

COP23 Climate Summit in Bonn, Nov. 2017

Description of Jens Galschiøt and AIDOH'S (Art In Defence of Humanism) activities

Why COP23:

We want to follow up on the activities from COP21 in Paris and many other climate summits because we believe that it is essential to do all we can to prevent man made climate change.

We believe that art specifically has an important role to play. Through its visual expression it can clarify the consequences of a world in meltdown for politicians and the general public. Art can partner itself with climate NGOs and scientists, and help them communicate their knowledge and start discussions about global warming.

We expect a massive influx of people to COP23. Both governmental leaders and activists from all over the world, due to Trumps backing out of the Paris agreement.

We have made sort of a hectic plan which among other things includes the installation of the Polar Bear sculpture, Unbearable, in Bonn and in New York as a commentary on Trump's climate scepticism. Moreover we plan to display the refugee ship with its 80 copper refugees, the Polar Bear Army, and a 6 foot tall smoking Statue of Liberty called Freedom to Pollute. We already have a few sponsors, we are in touch with an NGO, and we have a very talented and committed representative in Bonn who is preparing the way for the events.

All of this requires a lot of administration and cooperation from both collaborators and volunteers. We are in the process of establishing contacts with different actors, and are open to other collaborators in any capacity.

We will invite NGOs, Foundations, activists, and politicians who read this to think whether they could be collaborators or backers for the project in different ways.

Below is an attempt to list all the activities planned, but it is of course just a rough projection and there will probably be things added on or stuck off.

Contact us for further information.

Jens Galschiøt, sculptor. Denmark, June 2017.



‘Unbearable’ in Bonn and New York

The 6 meter tall and 12 meter long climate sculpture will be exhibited in the center of Bonn for COP23. After the climate summit the sculpture will be moved directly to New York.

The idea is to send a symbolic message from activists, scientists and world leaders from COP23 to the USA by placing the sculpture of the impaled polar bear close to the Trump Tower. ‘Unbearable’ is precisely an artistic representation of how much human overproduction is affecting the atmosphere. Therefore the sculpture will work as a kind of education to show Americans the effects of Global Warming while in one displaying the catastrophic direction climate change puts us in.

Bonn: ‘Unbearable’, in the center of the city or at COP23. We are currently researching several exhibition options: 1. In front of the main entrance to the COP23 conference. 2. Centrally in Bonn in Münster Platz or Markt. 3. In front of Bonn’s art museum which is right next to the COP23 conference. 4. Where the climate demonstrations end.

The sculpture has a base of 12 by 3 meters. We plan on setting it up in good time before the summit.

New York. The ‘Unbearable’ sculpture will be exhibited in Central Park or even better in front of the American Museum of Natural History which is located in Manhattan right next to Central Park. We have made measurements and the sculpture could be exhibited directly on the landing outside the museum.

The Polar Bear Army

The ‘army’ of the ten polar bears, (people in costume), went to COP21 in Paris and got enough attention to end up all over the media. The ‘polar bear army’ will tour Bonn, both in the streets, at the conference and in the demonstrations. The 10 polar bears walk together and will, like in Paris, garner plenty of attention. We are considering expanding the manifestation by sewing more polar bear costumes, so we can expand the army headed to Bonn. Moreover there are multiple kids in the Gallery’s crew, 0-4 years old, who we are also sewing polar bear costumes for.

Status: We have 10 polar bear costumes and we are in contact with the Green Party in Denmark, who might mobilize another Polar Bear “army”. It could be a lot of fun and as the polar bears are already well known from COP21 in Paris we will easily be able to ‘conquer’ Bonn.

COP23 side-event with the polar bears.

The Danish collective of environmental NGOs GROUP 92 has the possibility of organizing an official side event for COP23. Maybe the sculpture ‘Unbearable’ and the polar bear army could be used for this.

- The massive sculpture could be installed in front of the main entrance, and the idea of the sculpture possibly moving to New York after the conference could act as a premise for the event.
- 24 cm: We have calculated that the climate graph that the polar bear is impaled on has risen 24 cm since COP21 in Paris. We could update/extend the graph by 24 centimetres as a visual statement that the rising CO2 emissions are still on a catastrophic course. It would of course require a crane, but the spectacle would make a fantastic visual.

- The Polar Bear Army. It would garner plenty of attention if 10 polar bears walked in to the conference area.
- We have a bunch of smaller ‘Unbearable’ models we maybe can use. They are different sizes, the largest we have measures 60 by 60 centimeters and are mounted on a pike which measures around 2 meters. We have 5 of those models.

The Refugee Ship on the river in Bonn.

We have made plans about getting the Refugee Ship to sail up and down the river Rhine which passes by the conference center and cuts through the city of Bonn. The ship in mind, which earlier transported refugees to Lampedusa, will be mounted with 80 refugee sculptures made of copper. In Bonn the Refugee Ship will draw attention to the 200 million climate refugees who the UN expects the effects of Global Warming will produce in the next 30 years.

In June 2017 the Refugee Ship, (same sculptures but on a different ship) was in Kassel as part of an unofficial art manifestation at the art exhibition Documenta14, in cooperation with the German NGO OUTLAW.die Stiftung). From July through October 2017 the ship will tour 23 cities throughout Germany. This will also be arranged by the NGO OUTLAW.die Stiftung).

OUTLAW has a massive network with over 1500 members and many local branches in Germany. OUTLAW orchestrated the tour through Germany in partnership with over 80 NGOs, so they also have an enormous network which we might pull from with regards to our activities in Bonn.

We are missing the funding and the permission to sail on the river (if this is needed).

Freedom To Pollute

We are bringing the 6 meter tall smoking Statue of Liberty, ‘Freedom To Pollute’, (which we also displayed at COP21 in Paris), to Bonn. We expect to exhibit it in the NGO camp and also take it with us to the demonstrations. The sculpture can easily be moved to strategic places in the city.

The sculpture has become even more relevant because of USA’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement.