes our strength together on this road is the dream in front of our eyes, which we do not want to give up, even as we are aware of how fragile it is.

"We dream …
We dream of healthy oceans teaming with life, functioning marine and coastal ecosystems and prosperous communities of artisanal fishermen and women producing high-quality food.

We dream of fishing communities being the guardians of coastal environments helping also to keep pirates out and the sea clean …

We dream of intact corals and mangroves neither threatened by global warming nor by pollution or indiscriminate cutting …

We dream of harnessing the power of the waves for clean energy while maintaining the awe and beauty of the nature.

We dream of studying the sea around us, trying to understand more of the dynamics of its currents that heat Europe through the Gulf Stream .."

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Brochure of the Initiative, July 2009:
"Sustainable Seas Through the Eyes of Art "

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II - *THE WAY*

Before we get on our way, we need to get prepared as best we can and unite our forces, step by step:

1) The Network of Solidarity -
To generate the foundation for a Collective Consciousness within the processes leading towards an Aesthetic Formation

- *The 'tools' of the sciences and the arts* are quite different. They have their own approaches and methods.
On the road to aesthetic formation each and everyone should have their own tool kit, but before deploying it, all those involved need to be ready to unite with the spirit of the other, recognising that we can achieve our objective only with combined forces and through solidarity.

- **We combine our tools:**
The most important principle in this context is that everyone prepares their own tool kit in a manner as to be able to use it in conjunction with the others. In order to understand and respect each other it is necessary to familiarise at least with their respective principal.

- **In other words, these objectives can be summarised as follows:**
To make accessible to non-specialists scientifically validated knowledge on the one hand and principle thinking coming out of the mind of the arts on the other that facilitate critical engagement and encourage active use of such knowledge for the transition towards sustainability.

INVITATION - to Scientists - natural, social and human
- to Artists - visual, sound and literary - to join the Network.

2) The School Network:

- Development of continued collaboration with Kayar and other interested partners, Senegal, Morocco, Nigeria, Guinea and youth in other countries as appropriate
- Extension of the network in Europe
- In a 2nd step, exploration of extension to Latin America (e.g. Brazil)
- In a 3rd step, exploration of extension to the West Coast of Canada - to the territory of the native people.
- in a 4th step, exploration of extension to Asia and other parts of Africa

3) The support of the school network by the Network of Solidarity:

- by an updated module on the resource situation, social conditions near the schools / in their countries
- by a module on global change
- by a module on related principle thinking
- by a module on aesthetic formation.

4) The work in progress

I° cycle : Collective Memory
- The collection of the memories, related to the surrounding seas
- The Identification
II° cycle : Collective Consciousness
- Find an own visualized position in relation to the research results - mediated by the various modules
- Relate them by visual means to the works of your group

III - *THE MEDIATION :*

- Visualization of the work in progress of each collaborating school
- Visualization of the updated modules on resource situations and social conditions
- Visualization of the module on global change
- Visualization of the module on related principle thinking

1) By: digital means - Homepage
- Each school receives in the home page of the Initiative a 'home' with a key to go in and operate.
- The persons entrusted with the elaboration of the modules, are also linked to the homes page.

2) By the means of visual communication - Itinerant exhibitions
in collaboration with artists and scientists:
Exploration of concepts for realizing a **multimedia exhibition / installation**

3) Multimedia publications: brochures, catalogue, flyer, CD, DVD   in collaboration with artists, specialised institutes and academies

IV - *INVITATION* to Universities / Academies

**Faculties: Art Pedagogy / Visual Communication   -
Integration of the Aesthetic Formation Module into their Curriculum**

V - *THE RECOGNITION OF THE ESTHETICAL FORMATION MODULE*

**Ministries of Culture and Education -
Integration of the Aesthetic Formation Module in the courses of instruction**

C - THE METHODOLOGY - S e n s e   a n d   S e n s e s

*The thought of our wonderful atmosphere with its multiple
relations to human life, and to all other life, has obliged me
to make this outcry for the children and of all angry
humanity... Consider this more important than anything
else... Don't vote for anybody who says: "It can not be
done." Vote for those, who declare:"It will be done."*

*Alfred Russel Wallace,
The position of man in the universe
in Tim Flannery: "Wir Wettermacher", 2007, p.330
- as soon as possible follows the original text*

I - *THE GOAL*

The project 'On the road to an Aesthetic Formation', is the realisation of the idea to bring in aesthetic dialogue students from over the world by setting in motion collective approaches towards sustainable processes about the subject *'Our surrounding Sea'* - with the goal to generate not only consciousness and awareness, but hopefully also love for the own way of looking at the world as well as for the way of the others to look at the same world, but from a different angle. - The consilient of the scientific process and the knowledge it generates with the mind of the arts is able to producing more understanding and empathy between human beings, across different cultures and geographic distance.

Humanity today is the result of a band of perhaps as few as 1000 individuals crossing over from the Horn of Africa into what is Yemen today and populating other parts of the Earth. This happened very recently, only 70,000 years or about 280,000 generations ago. These modern humans replaced other species, rather than mingling with them (e.g. Neanderthals). What we have in common is so much more than what divides us superficially.

II - *APPROACH on the principles of visual creation and visual thinking*

Art is not amenable to learning but the way to it is.

The following guiding principles on visual creation are inspired by the ideas of the art pedagogue Reinhard Pfennig who concentrates many ideas on visual thinking, the first essential for developing a critical view on the world in which we live - the very objective of this project proposal.

1.   **The teaching of arts** always needs to confront the challenge of developing people's power of expression and the capacity to order in a way that corresponds to the thinking and consciousness of the time in which one lives.

2.   The ability to form, the invention of signs, desire of expression and self-presentation, the drive to play, the construction and destruction and the curiosity in front to any material are the preconditions for **visual thinking.**

3.   **Insight into the world** is intrinsically linked to the doability of images and signs. Insights arise only when the 'discovered' and 'experienced' becomes self-engagement through the act of doing it. This process is also always one of addition and ordering. Distinction and Addition can not be separated from one another.

4.   The process of visual thinking alternates **doing - seeing - acquiring an inside - reflecting - reacting - doing**, in a form of dialogue.

5.   Each process of forming something consists of **invention and implementation**. The invention as well as the implementation articulate themselves as **abstraction** – starting with an existing reality – or as **concretisation** – making a previously invisible reality visible through signs. In each case **visualisation** is both the way and the goal of the visual thinking process.

6.   **The result of this type of learning** is a transformation of the person him/herself, in his/her knowledge and ability, in his/her experience of meaning, attitudes and perceptions.

III° - *THE TRANSFORMATION - THE REALISATION*

The Project embraces two cycles:

I° Cycle - Collective Memory : Our Cultural Identity in relation to the Sea
II° Cycle - Collective Consciousness: Our Awareness in relation to the Sea

1) I° Cycle - Our relationship to the surrounding Sea

- *Stock taking*

- Where we are living - Our Sea as part of 'our world'
- Symbolisms of our Sea
- The songs about our Sea
- The stories, the poetry of our Sea
- The art and handicraft inspired by our Sea
- The 'cuisine' inspired by our Sea

You are invited to send further suggestions

- *The media*

- Use of the most various visual means - including digital photography
- Use also of sound, for example for collecting songs, poetry, the sounds of the seascapes …

- The collective media should be the 'Assemblage'
- Already considering the concept for the final Itinerant Exhibition / Installation:
    Each group should have a still to define number of panels in a still to define format at disposal and the means to realise a sound and a visual CD installation.

- ***The Equipment of the schools***

All participating groups should to be equipped in the same way and should have Internet access to operate in their 'home' within the home page of the Initiative.
The home page should be realized with programmes that allow easy handling.

- ***Coordinated time windows for all schools***

2) II° Cycle - Collective Consciousness

- ***Stock taking***

- The various modules coming out of the network of solidarity should be at the disposition of all schools in the home page of the Initiative.
- Research on the resource situation, social condition near your place

- ***Visual transformation***

- Find an position of your own in relation to the research results - mediated by the various modules - and relate them visually to the work of your group.

- ***The media***

- Use of the most various visual means - including digital photography
- Use also of sound, for example for reporting
- The collective media should be the 'Assemblage'
- Already considering the concept for the final Itinerant Exhibition / Installation:
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D - TIME TABLE

- The exploration of the School Network with the minimum of 2 schools in coastal zones in Europe should be defined within November.

- Members of the Initiative should decide to join the Network of Solidarity within November 2009.

- Members of the Initiative should make their own detailed planning for associated proposals within November 2009.

- After the definition of all kinds of collaborations the complete project should be prepared for the official presentation.

- The project should start when we have the confirmation of its funding.

- The first itinerant exhibition should start after the conclusion of the project.
  We should combine a time table for at least 1 year from the start.

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Proposal for the Itinerant Exhibition:

- Within 2010/2011 : Start in West Africa
- Within 2011/2012 : Tour in Europe

My suggestion :

I would propose to start the itinerant exhibition in West Africa -
so I could in parallel also start there the research for the West Africa project together with the West Africa staff, the responsible artist for the combining concept of the exhibition - installation and the film director.