

APPEAL

A Lighthouse for Lampedusa!

Almost every day we get news of stranded refugees in the south of Europe. Annually about 20 000 refugees try to reach Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa. Thousands drown in the sea - aid organisations estimate 10 out of 100 migrants die during the dangerous crossing.

Endeavours to improve and sustain living conditions in the immigrants' country of origin are of prime importance - but even if rich countries are willing to help, this will take time and it will be a matter of decades, if not generations, before people are confident enough not to leave their homelands.

As long as people put their life at risk, as long as people die crossing the Mediterranean in a small nutshell for the sake of a better future... we have to ask ourselves: what can be done?!

A lighthouse with a maximum strength beam can provide essential orientation at sea and help to reduce the danger to life.

Over the last few months, Berlin artist Thomas Kilpper developed this idea for a new art project with a double function: in collaboration with architects, engineers and local people he wants to build a lighthouse with an adjacent arts center on Lampedusa.

A tower and a landmark building, capable of hosting a diverse and transnational programme of communication, negotiation, exhibitions, concerts and other cultural events on its ground floor; a place that attracts not only new visitors to the island but also local people - making Lampedusa not just a location to talk about, but also somewhere to learn from and listen to each other.

This project underlines the need for a solution to the refugee problem: it's not possible to solve it via restrictions and declaring a 'state of emergency'. We call for a humanitarian and just immigration and integration policy in Europe. None of the refugees is illegal. We oppose any idea to establish a 'Fortress Europe'. The lighthouse will be a self-confident signal: 'here we are, we do not hide'.

In December the first stage of the project will be launched. Thomas Kilpper will build a symbolic model made from boats of immigrants who have arrived in Lampedusa, first at the disparti&disparti project space in Reggio Emilia, and then again, in spring 2009 at Villa Romana in Florence, in order to present the idea to another public.

The second stage - finding ways to realise the tower on Lampedusa - will start as soon as the project gets local and international support.

This project ties in with a history of magnificent lighthouse constructions that have already been built, for example in Alexandria in 300 B.C. - mentioned as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Let us once more build a 'wonder' of welcome - this time on the other side of the sea!

We the undersigned are in support of this project.

November 2008

NAME:

PROFESSION:

ADDRESS:

Please write down your full name, profession and home address / at least home town and send these informations back to sender. You are kindly invited to forward this appeal to all your friends and colleagues !

Enquiries to

disparti&disparti : 0039.3356097304 / info@dispartiedisparti.org

Villa Romana: 0039.055221654 / info@villaromana.org