

FREEPORT DOEL => The Purpose of Belgium's Peace-village

The Axis Mundi are the totempoles of so-called cultural freespaces. These are places, varieing in size form a squat-house in Berlin to a complete city department of Copenhagen. Some of them have evolved on very remarkable locations on Earth, such as for instance Ruigoord (NL) nearby Amsterdam. On such a crosspoint of ley-lines – you could call them a cosmic leak, so called 'Islands of Light' have evolved through time. These places are protected, but are also besieged sometimes by the more darker forces that are wasting the 3-dimensional world.

This is also the case for the former peninsula of Doel, which has been threatened by the Port of Antwerp since the 60's. Also the placing of a nuclear powerplant north of Doel-Centre, can be seen as an act of Ilumaniti-kind-of-figures, to endanger or unbalance the energy of the place, with no effect I daresay. Reality is thus, that the nuclear powerplant won't ever experience a 'Fukushima-moment', because of the vicinity of the Center (a.k.a. Source) of Doel.

The remarkable protection that has sheltered Doel already twice from flooding, still counts of course. The oldest resident, an 80+ lady that has squatted her own house, saw an Angel flying there as a kid. Next to that kind of protection, from the moment that Doel started to get emptier because of the re-envigoring of the harbour-expansionplans around the year 2000, a great number of local residents out of the vicinity have united themselves in the actiongroup 'Doel 2020'. They are the ones who fight the battle in court, talk to the media and organize the annual 'Doelish Parties' – a kind of yearmarket with second-hand brocanterie and landjuwel, around the Scheld-consecration in august. On that day the village is revived with approximately 15.000 visitors.

Nevertheless, the magic of this place which has a checkerboard-plan, doesn't make it invulnerable for influences from outside. One of the typicalities of 'Islands of the Light', I noticed over the years, is that they reflect the World on a smaller scale. Doel, in that perspective, looks most like a lost Syrian smalltown. Vandalism has terrorised most of the development and houses, coming from cupper- and windowthievery, peace beaten roofs, pointless graffiti*tags* and lately the haphazardly demolishing windows on houses and the old building of the St. Cornelius Convent.

However, the tide has turned already on behalf of the good side!



Historical graffiti about the powers that were and had already wiped out a few villages on the rightbank of the Scheldt.

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Because the Amsterdam Balloon Company (ABC) from Ruigoord, under the guidance of the artist Aja Waalwijk, laid the connection between free cultural spaces on a local, national and international level under the term Axis Mundi, as a Group of artist from the Northern- as well as the Southern Netherlands (NL & B) we came together with the idee of making Doel a Peacevillage (Vredesdorp) and thereby a fully functioning 'cultural freeport'. The road to this purpose, is one of hurry up slow and bit by bite; maybe because the year 2020 is still a while away. For now, we are just a mobile company of autonomous transition organizing menandwomen under the name the 'ATOM'.

We have done so by a try-out kind of festival in 2013, after the Third Futurological Symposium, by re-erecting the totempoles at the Totemplein. Five hands full was the number of people that attended, but at the annual Scheld-consecration (wijding = we thing) the visitor nuber of the village numbered up to a more realistic number for a gathering. These also hold our hopes for next year, when we want to inspire a gathering of this format. Nomads, Rainbowpeople and Freespacers: all are wellcome as long as they keep in tune with what this place needs!

As of yet, Doel doesn't have a guesthouse, but secretive camping is possible on an undeveloped and overgrown terrain behind near the sportfields somewhere. Currently we are working on a place for artists-in-residence, for more info on the possibilities mail us at vredesdoel (monkeystail+dot) gmail.com. Also regarding graffiti the village has a lot to offer and there is a lot of freespace, but for true artwork a little conjunction with locals is advised. You can also mail us, for instance we have seen enough tags, but love art (kunst)!



So, though water is available at the cemetery, though there is a cigarette-vendingmachine and three kinds of hospitality-industry-opportunities (the Windmill, Doel 5 and the society of the port of doel 'de Spuikom') to stay in Doel is not possible on a self-sufficient way yet. If you come there, take enough for your livelyhood. Except a public toilet and a flowing water, you will find a cosy meeting of the local resistance, every Sunday afternoon, in the old schoolbuilding (de Doolen, Engelsesteenweg 8). Info in Flemish is to be found on www.doel2020.org. Our party is developing a website slowly...

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As ATOM-company we don't facebook by choice since we don't want to attend authorities to our actions, therefore the website is a slowly developing thing. We maintain our relations (such as yourself, Rainbow, Antwerpian Musicbox, Ruigoord, etc.) by briefings in which we announce our activities and the Free Cultural Spaces-forum. Furtherly, we are planning a permanent resident building, starting from a caravan. The future is something we invite all of you to contribute with us!



All activities (such as Animal's Day, Wintertimeparty! already have been since september) are with a high Doel-it-Yourself (=DIY)-level, bring something with you to make it nicer and if you have any questions mail to vredesdoel@gmail.com



From Christiania's Ruigoord Embassy it's quite a--long walk, but you can find us also on [openstreetmap.org](https://www.openstreetmap.org)