

The background of the image is a dense, dark, and textured surface. It appears to be a pile of dark, jagged rocks or stones, interspersed with dry, yellowish-brown grass or straw. The lighting is dramatic, with some highlights on the rocks and grass, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall color palette is dark, with shades of black, dark grey, and brown, punctuated by the lighter tones of the dry grass.

Helmets for Peace



Helmets for Peace is a multifaceted project, an application and representation of the method of the *Société Imaginaire*, itself an undertaking that for over twenty-five years strives for cultural dialogue. The project, focusing on the armed forces as an organized institution whose members worldwide experience and share vast similarities, brings participants together by exercising the undertaking's method of providing direct communication.

Through this direct communication where members of the armed forces worldwide, together with those participating from the civilian sector, contribute a message of adherence to the principle *no más fronteras*, voicing this common desire of overcoming borders through the artwork they help to produce together.

The project is not only an exhibition of the resulting contributions from members of the armed forces worldwide, the correspondence they establish amongst themselves and with others, but an exhibition of the method of the *Société Imaginaire* itself.



In the city of Chemnitz, Germany a place has been designated through the support of the Stadtwerke AG Chemnitz to officially house the project *Helmets for Peace* and its exhibition. Beginning with a historical insight into the development of the *Société Imaginaire*, the exhibition includes many past contributions together with those dedicated to the armed forces. It is an extensive show which includes original artwork from the undertaking's founder, contributions by its members, ranging from renowned artists to heads of state, the submissions by members of the armed forces, the large work "Helmets for Peace I" presented alone with a specially designed light sequence, the mega-installation "Helmets for Peace II – The Anti-Wall" by Batuz in close collaboration with architects from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and documentary videos running continuously to inform the public on the disasters occurring at the growing number of walls and barbed wire fences being erected throughout the world.



"Batuz' proposal is noble. It can seem utopian and imaginary. For this exact reason it has strength"
– Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former president of the Federative Republic of Brazil

The Method of the *Société Imaginaire*

The *Société Imaginaire* is an undertaking that strives for cultural dialogue. It has applied itself through multifarious projects, continuously aiming at the same goal while doing so through different means. Overcoming borders, whether they are the physical ones that are imposed between regions or even the imperceptible ones that arise socially, the projects bring together the various different and divided peoples by having them communicate through art, they virtually overcome their differences by exposing a common desire that is shared individually yet globally.

"To overcome borders: soldiers should be involved!"
– Hans-Peter von Kirchbach, former commander in chief of the German Bundeswehr

The Armed Forces and the *Société Imaginaire*

The armed forces throughout the world have undergone remarkable changes in their purpose and structure. Less and less are they isolated forces of confrontation and more and more are they joining together in mass coalitions in order to struggle together for the common goal of peace. Such a remarkable development providing vast similarities is a direct portrayal of what the *Société Imaginaire* seeks and exemplifies: individuals throughout the world keeping their individualities while at the same time joining one another in a common effort for a "convivencia humana".

Furthermore the armed forces are one of the first proofs of a world society where individuals work in cultures with which they are not familiar while defending ideals common to all.

Around the world they are submitting helmets to this project, together with their artistic contributions of communications that answer the call to overcome borders. The helmet is a symbol most closely associated with war; the donation of such war equipment to the project is a remarkable portrayal of each contributor's adherence and the undertaking's leading principles.

"Helmets for peace" is a fundamental work that seeks to overcome boundaries, that refers to the past as a memorial for the future and visually annuls the differences between people."

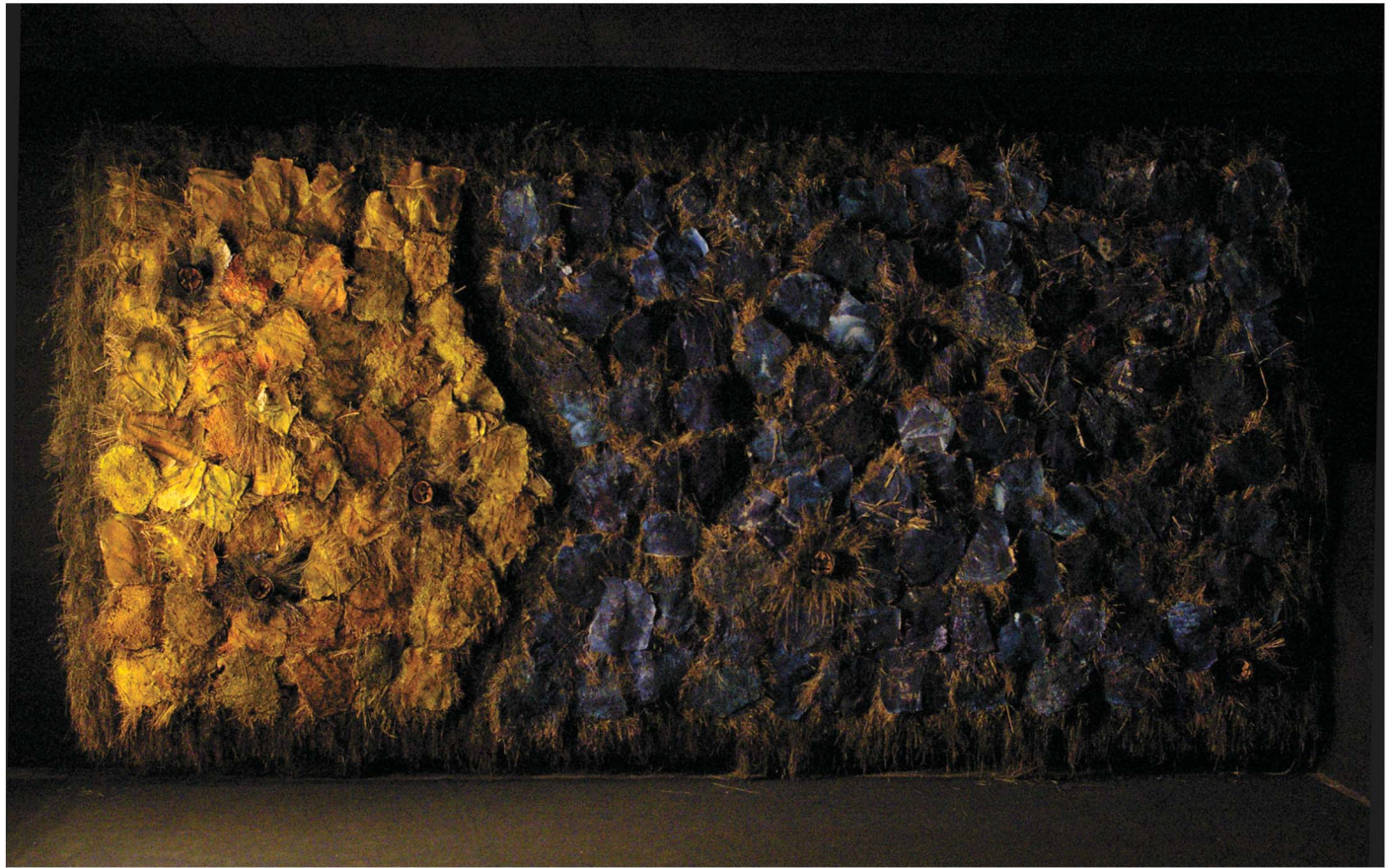
– Dr. Dieter Ronte, former director of the Kunstmuseum Bonn

Helmets for Peace I

As a consequence to the project *no más fronteras Piensk-Rothenburg* and the direct participation of the German Bundeswehr, where hundreds of participants from several countries and professions met on the Neiße River to demonstrate through a work of art their adhesion to overcoming borders, only later was it realized what a magnanimous symbolic representation had been provided by the unique combination of war helmets in a work of art that united people through the *Société Imaginaire's* method for direct communication. Five years later, these helmets, kept in storage as if in a mass grave, came to life through an encounter of Generalinspekteur a.D. Hans-Peter von Kirchbach and Batuz.

Though the point of union on the Neiße River was where the myriad individual works of art came to be joined into one, it was still under the influence of the hands of many. It was only after the suggestions that emerged through the above mentioned encounter that Batuz decided to put the pieces together himself, calculating every single position of each individual artwork into a collective piece. With the help of a few assistants, he has taken each helmet, each a singular artwork (since each of the helmets were constructed by various individuals and no two are alike) and assembled them under his learned guidance. Doing so he has taken a momentary event, where a work of art was realized by many, and memorialized this activity into a work of his own.

Simultaneously the creation of this singular work made by many and the same, a work in which the Bundeswehr played a decisive role, stimulated the extended call for others to take example from what occurred on the Neiße River and continue the correspondence. The creation of *Helmets for Peace I* is what initiated the project to focus on the armed forces worldwide, to harness upon the vast similarities they are more and more experiencing and bring them together so that they may share and gain a greater understanding through the undertaking's method of direct communication.



*"Man has made borders and man can make them disappear."
- Batuz*

Helmets for Peace II : The Anti-Wall of Batuz

Batuz knows a lifetime of crossing and opening boundaries: geographic, disciplinary, political. Such efforts are his life, his intellectual and cultural agenda. A wall is anathema to Batuz, yet now he builds a wall. An anti-wall, and like all walls, the anti-wall has two sides.

Though armies around the world contribute helmets in a gesture of peace, the helmets rest here as witnesses of why walls are built. Witnesses fallen at the foot of a brooding wall — constraining, shadowed, excluding, confining. It is a place to contemplate the bleak, enfeebling realm of barriers and conflict. A dark contemplation relieved by the anti-wall of Batuz.

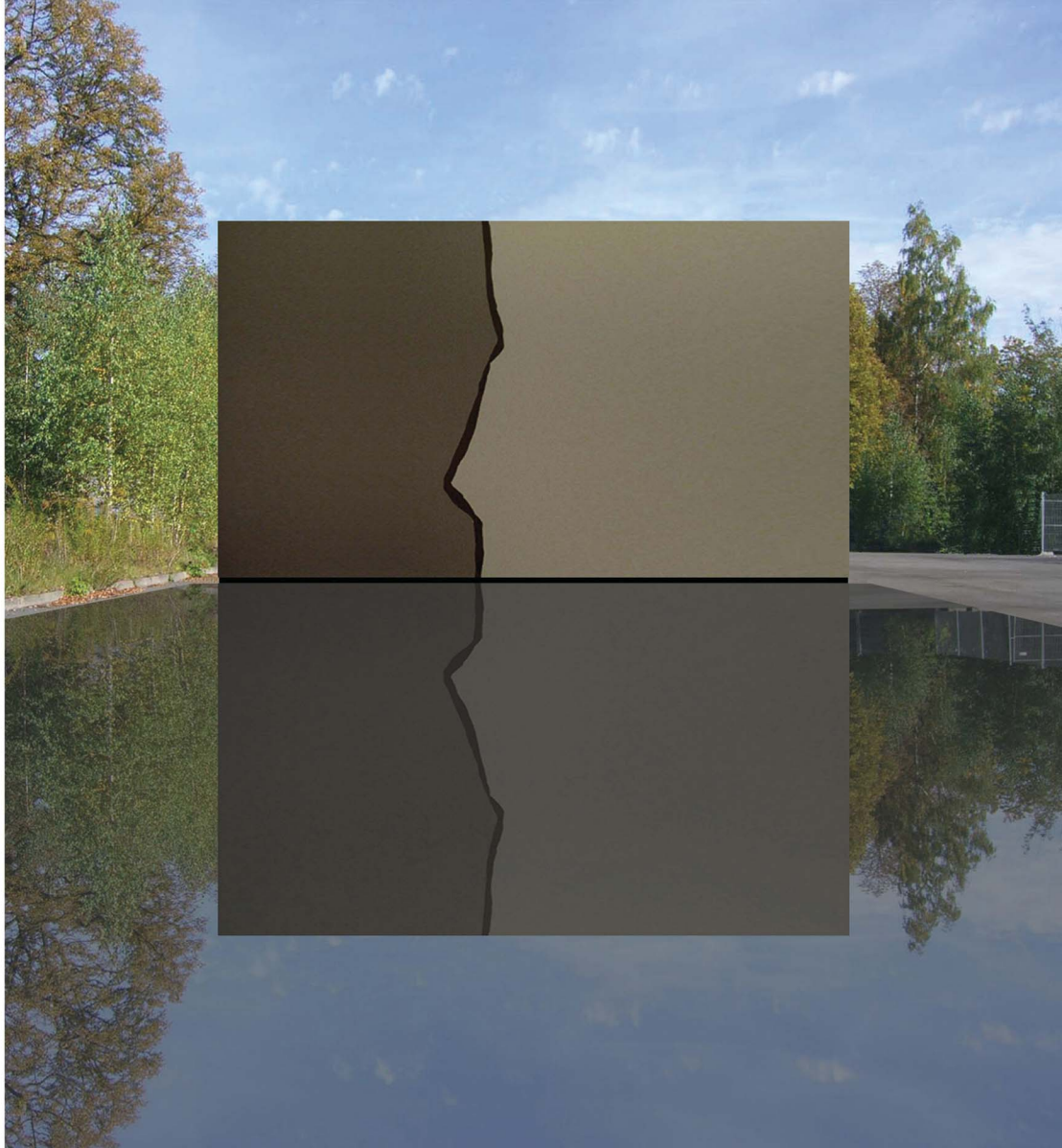
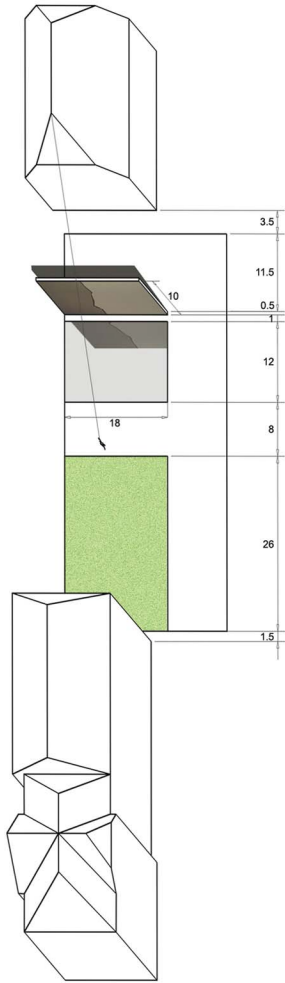
Batuz' anti-wall is open, spacious, free, welcoming — standing in sunlight and mirrored in water. Visitors are received at a monumental instance of Batuz' life work: strong elements confront one another but achieve a correspondence, share in a meeting.

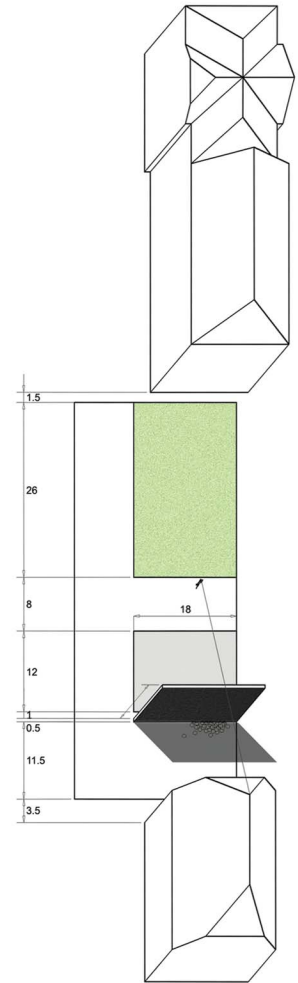
The helmeted wall is restraint by industrial means; the anti-wall beckons with color, texture and light.

Stanford Anderson, Prof. of History, Theory and Criticism at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology



Wall and site design: Stanford Anderson with Wenjun Ge





*“Société Imaginaire...idea for a world in which borders stop being ramparts
in order to transform themselves into bridges that communicate.”
- Julio Maria Sanguinetti, former president of Uruguay*

Forum and Correspondence Between Armed Forces

The call for soldiers to participate in this project is not only to gain their adherence to symbolize this common desire in a collective work of art, but to give continued life to this effort by extending the initial contributions into a long-term correspondence involving many.

Helmets for Peace has been developing to offer the armed forces throughout the world a new platform for direct communication, where they can share their experiences and further gain understanding of the remarkable similarities apparent amongst themselves. For this, a forum has been constructed on the undertaking's official website (www.batuz.com) where each participant's initial submission, either an artistic interpretation of his selected border (a physical approach and identification of his border attained through his art) or a handwritten text containing a testimony of the individual's adhesion to the project's principle, becomes the symbol of his individual profile, setting a possible dialogue in motion. His statement and/or work of art is a symbol of his identity and which others may identify themselves. The responses can then lead to dialoguing amongst themselves.

The forum provided is a continuation of a longstanding practice of the *Société Imaginaire* to initiate long-term correspondence between like-minded people, this time utilizing the possibilities of the internet and its immediate source of communication.

*"Batuz is a great artist who has placed his art at the service of a superior ideal: overcome the borders within the "convivencia" of the men and women of our world."
– Patricio Aylwin Azocar, former president of Chile*

The Portfolio *no más fronteras en las Américas*

"Correspondence" has already been achieved by the *Société Imaginaire* through various approaches, mostly documented in the series of portfolios produced by the *Société Imaginaire* and forming part of the collections of some of the most renowned museums around the world (National Gallery of Art Washington DC, Kupferstichkabinett, Albertinum, and more). Institutions which await further contributions such as the one currently in process, *no más fronteras en las Américas* where former presidents throughout the western hemisphere such as Julio Maria Sanguinetti of Uruguay, Belisario Betancur of Colombia, Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, Carlos Diego Mesa of Bolivia, Patricio Aylwin Azocar of Chile and more, are contributing manuscripts declaring allegiance to the principles of this unique undertaking. With their handwritten statements, they illuminate /illustrate, each from a different perspective, the unrelinquished and consistent work of Batuz in his search for a more peaceful and creative "convivencia-humana". The result of this portfolio will be exhibited together with others of the *Société Imaginaire* in the presentation of *Helmets for Peace*, together with the works submitted by members of the armed forces and the civilian sector throughout the world which will be collected and submitted in yet another edition of the portfolios of the *Société Imaginaire*.

The portfolios give permanence to the projects, tying together the immediate and long-term of these actions while simultaneously becoming historical documents that are kept in museums such as mentioned above.

For example, the portfolio *no más fronteras* created together with Czeslaw Milosz did exactly this to the action performed on the Neiß River: by turning the action into a piece of art we give a transient moment an historical permanence. The portfolio *no más fronteras en las Américas* is doing the same for the project *Helmets for Peace*, further solidifying the ambition of this project as an eternal statement for the future. The handwritten texts from such prestigious presidents have to be seen as supporting statements calling for peace and a "convivencia humana", the main goals of the *Société Imaginaire* and the project *Helmets for Peace*.

Una gran antipatía

El Abogado Simón Bolívar fue un
amante de la armonía: desde las
cláusulas penales de su Carta
de Jamaica, tuvo el presentimiento de una
América transida de delitos y guerra, de
los estados de justicia, solididad, libertad
y paz.

Para ello, a la manera de Sócrates
cuando una de las esposas americanas
quiere a los dos que capitula a Cometas,
Bolívar convoca en 1816 un Congreso
suplenatorio de todos los países americanos
en el Istmo de Panamá pero fracasó
por la oposición de los latidos briosos.

Final suceso de los siglos, ahora por el
estilo la península Bolívar, una punto
necesario de la historia Bolívar-México, por
una América misma, en fin, en los
valores de la justicia, la libertad y la paz.

Todo antes que se realice el compás
de una América, pensó el indolente de
Domingo, el indolente, pero realista, de los
de bello amor colectivo de Bolívar.

Belisario Betancur

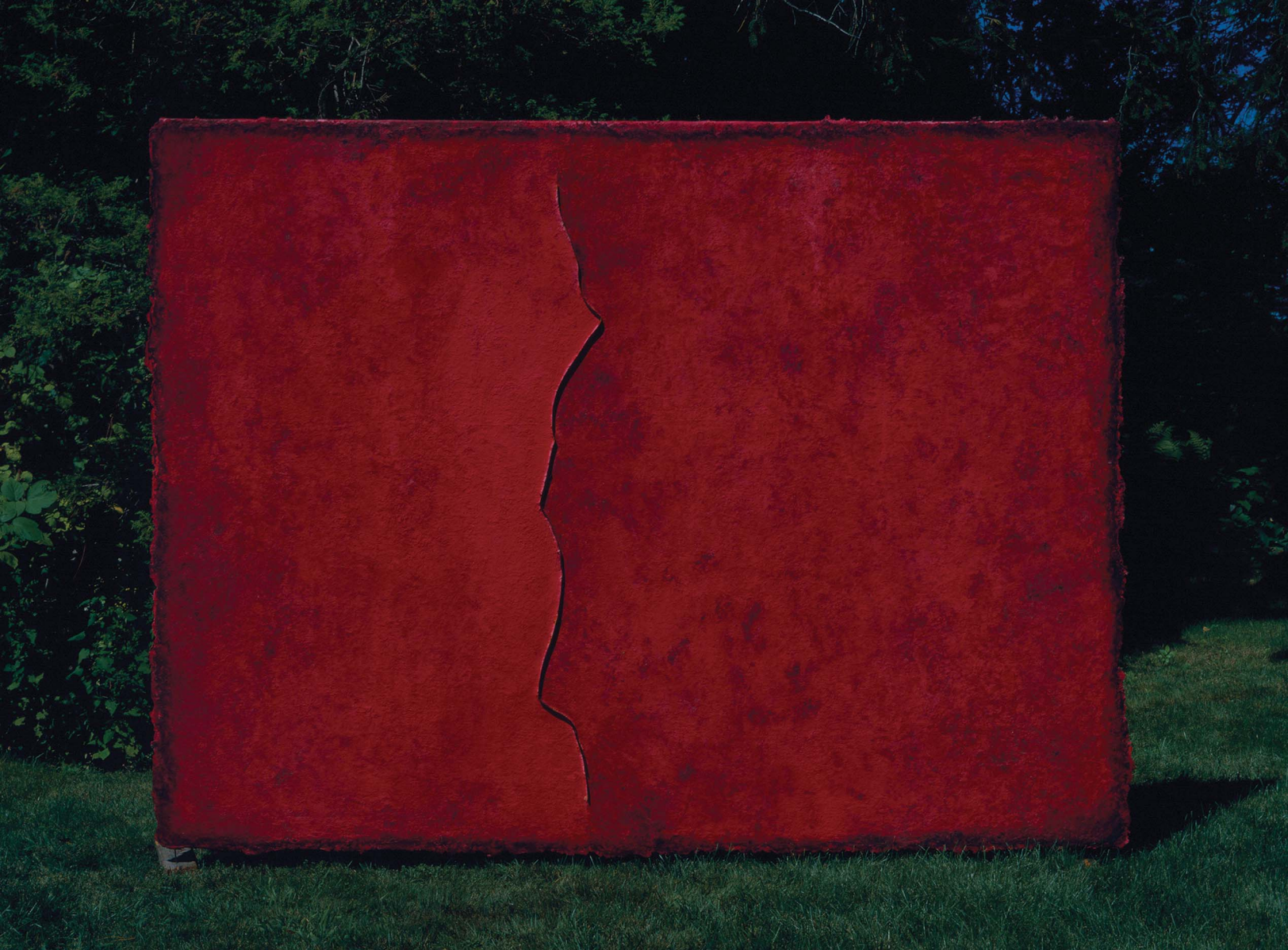
"Like no other, Batuz embodies this imaginary society, whose goal of crossing frontiers and building bridges between worlds brings together people of different nationalities, professions and schools of thought."
– Dr. Peter Seifert, former lord mayor of Chemnitz

The Exhibition

To warrant a full comprehension of the project *Helmets for Peace* an introduction to the fundamentals of the *Société Imaginaire*, its birth and extensions will be presented to the public. For this, the second edifice of the compound housing the project is thus allocated, open to several hundred square meters of exhibition space.

Herein will be a compendium exhibition beginning with the development of the founder's study on the interrelation of forms, which he eventually extended from a singularly painterly sphere to a plurally social one; the interrelation of cultural forms. The gradual development of his studies will be identified through various reproductions and original artworks, leading towards the emergence of the *Société Imaginaire* with the first portfolios made with others. All editions will be on display, allowing the public to see the depth and scope of the *Société Imaginaire*'s working and the people that have participated. Here will also be presented the before mentioned portfolio *no más fronteras en las Américas* and furthermore, together with the artworks and statements contributed by members of the armed forces and civilians throughout the world.

The exhibition thus links together the multitude of the project and the undertaking, helping to tie together the various parts that are all interrelated and thereby offering a thorough presentation.



"Each dream shared with others instantly turns into reality and so will the beautiful collective dream of Batuz."
- Belisario Betancur former president of Colombia

Conclusion

The aim of the *Société Imaginaire* is to find a method to live together in this globalized and confused world in a more civilized and peaceful way. Over the last 25 years, thousands of participants in innumerable projects have demonstrated that it is possible.

This small brochure is yet another testimony of that fact.

In my work *Helmets for Peace*, this desire is clearly visualized. It represents also an homage to the soldiers of so many countries offering their lives to achieve this noble goal.



Batuz in front of the building of Helmets for Peace I

The city of Chemnitz generously has offered its support to house this project, a place of meditation, remembrance, a place for the viewer to gain more awareness of the many worldwide conflicts, of the walls and fences being built, and how to overcome them.

From texts of all the participants in our projects we can hear an irrepressible voice of this common desire to build a better world.

Let's end those empty talks on a Global Village, and let us build one!

We have never had a better starting position like now . Together we can do it, right now and here in Chemnitz.

Batuz

Contributors to the project Helmets for Peace

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R. Kammerer, Generalmajor, Germany

J. Vollmer, Brigadegeneral, Germany

Julio Maria Sanguinetti, former president of Uruguay

Angel Bertolotti, General a.D. Uruguay

Hugo Viglietti, Rear Admiral, Uruguay

Dr. Peter Seifert, former mayor of Chemnitz, Germany

Fritjof von Nordenskjöld, Director of the DGAP

Karl-Gerhard Degreif, Vorstand Stadtwerke AG Chemnitz

Uwe Barthel, Vorstand Stadtwerke AG Chemnitz

Dr. Dieter Ronte, Kunstmuseum Bonn

Lucio Caceres, former minister for transportation, Uruguay

Stanford Anderson, Professor of Architecture, MIT

Prof. Kurt Jankowsky, Georgetown University

Prof. Timothy Keating, Dean at University of Southern Maryland

Roque Garcia, Teniente Coronel, Uruguay

Aldo Francescoli, Captain, Uruguay

Marko Frank Ahnert, Major, Germany

Edgardo Flores, Assistant to Batuz

Helmut Scheuck, Reserve Officer, Germany

Guillermo Hornos, Videographer

Daniel Behar, Photographer

Rito Gonzalez, Assistant

and the support of the German Auswärtige Amt

and the cooperation of the Panzergrenadierbrigade 37

More extensive information on the project, a developing archive of the Société Imaginaire, its forum, and contact information can all be found on the official website at www.batuz.com

Batuz, President

International
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Stanislaw Baranczak, Poland
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Gerhard Wahlers, FRG
Helmut Wittelsbürger, FRG
Elmar Zorn, FRG



Generalinspekteur a.D. Hans-Peter von Kirchbach
and Batuz on location of Helmets for Peace I



General Major R. Kammerer and Batuz
after completion of Helmets for Peace I

