

Embassy of Rockall in Reykjavik

What if you could start a new country from scratch on a tiny island in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean? The Embassy of Rockall in Reykjavik turns the idea of reimagining our world into a 3 month expo. A programme of events, installations and discussions will showcase new technology, provoke discussion and provide a playground for children, adults, and innovative thinkers of all kinds.

Rockall

Rockall is a rock in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Just 25 by 30 metres, it occupies one of the roughest parts of the ocean. It is uninhabitable for humans and if it weren't for the surrounding natural resources, few would care for this barren peak of an extinct volcano.

As it is, the island is highly contested. The UK, Denmark, Ireland and Iceland and even Greenpeace have advanced a claim in recent years. But, the UN Law of the Seas states that no one can claim land that is not permanently habitable, and none of the claimants have been able to install a permanent population.

What if we would make it a habitable and liveable place? Since nobody owns the land, we could start imagining a new country, a new system and find ways to live our lives in a more sustainable way. With technologies improving and global challenges upon us, it's at least a good idea to discuss and investigate these matters.

In the modern society technologies run fast, information and knowledge is more reachable than ever before. Innovations seem to pop up every day and more and more design solutions are available to make every place on this earth, or even in space, habitable.

The Travelling Embassy of Rockall

The Travelling Embassy of Rockall is a physical public intervention in the heart of downtown Reykjavik. The poeto-pragmatic idea of making Rockall habitable is an opportunity to test ideas for off-the-grid living, sustainable energy, innovative food production, sanitation, and even new ways of making clothing fitting to the conditions. Besides this technical challenges of making the island habitable, the new society should be worth living in. We will need economic, social, cultural and ethical systems. The Travelling Embassy of Rockall will host events to discuss these matters. In doing so it becomes an expo that moves from place to place collecting ideas, products and innovations, while bringing fun and discussion to every city.

Reykjavik 2016

In this pilot year the festival will start in Reykjavik, Iceland. This volcanic island in the North Atlantic is one of the claimants of Rockall. Remote and with a small number of inhabitants, it has a history of challenges in international matters and rights over fishing territories. The country experienced a turbulent modernization, financial collapse and a quick recovery. It has been experimenting with co-creating a new

1. INTRODUCTION

constitution and is known for progressiveness in human rights and equality.

These features make it the perfect ground to start off the project.

During July, August and September 2016, a scale model of Rockall and a pavilion will rise in the Old Harbour. This will be the centre of the event site and the place where we'll collect ideas for Rockall. Surrounded by the basic structures for habitation (food, water, energy and shelter) around it. A coffee house will be opened, and local restaurants will serve food on the spot.

A weekly program with talks, concerts, dance and theater performances will be hosted, surrounded by art exhibitions and showcases of innovative techniques.

The Travelling Embassy of Rockall will turn this empty, unused plot into a lively public space. Open to the public and collaborating organisations.

2017 and further.

The basic thought of the Embassy is to gather people, ideas and techniques to scan the possibilities of making desolate places habitable. Every country and every city has different qualities to offer. Therefore it's important to move from place to place, making it a whispering game of knowledge. The Embassy will move to Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Aarhus, Denmark in 2017, before returning to Reykjavik again. Collaborators from both cities will take part in this year's edition. In the following years, the number of cities can expand.

Location

The Travelling Embassy of Rockall will land on an empty plot (Vesturbugt) in the Old Harbour of Reykjavik. There are building plans for the site, which will be most likely to be executed in 2017. This plot is the missing link in between downtown and the new development in the up and coming 'fish packing' -district of Grandi, where restaurants, galleries and small craft shops are newly opening up.

Situated next to the ships wharf with its industrial appearance and activities and next to the Maritime Museum. The views to the harbor with ships coming in and going out makes the place very interesting to turn into a lively and actively used public space. A little boat is placed on the site as a decoration, around which children play during the summer months.

Structures / Installations

To showcase the possibilities of life on Rockall several structures will be built, making it a place where visitors can enjoy the views, play around, drink a cup of coffee or participate in the program.

Pavilion / model Rockall

- The pavilion will be the heart of the site. Used as shelter for the events that will be held. A scale model of Rockall will be part of the pavilion. It will function as the place where people can dream and talk about life on the island. An interactive idea wall will collect and show data.

Portals

- Portals are gold shipping containers equipped with immersive audio and video technology inside. When you enter one, you come face-to-face with someone in a distant Portal somewhere else in the world. <http://www.sharedstudios.com/portals-info.html>

Art container

- An empty 20ft shipping container will function as an exhibition place for one artist per week.

2. PROGRAM

Playing ground

- Draw, or build a rock. Moveable blocks will give children the chance to imagine a perfect rock.

Greenhouse

- When living on an island you will need to be able to grow your own food. The greenhouse will experiment with growing food on a small scale, using waste as a source.

Café

- Everything good starts with a coffee. Kickstarting the day, and a catalyzer for social interaction. The coffee house, run by a local roaster, will be opened every day. Food will be served by local restaurants.

Activities

The project will have a running time of 3 months. From the first of July, to the 30th of September 2016. The structures will be opened from Wednesday until Sunday during this period. Entrance to the events is free.

Art exhibitions and showcases

- Several companies, artists and students will be invited to show their work, related to a theme. This will be an ongoing expo during the whole period.

Weekly program

Every week will have its own theme, ranging from technical topics like off the grid living, or architecture, to more social topics like equality and ethics. Performances will take place between 7pm - 11pm.

- **Wednesdays:** lectures and workshops
Experts will talk, discuss and debate around the theme of the week, or host workshops.
- **Thursdays:** film screenings and discussion
Relevant documentaries and films related to the theme of the week;
- **Fridays:** Performances
Music, theatre, dance;
- **Saturdays:** Performances
Music, theatre, dance;
- **Sundays:** open for public
Structures are open to the public, open stage.

Rockall opens the stage for several cultural initiatives, ranging from music labels, theatre groups and dance collectives to host the Friday and Saturday performances. All performances in the pavilion will be donation based.

Elementary schools will be invited for workshops.

Platform for interactions

3. PROJECT GOAL

As a physical platform for dialogue and collecting ideas on possible future scenarios, the Travelling Embassy of Rockall seeks to contribute to innovation and development within the fields of cultural, educational and social interactions. Exploring, communicating and visualising a society from scratch.

The Travelling Embassy of Rockall believes that the ingredients for a better society are already out there. Their artful combination requires conversations, decisions and collaborations that involve people of all kinds from all conceivable disciplines.. It's therefore valuable to provide an open, interdisciplinary platform which will make manifold ideas, solutions, and technologies visible, accessible and tangible to the public. Various online platforms in the form of websites and social networking sites already act as an open public place to communicate, visualise and explore ideas. These platforms are however restricted to their digital boundaries. The live experience of actively interacting with these issues can encourage a broader group of people to engage in these matters in ways that are impossible online. By combining the popular mediums of food, coffee and music with showcases on future scenarios, the Embassy of Rockall will create an attractive, accessible and thought-provoking place for ideation and recreation.

Through numerous public events in the form of talks, concerts, installations and workshops at Rockall's Embassy, the project will attract and engage citizens and visitors of Reykjavik alike in fun and activities around solutions, experiments and ideas on sustainability and possible future scenarios. The events will have various focal points ranging from social capital to technological innovations, but have the common goal of stimulating learning and exploration of alternative ways of acting, thinking and being in the world.

The Reykjavik Embassy of Rockall is a place for the young and the old to participate and visit, inspire and become inspired. The cultural catalysts of coffee and music are foundational to the Embassy as a place to come together to socialise. The interdisciplinary nature of the activities offered at the Embassy and the broad range of experts, artists and thinkers contributing provides an opportunity for everybody to find something that sparkles their interest and curiosity.

The potential of the Embassy of Rockall as a place for ideas to unfold and develop and as a platform for individuals to form new connections and relationships, supporting knowledge dissemination among the various actors involved in the project.

Strategy

4. COMMUNICATION

The aim for the communication channels is to reach everyone who lives in or visits Reykjavik. It focuses on an adolescent creative target group who are usually open minded and will therefore function as our early adopters. This group is socially very active and will experience a low threshold in visiting new activities. Our aim is to collaborate with these people in order to attract others.

Two spear points of communicating the Embassy of Rockall:

Attention

To attract attention we will create a buzz with short daring questions that will stick to the mind, communicated with the strong identity of Rockall. This way the questions will visually be linked to Rockall and we will raise the first awareness of its existence. The questions will create interest and curiosity with the aim of the name Rockall being when we start.

Inclusive

The Embassy of Rockall is accessible to everyone and thus will incorporate a clear style of communication, that shows what Rockall stands for: building a future

together, for everyone on a tiny island. The values are communicated in a creative, clear style that needs no explanation to be understood for a broad audience, in English and Icelandic.

Communication channels

In the lead up to the summer and during the 3 months that the event will be running, we will use several communication channels and methods.

key influencers: Known people with a varied background are invited as ambassadors of Rockall. Collaborating with them will attract attention of their community.

Popup events like film screenings are organized as an introduction to the idea. This way we can test the concept and start growing a following.

Co-hosting program The programming in the summer will be co-hosted by several partners. By using their existing channels we reach out to their community.

Local media: journalists, bloggers and similar event organizations are actively approached with press releases and invites to events.

Website: the website communicates the background of Rockall. The main themes are shared and it keeps track of ideas and products that have been developed during the event. We share news and visual material about the event.

Facebook: this is the main communication channel since it's the most used medium in Iceland. Here all updates are shared and is used to collect the different social channels in one place. Events are created on the medium to share.

Twitter: Used to share updates that relate to current issues and discussions.

Instagram: Used to share visuals about the progress of the site and to document the events.

The organisation of the project consists of a core team of professionals in different fields. Committed at least 20 hours per week in the preparation and realization phase (chapter 6).

Core team:

René Boonekamp - Creative director / Project coordination

BA Leisure management, social entrepreneur

Hugrún Jónsdóttir - Business manager / Administration

BA Global Health and Sustainability, part time television production at RÚV

Berglind Jónsdóttir - Marketing & PR / Funding

BA Art direction, freelance marketeer

Peter Hartree - Web developer / Lectures and Tech Programming

BA Philosophy, tech entrepreneur.

Adriana Pacheco - Design, Multimedia, Visual Art programming

MSc Graphic and Editorial Design, Cross-disciplinary designer

Extended team (1-3-2016, more to follow):

Baldur Snorrason - Architect

BA Architecture, Freelance architect

Lemke Meijer - All round organisation

MSc. Design for Interaction, Interaction designer at exhibition design company Gagarin

Chelsea Fox, USA/Iceland - Finances, legal advisor

Doctor of Law, corporate attorney

Co-operating partners (1-3-2016, more to follow)

Bas van den Berg, Netherlands - Stichting Treehouse / Keilewerf

Alexander Muchenberger, Denmark - Bureau Detours / Institut for X

Siggtrygur Baldarsson - IMX

Valgeir Valdimarsson - Reykjavik Coworking Unit

Toti Ivarsson - Veraldarvinir
Garðar Eyjolfsson - Listahaskoli Islands
Bas Wlthagen - Fablab Reykjavik
Torfi Þor Torfason - Reykjavik Roasters
Þorir Bergsson - Bergsson Mathús
Lucas Keller - Coocoo's Nest
Hugo Nagtzaam, Netherlands - De Bende
Mads Binderup, Denmark - Bureau Detours
Carrie Denning, USA - Portals
Miquel Ballester, Netherlands - Fairphone
Marcel Schouwenaar, Netherlands - Incredible Machine
Nicolas Kunysz - Ladyboy records
Andrea Carafa, USA - ArtsUp
Steinunn Thorarinsdottir - Artist
Justin Levesque, USA - Artist

6. TIMELINE

January - April 2016: Preparation phase

Setting up project

Team assembly

Confirming location

Set up identity

Communication plan

Fundraising

April - June 2016 Realization phase:

Confirming program

Implementation PR plan

Permits

June - September 2016: Implementation phase:

Building on site

Start of the activities.

October 2016: Evaluation phase:

retrospective, financial review

Important dates:

April 1st - GO / NO GO moment -> prospects on finances

April 2nd: Start marketing campaign

June 1st - GO / NO GO moment -> permits ready, finances sufficient, program completed

June 15th: Start placing structures

July 1st: Start program

September 30th: End program

October 1st: Start clearing the area

October 15th: Evaluation and financial overview

7. FINANCIAL

Budget plan

*In annex

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