

# Dust of famous people

## Clear as Water and Dust

### the inspiration

Imagine a group of life-size and fully transparent people from all walks of life, from a world-class star to a prominent and middle class person to a “nobody” (someone who has struggled or even been rejected by the world). They all face and behold “the dust of their mortality”, that they hold in their hands. Is this not a metaphor that visualizes a very simple but basic ancient truth of our humanity? For if we engage ourselves with the fact of our mortality, we can come to a realization that positions people of various stature and class on the same level and humbles every hidden human arrogance.

“All go to the same place; all come from the dust and to dust all return.” Ecclesiastes 3: 20

With the culture project “Dust of Famous People” the Swiss-Canadian artist Bryan Haab poses a universally relevant question on value and worth of human beings in a world where inequality is on the rise.

*“I believe that if we able to simplify and deconstruct our facades until we come back to the essence of who we are as human beings, it is possible to find a valuable and intriguing basis to discuss the topic of “equality”. The sculpture project “Dust of Famous People” shall trigger a concern for our superficiality as well as evoke a sense of awe regarding the true value of us as humans. I want to inspire a new and intensive dialogue about the components of our value systems and the perspective of different world views. (Bryan Haab)*

## Dust of Famous People

### project description

The body is made up of approximately 55 to 60 percent water while the rest consists of a simple collection of minerals; also contain the “dust of the earth”.

The artistic reflection on this truth will be visualized through the crystal clear polyurethane resin casting of life size people in their everyday apparel. The form of the body will be completely transparent as if it were water. Each figure will also have an example of the dust from their body, taken from a hair sample that has been ground to dust and injected into a transparent form. The dust will be integrated in a way that the person observes his or her own dust, for example, the first figure hat the dust injected in a water drop form hanging off the fingertips.

For the documentation and communication of “Dust of Famous People” a documentary film team is following the development of the project.

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Preparation of the casting form, January - May 2007



## In Focus

### the goals of "Dust of Famous People"

- Call to respect and have an appreciation of people with various cultures and social statuses by digging down to the roots of intercultural conflicts and bringing people together.
- Development of a powerful aesthetic reality based statement on the equality, value and worth of all people which simply offers a peaceful reflection amidst the fears of our terror-shaken world.
- Creation of a discussion platform which encourages fresh dialogue about the building stones of our value systems as well as perspectives for our world view.
- Exposure of our tendency to be materialistic while showing the value of our uniquely human existence.
- Creation of an interactive artistic process which has an enhanced relevance through the involvement of several volunteers out of various social and cultural backgrounds.

## In Process

### Realisation of the project since January 2007

On the occasion of their 10 year anniversary the Swiss employment and integration foundation "Stiftung Integration Nordwestschweiz" has generously sponsored a portion of the first figure.

#### January – May 2007      **Stiftung Integration, Pratteln**

- Prototype work
- Creation of the negative from a living model in plaster wraps
- Casting of the positive figure in polymer plaster and fiber glass
- Dressing of the figure and creation of the second negative in a silicon and reinforced plaster shell
- Casting of the sculpture with polyurethane casting resin
- Throughout the five months, artists and other people have been involved and personally experienced the project „Dust of Famous People“
- The webpage has been designed and made available online.  
([www.dust-of-famous-people.com](http://www.dust-of-famous-people.com))
- Due to missing sponsors the project needed to be put on hold.

#### April – June 2008      **Verein Zem Wäg, Münchenstein**

- preparation of the pedestal and high gloss finishing of the whole figure

#### 23. June 2008      **Presentation of the first figure**

Invited were our project partner, sponsors and close friends. The presentation to a wider public will take place together with the second figure.



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Casting of the figure on 22. May 2007





# Dust of famous people

Presentation of the Figure on 23. June 2008



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**5. – 18. July 2008**

**Vilnius, Lithuania**

Invitation for a pre-project in connection with „Vilnius – Culture Capital of Europe 2009“

- Casting the hands of a locally known architect
- Concerts of two bands, performances to the topic of “Social Justice”
- Involving visitors of the event by cementation of a hair sample and by giving them the opportunity to express their own thoughts on stage.

**Since June 2008**

**Community Studio „Humus“, Münchenstein**

- Presentation of the figure in the studio space „Humus“
- Networking with „Famous People“, potential project partner and sponsors

## International one step further

With the first casting's completion there is the cumulative potential for further interested personalities who will want to invest themselves in such a creative and socially active cause. The following castings will be chosen out of the 7 Continents with a wide selection of cultures and social layers.

The process of “Dust of Famous People” will be continuously filmed in all of its stages, from places such as the African desert to the steps of palaces, collecting the experiences in a full-length documentary.

As the collection of cast figures grows, it is planned to find partner galleries for rental as a travelling show in the countries where we are on location. The series of figures will only be shown as a collection and not as individual statues in order to protect the concept of equality through this unique community of personalities.

Goals beyond:

- Shaping a culture of value and respect.
- Encouraging acts that embrace the standards of social justice on a global level.
- Re-investing the generated finances into charity that is specifically oriented toward social justice causes. Each person that has been cast will be involved with the choice of these charities.



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July 2008: Events in Vilnius in connection with European Culture Capital 2009



## Participating Staff

### project organisation

Soul Works Foundation	Project management
Bryan Haab	Artistic direction
Mechthild Bucker	Project coordination
Benjamin Haab	Documentary film
Melanie Bockholt	Photography
Megalomania	Music

### with additional support of

Integration NWS	Project partner
Brigitte Huegin	Graphics
ALC Relations	Communication coaching

## Contact

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## Sponsoring

This culture project is not fully funded to date, and will only be made possible through the generous support of individual investors, companies, foundations and other culture supporting institutions. If you are interested in being a part of this monumental effort, please see the contact details below. We would love to personally present the project in detail with a complete budget plan if you are interested in more specific information.

## Bank Details

Soul Works Foundation  
Basellandschaftliche Kantonalbank  
4410 Liestal

Account number: 162.111.734.58 769  
IBAN: CH: 47 0076 9016 2111 7345 8  
BIC: BLKBCH22

Soul Works Foundation is a Non-Profit Organisation.  
Donations are tax-deductible with in Switzerland and Canada.



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Impressions of the first figure, the cast of Matthias Bitterli

