

A history of technology

In the 19th century the industrial revolution re-shaped much of western Europe. The mechanical world was born. An old chinese proverb says that to a person who's only tool is a hammer, everything else looks like nail. The industrial revolution provided us a steam engine and the world looked suddenly like a gearbox, waiting to be powered by our steam engine. Not only the world transformed into a giant machine, but also our body's became machines. In common language, the heart was the engine, the brain the control-panel, the nerves became of steel. This *New Vision* reshaped many of the city's in europe, cut them loose from their Medieval roots and propelled the 17th century infrastructures into the mechanical future. The city had come a part of *The Machine* and labour had become the fuel to keep the engines going. Cheap fuel, because everybody can do a routine, but only few can master *The Machine*. Hagen (as part of the industrialization of the entire Ruhr area) became a full mechanical industrialized city.

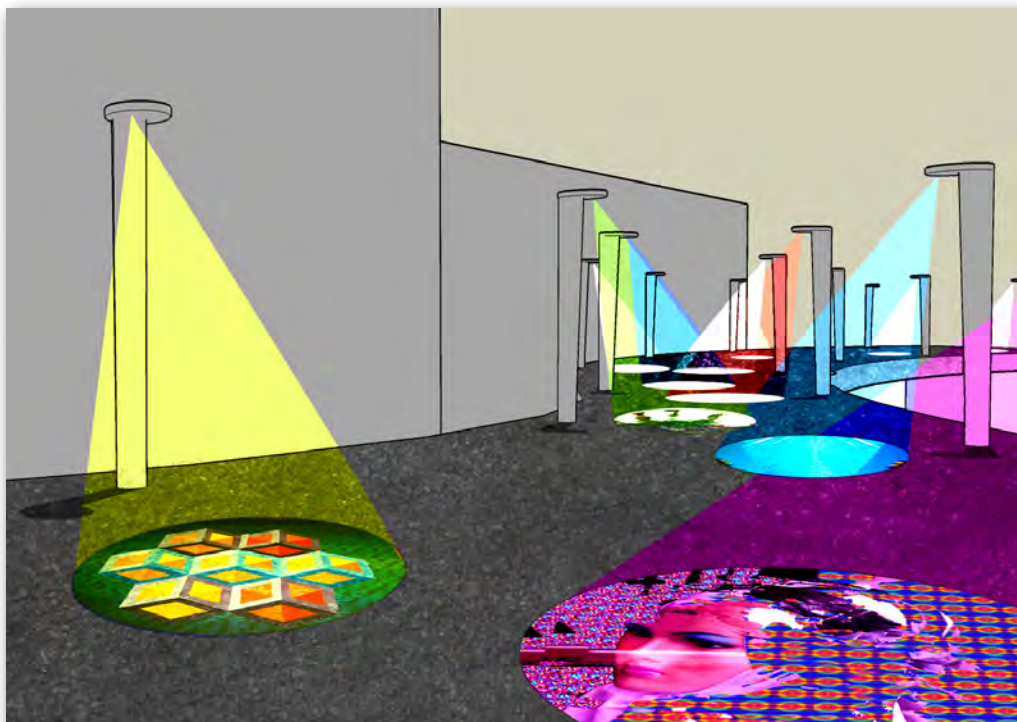
But in the 1960's *The Machine* started to stutter. Maybe the world was not a machine but a flower pot? And our body not a device but an organism? The coal industry collapsed. Pollution became an issue. In the seventies heavy industry was not so cool anymore; not for an 'first world' country. Banking, electronics, services and culture changed *The Machine*. Instead of producing goodies, its started to produce zero's and one's; information. In the 1980's and 1990 information-culture took over the world. Man's only tool is now a computer and the world subsequently, became a database...

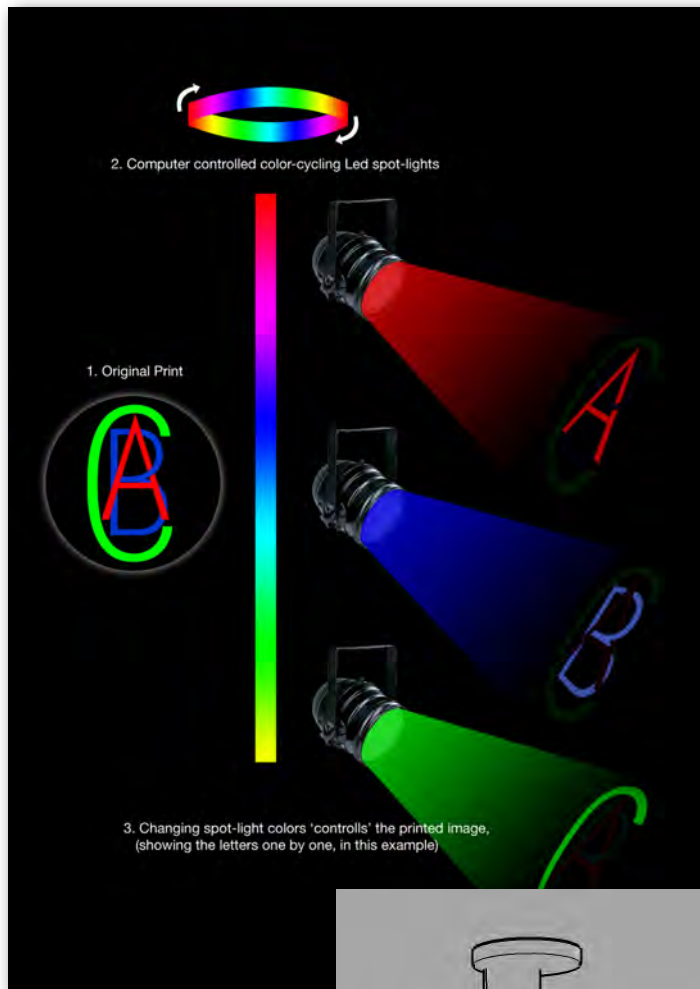
This is where Hagen was swept off the main stage of world-economy. Lack of information-culture and digital industry, disconnected from the past and tradition, absence of a wealthy educated middle-class, a population with many cultural identities and a city centre with scars from the last war. No culture, no future? How to prepare for a possible future?



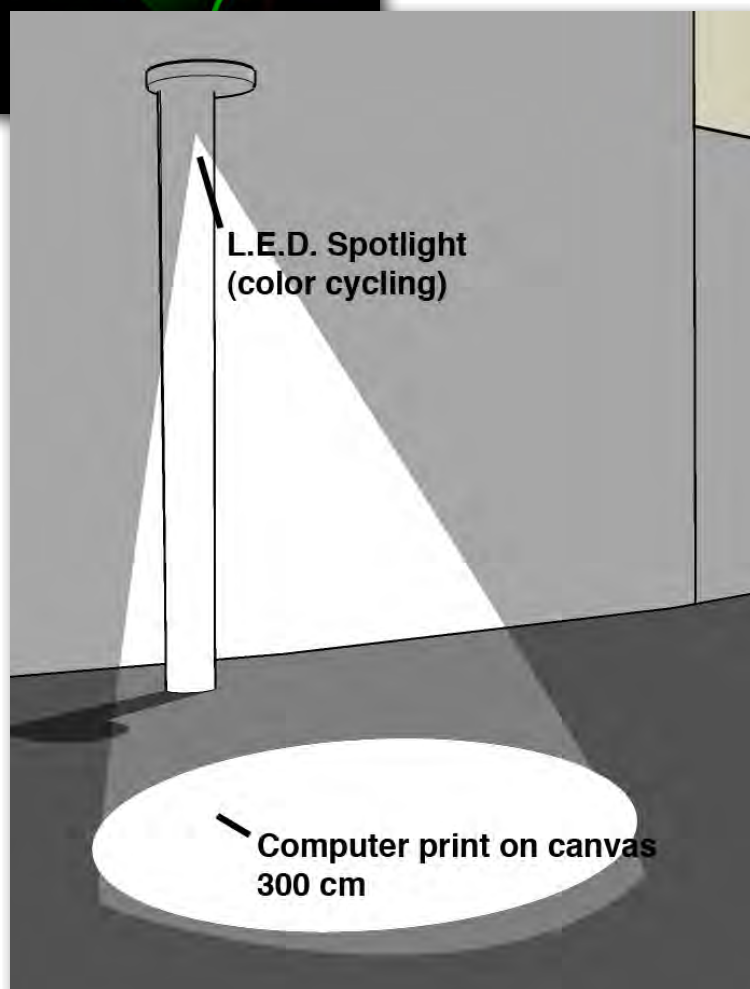
Preparations for a Possible Future. Ingredients:

- 20 computer-prints in color, round, 300cm, at the base of highway lampposts on the road, over a total stretch of 300 meters.
- 20 LED spot lights (computer controlled, continuously shifting color), attached to the lampposts.
- A Bridge in the centre of Hagen.

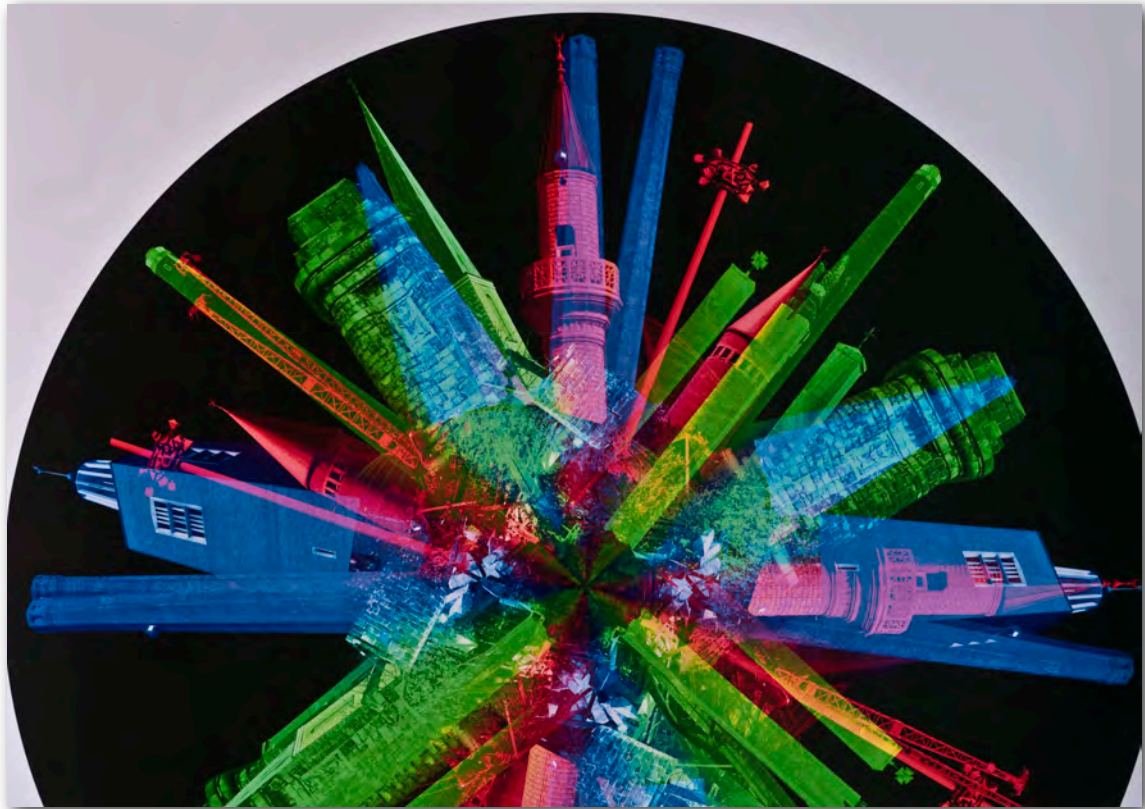




The Bridge will be closed for traffic for three days. The bridge and the lampposts will become an integrated part of the artwork. The LED spotlights produce a bright colored light beam that collides exactly with computer-prints on the asphalt. The prints are specially color-coded and by changing the color of the LED spotlights, images can appear and disappear, making elementary animations. Changing the color of the light on the prints can create an illusion of movement on a print, an Illusion of rotating gears for instance.







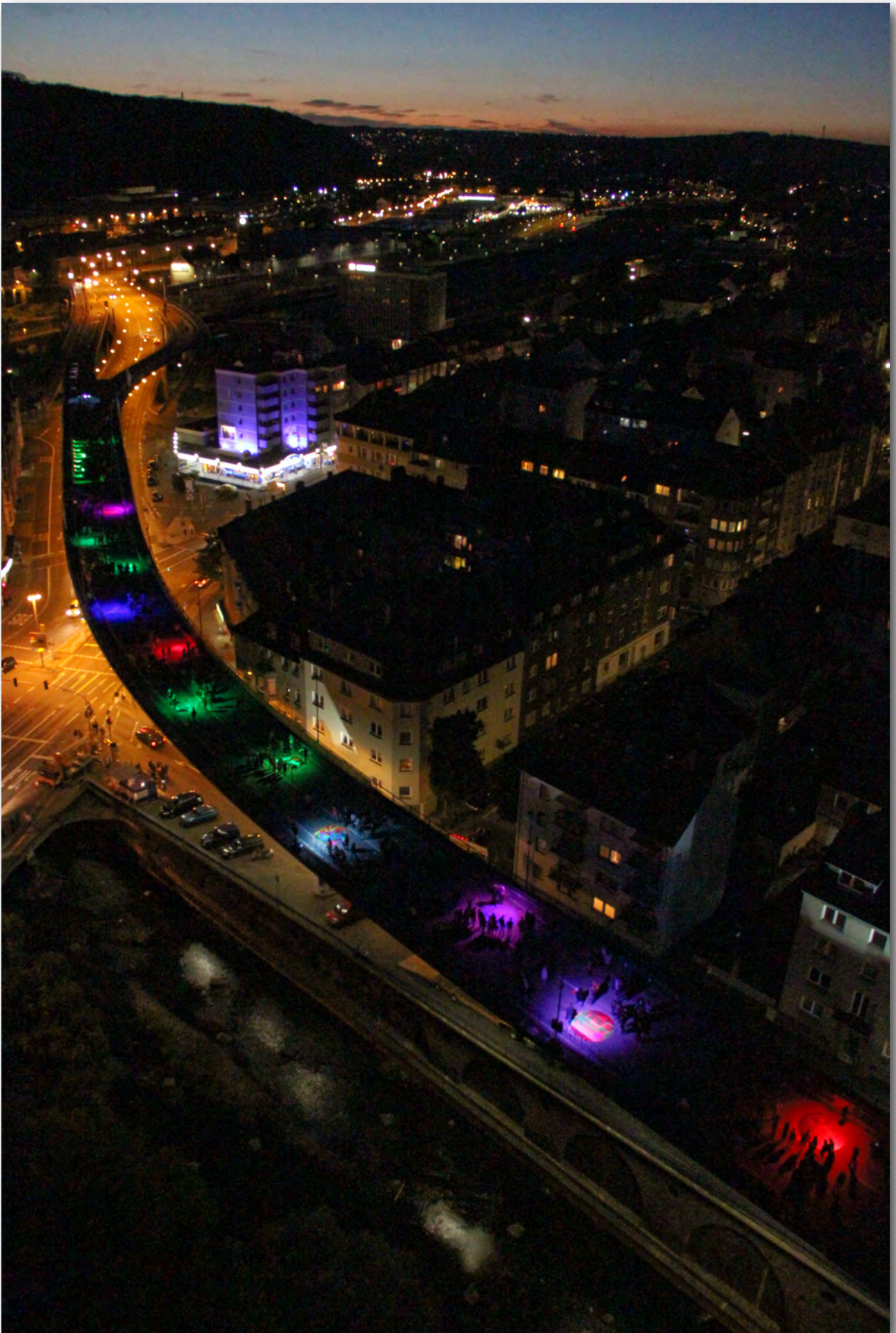
The images:

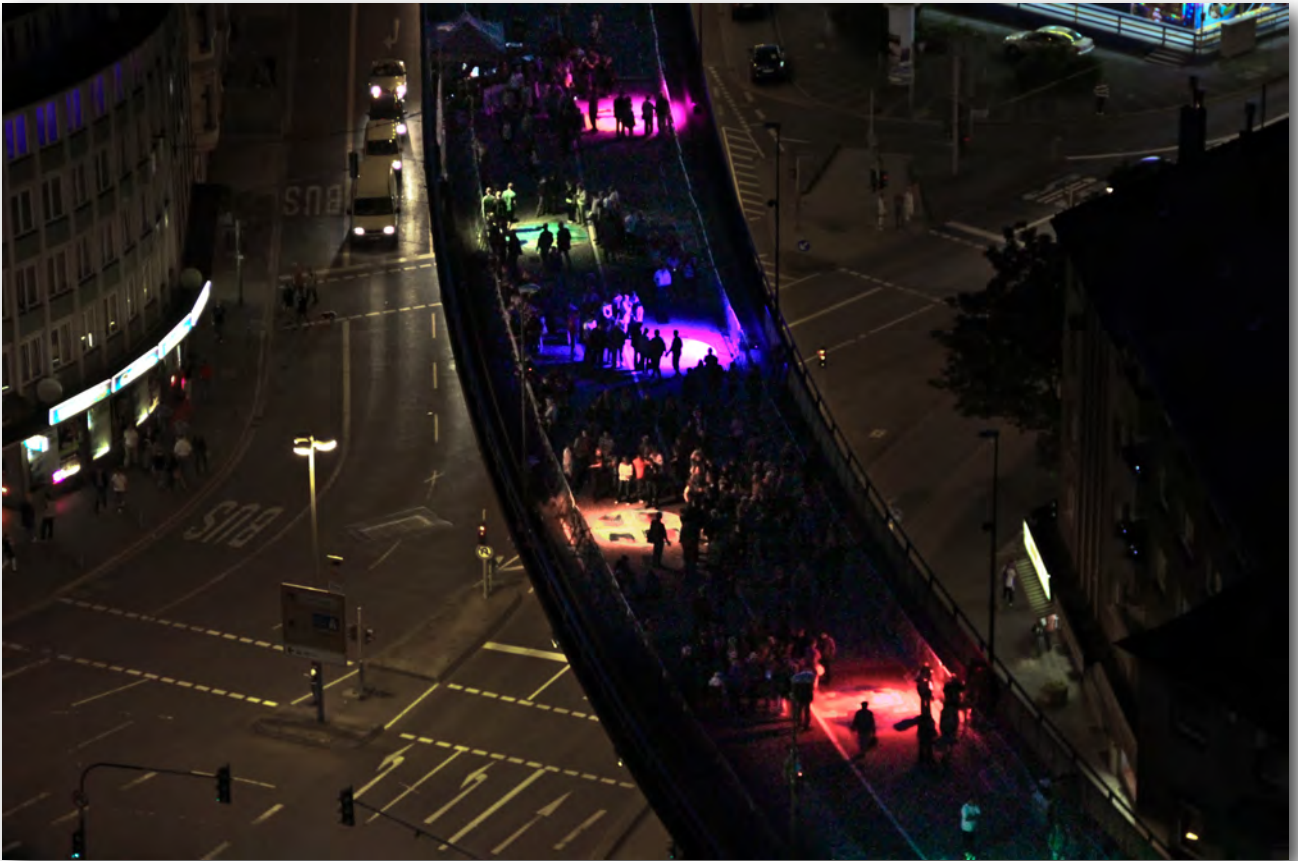
I just cant help wondering being in Hagen where does it go from here? Not an easy one to answer. What is the definition of the world after post-modernism? Where will the marriage between technology, economics and culture take us? Now that Europe is becoming Old Europe. *Easternisation of the West*?. *Sustainability = Kapitalism 2.0*? Possibly.

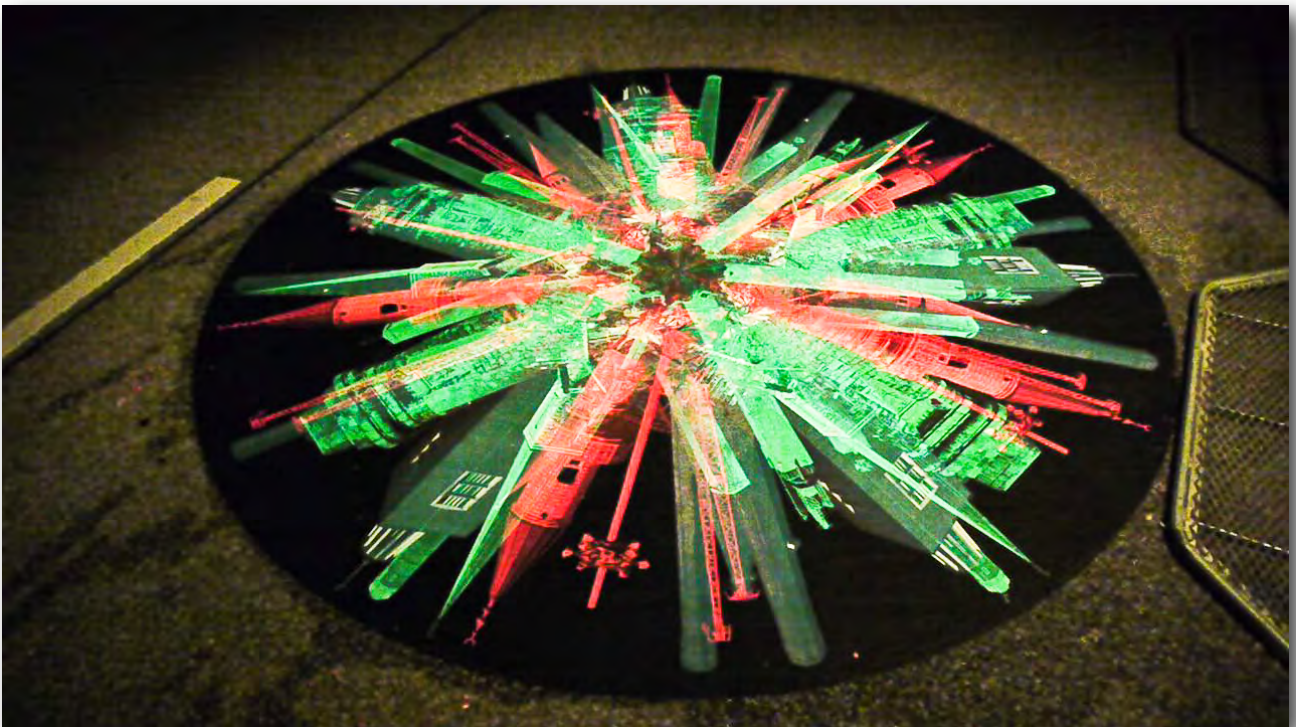
The anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss (1908 - 2009) once pointed out how hard it is to replace the *old* with the *new* when you have only the language of the *old* to articulate the *new*. I don't want the collages with figurative images to result in Social Realism. Instead of a *confirmation* of Hagens past, 'Preparations for a possible Future' wants to deconstruct the past. In order to articulate the future, new language is needed (in any kind of media). In order to create new language we need (de)constructive art !

The people of the (former) industrial European city's might not have a shared past, but that's not the problem; what is needed is a shared dream for a possible future.













Ruhr.2010 European Capital of Culture.

Geert Mul 'Preparations for a possible Future'

Team: Wijnand Veneberg, Gyz La Riviere, Tim van Cromvoirt.

Hagen 23, 24, 25 July 2010

Supported by: Stadt Hagen, Fonds BKVB, Generalkonsulat der Niederlande.