

Geophone - model views of the landmark on the Bohemian-Bavarian border
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Geophone -- landscape sculpture in the land of the Green Dragon

**Contribution to the European Capital of Culture event in Pilsen 2015 and Impuls
2015**

**Place of contact - social sculpture as a forum to strengthen the rural
areas and for the release of effective social stimulus for
the re-cultivation of our culture, i.e. the ways in which we
shape our common living environment - and thus
ourselves**

The geophone is conceived as an organic landscape sculpture with an integrated innovative audio-visual listening room in Furth im Wald.

Several minor variants (Geotone) are envisioned in the mountains along the Bohemian-Bavarian border, in the Pilsen region and in eastern Bavaria, creating additional connections in the sense of the European Capital of Culture event.

Establishing connections between concerned citizens, artists, musicians and politicians is a main feature of the project, which is to be achieved by cultural events organized at the geophone`s site.

The geophonic landscape sculptures will bring the region of the Bohemian Forest as a whole geographical unit into consciousness, the regio-political importance will be developed further and the rural area on both sides of the border will be strengthened.

The idea: Europe is seeing right into its very center

As an organically shaped earth sculpture the geophone is built to be a point of contact for locals, hikers and travelers in the region of the Bohemian-Bavarian border. A special feature of this scenic point of reference is an innovative listening room to allow for the conscious perception of our living environment.

Modulating and amplifying the raw acoustic pulses from the earth and the forests of the Middle Mountains by an innovative technology, tones, sounds and images are generated and composed to create an ambient and “conscience expanding” atmosphere of awareness.

Through the organic, symbolic and social power of the geophonic earthsculptures, the project is conceived to create regional identities and have sustainable effect on the awareness of the possibilities of a cultural and creative living at the countryside, still after the agenda of the European Capital of Culture 2015, Pízen.

Smaller variants of the earth-sculpture, called Geotones, are provided with a broad variety of possibilities in use, including motion design for a children's playground, a basis for a garden-therapeutic institution, a landmark for small-scale landscapes in topographical points of interest, land-art event at local creative spaces, in its topographically negative form it can be also used as a sand bunker at golf courses, facility of time measurement and observation point in line with our roots in European History, for instance in the neighbourhood of archaeological monuments, sheltered niches for sunbathing, integrated transgenerational playground and snack station on the trail, memorial to lost villages and churches in Bohemia, and much more.

Some Geotones are already configured. Projectual subjects are for instance the forthcoming horticultural shows in East Bavaria in Tirschenreuth and Deggendorf, municipalities, private citizens and Czech partners.

[Force of earth tones - Geoton as a detail contribution of a land Garden Tirschenreuth 2013]

[geophone - model in the sun during prospects looking]

The location

The Geophone should ideally be sited in the area of the city of Furth im Wald, which lies in the heart of one of the oldest mountain ranges on earth. It is also the geographical center of Europe, located in the Green Belt between the Northern Sea and the Aegean.

The geophone will be sited close to the newly built bypass road B20 [in the Southwest], forming an unique Bohemian-Bavarian landmark which will be visible from elevated locations in the core city and surrounding areas.

Form and effect

The waveform of the sculpture refers to the plastically folded primitive rock of our common Bohemian-Bavarian homeland and also provides numerous symbolic and creative associations. The fossil concentration of the sculpture procures a strong local reference to the primeval landscape in this cross-border region.

The listening room

An auditory space by the Geophone is, by multimedial means, furnished with sound colors to provide and establish a special relationship with the nature. The vibrations of the surrounding landscape is made accessible to the sensual experience, both visually and acoustically.

Interactively, in sensitive dialogue with the experienced, the users may also create compositions. The according technologies are already developed and can be tailored individually for each project.

These sensory experiences create a distinct user experience, as they allow for a rich dialogue with the surrounding world making nature a contemporary.

Details of implementation

The main office of the city of Furth im Wald is currently looking for a adequate site. Finding a public accessible place at an ideal location will be crucial.

The geophone will ideally be located on a cultural axis of experience reaching from the core city of Futh im Wald to the Drachensee (dragon lake). It is part of a regional network of hiking, biking and trails. A first object in view Furth on HofLind is under construction.

The planning and implementation of the listening chamber is accompanied and supported by scientific partnerships, namely by physicists, psychologists and sociologists. Beyond the effects on tourism the geophone is changing the ways in which we percept our surroundings and therefore is also inducing change on a social level.

The dimensions of the geophone depend on the intended use. The possible size of the listening chamber ranges from a concave humming stone, over the a listening grot up to a dragon's lair. The current design for the site at Furth im Wald is about 9 to 11 m in height, 72 m in width and 88 m in length, with roughly 18000 m³ of earth, which are currently available from the current building site of the B20-bypass.

Further conceptual details and steps of implementation:

- clarification of construction, water-economic and traffic law issues, depending on the location
- infrastructural development with the involvement of existing roads, parking and sanitary
- multilingual signs and explanations for visitors and tourists
- The costs depend on location, design, purpose, equipment, maintenance, etc

- clarification of the funding body, financing and finding a provider.
- trans-regional marketing concept

Creative aspects

The geophone is a landscape scene on a European scale.

Emblematic arrangements of different design elements such as boulders, trees and plant arrangements, herb mats and banners, as well as land art objects for special occasions provide ties to the mythology of the dragon country.

A restrained illumination, which is controlled by the changing wind, makes the geophone visible even at night.

Socio-cultural background

Schedules and the noisy rhythm of all day life largely determine our existence. Our ways of perception are greatly embossed by the technical rationality of natural science and the ubiquity of media. Permanent distraction is weakening our sensual, aesthetic experience and the ability to concentrate is affected accordingly.

In contrast, the geophone is operating on several levels of sensuality towards an openness for the autonomous experience of the own presence in space and time.

We are used to our apprehension of the world being increasingly mediated by technical artefacts and media. In this exact situation, the visitor is met, picked up and reminded of this original autonomy on the planet.

In the listening chamber we are able to contemplate the silence, opening ourselves for the resonances of the human body and the world around us. The earth with its diverse vibrations and sounds can be sensed in a new ways.

In awareness of the place and in dialogue with the living environment the acoustic impulses in the geophone compose a "melody from the land of the green dragon", the Šumava (lit. "whistling forest"). Those individual musical dialogues will strengthen the consciousness of living in the common region of the Bohemian Forest, extending the affiliation across the borders of nation and language.

Landscape, garden and sound as eternal companions in time

The geophone is cultivating our senses. It adjusts us humans towards a conscious and responsible handling of our ability of shaping and creating our environments. The geophone offers a location of contact and touch, it is a place of contemplation and orientation, a place of becoming open, and thus of finding and be found.

HofLind, in April 2012

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