

Excerpts from the Ingot Museum

Munich Public Art Project Proposal

Dan Peterman December 2019

Ingot:

*pure material, often
metal, formed into
a shape suitable for
transport, storage, and
further processing—
sometimes functioning
as currency or
currency reserve.*

a piece of relatively

Project Description

Excerpts from the Ingot Museum

currently no such thing as an *Ingot* Museum. Being pragmatic, modest assemblies of matter, Ingots are utilized in industrial material networks or stockpiled for future use but not generally considered for end use or display. This project would create multiple installations of carefully sourced “ingots” of material derived from recycling systems. Recycled metals, clothing and fabrics, plastics, paper and cardboard and other basic materials are continually sorted, shredded, bundled, melted, compressed, etc into efficient modular forms as they are prepared for re-entry into industrial material networks. *For purposes of this project these units are collectively referred to as Ingots.* The moment of transformation from waste to resource is captured in these ingot forms and is the subject of this sculptural proposal. The idea of “museum excerpts” displayed in a multi site public installation would allow ingots from these generally invisible material systems to enter into a more open relationship to a public that actually participates in generating this material, and their accompanying waste networks. The viewing public is collectively, fundamentally, tethered to this post-consumer material. The “ingot” is the simple modular material form that material is cast, compressed, or baled into as it is transitioned from discard and re-enters circular, material re-use economies. I am most interested in the moment of transformation that occurs when waste material abruptly gains new possibility and value in “ingot” form. This reshaping and condensing of matter reverses a process of losing value and instead begins an accumulation of value. Ingots, seamlessly slide

from local waste economies into new, and accelerating global economies of re-used materials--salvaged resources re-fitted for global transit and stockpile and awaiting further remanufacture into another generation of products. The idea of the Museum here suggests a stable institution from which to catch a glimpse, perhaps for the first time, of these mundane, transient and yet expansive material processes.

Excerpts from the Ingot Museum further develops a project concept that I first exhibited in Documenta 14 under the title of *the Kassel Ingot Project (iron)*. (more information on this related project is available at: www.danpeterman.com) This project began as an exploration of both global and local material and economic networks of salvaged and recycled materials and focused on the pivotal instant of creating an "ingot". This is a moment when devalued "waste" material is recast, compressed, baled or bundled into dense modular forms that reenter global commodity economies and material trajectories. This quiet transformation represents an ongoing ecologically driven shift to circular economies of reuse and conserved energies rather than traditional exploitation of virgin mined or harvested materials. It also establishes important links between black or gray market activity with the mainstream economy. Although simple enough in concept these recaptured and redeployed materials from the waste stream represent complex and intriguing changes to how we fundamentally relate to our material world. In a sculptural sense the moment of "ingot" production is a moment of transformation into new valuations, and new efficiencies of storage, and transportation--a new way of being in the world. Opening up these mostly invisible material flows to deeper scrutiny, investigation or meditation, enhances speculative awareness of how we exist in a material world, and reshape the material resources available to us.

Site information:

different *Excerpts from the Ingot Museum* sites (undetermined at this point) that would accommodate five different ingot installations. I think of this as a variable number, but the idea of a series of these *excerpts* is appealing. Sites could vary distinctly in character so that there would be a possibility of activating different ways of exploring the attributes and meaning carried by each ingot installation. Some materials could be installed out of doors, for example, others might have fragility issues, or high valuation that would make them more appropriate for a building atrium, or a secure retail-like space. Other installations might creatively engage with architecture or infrastructure features to be found within the city. Sites would be chosen with specific materials ingot units in mind – fine tuned, so to speak to the nature of the material. Industrial flows of material that are typically invisible could be opened up for consideration in surprising contexts. *Kassel Ingot Project (iron)* for example was simultaneously installed in 5 sites in Kassel during Documenta 14. Although the material was the same throughout the project in that case, the various contexts allowed richly layered associations and meanings to emerge. One installation was casually installed next to railroad tracks, another in a large scale industrial building (the former post) yet another installation was in a retail--former wedding dress shop.

I would in München explore how diverse spaces in near proximity to each other could be utilized. Having short walking distances between installations is appealing, and so is creating occasions for accidental audiences to possibly encounter different stations of this project as they move through public space. Surprising, playful, sculpturally dynamic qualities of the materials and sites would be carefully considered throughout this project.

Duration of installation:

would make sense to time them together, but even this could be adjusted as necessary. As “Excerpts” that are separately installed, the timing could be staggered if necessary and still be perceived as part of the singular project. Working within the time frame of a year seems generous. If a rented space is utilized, as an example, that may impact the duration. Installations could adjust as needed to specific particular constraints on time as needed.

All three main aspects of this project: the material choices; the sites; and the duration of installation; are difficult to fix in advance stages of planning. It is an obvious centerpoint of this project that the connections between all these things would be carefully developed in concert with one another as the project develops.

Dimensions and scale

be used is very open to variation. Physical constraints of each site and the logistics that accompany the acquisition or loan of material could all determine the relative scale of each installation. Looking for dynamic and exciting ways to integrate the ingot units into a particular installation is key. Success in this regard is the primary sculptural engagement—but for obvious reasons is not possible to determine with specificity at this early stage of planning.

There is a possible variation of this project that would place all of the materials at one shared site. In this regard there are many variables to consider in advance, but it is important to

emphasize the significant degree of adaptability, and improvisation that will dictate the final form of this project.

Notes:

The images used in this proposal are intended to convey a general sense of material forms could be considered for use. Arrangements or quantities are not meant to convey specific design ideas but reference of the general qualities for stacking, building arranging etc.

Fundamental sculptural aspects of this project will depend on future exploration of possible installation sites and specific qualities of the selected material ingots. It is impossible to convey.

More information: www.danpeterman.com