

The background is a vibrant green color. It features a complex network of white lines connecting various nodes. Some nodes are represented by small white circles, while others are larger red squares. There are also several concentric white circles scattered across the background, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

LEIPZIG
SEPTEMBER 21ST-27ST, 2015

kultur
standort
bestimmung

International cultural congress
and cultural festival

**BEST PRACTICE
CATALOGUE**

The congress **culture | place.positioning** represented the most crucial cultural contribution of Leipzig's independent scene for the city's anniversary year 2015. 1000 years after the city's first mention seemed to be a grand occasion for celebrating that which makes the city what it is and what it stands for. The initiative Leipzig + Culture e.V. was supported by the municipality to conceive and carry out an international and interdisciplinary congress that invited 40 experts from France, Great Britain, Poland, Greece, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Latvia, as well as from all over Germany. They were tasked with (re)defining practical German examples of cultural policy, gathering recommendations for action, collecting examples that have been undertaken and fashioning suggestions for action.

There were many examples in the discussions that presented political and government action with regard to culture. In addition to the PDF *Content* and the PDF *Recommendations for Action*, in this *Best Practice Catalogue* there is a structured and detailed presentation of selected examples: On the one hand it includes a collection from existing places of dialogue between the independent scene and municipal decision-makers from various cities, and on the other hand it presents structuring processes of the independent scene in various cities.

The examples shown here are fundamentally based on the stories shared by speakers during the congress. Within the framework of this publication, it was neither possible to audit their respective implementations, nor to collect further information. Because of this, we ask for your consideration regarding subjective representations.

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1. PLACES OF DIALOGUE

1.1 Berlin: „Jour fixe Visual Arts“

Initiators

Berlin Network of independent project spaces and initiatives

Written basis: no

Participants

Speakers of the Berlin network of independent project spaces and initiatives and employees the Berlin Senate Chancellery for Cultural Affairs, Dept. VD financial assistance for artists, projects and independent groups

Frequency

Every 8 to 10 weeks, since April 2011

Place

2011-2014: on the premises of the City Administration
Since 2014: rotation of places at various project areas

Publication of contents

Internal protocols within the network

Séverine Marguin, art and work sociologist at the University of Lüneburg reported at the congress.

For further information: <http://www.projektraeume-berlin.net/netzwerk/mission/>

1.2 Bonn: “Roundtable”

Initiators

Council of the City of Bonn, Department of Culture, City of Bonn

Written basis: no information

Tasks

The City Council of Bonn commissioned the administration on April 29, 2010, to develop a global approach for the cultural city of Bonn. The concept, which was voted upon by the city council at its meeting on December 13, 2011, gives an overview of the current cultural offerings of Bonn, development prospects for the future (2012–2022) and measures for achieving the goals. It is divided into four sections and contains visions, guidelines and descriptions of the ten areas of action and overarching issues such as regional cooperation

Participants

A total of 150 cultural workers and experts at ten round tables on the subjects of: Performing Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Literature, Film, Cultural Memory, Building Culture, Science, Cultural Education/Intercultural Access, Beethoven

Frequency

The roundtables met from February to September 2012 in the following phases:

Feb. 03–Mar. 05, 2012: 1st Phase roundtables – discussion of the status quo

Mar. 16–May 11, 2012: 2nd phase roundtables – discussion of the target condition

Jun. 20–Sep. 11, 2012: Phase 3 Round Tables – discussion regarding instruments and vision

Guidelines

Since the conclusion, about every six months the City Cultural Office coordinates the monitoring of the implementation of the cultural concept

Place

Facilities of the city administration

Publication of contents

Minutes of the roundtables – internal

Minutes of monitoring – in Bonn Council and Information System Bo-RIS

Martin Schumacher, Head of the Department of Culture, Sports and Science of Bonn reported at the congress.

For further information: <http://www.bonn.de/@kulturkonzept>

1.3 Brno / CZ: “World Cafe”

Initiators

Brno Kulturní (Brno Cultural) – non-profit association

Written basis: no information

Tasks

Design and development of a conceptual paper on cultural policy in the city of Brno: “The program for the development of culture in the city of Brno and its Evaluation”

Participants

Members of Brno Kulturní, representatives of municipal and private cultural organizations, representatives of the city administration

Frequency

Irregularly, as required, so far five meetings of the World Café took place between Spring 2012 and June 2014

Place

4 x Cultural Centre, 1 x Café

Publication of contents

Minutes of the meetings, published in the E-Newsletter (Cz .: Zpravodaj 01 ...)

Pavla Spurná, co-founder of the association “Brno kulturní”, an association of independent cultural operators and organizations in Brno/CZ reported at the congress.

For further information: <http://www.brnokulturni.cz/ke-stazeni/>

1.4 Essen: “Cultural Advisory Council Essen”

Initiators

Essen City Council

Written basis

The rules for the Cultural Advisory Council of the City of Essen regulate tasks, functions and membership

Tasks

Discussion and approval of suggestions and opinions on urban culture. The Cultural Council has so far only an advisory and not a decisive function in terms of the city’s cultural committee or the parliamentary authority in the city

Participants

Individuals (artists and cultural workers of various divisions), institutional representatives (schools and university), competent individuals from architecture, urban development and other areas of culture. The executive director is the Director of Cultural Affairs

Frequency

Four times per year, since 1985

Place

The Cultural Office of the city functions as the office

Publication of contents

The Cultural Office of the city writes and send out invitations as well as minutes of the board meetings, the Council and the committees

Contact

Cultural Office Essen

Gildehof, Hollestr. 3 45127 Essen

Tel: +49 201 88 41211

Fax: +49 201 88 41111

Email: kulturbuero@essen.de

Internet: <http://www.kulturbuero.essen.de>

Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheytt, president of the Association for Cultural Policy e.V. and Managing Director of Cultural Experts GmbH reported at the congress.

For further information: <http://www.kulturbuero.essen.de>

1.5 Leipzig: “Roundtable for Independent Culture”

Initiators

Initiative Leipzig + Culture

Written basis: no

Tasks

- 2008–2009, the identification of problems and constraints and fashion an overview of the situation
- Since 2011, the analysis of the practical implementation of the City Council decision of 2008 which set a funding limit of 5 percent of municipal cultural spending for the independent scene from 2013 onwards
- Since 2012, focusing on the revision of the general guidelines for the award of grants from the City of Leipzig to recipients from outside the city council and the continuous actualisation of the guidelines for the funding of culture
- 2013–2014 Break
- 2015 Resumption of the work after the formation of the new city council

Participants

All representatives from democratic parties in the City Council and specifically those on the sub-committee for culture, the Department of Culture and representatives from the independent cultural scene as represented by the initiative Leipzig + Culture

Frequency

irregularly – depending on the topic up to 4 times a year, since June 2015 every 2 months

Place

Mostly in a room in the community college, which is rented from Leipzig + Culture. Paid for by the non-profit

Publication of contents

Public minutes of key points/results log on the website of Leipzig + Culture

Contact

Leipzig + Kultur e. V.
Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 48
04275 Leipzig
www.leipzigpluskultur.de

Falk Elstermann and Sophie Renz, speakers of Leipzig + Culture e.V., reported at the congress.

For further information: www.leipzigpluskultur.de

1.6 Leipzig: “Cultural Forum Leipzig”

Initiators

Leipzig City Council, Organization: City of Leipzig, Office of Culture

Written basis

Decision of the city council no. RBV-998/11 of 17.11.2011

[http://notes.leipzig.de/appl/laura/wp5/kais02.nsf/docid/86A6D59E4C4E87C2C125796000455404/\\$-FILE/V-rb-998-ausfertigung.pdf](http://notes.leipzig.de/appl/laura/wp5/kais02.nsf/docid/86A6D59E4C4E87C2C125796000455404/$-FILE/V-rb-998-ausfertigung.pdf)

Tasks

Platform for current artistic and political discourse, cultural and political issues, networking of stakeholders from culture, politics, science and the independent scene

Participants

Wide participation of all cultural operators in Leipzig – city, state and federal public institutions; Representatives of foundations, representatives of universities/sciences, representatives from independent culture, representatives from the creative industries, representatives from politics and administration + external experts, composed of between 80–100 people

Frequency

Since 2012, once annually

Place

New city hall

Publication of contents

Culture Forum 1 and 2 – on the website of the City of Leipzig, indirectly, some aspects have been recorded in city council documents

Culture Forum 3 – yes, on the website of the City of Leipzig

Culture Forum 4 – no

Contact

Department of Culture

New City Hall

Martin-Luther-Ring 4–6

04109 Leipzig

Email: kulturdezernat@leipzig.de

Phone: 0341 123 4200 and 0341 123 4209

Falk Elstermann and Sophie Renz, Speakers of Leipzig + Culture e.V. reported about it at the congress. The information comes from the Department of Culture.

For further information:

<http://www.leipzig.de/freizeit-kultur-und-tourismus/kunst-und-kultur/kulturforum/>

1.7 Tübingen: “Cultural Round Table”

Initiators

The Cultural Network Association is responsible for schedule coordination, the organization of the premises, thematic preparation, presentation and the creation of minutes from the meetings

Written basis: no information

Participants

All cultural institutions, independent cultural operators and individual artists

Frequency

4 times annually

Place

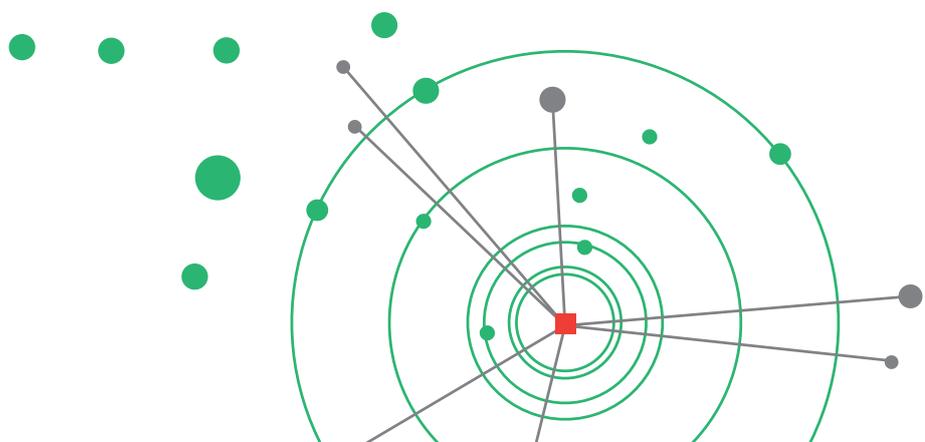
Each meeting occurs at a different place of culture in the city of Tübingen

Publication of contents

Publicly available minutes under http://www.kulturnetz-tuebingen.de/runder_tisch_kultur/

Daniela Rathe, then Head of the Department of Arts and Culture of the university town of Tübingen reported about this at the congress.

For further information: www.kulturnetz-tuebingen.de/runder_tisch_kultur



2. STRUCTURING THE INDEPENDENT SCENE

2.1 Free Riga!

The following section is based on the text of Jonas Büchel, “Free Riga!” published in the journal *World city. Empty Spaces*, n°9 of the Goethe Institute (available at: <http://blog.goethe.de/weltstadt/archives/136-Weltstadt-Newspaper-Riga.html>)

“When the Empty Spaces Network organized its first workshop in the Goethe-Institute in Riga in June 2013 with the participation of international and Latvian culture managers and urbanists, the 2014 opening of the European Capital of Culture Riga was just around the corner, preceded by half a year of numerous meetings of the culture managers in the Network, discussions with policy-makers, urban development decision-makers and other actors and persons interested in the urban process.

The local actors in the Network were aware that in Riga the space needed for art, cultural work and social cultural activity is not available. [...] Among the most affected: independent cultural centres, young people who often represent informally organized initiatives and interests, contemporary art, alternative socio-cultural projects, in the final analysis all of the actors with the potential to change a city. [...]

In early summer of 2013, a new dynamism entered the network: [...] shortly after the opening of the annual art festival *Survival Kit*, “Occupy Me” stickers were to be seen on many an empty building and object. Shortly thereafter, the group, which until then had acted cautiously, appeared in social networks under the name *Free Riga 2014* and an astonishing reaction occurred: Within a few days, the group’s popularity jumped to a thousand and more interested persons. But the reaction was not only virtual – a meeting convened in September in the *Kanepes Kulturas Centrs* was overrun with young people with an interest in their city, in the cultural, social and physical particularities of their environment. In the course of the following weeks, a young social movement evolved out of this concept that dominated the social, political and media landscape of Riga in the second half of 2013 and the first months of 2014.

Here, urban development served as a perfect incubator for social and political sentiments and interests. The idea emerged from the movement that empty sites must be mapped, that young people should call attention to their cultural interests, that the group should have a stronger public profile, that the issue must be discussed with both private and public owners, an open social dialogue was urgently needed! This had far-reaching consequences for its social quality: A new generation of city dwellers with completely different interests from what until now had been assumed by planners is articulating itself not only towards decision-makers and politicians, but also with itself, thus creating a positively connoted urban identity among young people. In any event, Riga has evolved to the extent that at least a few politicians have grasped the trend and have intervened energetically in the dialogue and have even taken part in *Free Riga* meetings. Here, what is of interest is that in the subsequent course of development, after the movement had proactively sought opportunities for testing new and interim usages and called upon the public to designate buildings, above all private owners approached the group. Owners who perhaps had long been searching for options to positively up-value their buildings by means of an interim solution, or as the case may be, transferring an object to the initiative on a long-term basis. In the meanwhile, a large, vacant post-industrial object by the *Tallinnas iela*, on the immediate outskirts of the city centre and located in the neighbourhood of one of the first alternative city quarters came into the centre of the group’s attention [...]. In October 2013, the Empty Spaces Network organized a further, even more strongly represented and attended public conference on the issue of interim and temporary usage. Participants in the group engaged themselves parallel to this and organized a master

class on the theme of temporary use with a spatial artist and architect on the site. After the turn of the year there were inspections of the site, various meetings with the head of the city's property registry and the increasing use of media and urban divings which sought to win over other interested persons for the complex on weekends, and to generate more publicity [...]. Since the developments of recent months have resulted in interest in Riga's vacant sites increasing to such a great extent, a further effect has now entered upon the scene. Spaces that up until now seemed impossible to access are suddenly accessible to artists, as just recently in the case of one of the city's highest buildings, the former Press and Publishing Building directly on the bank of the Daugava River across from the city centre, which shortly before the completion of this article was at least in part taken over by one of the most important actors in the art industry.

Together with other existing cultural and social movements, the Empty Spaces Network is seeking to focus public attention on vacant space in Riga. The process of re-thinking, both on the part of the municipality and above all private investors and owners, has taken on a dramatically rapid development. The old city parking lot at the Tallinnas iela can serve as an example here; over 20 buildings of completely different quality are already on the Free Riga movement's list: Apartment buildings, smaller-scale commercial buildings, culturally and historically valuable wooden buildings, old educational facilities, and the number of persons with an interest in repurposing is continually increasing. But what was and is most important for all parties involved is the sudden increase in readiness of people to engage themselves for the urban environment, urban space, to actively co-shape our living environment, to be an actor in and for urban space.”

2.2 Leipzig + Culture e.V.

The following section has been put together by Falk Elstermann and Sophie Renz, both members of the board and founding members of Leipzig + Culture.

“At the end of the 1990's, the initiative Leipzig + Culture was founded and has repeatedly tried to reach the city council of Leipzig with a variety of activities in order to make the council aware of problems within the independent scene. With “White January” in 2002 something important began to gather energy – a type of strike in which the initiative demonstrated how colourless the cultural calendar of the city would be when all positions usually filled by activities of the independent scene remained unfulfilled. It founded the Roundtable on Free Culture as a panel composed of people from politics, the administration and representatives of the independent scene, which had the goal of jointly improving the conditions for independent cultural activities in Leipzig. Unfortunately, the Panel convened very irregularly and the dialogue repeatedly tailed off. Since June 2015, however, the Round Table has come together every two months.

A large and visible success of the many years of effort for improving the working conditions of independent artists and cultural initiatives was the city council's decision in September 2008. After the campaign “5 for Leipzig”, the Leipzig City Council decided that within 5 years the funding for the independent cultural scene should be increased from 2.4% to 5% of the municipal cultural budget. Although this goal has still not been reached after repeated extensions, progress is still being made. Meanwhile, Leipzig + Culture is discussing with the Leipzig's cultural politicians and the administration about much more than just numbers and money. Both the framing directive and the cultural funding directives are currently being revised. This is a process that Leipzig + Culture is involving itself with, because the basic conditions for free cultural work need to be defined in the future. Similarly, the initiative is in intensive discussions with the municipal decision-makers for an introduction of more transparency; an increase of the technical quality and democratic legitimacy in urban funding procedures; and the anchoring of jointly developed strategies for the future of the independent cultural scene and its work.

Meanwhile, in its role as a point of contact of the independent scene, Leipzig + Culture has been accepted by the politicians and administration and has been able to incorporate the needs of independent artists in political processes. Each sector has created a mid-term development concept, and the goal is to make it the basis for priorities in the promotion of culture. Leipzig + Culture wants self-determined culture and cultural policy to be co-determined by the independent scene. Out of this motivation, it seemed mandatory that the anniversary of the cultural city of Leipzig in 2015 should be seen as an opportunity for the deepening of politico-cultural discourse, for presenting the quality and diversity of the entire scene and for discussing future developments. **culture | place.positioning** has been an undertaking of the initiative Leipzig + Culture since 2013.

This project had the goals of expanding its view of cultural policy work, of thinking outside of the box and introducing inspirational and competent expert knowledge into the discourse. Together with the local population, as well as with national and international experts in the fields of art, culture, science and politics, the independent scene wanted to be intensely involved in the interactions between culture and society in the 21st century. The website www.leipzigpluskultur.de has more information about the work of the initiative. The website serves as an open information platform and as an opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas. The initiative Leipzig + Culture is represented by its spokespeople. This group of people is composed of one representative from each of the sectors of socioculture, literature/media, music, performing arts and visual arts. The representatives were determined within the individual sectors by the members of the initiative.”

For further information: www.leipzigpluskultur.de

2.3 Brno Cultural

This section was written by Pavla Spurna, co-founder of Brno Cultural for the Best Practice Catalogue.

“[The] public initiative for systemic change of cultural funding in Brno was established in the autumn of 2011. At that time, representatives of cultural, artistic and educational non-profit organisations raised critical objections to cuts in operating contributions required by the city from its contributory organisations. Brno subsidy policy was not transparent and the Grant Committee lacked experts. Therefore, Brno Cultural focused on [the mediation] of a dialogue on the Brno cultural stage – the official stage as well as that of the non-profit sector, the public, politicians and Brno Municipality officials.

The Coordination Group

Over the next year, a Coordination Group consisting of thirteen members was established. Besides representatives of the municipality and organisations established by the city, the group also included representatives of the independent scene and academics who were chosen by elections organised by Brno Cultural. The Group aimed to build partnerships between professionals, the cultural community and the public; to support and ensure that their communication and cooperation remains sustainable in long term and to specify and develop a conceptual document “The Programme of the Brno City Culture Development and its Evaluation”. It was the poorly compiled proposal part of the document that was one of the impulses that led to the origination of the Brno Cultural association. Following the participation method, the Coordination Group worked on the update and specification of the Programme of the Development, initiated a serious discussion about the change of the subsidy system (proposed changes in the support of cultural events in the city area in a form of subsidies and launch of grants for more years) and realised projects focused on communication and cooperation with public. After the elections in 2014, the Coordination Group was replaced by the so-called Cultural Parliament – an open discussion platform.

The Subsidy Policy

Brno adopted a new system of subsidies in June 2013 and the first applications for grants in the new format started being submitted just a month later. The most significant changes included an assessment of the applications by an expert evaluation committee, the launch of three-year long subsidies and the possibility of the reimbursement of personal expenses. Since that time, eleven high-quality experts have sat in the Evaluation Committee and their scoring of projects has been accepted by the political representation. Approximately one third of the received applications were supported in the first year of the new subsidy system, which is a great degree more than before. Unfortunately, many high-quality projects were not supported at all or were granted only a part of requested funds. This situation once again highlights the significant underfunding of independent culture in Brno.

Culture in the Election Programme

Before the municipal elections in Autumn 2014, the Brno Cultural association did not reconcile to vague election programmes of political parties and created so called 'Several-logue' of Brno Culture in order to give voters a clear idea of what each party intended to do in the field of culture in case of its election. Members of Brno Cultural wrote down basic propositions to which political parties could subscribe or add their own. The topics were focused on the direction of cultural policy in Brno in general, improvement of conditions for contributory organisations in culture, cooperation of the city with independent cultural stage or strategic investments in cultural development. Brno Cultural then published final ranking of cultural commitments of individual political parties. Most of the major parties running in the election concurred in support of these points and the 'Several-logue' gained widespread support.

The Structure and Future Challenges

The registered association Brno Cultural was established in 2012. Today it has about 10 members and is led by a five-member executive committee and a three-member supervisory board. We are trying to expand our membership base but we have not been very successful so far. Our members are experts in cultural policy, cultural management or sociology. Thus for the time being we are not an umbrella organisation of all cultural non-profit organisations in the truest sense. All the members work for the organisation as volunteers.

Thanks to several years of continuous activity, the members of Brno Cultural have succeeded step by step not only in the mediation of open communication between various participants on the cultural stage and politicians, but also in achieving specific changes, especially in the subsidy system and in preparations for a new cultural strategy. Thus, the association significantly contributes to the increase of quality of cultural projects realised in Brno."

For further information: www.brnokulturni.cz

2.4 Coalition of the independent scene of the arts Berlin

This section was written by Christophe Knoch, spokesman for the Coalition of the independent scene of the arts Berlin for the *Best Practice Catalogue*.

"The coalition of the independent scene advocates for a new funding policy of non-institutionally funded artistic practice in Berlin. The large number of independently working artists in Berlin creates a certain hermeticity. The task at hand includes breaking through this hermeticity and becoming a permanent partner for the city, to be addressed not only through permanent lobbying of the institutions of legislative and executive branches of the state of Berlin, but also by addressing the press. Additionally, the coalition shall

identify sectional concerns of all of the fields of art, summarise them and represent them in negotiations with politicians and the administration.

The coalition of the independent scene exists since early 2012. It is an open platform for action without legal basis. It consists of two working bodies: The circle of spokespeople and the plenary meeting. The circle of spokespeople undertakes the continuous work. It has been mandated by the plenary meeting and meets every two weeks. The plenary meeting of the independent scene takes place at irregular intervals approximately every three months. Different places in the independent scene are chosen for both the meetings of the spokespeople and the plenary meetings. The means of communication are a mailing list that anyone can sign up for; a Facebook group with over 7,000 members; a website: www.berlinvisit.org.

The coalition has developed a culturally political manifesto: '10 points for a new policy of funding'. The paper includes 10 demands for a new funding policy, which are shared by all art forms of the independent scene (here the link: <http://www.berlinvisit.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/10-Punkte-Programm.pdf>) “.

For further information: www.berlinvisit.org

2.5 Gängeviertel Hamburg

The following section is based on a text by Christine Ebeling, spokeswoman for Gängeviertel e.V., with excerpts from the book “More than a Quarter”, published by Association A.

“A work of art in the copper thieves house, a mural in which the lines made by connecting the dots in a neatly written sequence of numbers, let the following sentence arise: “It’s easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission.”

Although forgiveness was never asked for, this sentence has a great deal to do with what has happened to culture and art in Hamburg and its residents. Without the courage and the will to conquer places, to open and maintain them, Hamburg would now probably be a place without Westwerk, Kampnagel, Vorwerkstift, Hafensstraße, Park Fiction and similar places. For decades, it has been specific groups of cultural workers and artists who fight for spaces that are just as essential to their own work as for the showing of their work and that seething exchange that makes life worth living.

The raising of the question of whether something is art or not, is just as unimportant as the asking of permission. Long before these questions can be formed, it is about the experience, enabling the experiment and the creation of a production site that serves as a place for a work to develop. These places are rare and above all expensive, and they are almost never found in a central location. [...]

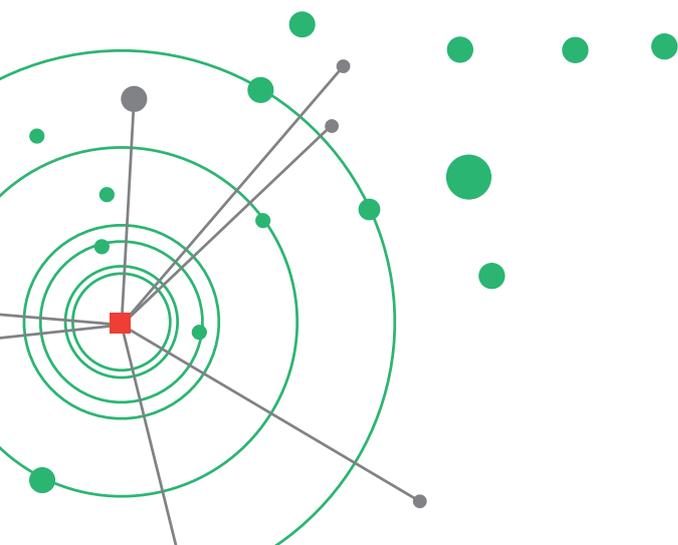
It is a tradition in Hamburg to perceive the city itself as material for artistic production and to convert it into a critical process to take up political issues and resistance. Who owns the public space, who can appropriate it and design it? Who determines how the city in which we live should look?

The Gängeviertel has become what it is because of a critical confrontation with the commercialised environment surrounding it. Furthermore, it has arisen out of an overall concept that it is the recognition of all abilities that lead to creativity instead of merely the artistic traits. It applies the so-called the expanded concept of art, in which creativity is a force to be found in the range from the social to the political, it is a force that every human being possesses. A place of cultural production, which can be experienced by everyone, where everyone can participate and the values are not considered to be consumer goods. It is a counter-proposal

in the centre of the city. Not only wishes came true, but also a concept for the development of a space of endless possibilities, a place of cultural production and art.

The Gängeviertel currently offers space for urban culture – thanks to volunteer work and non-existent economic constraints. But it will be able to remain so? The future of the district will be determined more and more by economic factors. Is it possible that this freedom can be retained on its path towards institutionalisation? This is less dependent on the commitment of the initiative, but more a factor of political decisions. In the heart of the Gängeviertel ensemble, the FABRIQUE will create a space of possibility: Five floors with more than 200 square meters each. A barrier-free place for art, culture and social exchange that is non-commercial and open to all. Even low-income and socially engaged people are and will be able to act and work there. The extent to which this is achieved will depend on the ongoing negotiations, particularly with regard to the rental fee. The fight for the opportunity to produce and share culture in the middle of the city is (unfortunately) long from being over. The development of Gängeviertel in the coming years can also be read as a seismograph: How much do we value free spaces and cultural?”

For further information: das-gaengeviertel.info



This text *Best Practice Catalogue* is part of the online publication of the Congress culture | place.positioning:

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