

| | T I | M E | T R | A V E | L | | |

Water 2050 – Concepts for the Future

Contents

Introduction to Project	Objectives Method of Time travel – Changing Values – Visionary Course TIME TRAVEL Water 2050: Location – Time – Participants – Implementation
Sphere of Action	OVERTURES – Programme
Organiser	Initiators – Project Partner
Theme of Water	Status Quo
Public relations	Public Relations focuses on specific target groups Film: Accompaniment and Documentation of the TIME TRAVEL
Book	in English, Spanish, French and German Right to demand information for a global, liveable future – Objective and Documentation of TIME TRAVEL
Participation	Conditions

TIME TRAVEL Water 2050 – Concepts for the Future

An interdisciplinary project by OVERTURES

Everyone is talking about water. Public awareness of the resource question and the demand for detailed information are on the rise. It is now more necessary than ever to have an in-depth discussion on the topic, far removed from the superficial debate and scare tactics in existence. Remember: No water, no life!

- The Journey** Traveling into the future, a group of opinion leaders from culture, art, science and politics, economics, technology, environment and society will develop a series of possible scenarios on state of our water supply in Europe in 2050.
- The Question** The method focuses above all on the analysis of clearly different scenarios created from the perspectives and experiences of the participants. The question regarding water is as follows: What shall, will, can or might be the future of our water supply in forty years time? A new angle: the events will be analysed and evaluated at regular intervals on the return journey from future visions back to the present.
- The Result** The difference between the original state of knowledge before Time Travel and the wealth of experience with which one arrives back into the present is of crucial importance. The acquired awareness and fresh perspective on knowledge will shed light on what we need to do today to handle our water resources so that we are better prepared for the situation we expect to find in the future. Possible measures and innovative strategies will be developed in order to satisfy the social, economic and ecological needs to cope with what we envision in the future. These will in turn generate recommendations for actions right now which participants can incorporate and implement in their daily lives.
- The Book** The journey to the year 2050 will be documented in a comprehensive book. The experiences on each stage of the time travel, the results as well as a proposal for a new code of conduct and a new set of values shall be presented based on an overview-type appraisal of the current state of knowledge on "Water". This extensive publication is also the key to a programme for updating facts on the Internet over a period of ten years.

Method of Future Travel

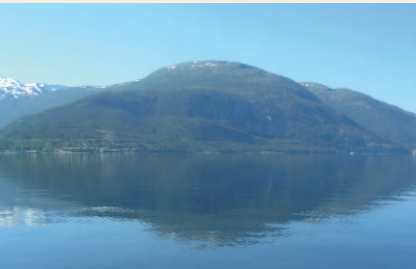
In order for the action plan to be completed in advance, we will embark on our journey TIME TRAVEL WATER 2050 and devise possible scenarios for the water landscape of tomorrow. We are actually relying on Scenario Techniques for this process. This method has already been used successfully to address economic, political, sociological, technological and social questions on the great unknown and on imponderable scenes with significance for the future. The Scenario Method has proven itself as a powerful tool for creating future developments in politics and also in every type and size of business. It is also used for working out sustainable future strategies as well as for solving issues in crisis and risk management. Because nobody can predict the future, irrespective of the given standard of knowledge, it is appropriate to create alternative future environments with the help of this method.

Changing values

The primary aim of Scenario Techniques is to create utmost contrasting scenarios, so that a broad spectrum of possible future situations can be taken into account. This raises the question in the case of TIME TRAVEL 2050: what shall and will, can and might be the future state of our water supply in 40 years time? Which facets of the future are imaginable between end-of-the-world stories about world wars over "Blue Gold" and the last dried up well on the one hand and the ideal of an effective, clever water management on the other? On their journey into possible futures, a group of opinion leaders from the varied worlds of science and politics, economics and technology, environment and society, together with artists, will draft strategies on how the water situation could be secured in the year 2050. As the innovative potential of art is increasingly brought into these future projections, we will be able to create alternatives with the aim of duly undermining linear thought sequences and of exploring unorthodox strategies 3-dimensionally. We are attempting to express a new mode of political and social responsibility for artists to replace the one lost to a large extent as a result of the demands for autonomy in western modernity in the last century.

Visionary Course

Returning from the evoked water landscape to the immediate present, we want to examine the possible actions, innovations and decisions at regular intervals. We can do this by using an imagined situation in a Storyboard and depending on the way of thinking, we can put it into effect or avoid it. When we finally return to the here and now, then it is imperative that we analyse the precise difference between the current state of the world's water and the ideal vision for a liveable future. The fatal consequences for the continuing water supply invariably become apparent when we revert to strategies that are still inadequate or follow today's laissez-faire approach. In order to sustain the water reservoirs and consequently ensure the survival of humanity and nature, it is of vital importance to create a new sense of awareness for our future responsibility and long-term behaviour. A categorical imperative: The supply of global resources can only be regulated in conjunction with the regenerative water cycle and not contrary to it!



The location

The event will take place in Norway at a location with a unique atmosphere on the water.

Hardingasete is located at a the historic site on the Ljones Peninsula with a view to the Hisfjord. The meticulously restored houses of the unorthodox conference centre stem from the 16th to 19th centuries. They provide all amenities, including internet access.

Why Norway? Surrounded by the sea and with its characteristic nature, it is Norway's resources, in particular fossil oil, water power, maritime navigation and fishing, that have enabled the country to become one the world's richest over the past few decades – and this in spite of its relatively low population density. This provides an ideal backdrop, between preservation and growth, for introducing the debate on value changes as a key societal challenge.

The participants from all over the world will have the opportunity there to impart and exchange their experiences and knowledge in personal dialogues.

In tranquility and seclusion, the "travellers" can embark here on their expedition to the future.

The point in time

The journey into the future will start on 15 September (arrival) and continue until 19 September (departure) 2010. A total of three days have been slated for the time travel.



The Participants

The number of participants for the workshop is limited to 16. An interdisciplinary committee will suggest and nominate them. The 16 chosen participants come from diverse social groups and different European countries. The concentration on Europe implies a common European awareness of the problem. Representatives from science and politics, economics, technology, environment and society will set off on the TIME TRAVEL and journey together with cultural representatives and artists.

Implementation

Chair of Time Travel:

Ute Hélène von Reibnitz, SCENARIOS + VISION, Vence, France. The chairperson takes over as tour guide into the future with the assistance of a well-proven Foresight tool, the Scenario Method. Participants enter their input according to the methodological specifications. This procedure guarantees that the participants' knowledge can be ideally structured and that the relevant findings on the future can be processed. The workshop takes place in English.



Sphere of action

TIME TRAVEL WATER 2050 is part of OVERTURES, a series of wide-ranging art projects started by artcircolo in 2000 that reflect the changing role of resources. OVERTURES stand for multidisciplinary "approaches" and unorthodox "food for thought", in which technicians, scientists, economic and media specialists and most importantly artists and curators are drawn into dialogue.

By emphasising the artistic element, it is possible to filter the suggested actions aesthetically in the most open form of communication possible and relay them back to society. In their most recent and once again pre-eminent discourse on TIME TRAVEL WATER 2050, OVERTURES are primarily concerned with implementing visions and futuristic scenarios in a creative manner to effect a change of values in dealing with water.

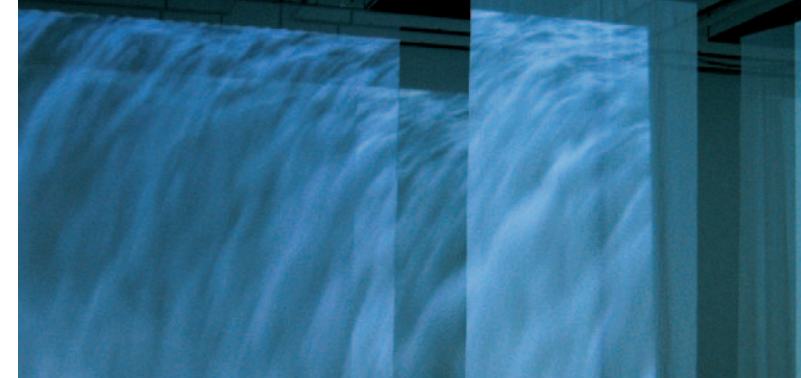
Project Partners

artcircolo

Dr. Serafine Lindemann has been committed to the art forum artcircolo, an experimental and transdisciplinary exhibition and dialogue program, since 1998. In collaboration with its core competencies in art, technology, science, economics and design, artcircolo provides an exciting scope of action for cross-societal questions and future design. The most prominent topics include the environment, research and communication.

Its reference project is OVERTURES, begun in 2000, in which artcircolo, in partnership with Vodafone Group R&D Germany, present the highly relevant range of topics "climate change/ water as an increasingly scarce resource."

OVERTURES already was presented at international art events as ars electronica in Linz (A) and Bienal Venice 2007 (I).



Dr. Bernd Wiemann

heads Vodafone Group Research & Development Germany. The R&D group looks to break new ground worldwide for Vodafone and researches yet undeveloped markets and opportunities for products and services, thereby broadening the horizons of mobile communication technologically, socially and culturally. His tasks include maintaining a creative corporate culture as well as technical and business excellence. In this context Bernd Wiemann pursues manifold processes like journeys into the future, improvisation theatre and transdisciplinary cooperation as a basis for sustainable innovation.

Ute Hélène von Reibnitz

has worked worldwide since 1982 as a free-lance management consultant with her company SCENARIOS + VISION, providing advice for big and medium size businesses. She conducts company-specific consultancy projects, seminars, workshops and coaching on topics such as Foresight, Scenario Techniques, innovation and creativity techniques as well as intercultural management.

Prof. Dr.Ir. Han Brezet

leads the Design for Sustainability (DfS) program at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering in Delft. He also acts as visiting professor at the IIIIEE –Environmental Sciences– Institute of Lund University in Sweden. His research focus and scientific publications are on the ecodesign of products and services, with special attention on energy and materials efficiency. Besides further international scientific positions he is involved in various projects in emerging economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

authenticore

For 14 years, the Norwegian travel agency authenticore has provided a value-oriented program that stands for the conveyance of local traditions and cultures. The founder, Karina Fürst, builds on travel concepts, encounters and personal experiences that create an awareness for holistic habitats as a stepping stone for solidarity, tolerance and respect between man and nature.

The Topic of Water

Status Quo

No Water, No Life!

Aqua est vita! (Water is life!) – this fundamental law of existence, prevailing since before antiquity, has been taken too much for granted and has subsequently been suppressed again and again. Everybody is now asking questions about global responsibility with regard to the naturally limited supply of water. Based on the fact that water is ranked number one on the list of life-giving treasures in our world, we can infer a far-reaching dictum: every person in every part of the world should have as a natural birth right free access to the wet element. We can hardly deny the fact that the situation is very different in reality, that far too many people on earth already suffer from an insufficient or even a contaminated water supply. We seem to have reached that precarious point in the history of humanity, at which decisions have to be made about how increasingly scarce water resources will be distributed in the future and in particular who will have jurisdiction over them. There is still time to steer a course which is consistent with economic policy and one that also creates a positive, just, lasting and above all peaceful future with sufficient water reserves for the whole of humanity. It is high time to begin research on the future opportunities of water in terms of geographical and socially differentiated conditions.

Blue Gold

Whether one takes the figurative or oral tradition of the original inhabitants, such as the Australian Aborigines, or goes through the texts of world religions, it is not surprising that most traditions speak of the sacredness of water. In antiquity, water was actually regarded as a sacred source to be used when consulting the oracle. This almost religious respect for water as the ultimate elixir of life has been lost over the centuries. Even though the water supply situation on our planet has long since reached a state of high alert, the wider public has not yet registered the crisis, or at least does not seem to have. While the general level of awareness about the increasing dangers of global warming has obviously risen in recent times, a certain segment of humanity, whose water is still flowing without any restrictions, has not yet acknowledged the second source of danger to ecological equilibrium on a worldwide scale.



The limited water reserves of the earth are based on a highly sensitive regenerative cycle. Due to the rise in the world's population they can become very scarce and not only in the regions that have always suffered from drought.

Speculation in water?

While over a billion people nowadays no longer have access to clean drinking water, we, in the privileged First World, use, pollute and waste the groundwater reserves of our planet so casually and rapidly that nature and humanity could be seriously endangered in the foreseeable future. At the same time, water has become a re-locatable commodity in our late capitalistic society, one that is exploited according to every trading rule on the global marketplace. Since the Global Water Forum 2000 in The Hague water may now officially be traded as a commodity. Multinational companies have discovered the struggle for water resources as their future market and have thus taken over in great style the supply of water to financially weak communities in the Third World and to some extent in a Europe now ready for privatisation. The business enterprise with bottled drinking has virtually exploded, and it is no coincidence that giant corporations are buying up more and more sources of water worldwide.

Water Wars

People are already speaking about the fact that the wars of the 21st century will be fought over water – between neighbours, countries, continents and between rich and poor. The cities in which 50% of the world's population already live, in particular the so-called mega cities, have generated special problems with regard to the supply of water. It is not just the fact that millions of people create enormous problems regarding sewage disposal, but also that as a result of sealing the earth's surface in huge urban areas rainwater now mainly runs off into rivers and subsequently into the sea, no longer seeping into the earth to a sufficient degree that guarantees the preservation of the water table. Countdown: we have to pave the way now for a future that secures a water supply for everyone.



Public Relations

TIME TRAVEL will be covered by chosen representatives of the media:
Opinion forming press from the sections economics and science, feature pages and ethics.

Aim of the coverage:

Public awareness of the TIME TRAVEL also in Europe
Positive coverage on the complexity of the project

Method:

Information to the press beforehand
Press conference
Opportunity for careful selection of media representatives to observe the TIME TRAVEL
Interviews with the participants after the TIME TRAVEL
Press releases after the TIME TRAVEL

Media partner:

The project can be presented in a careful and tightly focused manner in partnerships with the media.

Film Documentation:

TIME TRAVEL Water 2050 will be made into a documentary film.

The Book

The journey to the year 2050 will be documented in a comprehensive book. The oekom publishing house will publish it in conjunction with the series Material Histories. The experiences during each stage of travel, the results, as well as a proposal for a new code of conduct and a new set of values will be presented based on an overview-type review of the current state of knowledge on "water". This extensive publication is also the key to a programme for updating facts via Internet for a period of ten years.

The Material Histories Series

The Material Histories series tells the biographical stories of material that has written and continues to write history. A periodic table of daily life is created volume for volume, enticing the reader into uncharted dimensions of a seemingly known world. There are materials that are elementary for our societal, economic and environmental development. These supposedly banal substances, such as dust or revolutionary materials like aluminium, form the interface between man and nature. The Material Histories series is dedicated to this underrated matter that shapes our lives. Many of these substances have traveled a long way before we ever buy them as products or handle them at all. If we follow what went before, we encounter the surprising and astounding, the repressed and unconscious. The conflicts of our globalised world manifest in the lifelines of these materials.

The series Material Histories from the Environment Science Centre at the University of Augsburg is brought to you by Prof. Dr. Armin Reller and Dr. Jens Soentgen in conjunction with the publishers oekom e.V.

Previously Published Titles in the Series

Volume 1: Dust – Mirror of the Environment. Jens Soentgen, Knut Völzke (Editor)

Volume 2: Coffee – The Epic of a Commodity. Heinrich Eduard Jacob

Volume 3: Wood – How a Natural Material Writes History. Joachim Radkau

Volume 4: Aluminium – Modern Metal. Luitgard Marschall

Volume 5: CO₂ – Climate Killer and Elixir of Life

More informations about Germanys first carbon neutral publishing house at <http://www.oekom.de/ueber-uns/nachhaltigkeit-bei-oekom/klimaneutraler-verlag.html>.



Attendance

Preparation:

The participants will receive a dossier on the topic of water and on the method of "future travel" in due time to prepare.

Transfer:

The participants will be collected at their place of arrival (airport Bergen, Norway) and taken by shuttle to the event location. For departure, we will organize transfer to the airport or train station.

Accommodation:

Participants will stay in comfortable rooms.

Catering:

We will provide the highest standard of catering, starting with a conference dinner. Throughout the TIME TRAVEL, breakfast, lunch and dinner are provided.

Result:

Each participant receives a TIME TRAVEL report, a DVD with scenes from the TIME TRAVEL, as well as the book on publication.

Organiser / project leadership

Project Management

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