



## **INTRODUCTION OF MONUMENT OF SUGAR ? HOW TO USE ARTISTIC MEANS TO ELUDE TRADE BARRIERS**

### **LONNIE VAN BRUMMELEN / SIEBREN DE HAAN**

Lonnie van Brummelen and Siebren de Haan:

?We visited Hrebenne, a small rural village at the Polish-Ukrainian border, on the day the expansion of the European Union went into effect. While we observed the growing queue of cars on both sides of the border, we spoke to a Polish farmer. He offered us homemade sausages and coffee. When he handed us the sugar, he joked that the Polish cukier had become twice as sweet since their entry into the European Union. The price had multiplied from one day to the next. As a result, Polish sugar was now even cheaper in the Ukraine than in Poland itself.? (quote from the film essay Monument of Sugar) This remarkable observation incited us to investigate Europe?s sugar trade. We studied COMTRADE statistics and discovered that the majority of Europe?s cheap export sugar was traded to Nigeria. In 2006, we traveled to Lagos with the aim of reversing the flow of the subsidized commodity by purchasing Europe?s sugar in Nigeria and shipping it back home. To avoid the European trade barrier for sugar imports, we would turn the commodity in situ into a sculptural blocks. As art work, the sugar could be imported under Harmonization Code 9703, which ensures the duty-free passage of ?all monuments and original artworks, irrespective of the material in which they were produced?.

The installation Monument of Sugar consists of a floor sculpture of 304 sugar modules and a 16 mm silent film essay of 67 minutes. The film essay charts our investigations into the sugar trade and our experiences when producing and transporting the monument. Silent documentary sequences explore the landscapes of agriculture, industry, market, transit, and the slow and laborious process of producing the sugar blocks. These cinematic scenes are intersected by slowly scrolling texts on white backgrounds, that give an account of our field work and production.

On the World of Matter web platform we include parts of the documentary footage, as well as the narrative of the film?s running titles in writing.

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**Cluster:** Monument of Sugar

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