

During Expo 2000, artists were invited to develop site-specific projects for an exhibition at a power station in Vockerode, one of the largest industrial ruins in Europe. The context of the exhibition created a premeditated role-playing of the invited artists: the imposed role of designer plus entertainer provided the point of reference for the works' content. The impending demolition of the ruins by detonation also directly influenced the project.

MEGABLAST is exclusively made with video and sound footage of explosions - a popular raw material for visual effects in TV and advertising. A video loop consisting of the minimally edited clips was projected in a boiler room of the inoperative power station.



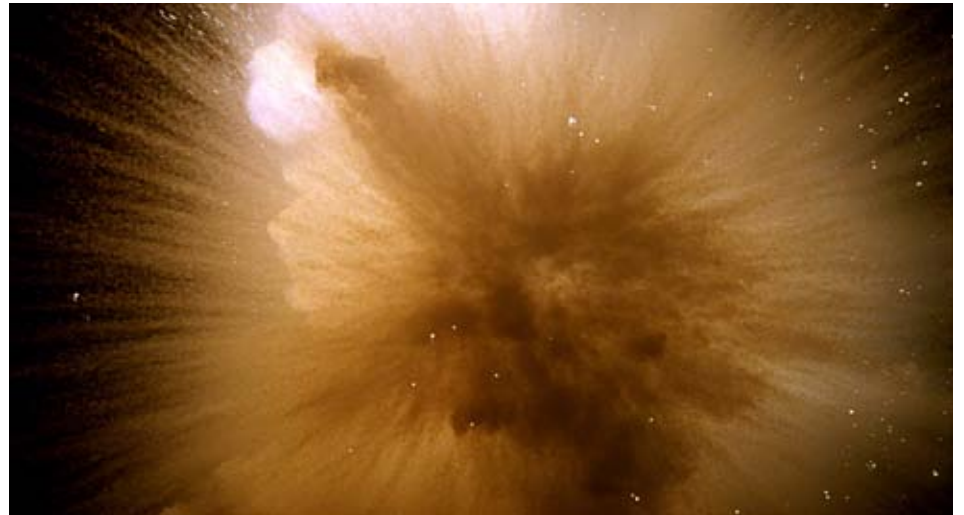
MEGABLAST, PAL video, stereosound
duration: 2:03 min, infinite loop, videostill

The sponsors of the exhibition, including the state of Saxony-Anhalt and the Expo 2000 Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH, were hoping to win prestige by presenting young local artists. They wanted a spectacle to attract large numbers of visitors to the peripheral site. The invited artists were thus given the role of event designers right from the start.

MEGABLAST is inspired by the role-playing of the artists, and as well, the impending demolition of the no-longer-used power station. Thus the project MEGABLAST was intended to co-ordinate the brutal fate of the power-plant - detonation - within an artistic framework. A choreography of the detonation was planned in co-operation with pyro-technicians, who designed the demolition as an aesthetic process with the character of a spectacle. The design of a marketing concept, "tourism of experiences," was also considered to awaken the public to a cultural mourning processes.

A two-minute video loop shows a series of acoustic and visual explosion effects in minimalistic fashion - bangs and echoes, flashes and clouds of smoke or dust, material whirling upwards or descending in slow motion. The medium of film creates distance, allows reflection and also avoids cynicism in the face of a difficult social situation. The inevitable destruction of the building is not only the erasure of a piece of history in the landscape of Saxony-Anhalt, but also the elimination of an element of local identity. As well, the imminent destruction represents the end of the industrial era; the decline of a once-flourishing industrial region and of the socialist model which upheld it. The film's reduction of the detonation to aesthetic-sensual aspects, while playing in the power station itself makes it possible to expose these references, rather than exaggerating and distorting them by using the event itself.

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Power station Vockerode before detonation