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IBA EMSCHER PARK

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For the way in which this event accompanied the transition from a former industrial area to a new type of cultural landscape on the basis of many different sorts of projects.

The Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park, hereinafter referred to as IBA Emscher Park, was a future-oriented programme of the German federated state, North Rhine-Westphalia which started in 1989. The aim of this programme was to tidy up a large part of the Ruhr area with ecological innovation and urban planning. This area had fallen into decay over the years after a period of industrial growth during the first half of the twentieth century. The IBA Emscher Park was a cooperative venture of urban and regional governments in the form of a cultural event. This event was not an exhibition in the traditional sense of the word, but involved projects in the context of a new sort of “tourism”. These projects were aimed at the economic, social, cultural, and above all, ecological restructuring of the Emscher zone. Many architects and visual artists were involved and a great deal of attention was devoted to color. As a cultural event, IBA Emscher Park lasted ten years and during that period 110 projects were set up.

By awarding the Sikkens Prize to IBA Emscher Park, the Sikkens Foundation was responding to current movements. Since the 1980s, rapidly changing technologies in the field of production, transport and communication, as well as the mobility of the flow of money related to this, have led to far-reaching shifts in the existing industrial landscapes, both in Europe and in the United States.

Large complexes where coal, steel, ships and cars were produced and transported in the past have been left desolate and apparently useless since the production system came to a stop or was transferred to a cheaper location. The cities and regions which played a central role in the transition to a post-industrial society responded in diverse ways to the possibilities offered by these former industrial sites, factories and industrial estates in recent years, in a functional, tourist and recreational sense. In addition to IBA Emscher Park, other examples of this include the timber port in Barcelona, the FIAT Car factories in Turin, and in our own country, the Kop van Zuid in Rotterdam.

According to the jury’s report, the Sikkens Foundation wished to express its respect for: “The wealth of ideas on which the IBA Emscher Park is based, but also for the way in which this has led to a new type of cultural landscape as a result of the careful stra-

tegy of form and color, where nature and art have entered into a completely new relationship with industry". The strategy used in the IBA Emscher Park was based on the notion of "thoughtful planning" and not simply on growth and planning, as is the trend in the current care of listed buildings and the protection of nature and landscapes. This form of modernity, in which the industrial culture of the past is seen as a sign of progress, led to the sculptures, spatial constructions and light installations interpreting the landscape and contributing to the culture, rather than merely being installed with the landscape as a background. In addition to the fact that color was returned to the Ruhr area after years of smog, soot and grime, the Sikkens Foundation wished to focus attention by awarding this prize, on the new considered way in which this project dealt with history, landscape and identity.

The Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park was established in 1989. The duration of this future-oriented programme of the federated state of North Rhine-Westphalia was ten years. The aim was to achieve the ecological innovation and urban planning of the Northern Ruhr area, an area of 800 km². The former "slums of the Ruhr area" had to be tidied up.

In this process of structural change, there was cooperation with a number of partners in the context of the International Bauausstellung Emscher Park: councils, businesses, institutions, pressure groups and citizens.

More than 110 projects were developed and completed on 6 industrial sites between Duisburg and Kamen.

The Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park was deliberately located in the Northern Ruhr region. The Emscher region is the industrial heart of Europe. In contrast with the Hellweg zone, industrialization only started here at a late stage, though on the other hand, the whole process was much more far reaching and on a larger scale here.

The Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park was not an exhibition in the traditional sense of the word. It was much more a process that involved a large number of participants. The IBA GmbH acted as the coordinator in this complex framework. The parties which commissioned the works were responsible for the individual projects. These were usually councils, but also businesses or pressure groups.