In 60 days from Berlin to Kassel: Volkswagen and Frauenhofer Institute support citizenship, a documenta project

PUBLISHED JUN 1, 2022
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For a whole decade, the artists of the Berlin-based collective KUNSTrePUBLIK had worked together in Berlin-Moabit under the roof of their institution ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics. Now, the wooden structure of the saddle roof has been removed and turned upside down to create a work for documenta fifteen. Converted into a ship and charged with cultural energy, the watercraft departs for a journey focussing on sustainability, inspring encounters and the power of community.

To ensure that the 60-day journey will be accomplished without using fossil fuels, citizenship has received a sustainable and recycled propulsion system. In collaboration with Fraunhofer Institute for Energy Economics and Energy System Technology, Volkswagen refurbished a 36 kW electric engine originally built for a Golf Citystromer. Power for the engine is generated by a photovoltaic system, direct-methanol fuel cells and small wind turbines, as well as with the help of recycled bicycles pedaled by the ship's crew and their guests. Two trainees from the Volkswagen plant Kassel assisted during the installation of the complex system. Providing further support on land, a fully electric T6 Transporter accompanies the journey.

Departing in Berlin two weeks ahead of the opening of documenta, citizenship is scheduled to arrive in Kassel on 22 July, four weeks after the opening. Covering an average of 10 to 20 kilometres per day, the ship is going to stop at a number of locations along the rivers Havel, Mittellandkanal, Weser and Fulda. Workshops, creative interventions, joint cooking events with local and international artists and interested people from areas around the stops will transform the ship on its journey into a citizenship. Community power enables not

only progress throughout the journey but also success of the creative research trip. After 60 days, citizenship is going to dock in Kassel.

Benita von Maltzahn, Head of Cultural Engagement at Volkswagen, comments on the completion of citizenship: “Art carries the power to fill ideas with intense life which then stirrs people’s minds. This ship is moving thanks to human power and sustainably generated energy. It is a stunning interpretation of one of today’s key topics, already leaving our trainees fascinated during their work on this project and set to inspire many more people.”

The Indonesian artists group ruangrupa, curators of documenta, have invited many artists including ZK/U Berlin to participate in documenta fifteen. All invitees base their work and creative values on solidarity, friendship and sustainability.

Volkswagen supports documenta fifteen as lead partner. Further to a four-year long preparation period, the exhibition will be open to the public between 18 June and 25 September 2022. The partnership extends Volkswagen’s international engagement for culture and the arts, strengthening artists, institutions and projects around company sites and beyond. The activities are being carried out with the commitment to enable a wide audience to engage with creative work and ideas, offering the chance to develop new perspectives for innovations and discourses.

Details about citizenship and further information at: Berlin is dedicated to the production of art, to offer residencies for artists and researchers and to provide a platform for projects linking local working with global discourses. The main meeting and event location at ZK/U is the old warehouse of the former railway depot Berlin-Moabit. Characterised by its raised saddle roof, this location had been used by ZK/U and its non-profit organisation since the opening ten years ago for organising meetings, exhibitions and events. Numerous ideas and thoughts led to collectively generated energy which fueled the roof, before ZK/U is now transforming it into its metaphorical and effective contribution for the “lumbung” of documenta fifteen.

Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Volkswagen, on Jun 1, 2022. For more information subscribe and follow us.

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