

International Artists' Exchange/Art in Urban Space within
The Art Festival „Portes Obertes“ 2008 in Cabanyal, Valencia

Breaches and Fractures – Breschen und Bruchstellen - Brechas y Fracturas (working title)

Reflections on fragmented spaces in the memory of cities

Open Doors

The Art Festival „Portes Obertes“ which attracts visitors from whole Spain, is annually organized by the Instituto de la Defensa de los Intereses Patrimoniales de Cabanyal/Canyamelar, cooperating with the Fine Arts Department of the Universidad Politecnica Valencia.

The Cabanyal neighbourhood invites artists from Valencia, the art academies and from abroad for creative cooperation in the subject of urban development, the problems of which be transformed in arts. Each year has its own focus on either visual arts, street theater or music/dance. The performances take place in public spaces or in private houses, most of which listed for the protection of historical buildings. In 2008, the 11th Art Festival „Cabanyal Portes Obertes“ (www.cabanyal.com) is taking place.

In July 2007 Maota Soldevilla, Professor for Art History at the University of Valencia and Vicent Gallart, architect – both members of the neighbourhood groups in Cabanyal – were invited by the multimedial forum Blinzelbar in Altona-Altstadt, Hamburg to introduce both the Art Festival and the problems of the urban development situation in Valencia. Für 2008 an international cooperation with artists is now being planned: *Breaches and Fractures*.

Artists from Altona - Cornelia Dusör, Yolanda Gutiérrez, Jokinen und Ilka Vogler – along with Christoph Radke and Nicolaus Schmidt from Berlin, both once living in Ottensen, are invited to Cabanyal to work on art projects for the 2008 *Portes Obertes*.

The six artists will exchange their experiences in a close dialogue with the inhabitants of Cabanyal. Exploring the urban situation of Cabanyal they will try to find artistic expressions for the public space.

In return artists and members of the neighbourhood groups will be invited to participate at Hamburgs biggest neighborhood festival Altonale 2008. The Hamburg artists will show the works done for Valencia at the 2009 Altonale.

Urban realities and artistic transformation

Cabanyal is an old quarter with beautiful landmarked art nouveau buildings situated on the coast. For eleven years long-time residents have tried to prevent the wide breach the extension of an avenue that connects

Cabanyal with the center of Valencia would create. This extension would carry traffic from the city center to the seaside right through the heart of Cabanyal. To this end buildings are neglected and finally torn down overnight. Other apartments or buildings of mainly elderly owners are disappropriated far under market price.

The parallels between Altona/Ottensen and El Cabanyal are obvious:

- In the 1970s and 1980s a wide breach through the old heart of Ottensen was planned for a feeder road. This was effectfully prevented by the residents, neighbourhood initiatives and artists. In spite of a process of gentrification Ottensen is still one of the liveliest and most creative quarters of Hamburg. Since a few years there exists a dialogue between the *Stadtteilarchiv Ottensen* and the *Instituto de la Defensa de los Intereses Patrimoniales de Cabanyal/Canyamelar*.
- Today the shopping center *Große Bergstraße* in Altona-Altstadt – Germany's first city pedestrian zone – poses a problem for urban developers. For years big parts of the shopping area have been vacated, creating the impression of a ghetto. Developers and politicians prefer to tear down the dominant concrete buildings. Meanwhile artists got temporary leases for cheap studios in these buildings. They revived the area and have developed a bunch of ideas for the empty spaces, at the same time being aware that they might become the spearhead of gentrification. Alternative concepts were not appreciated by the authorities.

In the contemporary discourse public art reacts on the problems that literally „lie in the street“. Answering the situation in Cabanyal as well as bringing their Hamburg experiences with them the artists involved will transform the urban realities of Cabanyal using their own means. The individual concepts will be developed further after the visit to Valencia.