



afb: Mush district Gyumri Armenië (google earth)



afb: Mush district Gyumri Armenië (fotografie: Jan Doms)

## Jan Doms - MUSHTOPIA 2019

art & architecture in motion

Lodz (Poland) Yerevan en Gyumri (Armenia)

### *Introduction*

On September 10th, Rebecca Nelemans (regional agent South of the Mondriaan Fund) visited Jan Doms' studio to learn more about his plan to work abroad for a period (Lodz, Poland and Yerevan and Gyumri in Armenia) under the project name MUSHTOPIA 2019.

In order to be able to present the multi-disciplinary character of this work period - from April to September 2019 - to colleagues, Doms was asked to provide a brief overview of the design and the content-related approach to this work period. You will find the description below.

Subsequently, in Amsterdam at the Mondriaan Fund an interview was held with Mr. Philip Montnor (Grants Officer) and in addition with Ms. Bonnie Dumanaw (contact point interdisciplinary projects of six Dutch Culture Funds). In consultation, it was decided to make an application for Project Investment Artist.

### *Background*

Jan Doms (1949) has a twofold educational background. One in the field of constructive sculpture and one in the field of architecture and urban design. In that respect, he made study trips within Europe and visited Brazil, Japan and the United States. Central to his work is 'movement' of many kinds with the focus, the human being who sets everything in motion.

His dynamic sculptures often form the basis for his performances, in which he frequently collaborates with artists from the various stage disciplines such as electronics, sound, music, voice, acting, animation, dance and movement.

In addition, his work is strongly connected to urban dynamics. That brought him to countries such as Poland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Spain and Armenia. He finds inspiration for his work in the Russian (and international) avant-garde and changes (movements) in today's society.

### *History*

Much of Jan Doms' work takes place at the interface between art and architecture in the broadest sense. It is also for this reason that ACROSS Yerevan (Artist in Residence Program) and the City Research Center Gyumri invited Jan Doms in 2015 to create a project aimed at the reconstruction of Gyumri, in collaboration with art and architecture students. All this against the background that Gyumri was hit in 1988 by a heavy earthquake. The project has contributed to the generation of new social, cultural and urbanistic ideas for the future.





pict: interior 'Dome' Gyumri (photography: Jan Doms 2015)



pict: lino Mush Jan Doms 2015

### ***Mushtopia - art & architecture in motion***

June 2018 Mkrtich Tonoyan (President ACOSS Yerevan) and Ashot Mirzoyan (Director City Research Center Gyumri) asked whether it would be possible to start a new (follow-up) project in 2019 on and in line with the first project 'Gyumri Urban Design Laboratory', where the Emili Aregak Center Gyumri could serve as a base again.

### ***Mush***

In consultation with the City Research Center Gyumri, it was decided to focus on the Mush district.

The district of Mush is a specific part of the Gyumri North urban expansion, for the rehousing of thousands of residents affected by the aforementioned earthquake in 1988. This part of Gyumri North is, due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union (1991), never phased out. The district has become a true 'ghost town'. As a result of this unforeseen stagnation in housing, many residents still live in 'domes' - the first emergency housing of those days, made of steel containers. In the summer almost unbearable because of the heat and in the winter hardly livable because of the cold.

### ***Utopia***

For the Mush approach, inspiration is found among others from the utopians Thomas More (humanist), Jakov Černishov (constructivist and graphic designer) and Hendrik Wijdeveld (architect and urban planner), known for the statement "Plan the impossible".

In order to revive a congested district such as Mush, much brainpower, imagination and creative power is needed.

### ***Mushtopia***

The basis for Mushtopia:

1. Is formed by the organization of an (international) Mushtopia laboratory (May 2019) for research and design, for and with young professionals and students in the field of art, design and science.
2. The results are then made public by means of a documentary film and publication and in the form of a three-day festival (13 - 15 September 2019) at the Mush location, so that this deserted area is temporarily brought to life and populated for the first time.
3. The results are also shown at the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art (ACCEA / NPAK) in Yerevan as part of the presentation of the art works of Jan Doms.





pict: cover Jan Doms Mushtopia - art & architecture in motion ACCEA Yerevan - Jan Doms 2018



pict: cover CASIO animation ⊗ graphic art ⊗ architecture Jan Doms 2018

*University for Architecture Yerevan | Art Academy Gyumri | Fontys School of Fine and Performing Arts | Fontys Masters of Architecture and Urbanism (MA+U) | Coventry University - School of Art & Design | Art Academy Lodz*

In the meantime, several students and graduates from the above-mentioned vocational programs have already signed up to participate in the international Mushtopia Laboratory for Research and Design at the Emili Aregak Center Gyumri, in the period May 2019. The City Research Center Gyumri and others offers thereby the necessary assistance.

### ***Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art Yerevan (ACCEA)***

After Doms' recent visit to Armenia in preparation for Mushtopia, there was a request in the form of an invitation for the presentation of his work in the context of Mushtopia. Management and staff of the Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art Yerevan, wants to show and clarify the relationship between Doms' autonomous dynamic sculptures and his applied work for professionals and the public. They want to do this in the form of exhibitions, a series of performances in the Grand Hall in various ensembles, in which Armenian artists are also involved. And in addition to that, organize a series of lectures, screenings and smaller performances in the theater of ACCEA. So over a period of two months ACCEA will also act as a platform and workshop for collaboration with Armenian artists, designers and artists. The results will be part of the weekly presentation program 'Mushtopia - Showtime' and - if applicable and possible - also be part of the Mushtopia Festival in Mush, Gyumri, from 13 to 15 September 2019.

### ***Residency Galeria Wschodnia [AIR] Lodz - Book Art Museum Lodz / Art Academy Lodz (PL)***

Prior to the work period in Armenia (May - September 2019), Adam Klimczak, (co)founder of Galeria Wschodnia, invited Jan Doms to create a new project in April / March 2019 in collaboration with the Book Art Museum as part of Galeria Wschodnia AIR (artist in residence). Everything in the context of Mushtopia. There is also the connection with the Art Academy Lodz and its students, for which constructive sculptor Tomek Matuszak, who is also associated with the sculpture department at the academy, has taken the initiative.

### ***Motivation***

This working period in Poland and in Armenia in 2019 offers Jan Doms the opportunity to further articulate the interaction between his free work and applied work, not in the least by working together with students, young professionals and artists from Armenia, Poland and other countries.

The stages involved, which are based on the avant-garde 'tradition' - ACCEA in Yerevan and Galeria Wschodnia in Lodz - attach great importance to a





pict: studio Jan Doms 2018 (photography: Jan Doms)



pict: still ultra short film 'Greetings for Armenië' Jan Doms 2017 (camera: Rudi Klumpkens)

meaningful connection between art, artist and society, without wanting to curtail the artistic freedom of the artist. They are separate from commerce and are only focused on artistic content. That certainly also applies to ACOSS, the Armenian artist-in-residence organization that Jan Doms initially invited.

### Summary Mushtopia 2019

Two leading venues for contemporary and experimental art, ACCEA in Yerevan, Armenia, and Galeria Wschodnia in Lodz, Poland, invited Jan Doms to show his work in 2019, to work on the spot and also to work with students, young professionals and artists.

The reason for these invitations are on the one hand the nature and scale of the multi-disciplinary work of Jan Doms on the interface between art and architecture in the broad sense and on the other hand the Mushtopia project that he has set up at the invitation of ACOSS, Yerevan (artist-in-residence) and the City Research Center Gyumri.

The Mushtopia set-up provides for the organization of an international research and design laboratory that focuses on Mush, a never-finished district in northern Gyumri, which was largely destroyed in 1988 by an earthquake. The results of the laboratory are then shown in the form of a film report, a publication and a three-day festival in this deserted area, in order to temporarily bring this 'ghost town' to life.

For Jan Doms this offers an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen and articulate the connection between his free and applied work and at the same time, in a metaphorical sense, to focus on young generations to contribute to a meaningful relationship between art, artist and society. Alles dank zij de steun van ACOSS in Yerevan, Galeria Wschodnia in Lodz, ACCEA in Yerevan, the City Research Center and the Emili Aregak Center in Gyumri and many others.

### Appendix

The plan preparation for this work period is still in full swing. It is now a matter of laying a foundation that makes it possible to work freely six months in various disciplines. To be able to work together on different fronts and exchange ideas and experiences with young professionals, students and artists and designers from Poland and Armenia.

Anyone who could contribute to Mushtopia - in whatever form - is cordially invited.

### Contact

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