



ANTI-SMOG GAS MASKS ON STATUES A TK Copenhagen Meetup Experience

An installation to create awareness on air pollution and noise produced by cars.

The experience

Copenhagen is not characterized by huge amounts of traffic. However, cars are still a nuisance here. We wanted to create an action which could be repeatable in other cities, so we brainstormed on what can be found on streets anywhere.

The answer we came up with was monuments and statues.

Thus, we decided to turn the statues into a symbol of protest against cars and the abuse of vehicles. Instead of living people, they would be the ones holding protest billboards and wearing anti-smog masks. Since it is the statues who are always in the midst of cars and traffic.

This is a symbolic installation which stresses the level of air pollution which can be encountered in an urban environment. The action underlines the seriousness of the several health hazards surrounding people who are constantly breathing polluted air. It also gives a touch of irony by letting the protest start from lifeless statues. The installation's visibility can be enriched by a video/photo crew able to create documentation of the action.

Here are the 8 steps which made the action possible

1. We chose the statues to target. We created a map of the action, pinpointing how many statues there were for each monument, indicating their approximate height. Hence, we knew how many billboards and masks to bring along, and were conscious of the difficulty of each installation.
2. We organized the logistics and made several on-the-spot surveys to consider timing and necessary human resources.
3. We divided the action into zones, assigning all statues to the various participants, deciding who should bring ladders or extensible poles to help place the masks and the billboards. In one night, each one of us was easily able to perform 10 installations.
4. We announced the action on the Meetup widely ahead of time, to meet and tutor who was interested in taking part in the action.
5. We created the billboards by printing A1 sheets, pasting one on each side of a cardboard sheet the same size as the prints. We hung them to the statues' necks and arms using strings, which was possible on taller statues thanks to the use of extensible poles. We replaced the anti-smog masks' elastic strings with longer ones, since in many cases the statues' heads were much larger than a person's.
6. We created a video and photo team thanks to enthusiasts, as so to have documentation of the event.
7. We announced the action to journalists, especially throughout dialogue with the ones most sensitive to the issues and initiatives linked to social and environmental order. Their support helped to get people to subscribe to the Meetup and to take part in the action after reading about it on the newspapers.
8. Once the action had been performed, we gathered all video and photographic material and spread the news locally to newspapers, whilst the Community allowed us to reach out internationally.