

URBAN PRACTICE, with + after Corona

Berliners are currently experiencing how everyday life in the city is undergoing massive changes due to the restrictions on culture, events and the freedom of movement. During the coming summer months, many people will have to stay at home; travel, festivals and summer camps will be canceled. Experience thus far has shown that individuals and groups who have to deal with major social challenges and precarious situations, even without pandemic restrictions, are exposed to additional risks due to confined space and isolation. Families, senior citizens, single parents, youth, and especially children, all are looking for living alternatives outside their own four walls. People without homes and shelter need connection and participation.

Across the board, people in the city need more space—now! Open spaces facilitating diversity, close to residential areas, and where everyone can get out of harm's way if necessary. Spaces are needed to come together, garden, design, build, and play, with and—hopefully soon—without social distancing requirements.

“The Outdoors City”: We Need More Room to Experiment!

In the wake of the experiences with the Corona crisis, it is becoming even more urgent to test ideas and concepts for the future of the city. To this end, experimental future laboratories are to be set up in every district. Berlin has already experienced exciting field tests and architectural surprises, pioneered by the initiative *raumlabor*. Together with partners from the fields of art and culture, the conceptual lines and implementation processes may well be devised.

To develop these new areas and spaces, the active support of the federal and municipal governments is required. Idle land, squares and vacant industrial sites are to be allocated in an uncomplicated and short-term basis to Berliner initiatives and projects in disadvantaged social milieus, especially those initiatives and projects fostering creative places for experience, learning, action and movement, spaces for and by the neighborhood. In cooperation with museums, literature and concert halls, dance initiatives, operas and theatres, each with their own visions, new forms of training and events might be tried and tested here.

The *Kreative Stadtwerke* provide guidance with their pilot project in Marzahn, as well as the four *Bauhütten* currently being developed by the partners *S27*, *Prinzessinnengärten* and *BERLIN MONDIALE*. At Südsterne, the floating university, initiated by *raumlabor*, offers a broad and diverse collaborative infrastructure involving art, science and inner-city neighborhoods. In addition, areas that already offer good foundations for large-scale, urban-, cultural- and educational-spaces are to be further supported and enhanced. In this context, it is urgently necessary to secure the overall project *Haus der Statistik*, in which *raumlabor*, *ZKU* and *S27* cooperate with other partners. The horticultural experiment of the *Prinzessinnengärten* at the Neukölln Jakobi Cemetery is acutely threatened with closure. It now needs the political will of all stakeholders to secure these important urban experiments for Berliners. For many years unused green oases in the middle of high-rise housing estates, such as the old school garden on the Neuköllner Dammweg, are to be expanded.

The multifunctional use of district- and state-owned areas and spaces for artistic and socio-cultural purposes now requires rapid coordination between the executive, the BIM and the district real estate administrations. As quickly as possible, and in accordance with the urgency of the situation, the urban development and management stakeholders are to be provided with intermediate/usage contracts and means of intervention (keyword: "Project Fund Urban Practice"). We also propose that the pool of experts already planned by the cultural administration be in place at once to advise stakeholders and to act as an interface between the offices and authorities involved, to expedite arrangements for creative spaces of action and public projects and ventures in disadvantaged Berlin social milieus in the run-up to summer break.

"Strengthen participation, facilitate access" - reference to the guidelines of federal guidelines, "Culture and Europe" (Drs. 18/0073, p. 49)

City in Crisis—City to Come

The troubling situation of the pandemic is not only cutting off our opportunities for exchange and our scope of maneuver, it also clearly reminds us how problems of climate change and the growing city come to a head: we cannot make the city crisis-proof with measures against the virus alone, as Corona is only one crisis among many. We need answers to the question of how the city will function in the future and how we want to reside in it together.

The divergent opportunities for participation and access to culture, education, work and health become even more visible and tangible in times of the Corona crisis. In view of the Regional Social Report for Berlin and Brandenburg 2019, the challenges post-Corona will skyrocket: one in five people in Berlin is already threatened by poverty; the poverty rate among children and young people is as high as 29%, according to the Social Report. There is a danger that the threat of unemployment will increase the level of poverty among Berliners* and that support for education and participation, especially for disadvantaged young people, will halt.

We rely on interdisciplinarity in combination with judicious cost-effectiveness. With interdepartmental cooperation, the objectives of the new city, with all its social, cultural, ecological and economic transformations, can be developed in synergy and achieved in stages, even under harsh budgetary conditions. Intermediate coordination and concerted priorities are now needed to sustain the spirit of a decisive turning point: civic commitment, forward-thinking policies and a highly-competent administration with skilled staff can work hand in hand to push the processes ahead.

The Council of Arts supports the upcoming transformations as an impetus and development-partner, during and after Corona. The initiators from the working group urgently request a rapid response from those responsible for implementing cultural and urban development in the "Outlying City".

WORKING GROUP URBAN PRACTICE: Markus Bader, Eva Maria Hoerster, Dr. Sabine Kroner, Barbara Meyer, Anton Schünemann, Danilo Vetter (*contact: Barbara Meyer b.meyer@s27.de*)

This translation of the original statement is supplied without liability and was commissioned by Berlin Mondiale