Exposé

CHECK-IN Øresund

exhibition
CHECK-IN Øresund is a multimedia exhibition made up of 3 mixed media maps, an animated cartoon, a video game imagery and 8 pair of maps for the Öresund region. It is a narrative display of an emerging new society, characterized by disorder and dissimilarity. A society, which is in part the product of the processes of globalization, manifesting itself in a new organizational territory: the region.

target group
The exhibition uses a contemporary MTV-like language, appealing to a younger audience, however addressing a broader audience engaged in society.

concept
It is commonly acknowledged that society is changing, but how do these changes influence the way in which we organize ourselves, relate to one another and perceive reality? *CHECK-IN Øresund* raises these questions through narrative mappings of 3 regions in 3 different parts of the world, an animation of a pre-historic Egyptian wall painting, a digitalized roadmovie and 8 pair of maps questioning the homogenity and the stability of the Öresund Region.

background
According to the UN, 3/4 of the population of the industrialized world, live in cities, but these are not necessarily cities in any traditional sense. The processes of globalization not only diminish the importance of the nation state, they also undermine the concept of the city as a limited and coherent entity. The global expansion of the market economy forces cities to grow artificially large:

"Indeed, in today's competitive world, a standalone city economy cannot compete effectively. A regional economy pooling the strength of the cities in the region together is the way forward."
(Tung Chee Hwa, Chief Executive of Hong Kong, 2003).

The region includes not only the city and its suburbs, but also the provincial towns, the rural districts and the nature reserves. Thus the inhabitants of the region may choose to live in rural settings, while still having direct access to most urban facilities.

The heterogeneous landscape of the region accommodates an equally heterogeneous population. It encompasses many different cultures, co-existing without necessarily interconnecting. Thus it is possible to experience most of the world in the region. Still, an increasing number of people tend to live with like-minded people without interfacing with others.

The global migrations, that give rise to heterogeneous society, can be seen as something positive:

"Immigration has been the engine of California's economic prosperity and the richness of our culture. We have a proud tradition of being one of the most ethnically diverse places in the world."
(Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California, 2003).

But it can also be seen as the opposite. Looming over of the political agenda within many countries, is the fear of the strange(rs). The ghetto has become a symbol of this fear. But are ghettos something necessarily bad?

It is believed that the first Spanish and Sicilian ghettos were established by the Jews themselves. Not until the 14th century were the Jews of some cities forced to live in ghettos, segregated from the rest of the city. Contemporary ghettos, on the other hand, are not just inhabited by the outcasts, but by people from all levels of society who feel they share a common social or cultural identity differentiating them from others. Thus it is no longer the ghetto that is segregated from the city, but the city that is being segregated into ghettos.

At the same time, increased mobility and communication enables cross border tribal formations among like-minded people, who are thus liberated from neighbors whom they had nothing in common with anyway.

While we become globally more interdependent, locally we become more autonomous. The region is not a melting pot like the metropolis of the industrial society. It is more like a salad bowl where various ingredients are tossed together without loosing their particular flavor.

installations
The exhibition consists of 5 video installations placed in the same room, to create a total audio-visual experience.

schizoscape
Animated cartoon
Running time: 55 sec.
Video projection

An animation of an Egyptian wall painting, based on the New Carlsberg Glytoteket's copy of the Griffith Institute's reproduction of the lost original, which was discovered in the prehistoric cemetery of Hierakonpolis and later destroyed by local villagers.

Dating from 3200 BC, the painting was executed just prior to the invention of the hieroglyphs and the establishment of the first Dynasty of Pharaohs. The two events mark the transition to historical time. The painting depicts a series of distinct scenes. The conception of reality that this and many other prehistoric pictures express, namely that situations which are disconnected in time can co-exist in space, mirrors modern conception of reality, in which situations that are disconnected in space can co-exist in time.
In prehistoric times events occurred in slow motion, making them incomprehensible to the human memory as part of a historic evolution. With events now unfolding in fast forward motion, it becomes equally difficult to maintain that sense of evolution.
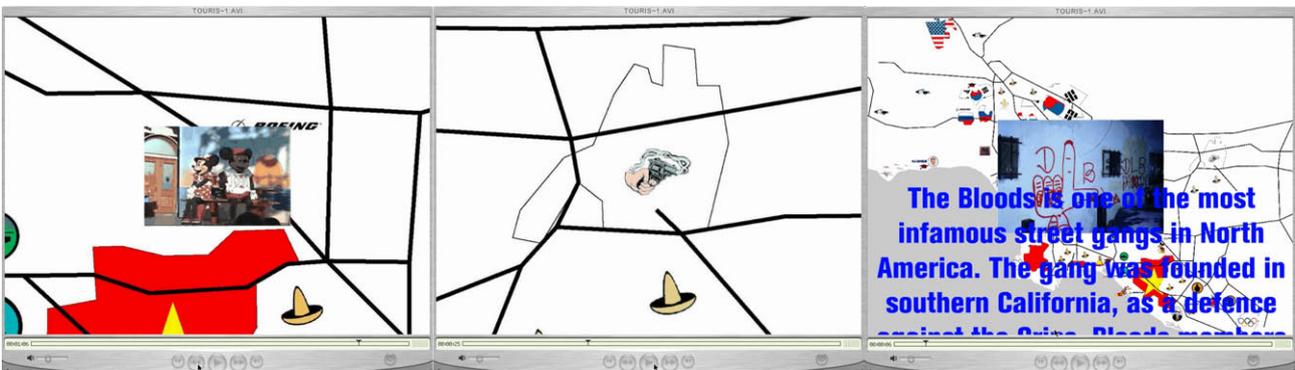
Road Movie
Video game imagery
Running time: 5 min.

We move in landscapes of signs, referring to things that is not there.

touristmap LA
Mixed media map
Running time: 20 min.
Video projection

Map of the Los Angeles region with icons, short pop-up texts, video clips, photos and sound.

Despite earthquakes, wildfires, traffic jams, smog alerts, overloaded sewerage systems, failing water and electricity supply, violent gang wars and riots … people from all over the world still flock to LA.
While hundreds of homeless people live in cardboard homes on the sidewalks of Skid Row, others pay hundreds of dollars for a new shirt from one of the exclusive fashion shops along Rodeo Drive. With its composition of 3rd world slum areas and the most extravagant luxury of the western world, Jewish business districts and Muslim mosques, black ghettos and Hispanic barrios, hippie cultures and fanatical sects, LA is not only one of the world's most heterogeneous regions, it is as such one of the most radical democratic experiments yet to be seen.

touristmap PRD/HK
Mixed media map
Running time: 15 min.
Video projection
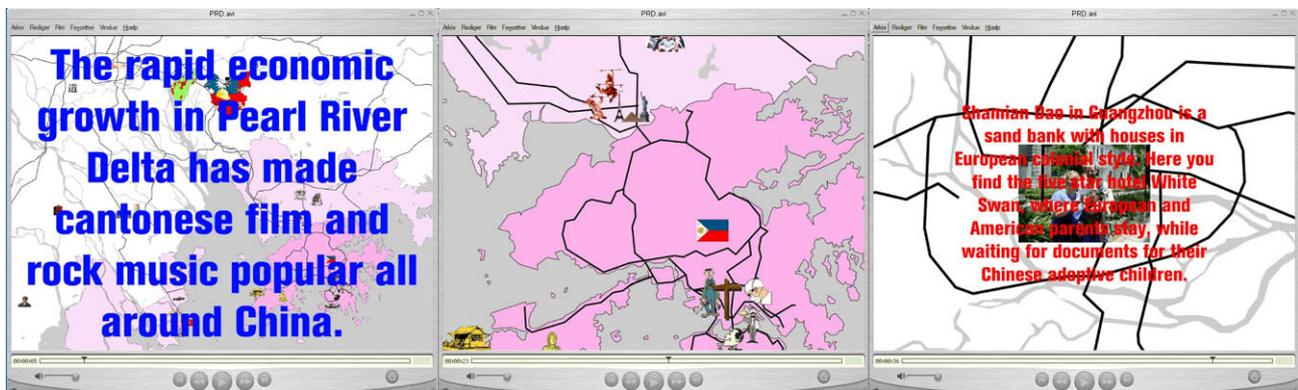
Map of the Pearl River Delta / Hong Kong region with icons, short pop-up texts, video clips, photos and sound.

When the Peoples Republic of China regained control of Hong Kong in 1997, the Pearl River Delta was still a relatively underdeveloped area, while the GNP of Hong Kong (the colony) had exceeded that of England (the colonial power). At that time, many people feared that the communist system would be instated in Hong Kong, but the Chinese have chosen to maintain the concept of "one country - two systems".

Following the take-over, large numbers of Hong Kong businesses have established themselves in the Pearl River Delta area, due to cheap labor. And many businessmen have assumed a double life with one wife in Hong Kong and another in the Pearl River Delta. The conflict between a free market economy and a communist regime, between a sophisticated cosmopolitan population and a mainly rural population, has proven to be a formidable incentive for the development of the entire region, now one of the most dynamic and fastest growing regions in the world

touristmap Oresund
Mixed media map
Running time: 30 min.
Video projection

Map of the Oresund region with icons, short pop-up texts, video clips, photos and sound.

As a trans-national region the Oresund region differs from many other regions. Local discussions often focus on specific historical or cultural conditions, which either connect or disconnect Danes and Swedes, but the inhabitants of the Oresund region do not constitute two homogenuous populations.

Arab immigrants abide by rules and norms that society at large consider medieval, members of the international motorcycle gangs of Bandidos and Hells Angels, have rules and norms not accepted by society at large. And while the well trained employees of the pharmaceutical industry usually follow the rules and norms of society they often feel a greater affiliation with the multinational they work for than they do to the local society they live in. Now even the homogeneous Scandinavian welfare state is threatened with disintegration due to the processes of globalization and ghettoization/tribalization.

credits
CHECK-IN Øresund has been produced for the Danish Center of Architecture, where it is exhibited from March 2004. CoMa in collaboration with Bernhard Snizek, Jonas Sangberg, Björn Gröhn, Søren Christian Madsen, Ali Tabatabai and Regitze Hess. CoMa is an ongoing research project, by the architects Henrik Valeur (Denmark) and Fredrik Fritzson (Sweden). The exhibition has been produced
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