



Fellow Report 2024 - Creative Impact in Practice

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Spaceship SEZ - A Toolbox of Creative
Strategies for Participation in Urban
Development Processes

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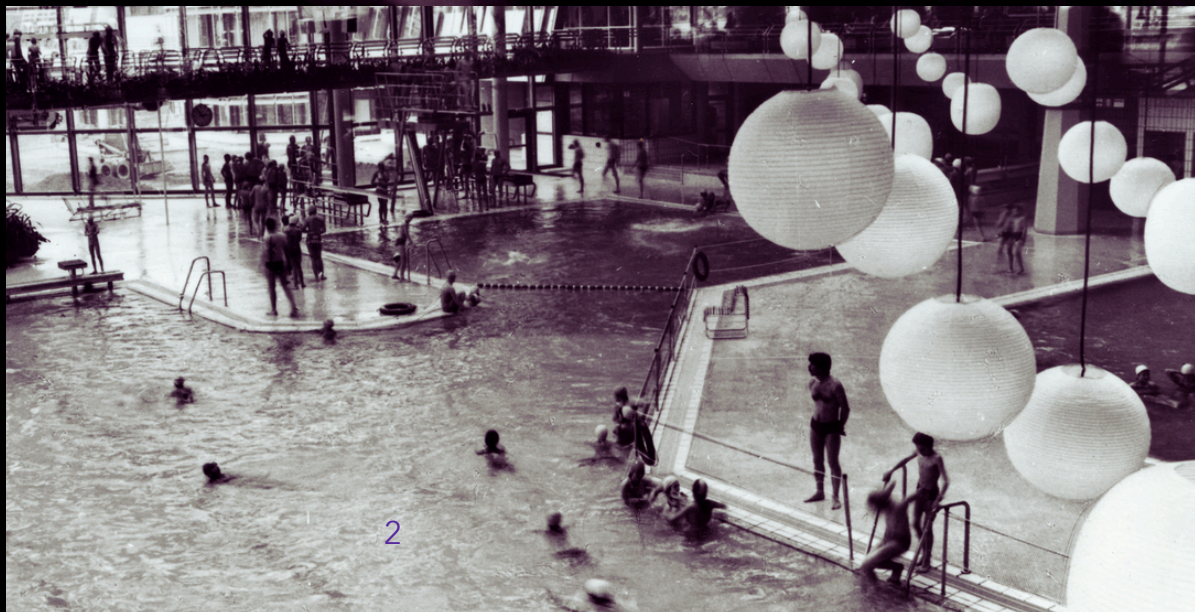
A Toolbox of Creative Strategies for Participation in Urban Development Processes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	2
Problem and Evidence	3
Journey	6
Core Terms and Ideas	
Worldbuilding and Science Fiction	
Encounter with the building and its guardians	
Archive call and collection of material	
Involvement in the activist work around the SEZ	
Research trip - artistic research, application and further development of the methodology	
Impact	16
A Growing, Collaborative Archive	
Changed Perceptions and A New Set of Creative Practices	
Learnings and contributions for CIRCE	21

SUMMARY

When cities grow, this does not only mean the construction of new buildings and infrastructure. Change is often accompanied by the destruction of what already exists - urban spaces that are an integral part of the lives and collective memory of the city's inhabitants. Their stories and ideas must therefore be part of the process of a changing city. Working with the exemplary case of the threatened Berlin Sports and Recreational Centre (SEZ), this pilot project aimed to develop creative strategies to engage those affected by urban development plans through a threefold approach: collaborative archiving, speculative narration and critical participation. Most approaches for a critical understanding of urban development come from a few established spaces - critical architects and urbanists, activists, civil society heritage conservation bodies and government bodies. This project took the insights from these fields into account, but primarily worked with methodologies of artistic research. The developed toolbox is meant to be a critical supplement to established knowledge and tools around mapping and archiving urban development and the history of architecture in a city such as Berlin, where dramatic urban shifts connect to attempts at revising not only the physical cityscape, but history itself. The project applied future-oriented artistic and narrative strategies in order to depart from hopeless inaccessibility and nostalgic despair, to an future-oriented creative approach that activates and reinvents the past. The toolbox developed in this project, consisting of an artistic research strategy including a workshop concept, can contribute to promote participation and birth original visions. Participation processes are often characterised by bureaucracy and formalities. Although these are necessary, they are by no means sufficient to achieve actual participation - on the contrary, they often lead to the addressees becoming frustrated and demotivated. Innovation is therefore urgently needed, including creative methods. Thus, both policy makers, local municipal bodies, artists and curators can draw inspiration from the toolbox to develop participatory cultural programmes.



PROBLEM AND EVIDENCE

The project intervened - and continuously intervenes - in the highly controversial plans of the Berlin city administration to demolish the SEZ, an iconic former sports and leisure centre from the 1980s. Like a giant spaceship, the building complex of the Berlin Sports and Recreation Centre (SEZ) towers over a densely populated district in the eastern part of the city. Once a prestigious project that was visited by thousands, the iconic brutalist building has slowly fallen into disrepair since the 2000s, when the city of Berlin sold it to a private investor for the symbolic sum of one euro. The demise of the SEZ is an exemplary case of how a large-scale public leisure infrastructure has become an almost unimaginable luxury in times of urban austerity. However, when the Berlin city administration recently announced its plans to demolish the building in favour of various new constructions, this led to widespread public protests.

People from all over the city are demanding the preservation and the reopening of the SEZ. Currently, at least three online petitions oppose the demolition and demand a re-opening of the SEZ(1), the citizen's initiative "SEZ für alle" holds regular meetings and organises protests and community gatherings(2). Thousands of Berliners remember the SEZ as a spacious and affordable leisure centre where they could swim in the wave or outdoor pool, play billiards in the light-flooded upper floors or go ice skating in winter. Its current state as a semi-private, only partially used no-man's land, whose material substance is slowly eroding, is evidence of an approach to urban development that neglects the people it is supposed to serve. This is all the more regrettable in the light of climate crisis. As climate action groups and architects conscious of sustainability issues have recognised, the demolition of existing buildings is indefensible from an ecological point of view.(3) It is therefore not surprising that there is a growing community of neighbors, activists, architects, and creative industry professionals who are gathering around the SEZ issue - and this community was the target group of this project.

1 One petition was initiated bei Gemeingut in BürgerInnenhand, two others can be found on change.org: <https://www.gemeingut.org/civi-public/petition/sign/?sid=35&reset=1>, <https://www.change.org/p/das-sez-sanieren-und-als-sport-und-freizeitfl%C3%A4che-f%C3%BCr-alle-wieder%C3%B6ffnen>, <https://www.change.org/p/abrissplan-stoppen-sez-erhalten>

2 <https://sez-fuer-alle.de/>

3 <https://www.architects4future.de/portfolio/publikationen/appell-an-den-berliner-senat>

PROBLEM AND EVIDENCE

Out of this moment of imminent threat and potential transition, three key questions formed for the project:

1. How can we collaboratively gather and awaken memories, specifically those concerning contested pasts?
2. How can we make alternative futures possible in the face of destruction?
3. How can artistic practices contribute in reactivating threatened community spaces?

During the project, knowledge about gentrification and privatisation was combined with artistic practices to develop a toolbox consisting of an artistic research strategy including a workshop concept.⁽⁴⁾ Using a playful and speculative approach, through the methods of collective world building and speculative storytelling in collaboration with the diverse communities and stakeholders from the neighbourhood, the pilot project aimed to develop concrete visions of a future SEZ - like a spaceship that sets off into the unknown many years after its first landing. The aim was to unleash the creative and regenerative potential of collective imaginations and memories in order to develop proposals for the reactivation of a much-loved public infrastructure. The toolkit was developed by delving into the unique universe and historical context of the SEZ, but its methodologies and strategies are suitable to be transferred to other political struggles and cases of contested urban development. Why was a creative and artistic approach needed here? Whoever is involved with the SEZ soon realises that the iconic building sparks the imagination and creativity by its beauty and inclusive vision alone. This potential makes the introduction of creative practices into the political struggle pertinent. But there is more. Due to the privatisation, the building lost one of its main characteristics: the accessibility to the public. It took more than a year of tracking and attending various demonstrations to save the SEZ, engaging closely with stakeholders at multiple levels - fellow activists, urbanists, artists, students, as well as political players like the interim owner, the other tenants etc - to achieve an unofficial guided tour of the building. How is it possible that it is so difficult to even enter a building which was once famous for being an inclusive and cheap public recreational complex?

4 In this case, privatisation is happening and has been taking place on several levels. Firstly, by the change from public to private ownership of a building and the corresponding property. Secondly, by the privatisation of access to a space that was once a commonly used recreational infrastructure to serve only the needs of its owner and the logic of commercial uses. It is important to note that the space was never fully democratised in the sense of a commonly managed space - a full deprivatisation would mean to not only to regain public ownership and public access, but also democratic decision over its usage.

PROBLEM AND EVIDENCE

The forced inaccessibility of the building complex is a structural as well as direct impediment to a sensitive conservation and a possible reopening of the SEZ. Understanding the extent to which it was being made inaccessible, this project wanted to contribute to a more inclusive development by offering an alternative way of "entering" the space - through artistic research practices. This approach opens up the space those who have been excluded from the building by the privatisation process, and it also creates a space for the memories and stories whose physical home is threatened by destruction. The guiding question was: How can we creatively engage people into archiving their stories and memories of this place, as a way of creating an artistic dossier used as a valid document for revalorization of the building when faced with top-down documents of urban planning, spatial management and cultural heritage, presenting its social, ecological and educational impact which alongside its historical significance already now incorporates the future of the urban development.

Photo: Karten der Moderne



JOURNEY

The project was made possible by two central collaborations: The creative strategies were developed with the artists' collective Spaceship Beben. The non-profit organisation Gemeingut in BürgerInnenhand was an important support for the activist part and the networking⁽⁵⁾. With the diverse resources brought on the table by these two collaborations, it was possible to chart out a focused, achievable and sustainable process that could meaningfully intervene in the complicated struggle and undemocratic inaccessibility of the SEZ. The project was and is taking place at a crucial intermediate moment, when the future of the building is open and the past is still present for many. During the course of the process, the political situation around the SEZ actually shifted. The city of Berlin had the former owner - who had once purchased the complex from the city for one euro - evicted and thus gained access to the building again⁽⁶⁾. Several smaller commercial providers currently rent out parts of the premises for sports use with the city's permission, and there is still a club in the building. However, this extended accessibility of the SEZ cannot hide the fact that the Berlin senate is still planning to demolish the building and has no intention to reopen it as a public pool, meaning that all current uses can be terminated at any time. The new archive, which was produced collaboratively as part of this project and will be accessible online by the end of November 2024, provides a space to conserve and activate the multitude of memories associated with the SEZ and its history in order to imagine possibilities for its reopening and positive transformation. As an ongoing project, it has been building on a year of preparation - activist involvement in the citizens' initiatives trying to protect the SEZ, archival research on the history of the building, involvement in Gemeingut's policy-based research and advocacy, and creating bridges and possible connections to existent critical architecture organizations. The rich and also highly complex and diverse material showed that we urgently need a creative intervention to make sense of this complicated situation. This is why Spaceship Beben's speculative practice perspective became a key approach in the project.

⁵ Gemeingut has been involved in this topic for many years, for recent press see for example this taz article from January 2024 where I am quoted, <https://taz.de/Ein-Abrissplan-und-zwei-Petitionen/!5982775/>, or this longer piece in Berliner Zeitung by Gemeingut's infrastructure expert Carl Waßmuth: <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/open-source/sez-in-friedrichshain-abriss-oder-sanierung-berliner-kaempfen-um-einstiges-ddr-freizeitparadies-li.2249088>

⁶ <https://www.rbb24.de/panorama/beitrag/2024/10/berlin-sez-zwangsräumung-senat-abriss-gerichtsvollzieher.html>

JOURNEY

Core Terms and Ideas

The guiding principle for the artistic research approach was a concept of nonlinear time in which past, present and future do not stand separately one behind the other, but are encapsulated in and can be accessed in each individual moment. This also changes the concept of the archive. The idea of an 'archive' is conventionally associated with dusty boxes of books and index cards. However, this project was about an archive that harbours the past, present and future. In other words, the focus was not only on preserving what had once been, but also on actualising promises and visions in a past that changes dynamically in the light of the present and has an impact on it.

The approach of activating rather than museumizing the past forms an antithesis to the urban planning approach that still dominates the minds of prominent politicians. Here, the past should simply give way to the new, namely by destroying it. Paradigmatic for this attitude is a formulation with which the responsible urban development administration responded to criticism of the demolition project: Due to the SEZ's commemorative value, it should be examined whether 'identity-forming features' can be preserved⁽⁷⁾. The past is thus formally preserved purely as a representation, for viewing and not for use; a relic of the wilfully destroyed remains primarily as a kind of concession to a guilty conscience. Urban society is robbed of the very thing that made this place so special: joyful leisure accessible to all in a luxurious and rich recreational landscape. The project counters this dead concept of memory with one of collaborative and creative archiving. Those involved in the project appropriate history by telling it together and developing an alternative future in the process. Speculative storytelling techniques and the artistic practice of worldbuilding were therefore central to the project.

Worldbuilding and Science Fiction

Building a - different - world is a classic literary strategy that many of us are familiar with from the novels and stories of J.R.R. Tolkien or Dorothy L. Sayers, from utopian or dystopian manifestos. The invention and detailed description of the environments and inhabitants, the chronicles and myths of other worlds is particularly prominent in the fantasy genre, but can also be understood in a broader sense as an indispensable element of all artistic work, which opens up bold, unusual, unique ways of perception through the creation of forms, rhythms and sensitivities.

7 The German formulation is "identitätsstiftende Merkmale", see for example here: <https://www.rbb24.de/politik/beitrag/2024/02/berlin-sez-wohnungen-stadtentwicklung-gaebler.html>

JOURNEY

At the same time - and probably precisely for this reason - worldbuilding forms the core of progressive political movements within which people empower themselves to counter the impositions - catastrophes, injustices, acts of violence - of this world by building a new one. Worldbuilding is the central artistic practice of Spaceship Beben, and, quoting captain and founder Promona Sengupta, consists in the following: "The production of the material world is inalienable from the labour of dreaming it up, describing it, finding ways of experiencing and sharing it with fellow builders, together giving it meaning and names so that we can remember it as the world we create and continue to shape. Worldbuilding involves a strong grasp of historical realities, the material present that it begot, and most crucially, the incumbent realities of the world that is waiting to be born out of these."⁽⁸⁾ The artistic practice of worldbuilding was applied and further developed in the course of the project in the form of prototyping an artistic research process that could at the same time fuel a participatory community-building practice. A workshop concept based on this practice forms a central component of the developed toolkit. As a genre with a repertoire of speculative narrative techniques, science fiction was particularly well suited to this project. As Donna Haraway notes: "Science fiction is storytelling and fact telling; it is the patterning of possible worlds and possible times, material-semiotic worlds, gone, here, and yet to come".⁽⁹⁾ It here becomes clear that this genre brings together two things that are central to all political struggles: the anchoring in a material reality and the leap into another, possible, perhaps even better world. Style, worlds of meaning and narrative techniques from science fiction were therefore central to the development of the artistic strategy and the workshop concept.

Encounter with the building and its guardians

In the initial project phase, the aim was to build a solid foundation for the rest of the process. It was important to establish a relationship with both the building itself, the emerging community around the SEZ, and to do the groundwork for the archive. A first crucial project goal was therefore to visit the SEZ. Due to privatization, the SEZ site has only been open to the public to a very limited extent in recent years. The situation has only changed since September, when the city of Berlin got it back after a legal dispute with the former private owner.

⁸ Sengupta, P. (2024), To Build What is Ours Permacultures of The Permanent Revolution, in: ii Magazine, out on November 1st, 2024.

⁹ Haraway, D. (2016) Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 31

The Building



Photo: Promona Sengupta



Photo: Jorinde Schulz

The Building



Photo: Jorinde Schulz



Photo: Promona Sengupta

JOURNEY

By a stroke of luck, the Spaceship Beben team managed to get a short guided tour of the site - and to meet an important person: caretaker ("Hausmeister") H., who has lovingly looked after the building for years. With him we explored the different corners and levels of the fantastic SEZ architecture while he told anecdotes about its last years. The tour generated the first material for the archive, namely photo, sound, and video material of the building as well as invaluable information on the building's more recent history. The visual material was used later in the political work to refute the argument of those in favour of demolition that the SEZ was dilapidated and in disrepair. Conversations and meetings with the citizens' initiative SEZ für alle, Architects for Future, the two anti-demolition groups urania anders and Initiative Hermannplatz served to build a solid network that was thickened by interviews of personal contacts with a connection to the SEZ. The contact with the project Kiosk of Solidarity(10), a transdisciplinary urban intervention series in Berlin funded by Projektfonds Urbane Praxis8, was particularly important, as it led us to the online space and thesis project SEZ zwischennutzen(11) that has agreed to host the collaborative archive created during the project.

Archive call and collection of material

Sifting through and collecting historical material about the SEZ was another important step in setting up the archive. This involved using public archives such as the Federal Archives, but also collectively created collections such as Facebook and Instagram pages about the SEZ, where a community of SEZ enthusiasts had already been active for some time. As personal stories and emotional references to the SEZ were particularly important for this project, an archive call was also launched. In order to reach people who still remembered the swimming and sports paradise from its early days, an advert was placed in a Berlin distribution newspaper in the eastern districts inviting people to send in material. The call was also published on the Gemeingut website(12) and sent to various mailing lists. While the general appeal actually had a rather sparse response, personal contacts led to creative and personal submissions to the archiving workshop that took place towards the end of the project and which results are described in the Impact section of this report. The many conversations and networking activities were therefore central to the success of the project.

10 <https://www.baustelle-gemeinwohl.de/akteure/kiosk-of-solidarity/>

11 <https://sez-zwischen-nutzen.de/>

12 Since the archive is growing, the call is currently still active: <https://www.gemeingut.org/sez- retten-abriss-stoppen/>


Archival Call

AUFRUF: SEZ BERLIN

Haben Sie ein Foto, eine Geschichte, einen Brief oder ein anderes Zeitdokument vom SEZ, das sie mit anderen teilen möchten? Schicken Sie es an **Gemeingut in BürgerInnenhand: Weidenweg 37, 10249 Berlin oder info@gemeingut.org**.

Eine Auswahl der Einsendungen wird mit Einverständnis in geeigneter Form veröffentlicht. Wort, Bild und Ton willkommen. Einsendeschluss 20.9.24.


GIB Gemeingut in
BürgerInnenhand



1 Sport- und Erholungs-zentrum Berlin (SEZ)
2 Maschinenraum
3 ILKA-Verdichter zur Vereisung
4 überdachter Eisring - Sport- und Erholungs-zentrum
5 Schwimmbad




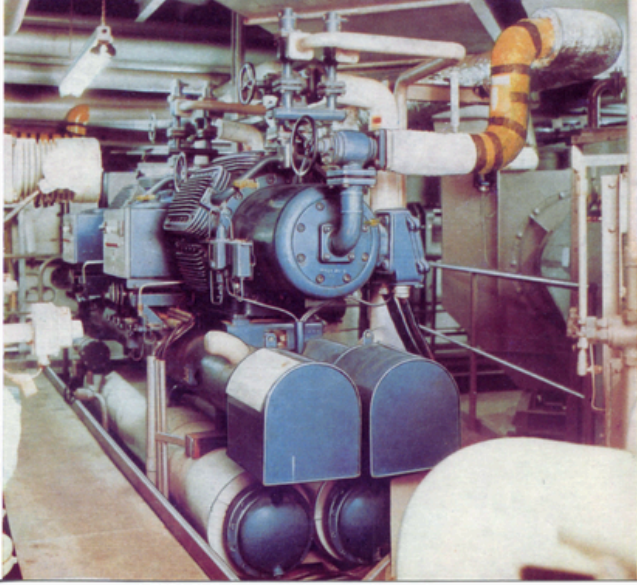
Auf der Kondensatorseite der Kälteanlage wird im Erhitzer Warmwasser von $+55^{\circ}\text{C}$ erzeugt. Seine Speicherung erfolgt in einem Differenz-schicht-Wärmespeicher. Die nachfolgenden Verflüssiger werden zum Erwärmen von Bodewasser in fünf unterschiedlichen Bode-becken genutzt. Das Bodewasser erwärmt sich auf etwa $+34^{\circ}\text{C}$. Ein weiterer Kondensator dient als Wärme-quelle für eine Wärmepumpe des Typs



KWS 500 mit einer Heizleistung von 430 kW bei $+55^{\circ}\text{C}$ Wassertritttemperatur. Unabhängig von der Kälteanlage für die zwei Eisflächen arbeitet eine zweite Wärmepumpe mit Plattenverdampfer in einem Duschwasser-

und Abwasserbehälter mit einer Heizleistung von 300 kW zur Wärmerückgewinnung. Vom Speicher wird das Warmwasser den Bodebecken, der Warmwasserbereitung, der Fußbodenheizung der Bäder und der Brauchwasservorwärmung zugeführt. Durch Zusammenschalten der NH_3 -Kälteanlage mit den Wärmepumpen wird die vorhandene Abwärme restlos ausgenutzt. Besteht kein Wärmebedarf, wird mit der überschüssigen Wärmeenergie das Außenbecken geheizt. Zwei der NH_3 -Verdichter arbeiten in den Sommer-monaten mit einer Kälteleistung von 860 kW zum Klimatisieren bei einer Verdampfungs-temperatur von -5°C . Die Kälteanlagen werden also das ganze Jahr genutzt. Unsere Demonstration an ILKA-Lösungen soll damit ausreichen. Vielleicht ist in der nächsten Auflage schon Ihr Problem unser Beispiel.





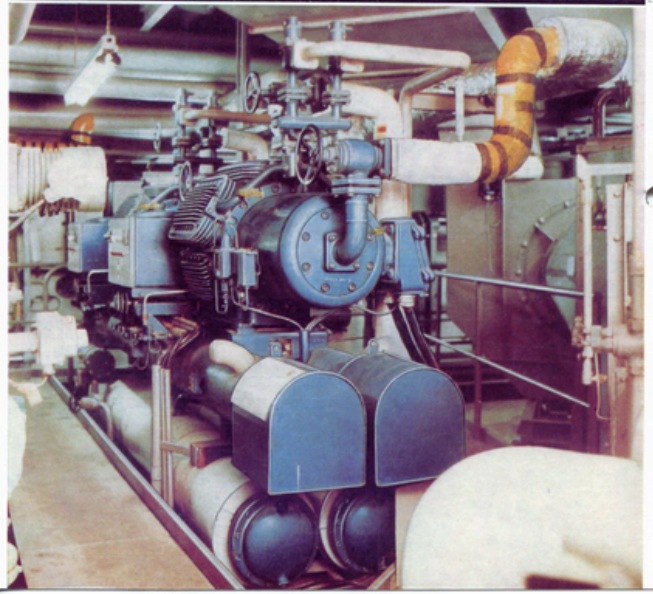


Bild: ILKA/VEB Maschinenfabrik Halle, Katalog, S. 38-39, Literaturarchiv des HKK



JOURNEY

Involvement in the activist work around the SEZ

The close connection to activist processes was central to the success of the project. Being part of the Gemeingut team, a non-profit organisation that campaigns for the preservation of public infrastructure and against privatisation, ensured this throughout. Gemeingut has been campaigning for the reopening of the SEZ for many years and was also involved in the successful fight to get the SEZ back into public hands. During the CIRCE project, an activist meeting was held in the form of a small workshop on the strategic goals and political demands for the SEZ. In another Gemeingut workshop, the participants jointly wrote letters to the monument protection office - an intervention with the aim of increasing political pressure against the demolition. The activist part of the project also included an analysis of the key political stakeholders in the urban development plans for the SEZ. This stakeholder analysis later formed the basis for an exercise in the creative archiving workshop.

Research trip - artistic research, application and further development of the methodology

A milestone for the project was a spontaneously planned research trip with three members of the Spaceship Beben crew. It first led to Ljubljana for a productive exchange about memory culture and urban planning with the CIRCE mentors Danica Sretenović and Naja Kikelj Širok, and then to two iconic anti-fascist monuments in Bosnia. The monuments known internationally as 'Spomenik', which are spread across the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia and commemorate revolution, partisan struggle and anti-fascism, appeared on the project horizon as part of the archive research on the SEZ. They share with the SEZ complex the reference to a socialist past whose promises remain unfulfilled to this day, as well as the reference to a brutalist architectural heritage. These monuments are also caught between decay, privatisation, misappropriation and precarious preservation.⁽¹³⁾ This referred back to the methodology of this project, to approach the buried histories and visions of heritage buildings beyond nostalgia, but also beyond a widespread historical revisionism, the extreme form of which is demolition.

13 The tension between antifascist memory and revisionist and/or nationalist misappropriation is analysed in Gal Kirn, *The "Primitive Accumulation" of Revisionist Memory: A Plea for the Partisan Counter-Archive*, In: *The Partisan Counter-Archive. Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle*, De Gruyter 2020, p 1-17, "<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110682069-001>

JOURNEY

The Spomeniks thus promised to give some productive insights. On the one hand, they connect the local past of the SEZ with an internationalist, left-wing past and are therefore important for the historical context of the project. Secondly, as monuments, they are architectures which address the very topic of remembrance and commemoration. The trip to two of these monuments, the Garavice Memoria in Bihać and the Sutjeska Memorial in Tjentište, therefore served as artistic research for the conceptualisation of the archive work. From the research on the SEZ, the spaceship emerged as the central metaphor for a speculative fiction about the SEZ. This ties in with the formal language of the SEZ architecture and also opens up the possibility of understanding it as a vehicle, i.e. as a vehicle for steering and flying, for taking off towards new galaxies. The radically abstract and imposing forms of the two monuments visited allowed them to be seen as spaceships as well – spaceships, left behind by extraterrestrials, that need to be brought back to life. This storyline became the narrative core of the speculative fiction developed throughout the project. Seen through this speculative lens, memory becomes a **call to us** at these sites, and monuments or heritage sites can be interpreted as places of encounter with the objects and technologies left behind by these unknown friends, vehicles whose functions and flying ability we can re-appropriate. The artistic research consisted of worldbuilding on site: An encounter with these legacies from 'outer' space – a partly lost past – that was documented in words, images and stories. Through this journey, the originally planned project of developing a radio play from the collected interviews and the collaboratively developed science fiction narrative grew into a more ambitious film project, which is currently a work in progress that will be completed in 2025, with applications to festivals, art funds and possible screening locations. Furthermore, the narrative elements developed on the trip and the visual material were also incorporated into the concept for the creative archiving workshop that took place towards the end of the project.

Artistic Research



Sutjeska Memorial, Photo: Jorinde Schulz



Sutjeska Memorial, Photo: Promona Sengupta

IMPACT

The creative impact of the project can be described in various dimensions. A first important goal of the project was to promote participation and develop creative strategies for this. One test of whether this was successful was the archiving workshop at the end of the project period. We were actually very positively surprised by the response to this. Although only a small number of participants came to the workshop date, we received several personal letters in advance with photos and stories that took up the speculative suggestions used in the workshop invitation and were further developed into funny and personal science fiction stories. The sharing of the corresponding sharepics by key players in the SEZ for All initiative showed that the project generated interest among the target group. The approach of promoting agency and empowerment through the architectural analogy to the spaceship and the appointment of the workshop participants as cosmonauts therefore worked. The workshop also produced rich and entertaining stories in a short space of time, which not only speculate about possible futures, but also shed new and interesting light on the realities of the present. It was important that the spaceship metaphor did not lead to decontextualisation. Therefore, the beginning of the workshop was dedicated to giving a historical and political background, which will also be taken into account when the archive is published. The new stories will be published in the collaborative archive described below. Another impact concerns the growth of the project. The new, original material that was collectively produced at the archive workshop as an implementation of the artistic research has found an online home and will continue to grow. The archive will be presented to a wider public at an event at the Volksbühne in Berlin on January 12, organised by Gemeingut. The presentation will include a DIY exhibition of archival photo material in collaboration with the archive Karten der Moderne. Furthermore, there will be a public panel discussion, accompanied by artistic interventions. Press work is planned to promote the event. This will enable the reality-changing visions it contains to be disseminated more widely. In the course of the project, other artists and companies from the cultural sector also made contact. This revealed interesting parallels and future exchange opportunities with the project 'Greetings from Lake Helena' by artist and activist Cory Tamler.¹³ A possible collaboration with another, entrepreneurial art collective is also currently under discussion, who also work with speculative and immersive artistic practices and the reactivation of abandoned urban spaces and are planning to work with the SEZ.

As a large part of the project period was used to develop and implement the creative strategies, no political effect of the artistic part can be proven at this stage. A number of recent newspaper articles show the growing public interest in the topic of SEZ. As

¹³ <https://www.corytamler.com/Gruss-vom-Helenensee>

IMPACT

part of the Gemeingut team, I was involved in some of the activities that received a very good press coverage, but it would be dubious to claim that the CIRCE project is mainly responsible for this effect. It is more realistic to assume that the multiplication of activities around this site has contributed to the fact that it has become more difficult for those politically responsible to defend the demolition.

What is certain is that the political-strategic workshop held at the start of the project helped to strengthen the arguments of the campaigners and bring about a strategic clarification. The workshop on monument protection was empowering and also marked the start of our work on a targeted petition on the topic, which is to be published with a small campaign at the beginning of next year.

The newly developed artistic strategies, which are described in more detail below and form the core of the toolbox, also entail creative impact. The toolbox, made up of both practical and theoretical elements, has been extracted from the findings gathered in the course of the pilot project. It contains a repertoire of political intervention possibilities and various practical exercises and suggestions for generating visions and narratives, including the core terms and theoretical underpinnings for these exercises. It builds on the implementation of the concepts and artistic practices described in this report. The toolbox can be adapted to other cases of urban development in the form of a series of workshops. Its methods and exercises can also be made accessible to interested parties in the form of individual talks and short workshops. Due to lack of time, the existence of the toolbox has not yet been systematically communicated to the project stakeholders and within the CIRCE network. However, following the creative archiving workshop, an evaluation of the process was sent to the workshop participants. A flyer to introduce the toolbox is in the works and will be sent out to collaborators and stakeholders.

A Growing, Collaborative Archive

A concrete outcome of the process has been the co-created speculative archive of the SEZ. This archive contains five speculative positions (including a zine and two short stories) and one personal artifact, as well as an archival photo collection, and is to be publicly available on the website of the project "SEZ zwischennutzen" as an online exhibition.⁽¹⁴⁾ This archive is the product of the speculative archiving workshop, and is a fantastic and highly appealing set of material that truly captures the way in which the SEZ could transform itself from a ruined old liability of the city council to a vibrant space of pleasure and leisure, even when it is not yet in use. Activating the building

14 <https://sez-zwischen-nutzen.de/> The link to the SEZ-archive will be made available as soon as it has been fully digitalised and published.

IMPACT

and its memories in this way is a method of explicitly exhibiting the intangible values of heritage, and acts as a quick and easily publishable concrete souvenir to be shared among those interested in joining the fight to save the SEZ in the future.

Changed Perceptions and A New Set of Creative Practices

With the worldbuilding and speculative methodology that is able to playfully but also precisely capture the overlapping zone between historical memory, contemporary urban development, and emotional archives of disputed pasts in especially disputed historical cities like Berlin, the project has aimed to push forward a method of mapping and archiving the intangible aspects of monumental and architectural pasts. While the UNESCO's definition of intangible cultural heritage¹⁵ creates a binary between cultural traditions and material monuments, these two are inextricably linked when it comes to questions of demolishing buildings that played a joyful and meaningful role in the past. The richness of the world inside a functional SEZ suggested not only a democratic access to swimming and water for pleasure, but also a highly futuristic and inclusive space. There were facilities in place for differently abled bodies to enjoy the pool landscape. Furthermore, the medical facilities made sure that injured bodies could be tended to. Due to the low price and accessibility, the vision of health for everyone was prioritised here. Such a utopic space actually existed, and now it does not. In order for us to even start the conversation regarding its preservation, we need to understand and communicate the uniqueness of what this complex was. Speculation is an effective and creative method to be able to collectively imagine the pleasures of the SEZ, to try to determine through the lens of our own imaginations and desires, what we think a space like that could actually provide if it still existed in its original capacity. It is an effective way of exhuming memories from the highly nostalgia heavy realm of "ostalgie" to give it a more contemporary and more activated edge. An example from one of these methods in the archiving workshop was the exercise where participants were challenged to re-imagine the SEZ in a science fiction narrative. After being given a thorough archival and historical background, that also including somatic practice and "fitness" modules where we re-enacted a classic television fitness program from the 80s that was shot and televised from the SEZ back in the day, we invited workshop participants to find an accessible and communicable way of telling the complicated story of the disputed SEZ property with this prompt -

You are members of an alien species, recruited to visit Earth to retrieve a historical piece of your planet's technology that had been left behind here by your ancestors – a space capsule, that was eventually repurposed by humans to create a swimming complex

15 <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

IMPACT

You are now under order to descend on Earth and take back your capsule, except, you simply cannot enter. There are so many people standing between you and the SEZ. How will you find a way? You must, at the end of your narrative, fly away successfully.

The prompt gave the workshop participants a fun and engaging anchor to tie together all the diverse information around the SEZ, for example about state-of-the-art pool heating and ice-skating lane cooling technology that existed there, or the many inclusive and futuristic bits about the building, and also the frustrating nitty gritty of the contemporary real estate disputes around it. They were able to tell the story of urban development and destruction of historical properties and also their own memories and emotions about the building in deeply engaging, interesting ways that would be accessible not only to urbanists and immediate stakeholders, but also to a much wider potential audience.



Zine by workshop participants

Creative Workshop

SPACESHIP BEBEN OPEN CALL:

The workshop will take place on **Saturday, October 5, 2024, between 3pm to 6pm** at Gemeingut, Weidenweg 37, 10249 Friedrichshain.

Participants with personal connection to the SEZ are especially encouraged to attend.

Participants need to bring at least 1 or more story, personal photograph, memory, or archival material about the SEZ. Archival material here can mean actual historical items, or personal wishes and fantasies that connect to the space. All material will be used with permission.

The workshop will take place in spoken German and spoken English.

Want to contribute, but don't have time? Please send us your contribution in the form of a text, voice note, photo with description, ... to jorinde.schulz@posteo.de.

SPACESHIP BEBEN OPEN CALL:

SPACESHIP SEZ ARCHIVING WORKSHOP CALLING ALL COSMONAUTS OF BERLIN!

Saturday, October 5, 2024

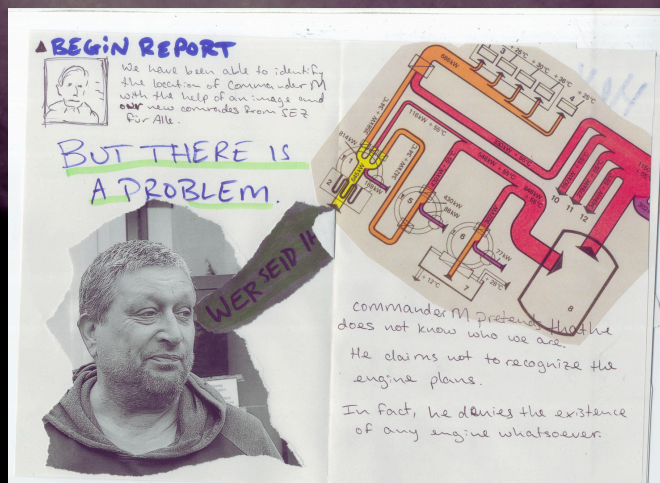
3pm to 6pm

Gemeingut, Weidenweg 37, 10249 Berlin

register at: jorinde.schulz@posteo.de

bring at least one or more story, personal photograph, memory, or archival material about the SEZ

Workshop invitation



Zines by workshop participants

LEARNINGS

The CIRCE fellowship gave a unique opportunity to further develop and implement artistic research in the course of an intense and rich five-month period. The learnings made in this process mainly concern time constraints: While it is highly possible to delve into a profound creative process as well as initiate and deepen community relations, we found that it was less realistic to both produce something substantial AND have the time to promote and disseminate it. This endeavour will take place in the coming months, however in a slower pace than was possible during the fellowship.

- Take into account vacation periods in planning: The creative workshops originally planned for August and September had to be pushed back and merged due to the summer holiday period, while the political workshop was brought forward to July. The vast majority of stakeholders are difficult to reach during the summer holidays and are not in a position to engage in intensive processes.
- Allow more time for public relations, dissemination and documentation of the project: While the material produced in the project is rich and satisfactory, there is still room for improvement in terms of public relations and press work. The sorting and public documentation of the material is also still pending in parts and will take place at a slower pace in the coming months.
- Allow extra time for collaboration with project partners: The publication of the archive as an online exhibition on the website of a project partner was fantastic news for the project, but cannot be completed within the five months due to the project partner's lack of time.
- Set realistic goals for the period: One of the originally planned outcomes of the project, to generate a radio play from interviews and newly developed speculative fictions, was simply not possible within the planned timeframe. The relevant material was therefore submitted to various arts funding organisations in order to be able to continue working on this part of the project.

It is important to emphasize that the community around the SEZ is an emergent one. This project needs sustained engagement in all regards. With both the workshop as well as planned online and offline exhibitions, we are able to make the SEZ issue into an appealing and interesting one, that opens it up to different kinds of research, as well as the possibility to fundraise from the cultural sector in the future. This is a key point towards sustaining and also spreading the interest in the building and the memories of the building, which is ultimately a powerful factor in keeping the demolition at bay. However, even if the demolition happens, we have ensured that there is a model of engaging with the building that remains both historically invested, as well as actively future-oriented, that refuses to let the SEZ die.

JORINDE SCHULZ

(1989) is the author of "Die Clubmaschine (Berghain)" (Textem 2018), a speculative literary essay exploring the myths and machinery of a legendary Berlin club. Excerpts from the book are featured in Noam Brusilovsky's and Tobias Purfürst's Techno Opera "Exzess" (rbb 2023). She is the editor of the anthology "Generalverdacht" (General Suspicion), a multidisciplinary critical anthology about racist criminalisation targeting migrant communities and neighborhoods in Germany. As a crew member of the artist collective Spaceship Beben, she creates feminist science fiction narratives in word, sound, and image. As an activist, she is part of initiatives against racist police violence, privatisation, and urban securitisation. In 2024, she is a fellow at the Creative Impact Research Lab.



EDUCATION & FELLOWSHIPS

2016-2018 Master's degree course in Philosophy, Freie Universität Berlin | 2016 Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy and Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin & Sorbonne Université Paris | 2011 Bachelor of Arts, Orchestra Musician, The Royal Danish Academy of Music Copenhagen | 2019 Dramaturgical Seminar, Alexandra Kumorek & Sandra Ehlers | 2018 Fellow of Kolleg Friedrich Nietzsche in Weimar | 2017 Treatment Funding by Deutsche Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) | 2024 Fellow, Creative Impact Research Center (CIRCE) Berlin

WORK EXPERIENCE

Since 2021 Campaigner and policy advisor, Gemeingut in BürgerInnenhand e.V. | 2021-2023 Policy advisor for Ferat Kocak, MP | 2021 Candidate in the Berlin parliamentary elections for Die Linke | 2020-2021 Curatorial team for the exhibition "Wissensstadt Berlin 2021" | 2018 - 2019 Editor, Ada Magazin | 2017-2018 Assistant, Conspirators Talent Management, Casting & Film Production | 2017-2022 Editor, Neuköllnisch Magazin | 2015-2017 Student Assistant, Research Center Affective Societies (Prof. Dr. Jan Slaby), Freie Universität Berlin

CREATIVE WORK, TALKS & PERFORMANCES (selection)

Co-producer, The Big Hen's Call - The Republic of Chicken Audio Guide, with Promona Sengupta, Shape of a Pocket Exhibition and Project, The Institute for Endotic Research (TIER), 2024 | Co-producer, Spaceship SEZ, with Promona Sengupta, archival and sonic research project for CIRCE Fellowship, 2024 | Co-host, Spaceship Beben radio show at the House of Kal exhibition, ngbK, 2023 | Panelist, "Ressentiment", Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, 2023 | Talkshow Guest, 27 - The European Magazine: "Should Public Transport be Privatised?", arte, 2023 | Performer, "This Situation" by Tino Sehgal, Gropiusbau Berlin, 2020 | Streetphilosophy: Befreie dich von der Schuld!, arte, 2020 | Streetphilosophy: Strebe nach Macht!, arte, 2017