

shifting perception

Theme and presentation

Questions you have to answer

- What is the specific problem that the project wants to solve?
- What is the project hypothesis?
- What are the project's objectives?
- Which are the desired outcomes?

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Through this thesis I tried to point out a way that might generate the solution for a problem that affects most of the cities in Romania and even Eastern Block, a solution that is easy to implement and is sensitive to the character of each of the industrial sites. I don't expect it to be the right solution but the right start for a dialogue that will eventually find a way to resolve such a complex matter as the problem of post-industrial sites and cities.

concept

How one can change the way people perceive the decadent post-industrial sites? By offering them the possibility to regard them from a different point of view. How? With the help of art. How? By transforming all that hideous, grey, concrete or brick buildings or the elements they generated in the surroundings into works of art. OK. Stop. How ? That's the interesting part. They are already works of art but no one knows. YOU'RE CRAZY. Please explain how. In the communist era the factories used to be one of the main engines of the economy, apparently having strictly a functional role. They also used to be the center of a community or even the generator of it. Many towns were created thanks to the apparition of the factories. Thousands of people were bonded to the factory they were working for, conscious and unconscious. They had to go there everyday and so on, but it was also the place where their friends worked, where they met their wife and the subject they debated during the dinner. For many of them it was the only goal of their existence. I don't say it's something good or bad, or that it doesn't happen nowadays too, but what I try to underline is that those factories were invested with the emotions of certain people who worked there: hatred, hope, carelessness, love etc and that their remains are the the witness of those times.

After the fall of communism these structures were abandoned and became the subject of theft, of degradation, of neglect. They became exactly the opposite of what they used to be -useless buildings or what remained of them that don't represent anything to anybody, that are ignored. What intrigued me and made me think that even these huge sites are works of art is the relation that appeared between their past form and present form, the changes they passed through, the time that worked and still works on them, even the sculptural or spatial qualities of some of these sites. Some of them are unfinished works of art that need the help of an artist or an architect in order to spotlight their most beautiful part or to enhance their value by a punctual intervention. Some of them are works of art thanks to their degradation, their death being a performance that is sadly passed over. Some of them are waiting the local community to get involved and intervene on their remains in order to revive them. Every post-industrial site might be regarded as a work of art on its own so I'm not interested in listing all the possibilities. What I'm interested in is in emphasizing the idea that if we change their status, from lost space into works of art, by opening this new way of perceiving them and by convincing the people to do so, new possibilities will appear.

macro - Romania

The shrinkage of post-industrial cities in Romania is a matter largely debated lately, even by the Romania’s pavilion at the Venice Architecture Bineale of last a year. Projects focused on the regeneration of the community of this areas have appeared and developed, Planeta Petrila for example. All of them are small scale interventions that imply only the local community, well adapted to the site’s character and to the specificity of the local people. A very contemporary approach. What they lack is a global vision, one that might integrate them in a system, a system in which the punctual intervention would be influenced or would take into consideration the general rules that might be thought for the system. All of the interventions presented at the Bineale have in common the fact that they succeeded because they were related to the cultural phenomena in different ways- film, exihibition areas, concerts, recoversions into cultural spaces etc. But what they didn’t have was a final goal-that of changing people’s perception regarding the post-industrial remains and the huge potential they have.

mezzo – Banat

During the 19th in the Banat region was created an important network of settlements by the austro-hungarian colonialists using the “grid method”. An ancient old method used during the centuries in order to create settlements that are recongnizable by the new commers and easy to manage. In the Banat area these cities are connected not only physically by road or by the rail, but metaphorically by their common past and history. One can recall the former brick and tile factories only by almost hidden marks-lakes, abandoned structures- and by the stories old former workers can still tell. In the future these remains will disappear. In order not to lose this heritage one should regard the remains of the brick factories as works of art or as works of art in waiting, ready to be transformed by the hand of an artist, architect or even by the local community. Using art as a new way to relate to the post-industrial sites in Banat region was already tried with success in Kikinda where the former brick factory was transformed in an arthub and museum. Creating a new layer of the network of the settlements in Banat, that of places where one might find art determined by the former brick factories, would determine a cultural and touristic growth. That would determine the improvement locals’ lives and better or mend the relation they have with the past.

micro - Jimbolia

Considering the idea I have already presented, the lakes in Jimbolia are not lakes. They are works of art. Are collective works of land art. They were created during tens of years by a collective author: the people of Jimbolia. They are the result of the dialogue of the two important instances: nature and men. It is an unprecedented work of art. Despite the long time during which it was created, noone until now did realize its value. It's a very complex work of art. It works with time, community/people, light, history, nature, water, weather, reflection, change, evolution, past, present, future etc. The themes it implies are almost unlimited. It can be even regarded as an informal work of art and picnic near it. You can see it as you wish. What it lacks is the physical infrastructure to be able to see it. All we have to do is to create the best way to present it. Inspired by the qualities of the site, by the grid used in the area and by Christo and Jean Claude's "Floating piers", some floating platforms, easy accessible were purposed. The gesture is thought as simple way to show how one can change the relation with the history of a place, how we can we start a debate about what arethe post-industrial remains, how can we improve a natural setting etc.