

March 2009 newsletter myvillages.org

Launch of the Village Produce Films, Nov 2008

During 2008 eight short documentaries which show the producers and production of items for the International Village Shop have been made by myvillages.org together with public works and Michael Smythe. The films focus on the handling and making of things, and communicate the narratives and locals specificities of each product. The films were launched during Grizedale Art's "toadball.tv" programme for GSK Contemporaries at the Royal Academy in London, November 2009. As part of the event we opened a two-day village shop and invited to a public discussion on what the shop is and might be, together with the partners in the Village Shop. Speakers at Royal Academy were Wapke Feenstra(myvillages.org), Kathrin Böhm(myvillages.org/public works), Andreas Lang (public works), Alistair Hudson (Grizedale Arts), Nina Pope (somewhere) and Michael Smythe (nomad). Weblink: <http://www.toadball.tv/works/village.produce.films>



Village Shop at the Royal Academy and at The Studio for Urban Projects

New collaborative village produce in the making in Loughborough/Barrow upon Soar, Boxberg and Neuenkirchen

On invitation by Nick Slater from Radar, the arts commissioning programme for Loughborough University, UK, Kathrin is working with staff from the renowned Sports Technology Institute and a group of young people from the nearby village of Barrow upon Soar to develop a new sport product. To be launched in June 2008. Website of Radar: www.arts.lboro.ac.uk/radar



Developing a multi sport tool in Barrow upon Soar and some shopping at a farm in Neuenkirchen

Antje is working on Boxberg Products - new village produce from Boxberg, a village in the Upper Lusatia lake district, Saxony, Ger, as part of ÜBER TAGE. The Lusatian lakes result from extensive brown coal mining in the 20th century. Some former open pits are now flooded and used as recreational areas, in direct neighboured to working mines and a huge electric power plants. The project series ÜBER TAGE brings contemporary art into a rural and industrial setting that is subject to a process of constant change.

Antje, Wapke and Kathrin also visited Neuenkirchen in Lower Saxony, Ger, to discuss the possibilities for new village produce with Bettina von Dziembowski from the Stiftung Springhornhof (www.springhornhof.de). Neuenkirchen has just twinned up with the village of Lubrza in Poland, and new produce could be used to introduce particularities to each other.

In each location myvillages.org is going to set up public workshops for the brainstorm and development of produce. The workshops themselves will be of interdisciplinary nature, e.g. bringing together a local women's group with a product designer, a sports-team with sports technology engineers, farmers with a professional chef, etc. Each production will be video-documented, and later be edited to a 3 - 7 minute Village Produce Film.

myvillages.org and International Village Shop in San Francisco,

Nov/Dec 08

On invitation by Ted Purves at the CCA Social Practice MFA Course, Antje and Wapke presented workshops and lectures during two weeks at the California College of the Arts. Their presence included a one-hour-village-shop and a farm-drawing-session with students. We were surprised by the high price we got for a tiny bottle of homemade frankonian Schnaps.

The Village Shop was open to the public on Saturday 29th Nov, at The Studio for Urban Projects in San Francisco. One could shop for frog-butter spoons, Häkeldeckentaschen and other village produce. Wapke and Antje presented some of their recent projects during a brief talk. Afterwards everyone was invited to bring leftover thanksgiving fare for a communal potluck. Wapke had the ambition to sell a Höfer-Frauen-Häkeldeckentasche to San Francisco Hippies, and finally she made it.

Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves also invited myvillages to contribute to the exhibition "The Gatherers: Greening our Urban Spheres" at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, they offered us to collaborate on a newspaper issue of The Meadow Network. (See www.fieldfaring.org). The rural background drawings for the newspaper were made during conversations at the YBCA and the Golden Gate Senior Center. We added a text focusing on our image of rural America.

Weblink to the S.F. visit: www.myvillages.org/index.php?a=work&id=30.

We are very happy that we could make friends with Amy Franceschini from Future Farmers (www.futurefarmers.com).

Bibliobox on the road

Recently, the bibliobox travelled to Groeneveld (NL), Wendschott (Ger), Hehlingen (Ger), Wysing Arts Centre (UK), Hasselt (NL) and to the Kunstverein in Wolfsburg (Ger).

For more info see : www.bibliobox.org/index.php?pageid=55

Also a first trip to Poland happened in 2008: Renata Mantorska invited the Bibliobox to attend a workshop "Yes I am" on the 23th May 2008 in Wolimierz, a little village in the south of Poland. Goal of the workshop: to remove the fear to communicate in a foreign language (English) and to enable conversation about basic things. All this in a village situated in a tourist area, but with poor opportunities for residents to participate in language courses. An associate professor organized three days of conversation based on a specially designed book (which also served as practice material) in exchange for food and shelter provided by the participants.



In autumn 2009 the bibliobox will start its longest journey so far, crossing the equator and e.g. attending the Mangrove Mountain Country Fair in Australia. The box is ordered by Neil Berecrys-Brown, a farmer that is the director of the Mangrove Mountain Country Fair, Brown's Cows Art Projects and the Gosford Art Flux Forum.

Upcoming projects

I like being a farmer and I would like to stay one

The third and last year of the project of Antje and Thomas: there will be field research in Macedonia in April (invited by Julia Lechler of the Robert-Bosch-Stiftung) including a screening and lecture evening in Skopje. In June and July we will continue our painting-for-a-video barter trades with farmers in north-eastern Romania supported by Vector Gallery in Iasi.

Last year's English and Welsh field research is shown at Acton Scott Farm Museum in Church Stretton, Shropshire (in cooperation with Adrian Plant, Shropshire Museums), opening reception on May, 29th.

December 4th: Opening of the big final exhibition at Städtische Galerie Nordhorn in northern Germany.



Filming in Switzerland, September 2008



Wapke Feenstra at Paralelo in MIS, Sao Paulo.

Paralelo is a four day project with workshops, symposia and live events, all focusing on Technology and Environment. It is a meeting point for artists, designers and researchers from Brasil, UK and The Netherlands. Wapke will introduce myvillages to the participants and audience of Paralelo. In the meetings she focusses on network based rural/nature projects like Former Farmland, The Best Place and webxylottheek. The project is hosted by the Museum of Image and Sound in Sao Paulo and the Centro Cultural de Brasil. More on paralelo.wikidot.com

Wapke's Grizedale Residency

Yes! Wapke got the Dutch Grant (Fonds BKVB) for a three months residency in Grizedale, Coniston, UK. Myvillages.org already worked at Lawson Farm, and our residency resulted in the proposal for a joint shop.

During the grand opening and relaunch of Lawson Park on the 10th of July, myvillages.org is going to produce new footage for the Village Produce Films, showing strangers handling what's on offer.

Bilder der Landwirtschaft / Imagining the rural (working title)

Symposium, January 2010 in Nordhorn, Ger

The symposium will focus on the representation of farms and farming, which has a longstanding tradition within art and art history. How does this image evolve? How is current agricultural production and tradition represented in and through art practice? What's the position of farmers and how is their image depicted within wider society? We are planning a three day convention of artists, art

historians, film historians, anthropologists, landscape researchers, representatives of agricultural institutions.

New Former Farmland tours in Oldenburg



Former Farmland EXPO 08 Saragossa

In the context of Landscape 2.0 in Edith-Russ-Medien-Haus in Oldenburg, Northern Germany, a new local version of Former Farmland will be produced by Wapke. Sabine Himmelsbach was interested in the Former Farmland concept after a guided tour during the latest Ars Electronica Festival in Linz AT. Landscape 2.0 will present current landscape concepts and their impact on economic, environmental and socio-political decision-making. Soon more on www.formerfarmland.org or www.wapke.nl