

FabLab Igloolik 2013

What it's all about

... or, in other words, what would we like to do? We pick up one of the main results of the API Open Space Conference in 2010, which is to build a fablab with and for the people in Igloolik which is an Inuit hamlet, Qikiqtaaluk Region in Nunavut, northern Canada¹.

This idea comes along with the decision of the group of international attendees to hold an community based workshop in Igloolik in 2013. Therefore we would like to bring forward the fablab subject by suggesting following steps:

- come together in Copenhagen for a Preparation Workshop in 2011
- establish a BaseCamp FabLab Igloolik in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 2012 - hopefully in cooperation with Icelandic API / FabLab partners
- use the BaseCamp for preparation workshops to develop the workshop in 2013 in Igloolik
- put up to discussion a project proposal how to manage the undertaking strategically, financially, and what else has to be considered
- bring together those interested parties who commit themselves to bring into practice the fablab
- enlarge and strengthen the fablab-supporters-network locally - in Igloolik - as well as internationally
- spread the word about API and the FabLab Igloolik initiative

FabLabs - a worldwide initiative

A fablab is a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication. It is generally equipped with an array of flexible computer controlled tools with the aim to make "almost anything", such as laser cutter, plasma cutter, CNC machines, rapid prototyper for 3D printing with plastic, and in some projects including free community FabFi wireless networks. Fablabs are about democratizing access to the tools for personal expression and invention by offering an enabling environment, and have already shown the potential to empower individuals to create smart devices for themselves.

The project has to work out, how general guidelines for fablabs - their purpose, design, equipment, business model - have to be adjusted to the vision and needs of the Inuit in a mutual development process.

Let's spot the background - API & more

FabLab Igloolik is an outcome of the API Open Space Conference held in Germany at the HMKV Phoenix Halle in September 2010, where international attendees² dealing with the Arctic region, its geopolitics and inhabitants were gathering:

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igloolik>

2 So did Jürgen Neumann, Berlin <http://www.junes.eu/Index.html>

"Ideas to be put into practice include a community based workshop and lab that will provide outreach and education facilities for learning techniques of fabrication, hands on technology repair techniques, new media authoring and literacy, a system of hydroponic community gardens that will be powered entirely from renewable energies and many other exciting proposals."³

Therefore, to dig deeper into the conceptual framework as well as the project's history, what does API stand for?

"The Arctic Perspective Initiative (API) is a non-profit, international group of individuals and organizations, founded by Marko Peljhan and Matthew Biederman, whose goal is to promote the creation of open authoring, communications and dissemination infrastructures for the circumpolar region. Its aim is to work with, learn from, and empower the North and Arctic Peoples through open source technologies and applied education and training. By creating access to these technologies while promoting the creation of shared communications and data networks without costly overheads, continued and sustainable development of autonomous culture, traditional knowledge, science, technology and education opportunities for peoples in the North and Arctic regions is enabled."⁴

By involving leaders from the North and the South, from political perspectives and cultural production, and from industry to ecology to the API Open Source Conference, a range of issues were identified and goals of advancing issues important to all northern peoples, including among others:

- climate adaptation and sustainability
- the preservation and use of native languages
- using technology, both advanced and traditional, for greater autonomy

Through the conference, API and the participants have started to draft the Phoenix Declaration stating the importance of the circumpolar region within the world's systems and collaboration with the peoples who have lived there for thousands of years. The Phoenix Declaration meanwhile is available on the Internet and can be signed (only by USA people).

Step by Step

This can not be done in one step. Such a complex project as a fablab needs an efficient planned and stringent managed proceeding - without overdoing things. As most of us know and would acknowledge preparation workshops are an inherent part of any professional project management for FabLab Igloolik. Therefore we suggest and go for a Preparation Workshop in Copenhagen (2011) and an API BaseCamp in Iceland (2012); which, as the fablab-module is only one part of an integrated multilayer undertaking, will be open for any API-driven activity, and could be hold open during the total FabLab project period.

An API BaseCamp in Reykjavik would - in our perspective - provide an ideal meeting and working space for the international API community.

3 <http://arcticperspective.org/news/api-open-space-conference> June 2011

4 <http://arcticperspective.org/> June 2011

Why Iceland?

First of all, Iceland is, in geographical terms, located in the center of the API members' national and activity locations: Most activists could reach Reykjavik easily by plane and the flight distance from Ljubljana, Slovenia⁵, is almost the same as from e.g. Berlin or UK; not to mention those who come down southward from Canada and the northern region.

For many API members an Icelandic API BaseCamp would be more than a flight stopover, but some kind of a physical and cultural "halfway station", which gives opportunity to approximate to Igloolik not only weather-wise.

Iceland is on its straight way up to the most innovative country in researching, discussing and practising sustainable development locally and nationwide, for instance in the field of sustainable energy supply. A cooperation between Icelandic experts and practitioners would be an enormous specialist input and offer a great opportunity to share experience in an interdisciplinary and international setting.⁶

An API BaseCamp in Iceland would bring in invaluable infrastructural support for any kind of meeting, congress and workshop set up to proceed API activities.

Iceland runs already three fablabs whose cooperation we would highly appreciate.⁷

Last but not least there are already many API interested parties in Iceland, who have already taken part in different activities like the API Open Space Conference in Germany in 2010⁸, and there are coming in more like those we were talking with at DMY in Berlin⁹ recently; we gathered a lot of interest and assurances for support and personal engagement.

We are convinced, the international API network would find an ideal center point in Iceland from where out it could outreach, and we would love to come into close and practical cooperation with representatives from Icelandic scientists, media-workers, fablab-practitioners ...

Take Part in the Discussion

- have a look on <http://arcticperspective.org>
- subscribe to the mailinglist API FabLAB <mailto:api-fl@mail.junes.eu>
- sign up for API communication platform Huddle

5 API exhibition "Coded Utopia" from Makrolab to the API, March 29 - June 12, 2011, in Modern Gallerija Ljubljana

6 As an example for a documentary film about the subject you may have a look at "Future of Hope" directed by Henry Bates and produced by Heather Mills, <http://icelandcinemanow.com/2010/08/17/future-of-hope-out-september-3rd-2/> and <http://www.facebook.com/futureofhope>

7 More details, links see Fab Lab List, Feb 21, 2011 <http://fab.cba.mit.edu/about/labs/>

8 Attendees see here <http://arcticperspective.org/news/api-open-space-conference>

9 DMY International Design Festival Berlin June 2011