

Village Convention: Contextual Art in Rural Environments
20th to 22nd May 2005
Ditchling, East Sussex, UK



Contents

1	The Idea	3
2	Development	3
2.1	Collaborators.....	3
2.2	Participants	3
2.3	Structure.....	3
2.4	Fundraising	4
2.5	Location	4
2.6	Marketing.....	4
2.7	Local Strategy	4
3	The Event	5
4	Outcome	5
4.1	A New Network	5
4.2	Case Studies Archive/'Biblio-Box'	5
4.3	Poster	5
4.4	Village Convention II.....	6
4.5	Trade Exhibition	6
5	Feedback	6
5.1	The Convention.....	6
5.2	Thoughts Confirmed.....	7
5.3	Future discussion points	8
6	Organiser's Conclusions	8
6.1	What went well	8
6.2	Constructive Criticism	9
7	Appendix	10
7.1	About General Public Agency	10
7.2	About myvillages.org.....	10
7.3	Short biographies of all participants	11
7.4	Thank You	23

Photo overleaf: Typical village products from the participants' countries are handed out to visitors during the Public Event. Photo: Julia Schmid

I The Idea

In recent years artists, curators and commissioners have increasingly used contemporary art to shed light on the decline of traditional rural structures, or have chosen to intervene with participatory practises to alleviate some problems associated with the dominance of the urban over the rural. *Village Convention: Contextual Arts in Rural Environments* was a three-day international convention/workshop focusing on the particular issues related to contextual art practice and production in rural environments. It addressed issues around the vitality and sustainability of village life in the context of modern pressures on the community, and to strengthen the debate about how contemporary art can contribute to village life.

The aim of the convention was to support and create an international professional network amongst practitioners addressing the rural as a context for contemporary art production.

The convention provided an opportunity for artists to share information, develop national and European networks and to discuss issues arising from personal experiences of rural art production and to set this in a European context.

2 Development

2.1 Collaborators

General Public Agency devised and organised the Convention in collaboration with the European cultural organisation myvillages.org. It took place at Ditchling Museum in Ditchling, East Sussex, UK.

2.2 Participants

A list of about 40 participants was drawn up and invited, comprising mostly of British and European practitioners, but also of relevant curators and commissioners. Local artists suggested by the Arts Council were also invited. See the list of participants at the end of this document.

2.3 Structure

The Convention was a practitioner-led and non-hierarchic meeting of like-minded spirits.

It was centred around three workshops focusing on:

- The Representation of the Village/Villager
- Village Business: Informal Economy and Social Exchange
- The rural as a location for contextual art practice

Each issue was introduced by two artist presentations, which served as case studies and illustrative material.

In addition two keynote speeches by internationally renowned researchers gave a theoretical overview of the issues at stake.

In between the workshop sessions both guided walks by artist Jo Roberts and less formal walks through Ditchling and its surrounding countryside provided informal opportunities for discussions, collaborative thinking and peer-to-peer learning.

A dinner on Saturday night allowed for a more intimate atmosphere, making it easy to connect between and establish new networks.

The event closed with a Public Event at Ditchling Museum, to which local artists, regional curators and commissioners, local authority officers, rural representatives, and, of course, all villagers were invited. The Public Event functioned as an informal place to meet and exchange with the participants.

2.4 Fundraising

The core grant was given by the Arts Council of England (£12,000). Smaller sums were granted by the UK Royal Netherlands Embassy (£1,500), All Ways Learning, a SE England-based organisation promoting professional development for the arts (£1,000), and the Austrian Cultural Institute London (£500). The Goethe Institute offered to cover for two flights from Germany to the UK.

2.5 Location

Ditchling Museum was found to be the ideal location. Director Hilary Williams had recently commissioned artist Jo Roberts to do a project to explore the village's history, which was shown at the Museum a few months earlier.

The decision to stage the convention in Ditchling was informed by the village's history as home to the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, an early 19th century artistic community founded by Eric Gill, the celebrated typographer, sculptor and engraver. Ditchling is closely linked to the intentions of the Art and Crafts movement who has established a very distinctive model of cultural production at the beginning of the 20th century. The issue of the rural as a place for art practice was locally and historically rooted and urged for a contemporary reconsideration.

The welcome session and introductory keynote talk took place in the museum, as well as Sunday's Public Event. In between we hired the school hall for two days for the workshops and breakout sessions.

2.6 Marketing

The Convention coincided with the Brighton Festival. Ditchling is only 8 miles from Brighton, and the Convention was listed in the Fringe Festival programme. The Public Event was also advertised in Art Monthly.

2.7 Local Strategy

The decision was taken to arrange for all the catering to be arranged locally, in accordance with the belief that any initiative should always benefit the local economy first. The organisers and all participants, numbering over 40 people, were all accommodated in local B&Bs, and were ferried around in private cars and local taxis.

3 The Event

41 participants (including the organisers) descended on the small village of Ditchling on Friday 20th May 2005. A welcome session in Ditchling Museum was followed by an introduction into the subject matter by the internationally renowned writer and researcher Francois Matarasso, who gave a summary of the rural arts debate by providing many examples of its historical development and its present state.

Over the following two days a variety of different approaches were represented through a series of talks, workshops and artist presentations, including "A Village Does Nothing", a film by Austrian composer and film maker Elisabeth Schimana, "One Stop Shop", an informal-economy project in Ireland by UK-based artist Amy Plant, and a presentation by curator Adam Sutherland from Grizedale Arts, a rural residency and commissioning centre, about his complex relationship with the village he is working in. All throughout the two days informal walks made it possible to breathe a bit of fresh air, clear the head, or engage in passionate discussions about the rural arts.

The Sunday Public Event saw a small exhibiton set up in Ditchling Museum featuring documentation of the participants' projects, a concert by local artist and Convention participant Elle Osborne, village produce from all over Europe brought by the participants, and guided tours of the village by artist Jo Roberts. The Public Event served as an opportunity for locals, arts commissioners and Arts Council officers to meet and greet the participants and find out more about the Convention and its outcome.

4 Outcome

4.1 *A New Network*

The Convention established a new informal practitioners network, which was immediately adopted by the participants.

4.2 *Case Studies Archive/'Biblio-Box'*

All participants' work will be represented as case studies on the myvillages.org website archive, and the practitioners will be contactable through the website.

The material provided by the Convention participants forms the starting point for myvillages.org's new project, the Biblio-Box. The Biblio-Box contains information about and documentation of previously implemented village-projects and is designed for travelling: It travels from village to village and there - with the help of local hosts - offers information about contextual art projects in other villages

4.3 *Poster*

General Public Agency are now in the process of developing a small publication/poster that will summarise some of the issues discussed during the Convention (funding permitting). This will be a well-designed publication featuring some of the

participants' projects, with an emphasis on policy-shifting, demonstrating that Rural practice can be inspirational and provocative.

All talks and presentations have been recorded on video with the possibility of publishing them on DVD alongside the publication. We've also conducted short interviews with all the participants straight after the workshops as a means to brainstorm and collect fresh impressions and ideas; this resource could be published separately either on DVD or on a website.

4.4 Village Convention II

For myvillages.org the Convention has been of great use to articulate their position in the rural arts debate, and it has helped them to map the issues that are of particular interest to them. The Convention was a great opportunity to find and contact relevant artists, curators and commissioners.

Myvillages.org are now looking to stage a smaller and more focused seminar-type Convention, probably at Grizedale Arts, Cumbria, to further the debate and instigate new rural arts commissions as part of their 'ourvillages' programme.

Andrew Hunter (Wysing Arts) suggests

An interdisciplinary conference where an established artist network is brought into contact with practitioners from other disciplines such as town planning (or food retailing or public) transport would be interesting (though difficult to chair).

Several participants offer to host the next village convention in their region in 2-3 years. Possible locations are Swabia/Germany, or Allenheads Contemporary Art in Northumberland, UK.

4.5 Trade Exhibition

Both General Public Agency and myvillages.org have subsequently been invited to take part in an exhibition about informal trade networks in Leitrim, Ireland, in November 2005.

5 Feedback

5.1 The Convention

Numerous participants reported that the Convention helped them greatly in articulating thoughts and arguments. It seems everyone enjoyed spending a long weekend away from his or her usual work.

Talks

Especially Francois Matarasso's comprehensive introduction to the UK's rural arts situation was seen as an essential factor to the Convention's success.

Artists Presentations

Everyone enjoyed the artist presentations and would have liked to have more of those.

Walks

The walks were a welcome respite from the sometimes heated discussions during the workshops, offering a less formal and more relaxed forum for exchange and learning.

Location

Even though some of the participants' B&Bs were not closely situated to the Convention's venues, the overseas participants enjoyed meeting locals and getting an impression of the English countryside. Staying in small local B&Bs ensured that nobody lost focus of the issues at hand.

5.2 Thoughts Confirmed

Several participants reported that they felt encouraged in their belief that the countryside is a place for reflection away from the hectic production circle of the city: *"I still think the rural environment offers significant advantages for artists practice. The city, with its constant sounds and dynamic, can be distracting. In a more at ease surrounding all the attention can go into the work."*

Karen Guthrie summed up the discussion that took place about what it means to work in a rural context:

"In our group we spoke about the notion of going back to the countryside. There was almost an unquestioning assumption initially that that was what we are all doing by working in a rural context. In fact, very few people originate from villages, and are experiencing that feeling. But perhaps what it gives rise to is the metaphor of going back, as maybe something to do with the desire or a need to regress slightly, as an artist, into a state of some kind of naivety, maybe some state which gives you access to an audience and a context to make work in that is in some way therapeutically different from the urban one. ... It's just that in a small population in a rural community you were often not going back to a place as much as going back to working amongst very intimate members of your family, for example, your mother, your mother's friends, your school friends. And perhaps that made you more vulnerable as an artist. And that was something that people often enjoyed."

Bianca Visser, too, reported back on her ideas about the specifics of rural environments:

It is mainly a matter of space. Urban public space is ruled by so many regulations that it is nearly impossible to organize a spontaneous act on the street. In Holland, for example, you are not even allowed to draw with chalk on the pavement without having gained previous consent by the council. Not to mention how difficult it is to shoot a film outside. This means that artists have to stay inside the studio or exhibition space. This does not stimulate experimentation. The studio is too isolated a place to try out new ideas....

My experience is that working outside is stimulating. In small communities everybody knows what is going on and there is always somebody curious to know what you are doing. This is the way art contributes to the village community.

She concedes that rural art cannot exist without its representation in an urban context:

But in the end, the final result is vindicated in the city. The urban infrastructure provides the devices that are necessary for generating art.

Andrew Hunter from Wysing Arts, a South Cambridgeshire-based public visual and applied arts centre, stresses the significance of exchange between rural and urban, artists and audience:

Contemporary visual art is on the periphery of debates around social and environmental change. Artists and curators are prone to talking among themselves exclusively and failing to engage with 'outsiders'.

All participants consider the email network very useful.

5.3 Future discussion points

Issues flagged up which participants would like to see addressed in future forums:

- Indigenous cultural practices - what rural people themselves do.
- The role of the agencies (typically public sector) that are commissioning and funding artists to work on socially engaged projects.
- The issue of why to choose to work in the villages. Why in the first place to go to a new/different context.
- Some people would have liked to see the inclusion of non-artist villagers.
- Is social/public interaction relevant? Why participatory practise in the first place?
- Someone suggested a more in-depth discussion about the relationship between artists and commissioners, and their respective motives.

I am very interested in discussing the way art and artists are today being used by authorities as a device to attract tourism to villages. There is a lot of money involved and I know many artists are quite rightly happy to collaborate. I'm not saying we should be against a priori, but we should define a position. We are being used as merchandizing. Do we agree with this development? Do these shows demand another kind of practice? Can we maintain independence in this situation?

6 Organiser's Conclusions

6.1 What went well

- Informal nature of the event
Everyone involved agrees that it has been a very successful event. The participants all understood the nature of the event; that it was by and large of an informal nature. Simply the fact of bringing together so many practitioners working in the same field made it possible and necessary to sharpen one's position and agenda. This in turn is good for the rural arts as a whole (if there is such a thing), and its standing in the wider contemporary art world gets a boost.
- Introductory talk
The opening talk by Francois Matarasso proved immensely valuable for the Convention. It was crucial that it took place at the very beginning of the Convention, allowing everyone to sharpen their own position and agenda. His resumé of current strategies in rural arts continues to influence GPA's thinking.
- Learning experience
For both General Public Agency and myvillages.org the experience of organising the Village Convention was a great learning experience, and both will make use of this experience in their future work.

- Accommodation/catering/travel
All participants were accommodated at local Bed&Breakfast places, much to the delight of the participants from overseas. All the participants' travel, even though for the most part not covered by grants, went well and smooth. The catering, provided by the local tea room, included a set-down dinner on the Saturday night, which was a great success.
- By making exclusive use of the local facilities, the Convention has contributed to the village economy.

6.2 *Constructive Criticism*

- Mixed roles for organisers
A problem for the organisers was that at times it was difficult to be responsible for both logistics and facilitation.
Some of the co-organisers would rather not have lead the workshops, because it made it impossible to express their opinion or to ask what they personally were interested in. In the end we would have preferred to have someone dedicated to each role, which would have been more satisfying for anyone involved, e.g. a professional facilitator. This would have given more structure to the workshops, and would probably have given a better chance of controversy, or a more precise outcome.
- A suggestion for an improved structure: “The other day, I learnt that on scientific conferences they have one person prepared to give a reply to every lecture. This person is being given a manuscript before and is therefore prepared to analyse what has been presented, which helps a lot for the discussion. It is difficult to find the right mixture of laissez-faire and structure.”
- Discussions / Issues
Even though the presentations and following discussions were very interesting, they sometimes remained too abstract. A greater role could have been given to the topic of the village economy, as this is something very real that everyone can relate to.
- Workshop sessions
All of the participants have some experience of working in rural areas, but none of the participants, with the exception of perhaps Francois Matarasso and Adam Sutherland, were specifically rural arts-only specialists. The convention has stimulated everyone to reflect the part of their practice which takes place in the rural.

The discussions after the artist presentations were looser than we had imagined and did not result in specific agreed resolutions.

This was due to the following:

- 1) a still very heterogeneous group, with very different interests and from different backgrounds, practically speaking different languages, which kept the debate from moving into more specific issues, and
- 2) the fact that the organisers are not professional conference facilitators who could enforce a preset structure/idea (the workshops, the boards, etc).

3) Language barriers might also have played a part in this. The Convention was attended by 40 participants from 8 European countries, with the largest groups coming from the UK, Germany and the Netherlands.

However on reflection this 'looseness' has allowed a free discussion of similarities, difference and interests.

- Ditchling Museum & School
Ditchling was considered to be a rich and appropriate site for the Convention. Logistics however were sometimes difficult due to the double venues of museum and school not being used to hosting conventions. Were therefore underestimated the amount of logistics support required.

7 Appendix

7.1 *About General Public Agency*

General Public Agency is a creative consultancy providing services which include strategic brief-setting, public realm strategies, cultural policies and programmes, branding and identity and exhibitions and publications.

General Public Agency's approach is multidisciplinary, encompassing architecture, artistic practice, community planning, environmental and creative regeneration, design, and issues of active citizenship.

General Public Agency uses a robust and tested methodology:

1. CHARACTERISATION
2. EXCHANGE
3. STRATEGIC VISION
4. ROUTE MAP TO DELIVERY

This process enables a critical holistic response to any issue or brief.

7.2 *About myvillages.org*

myvillages.org is an international, non-profit cultural organisation which aims to address the discrepancy and synchronism between urban and rural cultural development. "The village" as an origin, location and concept is at the core of the objectives and programme of myvillages.org.

myvillages.org is initiated by the artists Kathrin Böhm (D/UK), Wapke Feenstra (NL) and Antje Schiffers (D) and registered as a International Stichting in the Netherlands. Current members of the board are Claudia Büttner (Curator, kunstprojekte_riem, Munich), Nathalie Castilla Serrano Houtermans (Curator, Mixtura, Rotterdam) and Gavin Wade (Artist-Curator, London).

The aim of myvillages.org is to initiate discussion and practice-based projects, which address the notion of village within contemporary cultural discourse and development. As an umbrella organisation myvillages.org will initiate and host various projects, which look at particular issues or areas. Each project will have its own programming/managing and advisory board.

7.3 Short biographies of all participants

ADAM SUTHERLAND (UK)

Adam Sutherland worked as an artist from 1982 to 1995. He was director of NLM London from 1990 to 1995, a community involved public arts programme. From 1995 until 1999 Sutherland was director of art.tn Inverness, an arts organisation for the Highland Region. Since 1999 he is director of Grizedale Arts, a commissioning and residency agency based in Grizedale Forest in the Lake District of England, which runs a context led arts programme.

Some of the projects he has led include:

Roadshow – Touring programme of artist projects to peripheral locations

Romantic Detachment – New York – Cumbria contextual programme of artist projects

Festival of the Tourist – series of projects in Cumbria

<http://www.grizedale.org>

ALAN SMITH (UK)

Alan Smith, born 1956, is a video artist and co-founder of Allenheads Contemporary Arts (ACA).

I work with video and digital media; my work combines recorded performance with sound compositions, producing cinematographic, audiovisual dynamics.

<http://www.acart.org.uk>

AMY PLANT (UK)

London based artist, Amy Plant initiates projects in which sensitivity to context and collaboration with communities are key, investigating the nature of 'public' spaces and how art can function within them. Her works are invented through dialogue and research and aim to create new democratic spaces in which grass roots cultural productions, diversities, common ground and desires for the future are revealed with equal value, giving rise to new as well as existing ideas and actions. The concept of public space is expanded to include various media including magazines and television programs, as well as new physical structures, such as mobile shops and sound systems - open containers that are given meaning and magic by those who get involved. Past projects have included Contact for the North London Link project - Camden Arts Centre, Valley Vibes, London (in collaboration with Jeanne van Heeswijk) and Laburnum Pilot - a street magazine, at The Drawing Room (in collaboration with Ella Gibbs).

Amy was the 2004 Artist in Residence at the Manukau School of Visual Arts, Auckland, New Zealand. She spent eight weeks working with community activists and students, producing a television program to be broadcast on Triangle TV. At the village convention Amy will talk about her Multi Stop Shop project which traveled and traded throughout the rural areas of County Fingal, Ireland during the summer of 2003.

ANDREW HUNTER (UK)

I have been working as a curator in East Anglia, England for the past fifteen years, firstly at Gainsborough's House and laterly at Wysing Arts. The two organisations both set in a rural context make for an interesting comparison.

Gainsborough's House is the birthplace museum of the painter Thomas Gainsborough in Sudbury, situated in a modest town house. There I curated a contemporary programme and managed the open-access printmaking studio which sits alongside an important collection of works by Gainsborough. Sudbury is a typical small market town surrounded by villages. A

large part of our audience, our volunteer base, and many of the participating artists lived in this village context but Sudbury, was the centre.

Wysing Arts is set on a former farm outside the small village of Bourn. The major centre in the area is Cambridge nine miles away and Bourn is one of dozens of small villages looking towards Cambridge. Wysing Arts is less well embedded in the cultural landscape of the area, though seeking to change this situation. It acts as an engine for the production of art, both by providing permanent studio space in the former farm buildings for seventeen artists and by commissioning artists to undertake a variety of curated projects. A public programme of exhibitions, workshops talks and courses for adults and children attracts a diverse audience. Both in Sudbury and at Wysing Arts I have deliberately chosen to live within walking distance of my workplace, knowing how thoroughly rural life today is dependent on the use of a motor vehicle.

CV - After studying Fine Art at Edinburgh University/Edinburgh College of Art, I worked as an artist in Strasbourg for a year before joining the staff of the Fine Art Society Plc in London. From there I moved to Gainsborough's House, Sudbury where I organised exhibitions of art and craft, including Ewen Henderson, Kate Malone and Joanna Constantinides as well as a Biennial Drawing Open. A major exhibition of the work of Nigel Henderson, a crucial member of the Independent Group in the 1950s, toured in the UK and Europe. At Wysing Arts I have worked on a variety of projects ranging from Jane Prophet's collaboration with Papworth Hospital to commissioning 'village markers' for the new green-field development of Cambourne. Kites are a long standing interest and a project with French artist Pierre Fabre to make a huge aerial installation for Gunpowder Park, London is at the feasibility stage.

<http://www.wysingarts.org>

ANTJE SCHIFFERS (myvillages.org) (D)

I was born in Heiligendorf, a village in northern Germany. I studied linguistics, literature and art and live in Berlin.

Much of my work deals with travelling: drawing a register of flowers in a remote mexican village, like an old-fashioned expedition botanist would have done. Doing paintings for food and accomodation in Italy and in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan and Uzbekistan. Travelling through eastern europe as correspondent and ambassador of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig. I also worked as a company artist in the tyre industry and did barter trade with farmers in northern Germany. To tell about my experiences I do lectures, exhibitions, newspapers and books.

One of my favourite sentences: They rode along, at once carefree and alert, like recently released thieves in the darkness, like young thieves in a luminous fruit orchard, wearing light jackets and having ten thousand worlds to choose from. (Cormack Mc Carthy, All the pretty horses)

Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at Hannover Kunstverein (2005), the Goethe Institute New York (2005), the Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig (2004) and Kunstverein Wolfsburg (2002). Selected group exhibitions: Unhomely home (Kunstverein Wolfsburg 2000), Le Repubbliche dell'Arte: Germania (Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena 2001), Writing Identity / About Autobiography in Art (Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig), Wrong time (Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb)

<http://www.antjeschiffers.de>

BIANCA VISSER (ES/NL)

In the past eight years Bianca has had various roles within the visual arts. She has worked for three years as a curator at the Fundación César Manrique in Spain and two periods as facilitator for the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. Trough this trajectory she has organised many shows and both small and large-scale projects.

Most recently she independently organised, Cultivated Nature, an exhibition that included twenty-five artworks produced by six international artists. All the work included in the show takes nature as its starting point and displacing it into our culture. The show closed in January 2005.

Since then Bianca has dedicated her work to a specific matter that has interested her for some time, which is ways in which art can transmit thoughts and feelings without addressing these issues directly. Bianca believes the power of art lies in its ability to create poetry, instead of launching a statement – the unspoken is capable of breaking through rooted structures, generating radical new ideas. Reality can be totally different than what we're told.

CHRISTIAN SIEVERS (D/UK)

Christian Sievers works as a sculptor and performer. In his lecture performances he has developed a peculiar format involving a collection of images presented as a slide show alongside a scripted text. The scripts often are a collage of contradictory impressions and opinions that he has gathered through questionnaires. The photographs are his own, documenting his visual obsessions and investigations.

Christian studied Fine Art at Braunschweig School of Art, Germany and at the Royal College of Art, 1996-2003.

<http://www.christiansievers.info>
www.generalpublicagency.com

CHRISTINE HOFFMANN (D)

Christine Hoffmann is an artist and curator. She is currently working on LandKunstLeben projects, site and context specific exhibitions, projects and events in the rural countryside of eastern Brandenburg between (and with) Berlin and Poland.

She has written texts and given lectures on the work of Bruce Nauman, Samuel Beckett, site specific art, art and garden, and arts and space. Her current projects include curating a decentral biennial on the countryside east of Berlin, and organising a conference on `the amateur` related to a film festival on the countryside west of Berlin.

<http://www.landkunstleben.de>

CLARE CUMBERLIDGE (UK)

Before co-founding General Public Agency Clare Cumberlidge was one of the UK's leading independent curators specializing in developing new areas for artistic practice and socially engaged practice. Over the past 15 years she has developed pioneering approaches to collaborative and cross disciplinary work. Her clients included The British Council, The Science Museum, The Poetry Society, The Architecture Foundation, Arts Council England, Institute of International Visual Arts, NESTA, Wellcome Trust and North Kensington Amenity Trust. Artists she has commissioned include Gillian Wearing, Tim Head, Jordan Baseman, Cornelia Parker, Yinka Shonibare, Tacita Dean, Brian Catling, Bridget Smith, Kathrin Böhm, and Adam Chodzko. She serves as an advisory member of the RSA Arts Panel.

Clare Cumberlidge grew up on a small farm in South Yorkshire.

www.generalpublicagency.com

CLAUDIA BÜTTNER (D)

Claudia Büttner is the editor of *Art Projects Riem: Public Art for a Munich District*. The new town of Riem, currently being built near Munich, was chosen as the location for the creation of 20 art projects designed by internationally renowned artists to be installed over a four-year period.

www.kunstprojekte-riem.de

DONNA LYNAS (UK)

I was recently appointed as Director of Wying Arts, a center for the visual arts set on the 11 acre site of a former farm eight miles south west of Cambridge. Wying Arts' key activities include: offering affordable studio space to emerging artists; an international residency programme; year-round gallery and outdoor exhibitions; public events such as performances; formal and informal learning courses and workshops; work with people with learning difficulties; and an NVQ course aimed at artists.

Previously, I was Curator at the South London Gallery for six years where I curated a number of exhibitions that explored the theme of the urban, including the recent *Depth of Field* photographic exhibition of work by an artists collective who explore urban Lagos in their work. I also curated the group exhibitions *Perfectly Placed* and *Independence*, both of which had an emphasis on new commissions and collaborative practice.

In 1999 I established the SLG's influential Live Art programme that was then developed into a programme of Off-Site Projects, the first of which was a durational performance lasting 7 days and nights, outdoors in Trafalgar Square, of the Japanese artist On Kawara's work *One Million Years*. I also worked with artists Christian Boltanski, Henrik Plenge Jacobsen, Ross Sinclair and Joëlle Tuerlinckx on their solo exhibitions at the South London Gallery. From 1995 – 1999 I was Touring Exhibitions Organiser and then Curator at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford in a department first led by Chrissie Iles and then the late Michael Tarantino. During this period I curated exhibitions by Mona Hatoum, James Casebere and Willie Doherty.

I have been a non executive director of the performance company Station House Opera for the past two years and am regularly asked to sit on panels and selection committees by various agencies, most recently the Arts Council's decibel awards for visual artists.

<http://www.wysingarts.org>

<http://www.southlondongallery.org>

DORIS KOCH (D)

Doris Koch lives and works in Berlin. Her diverse practice includes projects under five headings:

Researches at the border of Art and Culture Science/Ethnology (selection of work): "do it try it fix it" (1995, Berlin) - the horizon of unoccupied bureau spaces and planning processes; "outskirts" (1999-2001, Berlin) - transformations on the outskirts of Berlin, - artistic reflection on scientific practice - in search of a framework for researching collaborative practice.

Conceptual Art - Description of a framework for Processes (selection of work): "Topography of the Absence" (1995, Potsdam) - moments of memory in times of wild change swing; „avoir lieu - avoir l'idée“ (1998, Gent/Belgium) - vacancy, networks and advertising art events; „MaanStücke“ (2003, Wilhelmshaven) - things which are or going to be missed. Work in Progress: "Making Art" (since 1994) - issues of intending s.th.; "Kochscheine" (since 1998) - financial issues, "Evidences" (since 1999) - documentation of art processes and sales of art.

Curator of cooperative art projects: "'Art In Village' - an art project in the context of municipal planning" (2002-2003, Hohenstein), six artist-teams were working in the village during the summer, after this two art projects could be realised. A lively process arises from the involvement of many villagers into the project.

Output of the project: a guideline for local governments, which wants to initialise such kind of art projects with the collaboration of relevant people.

Current projects: "Prospects" (2005, Steinhöfel) preparing research in collaboration with relevant actors, - 12 villages combined to one local government, about viewpoints of rural development in Brandenburg/East Germany, "ourvillage: Niederstotzingen" (2005, Niederstotzingen) preparing research in collaboration with three generations (born around 1933, 1960, 1990), - places in public, where we played as child, about childhood in the context of war, of consumption and of crunch.

<http://www.doriskoch.de>

ELISABETH SCHIMANA (A)

Elisabeth Schimana was born in Innsbruck and has since 1983 been working as a performer, free-lance composer and radio artist. She studied electro-acoustics and experimental music at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst (Vienna), was visiting scholar at York University's Music Department, and studied musicology and ethnology at the University of Vienna. Elisabeth Schimana has often collaborated with Austria's prestigious ORF Kunstradio, for which amongst others she created radio plays children (1992-1997), and initiated several projects such as "Touchless I and II", where the sensuality of instruments played without touching - such as the termen -vox - is emphasised. Her most recent pieces include "Obduktion"; "The Fugue", "Brainers" for the similarly named dance production, "Narratives I, II, III" and "Drachenzzeit", which was a sound installation for the 1999 total eclipse of the sun. Since 1994 Elisabeth Schimana is involved with the educational music project "Klangnetze" and is a member of the Austrian Society for Electro-acoustic Music. She is currently artistic director of the OST.SÜD.OST. festival, a festival dedicated to Eastern Europe where contemporary electronic music intersects with folk music.

ELLE OSBORNE (UK)

Elle Osborne is a musician and sound artist. Her interests lie in the power of sound to evoke visual images. Her sound collages explore new notions of folk music using found sounds, samples and oral history. Inspired by traditional music collecting, her aim is in elevating and celebrating the commonplace ~ the common place ~ honouring a moment, acknowledging continuity and change, resonance and relevance. "In performance, I accompany myself on the violin ~ fiddle-singing. I play my own songs, plus the English folk songs and fiddle tunes I was raised listening to." Osborne has toured Britain, USA, Canada and Australia, and has released one solo album, called Testimony. Recent collaborations have included Welfare State International and Hed:Strong Dance Company, and currently she is working on a sound collage of an ancient Romany Horse Fair in North Lincolnshire ~ "Brigg Fair, Dark Nights" ~ to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the fair.

<http://www.elleo.com>

ESTHER POLAK (NL)

Esther Polak studied graphic art and mixed media and is interested in how technology determines (visual) perception. Esther is an artist who explores the visual and documentary possibilities of GPS. Her AmsterdamREALTIME project was one of the first large-scale art explorations in GPS mapping. <http://realtime.waag.org>. Recently she developed the collaborative MILKproject, tracing milk transports all the way from Latvian cows to its final destination in cheese on a Dutch consumer's plate. www.milkproject.net
In her work Esther manages to strip GPS of its nerdy riffraff, and instead uses this technology for making comprehensible visualizations and telling human stories. Another ongoing project of Esther's is "the preparatory national course on image dictation" For this she organises a series of special lessons in which participants are being trained to see more.

<http://www.stroom.nl>

<http://www.milkproject.net>

FRANCOIS MATARASSO (UK)

Francois Matarasso is a writer, researcher and consultant. He worked for 14 years as a community artist in London and in the East Midlands; since 1994, he has focused on project support and research, including groundbreaking work on the impact of participation in the arts. He continues to work on cultural programmes, maintaining the link between ideas and practice. He has been commissioned by international and national bodies, local authorities, NGOs, foundations and cultural organisations in over 20 countries in Europe and other parts of the world. His work has been widely published and translated.

<http://www.homepage.mac.com/matarasso>

GAVIN WADE (UK)

Gavin Wade is an Artist-Curator and ACE Research Fellow in Curating at the University of Central England. His work has developed from structures within exhibitions for 'supporting' the work of others to a broader enquiry into responding to and generating new sites for art, resulting in projects looking at collaboration and the public space. Current projects include Support Structure Phase 1-6 (with architect Celine Condorelli) (2003-5) which is an RSA Art for Architecture project evolving over 6 sites across the UK (www.supportstructure.org); and Strategic Questions (2002-2007), an ongoing series of 40 projects in 40 publications including 32. What is Harmonic? (2003) with Bill Drummond, Duncan McLaren and Simon Wood for Sharjah Biennial, UAE and 16. What is brain? (2005) with Henrik Schrat at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. Previous curated projects include Nathan Coley: Black Tent, (2003) Portsmouth Cathedral; STRIKE (2002) (adjusted by Liam Gillick) Wolverhampton Art Gallery; Let's Get To Work, (2000-2001) San Francisco, Harrisburg & Philadelphia; Nathan Coley & Bas Jan Ader (2001) Vilma Gold, London; In The Midst Of Things (1999) (with Nigel Prince), Bournville, Birmingham; Hello..clk..bzz..whrr..Nice To Meet You (1999) (with Kathrin Böhm) Nuremberg; and Kling Klang, (1998) HMS Plymouth, Birkenhead.

HILARY WILLIAMS

Hilary Williams is currently the Director of Ditchling Museum and has been in post for just over a year. Previously she has worked for the Design Museum, the Crafts Council and Dartington Hall Trust. In Britain, Dartington is recognised as one of the most important 'experiments' in rural regeneration with the arts as a central tenet. Artists, designers, architects, dancers, choreographers and musicians from all over the world lived and worked on the estate from the 1920's - many of whom were refugees from Germany in the 1930's. The collection, archive and the architecture remain a fascinating testimony to this foray into community and the arts. After two years of working freelance, where projects included an artists mentor for Arts Council North East, she came to work in Ditchling. Ditchling was home to an artist community, the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, at the beginning of the 20th century founded by the artist Eric Gill and the museum collection holds much of their work. A wide range of responsibilities at Ditchling include the exhibition programme and earlier in 2005 she worked with the artist Jo Roberts at Ditchling on a project that referenced the extraordinary history of this Sussex village and celebrated its cultural heritage and also addressed the future of the museum and the collection.

<http://www.ditchling-museum.com>

JO ROBERTS (UK)

*I call myself a 'Commentariographer', a word last used in 1576
"Someone who writes, mediates, ponders, portrays or records."*

One who comments on current events and produces an expository treatise.”

My practice as a visual artist is project based, the work evolving over a period of time. I am equally involved with the process of the project, and the final outcome whether it be an audio CD, book or tea party. Communication is central to my practice. I am interested in the minutiae of everyday life and highlighting the specific. I am curious and inquisitive about people, places, things and their interaction with one another. I have an interest in the artist as a catalyst; an agent for change, often in a subtle way. I like the knowledge that after a project something, however modest, is different. I'm fascinated in journeying, investigating and recording the things I discover – I see the quirky side of life.

Jo has recently completed 'The Line of Continuity [of Ditchling]' project and exhibition for Ditchling Museum. Other recent projects include 'Boundaries' for the Pumphouse Gallery, London, 'A Survey of Gatherings' a Creative Consultation project in a group of villages in East Midlands and working with the Director of Arts & Business West Midlands and his Advisory Council on better communication.

www.jorobertsjourney.com

JULIA SCHMID (D)

Julia Schmid, grew up in the small village of Arzdorf, Wachtberg close to Bonn. After a year in New Zealand she worked in fruit harvesting in her 'home village Arzdorf'. She studied in Braunschweig School of Art 1990 until 1997. Her main focus was painting (and photographing) of close up views of plants, stones and other 'natural material'. She did several residencies in the countryside: the village 'Meinersen' (1998), the medieval small town 'Nordheim' (2000) in Lower Saxony and 'Castle Ringenberg' (2001) in North-Rhine-Westphalia. During her residencies she was living in Berlin and so made regular commutes between the city and the countryside. This has concentrated her interest on urban and rural structures, concerning modern identity, orientation, value and structure e.g. in the nature of biotops'. A single red maple tree on 'Rudolphsplatz' in Berlin might be as significant for the character of an urban place as a big strawberry field is for a village like Arzdorf so it was the overgrown medieval wall in 'Nordheim', which caused one of Schmid's first painting cycle: she collected and painted a part of every plant growing on this wall over a six month period - a subjective portrait of the 'biotope wall'. In the exhibition 'Zwinger 9-Mauerwerk', at the Kunstverein in Hanover (2002) Julia developed a series of paintings that refer to certain places, walks or self-defined biotops. All the paintings are called 'Sammelbilder', a term that deals with 'collecting' and 'assembling' in different cultural and social contexts (exhibitions 'Sammelbild' 2000 and 2004 'Gallery Walbroel', Duesseldorf). Julia has participated in the ISCP (International Studio and Curatorial Program) in New York 2004/5 and developed an individual city map of New York in different series of works ('walk around the block I-V'; 'urban beds'; 'b-line I-II' and 'new york city subway map - natural version'). Julia currently lives in Hanover.

KAREN GUTHRIE & NINA POPE (UK)

Nina Pope & Karen Guthrie background:

We are visual artists with a diverse and usually context and site-specific practice. Media such as video and web-casting often characterise our work, as well as a recurring interest in audience interaction at the point of production, live presentation or events, and amateur or hobbyist networks. In the past this has led us to work on a diverse range of projects with a real variety of people - from re-enacting a famous travelogue, to building a model of a virtual space, living on a boat and running a festival. We have worked with local liars, railway modeling groups, on-line gamers, sewing circles, film archivists and a rally driver. We have worked in collaboration since 1995 developing our own projects and more recently as co-directors of Somewhere. This is an organisation, which generates and promotes innovative cultural projects with a focus on collaboration, public access and new technologies often explored through live projects with both an on-line and 'in situ' audience.

The majority of our projects can be seen as relevant to the Village Convention as we rarely seem to work in an urban or gallery context! Some of our most relevant projects are: *A Hypertext Journal* (one of our first collaborations made in 1996) where we 'broadcast' live on the web our month-long journey following Boswell and Johnson's largely rural *Journey to The Western Isles*; *HOMESPUN* (1997) which saw us return to our home town/village for a week producing two new split screen video performance pieces each day; and our work at Grizedale. Throughout 2000 we worked together with Anna Best and Simon Poulter developing a suite of projects for Grizedale Arts focused in some way on local culture – this residency resulted in *The Festival of Lying*, *Limo Day* and *David Shuttleworth, Rally hopeful*. Most recently we have completed our first feature length film *Bata-ville: We are not afraid of the future* - where we took former Bata factory workers from the small UK communities of East Tilbury and Maryport to Zlín in the Czech Republic – the original home of the Bata shoe empire and its charismatic founder Tomas Bata.

<http://www.somewhere.org.uk>

<http://www.grizedale.org/lying>

<http://www.swansong.tv>

<http://www.bata-ville.com>

KATHRIN BÖHM (myvillages.org) (UK)

Establishing personal contacts and exploring the potential of public space are central to Kathrin Böhm's work – in collaboration with colleague Stefan Saffer and architect Andreas Lange. See their project 'Mobile Porch' (www.mobileporch.net). She recently presented her 'Park Products' in collaboration with the Serpentine Gallery, encouraging visitors to use and contribute to park resources and investigate alternative forms of trade.

<http://www.myvillages.org>

LARA ALMARCEGUI (ES/NL)

Lara Almarcegui projects and actions speak about spaces that escape a defined design as buildings under transformation, allotment gardens and wastelands. Her first action of demolition consisted of restoring a market that was scheduled to be demolished in San Sebastian; in Rotterdam she used to invite the public to watch demolitions and openings of interior courtyards. Other actions were digging in an empty lot of Amsterdam and converting an abandoned railway station of a village in Aragon into a free Hotel. In Rotterdam in order to investigate the phenomena of urban allotments she became part of a community of allotment gardeners and cultivated her allotment over the course of three years. Her first project about wastelands was the publication of the Wastelands Map Amsterdam, a guide to the empty sites in the city. In Liverpool she organised a guided tour of the wastelands, and in several cities she has made the action of getting an empty lot open to the public. Recently, after convincing the owners of a terrain in Rotterdam Harbor to keep it always as a wasteland, she is trying to convince more owners of terrains to do the same. Her projects have been exhibited and produced by Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Etablissement d'en Face, Bruselas, Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid, Pontevedra Biennale, Torino Biennale, Index, Stockholm, De Appel, Amsterdam, FRAC Bourgogne, Dijon, Kröller Müller Museum, Arnheim, Werkleitz Biennale, Halle, International Liverpool Biennial. She has organised workshops that invite the participants to investigate the city and organise guide tours in Piet Zwart Instituut, Rotterdam; Minerva Akademie, Gronningen; CAAM, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, La Casa Encendida, Madrid y Hangar, Barcelona. Lara has given lectures in De Ateliers, Amsterdam, Artez, Arnheim; Berlage Instituut, Rotterdam, Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam; Etablissement d'en Face, Brusselas; FLACC, Genk; Ecole des Beaux Arts, Dijon; Metz, Nancy.

LOES HEEBINK (NL)

Born on 6 maart 1955 in Utrecht, Netherlands

www.loes-heebink.nl

LORETTA BOSENCE (UK)

Loretta Bosence holds a Fine Art degree from Falmouth College of Arts, Cornwall and an MFA Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. Some of her projects include

'Me and My Shadow', Wiltons Music Hall, Grace's Alley, London (2005), a sonic exhibition with arts group Measure, and the Museum of London; a group exhibition 'Domestic Sphere', The Art House, New Cross, London (2002)

www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/degree2005

LORRICE DOUGLAS (UK)

Lorrice Douglas researched historical and contemporary rituals Grizedale Arts in Cumbria, focusing on dance. She then organised 'A Lakeland Variety Show' with Audrey Steeley which was held at Wateryeat Village Hall. A publication called PANGENT documents this project.

Current projects:

Artist in Residence, Peckover House, Cambridgeshire, April 2005 - February 2006.

Devising collaborative works for The National Trust Untold Story Project.

Artsadmin Artist's Bursary. Toynbee Studios, London 2004-2005.

Practical Research Specialising in Vernacular Swing Jazz Dance. Performance and Music of the Swing Jazz Era: Vaudeville and early 20th century performance.

Dance / Performance workshops in the following locations 2002 -2005:

St. Petersburg, Moscow, Sweden (Herrang), Hamburg, Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, UK.

Commissions East Mentoring Scheme, 2004 -2006.

LUCY MUSGRAVE (UK)

Before co-founding General Public Agency in 2003, Lucy was Director of the campaigning charity and cultural organisation The Architecture Foundation where over an 8 year period she developed programmes of action research in the field of social inclusion and the built environment. Lucy was responsible for pioneering new thinking, methodologies, and evaluation for community planning and creative regeneration strategies. She staged a series of public forums on the future of London which attracted over 15,000 people. Following the "Roadshow" initiative to generate creative community planning proposals for derelict or underused public sites in London, she produced the publication "Creative Spaces: a toolkit for participatory urban design". She is also responsible for the acclaimed directories of the best young architects in Britain, both publications supported by the Government. She was a member of the Government's Urban Sounding Board and the GLA's Public Realm Advisory Group, and was a trustee of The Photographers' Gallery for the past 5 years. She is a trustee of the Sheila McKechnie Foundation, an external examiner at London Metropolitan University, a school governor and an honorary fellow of the RIBA.

www.generalpublicagency.com

MARIANNE EIGENHEER (UK/CH)

Marianne's research interests include the visual arts in relation to other disciplines. Recently this includes exciting opportunities between different aspects of art, science and society and the problems of culture in different societies. She trained first as a musician becoming a visual artist, curator, writer and an academic later. She has exhibited on an international basis, and

has written on art with particular interest in the visual arts in relation to other disciplines. For many years she worked at the Museum in Lucerne and as a freelance curator. Currently she holds the position of Professor of Fine Art at the Art Academy, Stuttgart and Director of ICE at Edinburgh College of Art.

MIKE PEARSON (UK)

From 1973 until 1981 Mike Pearson was Artistic Director of Cardiff Laboratory Theatre. In 1981 he was appointed Artistic Director of Cwmni Theatr Brith Gof where he worked until 1997. He then went on to become lecturer of Drama at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth where he worked until 1999. Currently Pearson is professor of Performance Studies at the University of Wales and Co-director of Pearson/Brookes performance group since 1998. In 2002 he was visiting scholar at Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, USA and visiting lecturer at the Johannes Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany. Between 1971 and 1997 Pearson helped develop and pioneer innovative approaches in the practice, theory, pedagogy and documentation of performance. To the spectrum of Welsh theatre, his work with the companies listed above introduced physical theatre, devised performance, workshop practice, site-specific performance, international co-production, international seminars, overseas touring and performance with the physically disabled. Since taking up his academic post in 1997 Pearson has continued to create professional performance as part of the Pearson/Brookes group - most recently a site-specific commission 'There's someone in the house...' at School of Performance Arts, University of Exeter (September 2004) - and as a solo performer, most recently in Chicago, US (November 2004). Most of Pearson's academic work focuses on convergences between performance and archeology:

<http://www.mikebrookes.com>

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/performance>

NINA POPE & KAREN GUTHRIE (UK)

'Somewhere' is an evolving creative organisation led by artists Nina Pope & Karen Guthrie, who have collaborated since 1995 on diverse projects using new technologies, video, installation, performance and broadcast media including web casting. They are currently in post-production of the feature-length film Bata-ville; working on a commission for the new Cinema City (due to launch in Norwich in 2006) - and trying to find a permanent home for their island installation An Artists' Impression!

<http://www.somewhere.org.uk>

<http://www.grizedale.org/lying>

<http://www.swansong.tv>

<http://www.bata-ville.com>

ROBERT EICHMEYER (D)

ROBERT-JAN MULLER (NL)

SIMON GRENNAN (UK)

Simon Grennan is one half of international duo (Grennan lives near Brighton, England, and Sperandio in Manhattan) transpose other people's narratives into the public domain, using a highly-developed digital drawing style to present an accessible but critical brand of audience-focussed cultural product. Well-known as early pioneers of New Genre Public Art, in comic book form and more recently through digital animation as Kartoan Kings, for the past fifteen

years Grennan and Sperandio have transformed the stories of friends', relatives' and strangers' lives into collections of oddly familiar narratives. Art-directed by participants, the artists use humour to decipher what motivates others and in the process cross a variety of social boundaries. In remastering everyday events, Grennan and Sperandio manage to fetishise the 'normal', and de-mystify artistic processes, bringing a variety of publics into the world of art.

Since 1995, they have developed comic book and animation projects in conjunction with museums in the US and Europe, with broadcast and web companies and with Fantagraphics Books, the "best comic company in the world" according to Dan Graham. The pair make both temporary works for print, broadcast and the web, and permanent works in collaboration with fabricators and craftspeople. Their interactive projects include "Energy" for the Livesey Museum for Children, "Artstar" for Voom High Definition TV, New York, "Modern Masters" for PSI/Museum of Modern Art, New York, in collaboration with DC Comics, "Some Folks" for Moss Side and Hulme Regeneration, "Invisible City" for New York's Public Art Fund, "Dirt" for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, "The Hand and the Word" for the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, "Ghost on the Stair" for artranspennine98 and "The Peasant and the Devil" for Seattle Art Museum.

Current projects include ground-breaking audience-development comic books for English Heritage, Arts Marketing Hampshire and the Holbourne Museum, Bath, a monograph on the artists' graphic work by Katy Segal published by West Virginia University, and a major public project for the Royal Botanic Gardens and Millenium Seed Bank. They are in post production with a television show titled 'Artstar' for US network Voom HD and Jeffrey Deitch Gallery. The pair also worked with Chicago chocolate factory workers to design and produce their own chocolate bar as part of the influential 'Culture in Action' exhibition organized by Mary Jane Jacob in Chicago in 1993 and were featured in Arthur C. Danto's book 'After the End of Art', Miwon Kwon's survey of New Genre Public Art "One Place After Another" and "Plop - Recent Projects of New York's Public Art Fund."

"Mr Grennan and Mr Sperandio tweak our notion of what art is and who it is for."

Roberta Smith, New York Times

SOFIE THORSEN (DK/A)

Sofie Thorsen lives and works in Copenhagen and Vienna. She studied at Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi in Copenhagen from 1995 to 2001. Since 1997 she has collaborated with Elsebeth Jørgensen and founded the exhibition forum OTTO, Cph, with Jeppe Hein and Lilibeth Cuenca. Her primary interests include drawing and photography, and she has also designed projects for public space. She lives and works in Vienna. Observation, research and documentation play a very important role in Sofie Thorsen's work. Her projects explore the social aspects of architecture, its functions and structures. The artist collects materials and conducts interviews with the inhabitants of selected housing districts and estates. For the last several years she has presented her projects as narrated slideshows and detailed drawings of interiors. Her projects often take the form of catalogues of the forms and elements that combine to constitute the spaces she investigates. For her project titled Reader (2000), Thorsen interviewed visitors to the main public library in Copenhagen and subsequently visited her subjects in their homes. She then created a series of sixteen drawings depicting the private spaces within which her subjects settle down to read. She then supplemented these drawings with quotes from the interviews and posted them on bulletin boards within the library building. Reader is a work about the uses of books, about their path from a featureless public space to real, private interiors. Sofie is also working on her long-term project titled Village fig., which explores the formal evolution and transformation of the meaning of suburban housing districts in Europe and South America.

<http://www.fdr.at/>

<http://www.artpublicplav.ch>

SUSANNE HAUSER (A)

Susanne Hauser studied History, Linguistics, Philosophy, German literature and Art history from 1977 until 1982. She received her MA in history and Communication studies in 1983 and has written two dissertations: *The Literary Perception of Cities (1700-1910)* for her Dr.Phil in 1989; and *Symbolic and Aesthetic Strategies in the Transformation of Post-industrial Areas in Europe* for her Habilitation: Cultural Sciences course in 1999.

From 1983 until 1988 Hauser was scientific research associate at the Technische Universitaet in Berlin. She was a fellow the Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin, Visiting Professor (History and Aesthetics of Landscapes), Universitaet Kassel, Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Landscape Planning from 2000 to 2003, and since 2003 Professor and head of the institute for art history and cultural studies at the Department of Architecture, University of Technology, Graz, Austria. Susanne is also visiting scholar at the EHESS in Paris, at the GACVS in Washington, D.C., and the Institute for German Language in Mannheim. She has held teaching commissions in Innsbruck (Austria) (anthropology), Stockholm (urban history), at the Technische Universität Berlin (semiotics), the Humboldt-Universitaet in Berlin (cultural studies) and the University of the Arts in Berlin (architecture/design theory). She has published texts on the cultural history of the landscape, urban history, the history of infrastructure, on the theory of architecture and planning, on semiotics and the media. Susanne's current projects are on the aesthetics of agglomerations, cultural landscapes, concepts for rural development in Brandenburg.

<http://www.kunstundkultur.tugraz.at> (german);

THOMAS SPRENGER (D)

I am between jobs at the moment.

Born in Braunschweig in Lower Saxony in Northern Germany I studied economics and chemical engineering in Berlin. After finishing university I started working in small company that then sold and still is selling materials for architectural modeling. We turned the small shop into a bigger company with 50 employees, dealing wholesale and retail with all kinds of design-materials from the Berlin-based shop and through the internet. My occupation there included controlling, business planning, the complete administration, copywriting and providing know-how about the products. Three years ago I left the company and started a business with two partners. We were developing individual software, mainly web-applications and other systems based on databases. I was forced to leave this company last week.

In the last five years I put more and more energy in supporting the work of Antje Schiffers. I joined her on a lot of the travelling and took part in the projects in the extent my job allowed me to. One of my interests in this is to create the web-sites that accompany the projects. By that I got the chance to produce the myvillages.org-site that I take care of and will develop further.

ULRIKE BÖHME (D)

The work of Ulrike Böhme is closely related to the origin of their respective context and can only be experienced in reference to their own spatial and thematic environs. Which means for the artist that her field of work must be constantly defined in situ. The artwork does not begin with her choice of material, a raw block of stone or an empty canvas in a studio. Her speciality is a certain form of art, in which her reaction to the given circumstances and the interplay with other participants is central. When commissioned, she integrates a work into newly finished architecture or participates beforehand in the planning of the different building stages. She is accustomed to examining the area, the situation and the process for their content, their potentiality and, above all, for the time frame the transformations are subject to, so as then to respond quite deliberately. A work by Ulrike Böhme is characterised by the fact that it reacts to its contextual givens in such a way that presence and future both come into their own.

WAPKE FEENSTRA (myvillages.org) (NL)

Wapke Feenstra involves people in experiencing their physical and mental surroundings more intensely.

See e.g. '-b-l-i-k-o-p-e-n-e-r-' (eyeopener) (www.verhalenvandordrecht.nl) and www.woefwoef.nl, in which she allows the viewer to experience a small village through the routes of owners walking their dogs. Currently she works on a digital “webxylotheek” which makes citizens more aware of the impact of trees in public space.

YEB WIERSMA (NL)

Yeb Wiersma lives and works in Amsterdam. From 1997 until 2001 she studied Visual Arts, Sculpture at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. In 2001 she was a student on the graduate programme at the Cooper Union School for Advancement of Science & Art, New York City. Her exhibitions and site-specific work include 'Dislocation', *Rialtofilm i.s.m.*

Somanydynamos, Amsterdam (2005); 'Out of the chimneys whirled constellations of sparks', *Stiftung Binz 39, Scuol* (2005); 'Any minute now, something will happen', *Museum De Paviljoens*, Almere (2004); and 'Fremd', *Transit Engadin / Kultur in Engiadina, Scuol* (2004)

7.4 Thank You

Village Convention was supported by the Arts Council of England, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, The Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation and Peter Paul Petrich Fonds NL, All Ways Learning, The Austrian Cultural Forum London, and the Goethe Institut London.



General Public Agency

10 Stoney Street
London SE1 9AD

T: +44 (0) 20 7378 8365

F: +44 (0) 20 7378 8366

mail@generalpublicagency.com

www.generalpublicagency.com