

“We need a publisher”

A book project about Gesamtkunstwerk Wagendorf Lohmühle
From the fall of the Berlin wall until today

To publish a book seems obvious to the residents of Gesamtkunstwerk Wagendorf Lohmühle. The book arises from a daily practice of producing self-organized structures of understandings which can be anything from ecological prototypes to summer parties. To use personal creativity and one's own body gives the opportunity to create a coherent network and self-realization. This in addition gives the residents of Lohmühle the important opportunity to take personal responsibility towards the public space, and thereby have a tool to communicate with the surroundings, which the hospitality of Lohmühle always invites you to do. In this context, the book may show alternative ways to organize, communicate, and live together.

Interview with Eve and Winnie – Chapter 1

“A green oasis for people and animals” says Eve and Winnie about the small community of Lohmühle. They came to the area after their dogs gave birth to puppies, and their apartment became too small. In Lohmühle, they started to improve ecological consciousness. They worked with the separation of garbage, transforming ecological garbage into earth, they built water-cleaning systems by planting roots and using stones, and they explored alternative energy forms. Eve and Winnie want to work toward a goal where Lohmühle can have its own self-sufficient green life-circle. In this process, they offer public seminars on microorganisms and conduct green tours to encourage dialogue on ecological issues.

The Nature Basement – Chapter 2

This chapter is telling about a concrete action that happened by building a large basement of second hand goods to make it possible for the community to keep groceries and beverages cold in the summer, and not too cold in the winter. The basement is basically a fridge that doesn't use electrical power, but by its physical presence underneath the earth it keeps a constant temperature.

Interview with Martin – Chapter 3

Here a space that was separated in East- and West- Berlin became a place where we could meet and live together... says Martin who has chosen a life as an artist. His definition of art is as wide as the definition of life. For him, to create a sculpture or plant a tree has the same important potential. One of his first visual actions in Lohmühle was to make a spiral of plants to symbolize the change of the borderland that under the cold war looked like a desert. For Martin, it is important to establish public spaces in the community that enables communication and can generate ideas and networks. He refers to these ideas as – ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ – social plastic.

Art and Gesamtkunstwerk – Chapter 4

Art is an integral part of life in the community of Lohmühle — it is a place where there is space for vitality and expression. This is not the case exclusively for the residents, but for everyone who wants to invest some energy. The output is enormous when you describe art in its wide terms of living. But the art also includes more classical sculptures and paintings, design and architectural works, public events, and ecological thinking. In this chapter the book focuses on some of the many objects that were produced in Lohmühle over time.

Interview with Zosch – Chapter 5

“We understand the need to keep politics simple”: says the 43 year old Zosch who was, from the beginning, a member of the little house-wagons community Lohmühle. He is very engaged in politics, and often goes under the nickname ‘mayor’. Zosch is working on securing legal rights for similar communities. He therefore remembers many of the turbulent stories from other, similar wagon communities, which got into conflict with local authorities, and were forcefully removed! At some point

we belonged to the neighborhood by the fact that our neighbors started appreciating all that we created from nature, what we planted, and the cultural events we organized.

Private sphere of Lohmühle – Chapter 6

There is another side of Lohmühle, and that is the daily rhythms of people living their lives in house wagons, and having their own normal private spheres and experiences of life. There are of course here some common characteristics that are this chapter's focus from living in wagons. This will partly be about living in a one room mobile unit with direct access to nature and about attaching personal signatures to their wagons.

Other loose ideas for the book

This book has been in development for some time, and also should reflect the diversity of the whole community. This mock up represented at Hamburger Bahnhof is maybe 70-80 percent completed. Other ideas have been to have additional articles by different academics from sociologists to art historians. Another aspect in consideration for the book is to portray some of the many fruitful and difficult process of compromising and decision making at the many meetings that have taken place in Lohmühle.