

Hustadt Project

In collaboration with Aktionsteam - an informal network of Hustadt activists

Type of work: Public Art Project

Landscape Architect: Christine Wolf, Landscape architects wbp GmbH, Bochum

Structural Engineers: MEYER & PARTNER Bauingenieure, Bochum

Location: Hustadt, Bochum, Germany

Year: 2008–2011

Photos: Apolonija Šušteršič, Lasse Ernlund Lorentzen

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Content: The construction of a public platform – a Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1, with a floor surface of 106 m², made of concrete walls, wooden construction (spruce), acryl-glass plates; furniture made from spruce wood + recycled wood – hard wood from the old pergola; a re-planted herb garden; a blog about the project.

Public participation process realized through various actions on the main square, Brunnenplatz: Sunday brunch, flea market events, bicycle repair workshops, dance workshops, storytelling and public readings, gardening on public greens, lectures and presentations, Exhibitions, Festivals, and building of a temporary pavilion as part of the project. The resulting Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1 continues to support a network of activities suggested by the inhabitants themselves: a summer kitchen, a sitting place, a small performance stage, an outdoor cinema, a bicycle repair workshop, and much more. The goal was to create a place that would stimulate and inspire everyone living in the neighborhood.

Concept: In 2008 I received an invitation from the City of Bochum to make a conventional public art work in a suburban neighborhood called Hustadt. The neighborhood was built in the late 1960s for approximately 6,000 inhabitants as a "Universitätsrahmenstadt" – Ruhr University Campus – to offer housing for professors, students, academics, and public employees. As a result of various social, economic, and political developments related to today's global situation, Hustadt has since then encountered many changes.

Today's inhabitants of Hustadt reflect a microcosm of the world; approximately 56 different nationalities live in the neighborhood, with many different cultures, lifestyles, and habits coexisting every day in close proximity to each other. High unemployment, lengthy integration processes, and the constantly changing community limit the possibility for its inhabitants to relate to the place as their home. As a result, Hustadt has the reputation of being a ghetto; its bad name has stigmatized the area.

Planned to last only nine months, the project turned into a three-year process of negotiations, discussions, and actions. It evolved into a self-organized initiative together with local activists (Aktionsteam) and provoked a huge discussion within the city legislature. The Hustadt Project was finally accepted in the urban regeneration plan for "Innere Hustadt" as part of "Stadtumbau West" – the Urban Regeneration Programme for Hustadt, Bochum. We managed to largely expand the initial budget for public art and turned a conventional public art commission into a sustainable participatory project.

More than an architectural object or urban infrastructure, the Hustadt Project was mainly a process composed of several parts. With Aktionsteam we researched the existing situation, through many formal and informal meetings, discussions, and workshops with people living in Hustadt and developed different activities for the neighborhood in order to test the location, to encourage them to act on and react to present conditions, outside of official social institutions, to create a place by themselves and for themselves, using the results as arguments in political discussions. The entire process led to the drafting of a proposal for and the eventual realization of the Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1, a multifunctional infrastructure for the main square in Hustadt, a meeting place for inhabitants.

The Community Pavilion – Brunnenplatz 1 became a self-organized mini cultural institution that will continue in the future to work closely together with its inhabitants (Summer Film Festival – Hustadt 2012). The custodian for the Community Pavilion has become the UmQ e.V. – University meets Querenburg, Association for Street Culture, together with HU_kultur and Förderverein which will also care for the Pavilion in the future.

The Hustadt Project became a platform that stimulated the imagination about the future of the place and its inhabitants. The project focused on and addressed distributions of power in public space; the role of the artist/architect within urban regeneration projects; the issue of "spatial justice"; and the appropriation of public space.



sunday brunch



clay workshop



bicycle workshop



dance course



flea market



storytelling



garden for the future



garden workshop



temporary pavilion: building process



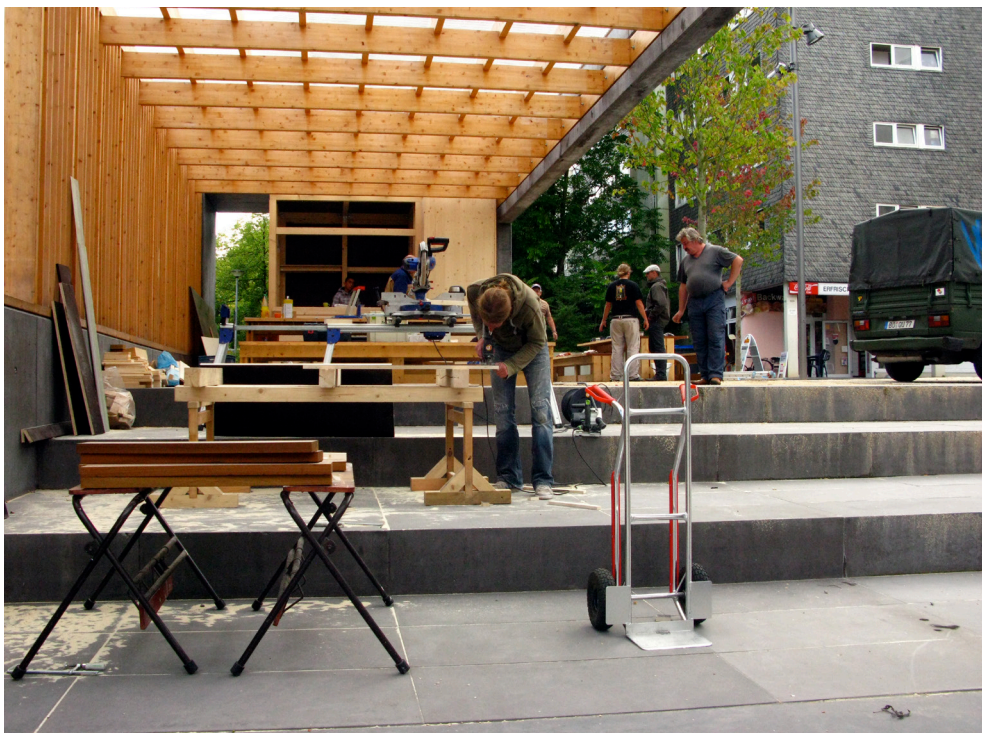


children using the pavilion





community pavilion - building site





views of the community pavilion



HUSTADTTEILFES



opening; Dr.Barbara Steiner



hustadfest 2011





open air lecture



open air cinema