

# HORST WACKERBARTH: HERE & THERE

Global migration exemplified by the port city of Duisburg  
and her seven twin cities  
short version



Portsmouth  
CITY COUNCIL



Born in Fritzlar, Germany, in 1950, Horst Wackerbarth studied at the School of Art and Design Kassel, specialising in photography. Currently, he works as a photographer and video artist and lives in Düsseldorf.

Wackerbarth's work is located on the border at which art and media meet.

Among his major themes, projects featuring the "Red Couch" form the centre of his life's work, which includes photography and video art, exhibition and book projects, co-operation with painters and film-makers as well as a TV series (on ZDF, 3Sat, Arte).

He chairs the Universal Couch Foundation (Gallery of Mankind), set up to promote global dialogue with the aid of art and media projects on TV, Internet and in print.

Indeed, Horst Wackerbarth has emerged as a photography and video artist of international repute. His works have been published in book form in ten monographs, shown in more than fifty exhibitions in museums and galleries worldwide and have been included in twelve important collections of contemporary art.

As an appraisal of the artist in the feature section of the German national daily newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" certified in October 2006: "Wackerbarth's work has already - during his lifetime - joined the great works of portrait art".

**Horst Wackerbarth**  
on the ring road 1 near  
the frozen lake Stemmulón  
Iceland, 2003



The project aims to enable **a global dialogue** and to compile an anthropology of the 21st Century, told by people themselves both to the current generation and generations to come.

#### **A Couch Travels the World.**

The „Gallery of Mankind“ project asks: What does the 21st Century human think, feel, wish and hope? Hundreds of interesting earthlings answer universal questions recorded on video and photographed to form a “Gallery of Mankind”. The bright red Universal Couch is the common denominator for all nations, religions, races and classes, for cultural diversity, customs, habits and views of individuals, groups or scenes, majorities and minorities. Thus, a red sofa becomes a stage or soap box for the unknown and well-known, poor and rich – for all the World’s citizens.

The Universal Couch comes to the people, to their country, their surroundings, their homes. It is both an explorer and ambassador of the human search for truth and happiness. On film and in photographs, unique perspectives of our World evolve. Indeed, in the unique, the individual, all of humanity’s major themes are reflected.

# Here &

Migration is everywhere and has always been with us: mass migration of entire people's, expulsion, poverty and political persecution, fleeing the countryside for towns and cities, advanced societies demanding migrant workers, both qualified and unqualified.

Some migrants have careers in alien lands. Some assimilate, others continue living their lives in the culture of their origin by existing in parallel societies, whilst others marry indigenous partners and have beautiful children.

Take a look at the Ruhr region, its present and the last 120 years of its past, to find a prime example of migration.

Based on an initiative by the port city of Duisburg as part of Duisburg's contribution to "RUHR.2010 – Cultural Capital of Europe", the artist Horst Wackerbarth will implement a project focusing on a global examination of migration, using the artistic media in which he specializes (photography and video art) and exemplified in Duisburg and her twin cities.

Based on his Red Couch, Horst Wackerbarth will realize a photography and video art project in Duisburg and the twin cities **Portsmouth**/England, **Calais**/France, **Wuhan**/China, **Vilnius**/Lithuania, **Gaziantep**/Turkey, **Perm**/Russia and **San Pedro Sula**/Honduras in 2009.

More than 50 works will result as individual biographies, each of which comprise photographs and video installations. In each of the seven twin cities, between five and eight contributions will be created based on persons epitomizing the kind of migration background that is typical of the respective region.

Thus the project "Here & there" puts the port of the Ruhr region for "RUHR.2010 – Cultural Capital of Europe" into a global setting with the aid of the twin cities Calais, Gaziantep, Perm, Portsmouth, San Pedro Sula, Vilnius und Wuhan.

there

Here & there – Global migration exemplified  
by the port city of Duisburg and her seven  
twin cities

Each contribution comprises a large-sized photograph and an interview to be presented as a video installation.

Dealing with existential questions about work, happiness, love and death requires a consistent interview form that affords sufficient space to embrace human diversity. In order to demonstrate that things common to all people are stronger than things which separate them, the questions asked are open and general. For, they are to be answered by people of all cultures and religions alike, by women and men, children and the elderly, Nobel prize-winners and illiterate people.

## The universal questions

What is here?

What was there?

What makes life worth living for you?

What do you not like about life?

What does happiness mean to you?

What does unhappiness mean to you?

What is the worst thing that has happened to you?

What is the biggest mistake you have ever made?

What are you afraid of?

What is your greatest wish?

If you could choose, who or what would you like to be?

What or who in your opinion created the universe, the world?

What do you expect after death?

<b>5-8 works</b>	For each twin city, 5-8 works of art, video installations and original photographs, will be produced in 60 x 75 cm, 80 x 100 cm and 120 x 150 cm formats.
<b>5-8 videos</b>	The videoed interviews (PAL on DVD) will be shown on flat screen monitors/DVD using head phones and provided with English subtitles for the touring exhibition to the twin cities.
<b>1 travelling exhibition</b>	The complete work will be shown in Calais, Gaziantep, Perm, Portsmouth, San Pedro Sula, Vilnius and Wuhan between 2010 and 2013. This travelling exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue in 22,5 x 21,5 cm format, with 240 pages, written in English and German and in a cover made of red velvet, the same material as the Red Couch.
<b>1 book</b>	
<b>Schedule</b>	<p><b>Pre-production</b> Winter 2008: Start of project. Field research in Duisburg, identifying locations and protagonists. Researching the twin cities. Contacting the city's prominent "children" and the twin cities. Planning travel.</p> <p><b>Production</b> January to September 2009: Production. Taking 50 original photographs and recording 50 videos on location in Duisburg and the twin cities. One production trip to a twin city per month. For Calais, Portsmouth and Vilnius 7 days each are scheduled, whilst for Wuhan, Perm, Gaziantep, San Pedro 10-12 days each are planned. Initial happenings and photo performances will take place and a "making of" documentation produced in parallel.</p> <p><b>Post-production</b> September 2009 to January 2010 Production of the works, prints, framing, scans, production of large surfaces, translations, editing catalogue, editing videos, German/English subtitles, happenings, photo performances etc.</p>



**Hsiao-Ming Flatow**  
Pensioner  
Ratingen, Germany, 2002

Hsiao-Ming Flatow was born in China in 1921 and moved to Germany in 1942 to study German and English. First, she worked as a translator then went to Hong Kong after the War with her husband. Only a few months later she returned to Germany with her husband's ashes who had died of a heart attack. She has worked for Romanian Radio, co-organised exhibitions on China and lives alone.

**The Melik Family**  
Songül (32), Arkadi (45),  
Marian (12), Wahe (10)  
and Sipan (4)  
Goch, Germany, 2006

The members of this family are “tolerated” asylum seekers. Due to their political status they lack any kind of future prospects. They can neither work, study nor take part in vocational training.





**Mikhail Gorbachev**  
Former President of the Soviet Union  
in the Perestroika Museum still under  
construction  
Moscow, Russia, 1998

**Robi Güver**

Sound engineer

In front of the demolished Gestapo Headquarters in Mar-stall in Weimar, Germany, in 1997.

Robi Güver was born in Turkey in 1946, where he attended a French school. His mother was Turkish, his father a Russian Jew. During the October Revolution his father had to flee Russia as a nine-year old. Later his son was to meet with the same fate: suspected of spying for Israel he had to flee Turkey in 1970. He came to Germany and became acquainted with the word foreigner. Despite this, he stayed in Munich, worked in a shop renting film equipment and acquired his first commissions. Today, Robi Güver works as a sound engineer for feature films and documentaries.

**What** does happiness mean to you?

The last great sensation of happiness I can remember, was, when my wife and I celebrated the “Hupa”, the traditional Jewish wedding. When I danced with my wife I felt profoundly happy.

**What** does unhappiness mean to you?

I am sad that I cannot return to Turkey. I can still taste and smell the meals that I ate in Turkey a long, long time ago. And even though 33 years have elapsed since then I still yearn for this country. It is a part of me.

**What** has been your most interesting experience?

That was a visit to Iceland two weeks ago: I stood on the Vatnajökull Glacier and underneath me was kilometre-thick ice, built up over millions of years. That impressed me incredibly.

**What** is the biggest mistake you have made?

I wish I had settled down earlier and had children.



## Travelling exhibition

After the exhibition has been presented during the Capital of Culture events in Duisburg in 2009/2010, it will travel to the twin cities, the places of its origin, from 2011.

It will comprise:

- 50 original photographs, framed, 30 of them in 60 x 75 cm format, 10 in 80 x 100 cm and 10 in 120 x 150 cm.

In order to enhance the attractiveness of the exhibition for the twin cities, the Duisburg series, consisting of 50 motifs, can be supplemented by works from the Wackerbarth collection (more than 300 framed pictures and videos), featuring for instance, well-known people from the respective region or country.

- 50 video installations (PAL on DVD), will be shown on 12 flat screen monitors/DVD using headphones with English subtitles.
- a large flat screen/DVD for video intro and excerpts from interviews.
- a catalogue, in 22,5 x 21,5 cm format, covering 240 pages, English/German. Cover made of red velvet, the same material as the Red Couch.
- the original Red Couch.
- CD for the press/media, comprising press text (in English) and picture samples, reprint free.
- Reading room for books, Internet, cinema (projection room) is possible.

The website [www.the-red-couch.com](http://www.the-red-couch.com) will be made available in English with a special focus on the "Duisburg Series"!

## Media co-operation

Various forms of co-operation with daily newspapers and broadcasters are being prepared.

Here  
&  
there

A project based on an initiative by



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in co-operation with

**NOAH!**

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Here

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