

ArtGenda 96

In 94, I led the 7th edition of the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), in Lisbon. Trevor Davis, as director of Copenhagen, European Capital of Culture, was programming different initiatives. He came to Lisbon to know how we were preparing the Lisbon edition. He took with him representatives from Stockholm, Aarhus, Vilnius, Tallin, Oslo and other Baltic cities. I had the opportunity to receive them and to explain them the project. Latter on, I was invited to go to Copenhagen to explain better the Lisbon edition and to discuss the design and preparation of ArtGenda.

The first edition of ArtGenda, inspired in the model of the Biennials of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean in general and in the Lisbon edition in special took place in Copenhagen in 1996.



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THE VISIONS OF ARTGENDA



As part of its international profile Copenhagen '96 wanted to put strong focus on the concept of a "new Europe" - a Europe which was in the process of rediscovering its past and redefining its boundaries to create its future. One of the central projects of Copenhagen was to

develop the project ArtGenda.

The Baltic region split for many years by political barriers and a region which is asserting once again its natural position where artistic dialogue and cultural contact is both natural, politically relevant and socially needed.

The Baltic region is a so called "new" region in Europe and a particularly important region. Parallels with the Mediterranean are obvious - the sea connecting the Nordic countries with central Europe and the former Eastern European states.

The decision to concentrate on cities around the Baltic was made primarily to create the necessary focus for the project and at the same time to underline these cities as the natural forces which are forming a new region in Europe.

The common characteristics of urbanism and urban life styles together with youth cultures, sub cultures and the international media are furthermore factors which make the cultural dimension more equal and compatible.

ArtGenda represent a wish to create a permanent activity on the basis that three European Cultural Capitals took place in the region as well as the European Month of Culture (Copenhagen 1996, Stockholm 1998, Helsinki 2000 and St. Petersburg 1996).

The project has the following foundation:

- the notion of the Baltic as a new and vital region in the "new Europe"
- the belief that cultural exchanges and cultural action are vital in the creation of a cultural regional dimension
- the notion of cities rather than national states as the driving force within the arts
- the needs of young professional artists in an international context
- the belief that interdisciplinary work and international projects are vital for the arts today

The model for ArtGenda is to be found in The Mediterranean, where the Biennial des Jeunes Créateurs de la Méditerranée has functioned successfully for a number of years.