

## Artists in Dialog

### Alex Toland: Personal Dispersal Mechanisms

An Interactive Urban Exploration along the River Panke

August 30, 2009, 4pm

Natural distribution mechanisms of plant species are often severely obstructed in the city. Tree sponsorship is a popular and effective way of re-greening city parks and streets. Individual sponsors become personally linked to individual trees while beautifying the neighborhood and creating new habitats for birds, mammals and insects.

Artist Alex Toland takes this idea a step further by creating species partnerships for a day and encouraging personal interspecies relationships as a potential distribution mechanism. As part of the series **Artists in Dialog** at ART LABORATORY BERLIN the artist will realize a collaborative walk and installation project by leading a group of Berlin residents through part of the green corridor along the Panke and make personal introductions between individual people and plants.

Each participant will volunteer his/her name, short biography and an on the spot (Polaroid) picture in exchange for a receptacle containing one sample cutting of a riparian species, a printed card and description of that species' unique qualities, ecological value and historical uses. Along the walk each participant will "adopt" a species for the day, which will hopefully lead to a longer friendship between man and weed, future recognition of the species and further interest and communication with others about the value of urban nature.

At the end of the walk the human portraits will be installed alongside the plant receptacles and descriptions at ART LABORATORY BERLIN, visually linking human diversity to plant biodiversity as a cultural asset. The walk will begin with an artist talk at ART LABORATORY BERLIN on Prinzenallee and end at the same place with the completion of the installation. It will take about an hour and is open to all ages.



River Panke, Berlin Wedding, Summer 2009



Alex Toland, Berlin 2009

*Environmental artist Alexandra Toland was born in Boston, MA in 1975, received her BA in 1997 from the UW-Madison, MFA in 2001 from the Dutch Art Institute in Enschede, Holland. She is currently completing an engineering degree in landscape architecture and environmental planning at the Berlin University of Technology and works as a teaching assistant in the Dept. of Soil Protection at the TU-Berlin and as a design researcher at the Wriezener Open Space Lab (Wriezener Freiraum Labor).*

*Her main interests include sustainable art, environmental ethics, urban ecosystems, soil conservation, plant population ecology, ethno-botany, landscape architecture and urban planning. She has exhibited artwork in Europe and the United States.*

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