



# **GLOBAL RAFT**

## **melting sculptures**

Project Iceland 2009 – 2015/2016

**Rappaport.**

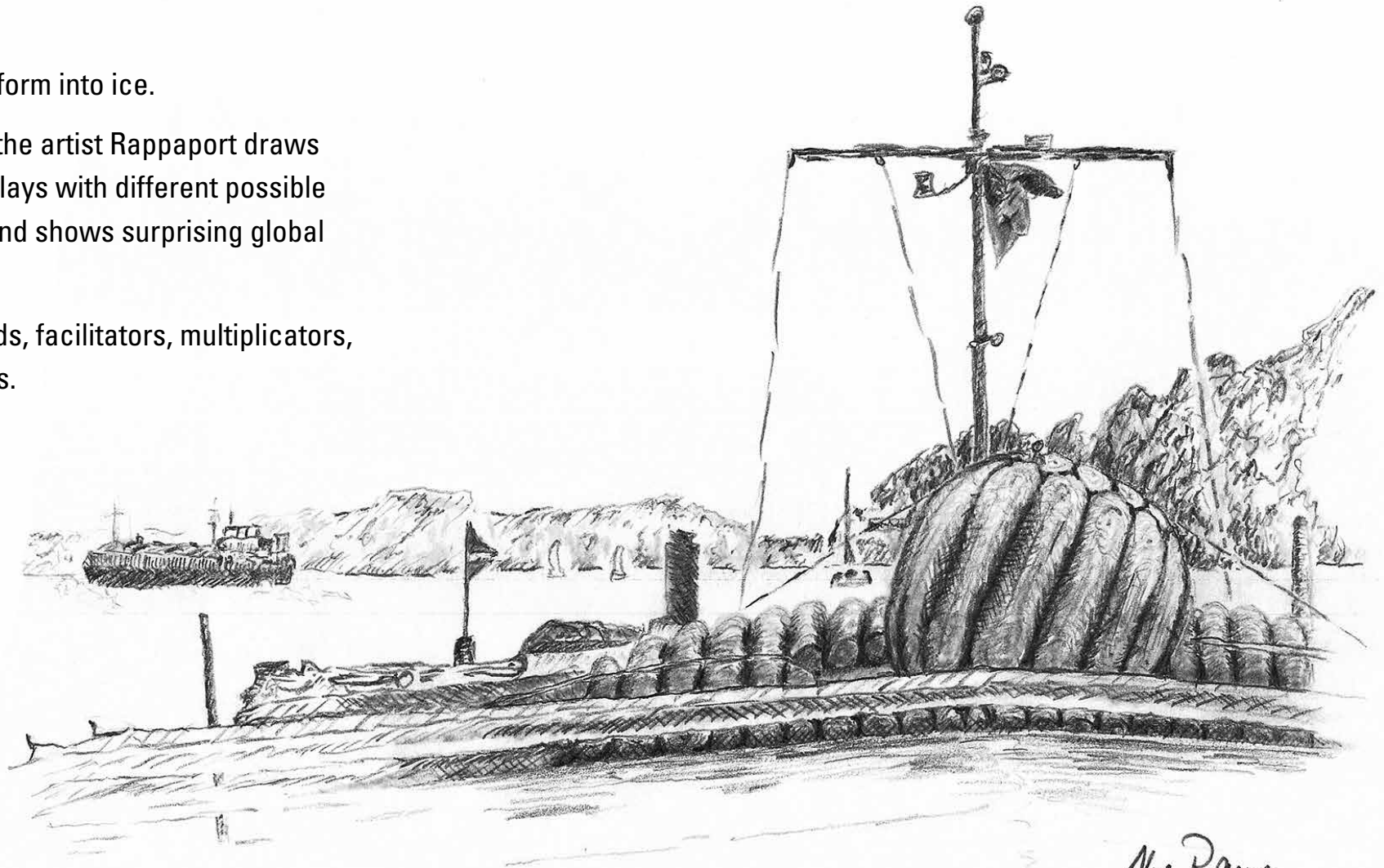
## The Plan

An archaic sphere-raft is on a journey from Stuttgart down the Neckar and Rhine through Rotterdam to Island.

Upon arrival it will transform into ice.

The land-art-project by the artist Rappaport draws from rafting traditions, plays with different possible appearances of water and shows surprising global coherences.

We are looking for friends, facilitators, multipliers, supporters and sponsors.









"Landscape is medium and location of my Art.  
Wood and Water my material. Water knows no borders,  
no boundaries, a moving, ever changing Art-fabric.  
The climate is a global cycle, in its own a worldwide  
Art project.

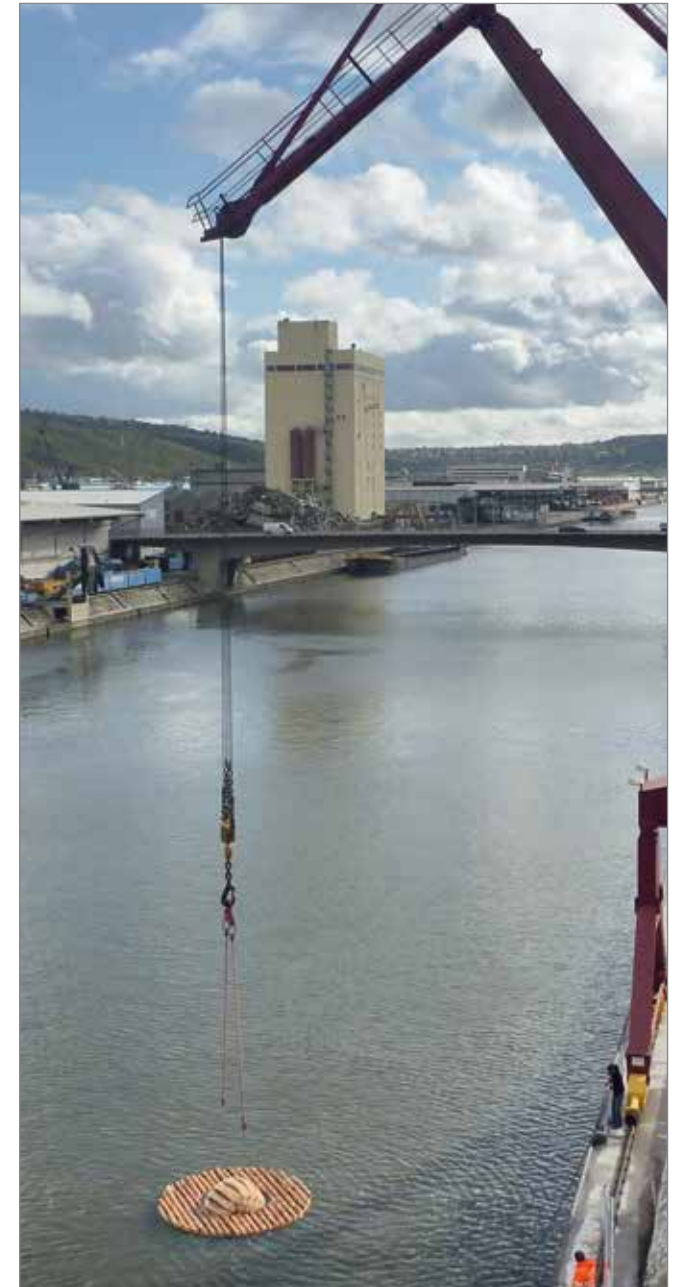
All things are connected. This is what I  
want to make visible: Land-Art becomes Earth-Art."

Rappaport, Januar 2015

## The SphereRaft

The SphereRaft is an archaic floating object. It floats on water without any direction or interruption – no one knows where it will eventually float. In the middle of the circular platform, four meter in diameter, constructed out of 22 pine trunks, there is a circular hole in which, also constructed out of pine trunks, a sphere freely floats.

Nature deploys water as an Art-fabric, using warmth and cold as it chisels. Water connects all and everything, and is as such a central climate factor that knows no human borders.





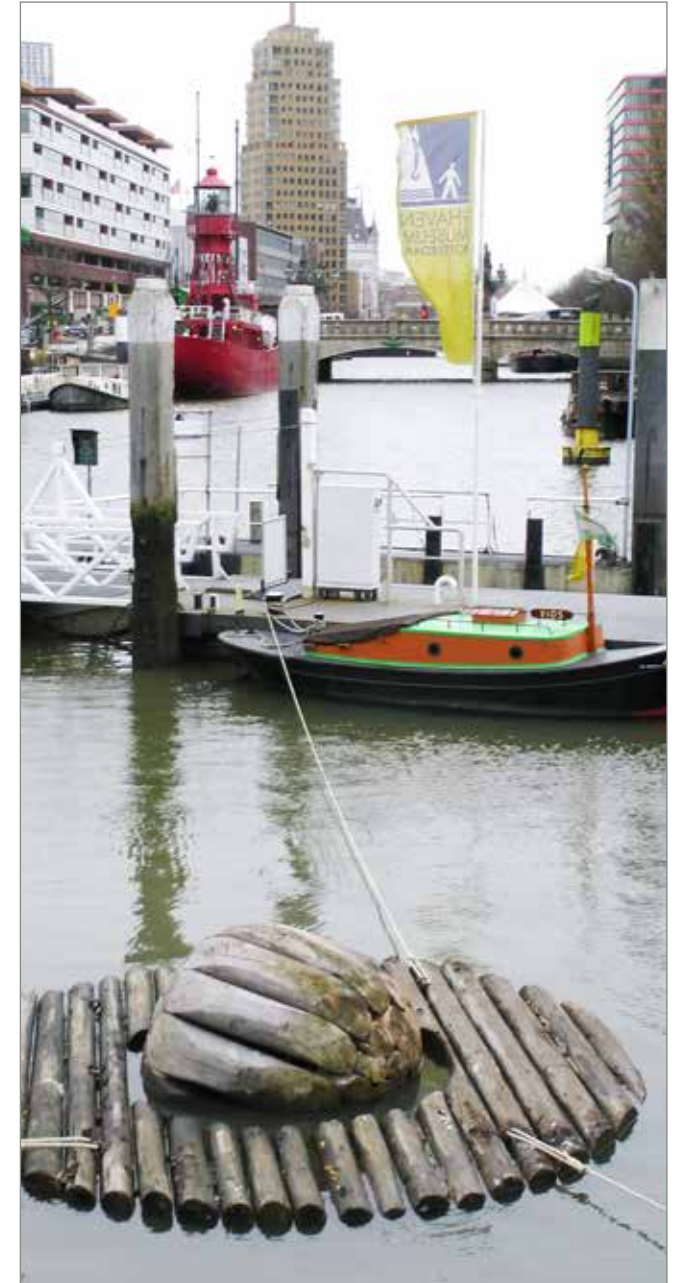
## The Journey

From its place of birth in the forest workshop in Stuttgart, in 2009, the SphereRaft has travelled by ship over the river Neckar and Rhine to the Sculpture park of Cologne – Stammheim. There, on the border of the river Rhine, the Global Raft Project halted for two years (2010 – 2012).

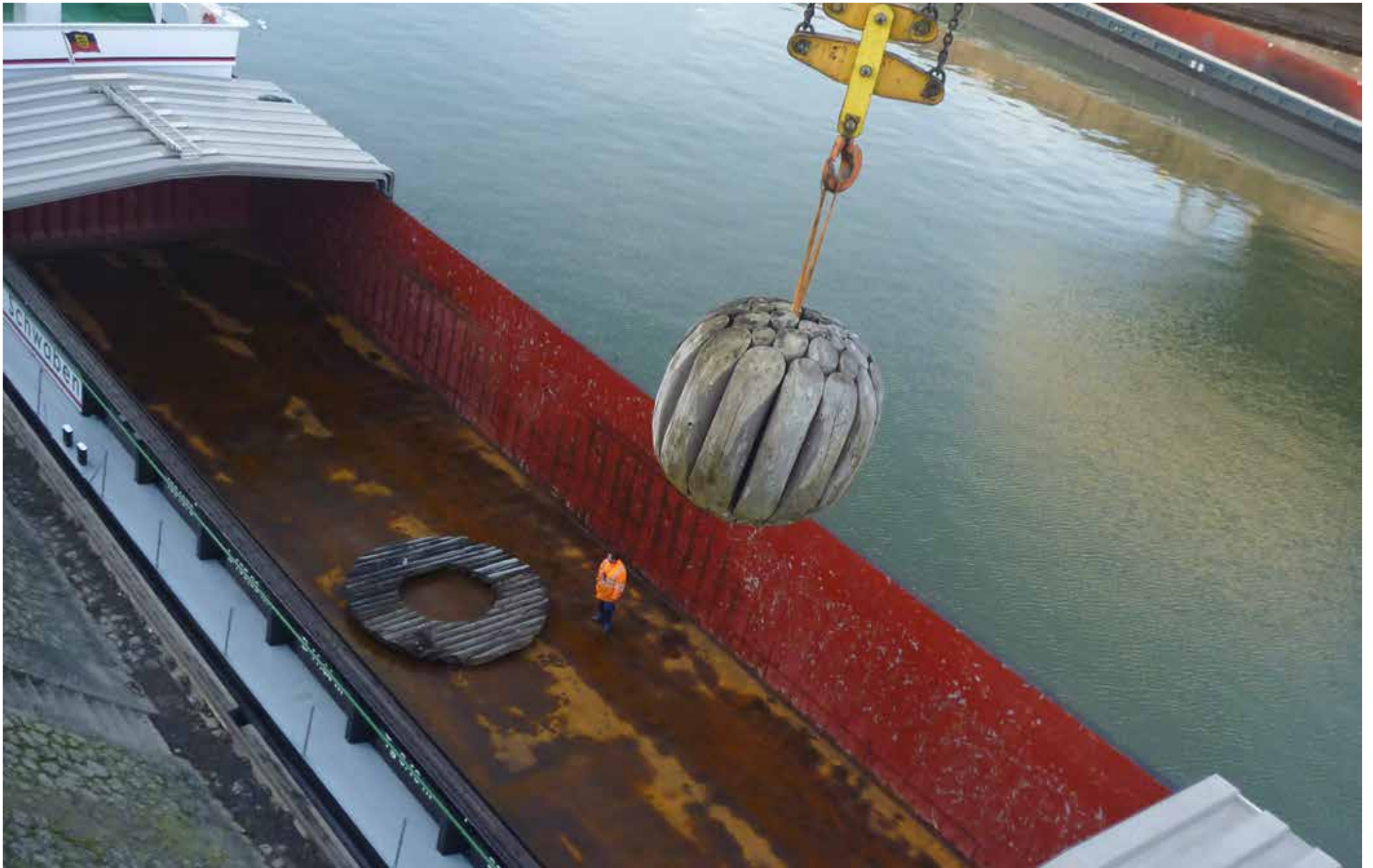
The originally planned journey directly on the rivers themselves was unfortunately prohibited by existing water traffic regulations... The first sluice warder strike in the history of Germany was the next unexpected blockade on the journey downstream.

Finally in the winter of 2013, the SphereRaft travelled in the belly of a ship to the Rotterdam Harbour museum.

Next Stop: Iceland.









## The Idea: Travel to Iceland with the wooden SphereRaft and then make an exact copy of it. Out of ice

"Thomas Rappaport brought his SphereRaft down the Neckar and the Rhine to Rotterdam. In the Netherlands the Rhine goes into branches. The Netherlands being the Rhine delta."

Why is Iceland the preliminary end of the project? It is in Iceland that the Artist will make a new SphereRaft out of ice, to confront the material Wood with the material Ice.

The sun will melt the ice, an echo of the transitory life of all things. It is clear that all things go their temporal way and will, unavoidably, perish in the end.

For me the encounter of the two rafts, of the two materials, Wood and Ice, is a sign

or a monument for the transitory character of things. With ice it is clearly to see that its life is short when exposed to heat, but wood, despite its happening more slowly, is ephemeral as well.

If I place my hand in the river Rhine, I can sense its water currents touching my hand. Should I remove my hand from the water and dip it back in a little while, the sensed water is long passed and new water currents touch my hand.

Hence, the old and wise saying:  
"that you can never jump in the  
same river twice."

*Thomas Hoffmann  
Mathematician and water scientist*



# Stages of the Island journey of Thomas Rappaport

## 1. Leg: Stuttgart – Rotterdam

In Rotterdam the raft will be picked up.

## 2. Leg: Stuttgart – Rotterdam

In Rotterdam the raft will be picked up.

3. Leg: Starting in Hirthals crossing the Skagerrak by ferry, with a layover on the Faeroe Islands continuing to Seydisfjörður in the north east of Island, Rappaport follows the main ring road around the island

4. Leg: To the north, where driftwood from Siberia is washed ashore. Here the raft will be repaired using siberian wood.

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5. Leg: Starting in Vopnafjörður following the ring road out west to Reykjavík, where Rappaport will be working as “Artist in Residence” at SIM - Samband islenskra Myndlistarmanna.

6. Leg: From Reykjavík heading southeast to the glacial river lagoon Jökulsárlón, where the week long event will take place: A copy of the wooden raft will be cut from ice and released into the sea with hundreds of smaller ice rafts.







# Nature Art Performance in the Icelandic Summer

The long stay in the water at the Rotterdam Harbour Museum took its toll on the wooden SphereRaft, the decay started to creep up slowly to the pine wood from the Black forest wood in Germany. The SphereRaft had to be repaired.

## **The preliminary last stop of the SphereRaft: Iceland**

In Iceland Rappaport will give the damaged tree trunks of the raft to the Atlantic ocean. Thus, the trunks of the raft, as did the trunk rafts of older times, ended up hundreds of miles away from where they originated.

On the Northern coast of Iceland ancient trees stranded coming from the rivers of Siberia. The transpolar drift leads them to the North Pole. Superficial streams and

vortexes of the Arctic Ocean drive them southwards where they are picked up by the North Atlantic Drift which pushes them northwards, to strand on the coast of Iceland. It is for ten, even fifteen years that they float in the ocean. Their tough, salted wood will replace the damaged pine trunks of the raft.

## **An Icelandic Land-Art Festival, with Island natives and guests**

After Reykjavik the journey goes southwards, to Jökulsarlon, the biggest glacier lake in Iceland. In a just one week action Rappaport will saw a new Sphere and a new raft out of ice.

A Land-Art Festival will be the last known stop of the project. Natives and guest are invited to the launch of the two rafts into the ocean. The wooden raft, imbued with drift wood, containing the ice sphere, and the ice raft, containing the imbued wooden sphere. Hundreds of small SphereRafts will accompany the launch of the big rafts.



# The Goal: Iceland

## **Iceland – The door to the Arctic**

The official ending of the SphereRaft project should actually be the Arctic Sea. In Greenland. Rappaport wanted to saw here a counterpart of the wooden SphereRaft out of ice. But it wasn't to be so and as Greenland kept its doors shut to Rappaport, Iceland welcomed him.

Icelandic people are curious, open to experiments, enthusiastic and their connection to the elements the same as Rappaports. The journey of the SphereRaft to Iceland is affordable and relatively uncomplicated.

The door to the Arctic is open.

And so is Iceland. This biggest volcanic island of the world, still quite a young one, situated on the very border between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plate. Due to the fact that these two plates float away from each, new hot magma seeps out of the earth's core, forming new land. Rappaport witnessed the biggest volcano of the island, the Bárðarbunga, spit fire and ashes in the late summer of 2014. Its crater reaches as far as the biggest Icelandic glacier, the Vatnajökull. Ever since Ice and Fire have been fascinating Rappaport.

They are the elements with which he works. There's hardly any forest on Iceland, but plenty of wood; driftwood from Siberia, stranded on the coasts of Iceland.

Natural springs boil up everywhere, varying from very hot ones to pleasantly warm ones, used by the natives for a "quick bath" in between.

Beaches of black lava sand contrast magnificently with pure white glaciers. From 190 meters high the tallest waterfall of the island, the Glymyr, plunges into the depth. All four seasons of the year within one day.

Iceland, a land of extremes. It seems that Rappaport's art and Iceland are made for each other.





“Wouldn't we be more concerned about the world's climate if we were more cautious about the climate existing between humans?”

“To me, Art is cooperation between  
Humans and Nature”

“I don't mean to change the landscape, just  
the way it is experienced.”

Rappaport, Januar 2015



# Comments on the Global Raft – melting sculptures

## Holistic – beyond the “classical understanding” of the term

“What fascinates me most about the Global Raft Project is the holistic approach. There is an attempt here to consider the subject of climate change surpassing geographical borders and even interhuman or intercultural borders.”

This vision goes beyond the classical understanding of this concept, which mostly ends up at CO2. Unexpectedly this aspect of the project gains momentum with the recent events around the Globe (IS, PEGIDA and Charlie Hebdo).

*Dr. Christian Dehlinger*

## The Future is the North

I am very impressed by the dynamism and creativity of this project: the whole concept of water as a core element, the flowing and freezing elements themselves, is fascinating. I wish you will have a certain impact.

In the past few years the Arctic circle has found its way into the centre of the global interest. Here one can observe climate change utmost clearly, the glaciers are withdrawing and the flora and fauna are changing. In this way such a long term and sustainable Art project can lead to many unusual impulses and touch people on its way.



*Tom Hoyem,  
Director of the European  
School of Karlsruhe,  
city council since 2004 (Tom  
Hoyem was from 1982 till  
1987 the last Minister  
for Greenland under  
the Danish government  
of Poul Schlüter.)*

## Artistic Counterpoint

In my opinion, Thomas Rappaport has already coined the right words in saying that “Art cannot change the world – until it really does so”. I mean, it has to keep trying anyway but it is never certain which impulse will change the world in the end. I would not mind if one of these impulses will be the one generated by Thomas.

It is the privilege of Art to do things against every kind of common sense, it is part of her original being. and in such a short termed, fractured time of ours, artistic and contemplative counterpoints seem more important then ever.

Thomas certainly has the energy to live up to the task, or call it “Karma”, anyway – He has got the will to do it and the “How” of his willing to do it seems to me worthy of support.

*Lukas Pollack*



# Thomas Rappaport

## Biography

1957	Born in Zürich, Switzerland
	Graduated at the Art academy/ high school of Art
	Apprenticeship as a wood sculptor
	Educated as a teacher for children with special needs
	Study at the Waldorf High school Stuttgart, Germany
	Arts and Crafts teacher
	Professor in adult education
	Private workshop in the woods of the Wildpark Stuttgart, Germany
Since 1999	Unassigned Art projects, Land Art / Social Sculptures
Since 2008	Freelance artist, homebased in Stuttgart, Germany. Works all over the World

## Projects

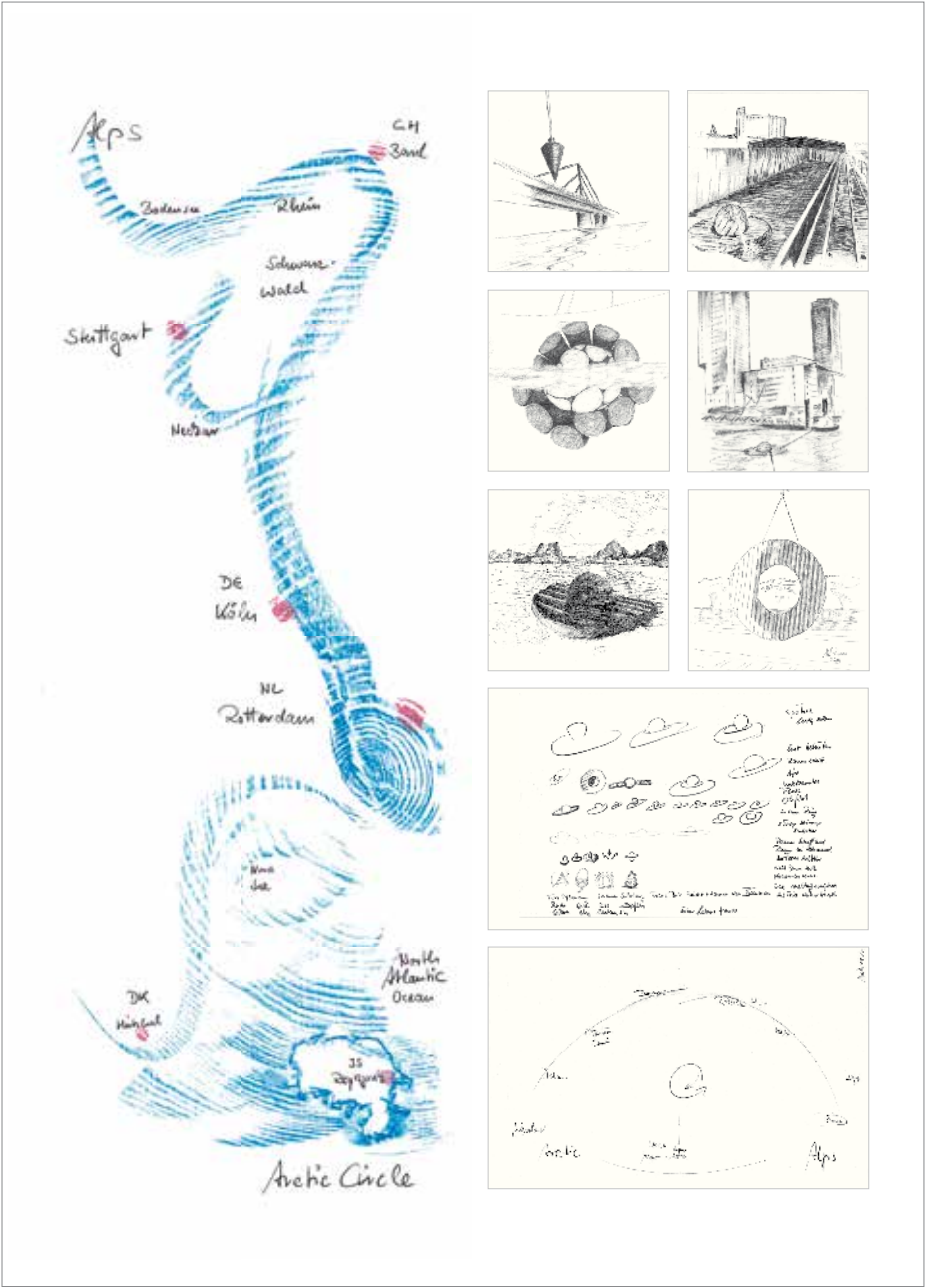
1999	Nature performance with the Solar eclipse, concept and project management.
2000	"Tree Playground I": permanent sculpture, a 300-year old oak is (not) cut down
2001	"Tree-strength": Solo exhibition in the foyer of the cultural community, Stuttgart
2004	"Wandering in a wood pretzel": Labyrinth Land Art Project, Stuttgart
2006	"Wood-Wellness-Oasis": Flame and wood sculptures at the Garden Show Festival, Heidenheim
2007	"Fire & Water": Art under construction. 4 wood stela for the Ludwigsburg Saving Bank
2007	"Tree Playground II": permanent sculpture, "spherical oak", a surgical operation on a living tree.
2009	"Floating Sculptures": exhibition at the Movie and Media Centre Ludwigsburg Starting Project: Global Raft – melting sculptures
2011	The Long night of the Museums in Stuttgart: "Ahoy Harbour tour" "Branding": Branding with elementary fire
2012	"Tree Playground III": Three tree trunks, folded open and into each other
2012	Fathoming Borders II: Felling a Perpendicular. Iced, cold Monumental wood Perpendicular
2012	"Rappaport Pure": Wood in Bliss / Fortuned Wood Gallery ZwischenKunst Stuttgart
2009 – 2016	Global Raft – melting sculptures



Art does not have to justify itself.

It offers us a chance to expand  
and alter our view and understanding  
of things and the world.

Accompanying Art:  
Miniature-SphereRafts  
and Global-Raft-Poster





Partners, friends and  
sponsors up to now:

## Team Global Raft:

Thomas Rappaport,  
Artist

Kathrin Falkenberg,  
Project Management and Finances

Dieter Soldan,  
Communication and Design

Hannelore Ohle,  
Press and PR

Thomas Hoffmann,  
Consulting

Wolf-Peter Steinheißer,  
Video-Production

Lukas Rappaport,  
Photography + Movie

Ann-Kathrin Fischer,  
Grafik Design

Kristin Kreimer-Phillipi,  
Investigation and Organisation



Reederei Schwaben



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