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# SOCIAL PLASTICS

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Social Plastics is an art intervention and non-profit society promoting humanitarian and sustainable development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of the United Nations through the implementation of social projects. The transfer of technology and expertise related to the recycling of plastic waste allows for a development of local and informal humanitarian recycling systems, while simultaneously promoting the reduction of environmental pollution and raising awareness. Moreover, people are empowered to achieve sustainable economic independence through direct plastics processing and value added, hence promoting the societal development of local communities.

Based on the expertise of realized interventions in Mexico, India and Syria, Social Plastics will initially be implemented in three new pilot projects. Additionally, an international platform will be set up to coordinate the wider network. Following this pilot phase, the system of train-the-trainer approach, international technology transfer and local networks will be rolled out globally and linked via an international platform.

**People.** „We are determined to put an end to poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all people can fully realize their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.“ (UN General Assembly Resolution, 2015)

**Social Plastics goals.** Poverty reduction, societal and economic development, social responsibility and environmental awareness

## Executive Summary

It requires the urgent and comprehensive implementation of international agreements to ensure sustainable global development. The United Nations Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals define the transformative goals and conceptual framework of the desired development at the economic, social and environmental levels (UN Report, 2018). The art intervention Social Plastics was created to bring together these dimensions in a humanitarian project and to realize an environmentally friendly development. In the start-up phase, it is planned to establish an international platform, the non-profit organization Social Plastics and three pilot projects.

Micro level – The people and the environment are uncompromisingly at the heart of the project. Building local, humanitarian recycling systems, Social Plastics promotes the reuse and direct recycling of plastic waste through the transfer of technology and expertise.

Local groups in developing countries will be enabled to work with this almost limitless resource of plastic waste in the area to create a substantial value added. The prerequisite hereby is the sufficient knowledge transfer of the exact region-dependent composition of the plastic material and related technical knowledge, which will be delivered through interactive workshops. Lightweight plastics, primarily packaging waste, consisting of polyethylene and polypropylene, are suitable for direct reuse within the project.

The simple technical process of plastic processing ensures project participants the development and immediate production of individual items for the local community. Furthermore, the creation of vernacular recycling objects for the global market is intended in order to refinance the local and global Social Plastics platform.

In this way, sustainable economic independence and poverty reduction can be achieved. It also promotes the social development of local communities and their cohesion. Based on the developmental economic idea of microfinance, Social Plastics promotes regional innovation and, in the long term, enables independent economic self-realization with positive externalities for the environment.

For the smooth implementation of the project, cooperation with local organizations and institutions in the target regions are indispensable. These collaborations enable the minimization of linguistic and cultural barriers and enable a rapid and effective implementation of Social Plastics on the ground.

Overall, Social Plastics is designed as a short-term intervention, using its financial resources to provide the technology, impart expertise on the plastics processing and provide a conditional basic income to project participants. After a period of two years, the aim is to establish financially independent projects through the marketing of vernacular recycling objects on the global platform. Furthermore, a continuous evaluation, the exchange of best-practices and the coordination of the projects are preserved.

Macro level - The organization and coordination of individual projects, their external financing, as well as access to a global market are ensured by networking with an international platform under the umbrella of the non-profit society Social Plastics. Social Plastics also offers an extensive network of experts in the fields of politics, art and science. An effective implementation can therefore be sustained to the overarching goals through the strategies and network communication on the international Social Plastic Platform.

Cooperation - To ensure that funds are used economically efficiently, an extensive evaluation of the three pilot projects is planned. A scientific evaluation should also measure the overall impact of the Social Plastics project on local communities. Establishing a causal effect of the art intervention in the regions on variables such as education, inequality and regional development provides scientific justification for the effective use of Social Plastics' financial means. The report can thus reinforce the internal validity of Social Plastics and form the analytical foundation for a global expansion of the project.

# NORTH KOREA

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To come right to the point.  
Yes, I have been to North Korea.  
Yes, it was really exciting.  
And yes, I have returned safely.

In 2014 I had the opportunity to present the project Social plastic at the congress „Caux Dialogue on Land and Security“ near Geneva, Switzerland. A delegation from North Korea was present and has been excited about the underlying idea of the humanitarian project. Then, everything revolved around the question of whether such a project would be feasible in a North Korean environment and what the conditions for such might be.

Personally, I didn't know what to expect - for me, North Korea was an unknown and somehow mysterious place. However, the opportunity to realise my project in this country fascinated me. Thus, I was very much excited to receive an official invitation from the North Korean government. I hoped that such an experience would allow me first hand to gain an insight into the local social situation.

After deciding to accept the invitation, we visited the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea from the 3rd to the 10th of June 2014. The aim of this first journey was to introduce the project itself and moreover to find out about the potential barriers of a realisation of the project given the current social and political situation.

The travel program included a visit to the Art Academy in Pyongyang, as well as meetings with various organisations and government institutions. These meetings were intended to discuss possibilities of future cooperation. Much of the discussion revolved around the issue of how to recycle the local plastic waste and to which extent this can be used within the project „Social Plastic“.

An important aspect of the visit was that it would be conducted independently of political and cultural institutions. The project is a free art project, a recycling project, an ecological project, a project which raises awareness, a neighbourhood project, a social project and especially a humanitarian project that places people and local communicates at its heart, independent of political and societal structures.



All dimensions L x B are including frame.



DPRK\_203212.08  
65,6 x 58,6 cm







DPRK\_203161.08  
72,6 x 59,6 cm



DPRK\_203161.08  
88,6 x 61,6 cm

everyone was very  
courteous and helpful ...

alle waren sehr  
zuvorkommend  
und  
hilfsbereit....





DPRK\_203171.08  
56,6 x 56,6 cm











DPRK\_203173.08  
44,6 x 50,6 cm





DPRK\_203292.08  
67,6 x 98,6 cm





DPRK\_203179.08  
45,6 x 58,6 cm

DPRK\_203181.08  
51,6 x 61,6 cm







DPRK\_203189.08  
50,6 x 37,6 cm







DPRK\_203191.08  
65,6 x 56,6 cm





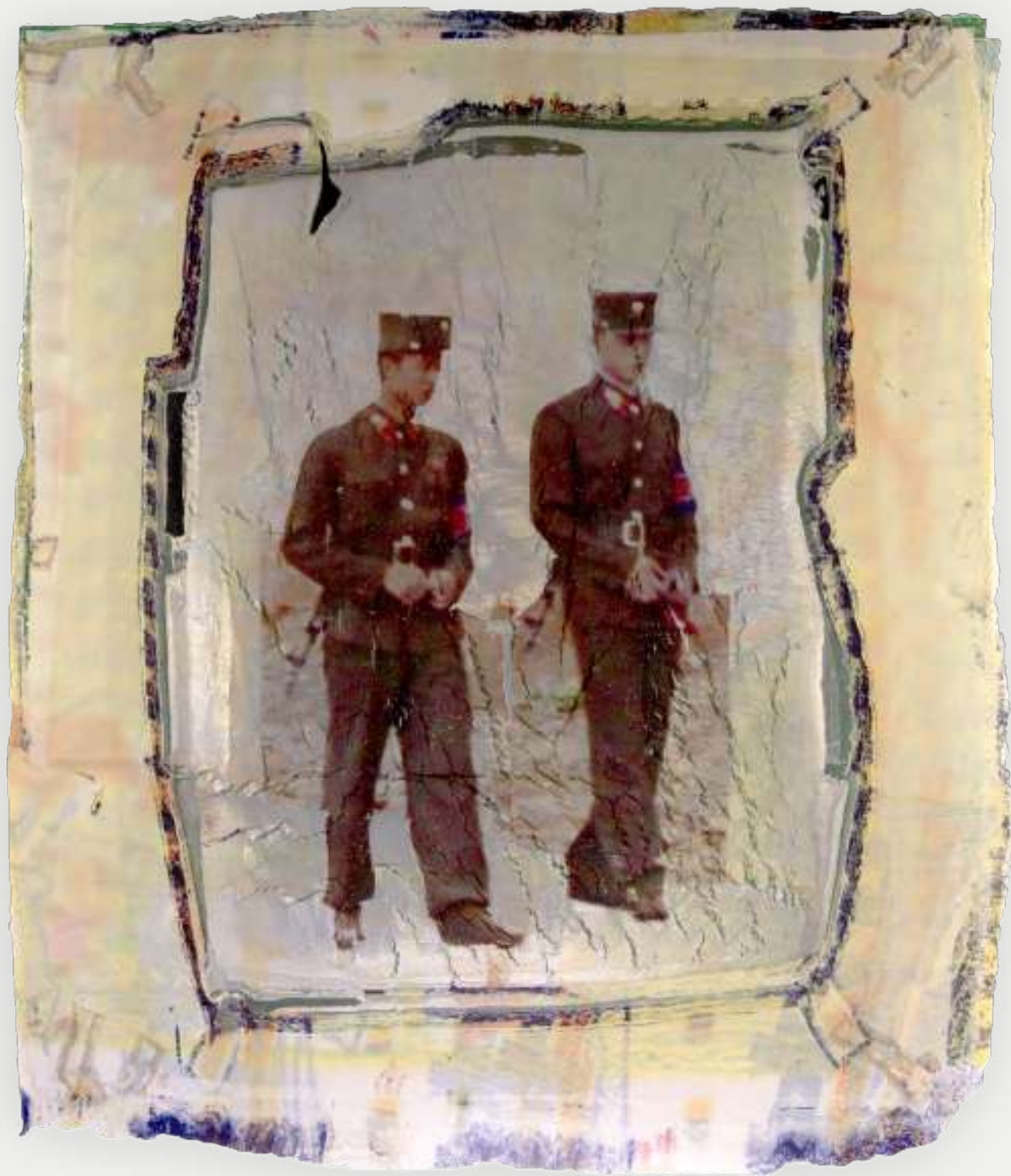
DPRK\_203169.08  
45,6 x 52,6 cm























DPRK\_203233.08  
74,6 x 63,6 cm



DPRK\_203253.08  
73,6 x 61,6 cm



ja ich war da

yes I was there









DPRK\_203238.08  
75,6 x 60,6 cm



DPRK\_203229.08  
69,6 x 55,6 cm



yes I came back safely again

ja ich bin wieder  
gut zurück  
gekommen





DPRK\_203200.08  
57,6 x 62,6 cm



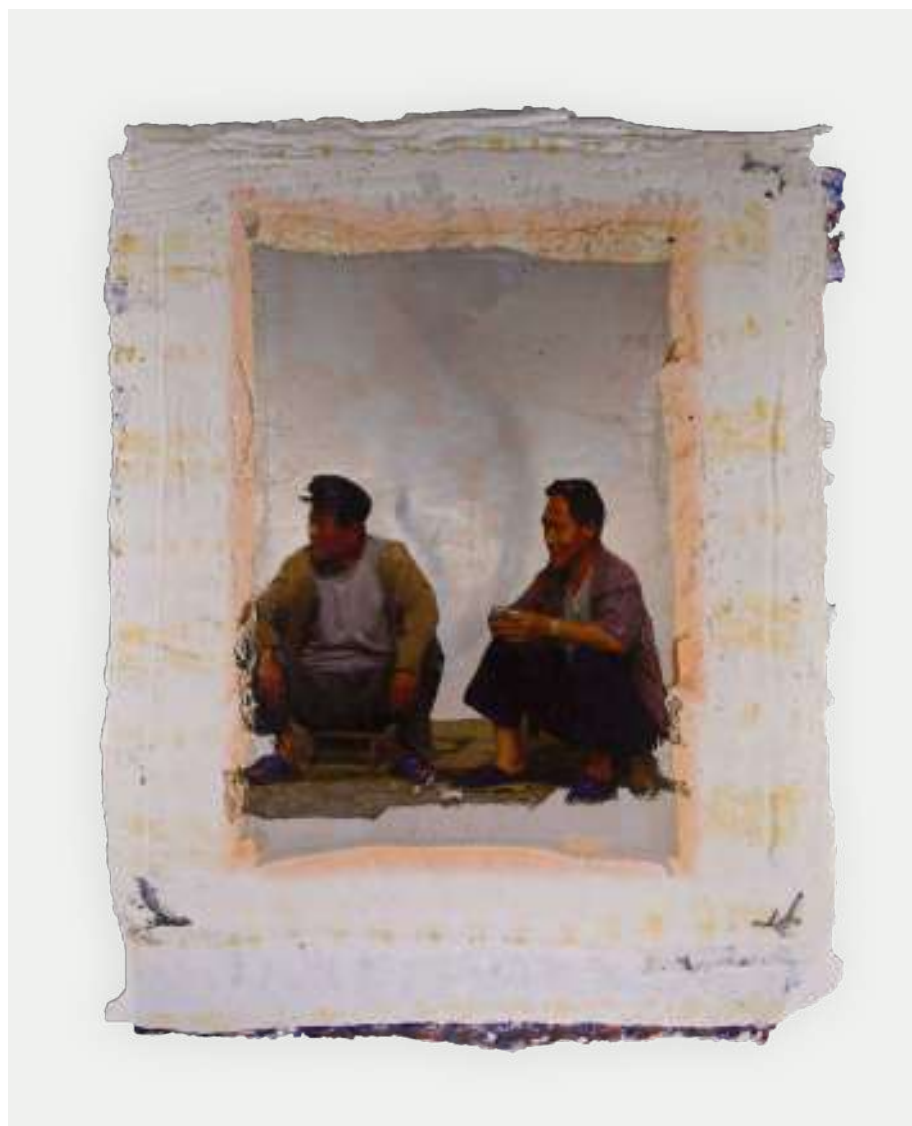


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DPRK\_203251.08  
78,6 x 63,6 cm



DPRK\_203276.08  
84,6 x 95,6 cm

















DPRK\_203175.08  
43,6 x 51,6 cm



DPRK\_203219.08  
69,6 x 59,6 cm





DPRK\_203240.08  
77,6 x 70,6 cm



DPRK\_203261.08  
74,6 x 59,6 cm





















DPRK\_203285.08  
79,6 x 66,6 cm



DPRK\_203236.08  
80,6 x 63,6 cm





DPRK\_203242.08  
72,6 x 63,6 cm



DPRK\_203167.08  
56,6 x 49,6 cm





DPRK\_203255.08  
68,6 x 54,6 cm





DPRK\_203278.08  
83,6 x 68,6 cm



DPRK\_203280.08  
80,6 x 65,6 cm





















DPRK\_203268.08  
63,6 x 92,6 cm









DPRK\_203272.08  
66,6 x 101,6 cm





DPRK\_203274.08  
75,6 x 101,6 cm





DPRK\_203177.08  
50,6 x 54,6 cm







DPRK\_203202.08  
66,6 x 58,6 cm

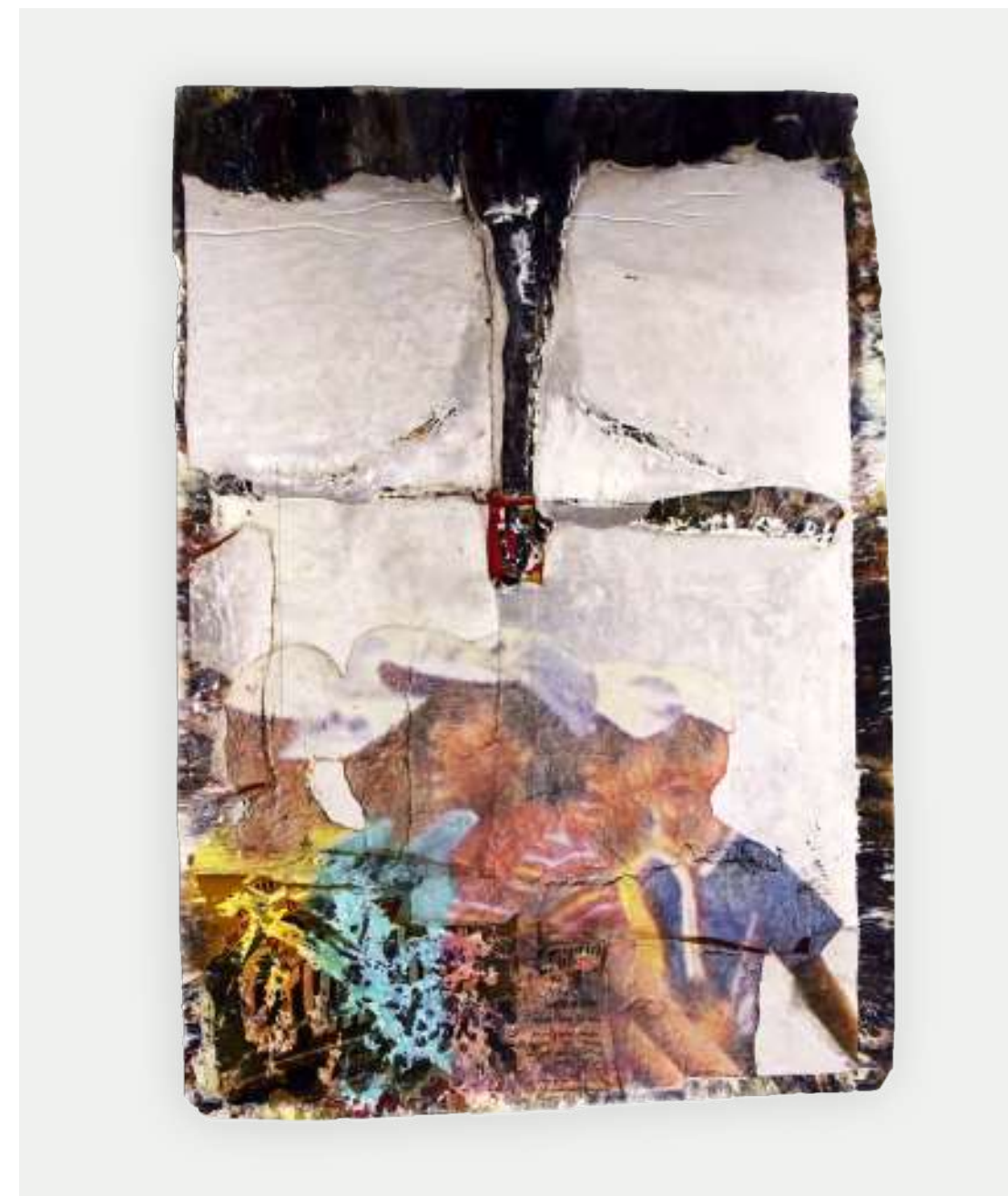


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68,6 x 57,6 cm





DPRK\_203287.08  
78,6 x 54,6 cm



DPRK\_203290.08  
80,6 x 58,6 cm





DPRK\_203295.08  
100,6 x 78,6 cm



DPRK\_3298.08  
114,6 x 114,6 cm



# IMPRINT

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Gerhard Bär  
[www.socialplastics.com](http://www.socialplastics.com)

Many thanks to all the known and unknown people I have met throughout my North Korean journey, especially the ones that are reflected in my work.

Thanks to Jil, Cosima and the agenturfuerkrankemedien





[www.socialplastics.com](http://www.socialplastics.com)  
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