

Newsletter _ E | Peru

End of July 2019

In the coming months, I will leave my studio on the Amstel to go to a studio in Peru to work on several art projects. At the invitation of X-Change Art Project in Lima, I received an artist-in-residence, which I am very excited about and would like to express my gratitude for. This opportunity gives me the possibility to focus solely on my artistic work for a while, on top of which I will bring it in such a beautiful, colourful country with millennia-old culture. In my studio in Lima I will develop different designs, all revolving around my main theme of a "house". The finished works will be presented at an exhibition early October in the artists' quarter Barranco in Lima.

The first two weeks of August I create, together with adolescents and children from Villa El Salvador (VES), artistic designs and sketches with the intended goal of creating a mural. My daughter Stella will be there too, to support me and we will be working together creatively with a total of fifty Peruvian children and adolescents. VES is kind of suburb of the Peruvian capital Lima and the partner municipality of Amstelveen. Amstelveen is in turn a suburb of Amsterdam.

The COBRA artist Karel Appel (1921 - 2006)

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karel_Appel

travelled to Peru in the nineteen seventies during which he also visited VES. The city was founded in 1971 by about 9,000 families on a desert like terrain on the outskirts of Lima. Karel Appel decided spontaneously, in cooperation with the residents Villa El Salvador, to make a mural, to bring colour to this new town. There are impressive photographs showing how Peruvian children use large paintbrushes to recreate the typical forms of the COBRA artist.

In 1976 Appel wrote: "... we worked together cohesively and intensively for two weeks ...". That is something I want to build on in creating a new mural in collaboration with the youth of Villa El Salvador. This mural will be a dedication to the founding of Villa El Salvador, with the courageous commitment of the citizens who created a new home. This idea also very much affects my art project HOME, on which you can find more information if you scroll further down.



The mural is also meant to be a tribute to brave women, like María Elena Moyano Delgado, president of Federación Popular de Mujeres, city councillor and peace advocate from Villa El Salvador. However, it is also a homage to Art, to artist Karl Appel and to the way in which art brings people together.

The citizens of VES requested to incorporate the theme of environment in the mural project as well, which I am very happy to do, since the environment is also something which I consider very important. My plan is to show the relationship between people and the environment: Just as the cosmopolitan and scientist Alexander von Humboldt already explained the term cosmos as: "... to grasp the world as a whole". I will ask the adolescents and children two important questions: where do you feel at home? And where do animals and plants feel at home? I want to help them think about sustainability and the environment, about what it means to live somewhere: to live in, and be part of, an environment. The answers to these questions will then translated and incorporated in the mural.

During my stay in Peru I will also start working on a new project, which is called “the wandering house” through landscapes in Peru or: La casa ‘caminante’ a través de los paisajes del Perú. It will consist of a short film and photos of a house form (3 meters high) ‘moving’ through the Peruvian landscape.

The house is carried by several people through the beautiful, scenic and mountainous landscape of Peru. Symbolizing that you will always carry your house with you no matter where you are or where you go. The house is a symbol for our doubts: are we doing it right? Did we make the correct decisions in our lives? Why are we living the life we live? The more we think, the more insecure we become. Sometimes though, the path that we have to go is not clear and visible and once we stop trying to control it and let go, it emerges by itself.

As the house ‘moves’ through the landscape, we move through our lives: always in search of the meaning of our existence.

The film shows the house ‘moving’ through the landscape. Just like in a cartoon, the house ‘walks’ up and down: imagine a house moving over the mountain into the valley and up again towards the top of the next mountain. It’s like a flipbook. A book with a series of pictures that vary gradually from one page to the next, so that when the pages are turned rapidly, the pictures appear to be simulating motion. Individual pictures will in the end make the house seem like it’s moving all by itself. The actual movement of the house in the film is created by the ‘invisible’ volunteers, who move the house step by step. The moments when people carry the house are not visible in the film. Only photos that will be taken of the volunteers when they are carrying the house, will in hindsight reveal the process.



Leaning on and learning from the old tradition and broad experience of the Peruvian textile culture, I’ll ask women to help me create a cover in the form of the house. The fabric is woven and embroidered in the typical colours of traditional Peruvian handcraft. It can also be a wrap made of non-spun wool, dyed with natural materials from the environment.

Finally, I would like to add some information on one of my ongoing projects: “HOME with knitted house”. I am very excited to continue this project during my artist-in-residence in Peru. So far I have had the chance to photograph a lot of people in Europe and last January I went to Japan to expand the project, which led to a lot of wonderful photos and intriguing encounters. My favourite depicts a bird and a young woman, looking out over the river (see bottom). During my encounters I try to not only take pictures, but also engage people in conversations about (their) home. I leave it to the people how they want to hold the house, after which I take a series of ten pictures, whilst asking them to think about what they need to feel at home. In addition, I take notes on, and make sketches of, the conversations and surroundings. Every participants gets their photo send to them afterwards per e-mail, as well as a change to share

some extra thoughts on the matter if they feel like it.



HOME is currently a very important theme, considering the many refugees and people who are forced to travel new ways and leave everything behind. However, also for the new generation home is an important topic: new developments make it easier and easier for them to travel all around the world and be connected anywhere. But what does home mean? What do you need to feel at home? Are answers to these questions different depending on age, background, home town or wealth? Are there differences between people from Europe, Asia and South-America? Or is there maybe one universal answer? I want to try and capture all this by taking photos and asking people these questions. My artist-in-residence will be a good opportunity to further investigate and explore this theme. In addition, I will give a presentation about my art work at the Dutch Embassy in Lima.

My gratitude goes to the **Ifa - Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen** and **X-Change Art Project** in Lima for their contribution. The mural project is supported by the cities of Amstelveen (NL) and Villa El Salvador (P).

