

## **The Sense of Place Manifesto**

### **What We Stand For**

Sense of Place is a cultural development organization that seeks to represent and enhance the unique character of the Wadden Sea and its surroundings through art and design projects. Together with residents and the landscape, we tell the story of the North. These are often rich, layered processes with many responsibilities in which all parties - the creators, residents, stakeholders and the landscape itself - work together equally. This manifesto serves as a guide and source of inspiration for all who are involved. Its purpose is to inform, excite and create enthusiasm in the making of plans and the realization of projects.

#### **Believing is seeing.**

Take time to allow yourself to dream.

In the leadup to each Sense of Place project, artists provide the space for a conversation in which all parties involved agree on a shared vision. This takes place before the practical thinking starts - imagination is encouraged, as is the seeing of all possibilities, the sharing of enthusiasm and the formation of a common intention.

#### **That which is already there.**

Take time to get to know the place.

Each work of art in a public space is an invitation to view or experience things in an imaginative way. Slow down and open yourself up to the place and listen to its extraordinary stories. A Sense of Place project lends the surroundings the attention it deserves. It entices you to absorb the place - to see it better, to hear it, smell it and feel it.

#### **Location, location, location.**

Make sure that each project is specific to that place, and thus becomes a natural part of the landscape.

A Sense of Place project is carefully tailored to the unique characteristics and context of its surroundings. The location acts as inspiration, and educates. Each project becomes a destination in the landscape as well as a place for wonder and reflection.

## **The Landscape is Fluid.**

Recognize that nothing is forever. Landscapes can, may and sometimes *must* change.

Everything is in motion and subject to change. You can either try to frantically hold it back, or go with the flow as in the past, when people lived with the water and the tides. A work of art can move fluidly and become part of the transitions that take place in the landscape. Embrace change and ephemerality.

## **Landscape - Community - Connectedness**

Ensure the involvement of locals.

This landscape was created by people; without it, the people would not exist. Ensure that the local community is involved in the project and feels that these works of art are both for and of them. A common phenomenon is 'transition pain': the difficulties people can experience with drastic changes to the natural surroundings that they know and love. We want to seek out 'transition pleasure': the playful, open-minded, engaged exploration with that which comes and goes. How can art play a role in a new 'alliance' between culture and nature?

## **In Trusted Hands.**

Ensure continuous commitment from everyone involved.

The realization of art in public space is often a communal process between government, organizations, local residents and artists. Create a respectful, inclusive working environment in which each person can fulfill their role with verve. The momentum and sense of shared ownership that can arise have great value.

## **No pain, no gain.**

Recognize and acknowledge that developing art in public spaces takes a lot of time, money and effort.

Bringing change to a landscape, in the environment in which we live, is not only a tremendous technical challenge, but a cultural deed above all. Place value on those things, especially the time, energy and money involved. These are grand processes that will have visible impact. A work of art in the landscape can encourage people to

think about societal issues, history, heritage and the spaces we occupy, and invite them to look at what already exists from a different perspective.

**Do it. It can be done. Hang in there.**

Remind one another of the common vision.

Think big and don't let regulations hold you back. Have the courage to invite others to colour outside the lines and be open to unexpected surprises. Tell the story or create the project we didn't know we wanted. Go against the current, stumbling, flailing, with courage and determination despite uncertainty. Do it. It *can* be done.