



Fearful Visions—Visionary Ideas: Europe’s Youth on the Move

A project organized by the Network for Intercultural Communication e.V.

Our current project encourages young people to think about their fears and hopes for the future in a time of global financial crisis, unemployment and climate change. 14 days, twenty students and one vision: in a workshop and following travelling exhibition Europe’s youth faces its anxieties and fears about a shared European future.

Idea In March 2013, we will invite 20 students from different European cities for a 14-day workshop to discuss their individual and collective European fears. The central point of discussion will be how to creatively employ public space in order to express these fears. The results of the workshop (videos, photos, audio points) will be presented in a mobile exhibition space that travels from August to September 2013 through four European cities: Berlin, Warsaw, Madrid and Brussels. The project is a joint-effort of the Network for Intercultural Communication e.V., the Museum for European Cultures Berlin, the collaborative research center “Mobilized Cultures” at the University of Potsdam and the Institute of European Ethnology at the Humboldt University Berlin. The central aim of the workshop and exhibition are to convey that fear is an essential human experience that is repressed in day-to-day life but nonetheless increasingly finds expression in abstract or conceptual fears (e.g. paranoia) and public debates. In contrast to current tendencies, we want to use fear in a productive and creative way. The “mobilization of fear” is therefore not intended to broaden the “combat zone” but to show that fear can be a productive experience that also holds the promise and possibility of a conjoint European future. As an analytic category it offers important perspectives on the needs and demands of European Youth. The intercultural approach shows that fear denominates a cross-cultural and cross-social status and further represents a moment of mobilization, which offers the possibilities of reflection and change. To face fear in and about Europe does not only facilitate a consciousness for the structures that produce and foster fear but enables us to better understand the present. Knowledge and participation thus provide the basis for the active participation in a conjoint future. The workshop will be open to students between the age of 18 and 27 who come from different disciplines. The call for applications will be conducted via the international offices and the Erasmus coordination of the universities in Berlin and Brandenburg as well as via international institutions that are dedicated to intercultural and inter-European exchange. The project will be presented to the public during the final presentation, as well as the travelling exhibition.

Workshop Thematic introductions and presentations by experts from different vocations (art, culture, psychology, economy and politics) will provide the students with theoretical background knowledge and a point of entry into the current “domains of fear”: global financial crisis, environmental threats and migration as well as gender roles or religious practices. What kinds of stories does Europe tell about these? How are those narratives told and which aspects could be interesting for one’s own work? The participants will be asked to provide examples from their home countries and bring their own experiences to the table. During the second part of the workshop, students will put their theoretical knowledge to practical use and develop their creative ideas in teams. Through interchanging phases of learning, reflection and presentation participants will encounter a wide range of potentials for (inter)action, enabling them to channel creative energy and increasing their own concentration and productivity. Furthermore, the results and experience of the individual workshop days will be discussed and documented during feedback phases. The workshop will take place at the facilities of the Institute of European Ethnology, Berlin.

Exhibition The developed “visions” of the students will be collected in the *comfort zone*, a mobile exhibition space that will travel to four different European cities. The exhibition space, which consists of a minivan and an adjacent tent, will present the students’ work via different forms of media such as video, photography and audio stations. Holding the exhibition in a public space enables us to meet people in their own local environment and to engage them in a productive experience of fear. The workshop’s results will be made available for and want to speak to a general public that rejects or does not have access to traditional sites of cultural expression like concert halls, museums or galleries. The exhibition will be accompanied by a travelogue that will document the local voices, reactions and moods. Visitors will be able to share their own experience in a blog, which will be continuously incorporated into the exhibition, creating a transcultural European dialogue.

The Network’s mission statement NIC’s mission is to encourage an interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue between academia, politics and cultural organizations. The non-profit organization was founded with the primary aim to establish a network for intercultural communication and to convey an intercultural understanding that helps to dispel prejudices valuing diversity in the social and cultural arena. We organize workshops, symposia and non-formal learning activities in order to establish creative spaces and to foster social and cultural participation among Europe’s youth.

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