

Fusion e.V.

FUSION e.V. – Project Manege and Jugendstrasse
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The History of Fusion e.V.

Fusion is the story of a self-organized effort to create self-respect, tolerance and ways of expression for youth where the council of Neukölln have given up. The founders Marta Galvis de Janzer and Wolfgang Janzer began with the idea of using carnival as a concept to create, communicate and infuse vitality. This has so far lead to Manege, a youth centre in 'Reuterkiez' in Neukölln and Jugendstraße which is now closed off for traffic. The Jugend Hotel Fusion is a further progress in their effort to infuse new ideas in youth work into Neukölln.

Fusion takes its roots in carnival and uses the methods of carnival to create new social conditions in the local community of Neukölln. The context of carnival is a way of manifest liberation in between daily rhythms of suppression. Carnival was evented by slaves in the Caribbean colonies.

Fusion is using this method of working with visual means together with children to obtain dialogue about themes like responsibility and respect of difference. This need to talk about these issues comes from living in an melting pot of emigrants with different cultures and languages that is represent in the area of Neukölln in Berlin.

The discourse of Fusions work has resulted in a whole body of different cultural and youth works and is constantly transforming itself into new projects. Fusion has become the place where children can go typically where the authorities gave up. Fusion is not in opposition to any system but is in a flux between many structures.

Fusion although have experience having problem with local authorities and had to move out for a while of Rütlistrasse when the establish system of social authorities was confronted with their successful methods.

Projects

Project Jugendstraße

When Fusion suggested to close off a whole street from traffic, the first reaction was that they must be mad. But the idea won in 2002 and Rütlistraße was 'reclaimed' as a public space for the people. This transformation was done in collaboration with youth living in the area together with artists, urban planners and residents. The transformation was to give the youth own space for development with possibility to for instance – what already exist today – an own stage.

Besides hosting 'Manege', Fusion's youth center, there are two schools, a kindergarten, allotment gardens and an abandoned hotel in the street. In the summer, Fusion hosts summer parties and summer is where the youth club Manege contributes to the carnival.

The street is flanked with two big frog figures – at the same time inviting and guarding! When building

and painting the frogs, Fusion just started their work in the street and as people came by they joined in making it an intercultural neighborhood event.

Manege

In the youth club you find all different kind of workshop that provides kids to work in the field of visual art. It is an after school program that uses visual art, circus and carnival methods in a daily practice. The visual art works are not the main focus but the dialogue that follows while working on them. The visual works often consist of fiberglass animals and is for public use. Sometimes they play on barrels and wear masks and participate in the cities carnival. Acting and writing texts are forms in use to. The Mange is also a space to just hang out, play table tennis, drink tee in the cafe, surf on the web, or even repair the computer.

Future plans

One of the future plans is to take over the abandon hotel on Rütlistrasse and make a youth hostel that can create jobs for some of the young teenagers of the area. And having a space that can facilitate the production of sculptures of bigger dimensions.



Children making totem pole



Wolfgang doing detail work after a childrens workshop on cow for school yard



Boys playing with masks from last carnival



Young users of Manege in the metal workshop





Manege, Fusions youth centre



The building is owned by the local council and rented out until 2006. After this Fusion wishes to take it over. For the poster we got illustrator Matilde Nordseth to make a proposal for the decoration of the facade.



