
PRESS RELEASE/PRESS NOTICE

(not to be published before January 16th 2004)

International Ideas Competition 2004 *Shrinking Cities - Reinventing the City*

Whether in the USA, Russia or China, whether in South Africa, Germany or Kazakhstan: shrinking cities are everywhere. Massive population and job losses convulse neighbourhoods, cities and regions. Hundreds of thousands of buildings stand empty, infrastructures collapse, urban life erodes.

The shrinking of cities is an involuntary process. Attempts to date to shape or guide it have been inadequate. Often, they have failed because the inherited instruments of city planning and urban development tend to be ineffectual in this context – assuming they are even available. This calls into question our established understanding of the city and of urban development.

Shrinking Cities is a project initiated by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany). In January 2004, the project, in cooperation with the architecture journal *archplus* and the journal *domus*, will announce an international and interdisciplinary **competition**, which has been endowed with altogether **€ 120,000**. Its objective is to identify innovative approaches capable of qualifying the urban transformations associated with the phenomena of shrinkage and to develop new ideas about the city based on the specific qualities of shrinkage itself. Might a hidden potential be harboured within the undesigned or the unplanned – even a utopian one?

The competition is interdisciplinary and experimental in orientation. Projects may range from the smallest physical intervention all the way to plans for large-scale regional development, and may entail the recasting of legal norms or encompass novel forms of urban communication. A project may take the form of social critique or even a political utopia, designed to be incorporated into the physical or communicative space of the city.

In order to tap into new fields of action, representatives of the most diverse professions – organised into interdisciplinary teams – are being invited to compete: anthropologists, architects, artists, economists, directors, graphic designers, landscape architects, lawyers, media designers, sociologists, stage designers and urban planners, as well as local initiatives. (Students are excluded.)

Registration for participation is possible until **April 15, 2004** (please see under www.shrinkingcities.com). The deadline for the submission of project ideas is April 30, 2004. At the end of a two-stage process, the jury will select 12 works for further elaboration. The competition works will be published in detail in the architectural journals *archplus* (Germany) and *domus* (Italy), and prizewinners will be featured in an international exhibition and accompanying catalogue.

Jury members include artist & architect Azra Aksamja (Sarajevo/Princeton), graphic designer Ruedi Baur (Paris), cultural studies researcher Regina Bittner (Dessau), architect and urban researcher Stefano Boeri (Milan), architect Anne Lacaton (Paris) and art theoretician Georg Schöllhammer (Vienna).

The territories of the competition comprise four urban regions: **Detroit (USA)**, **Halle/Leipzig (D)**, **Ivanovo (RUS)** and **Liverpool/Manchester (GB)**, each of which has already served as a case study for an international analysis performed in the framework of the 3-year research and exhibition project *Shrinking Cities*, launched fall 2002. Besides the journal *archplus*, project partners include the *Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau* as well as the *Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig*.

For additional information about the project *Shrinking Cities* or about the competition: www.shrinkingcities.com.

We would be grateful if you would announce both the competition and the project in the next issue of your publication.

We would be glad to respond to your queries, or to provide additional information or illustrated materials concerning the competition, as well as information about the project as a whole.

Contact:

Dr. Astrid Herbold
Media and Public Relations
P: +49 (0)30 81 82 19 06
F: +49 (0)30 81 82 19 12
press@shrinkingcities.com