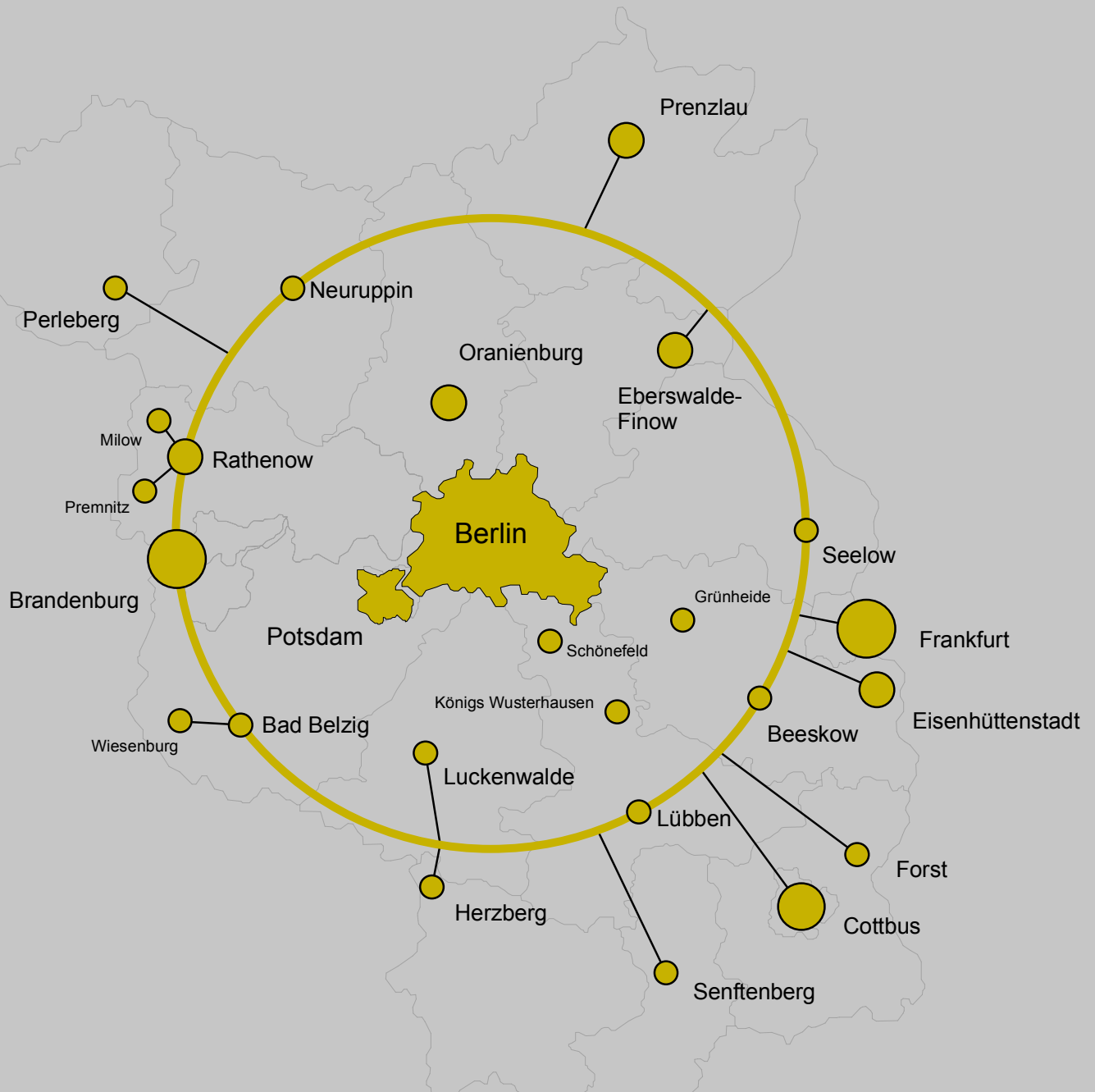


2/2025

AIV-FORUM

BRANDENBURG SPECIAL

Journal of the Architekten- und Ingenieurvereins zu Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.



**The GOLDEN CIRCLE
of the CITIES of the
SECOND TIER**

Brandenburg mission statements: Quo Vadis – a future of coexistence?

'Merging with AI is the only way to avoid being dominated by it.' Ray Kurzweil in an interview with Die Zeit From Die Zeit No. 32/2025, 30 July 2025

(AI image: Sebastian Wagner)



Architekten- und
Ingenieurverein
zu Berlin-
Brandenburg
e.V.

seit
1824

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August 2025

The **GOLD** of Brandenburg

Why go to the trouble of travelling through time to understand that Slavs and other peoples have been at home here since time immemorial and that the bricks for Berlin, including those for the Neues Museum, came from the Rathenow area? Berlin was able to develop into a metropolis because it emerged from the bosom of the Mark Brandenburg.

Great minds such as Fontane, Schinkel, Lilienthal and others came from here. It was the inventors from Rathenow who designed and put into operation the world clock on Alexanderplatz. It is the landscape that flows and keeps the spirit alive in an infinitely beautiful natural space with cities where people, nature and technology come together in harmonious balance.

Members of the AIV Berlin Brandenburg^{1]}, from Karl Friedrich Schinkel to the present day, have created universities and spaces and brought building culture to an international level, for example with the "Weinberg Bridge" in Rathenow through the AIV Schinkel Wettbewerb^{2]}.

They also co-founded the University of Cottbus (founding professor Wolfgang Schuster, architecture programme) and the European University Viadrina (Sebastian Wagner, founding member and advisor to INTRAG, the university's Institute for Transcultural Health Sciences) in Frankfurt, shaping them through the integration of a planning system and the promotion of health.

A Schinkel competition is now being held in Luckenwalde to help realise Brandenburg's ambition to become an IBA34 partner^{3]} with Berlin in the Berlin-Brandenburg border area created by the division of Germany.

The Brandenburg region offers opportunities to further strengthen and consolidate innovation around the metropolitan area in the future and the chance to learn from the identity of the past, reflect on the present and make the 'construction boom' in Germany visible.

That is why this booklet has been produced, showing how a 'journey through dreams and realities' has opened new doors. The state of Brandenburg is showcasing its potential through exhibitions at the Rathenow Cultural Centre and the former city library in Premnitz. Both the master plan for Premnitz and the possible construction hut of the IBA Berlin-Brandenburg in Brandenburg's new nature and industrial areas open up a broad perspective from the perspective of the individual location and the outside world.

This was examined in detail by the participants in this process, both in the mission statements for the West Brandenburg economic area and in the six studios on current topics in construction and planning:

The studios of the AIV Forum: spaces for thinking, planning and experimenting

As part of the AIV Forum, six studios were designed as curated thematic workshops to examine key issues of architecture, urban development and social transformation in a broad international and interdisciplinary context. Each studio was dedicated to a specific focus – from the city on the edge (Studio 2) to questions of fairness and collaborative building (Studio 3) to the search for identity in Studio 4: Tourism | Museum | Health, with a tribute to Ingeborg Kuhler's museum building, to international designs for the future.

The studios serve not only for reflection, but also for the practical testing of new approaches – they link theory, building culture and concrete spatial issues in Brandenburg with global perspectives. Together, they form a discursive resonance space for an International Building Exhibition that aims to be more than an exhibition: a process.

Embarking on a journey in the spirit of Theodor Fontane: *"...I have travelled through the Mark and found it richer than I had dared to hope. Every foot of earth came to life and gave birth to figures [...] wherever the eye fell, everything bore the broad stamp of history ..."*

From the Mark Brandenburg to the northern Sporades of Greece (CIAM 5.0, Studio 2), from the star park of the western Havelland with a view into space... Odysseus sends his regards.

1] AIV Berlin Brandenburg | Architekten- und Ingenieur Verein zu Berlin – Brandenburg e.V. – Architects and Engineers Association of Berlin-Brandenburg

2] AIV Schinkel competition

3] IBA34 International Building Exhibition Berlin Brandenburg

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1] International Architecture Competition



It is particularly important to me to focus on the potential of Brandenburg's cities outside the major metropolitan areas.

With our special issue 'Second-Tier Cities – The Golden Circle', we are focusing specifically on so-called Second-Tier Cities – places with character, history and future potential.

These cities are often underestimated, but they offer scope for new models and development scenarios beyond the pressure for growth in Berlin.

We focus on their unique characteristics, their cultural and spatial qualities, and their role in the regional fabric. In the exhibition 'Welten > Verbinden'^{1]}, which we co-organised, we show examples of how these cities can provide impetus for an integrated, co-operative building culture – between tradition and transformation, city and countryside.

The AIV sees itself as a platform for providing expert support and visionary inspiration for this debate.

Christian Müller

Chairman of the Board,
AIV Berlin Brandenburg



Connecting Perspectives –
Berlin and Brandenburg

After enriching the debate on the urban future of our metropolitan region – Berlin-Brandenburg – with the exhibition and event project 'Unfinished Metropolis' and the 'International Urban Design Competition Berlin-Brandenburg 2070', the AIV has now broadened its horizons once again: The state of Brandenburg, closely linked to Berlin, nevertheless has its own political and spatial identity.

We see the diversity inherent in this as potential for new forms of planning and construction. With the special issue 'The Cities of the Second Tier – The Golden Circle', we focus on the unique character of Brandenburg's cities and open up new perspectives for urban development.

The exhibition „Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities", which is being presented here once again, shows how dialogue between city and country side can succeed – through recognition of differences and through cooperative action.

Tobias Nöfer

Managing Director Berlin 2070 gGmbH,
AIV Spokesperson for Policy



Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities The Golden Circle

Perspectives for Second-Tier Towns in Brandenburg, using the Example of the Western Havelland Region: Milower Land, Premnitz, Rathenow and Brandenburg an der Havel

The exhibition 'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten'^{1]} at the Rathenow Cultural Centre and the accompanying events focused on the so-called Second-Tier Cities.

These are places with an industrial tradition, growing innovative strength and an independent urban identity. Based on the content of the Kulturland theme year 2024 and with a view to the future year 2026 ('Land of Tomorrow'), the AIV Berlin-Brandenburg, together with regional partners, has made a contribution to the development of Brandenburg's cities.

Today, the state of Brandenburg presents itself as an independent region: with an excellent natural environment, efficient infrastructure, energy and water supply, research facilities and internationally competitive industry.

Cities such as Rathenow, Premnitz and Brandenburg an der Havel are developing into central areas of the future – for example in medical technology, optics, digitalisation and Industry 5.0. This transformation calls for contemporary models and strategic perspectives that bind, qualify and strengthen people.



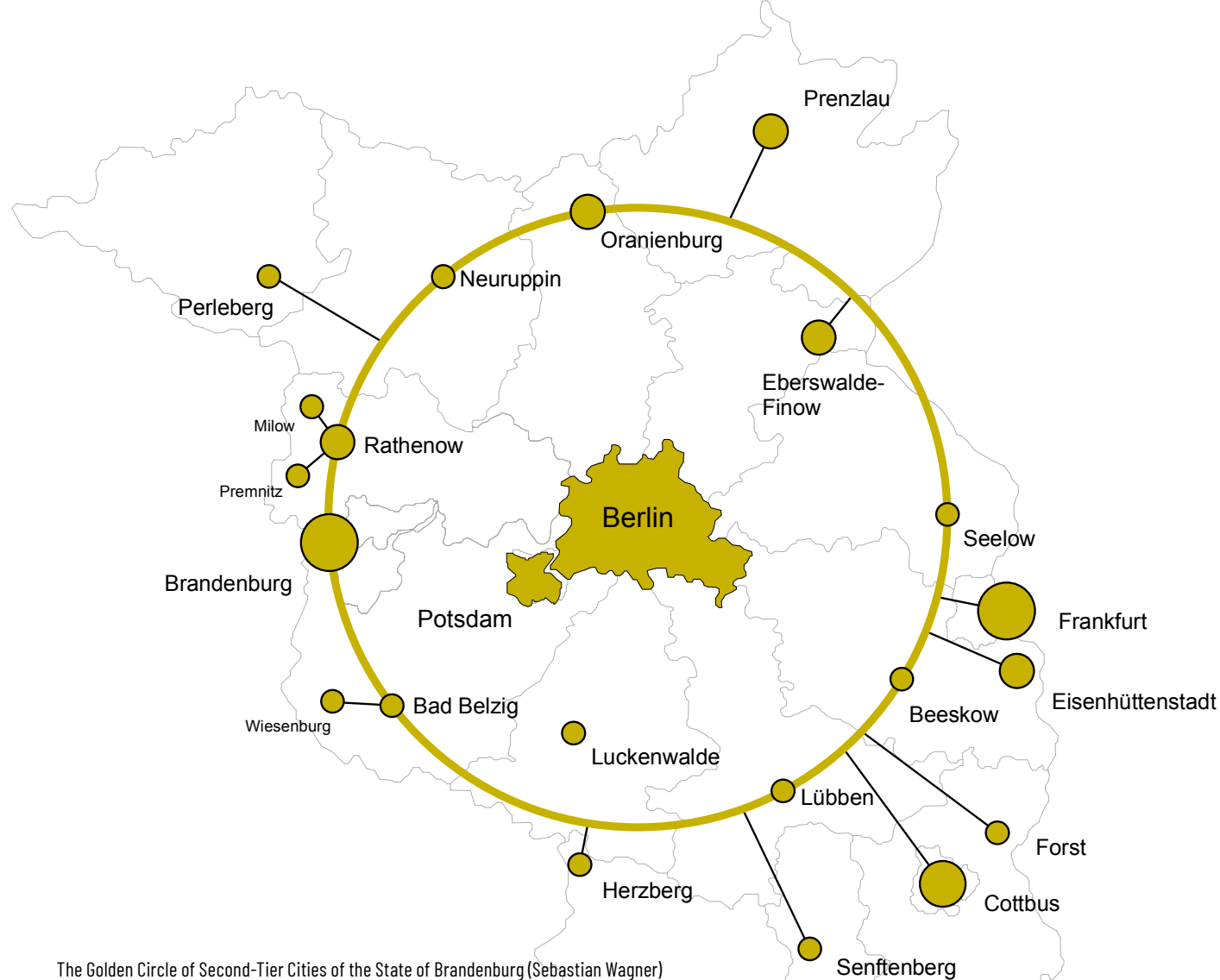
Programmes such as LAGA and BUGA have provided initial impetus – now it is time to think ahead: for example, with formats such as IBA 34 for the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan area. Brandenburg is more than just a supplier to the metropolis – it is a driving force for the future of Europe.

Second-Tier Cities are currently coming into focus worldwide. This issue documents initial approaches and invites readers to join in shaping resilient spaces.

Sebastian Wagner

AIV Board Member
AIV Spokesperson for Brandenburg
Initiator and Managing Director of the Event and Exhibition
'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten'

^{1]} „Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through
Dreams and Realities"



The Golden Circle of Second-Tier Cities of the State of Brandenburg (Sebastian Wagner)

Landscape | City

The Golden Circle and Settlement Star

Sebastian Wagner

The Landscape | Cities in Brandenburg are becoming increasingly important in the context of nature, identity, culture, production and innovation. As spaces on a human scale, they enable a new relationship between people and the environment. Second-Tier Cities – long neglected – are now coming into focus due to the congestion of metropolitan areas.

They form a 'Golden Circle' around conurbations such as Berlin and, contrary to earlier predictions, are developing dynamically and independently. The Golden Circle consists of Second-Tier Cities. They are the real performers that supply the metropolises. They are decentralised engines with a high quality of life and offer a human scale. Here you will find specific identities and the potential to connect 'Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow'. Second-Tier Cities are the potential development space of today and tomorrow and can draw on yesterday.

With its succession of City and Countryside | Countryside and City, the Havelland region offers a high-quality living space that needs to be explored and enhanced through targeted, acupuncture-like interventions.

Once this development and the strengthening of Second-Tier Cities has progressed, the settlement star can come to life. Against this backdrop, the International Building Exhibition 2034 (IBA34) offers a historic opportunity to systematically shape this development.

The Berlin-Brandenburg capital region is exemplary for many metropolitan regions worldwide: while Berlin suffers from densification and land scarcity, rural areas in Brandenburg have vacant properties, actors who are keen to experiment and diverse development areas. IBA34 can help these regions gain greater visibility and initiate a cooperative future space between urban and rural areas – not as an alternative to the metropolis, but as a productive complement.



Rathenow Yesterday | Tomorrow (Collage Sebastian Wagner | Image Mario Cucinella Architekten)

The municipalities of Rathenow, Premnitz, Milower Land and Brandenburg an der Havel have the necessary expertise to act as a raw model and pioneer thanks to their experience with state and federal garden shows and inter-municipal cooperation.

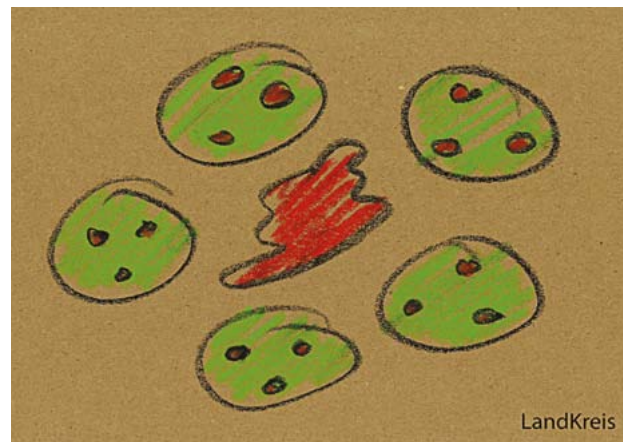
The district of Havelland is taking a proactive approach to the situation and has joined forces with the municipality of Milower Land and the town of Premnitz to bring high-quality commerce and promising industry to western Havelland.

This requires settlement areas. With the 'Western Havelland Commercial and Industrial hub', the three partners want to create such opportunities: The Premnitz sub-location, an extension of the industrial park, is one of these and is discussed in more detail in the article 'Ex Occidente Lux in Havelland'.

Initial preliminary talks with other municipalities (including Potsdam, Oranienburg, Eberswalde and Eisenhüttenstadt) have already been held by the IBA34 administration.

Premnitz, Rathenow and Milower Land have confirmed their commitment to the project with a joint expression of interest – a strong signal for the cooperative transformation of the region. In addition, there are many active networks in this circle that already have an impact far beyond the region and are joining forces in workshops for the courageous.

The 'Workshop of the Courageous' is an initiative that took place at the House of World Cultures in Berlin. There, 300 regional designers and 50 members of the 'Deutsche-Bundestag' met to work on topics such as the economy, housing, climate protection and education in a non-partisan and solution-oriented manner. The aim was to develop regional solutions and bring them into federal politics. The days of sticking with the status quo and waiting for elected politicians to act are over. Courage and commitment are needed. But the reward is a future that is lived



Four Towns - Four Images (Klaus Theo Brenner)

Rathenow - Premnitz - Milower Land - Brandenburg adH

Four Towns - Four Images

Text and Images by Prof. Klaus Theo Brenner

Four Towns - Four Images

describes the fundamentals of the heterotopic concept and can be represented by the four terms cityscape, rural district, city island and heterotopia, providing scope for a differentiated action strategy for the four locations of Rathenow, Premnitz, Milower Land and Brandenburg an der Havel.

Urban | Landscape

The IBA34 Berlin-Brandenburg focuses on the relationship between Berlin and Brandenburg, city and countryside.

County | District

The landscape surrounding Berlin - Westhavelland, Dahme-Spreewald, Märkische Schweiz, Schorfheide-Chorin, Uckermark, Ruppiner Land - forms a cultural region with distinctive characteristics linked to the cities embedded within this cultural space.

City | Island

Brandenburg's towns are integrated into the surrounding landscape. The towns are urban islands in terms of cultural, economic and architectural density, forming a harmonious and individually characterised relationship between the towns and their rural surroundings.

Heterotopia

The IBA34 symbolises a model of urban repair and renewal in Brandenburg in the sense of a heterotopic strategy. Heterotopes are characteristic and thematically clearly defined districts with distinctive features, integrated into the urban context in the sense of urban acupuncture. With their architectural and functional characteristics, the heterotopes symbolise urban renewal in conjunction with the theme of urban gardens as an urban reference point to the open countryside surrounding the cities.



Rathenow - Location of the Körgraben in the Urban Area (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten/SWA Group International)

Havelland

The Westhavelland region, with its urban islands of Rathenow, Premnitz, Milower Land and Brandenburg a.d.H., is a prime example of the heterotopic strategy integrated into the Berlin-Brandenburg IBA concept. Heterotopes are identity-forming urban development elements in the sense of acupuncture, inserted into the urban context in order to redesign confusing and sometimes chaotic urban areas in a new and sustainable way.

The theme of **Stadt | Garten**, integrated into the **Heterotope Strategy**, symbolises the relationship between **City and Landscape | Landscape and City** in Brandenburg as an important urban building block. The basis of the Heterotope Strategy for the Four Locations in Westhavelland is their individual urban dimension and structure against the backdrop of their specific historical development. The aim of an urban development-oriented and selectively implemented optimisation strategy within the framework of the **IBA34** Berlin-Brandenburg with a high public impact is, in addition to the urban development effect, to improve the quality of life in the cities in terms of urban space and its uses.

Rathenow - Körgraben

The Körgraben area in Rathenow is an essential part of the **IBA34** concept in Rathenow in terms of the heterotopic strategy. As a mixed-use open space, the Körgraben forms a kind of 'green wedge' from the outside into the urban structure, which today still appears relatively chaotic in its historically grown parts and fragments. The aim of the **Heterotopic Strategy** at this location is, on the one hand, to supplement the existing buildings and renovate them functionally and architecturally in all their architectural diversity.

On the other hand, it is about cultivating the open space at Körgraben as a public open space and thus a connecting element between the surrounding buildings. The Körgraben will become a **City Garden** and event space with a significant sequence of structural events complementing the existing buildings.



Schwarzplan Kirchmöser, Brandenburg adH (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten)

Rethinking City and Landscape

Brandenburg | Model Area for Integrated Urban Development

Klaus Theo Brenner, in conversation with Friedrich Schöning

Current urban development in the Berlin area is opening up new perspectives for the interplay between urban identity, integration into the landscape and cultural exchange. This is particularly evident in two projects in which I am involved: the garden city of Kirchmöser in Brandenburg an der Havel and the reconstruction of the old town island in Rathenow.

Both projects not only mark a change of perspective in my work as an architect and university lecturer, but also reflect a larger movement: the shift from an isolated Berlin growth logic to an integrated view of the Berlin-Brandenburg urban region. From the metropolis to the region: a biographical movement For a long time, Berlin was the centre of attention in terms of architecture and urban development.

In recent years, however, the focus has increasingly shifted to the region. For me personally, this development began with the project in Kirchmöser – a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Brandenburg an der Havel, embedded in a historically influenced settlement structure with close ties to nature and the city. In Rathenow, on the other hand, we are working on behalf of RWG on the urban redevelopment of the old town island. Even before that, a church environment project was developed with students from the Potsdam School of Architecture, which laid the initial foundations for a sustainable relationship with the city.

Such projects do not arise from abstract planning interests, but from concrete personal relationships – a decisive factor for high-quality urban development.

City and landscape: Brandenburg's dual Identity

What makes Brandenburg so special is the proximity of its established urban structure and largely untouched landscape. While Berlin is increasingly losing its connection to urban culture in many of its new neighbourhoods, Brandenburg offers an exemplary alternative: an urban structure with historical depth and, at the same time, the opportunity to live close to nature. The neighbourhood in Kirchmöser, for example, combines both – it is located on the outskirts of the city, but is within walking distance of nature and at the same time embedded in the urban structure.

It is symbolic of a sustainable urban landscape. The European dimension: local projects in an international context The quality of our projects is determined by their embedding in an international discourse landscape. The IBA Berlin in the 1980s showed how much architectural quality benefits from an open, European debate.



Masterplan Kirchmöser, Brandenburg ADH (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten)

My long-standing connection to Italian building culture – through teaching and project work in Milan, Padua and Genoa, for example – has made it clear to me how much small towns can benefit from a strong identity and a direct relationship with the landscape.

This is a model that Brandenburg can adapt: towns with a clear identity, compact historic centres and an active relationship with nature. Reconstruction instead of expansion: understanding and repairing the town For sustainable urban development, it is essential to understand the existing town – its history, its fractures and its potential.

In Rathenow, for example, the focus is not on large-scale expansion, but on the precise further development of the existing stock: a kind of 'urban repair' that connects to the historical structures while opening up new possibilities for use and activating cultural spaces. The goal is a lively city centre with attractive qualities – squares, streets, cinemas, parks, educational and cultural institutions. Only on this basis can expansion to the outside world make sense.

The City as Cultural Practice

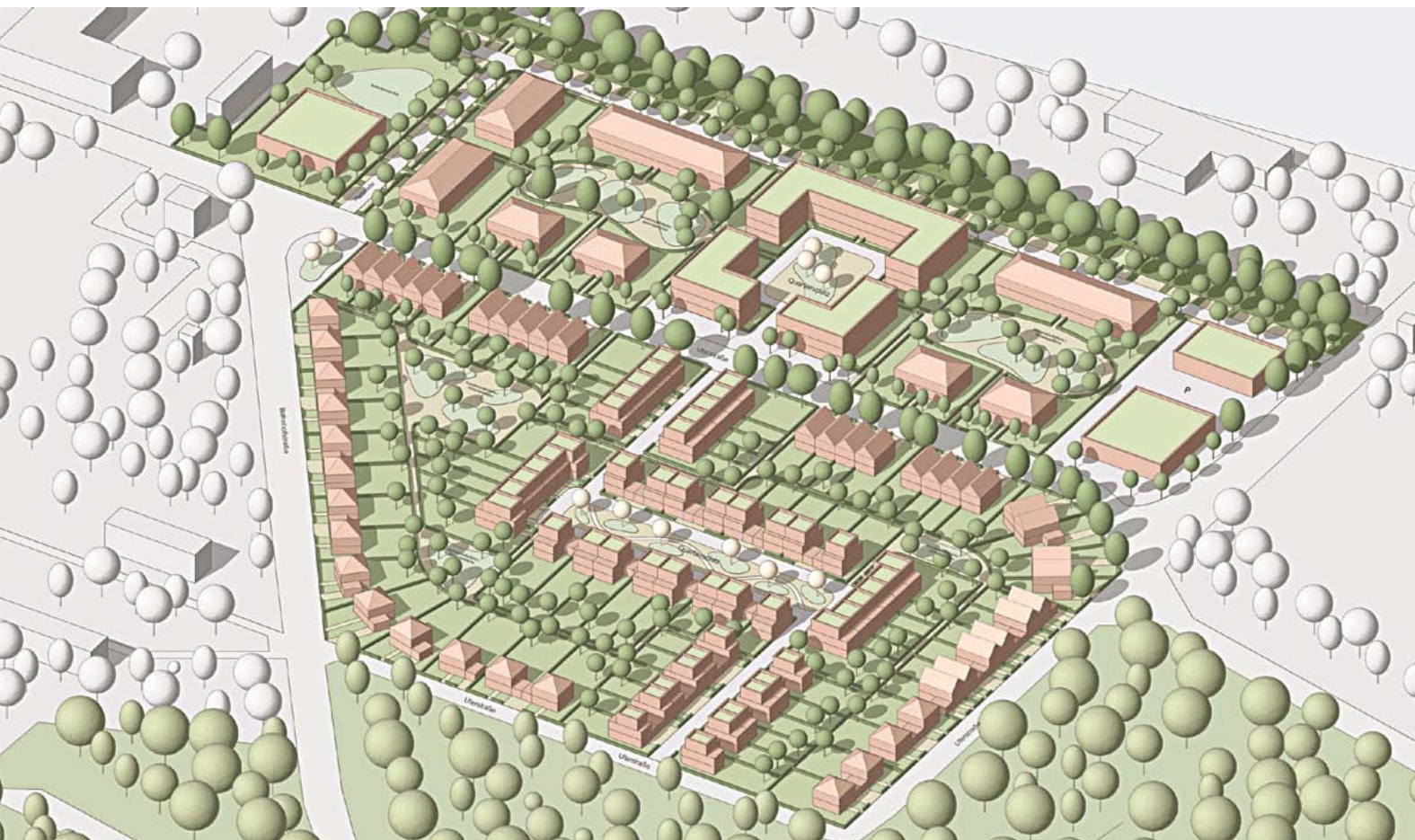
The city is more than architecture and infrastructure – it is a cultural practice. The success of urban development depends not only on planning decisions, but also on lived

urbanity: where do people meet? What cultural events take place? How is public space used? These questions are central to the attractiveness of a place. Projects such as the exhibition 'Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities'^{1]} in Rathenow provide important impetus in this regard. They create cultural identity and strengthen the relationship between Berlin and Brandenburg on a sensory, emotional level.

The Role of Politics: Support for Cultural Urban Development

The role of politics: support for cultural urban development Without political support, many cultural and architectural initiatives remain ineffective. Brandenburg in particular shows how important it is for cities to actively commit to the quality of their architectural development. This is the only way to prevent projects from being purely economically motivated and losing their cultural connection. The cities in the Berlin area have enormous potential if they succeed in activating it through design quality, functional diversity and cultural programming.

1] www.welten-verbinden.com



Axonometry Kirchmöser, Brandenburg ADH (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten)



Masterplan Körgraben, Rathenow (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten/ SWA Group International)

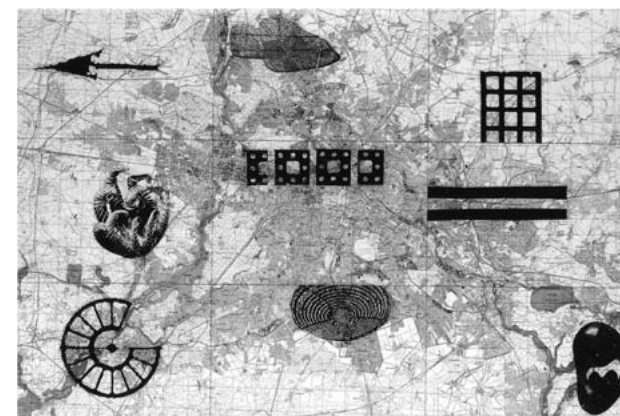
Conclusion: Brandenburg as a Laboratory for the Future

What can be seen in Brandenburg an der Havel and Rathenow could serve as a model for a new form of urban-rural relationship in the 21st century: away from undirected growth and towards a conscious, identity-oriented further development of existing structures. It is about densification and expansion, urban repair and urban culture, architectural quality and international debate culture. And last but not least, it is about a new understanding of the city as a living space – in close connection with the landscape, history and the people who inhabit it.

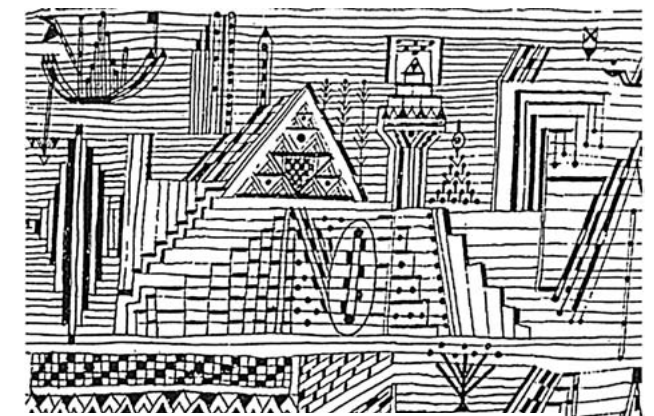
Note

This contribution is based on an interview by Friedrich Schöning (filmmaker) with Prof. Klaus Theo Brenner (architect, university lecturer in Berlin, Potsdam, Milan and Genoa) on the occasion of the Exhibition 'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten' (Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities), initiated and organised by Sebastian Wagner and the Welten > Verbinden Project Team, 2024, Kulturzentrum Rathenow.

More information: www.welten-verbinden.com



Stadt der Heterotope (Klaus Theo Brenner)



Heterotope
Ernst & Sohn Verlag,
Berlin 1995,
ISBN 3-433-02643-2



Parkstadt Karlshorst: Modell einer
Wohnstadt
Jovis Verlag, Berlin 2017
ISBN 978-3-86859-480-5



Stadthaus Projekte 2000 - 2020
Park Books Schweiz 2021, ISBN 978-3-03860-255-2



Urban Remodelling by Rathenow Housing Cooperative RWG, Old Town Island, Rathenow (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten)



Urban Remodelling by Rathenow Housing Cooperative RWG, Old Town Island, Rathenow (Brenner Krohm und Partner Architek-

Middle Town | Cooperative

Rathenow – Urban development on a Human Scale

Jens Hubald, Urban Planner and Managing Director of Rathenow Housing Cooperative RWG

Small towns such as Rathenow, located in the Second Tier around a metropolis such as Berlin, offer an attractive mix of the advantages of urban and rural life. Social infrastructure, cultural offerings, services, healthcare and even workplaces are all within easy reach.

The short distances between residents' daily destinations enable them, including young and old alike, to live their lives independently. This sets small towns apart from villages or 'dormitory towns' on the outskirts of metropolitan areas. For cultural offerings, special services or certain jobs that only a large city can offer, the well-developed rail connection can be used. In just one hour, the regional express takes you to the centre of Berlin – Berliners can't get around their city any faster than that.

At the same time, the small town reduces the human stress factors of urban life in everyday life thanks to its much lower traffic density and a more familiar social environment. The quick access to genuine nature, the green expanses of the Westhavelland region criss-crossed by the Havel river, combined with fresh air and a slower pace of life, are also a significant bonus for quality of life.

As an urban planner, I see the potential of these towns to create functional and aesthetic living spaces that put people at the centre. The manageable small town on a human

scale, with short distances for daily errands, distractions or necessities, in the midst of the water-rich expanses of the Westhavelland region, offers a competitive model to and between big city or village life.

With its established urban structures, social proximity and good connections to the metropolis of Berlin, it provides an ideal environment for a liveable combination of family and work. With 1,500 residential units, the Rathenow Housing Cooperative (RWG) is the second largest housing provider in Rathenow.

The RWG strives to bring the cooperative idea back into focus. It promotes an active neighbourhood culture, which aims to strengthen community life and prevent possible isolation through communal spaces, a neighbourhood association and community gardens.

The cooperative principle of member participation in communal property, its maintenance and development contributes to safety and well-being, as does the premise of 'real people' instead of 'automats' in customer contact.

Housing is a special commodity that must be offered on a broad basis in a solid and affordable manner. A major advantage of cooperative management is that the economic efficiency of the operation is only a means to an end.

All capital generated flows back into the maintenance, upkeep and development of the housing stock and the residential environment. There is no outflow of money in the form of dividend payments or distributions. This means that housing in the cooperative is not unnecessarily expensive, yet the necessary funds are generated to maintain the common property.

The RWG is celebrating its 70th anniversary. Its focus is on sustainable portfolio development. Instead of pushing for demolition and subsequent new construction, the RWG focuses on preservation, modernisation and targeted additions to the building stock.

These additions are based on the careful restoration of the urban space. A clear separation between public space on the street side and semi-public/private space in the form of green courtyards is the guiding principle throughout.

The fragmented urban space left behind by the war and post-war construction, which lacks intuitive possibilities for appropriation or orientation, is to be gradually rebuilt for human perception. Instead of oversized and largely lifeless traffic corridors lined with large blocks, smaller-scale street spaces with more varied buildings are to be created again.

A more individual face for the city, with individual solutions for individual plots and buildings, is intended to breathe new life into the old town. A human scale and diversity, including in the street space, residential environment and buildings, are intended to promote residents' identification with and appropriation of their neighbourhood.

The anonymity and uniformity of the industrial settlement should be remedied to a large extent. In addition to these urban and social aspects, urban regeneration must overcome other significant challenges. The green residential courtyards and surrounding urban open spaces must be adapted to the consequences of climate change. This applies to their resistance to heat and drought as well as their protective function for the residents who use them.

In addition, networked biotopes are to be created to protect biodiversity. In terms of climate protection, the energy-efficient renovation of the RWG's building stock on the old town island, which is currently heated and supplied with hot water using more than 90% fossil fuels, is to be classified. More than half of these are heated with heating oil and the rest with gas. As the buildings were already insulated and fitted with new windows in the 1990s, further 'over-insulation' would be a technically complex and costly measure, but one that would have little effect.



Refurbishment Project on the Old Town Island, Rathenow – Klaus Theo Brenner Stadtarchitektur | Brenner Krohm and Partners Architects

It is much more advantageous to switch from fossil fuels to renewable energies. The relatively dense development makes the construction of a local heating network with a central heating station economically viable. A river water heat pump in the Havel is planned as the main heat source for the local heating network.

However, it does not always have to be the big solution that leads to the goal – a series of small steps and measures can also enable considerable progress in the end. For example, RWG provided organisational support to its tenants as part of a balcony power plant campaign, tested heat-reflective coatings on facades and in interior spaces, and installed a heating monitoring system in the heating centres to adjust heat supply to actual consumption.

In one of its buildings, RWG is replacing conventional radiators with panel heating systems. Many of these small steps allow effectiveness and cost efficiency to be tested. If successful, the measures will be gradually applied to the rest of the portfolio. If unsuccessful, something has been learned.

Small towns like Rathenow offer an ideal balance between individuality and community. Unlike in villages, people are not forced to have close, almost familial contact with everyone, but can create a familiar environment that meets their personal needs. Many people who once enjoyed big-city life are recognising the value of a quieter life as their responsibility for their family and the environment grows. In contrast to anonymous suburban settlements, Rathenow is characterised by a mature urban society, a lively culture and functioning economic structures that provide a stable basis for future development.

The 'Citta Slow' concept is evident here: living more consciously, without hustle and bustle. People can find their own individual path and maintain their networks without sacrificing the pulse of modern life. Rathenow offers social and cultural structures that enable a fulfilling life. The human dimension is reflected in friendships, family ties and a familiar environment. The proximity to nature, the Havel river with its four arms flowing through the city centre and the city forest create quality of life.



Refurbishment Project on the Old Town Island, Rathenow – Klaus Theo Brenner Stadtarchitektur | Brenner Krohm and Partners Architects

Satisfaction does not come from speed, but from conscious enjoyment and connection to the environment. Children can move around independently, take part in leisure activities and go to school without constant adult supervision. Neighbours and teachers contribute to social control, which creates a feeling of security. The proximity to infrastructure allows for more relaxed daily routines: shopping, work and leisure activities are accessible on foot or by bicycle, without long journeys or commuting times.

After 6 p.m., night-time peace and quiet prevails, and open windows are no problem. Compared to the big city, small towns offer a less hectic, more harmonious life with a higher quality of life. Living in a small town allows for a conscious decision to slow down, enjoy proximity and community.

Highbrow cultural offerings such as opera or ballet are lacking, but these are not usually enjoyed on a regular basis anyway. Instead, the focus is on social interaction and quality of life through modern working models, such as location-independent working and the integration of work and leisure.



The cooperative promotes an active neighbourhood culture through communal spaces, meeting areas and community gardens. These spaces offer social contact, especially for older residents, and prevent anonymity and isolation. The design of open spaces supports this development, while the cooperative encourages its members to participate and build community in order to take ownership of their living environment.

The cooperative's representative assembly allows direct influence on its policies and ensures that funds collected are reinvested in the portfolio, resulting in a high level of renovation and expansion. Unlike private investors, the cooperative offers security and continuity, with rent adjustments only in cases of absolute necessity.

The cooperative participates in the International Building Exhibition (IBA34) in order to set important topics for the city and develop sustainable projects. Rathenow offers a range of cultural activities that meet the needs of the population, with younger target groups in particular being addressed through participatory cultural education programmes.



Conversion Project on Goethestrasse, Gründerzeit District, Rathenow (SWA Innovation Studio)

Culture in Rathenow is undergoing change and becoming increasingly innovative, with new formats and events enriching public life. The Optikpark and the **Kulturzentrum** (Cultural Centre) attract visitors from outside the city and offer an interesting range of activities that combine nature and culture.

The Optikpark in particular attracts guests from all over Germany, and events such as the nature experience with culture appeal to city dwellers. Rathenow also offers a variety of tourist attractions and serves as an ideal starting point for exploring nature.

The city combines culture, nature and regional specialties such as being the **First City of Optics**. Participants travel to Rathenow from different regions for events such as the Dragon Boat Cup and the Long Night of Optics.

These events not only promote sporting competition, but also social interaction and the building of friendships. In a smaller town like Rathenow, it is advantageous that citizens can implement their ideas more quickly, in contrast to large cities with bureaucratic, organisational and structural hurdles. Close cooperation and personal commitment contribute to a high level of well-being. In addition, familiarity and networking with local actors enable efficient implementation.

Cultural Center, Kulturzentrum Rathenow



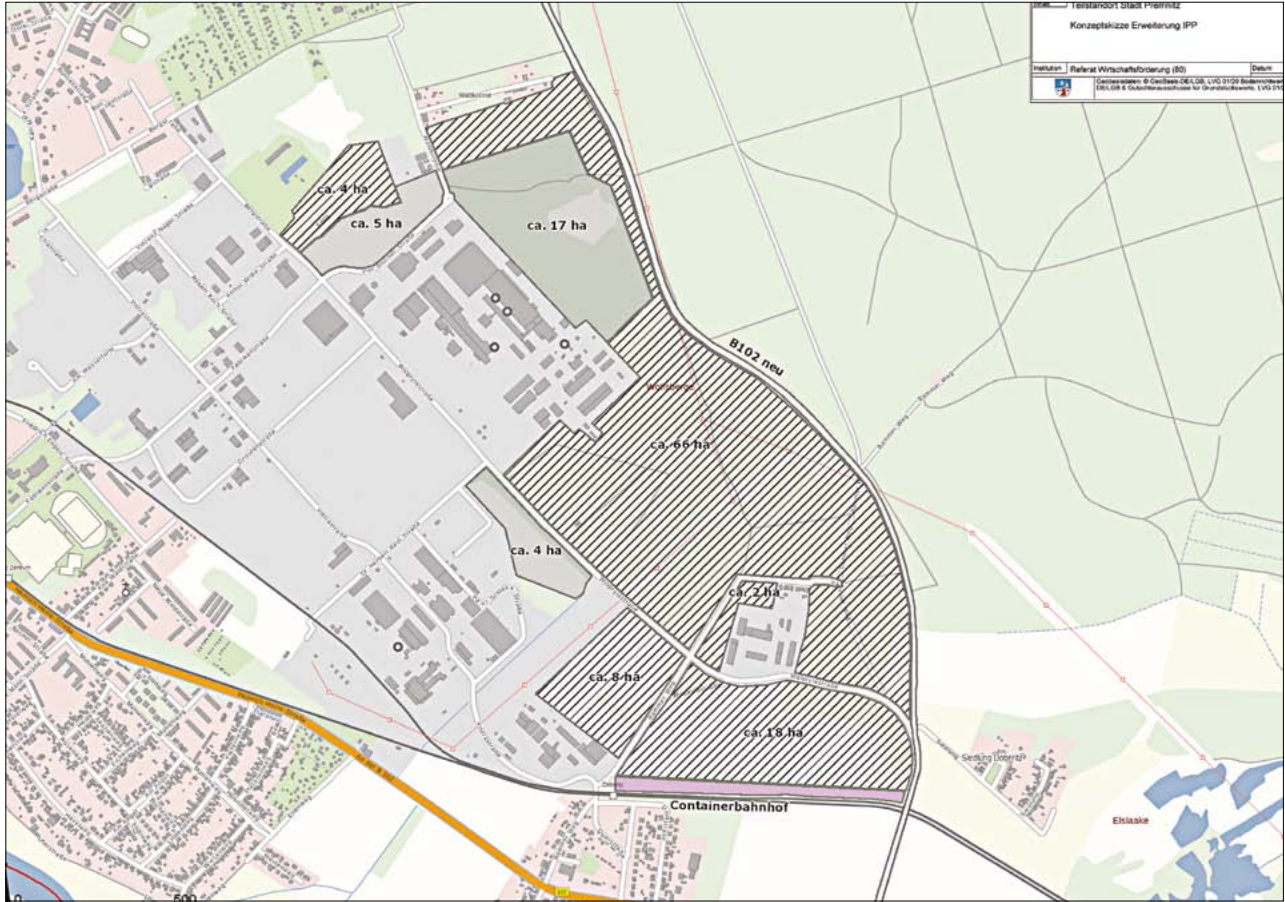
Optical Park, Rathenow



Above: Conversion Project, Goethestrasse, conversion of a WBS 70 slab in the Gründerzeit District, Rathenow, Client RWG Rathenow, Architecture (SWA Innovation Studio)

Dragon Boat Race, Rathenow (Uwe Hoffmann)





Expansion of the Premnitz Commercial and Industrial Park

Ex Occidente Lux in the Havelland

Summary by Sebastian Wagner

The Havelland is one of eight districts in Brandenburg neighbouring Berlin. Like these, it forms part of Berlin's 'affluent suburbs' in the eastern Havelland. In contrast, the western Havelland is predominantly rural. The district has a dominant west-east orientation and therefore two state borders, namely with Saxony-Anhalt and Berlin.

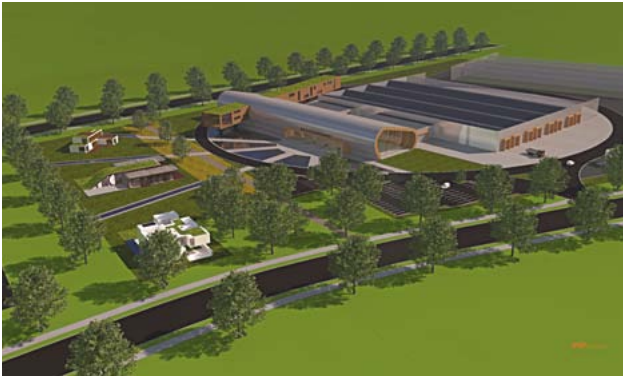
If you take the RE 4 train to Rathenow from Berlin Central Station and pass through the forest near Groß Behnitz on the Lehrter Bahn railway line, you enter another world: 'Before' you see the outskirts of the metropolis from the train window, "after" you see pure rural countryside. It is not until you reach Rathenow that you return to 'The City', albeit on a smaller scale.

The same applies to the B 5 westbound: after Berliner Heerstraße, it is still a four-lane quasi-motorway, crossing the western A 10 at the Wustermark freight transport centre, but then narrows to two lanes as the Nauener Südtangente and finally becomes a tree-lined two-lane road. From Ribbeck onwards, the B 5 is a 'country road'. This structural east-west divide in the Havelland region is also reflected in its economic strength.

The eastern Havelland region enjoys a high concentration of commercial and industrial activity and – unsurprisingly – a low unemployment rate of less than 5%, almost on a par with southern Germany. In Western Havelland, unemployment remains stubbornly above 10%.

The district of Havelland is not willing to accept this 'uneven' situation and has joined forces with the municipality of Milower Land and the town of Premnitz to bring high-quality businesses and promising industries to western Havelland. This requires settlement areas.

With the 'Western Havelland Commercial and Industrial Hub', the three partners want to create such opportunities: Premnitz as a sub-location and extension of the industrial park. A **Feasibility Study** for the hub by the Potsdam-based planning office IPG will examine whether such ambitions are realistic. Initial feedback from companies involved in large-scale prefabricated construction has been positive. The results of the feasibility study are expected to be available in December 2025.



Design of a Sustainable Commercial and Industrial Park (SWA Group International)

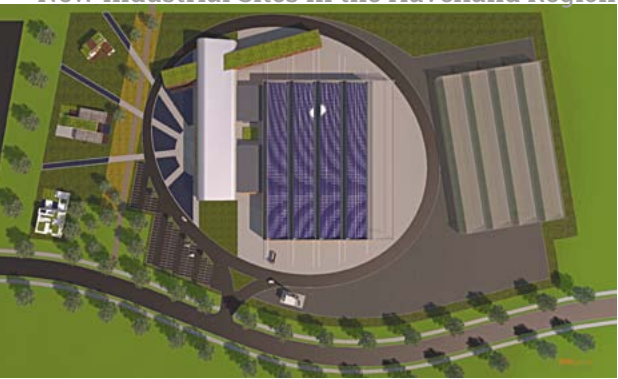
The three partners are looking far beyond the state border to Stendal and Magdeburg, the up-and-coming capital of Saxony-Anhalt and future Intel City. With the completion of the A 14 motorway between the A 24 and A 2, the Western Havelland region will enjoy unprecedented accessibility in just a few years. Rail transport is not being neglected either: the focus is on the nearby Stendal railway junction, the planned multi-track expansion of the Lehrter Bahn railway and the development of the sites by rail.

The initiative to aggressively position Western Havelland as a business location comes at the right time – despite the economic downturn and the postponement, and possibly permanent cancellation, of Intel's move to the area thanks to Trump. Or is it precisely because of this?

In Brandenburg, there has been a shortage of commercial and industrial sites since Tesla arrived, if not before. Well-developed sites of 20 hectares or more are in demand from manufacturing companies throughout Germany and indeed Europe. The three partners can choose their prospective customers. It remains to be hoped that the 'Western Havelland commercial and industrial hub' will be a success. '

Success' here means authentically demonstrating **21st-century manufacturing**: sustainable, climate-neutral manufacturing techniques and end products, goods received and shipped by rail wherever possible, employees who can live well on their wages, do not have to commute long distances (short distances between home and work), and can travel to and from work using eco-friendly modes of transport (train/bus/bicycle/on foot).

The urban development **Master Plans** for the sites may meet all these requirements, and the buildings constructed there even more so. Commercial and industrial architecture is 'beautiful' not so much because of its mere appearance, but rather because it reveals how it meets the aforementioned requirements. In this respect, the 'Western Havelland Commercial and Industrial hub' can serve as a model for Berlin. After all, it only takes a good hour by train to reach the sites.



The Master Plans by Klaus Theo Brenner and Sebastian Wagner were presented to the public in two exhibitions, to the municipal committees and to Berlin. There, in line with IBA 34, they are considering the integration of such areas as a 'construction hut' for the possible synergies and the associated urban and spatial development of Premnitz, Milower Land and Rathenow.

There, in line with **IBA 34**, they are considering the integration of such areas as a 'Construction Hut' for the possible synergies and associated urban and spatial development of Premnitz, Milower Land and Rathenow. There is scope here to implement the criteria of excellence of an international building exhibition.

Exciting in this context is the decision by Hasso Plattner, who has already established the Hasso Plattner Institute as an IT research facility in Brandenburg's state capital. Now, following the decline of the scientific structure in the USA, he wants to renovate the former state parliament building on the Brauhausberg above the city centre and turn it into an extended campus of the University of Potsdam with new buildings.

With its proximity to Potsdam, its expansion areas and production facilities, the Havelland region is ideally suited to become a **Technology Hub** for Brandenburg.



Construction Progress | Kreativ Quartier Potsdam 08/2025 (Image Benjamin Maltry)



Potsdam Creative Quarter

Christopher Weiß, Architect and Project Developer

Kreativ Quartier Potsdam – a Laboratory for Ideas, a Driving Force for the City and a Model for Germany

Potsdam is a city with an eventful history, characterised by royal splendour, Prussian discipline and a rich cultural landscape. But since 2019, a new chapter has been unfolding here on the site of the old fire station: the Kreativ Quartier Potsdam. It is a place that is rethinking and reshaping the future of the cultural and creative industries in Brandenburg's capital. With a usable area of around 25,000 square metres, a unique mix of uses, affordable rents and high process quality, the Creative Quarter Potsdam is setting standards – not only for Potsdam, but also for other cities in Germany.

The Importance of the cultural and creative Industries – a Driver of Innovation and Urban Development

The cultural and creative industries are one of the most dynamic sectors of the German economy and comprise eleven

sub-markets – from architecture, design, art, music, literature, film, broadcasting, performing arts, software/games and press to advertising. The industry is also an important economic factor in Potsdam: the city is home to renowned universities such as the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF and the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences with its design and architecture courses. Its proximity to Berlin, the film and media landscape of Babelsberg and its high quality of life make Potsdam a magnet for creative people, start-ups and cultural professionals. Creative people are not only employers and taxpayers, but also drivers of innovation who pick up on social trends, adapt new technologies and promote cultural diversity. They revitalise neighbourhoods, create identity and make a decisive contribution to the attractiveness and sustainability of a city. However, the demand for affordable, flexible and communal workspaces is growing steadily – and this is exactly where the Kreativ Quartier Potsdam comes in.

From Idea to Neighbourhood: Origins and Vision

The idea for the Creative Quarter was born in 2017, when the city of Potsdam, together with the local creative scene, was looking for ways to meet the need for spaces for art, culture and creative work. The site of the old fire station, centrally located between Plantage and Werner-Seelenbinder-Straße, offered the ideal starting point. Following a public tendering process as a concept procedure, the project developer Glockenweiß GmbH prevailed with its innovative concept. The urban design was created by the renowned architectural firm MVRDV, which, together with KVL Bauconsult, Wilfried Lambert and Tim Renner, designed an urban 'village': a mixture of perimeter block development and detached buildings, interspersed with public paths, courtyards and green roof landscapes.

Mix of Uses: Diversity as a Programme

The Creative Quarter Potsdam sees itself as an open ecosystem for the cultural and creative industries. Covering around 25,000 square metres, it will comprise:

- 16,000 square metres for the cultural and creative industries:

Above
Total ensemble
Left
Langer Stall
Right
Lantern & Quartiersplatz,
Kreativ Quartier Potsdam
(3D visualisations (c) & MICA)



studios, offices, workshops, music rehearsal rooms, exhibition spaces, event rooms and co-working spaces.

- Commercial and gastronomic areas: cafés, restaurants, small shops and service providers will bring life to the quarter.
- Social infrastructure: apartments for students and creative professionals, communal areas and green open spaces.
- Flexible spaces: the buildings are designed to be modular, so that rooms can be adapted to changing needs – from individual offices to open studios and event spaces.

The mix has been deliberately chosen: it promotes synergies between the various disciplines, enabling cooperation, exchange and mutual inspiration. The ground floor areas are open plan, with large glass fronts that allow a glimpse of the creative work going on inside.

Affordable rents: space for everyone

A central concern of the project is the creation of affordable space for creative professionals. Half of the space for the cultural and creative industries is rent-controlled. Small



Construction Progress | View from the Academy towards the Tower of the Garrison Church | Kreativ Quartier Potsdam 06/2025 (Image Benjamin Maltry)

units under 100 square metres are rented from £5.70 per square metre (net cold), larger ones from £12.90. These favourable conditions are cross-subsidised by renting the remaining space at market rates. This creates a socially diverse neighbourhood that offers space for young creative people, start-ups and non-profit initiatives as well as established companies. The price-controlled rents are an important contribution to preventing creative actors from being displaced by rising rents – a problem that can be observed in many German cities.

Participation and Process Quality: Having a Say, Helping to Shape, Helping to Decide

The Kreativ Quartier Potsdam is a model project for cooperative urban development. From the outset, future users, representatives of the creative industries, city administration, politicians and the owners were involved in the planning. An independent advisory board consisting of players from the local creative scene accompanies the process, develops criteria for the allocation of rent-controlled spaces and decides on the selection of tenants. The advisory board will remain active even after completion and will help shape the content of the quarter – for example, by selecting exhi-

bitions, art events or other events. It is headed by cultural manager Doreen Löwe.

The process of finding a name for the quarter was participatory: citizens, creative professionals and residents were able to contribute their ideas. Thus, the 'Alte Feuerwache' became the 'Kreativ Quartier Potsdam' – a name that signals openness, diversity and innovative strength. Temporary uses: creative experiments as a prelude

Even before construction work began in earnest, the area was opened up for creative interim uses. Artists, initiatives and associations used the space for performances and concerts. One highlight was the 'Playlist for Brandenburg' campaign, in which musicians from the region presented their favourite songs, creating a musical cross-section of Brandenburg's cultural landscape.

These interim uses are more than just a stopgap – they are part of the concept: they create visibility, promote networking and make the neighbourhood a meeting place for the creative community even in its early stages.



Construction Progress | View from the Rack and the Orangery towards St. Nikolai Church | Kreativ Quartier Potsdam 06/2025 (Image Benjamin Maltry)

Process Quality: Transparency, Sustainability and Innovation

The development of the Potsdam Creative Quarter is characterised by high process quality. Transparent decision-making processes, regular information events, open workshops and participatory formats ensure that the interests of users are at the centre of attention. Sustainability is a central theme: the buildings are constructed according to the latest energy standards, with green roofs, rainwater harvesting and sustainable building materials. Common areas create a pleasant atmosphere and promote social interaction. The column-based construction method makes it possible to respond to changing needs – for example, by converting offices into studios or temporarily using spaces for events. This keeps the quarter flexible and future-proof.

Significance for Potsdam: Exemplary Urban Development

The Creative Quarter is much more than a real estate project for Potsdam. It is a key component of urban development that strengthens the local creative scene, retains talent and promotes innovation. The combination of work, culture,

education and social life creates an urban ecosystem that sustainably improves the quality of life in the city.

The quarter helps to position Potsdam as an attractive location for creative professionals, start-ups and companies. It creates spaces for encounters, exchange and cooperation – and thus the basis for new ideas, projects and business models. The openness, the diversity of uses, the affordable rents and the consistent involvement of creative people make the Potsdam model interesting nationwide. Radiance beyond the city limits: a role model for other cities

The Creative Quarter Potsdam is already being perceived as a model by other cities. Representatives from Heidelberg, Munich and other municipalities have learned about the operating model and processes and are seeking dialogue in order to develop their own creative quarters. The combination of mixed use, affordable rents, participation and sustainable urban development is considered groundbreaking.

Potsdam shows how cities can remain sustainable and liveable through cooperative processes, social diversity and the promotion of creative, potential can remain sustainable and liveable.



Construction Progress View of Office Space in the Orangery before Tenant fit-out begins | Kreativ Quatier Potsdam 06/2025 (Image Benjamin Maltry)

The Creative Quarter is a laboratory for social change, a driver of innovation and a catalyst for urban development – far beyond the borders of Brandenburg.

Networking, Cooperation and Future Prospects

Another important aspect of the Creative Quarter is the targeted promotion of cooperation and networks. Regular events, joint projects and open formats create a creative milieu that fosters innovation and increases the visibility of the players involved. The proximity to universities, research institutions and companies enables interdisciplinary collaboration – for example, between designers and software developers, artists and scientists, or start-ups and established companies.

The quarter sees itself as an open space for learning and experimentation, where new forms of work, digital technologies and sustainable production methods can be tested. **Workshops, Hackathons, Exhibitions and Festivals** bring together a wide variety of people and promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and ideas. The integration of educational institutions, for example through cooperation with schools and universities, is part of the concept and ensures that young talent is involved. The future prospects for the Creative Quarter are promising.

Upon completion in summer 2026, the quarter will become the central hub for the creative scene in Potsdam and the surrounding region.

Creative Quarter Potsdam as a Future Laboratory for Urban Development

The Creative Quarter Potsdam is an outstanding example of innovative urban development that focuses on participation, diversity and social responsibility. It offers space for creative work, cultural exchange and social engagement – thus laying the foundation for a vibrant, sustainable city. The combination of mixed use, affordable rents, sustainable architecture and cooperative processes makes the quarter a model for other cities.

The active involvement of the creative scene, the promotion of networks and openness to new ideas are creating an urban ecosystem that extends far beyond Potsdam. The Creative Quarter is not just a place, but a laboratory for social change, a driver of innovation and a catalyst for the urban development of tomorrow.



View of the Entrance Area of the Long Stable | Kreativ Quatier Potsdam 06/2025 (3D visualisations (c) & MICA)

With the completion of the quarter, Potsdam will gain a new beacon of the creative industry that attracts talent, promotes innovation and further strengthens the city as an attractive location for culture and business. The Creative Quarter Potsdam is thus an example of a city that is actively shaping its future – together, creatively and sustainably.



Brauhausstrasse, Rathenow – View of the Brewery, Collage (SWA Innovation Studio)

Gründerzeit Rathenow

BrauLab | Transformation

Sebastian Wagner

One of the locations for developing a mission statement in Rathenow is parts of the Gründerzeit district. The focus here is particularly on Goethe Strasse. Adjacent vacant properties such as the former brewery in Grosse Hagen Strasse are being considered, as well as the optimisation of existing RWG buildings, in this case Goethestr. 79–81/Waldemar Strasse 1, and individual development approaches by residents of the district. The location plays a special role in the development, as it is a meeting point for different time clusters that have not yet been further developed, either architecturally or in terms of urban planning.

Quarter Development

The former brewery, surrounded by Goethe Strasse, Grosse Hagen Strasse and Brauerei Strasse, is in free fall due to its chequered history and long years of vacancy; due to the lack of sensitive and targeted urban planning. As a result, the city and its citizens have already lost many historic buildings that contributed to the city's identity, such as the officers' mess, the ROW Rathenower Optische Werke, and others. The conversion of the brewery into an urban quarter is a step in

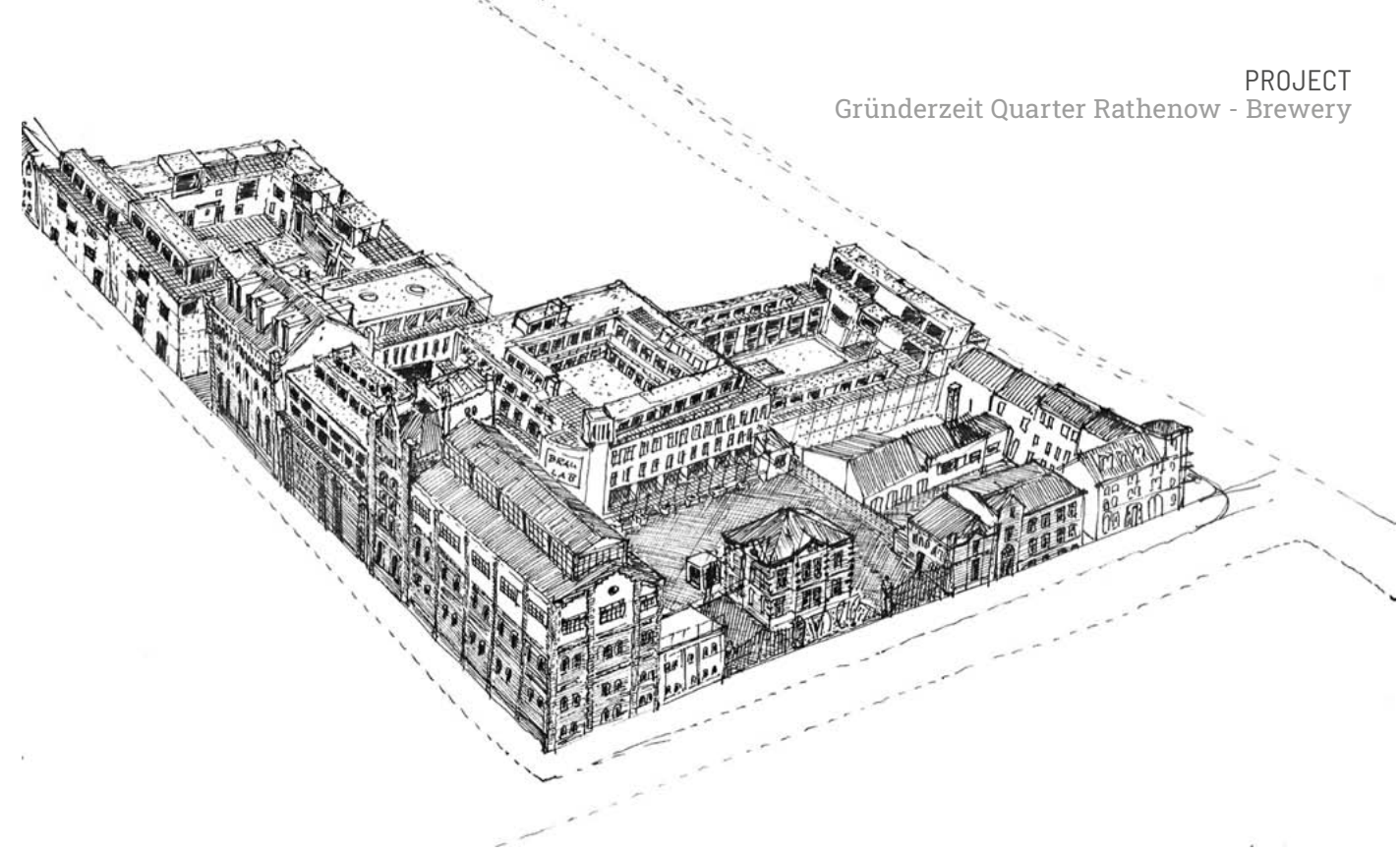
the necessary and right direction. The complex is suitable for the creation of a modern urban quarter in a historic setting with up to 100 flats, a nursery, a medical centre, neighbourhood shops and a café, restaurants, a bicycle hotel and high-quality recreational facilities in six courtyards. Particular emphasis is placed on public interaction in the neighbourhood. Each courtyard has its own identity, created from its history.

Three of the courtyards are inviting places for city residents to spend time.

Three of the courtyards are characterised by their private nature.

Quartier Hof Concept

The design divides the neighbourhood into six different courtyards, each with its own identity. A distinction can be made between two types: public and private courtyards.



Top: BrauLab Design Sketch (Sebastian Wagner) | BottomLeft: Gründerzeit Quarter in Rathenow | Bottom right: Gründerzeit Quarter in the Brewery Area

Public Courtyards

Health and prevention facilities, café, tea and 'Farm Shop', restaurants and dining kitchen, boutique hotel, wellness and fitness, co-working and co-living, and e-bike charging station. Opposite the neighbourhood is another courtyard, separated from the street by a multi-storey car park. This courtyard has a nursery and children's playground, and on the street there is a car park with a vertical playground.

Private Courtyards

The other courtyards are private, giving residents the opportunity to connect the indoor and outdoor spaces without being disturbed by the public. There are water features, tenant gardens, balcony terraces and roof gardens.

'Farm Shop' | Regional Products

The 'Farm Shop' plays an important role in the distribution of local products. The population's food supply is mainly provided by discounters and supermarkets. The brewery's farm shop serves to strengthen and establish regional food products, such as those from the Albertinenhof, where healthy eating and holistic lifestyles form the basis of the concept. Around the historic three-sided farmstead, vegetables are cultivated at the Albertinenhof in an environmentally friendly manner, without the use of pesticides and with minimal use of soil-compacting machinery.

Inspiration

When the old is carried into the new world, continuity is created. When it is torn down, a part of ourselves is lost. If we leave it alone, it collapses. The city is the extended organism of humankind itself and reflects our own status quo. Healing comes through inspiration and the resulting models.

Architecture Identity

In addition to the **Water City Aspect** (the brewery stands on six springs) and adjacent parts of the Gründerzeit district, the old town – an island with its waterfront locations – is within walking distance, thus enhancing the quality of life in the district. The identity of the brewery is characterised by its stylistic pluralism, which is distinguished by the coexistence of classicism and romanticism. Like the brick industry, the brewery was part of social development in Rathenow, an expression of the growing city and the prosperity associated with it. The struggle for a new use is the struggle between **Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow**.





Braulab Courtyards

Public

Courtyard 1 – Tuscan courtyard
The ensemble of the villa and the surrounding buildings creates the character of an Italian piazza with a café.

Courtyard 2 – Farm shop | Recharge
A semi-covered glass courtyard passage connects the public passageway with all public areas such as the multifunctional hall, farm shop and brewhouse.

Courtyard 6 – Children's courtyard
A garden courtyard with a nursery and school rooms.

Semi-public

Courtyard 4 – Goethe's courtyard garden
Living next to a courtyard passageway leading directly to the wellness area of the old brewery cellars.

Private courtyards

Courtyard 3 – Tropical courtyard garden
Above the vaulted cellars, a terraced residential courtyard with a central water feature is being created.

Courtyard 5 – Hanging gardens
Holistic courtyard and façade gardens with many private niches for residents.



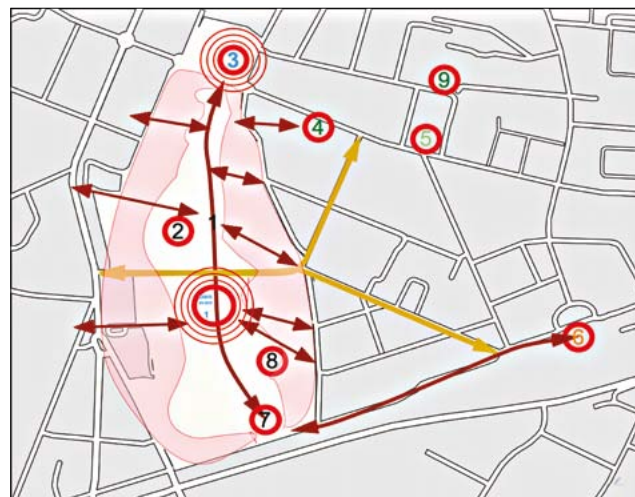
BrauLab Yard 4 – Goethe's Court Garden (Sebastian Wagner, Christopher Weiß)



BrauLab Yard 2 Farm Shop | Recharge (Sebastian Wagner)

BrauLab Yard 5 Hanging Gardens (Sebastian Wagner)





Körgraben | Location in Rathenow

Körgraben Rathenow

Masterplan

Working Group | Klaus Theo Brenner Stadtarchitektur | Sebastian Wagner

A masterplan is an overall urban planning perspective and guideline for the coming years. It is an urban planning navigation aid and can be understood as a 'script' for the future development of the city. At the same time, it provides a framework for the implementation of individual measures. The masterplan sets out important objectives for the future of the city.

With regard to Rathenow, the planning community SWA Group International | Sebastian Wagner and Klaus Theo Brenner Stadtarchitektur, Brenner Krohm und Partner Architekten, together with urban planner Jens Hubald, managing director of RWG, addressed this topic and considered key areas of focus. The following locations were identified for Rathenow: Magazininsel – Altstadtinsel – Stadtgraben – Gründerzeitviertel – Körgraben, and Körgraben was seen as an ideal basis for heterotopic urban development due to its urban planning conditions.

Körgraben | Young People build their own Skate Park



Legend (left)

- 1 Possible Museum Location
OIMR Event
- 2 Rathenow riding arena
- 3 Rathenow cultural centre
- 4 Town hall
- 5 District office
- 6 Railway station
- 7 Körgraben entrance
- 8 Launepark

Legend (right)

- 1 Rideplatz
- 2 Space for city villas
- 3 Körgraben centre
- 4 Launepark
- 5 Possible heterotopic interventions
Block and city edge
- 6 Possible heterotopic interventions
A third location, e.g. a
museum pavilion
- 7 KWR expansion areas
- 8 Possible heterotopic interventions
City edge

The Körgraben

Lowlands stretch from the city forest across Wolzensee lake from the natural area to the centre of the city, where they form a central, valuable green space in connection with water along the city canal. It is a fresh air corridor, a cold island with an effective impact on the city's climate in the midst of compactly built-up neighbourhoods, and a rainwater reservoir in large parts of untouched nature.

The Körgraben is an urban planning gem that offers residents an enhanced quality of life thanks to its versatility. The experience value must be improved by better connecting the path structure with each other and with the surrounding fragmented uses.

A 'city edge' with high-quality, permeable building structures can mediate between the compact city and green space, thus creating something new.

The Masterplan

The Körgraben Masterplan serves to provide the city of Rathenow with a qualified instrument for applying to participate in IBA 34. A more in-depth look was taken on 29 October 2024 in the workshop on the topic of **Museum | Tourism | Health**, and the central project was the **OIMR event** – the further development of the 'Optik Industrie Museum Rathenow' into a multifunctional museum for the future at Körgraben.





Above: Sunset on the Waterfront Promenade
 Right: Visualisation of the City Canal

New Premnitz Centre
Masterplan
 Sebastian Wagner Text and Images



The draft masterplan for the centre of the water city of Premnitz emerged from the exhibition event **Welten - Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten** (Connecting Worlds | Journeys through Dreams and Realities) and the associated development of a mission statement for the region. It became clear here that the establishment and development of new forms of production and work in the future industrial park will lead to higher living standards and thus to a change in the existing city. High-quality housing, living and working in an urban natural landscape are the special attractions that make Premnitz appealing to many people from all federal states.

The masterplan refers to a development over the next 25 years, whereby the waterfront could be implemented within the next 10 years as part of an IBA 34 Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Region Satellite. This could provide the initial spark for the development of the city centre. In this 10-year process, the first step would be to develop the water | city | space with five new wooden residential blocks. From there, the axis already developed in the BUGA 2015 leads to the **Commerce | Industry | Park**, which in its further development also creates densifying infrastructures that allow for tourism, supply, culture and city life (E02).

The **City Canal** envisaged in the master plan brings the qualities of waterfront living to the city (E03), while the third development axis leads from the sports field towards the water and education around the school is expanded (E05).

Development Steps for the City of Premnitz
City Centre and Periphery

The masterplan will also have an impact on urban development within the greater urban area. It can be assumed that the revitalisation of industrial areas will be accelerated if Premnitz has high-quality residential and living spaces to offer. These spaces must be developed with particular attention so that a symbiosis between nature and urban space can emerge.

See graphic representation of development stages:

- Development stages within the new centre of Premnitz
- E 1 Development cycle: waterfront
 - E 2 Development axis: waterfront – commercial and industrial park
 - E 3 Development axis: city canal
 - E 4 Development axis: city park
 - E 5 Development: school centre

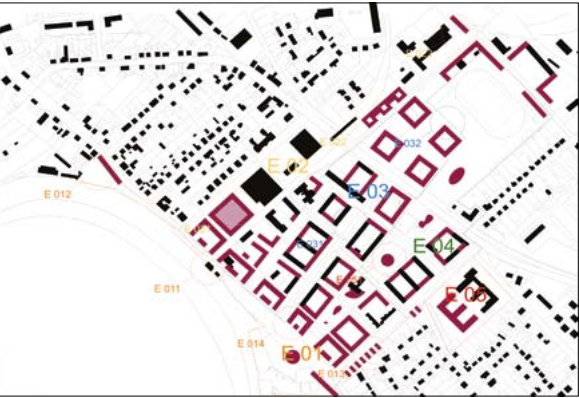
- Development stages within the urban area of Premnitz
- E 1.1 Creation of new industrial areas, container terminal and rail connection to seaports
 - E 1.2 Creation of a city centre through heterotopic¹⁾ Development stages
 - E 2.2 High-quality living in the Havel nature and water area.

1) '...The term heterotopia refers to the foreign, the special, the other, which nestles within the context of a prevailing normality. The urban planning thesis that results from this is that of the limited identities of (new) urban districts in contrast to their surroundings and an image of a city of discontinuity...' Klaus Theo Brenner



PROJECT
 Masterplan New Premnitz Centre

Design of the Waterfront with Block Formation in prefabricated Timber Construction, a Third Place' for Encounters and the local Boat Harbour.



Top: Development Stages within the New Centre | Premnitz
 Bottom right: Wooden Apartment Block Grid 2.70 m x 2.70 m
 Bottom: Development Stages within the Premnitz Urban Area



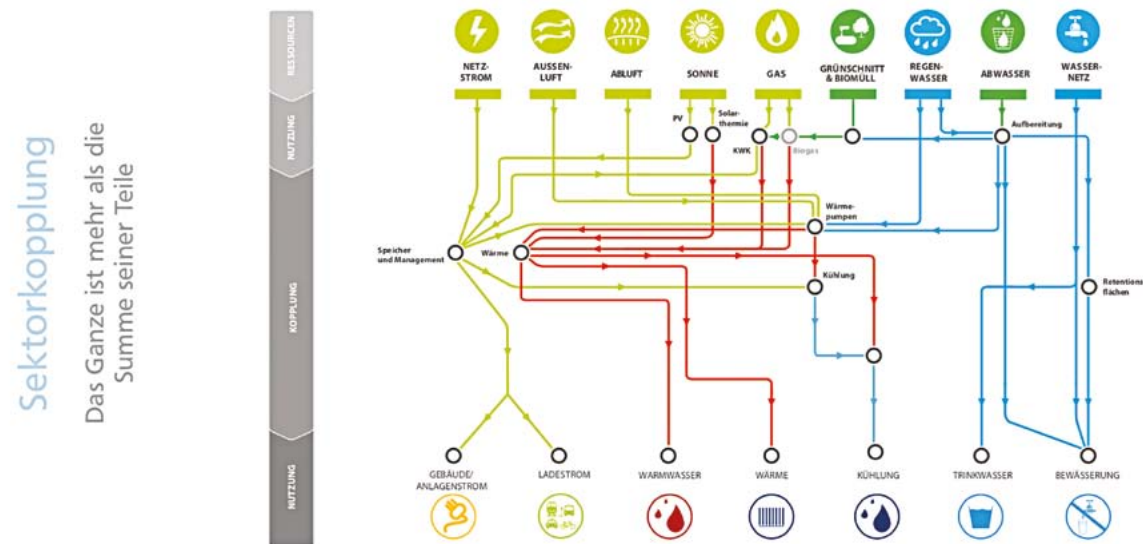
"...The opportunity to launch flagship projects for IBA 34, the International Building Exhibition Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Region, in order to increase its appeal beyond the city limits, as can currently be seen in the "Neue Mitte Premnitz" exhibition, is a vision for the entire Westhavelland region. Together with the district and the neighbouring municipalities, it is a way of drawing attention to our region and participating in it, regardless of the questions that remain unanswered. The fact that the Premnitz housing association and the housing cooperative are working together here is good and very important..."

Thomas Rosenberg,
 Mayor of Premnitz



- Inventory
- Street
- Sealed Surface
- Supplementary Buildings | Heterotopes
- Private Green Spaces
- Public Green Spaces
- Urban Beach
- Water Areas





Sector coupling (Gartenfeld Manifesto)

Infrastructure as a meaningful urban feature

Premnitz City Canal

Harald Kraft | Sebastian Wagner

The city canal in Premnitz's new centre is a structure that serves as urban furniture, infrastructure and an ecological feature. It is much more than a watercourse – it symbolises a new relationship between technology, the city and nature.

Formally designed as an open waterway running through the neighbourhood, the city canal has an impact on several levels: it is an aesthetic urban structure that shapes and enhances the public space. Its open design invites people to touch, linger and interact – water becomes visible, tangible and comprehensible again.

At the same time, the canal is a highly functional infrastructure element. As a cascading water purification system, it regulates the rainwater balance in the neighbourhood, filtering and circulating excess water – without any external energy input. It uses excess water from the Havel river instead of extracting resources. The city canal is intended to contribute to a closed, local water cycle – a principle that is gaining new relevance in times of increasing droughts and heavy rainfall (precipitation runoff is not discharged into the Havel, but stored in the canal and reused, thus contributing to flood protection).

In addition, the canal fulfils climatic functions: It humidifies the ambient air, lowers the local temperature and contributes to air purification. This makes it a central microclimate regulator that brings not only ecological but also health benefits to the urban space.

The city canal is an example of the fusion of architecture, hydraulic engineering and environmental technology into a social and sensory experience space. It makes infrastructure visible – and thus also comprehensible – as a common good.

At a time when cities are increasingly seeking resilience and meaning, the city canal is becoming a model for integrative urban design that harmonises beauty, technology and responsibility.

"The city canal is much more than a technical structure – it is a meaningful urban entity. As an open, visible element in public space, it combines aesthetics and function: it purifies air and water, cools the microclimate, regulates the rainwater balance and brings ecological infrastructure to life. With its cascading structure, the canal becomes a symbol of integrative urban development that brings technology, nature and community into a new balance." –

Sebastian Wagner on the design of the city canal in Premnitz

Integral
(Manifest Gartenfeld)



Premnitz Master Plan | Key Elements for Integrated Water Management (Harald Kraft, Sebastian Wagner)

The New Centre of Premnitz – A Neighbourhood as an Operating Model for the Urban Future

The focus is on the idea of cross-sector neighbourhood management, in which architecture, infrastructure and participation are consistently conceived and integrated into operations.

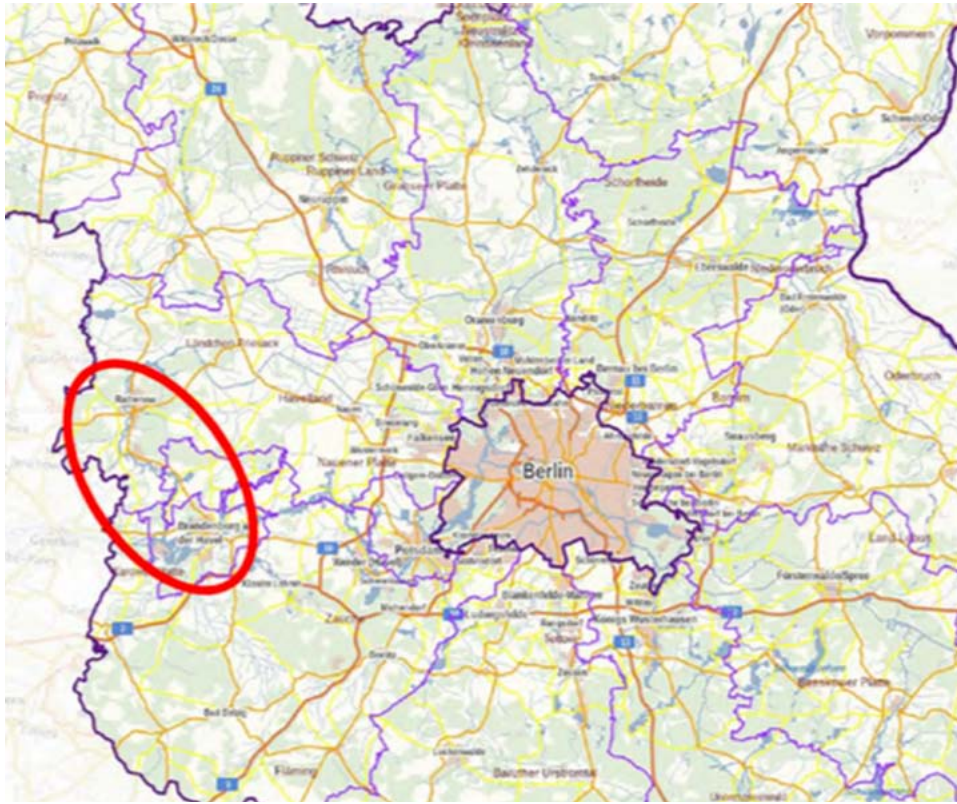
The central element is the establishment of Quartierswerk GmbH – a new type of operating unit in the form of a modern municipal utility company. It not only takes on traditional tasks such as energy supply, maintenance and administration, but also acts as a central control system for all infrastructure services: from mobility and water management to logistics and digitalisation. This form of sector coupling enables efficient, cost-effective and resource-saving supply while creating an easily accessible service platform for all residents.

Quartierswerk GmbH is supported by the municipal Premnitzer Wohnungsbaugesellschaft (PWG), the Regionale Wohnungsbau-genossenschaft (RWG) and other infrastructure and planning partners. Their capital shares are based on the extent of their investments in the jointly used neighbourhood infrastructure. In addition, a user and owner cooperative is being established, which, as an open participatory structure, enables active involvement of the neighbourhood community – a democratic foundation for joint economic activity and social cohesion. The conceptual development was carried out by the SWA Innovation Studio under the direction of Dipl.-Ing. Arch. Sebastian Wagner in collaboration with water engineer Dipl.-Ing. Harald Kraft and his experience from co-developing an integrated

water and energy management system. The starting point was the question of how urban infrastructures can be architecturally and operationally interlinked in such a way that they create synergies instead of blocking each other. The result is an integrated master plan that understands mobility, energy, water and digitalisation not as individual systems, but as interlocking components of an urban ecosystem.

The **Neue Mitte Premnitz** is thus becoming a real-world laboratory for resilient urban development – ecologically sustainable, economically resilient and socially inclusive. Architecture is not understood here as an isolated design element, but as part of a systemic infrastructure dialogue. The cross-sector management structure, which is supported by Quartierswerk GmbH and the cooperative, is scalable and adaptable – and thus provides a transferable model for other municipalities that want to make their urban development sustainable.

Premnitz shows that urban transformation is successful when technical infrastructure, architectural quality and social participation are not planned separately, but operated together.



Studio 1 – The Westhavelland Economic Region in the Context of IBA 34 | Summary

Rathenow | Premnitz | Milower Land | Brandenburg adH

Julia Feier, Nanni Grau, Jens Hubald, Sebastian Wagner, Christopher Weiß, Deborah Weiss

In the event and exhibition series 'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten' (Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities), models were created and displayed during the exhibitions in Rathenow and Premnitz and the associated events, which are suitable for identifying themes and locations for IBA34 correspondence locations.

Representatives of the Berlin Senate administration visited the region and its towns and established exchanges at the municipal level. The mayors of Premnitz, Rathenow, Milower Land, Wiesenburg and Lindow have already expressed their interest in the IBA34 and in hosting it locally in writing.

Documents from the Berlin Senate^{1]} reflect the interest in jointly hosting the IBA Metropolitan Region Berlin Brandenburg:

'...The coalition will quickly develop a concept for holding an International Building Exhibition in the Berlin Brandenburg metropolitan region and then discuss and refine it with the urban community...'

1] Berliner Koalitionsvertrag und Präsentationen IBA Stabstelle Stand 04.2024

Work has already begun and documents point to the developing process:

"...Study areas and locations for the IBA 2034-37
On the one hand, several potential project areas are being identified for the IBA 2034-37 on the basis of quick checks; on the other hand, other areas can apply to participate in the IBA as 'corresponding locations' as long as IBA themes and criteria are met. These locations may also be outside the urban area of Berlin...
...The Senate intends to address the implementation of the IBA in the fourth quarter of 2025 and then submit it to the House of Representatives for information..."^{2]}

'...Impact on cooperation with the state of Brandenburg: The implementation of the IBA offers an opportunity for cooperation between the states of Berlin and Brandenburg, the Berlin districts and municipalities in the region...'^{3]}

2] Bericht SenStadt II
Stand 17.02.2025

3] Bericht SenStadt II
Stand 17.02.2025

Milestones Rathenow

10.000 v. Chr	12. Jahrhundert	1216	1801	1815	1883	1928	1949 - 53
Settlement Hunters Gatherers	Basilica	Certificate Rathenow	Dunker Optical Industry	Optical Industry County Town	County Office	Bauhaus Estate Otto Haesler	Brachymedial Telescope
1969	2002	2006	2013	2015	2018	2024	2034
World Time Clock	Kirchberg Bridge	State Garden Show	City of Optics	Federal Garden Show Weinberg Bridge	Rideplatz	IBA 34 Metropolitan Region Berlin Brandenburg Landscape City Havelland Heterotopia Rathenow	

Identities Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow

Yesterday	Mechanics	Today	Mechatronics	Tomorrow	Digital and AI	Masterplan	Fusion
Identities come from Yesterday	Military Optics Technology	They form the basis for today	Tourism Infrastructure Water and Land	Innovations create Tomorrow	Co-working 3D printing Telemedicine	The Masterplan can bridge the Times	networked energy-efficient demand-oriented

The economic region of West Brandenburg was examined in an accompanying study entitled Rathenow-Brandenburg an der Havel under the motto: Reactivation.^{4]}

The quick check assessed the suitability of the location between Rathenow and Brandenburg an der Havel for the IBA34 on the basis of criteria such as location and characteristics. The focus is on the sustainable reactivation of historic buildings and locations that serve as central meeting places in the region's transformation process.

The Leitmotif of the Region from Rathenow to Brandenburg an der Havel is Reactivation

IBA34 focuses on the sustainable revitalisation of existing buildings, using only regional materials and resources to add as little new as possible. The focus is on fragile, historic sites and former residential quarters that are to serve as important meeting places in the transformation process. The aim is to transform these places into attractive, identity-forming centres that preserve the past while promoting a new, sustainable urban and

4] Fact Sheet, IBA-Untersuchungsräume
Stand: 06.08.2024

community culture. This approach places particular emphasis on aesthetically high-quality renovations and the strengthening of regional identity through the targeted conversion of existing structures, the reactivation and reuse of existing buildings and neighbourhoods.

City of Rathenow

The focus here is on revising the urban structure in order to strengthen regional identity and promote sustainable development. The aim is to create a larger scale that provides space for future growth. The renovation of prefabricated buildings by the RWG housing cooperative and the creation of green corridors connecting residential areas and the city centre are seen as improvements to the quality of life and are intended to promote ecological stability. Strategic planning lays the foundation for sustainable urban development without limiting it to specific large-scale projects. In the exhibition's mission statements, the activation of the waterfront and the Körgraben were emphasised and defined as heterotopic spaces.

Milestones Premnitz

3.000 v.Chr	900	1345	1375	1631	1870	1888	1896/97
Besiedlung Jungsteinzeit	Slawische Siedlungen	Urkunde Mögelin	Kaiser Karl IV Urkunde Premnitz	Zerstörungen Pest + Reiter	Mögeline Ziegelei	Klinker und Falzziegel	Strasse Brandenburg + Pritzerbe
1900	1904	1913	1915 - 1990	1962	2008 -heute	2024	2034
Telefon	Städtebahn	Stromversorgung	Industrialisierung	Stadtrecht	Energie Kreislauf	IBA 34 Metropolen Region Berlin Brandenburg Landschaft Stadt Havelland Heterotop Premnitz	

Identitäten Gestern | Heute | Morgen

Gestern	Chemie	Heute	Rückbau	Morgen	Nachhaltigkeit	Masterplan	Fusion
Identitäten aus dem Gestern	Militär Pulver Faser	Sie bilden die Grundlage für das Heute	Tourismus Infrastruktur Gestaltung	Innovationen schaffen das Morgen	Wasserstoff Speicher Tankstelle	Der Masterplan kann die Zeiten verbinden	vernetzt energieeffizient bedarfsorientiert

The Milower Land

There are significant challenges there due to immigration and growth-related pressures on infrastructure, daycare centres and schools. The IBA aims to solve these by renovating historic buildings and using sustainable construction practices that reuse resources and follow the principles of circularity. Fragile places are to be revitalised through reprogramming and given new functions.

The Town of Premnitz

The Premnitz Industrial Park is a central component of the urban development strategy. The aim is to transform it into a showcase project for the symbiotic connection between industry and the environment. The park strives to generate more than 100% of its energy requirements from renewable sources in order to use local resources efficiently. The implementation of modern technologies and sustainable production methods is intended to revitalise the park, create new jobs and promote educational opportunities. The vision is a resource-saving cycle between town and country, in which waste is used as a valuable resource. Premnitz is thus to serve as an economically strong, ecologically sustainable location and act as a model for other regions. A master plan has already been outlined in the exhibition Welten > Verbinden | Masterplan Premnitz (Worlds > Connecting | Premnitz Master Plan). The local authority, housing association PWG and housing association WBG Premnitz have also promoted the exhibition and master plan outline from an

economic perspective. A key element of this is a city canal, which is intended to make a significant contribution to the climate quality of the location. The established water engineer Harald Kraft exchanged initial ideas with the designer of the master plan, Sebastian Wagner.

Brandenburg an der Havel

Here, the development of new urban identities plays a central role. The conversion of the Packhof area into a cultural and creative hotspot is intended to become the new heart of the city centre. This promotes the combination of living and working, making the city more attractive to various target groups. The transformation of large, abandoned areas into multifunctional spaces makes them accessible to the public and strengthens the sense of community.

Projects to Connect Urban and Rural Areas

These create green corridors and sustainable mobility solutions. The Rathenow-Brandenburg an der Havel, Rathenow-Berlin and Brandenburg an der Havel-Berlin axes promote high-quality, environmentally friendly living spaces and new areas for sustainable Industry 5.0. Voices from the planning offices of the Havel district and the Berlin Senate also see these development areas as an opportunity to use newly settling industry for an IBA Bauhütte.

Milestones Milower Land

1250	1857	1250	1882	1815	2012	1350	1370
Bützer Dorf Kirche	Bützer Ziegelei Witte	Milow Burg Gutshaus	Milow Carl Bolle Villa	Möthlitz Rittergut Hünicke	Möthlitz Windpark	Vieritz Dorf Kirche	Nitzahn Dorf Kirche
1928	1737	1778	1760 1998 - heute		2022	2024	2034
Vieritz Post Schloss	Großwudicke Schloss	Kleinwudicke Friedhof Kapelle	Zollchow Galmer Hofkultur	Gerd + Annette Göschel	Jerchel Kapelle am Weg	IBA 34 Metropolen Region Berlin Brandenburg Landschaft Stadt Havelland Heterotop Rathenow	

Identitäten Gestern | Heute | Morgen



Gestern	Land Wirtschaft	Heute	Tourismus	Morgen	Digital und KI	Masterplan	Fusion
Identitäten kommen aus dem Gestern	Kirchen Landherren Landbau	Sie bilden die Grundlage für das Heute	Tourismus Infrastruktur Wasser und Land	Innovationen schaffen das Morgen	Co Working 3 D Druck Technologie 5.0	Der Masterplan kann die Zeiten verbinden	vernetzt energieeffizient bedarfsorientiert

IBA34 is committed to sustainable and climate-resilient development by developing a conversion strategy for future urban development that focuses on environmentally friendly projects, green infrastructure, innovative technologies and sustainable materials. The aim is to radically redesign the built environment and make it fit for the future. At the same time, the initiative strengthens the local economy and community by bringing together local authorities, businesses, tradespeople and institutions, promoting social diversity and creating jobs. While the reactivation of existing structures is the focus of the study area between Rathenow and Brandenburg an der Havel, topics such as new building, digitalisation and identity are also comprehensively integrated.

Digital platforms for materials and building materials facilitate sustainable construction and reuse. In inner cities, unused spaces offer the opportunity to develop innovative neighbourhoods that combine historical roots with modern elements. This approach promotes growth, renewal and vibrant design in the region, making reactivation a driving force for a future-proof community. The axis from Rathenow to Brandenburg an der Havel is characterised by a diverse landscape that encompasses urban, suburban and rural areas. This diversity offers great potential for innovative urban development projects that combine historical and modern elements. The proximity to nature, and in particular the Havel River, promotes quality of life and provides recreational areas, while good transport links ensure safe access to the Berlin metropolitan region.

The erosion of boundaries between urban and rural areas is creating hybrid living spaces in which modern infrastructure is integrated into rural contexts. Strategically, the region is also an important transport hub with potential for economic growth through the revitalisation of existing residential, industrial and commercial areas, as well as through tourism. This combination strengthens the regional economic base and ensures sustainable growth in the region.

Milestones Brandenburg an der Havel

500	1170	1196	1314/15	1474	1618 – 1648	1820	1846
							
Settlement Slavs	Brandenburg Old Town	Brandenburg New Town	Both Cities join the Hanseatic League	Roland Symbol Justice and Free-	Destruction Thirty Years' War	Industry Cloth maker	Railway Berlin Magdeburg
1871	1912 – 1914	1933	1963	1992 – heute	2015	2024	2034
							
Brennabor Industrial Plants	Steel and Rolling Mill	Armour Centre	Partner Cities Ivry-sur-Seine	FH Brandenburg TH Brandenburg	Federal Horticultural Show	IBA 34 Metropolitan Region Berlin Brandenburg Landscape City Havelland	

Identities Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow

Yesterday	Steel	Today	Transformation	Tomorrow	Digital	Masterplan	Fusion
							
Identities come from Yesterday	Military Armour Automobiles	They form the Basis for Today	Knowledge Mobility Culture	Innovations create Tomorrow	Radiance Education and Science	The Masterplan can link the Periods	Networked energy-efficient demand-oriented

Strengths

The region between Rathenow and Brandenburg an der Havel is characterised by a diverse mix of urban and rural areas that offer a wide range of development opportunities. Excellent connections to the RE lines promote regional mobility and encourage the influx of new residents and jobs. The cultural and historical heritage, in particular the historic town centres and old industrial sites, forms an important basis for future projects. In addition, committed communities and local initiatives, especially in rural Milower Land, contribute to the implementation of community developments and strengthen social cohesion in the region.

Weaknesses

The region faces challenges due to the varying levels of development and requirements of the different locations, which need to be addressed appropriately. Cultural differences and the expectations of the population must be taken into account in order to avoid tensions and ensure inclusive development. Opportunities exist in the potential for innovation, which creates new identities through modern projects and combines traditional values with technology.



The Starry Sky above Parey and Gülpe (Image: Tom Radziwill)

Conclusion

IBA34 offers a platform for international promotion and sustainable technologies to make regional development ecologically future-proof. However, there is a risk that the population will resist change, especially if it is perceived as a threat to their existing way of life and there is no clear identification with the projects.

The region from Rathenow to Brandenburg an der Havel has numerous special features that offer great potential for the development of new community and identification centres. Despite their rich history and cultural diversity, many places still lack clear centres and third places that foster community and create identity. The conversion and reactivation of old industrial sites, for example in Rathenow, Premnitz and the inner-city districts of Brandenburg, offer the opportunity to develop modern, vibrant meeting places.

These places combine innovative construction, culture, living and working and set standards for sustainable urban development. Such projects promote long-term resident loyalty and can help to reduce vacancy rates in metropolitan regions, which is also in line with political objectives. The diverse measures along the axis revitalise existing structures, connect historical roots with modern lifestyles and promote sustainable, future-oriented development.

The format of IBA34 invites you to experience this transformation first-hand and be inspired by the innovative ideas and projects that are rediscovering the charm and potential of the region.



Studio 2 | Zweite Reihe Städte International

CIAM 5.0

Plamen Bratkov, Rositsa Bratkova, Georges Heintz, Amrit Kaur Khalsa, Georgi Stanishev, Sebastian Wagner

The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) were international architecture congresses held between 1928 and 1959 that provided significant impetus for modern urban planning. One highlight was the 1933 congress, which took place on a ship travelling from Marseille to Athens. Under the leadership of Le Corbusier, the Charter of Athens was drawn up there, a guiding document for functional urban planning with clearly separated areas for living, working, leisure and transport. The intensive collaboration on board enabled a creative examination of the challenges posed by growing cities. Social aspects such as quality of life and green spaces were also emphasised. The last CIAM congress in 1959 in Otterloo, organised by Team X, marked the transition to structuralism – a more humane, flexible form of planning.

The ideas of CIAM continue to have an impact today, for example in the New Charter of Athens (1998) and the Leipzig Charter (2007) on sustainable urban development. As part of the exhibition and event programme Welten > Verbinden (Connecting Worlds), an international group of architects sailed together to the Northern Sporades and reflected in CIAM 5.0 on the interaction between people, machines and the periphery in the context of sustainable, people-centred living spaces.

In many regions of Europe, the creeping decline caused by migration to metropolitan areas is a familiar phenomenon. Rural areas and smaller towns are increasingly struggling with population decline as young people and skilled workers in particular move to urban centres in search of better job opportunities, educational opportunities and a higher quality of life. This exodus leads to a shortage of labour in the regions of origin, weakens the local economy and causes social structures to crumble. This trend has a profound impact on infrastructure and cultural life. Schools and medical facilities are closed, public transport is reduced and the vacancy rate of residential buildings increases.

At the same time, cities are becoming overcrowded and often unaffordable places to live, which exacerbates social inequality. To address this problem, some regions are adopting innovative approaches such as promoting home working, expanding digital infrastructure and targeting the establishment of new industries. Preserving regional identities and creating attractive living conditions are key objectives in this regard. Nevertheless, the challenge remains great, as urbanisation and centralisation are global trends that are difficult to stop. The balance between urban and rural areas will be crucial in creating sustainable and equitable living conditions in the long term.



Links: Georgi Stanishev, Plamen Bratkov, Rositsa Bratkova, Amrit Kaur Khalsa, Sebastian Wagner, Georges Heintz
Oben von links nach rechts: AEDES Studio Jaclyn Fassade, Sofia | Q-Zentrum Interior, Sofia - Cabinet HEINTZ Festsaal Ernolsheim-lès-Saverne
Unten von links nach rechts: SWA Group Hacienda el Cazadero, Mexiko - GS Studio Partheno - SWA Group Wohnen am Wasser, Premnitz

Just as past International Building Exhibitions (IBA) in Germany have provided international impetus for a rethinking of the planning matrix in politics and the construction industry, a corresponding process must be initiated at the international level at a very early stage. For it is only through this creative exchange that the contemporary can find its place.

Unten: Arbeitsplatz an Bord der Vetrohod





Above: Soviet Army Monument, Sofia (1951), painted over with US Pop Culture heroes on 29 June 2011, Source: <http://www.kultura.bg>

Below: Newsreel Footage showing a Model of Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International (1919-1920), which was carried through the Streets of Moscow as a Volumetric Slogan. Source: <http://www.redwedgemagazine.com>

Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International

The Periphery and the Centre

Georgi Stanishev Sr. Sophia | Georgi Stanishev Jr, Paris

Those who focus too much on details may lose sight of the bigger picture. Today, excessive interest in totalitarian regimes in post-war Eastern Europe has spawned numerous books, exhibitions and films. This “carnival” culture often seems more like show business than scientific analysis and distorts the role of the communist era by marginalising its intellectual and creative contexts. It is time to replace the microscope with a telescope in order to understand cultural processes from a broader perspective.

The process of modernisation in society, industry and politics in Eastern Europe took place simultaneously through two ideological systems: communism and liberal capitalism. Both strove for expansion and universality, but with opposing means. Western modernisation combined market logic with rational planning, while communism organised life according to political goals.

To understand architectural developments in the Eastern Bloc, we must outline two different conceptions of modernism and modernisation. Capitalism gave rise to a ‘liberal modernism’ characterised by the market and cultural diversity. Communism, on the other hand, was dominated by total state planning, inspired by rationalist Enlightenment ideals that aimed at complete industrialisation and social equality.

In 1995, Japanese architect Kiyonori Kikutake described Western modernism as ‘nostalgic’ and ‘purist,’ while Eastern cultures absorb external influences and transform them into hybrids. This model also fits with Russian history, which developed in cycles of Western inspiration and internal transformation.



After the revolution, the Soviet Union implemented a gigantic socio-economic and cultural modernisation project. According to Vladimir Paperny, it was the only country in which modernism was fully integrated as a political doctrine. The USSR saw itself as a rationally planned system without market spontaneity.



GS Studio Residential and Tourist Complex in Zanzibar, Tanzania
Georgi Stanishev Sr
Source: <https://prospectum.studio/ankaya/>



Blue Ball Theatre and Sphere Oscar Niemeyer, Karow Werke, Leipzig
Georgi Stanishev Jr., Architecture and Scenography Studio, Paris
Source: Sebastian Wagner

After the Second World War, the Eastern Bloc was characterised by a paradoxical combination of communist universality and national continuity.

‘Socialism in one country’ was exported to promote the Sovietisation of the satellite states. Architecture played a key role in this: national style combined with socialist content was intended to reinforce the distinction from Western modernism.

In the satellite states, local traditions and materials were deliberately promoted in order to preserve cultural identity. The return to the modern Bauhaus style in the 1950s (known as the ‘Khrushchev pigeon’) opened up new creative freedom for architects. However, without a clear definition of ‘socialist modernism,’ architects had to decide for themselves which trends they wanted to work with. Paradoxically, this marked the beginning of a rapprochement with the West.

During this transitional phase, architecture was a contested field between Soviet and Western influence. The ‘Centre-Periphery’ approach describes this area of tension: both sides existed only in interaction with each other, resulting in a hybrid, creative synthesis.

The MEE countries (Central and Eastern Europe) developed tactics to exploit their ‘intermediate position’ between East and West. Their architectural culture was based on a self-image as a peripheral zone that mediated contradictory influences. This role led to a multitude of regional modernisms and nationalisms – especially in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia. But the flexible identity of the periphery also led to internal disintegration. The inability to develop a collective identity ultimately became a decisive factor in the failure of the socialist model.

Conclusion

The text outlines the dialogical encounter between two generations of observers of recent European architectural history. It defines polarities and facets of post-war architectural ideologies and correlates the Soviet model of total planning with the ambivalent, market-economy-democratic model of Western Europe. The Soviet system acted as a strong impetus for modernisation, but without its own architectural language. Western modernism, on the other hand, established independent forms of expression that often had a subversive effect on the East.

For the MEE countries, modernism was both a tool for modernisation and a means of presenting national identity on the universal stage.



Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International
Outskirts of Sofia
 AEDES Studio

The Studio

Due to their contextuality and high-quality design, most of Aedes Studio's construction projects have become landmarks. Most projects are residential and office buildings. A central concern for all of them is the interaction between the building and its surroundings. Each design tells a story derived from its purpose and location. Many of them deal with different scales and explore ways of reducing the volume of a space that is confined to a small area. Particular attention is paid to the intermediate areas that separate the interior from the exterior and connect the building with its surroundings.

Liubata

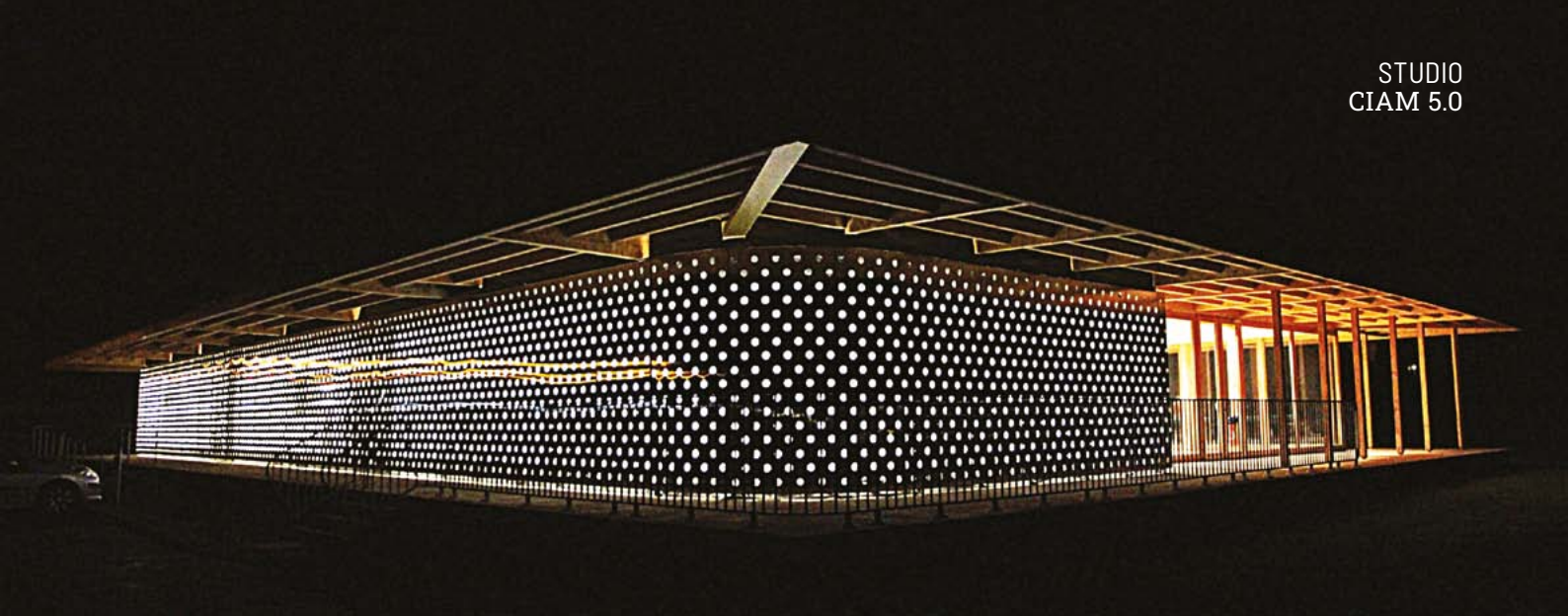
‘Liubata’ is a residential building in the Lozenets district, a place that was chaotically overbuilt in the 1990s. The abundance of shapes and colours in such a small space called for a retreat, an approach that differs from the massive structure. The project reflects on the sense of natural beauty of the old Bulgarian building tradition. Modelled on the typical barn with its heavy stone ground floor and light wooden structure above, the traditional house takes up this contrasting concept.



The new building is reminiscent of the airy old barns and blends gently into this overbuilt scenario. To reduce the heaviness of the wooden structure and at the same time emphasise the individuality of its residents, it is divided into four components, each of which is variable.

They are separated by glass strips that hang back from the cantilever to the line of the stone ground floor, thus following the facades and the roof. Viewed from the street, the building gives the impression of a row of houses, each clad with wooden slats of different sizes and orientations. The ground floor, clad in the same stone as the surrounding pavement, is separated from the four wooden structures by a strip of glass.

This creates the impression that the structures are floating above the stone – an effect that is most clearly visible at night when the strip emits light. Driven by its sense of natural beauty and tradition, ‘Liubata’ succeeds in finding a balance, a moment of peace, in the dynamic environment in which it is located.



Top and right: Cabinet Heintz Ballroom Ernolsheim-lès-Saverne
 Source: AEDES Studio

Left: AEDES Studio Liubata 2005–2006, Sofia, Bulgaria
 Source: George Heintz

Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International
Strasbourg Region
 Cabinet HEINTZ

Cabinet HEINTZ

The architecture and urban planning firm focuses primarily on public procurement in the field of architecture and urban planning. At the same time, George Heintz is a world-renowned architectural theorist and critic. In earlier years, George Heintz worked at Rem Koolhaas' OMA office and was invited internationally at a very early stage, for example to Japan to Villa Kujojama, Kyoto, where he was honoured for his ground-breaking designs.

This article emphasizes his creative and economical approach to realised infrastructure projects for **Second-Tier Cities**. He often works on projects that involve public space and the development of peripheral areas in order to bring these areas out of their isolation and integrate them into the urban network. An example of his work in the **Periphery** is the design of **Residential Complexes** or **Cultural Facilities** in the outskirts of Strasbourg, which aim to make urban space accessible and attractive to broader sections of the population. In doing so, Heintz combines modernist approaches with a strong consideration of local identity and the specific needs of residents. His projects integrate elements of landscape design and public space to create sustainable and functional architecture.



He focuses intensively on creating open yet protected communal spaces that promote social interaction and ensure privacy. Heintz's work thus contributes to the **Transformation of Peripheries** by enhancing them not only architecturally, but also socially and culturally, and integrating them into urban life.

Salle Multi-Usages à Ernolsheim-Les Saverne (Bas-Rhin)

A mixed construction of wood and steel covers a ballroom with three-sided glazing that opens onto the Alsatian plain. In front of it is an inner courtyard planted with ginkgo biloba trees, behind it an outdoor dance floor. The main façade facing the slope consists of a solid construction made of larch wood. Curves and staircases invite party guests to celebrate.

Georges Heintz is known for his work, which often focuses on the **Peripheries of Cities** and **Urban Fringe Areas**. His projects, which have been realised in both urban and rural areas, aim to establish a dialogue between architecture and the specific geography and social context of the **Respective Peripheries**.



Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International Country | City | Suburb

Amrit Kaur Khalsa

Amrit Kaur Khalsa plays a central role in the transformation of the **Palazzo Pitti Rathenow** and, together with Sebastian Wagner, is committed to a holistic way of life that combines architecture, art and spirituality. Her work at **Lichtwerk Berlin** and **Hacienda el Cazadero** in Mexico focuses on creating spaces that enable both creative and spiritual renewal. Hacienda el Cazadero is a place where Kundalini Yoga festivals have been held under her direction. In Berlin, she transformed Lichtwerk Berlin and promotes the principle of **Sacred Tecture – Architecture** that is in harmony with nature and focuses on the well-being of the community.

Lichtwerk Berlin

Lichtwerk Berlin is an outstanding example of the vision of holistic, sustainable architecture that combines art, community and spirituality. The project was realised between 2005 and 2013 by converting a historic school building in Berlin-Lichtenberg into a multifunctional centre for art and culture. It includes not only living spaces, but also studios and workshops that serve as creative spaces for artists and community initiatives. Lichtwerk sees itself as a place of transition and transformation, both on an architectural and social level. The design of the rooms was based on the principles of Sacred Tecture, an architecture that respects people's spiritual and cultural heritage and promotes physical and mental well-being.



Above: Lichtwerk, Berlin
Left: Hacienda el Cazadero, Mexico
Source: Sebastian Wagner

Hacienda el Cazadero

Hacienda el Cazadero in Mexico is a historic building that plays an important role in preserving Mexico's cultural heritage. The project was proposed as a cultural heritage site for the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 during a UNESCO conference with the International Academy of Architecture (IAA). Wagner and Khalsa were committed to preserving the hacienda as an architectural gem while promoting its use as a modern conference centre. Hacienda el Cazadero is an excellent example of the transformation of a historic building on the periphery, preserving its traditional character while integrating modern, sustainable concepts. The conversion promotes understanding of the historical context and significance of such buildings for the local community and international culture. The project is in line with the holistic approach of combining sustainable development.



STUDIO
CIAM 5.0

Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International Water | City | Periphery

Sebastian Wagner

The Third Place – Waterfront Master Plan
for Rathenow Water City
Source: Sebastian Wagner

Sebastian Wagner has been committed to sustainable architecture for over 30 years, always seeking dialogue between architecture, culture and the environment. He has developed numerous master plans, including for Westhavelland, and has focused on the transformation of historic buildings.

One of his key projects is the design of the **'Golden Circle'**, which is intended as a regional development framework. Wagner pursues an integrative approach that combines ecological, economic and social aspects. The focus is on the sustainable revitalisation of industrial wastelands and the promotion of sustainable urban development. Through his work, he aims to establish Havelland as a model for innovative urban development in rural regions and to create a balance between modernisation and traditional heritage.

The Master Plan for Premnitz

It aims to transform Premnitz into a sustainable, innovative and liveable city that integrates both local history and modern, ecological principles. The master plan promotes the symbiosis of nature, culture and urban life, with a focus on environmentally friendly infrastructure and the revitalisation of the industrial site. This project is regarded as a model for sustainable urban development within the framework of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) 34.

Rathenow Master Plan

The Masterplan for Rathenow takes into account the city's unique location on the **Körgraben** and the Havel water front and emphasises the importance of these natural areas for the quality of life of its residents. The **Water City** of Rathenow can be developed as a vibrant, sustainable city that is closely connected to the surrounding nature. The plan promotes access to natural areas and focuses on the creation of green, water-friendly urban spaces. The Körgraben provides the basis for a holistic human/nature ecosystem. An expression of Rathenow's identity: the **Optical Industry Museum Rathenow (OIMR event)**, a place for optics, people and culture in an urban natural space, an event engine and cultural catalyst that not only expresses the city's historical heritage, but also promotes modern technologies and visions. The Havel River is used as an ecological, social and cultural link. The Masterplan integrates the Havel and promotes a high quality of life through natural, regenerated urban structures that combine historical heritage with modern, environmentally friendly concepts and focuses on sustainable development through interdisciplinary exchange.



Above: The Vetrohod between the Sporades, Source: Sebastian Wagner

Studio 2 | Second Row Cities International CIAM 5.0 Manifesto

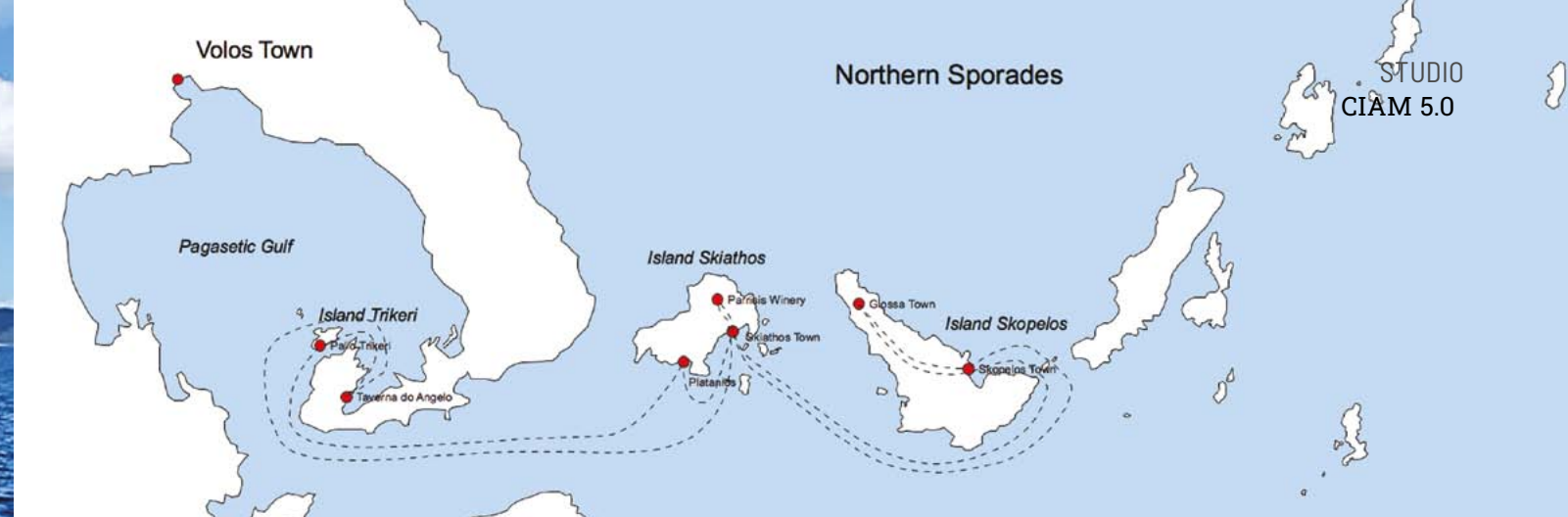
Plamen Bratkov, Rositsa Bratkova, Georges Heintz, Amrit Kaur Khalsa, Georgi Stanishev, Sebastian Wagner

Georgi Stanishev, Rositsa Bratkova, Plamen Bratkov, George Heintz, Sebastian Wagner and Amrit Kaur Khalsa share a long tradition of collaboration within international networks such as the **International Academy of Architecture (IAA)**, the **Jacob Chernichov Foundation** and the **International Forum of Young Architects (IFYA)**. This collaboration promotes the development of sustainable, future-oriented urban concepts. They are key players in the design of liveable Second-Tier Cities that can be transformed through innovative approaches and the use of Industry 5.0 and artificial intelligence. Their work is expressed, among other things, in the CIAM 5.0 Manifesto, which focuses on the interaction between urban development, technology and the human dimension. The manifesto on the periphery is a vision that focuses on promoting progressive architecture and urban planning ideas through creative and integrative solutions.



Role of second-tier cities

1. Second-Tier Cities play an increasingly important role in the global urban network by acting as buffer zones and innovative catalysts between global metropolises and rural regions .
2. These cities are not only capable of creating sustainable and liveable spaces, but also contribute to economic diversification by promoting economic interactions between metropolises and peripheral regions.
3. Their dynamic adaptability enables them to integrate innovative Industry 5.0 models, green technologies and digital transformation more quickly, making them a strategic complement to metropolises.
4. The interaction between second-tier cities and global metropolises takes place in several ways: economically, these cities benefit from the supply networks, research institutions and know-how of the metropolises, while at the same time offering resource-optimised and more sustainable solutions that can serve as models for the metropolises themselves.
5. Second-tier cities can be understood as free radicals within development processes, which, due to their peripheral position, are able to develop and implement alternative perspectives and solution-oriented models on a small scale.



Above: Sailing Route of the Vetrohod, Source: Sebastian Wagner
Below: Intensive Exchange about the Peripheries, Changes and Ways of Life
Source: Sebastian Wagner

6. They give people space for individual self-development, thereby promoting independence, social skills and interaction between people and nature.
7. Through their networking with the global knowledge society and the use of new technologies, they contribute significantly to the development of an inclusive, resilient urban system.
8. This interaction offers potential for synergies – the impetus from the periphery can broaden the centre of decision-making processes, while the metropolises offer access to markets and global networking.

Summary

Second-Tier Cities act as innovative, sustainable bridges between metropolises and rural regions. They promote economic diversification, integrate new technologies more quickly and offer alternative perspectives. Their dynamic role strengthens resilient urban systems and creates synergies with global centres through networking and knowledge exchange.





Studio 3

Vacancy | Prosperity | Cooperative

Steffen Adam, Thomas Bestgen, Thilo von Haas, Vite Joksaite, Mik Kuhn

Andreas Rasch, Wolfgang Schuster, Sebastian Wagner, Moderation Florian Franke-Petsch

'Worlds> Connecting' initiated the Studio **Vacancy | Prosperity | Cooperative** to develop a model for the innovative use of vacant properties – with the cooperative as a forward-looking instrument. The aim is to rethink public and private spaces and link them in a meaningful way. Vacant properties in urban and rural areas offer untapped potential that can be activated through community structures. The cooperative model serves as the organisational backbone for participation, solidarity-based economic activity and sustainable perspectives. It connects owners, users, local authorities and civil society – promoting cultural, social and economic projects, strengthening local communities and counteracting spatial fragmentation.

Renowned experts were invited to the workshop on vacancy, prosperity and cooperatives to contribute their perspectives and experiences. The aim of the exchange was to develop a common mission statement for dealing with vacancy in second-tier cities. The focus was on how cooperatives can act as economic catalysts and how vacant spaces can be reactivated in a socially, culturally and ecologically sustainable manner – in the interests of the common good.

Cooperative | Existing Buildings | New Construction

Thomas Bestgen develops housing cooperatives with the aim of sustainably developing affordable living space in new and existing properties. Approaches oriented towards the common good, social diversity and cooperative forms of living have resulted in long-term sustainable neighbourhoods. His completed projects (Lokdepot, Möckernkiez, Urban Quarters, etc.) demonstrate neighbourhoods in action.

Energy | Cooperative

Thilo von Haas is committed to cooperatively organised energy solutions. Energy cooperatives enable companies and employees to benefit from stable energy costs, regional value creation and participation in the energy transition. They promote sustainable business practices, strengthen networks and create opportunities for participation in jointly supported projects with ecological and social impact.

Left Image |WoHo: Where?

"...Between Anhalter Bahnhof, Tempodrom and the canal, the Berlin skyline is gaining another silhouette. A modern, sustainable residential high-rise made of wood gives the capital what travellers to Sydney, London or Vienna have long raved about: impressive, sublime, slender beauties that are becoming landmarks for a new attitude to life in the metropolises..."
Image and Text: UTB website – Berlin



Mik Kuhn, Sebastian Wagner, Vite Joksaite, Andreas Rasch, Florian Franke-Petsch at the Kulturzentrum Rathenow.
Hybrid connection: Thomas Bestgen, Thilo von Haas, Florian Kunz and Jan Lierse

Fair | Culture

Andreas Rasch, FairKultur, combines socially oriented living with ecological construction, flexible room concepts and cultural offerings. The cooperative develops living, working and creative spaces from natural materials, promotes community, urban gardens, mobility and cooperation with local authorities. Financed by shares and bank loans, it combines social responsibility with innovative urban development.

Participation | Access | Justice

Vite Joksaite is involved in networks such as EASA:Together – European Alliance for Solidarity Action – and brings together experts from the fields of human rights, peace work, gender justice, event management, gastronomy and PR. The aim is to achieve a more sustainable, humane, creative and transcultural life in Europe and to promote change and solidarity-based future planning through a coordinated network.

Cooperative | Next Generation

Sebastian Wagner combines the cooperative principle with contemporary construction. He is interested in how communal

property and co-determination enable innovative forms of living and lifestyles. Through participatory planning processes, he creates spaces that promote social integration, ecological sustainability and economic stability.

Small Cooperative | Markanstoss

Wolfgang Schuster analyses the housing situation in Germany and advocates cooperative living as a long-term stable, socially just and self-reliant solution – especially in conurbations. Cooperatives offer security, co-determination and pension provision, require personal initiative and are less attractive in regions without a housing shortage.

Cooperative | Health

Steffen Adam examines the development of classic large cooperatives based on solidarity, communal ownership and economic cooperation. Over the years, these cooperatives have established themselves as stable models for the provision of housing, energy and services, with an increasing focus on sustainable, social and ecological solutions.



Lichtenrader Revier, Alte Mälzerei (Vortrag Thomas Bestgen)

Studio 3

Cooperative | Existing Buildings | New Construction

Thomas Bestgen | From the Lecture

Lichtenrade District – Urban Development as a Collective Project

The Lichtenrader Revier in Berlin-Tempelhof-Schöneberg, originally developed on the basis of cooperative principles, does not view the city as a collection of buildings, but rather as a social structure that focuses on the common good, participation and ecological responsibility. It symbolises a paradigm shift: away from profit-driven property development and towards the city as a collective process.

From Property to Relationship

At a time when urban spaces are shaped by market logic, the Revier formulates a radical alternative concept. The development focuses on social diversity, sustainable construction and cultural anchor points – not as add-ons, but as the basis for a vibrant urban society. Diversity is taken seriously here: different types of ownership (public, private, cooperative), diverse housing types (from one-room apartments to cluster flats) and neighbourhoods that span generations and backgrounds create an urban coexistence that goes beyond monofunctional structures.

Community as Spatial Practice

The ‘City as Commons’ is the guiding principle: instead of clear boundaries, hybrid spaces for encounter and collective action are created. Three new public spaces on formerly private land underline the programmatic opening. Participation is understood not as a marketing tool, but as a genuine means of production for the city – via the networking advisory board, the Lichtenrader ReWIR e.V. association or participatory rental guidelines.

Architecture as Social Infrastructure

Architecturally, this attitude manifests itself in permeable, adaptive structures. Equal fittings in all apartments (parquet flooring, high-quality bathrooms, wooden windows) reject the premium discourse and define quality as a social category. The rents (€6.80–9.00/m² subsidised, €7.92–12.80/m² privately financed, max. €14.50/m²) represent a socially balanced model. Cluster flats, intergenerational forms and a dementia shared flat expand the social fabric.

Ecological Responsibility as Urban Ethics

Sustainability is considered comprehensively: KfW 40 Plus standard, photovoltaics, e-mobility infrastructure, car and car-go bike sharing, and a mobility pass enable low-car mobility and resilient neighbourhood development.



Lichtenrade District
Top Left:
New buildings
Top Right:
Urban Development

Aerial Photographs
Bottom Left:
Before Renovation
Bottom Right:
During Renovation
(Lecture
Thomas Bestgen)

Old Malt House: Hybridisation of Space and Use

The revitalisation of the old malt house (1897) illustrates the approach: history is not preserved in a museum, but reactivated as cultural infrastructure – with a children’s museum, teaching kitchen, library, theatre, cinema and culinary offerings. It functions as a social and cultural anchor.

Key Data

Site: 23,000 m²
GFA: 35,540 m²
Living/usable space: 14,230 m²
202 residential units, 52% subsidised
Old malt house: 3,600 m² (16 units)
Residential block: 6,500 m² (12 units)
Country house: 327 m² (2 units)

Impact beyond the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood sees itself as a catalyst for urban transformation focused on the common good. Cooperation with local initiatives and the integration of Bahnhofstraße Lichtenrade extend its impact into the urban space.

Conclusion: the City as a Social Form

The Lichtenrade district answers the question ‘Who owns the city?’ with a clear ‘Everyone’. Here, the city is not being built, but created together – as a collective, cultural and ecological blueprint for the future.



Variation of Energy Storage in combination with Photovoltaic Elements to provide shade for the Gardeners' Mile. The Spaces in between serve as a Showroom for Garden Plants (Swa Innovation Studio)



Top Left: Energy Storage Facility with Green Elements in Front
"...Multifunctionality makes the landscape both technological and complex.
It serves agricultural purposes, as a sales area and shopping centre in the countryside..."
Sebastian Wagner, Swa Innovation Studio

Top Right: Standard Technology Block Energy sStorage
Bottom Left: Company Headquarters in Ottobrunn also serves as a Think Tank and concept Development Space
Bottom right: Integrated Photovoltaic Fields (Energisto Website)

Studio 3 Energy | Cooperative

Thilo von Haas | from the Lecture

ENERGISTO – New Energy as Collective Architecture

At the 'House of ENERGISTO', an interdisciplinary team works towards a common goal: the use and promotion of renewable energies. ENERGISTO is not a traditional company, but a cooperative that combines entrepreneurial freedom with a shared vision.

Founded on Community

ENERGISTO was born out of many years of collaboration between nine partners with expertise in civil and industrial engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, business administration, marketing and project management. Between 2009 and 2014, they had already realised large-scale international photovoltaic projects. In 2014, two partners with expertise in hydropower and bioenergy joined the team. Together, they form a foundation that combines entrepreneurship with cooperative thinking.

Architecture of a cooperative

The chosen legal form as a cooperative allows for maximum independence from investor interests. Instead of return on investment, the focus is on co-creation and responsibility.

Decisions are made democratically and transparently. Each 'Energist' remains independent, contributes their knowledge voluntarily and designs projects collaboratively.

Three Pillars of Action

ENERGISTO develops and implements power plants based on renewable energies, primarily photovoltaics, supplemented by biogas and hydropower solutions. In addition, it provides consulting services for companies and municipalities to develop sustainable energy and resource concepts. A third pillar is the transformation of unused land and vacant buildings into ecologically and socially valuable spaces.

'Unleashing New Energy' – Aspiration and Attitude

'Unleashing new energy' is both an aspiration and a lived attitude. ENERGISTO motivates people to break free from fossil fuel dependencies and strengthen their ecological awareness. The focus is on people: shared responsibility and collaborative learning create new opportunities for growth.

Brownfield Sites as an Urban Resource

One focus is on upgrading brownfield sites and vacant properties. These places are not only renovated to be more energy efficient, but also transformed into social meeting places, ecological power stations and architecturally unique spaces. This results in projects that create identity and have a lasting impact.

Learning organisation as an architectural model

ENERGISTO sees itself as a dynamic, learning organisation. Experience gained from projects is integrated so that the community remains adaptable and open to innovation. This attitude also shapes the architectural mindset: multi-layered, flexible and resilient.

Attitude and Symbolism of the Community

Openness, trust and shared responsibility characterise the collaboration. This attitude is symbolically condensed in the figure of the 'Energist' – a cross between a horse (strength, reliability) and a bee (diligence, community, networking).

Why a Cooperative?

The choice of a cooperative is an expression of belief in collective action. Participation, co-determination and responsibility are central. This structure enables independent action, even in complex projects. Customers benefit from a network that not only plans, but also implements collaboratively.

Architecture as Social Infrastructure

ENERGISTO understands architecture as a social, ecological and economic practice. Instead of standardised solutions, tailor-made, integrative concepts are created that combine responsibility, technology and space.

Conclusion

ENERGISTO is more than just a provider of energy projects. It is a collective, learning architecture that creates new spaces for energy, community and nature. Shared values, entrepreneurial courage and a clear stance result in projects of high social and architectural quality. 'Unleashing new energy' thus becomes an architecture of cohesion.



The Cooperative as a Third Place
(SWA Innovation Studio)

Studio 3

Fair | Kultur

Andreas Rasch | from the Lecture

FairKultur – Living as an Art of Life

The FairKultur cooperative pursues a visionary living concept that consistently combines people, nature and social responsibility. The aim is to create living spaces that can be flexibly adapted to different stages of life, are built in an ecologically responsible manner and promote community spirit.

Dynamic and People-Centred

At FairKultur, living is understood as a dynamic process – adapted to the needs of young people, families and the elderly. Instead of pure functionality, spaces are created that enable social integration and flexible use: affordable, adaptable, communal.

Ecological and cycle-oriented

The architecture focuses on sustainability: wood, natural stone and recycled materials minimise the ecological footprint. The construction and design follow ecological standards without compromising on aesthetics and durability.

Working and Living in Harmony

FairKultur combines professional and private life under one roof. Individual home office solutions, communal co-working spaces, studios and workshops promote flexible working models, creativity and exchange. Professional and private areas can be combined or separated depending on the stage of life.

Community and Social Integration

Cooperation with social institutions strengthens neighbourly relations and creates support networks, especially for older people, single parents or people in need of assistance. Community is seen as a resource for a better quality of life.

Art as a Defining Element

Art and culture are central components of architecture. Whether studios, exhibition spaces or sculpture parks – the buildings are deliberately planned as places of inspiration and cultural encounter. In this way, living space becomes a place of identification and exchange.



STUDIO
Vacancy | Prosperity | Cooperative



Top: Tiny House (Fairkultur website)

Bottom Left: Kunstinvest | Painter Volker Nickel (Image Excerpt from Fairkultur Website)

Bottom Right: Photography | Raoul Kevenhörster (Image Excerpt from Fairkultur Website)

Sustainable Mobility and Regional Integration

Charging stations for e-mobility, good public transport connections and secure bicycle parking spaces promote sustainable mobility. At the same time, local structures such as local supply, crafts and regional markets are integrated into the planning in order to strengthen social and ecological cycles.

Co-Creation through Self-Build and Urban Gardening

Residents actively help to shape their environment: self-build workshops, communal gardens, roof gardens and vertical gardens promote self-sufficiency and ecological awareness. The focus is on permaculture and the circular economy.

Diverse Building Designs for Diverse Lifestyles

Whether small mobile buildings, stackable container solutions or the conversion of old buildings – FairKultur creates flexible, cost-efficient and sustainable forms of living. Cultural and creative centres with multifunctional rooms and digital infrastructure complement the portfolio.

Socially Oriented fFinancing Model

Financing is provided through cooperative shares and bank loans, supplemented by FairKultur AG. This structure ensures a solid equity base, protects against speculative investors and guarantees stable long-term usage costs.

Conclusion

FairKultur stands for a holistic living model that combines living, working and culture. With ecological construction, social participation and cultural integration, the cooperative strives to create forward-looking spaces that go far beyond functional living. It offers an alternative to the speculative housing market – and understands living as a lived culture of coexistence.



kitev (Kultur im Turm e.V.) in the Water Tower of Oberhausen Central Station. Source: Lecture by Vite Joksaite

Studio 3

Participation | Access | Justice

Vite Joksaite | from the Lecture

EASA:Together – Architecture for a City based on Solidarity

Europe is facing major challenges: while migration policy is increasingly focused on defence and border security, many cities are seeing a growing desire for new forms of coexistence. EASA:Together is responding to these issues with a bold experiment: the initiative sees architecture and urban development as a social task and is testing how cities can become spaces of solidarity.

Supported by civil society organisations from Germany, Portugal and Spain, EASA:Together develops collective sponsorship models for people with refugee experience. The aim is not only to provide accommodation, but also to create places of encounter, participation and self-efficacy.

Cities as Social Architectures

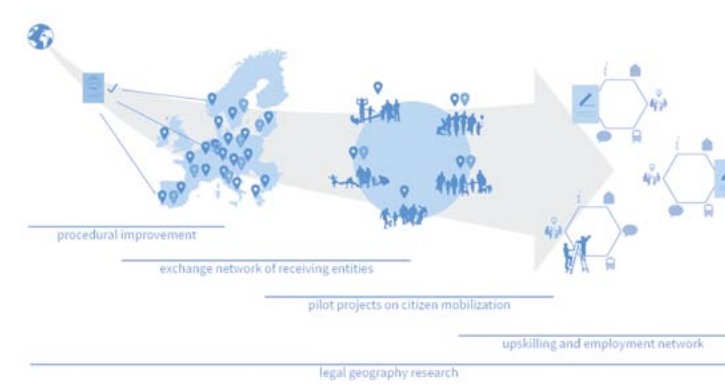
The focus is on two sponsorship models: the large group model, in which entire neighbourhoods or district initiatives take responsibility for several people, and the

‘group of five’ model, in which five private individuals accompany a single person or family. These models are combined with artistic and urban interventions, community gardens, permaculture projects and neighbourhood-oriented formats.

This creates hybrid spaces that combine living, working, learning and culture. Architecture is understood here not only as a physical structure, but as a tool that shapes community. The question is: how can we design neighbourhoods in such a way that they promote trust, exchange and mutual support?

Participation Instead of Representation

EASA:Together consistently focuses on participatory processes. Refugees are not seen as ‘guests’ but as co-creators. Together with local communities, spaces are developed that are flexible, adaptive and open. Through workshops, joint construction and gardening projects or artistic interventions, places are created that break down social barriers and form new neighbourhoods.



Top
Bottom Left
Right
Centre

Strategy (easa-together.org)
Image from the Presentation by Vite Joksaite
Image from the Presentation by Vite Joksaite
Human Losses (easa-together.org)

Research and Practice Combined

The project is accompanied by an interdisciplinary research team focusing on ‘legal geography’, i.e. the interface between legal frameworks and spatial practice. The aim is to develop concrete recommendations for action for cities, municipalities and planning offices. At the same time, a Europe-wide network for education, training and employment is being created. Architecture serves as a lever for empowerment – through craft training, collaborative design and social participation.

First steps: ‘Together We Act!’

The preparatory Erasmus+ project ‘Together We Act!’ has been running since autumn 2024, empowering young transcultural activists with their own or accompanying refugee experience. They are being trained as urban designers through exchange formats in Portugal and Germany, as well as workshops on regenerative design, migration law, fundraising and artistic strategy. At the same time, initial pilot projects are being launched, primarily in collaboration with migrant self-organisations.

Perspective: A European City based on Solidarity

In the short term, collective sponsorship models are to be implemented and evaluated in at least three countries. In the long term, EASA:Together aims to lay the foundations for a European Alliance for Solidarity Action (EASA). The goal is a new, grassroots-driven reception and integration practice that understands cities as social and spatial organisms.

Conclusion

EASA:Together takes architecture further – not as a completed construction task, but as a social and political process. Cities become open spaces of possibility where solidarity, participation and resilience can be re-examined and institutionalised. In times of increasing disengagement, EASA:Together offers a radical alternative: a Europe that holds together through community rather than division.



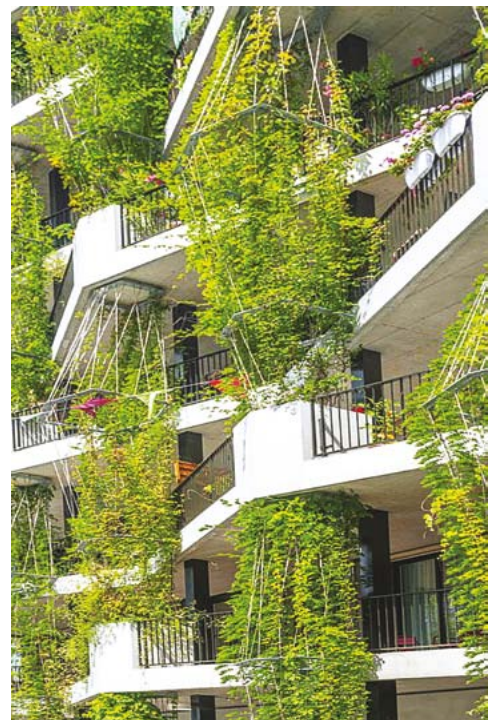


Left
'City Water Edges'
Small Cooperative
Resilient Building Typology
Source: Swa Innovation Studio



Above
'Natural space - Reorganisation'
Small-Scale Cooperative Building Typologies
Elimination of the individual functions of
bathrooms and kitchens, replaced by individual
intimate spaces embedded in the landscape with
central bathroom and kitchen buildings
Source: Swa Innovation Studio

Right
Building cooperative
'More than just living'
Source Duplex Architects
Hunziger Areal, Zurich



Studio 3

Cooperative | Next Generation

Sebastian Wagner | from the Lecture

The Housing Issue as a Key Social and Environmental Challenge

The housing issue is one of the central social and environmental challenges of our time. In many cities, rents are rising dramatically, while land and living space are increasingly becoming commodities. More and more people are being displaced, while at the same time the need for affordable, climate-adapted housing is growing.

In this situation, resilient models oriented towards the common good are needed. From an architectural perspective, it is no longer enough to simply design buildings — we must also help shape the social and economic models behind them. This is precisely where cooperatives offer a solidarity-based approach.

The Cooperative as a Building Contractor: Building Differently

As an architect, I have worked on many projects with cooperatives. The difference between them and traditional building contractors is fundamental: cooperatives do not build for short-term profit, but for the common good. This attitude changes everything: planning, design, processes — and the architecture itself. Future residents are involved at an early stage. This leads to greater identification and tailor-made solutions: flexible floor plans, communal areas, neighbourhood uses. As a planner, you

work with a committed collective that has clear ideas about community, sustainability and social diversity. This work is both challenging and enriching.

Cooperatives as a Corrective to the Market

Access to land is a bottleneck in many cities. Speculative price increases often prevent projects that are oriented towards the common good. This is where cooperatives act as non-profit organisations, provided they are supported.

Instruments such as leaseholds, concept awards or municipal land funds are crucial for securing land in the long term. Their ownership structure — membership instead of private ownership — prevents privatisation. Housing remains permanently in community hands, with surpluses flowing into reserves, maintenance and social purposes. In this way, cooperatives not only create affordable housing, but also stable neighbourhoods, promote integration and remove land from speculation.

Architecture as a driver of quality

For a long time, there was a prejudice that public-interest housing came at the expense of architectural quality. Today, projects such as 'Mehr als Wohnen' (More than Living) in Zurich

or 'Lichtenrader Revier' in Berlin prove the opposite: cooperatives often set high standards — architecturally, ecologically and socially.

Innovative solutions arise particularly in collaboration with cooperatives: cluster apartments, flexible floor plans, open ground floor zones, hybrid uses — combined with consistent sustainability (timber construction, KfW-40, tenant electricity models). The design is not created on the drawing board, but in dialogue. This process requires more communication and moderation, but leads to more resilient, identity-forming buildings.

Social and Ecological Thinking

Cooperatives create social infrastructure: communal areas, workshops, gardens, co-working spaces. These elements are not accessories, but central. They promote encounters, neighbourly help and participation. Cooperatives are also often pioneers in ecological terms: resource-saving construction, renewable energies, car-free courtyards, car sharing. This shows that sustainability is not only a technical issue, but also a social one. Only when people are part of the process will measures be supported in the long term.

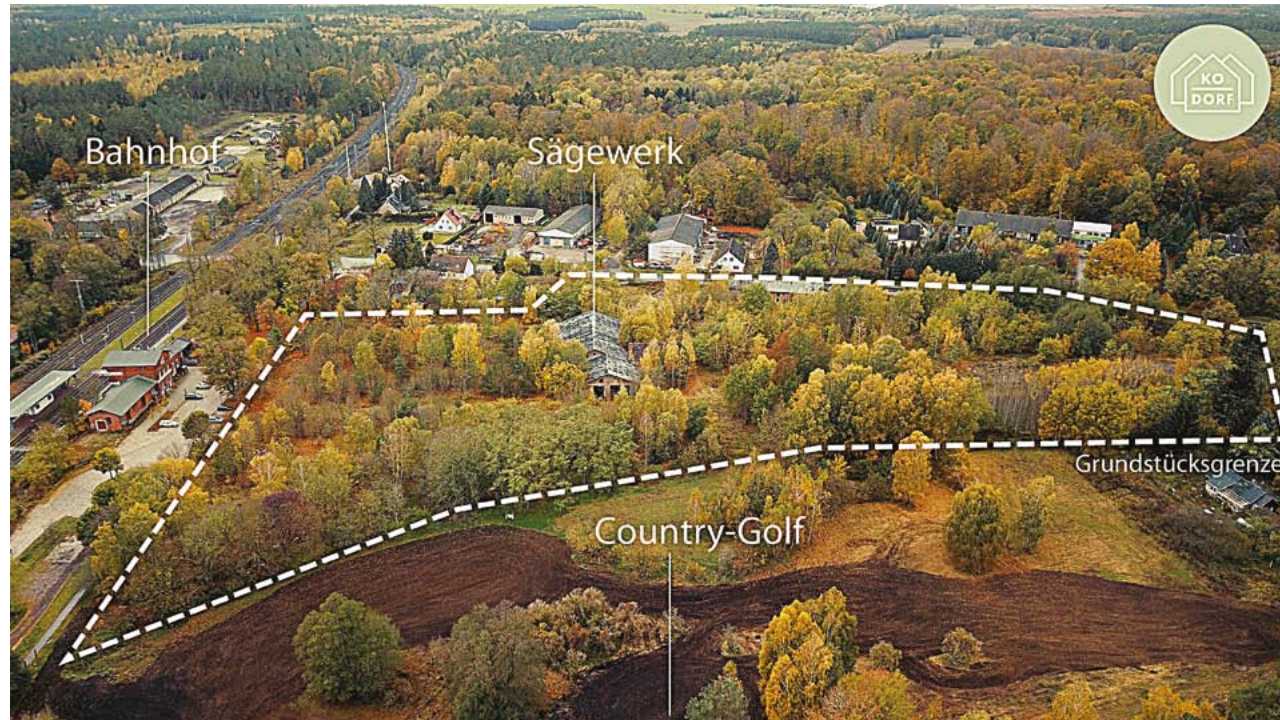
Challenges and Prospects

Despite all its strengths, cooperative building is not a sure-fire success. Bureaucratic hurdles, complex funding conditions and high planning costs make many things difficult. A clear commitment is needed here: If you want urban development that is oriented towards the common good, you must also promote actors who are oriented towards the common good — with access to land, simplified procedures and targeted support.

Conclusion: Architecture for the Common Good

Cooperative buildings are a model for the future — socially, ecologically and architecturally. They create affordable living space, promote participation and act as a catalyst for a more equitable city.

For us architects, this means that we are not only designers of forms, but also co-developers of social models. We don't just build houses, we build communities. In a time of multiple crises, this is not only sensible — it is necessary.



Aerial Photograph (Image: Ko Work Dorf Wiesenburg)

Studio 3

Small Cooperative | Market Impetus

Text Prof. Dr. hc Wolfgang Schuster | Images agmm - architekten + stadtplaner

Renting or Buying – a Fundamental Question with Far-Reaching Consequences

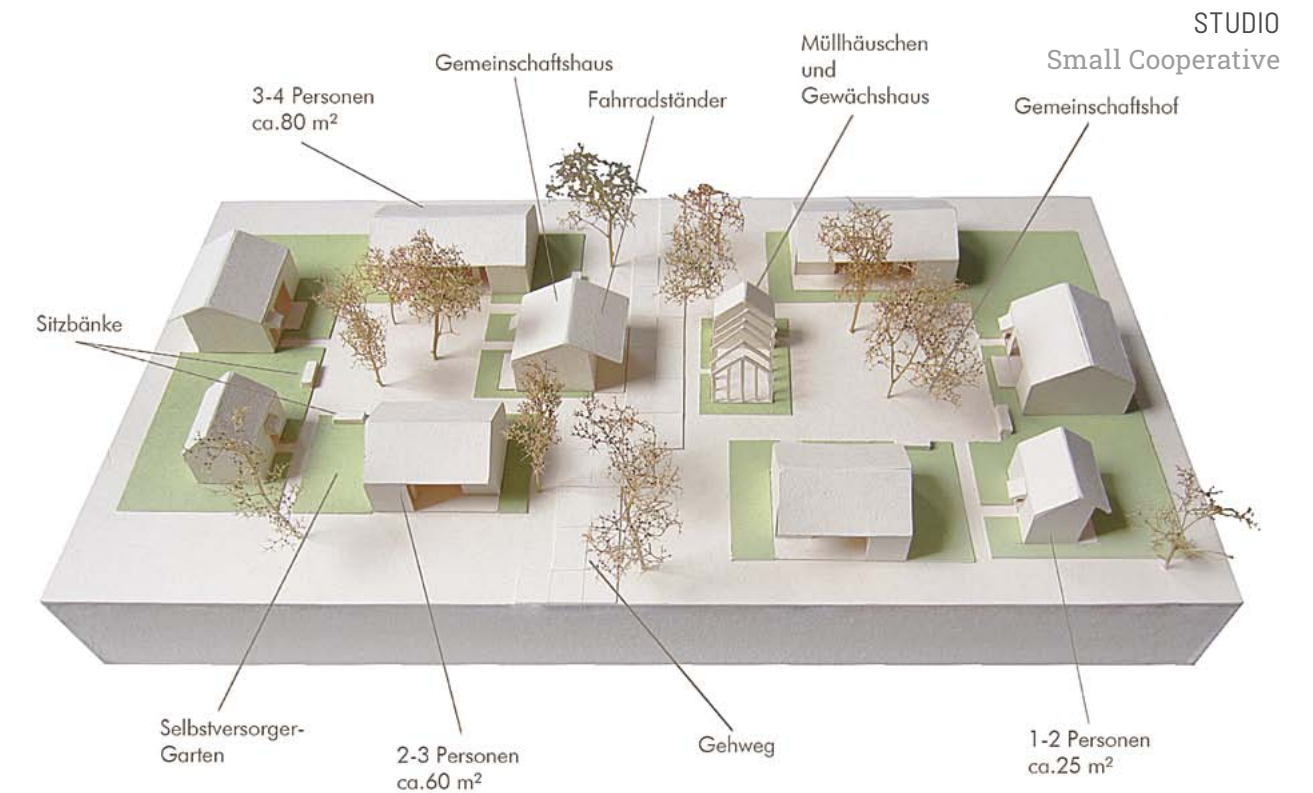
The decision between renting and owning is closely linked to personal life plans and financial possibilities. Buying is only worthwhile if you can afford the long-term financing of a property and the monthly costs do not significantly exceed those of renting. In addition, your career prospects must appear stable for at least 25 years. Planning for the future over a quarter of a century is deceptive, because life circumstances can change.

Since reunification, rents in Berlin have been rising steadily, and this trend has now spread to the surrounding area – the so-called affluent suburbs. In the outskirts of Brandenburg, rents are moderate and housing is available. Nevertheless, many people, young and old, are drawn to the cities – a trend that is causing the demand for affordable housing in the metropolises to rise steadily. One problem is the discrepancy between the available vacancy rate for commercial space and the lack of conversion into residential space. The reasons for this are tax advantages for vacant properties and changes in tenants' requirements compared to previous decades:

While improvised solutions were accepted in the 1980s, today's housing needs are significantly higher. The result is a growing shortage of housing in city centres.

Housing Shortage – a Long-Standing Problem

The shortage of housing in urban centres is not a new phenomenon. This issue has been discussed in literature on urban development for over 2,000 years. Free citizens have always been dependent on their financial resources: those who could not afford to buy property had to rent. But what happens when there are no properties available to rent? This question is more relevant today than ever before. In this context, it is clear that new concepts are needed. The Association of Architects and Engineers in Berlin and Brandenburg (AIV) is therefore proposing the establishment of housing cooperatives. A cooperative offers its members the opportunity to get involved in housing construction with their labour and, if necessary, capital. Architects, engineers and planners could thus pool their skills and realise projects together. If there is a lack of equity capital, labour becomes working capital.



Haus-Cluster-Modell

Model of Typologies (Bild Ko Work Dorf Wiesenburg)

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The Idea of the Cooperative – Origins and Change

Cooperatives are based on the principle of shared ownership, in which members are simultaneously users, owners and decision-makers – the so-called identity principle. This form of organisation is a private-sector cooperation on a voluntary basis.

The roots of the cooperative movement in Germany date back to the 19th century. Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch is considered the founder of the German cooperative system. As a result of industrialisation, many craft businesses were no longer able to produce competitively. In Delitzsch, shoemakers joined together to form a cooperative in order to purchase machines jointly. The financing was shared and the costs of use were distributed proportionally. This principle was enshrined in the first Cooperative Act of 1868 and enabled economic self-help without state intervention.

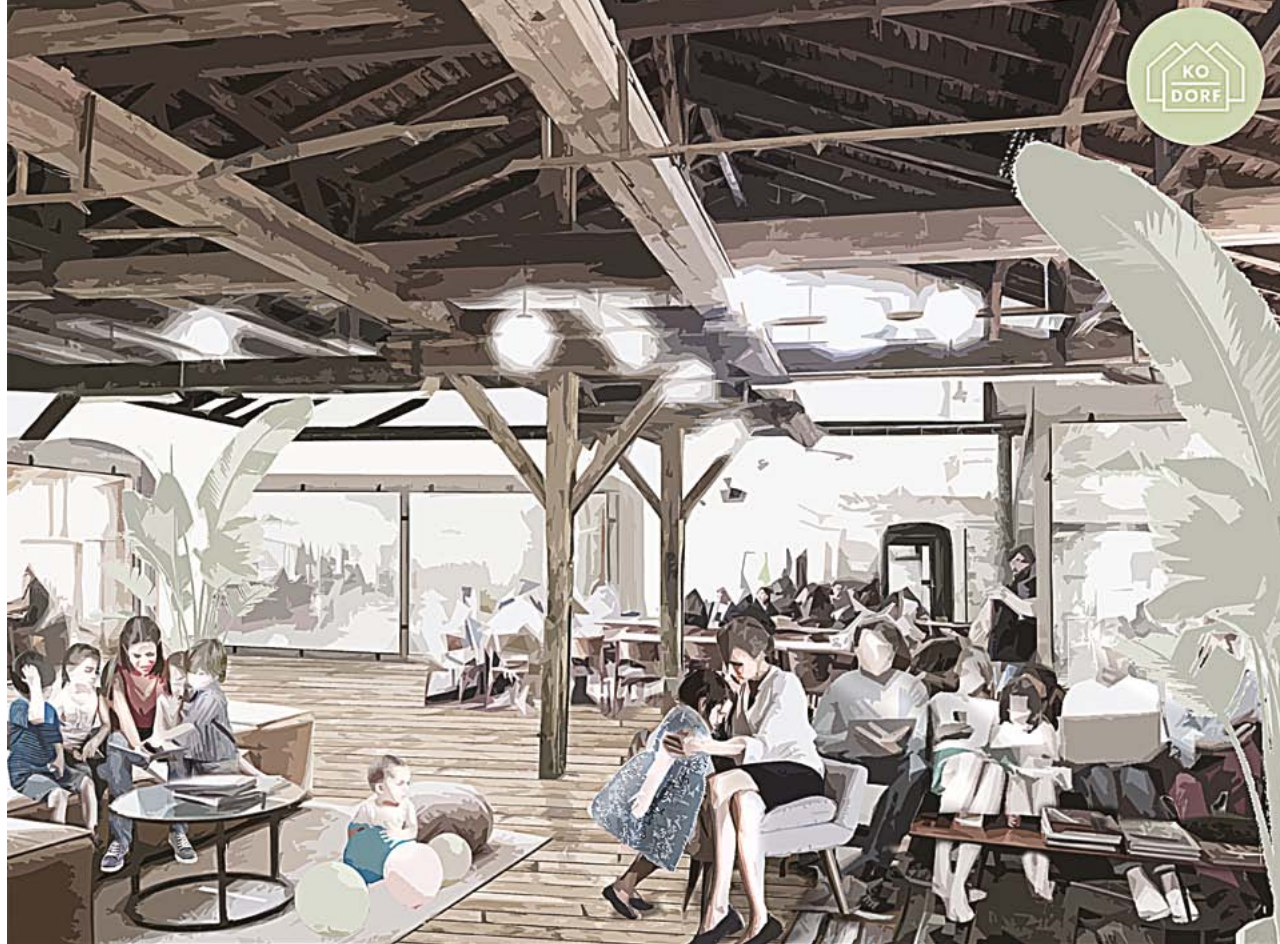
With the amendment of the Cooperative Act in 1889, large institutions such as local authorities, trade unions and industrial companies were also able to initiate housing associations. These companies continued to build social housing, but often without the direct involvement of the residents. During the Third Reich, the cooperatives were brought into line and nationalised. After the Second

World War, they were returned to self-administration, but without sufficient capital to expand their holdings. It was not until the introduction of the home ownership subsidy in the 1960s that cooperatives were able to take out interest-free loans.

Today's Housing Market: Oversupply meets Mismanagement

Today, the federal government estimates a shortfall of around 400,000 homes per year until 2030. This contrasts with a vacancy rate of 1.9 million units according to the 2022 census. This discrepancy shows that there is no shortage of homes, but rather a shortage of suitable living space in city centres. While small towns and rural regions are experiencing vacancies, metropolitan areas are struggling with a massive housing shortage.

The supply of housing is not concentrated where demand is greatest. The political decision to invest primarily in publicly funded housing construction after 1950 has contributed to market distortion in the long term. Countries such as Spain and the Scandinavian states, where the majority of homes are privately owned, have hardly any such structural housing problems.



Old Sawmill, intended as a Kitchen and Co-Working Space (Image: KoWork Dorf Wiesenburg)

Developments after Reunification

In 1990, the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic brought a dilapidated housing stock into the market economy. The prefabricated buildings were often structurally deficient. Many of these buildings were demolished as part of the 'shrinking cities' concept. In eastern Germany, cities shrank due to migration, which led to vacancies. Politicians declared the housing market saturated, even though the actual demand had merely shifted regionally. Local authorities sold their housing stocks to private investors, which led to a rapid increase in the cost of housing. Demand remained high, but supply was artificially reduced.

Financial Crises and Political Failures

In order to stop the sell-off, state banks were obliged to invest in municipal housing associations in the 2000s. The result was debt at several levels:

Local authorities, state banks and ultimately tenants suffered from the consequences of these misguided investments.

Rents rose, especially in conurbations, while incomes stagnated or even fell in real terms. Housing became a commodity – the price was determined by demand and the artificially restricted supply structure. The social aspects of housing took a back seat.

Housing Cooperatives Today – Sensible or Outdated?

Depending on the location, the cooperative model can be a solution to the housing problem. Only if the housing market in regions and cities such as Rathenow comes under pressure in the future could cooperatives offer advantages: stable rents, co-determination and protection against termination. In cities, on the other hand, cooperatives are an attractive alternative. The proportional rent, which is used to finance the project, remains stable for decades.

What Politicians need to do

Neither the federal government nor the states currently have convincing strategies for solving the housing shortage in major cities. Political appeals to private investors are futile as long as approval procedures remain lengthy and financing options unattractive. Housing construction is capital-intensive, and current interest rates are deterring investors. Several measures would be necessary to counter-act this:

- Introduction of depreciation incentives for owner-occupied property
- Reactivation of the home ownership allowance
- Provision of municipal or federally owned land at subsidised prices
- Promotion of long-term, low-interest financing – also via cooperative banks

Conclusion

The housing market in Germany is the result of historical, political and economic developments. The combination of excess demand, speculative shortages and political mismanagement has made housing as a commodity unaffordable, especially in cities.

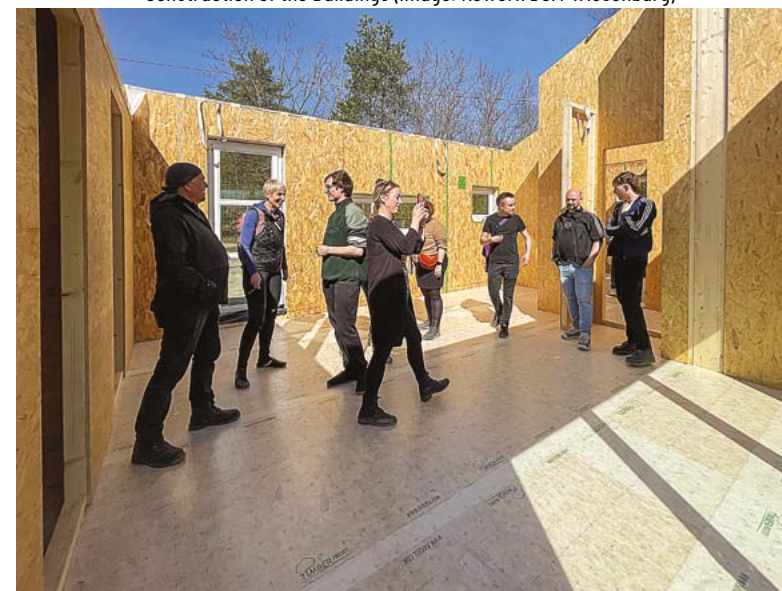
Cooperatives offer a promising opportunity to create communal, affordable living space again – especially in urban centres. The economic conditions are in place here, and the demand is high. In rural areas, on the other hand, there is currently no need for this type of organisation – unless one takes a visionary view of the future.

Politically, a fundamental reorientation towards a more privately funded but socially secure housing policy is needed. This is the only way to counter the looming housing crisis in the long term.



Plan of the Entire Site (Image: KoWork Dorf Wiesenburg)

Construction of the Buildings (Image: KoWork Dorf Wiesenburg)



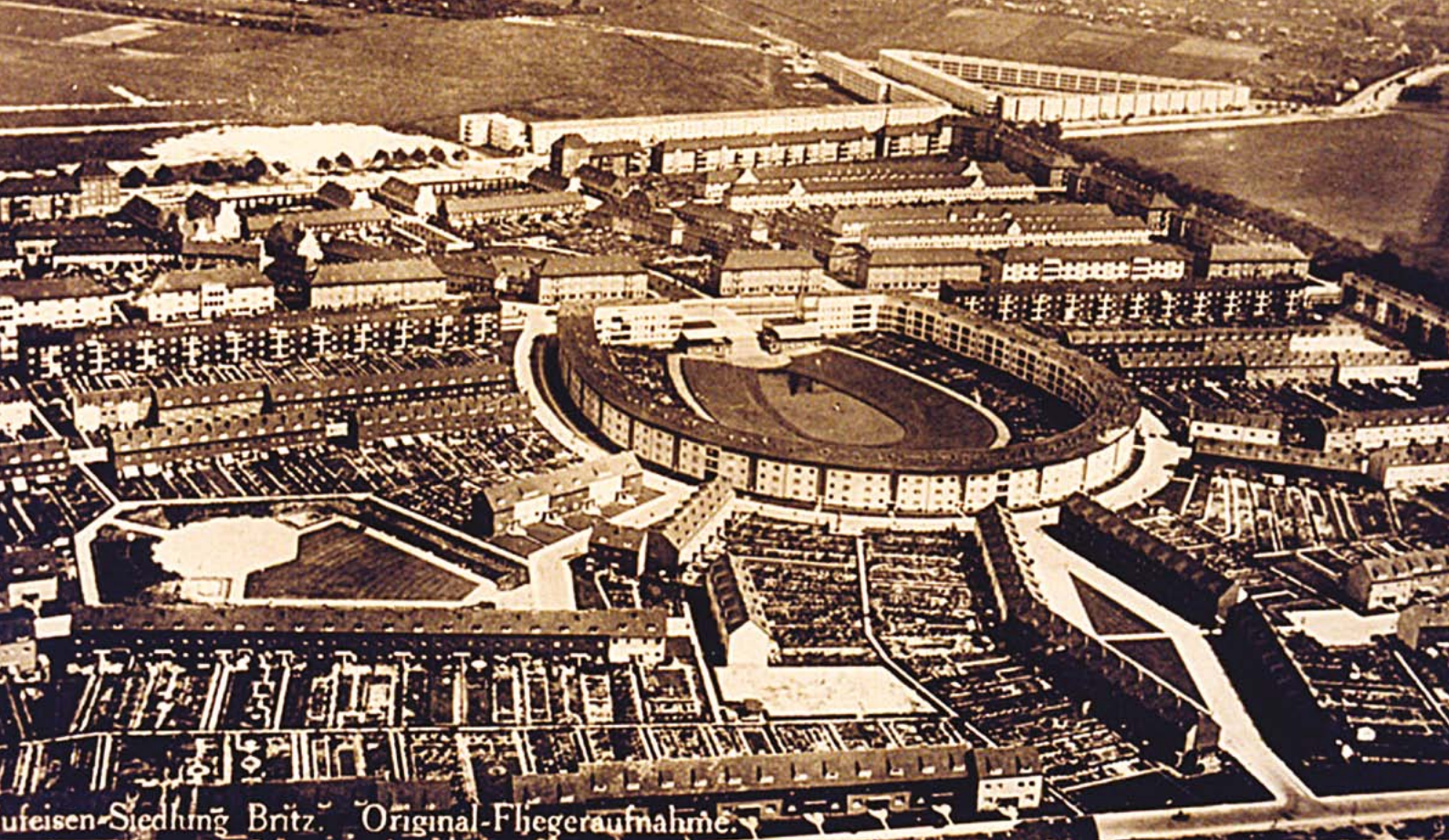
All images are from KoDorf Wiesenburg, which is currently being built by agmm Architects + Urban Planners for VielLeben eG.

'...100 years ago, the garden city movement attempted to create a new form of settlement that combined the best of both worlds: city and countryside. We are revisiting this vision and reinterpreting it in line with today's needs and possibilities...'

'KoDorf is a counter-model to the prefabricated housing estates on the outskirts of towns.'

*'...Focus on the common good
Rural areas are increasingly becoming places of longing and the future. With the KoDorf, we want to help shape this change. KoDörfer consist of a large number of small, ecologically built wooden houses and large communal areas. KoDörfer are cooperative projects...'*

Neulandia – Frederik Fischer



Aerial View of the Hufeisensiedlung (Horseshoe Estate) in Berlin Britz shortly after Completion in 1927 (neukoellner.net)

Studio 3

Cooperative | Health

Steffen Adam | Contribution to the Studio

At the beginning of the 20th century, a new understanding of healthy living developed, closely linked to hygienic and social reforms in housing construction. The central figure in this development was Albert Kohn, director of the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse (AOK) from 1914 to 1925.

Together with the AOK, he initiated comprehensive studies and concrete construction projects to improve the miserable living conditions of the working class. Kohn recognised that many diseases such as tuberculosis, bronchitis and cholera were directly linked to the living conditions of the time.

The dwellings of the imperial era suffered from structural defects: damp, mould, inadequate ventilation and poor sanitary facilities. In dark, overcrowded courtyards, many people often had to share communal toilets. Zille described these conditions in stark terms, and Heinrich Lichte's photographs impressively documented the misery.

The AOK understood early on how to intervene in the housing issue from its perspective as a health insurance company. As early as 1902, the 'Berliner Wohnungsenquete' (Berlin Housing Enquiry) published annual reports on the condition of rented accommodation.

This work was organised by the 'Arbeiter-Sanitäts-Commission' (ASC), which also included well-known doctors such as Karl Kollwitz and Alfred Blaschke. Between a third and a half of all illnesses could be attributed to poor housing conditions.

Politically, it was a novelty for a health insurance fund to concern itself not only with treatment but also with prevention through housing construction. After government agencies initially prohibited the AOK from using funds for housing construction, workarounds were found: in Rixdorf, the AOK acquired a plot of land on which the 'Ideal' building cooperative was established. The resulting 'Idealpassage' still exists today.

Another milestone was the AOK's participation in the Groß-Berlin non-profit building cooperative. After a study trip to England, where Kohn got to know garden cities such as Letchworth and Welwyn, the idea of the garden city was also implemented in Berlin. This resulted, among other things, in the now world-famous Tuschkastensiedlung in Grünau, designed by Bruno Taut. The aim was to create healthy, light-flooded and socially acceptable living space.



Steffen Adam · Reinhard Wenzel (Hrsg.)
100 Jahre GEHAG
Gegenwart und Zukunft des Solidarischen Wohnungsbaus



Steffen Adam:
100 Years of GEHAG
The Present and Future of Solidarity-
Based Housing Construction in Bebra
Wissenschaftsverlag,
ISBN 978-3-95410-344-7

At the same time, the AOK advocated for the construction of sanatoriums, such as the one built in Müllrose near Frankfurt/Oder in 1907. Infrastructure measures were also supported, such as road construction in Bohnsdorf to enable new housing developments. The amendment to the Reich Insurance Code legitimised this commitment from a legal perspective: From 1918 onwards, health insurance funds were officially allowed to contribute to housing promotion.

In 1924, the AOK was a founding shareholder of GEHAG (Gemeinnützige Heimstätten AG), which made a significant contribution to housing construction in Berlin until 1933 and from 1952 to 1999. GEHAG brought together stakeholders from trade unions, building cooperatives and municipal institutions. Its founders included the 'Ideal' building cooperative, Freie Scholle Tegel, Berliner Spar- und Bauverein and the Paradies workers' building cooperative.

The close interlinking of welfare, the construction industry and social commitment had a lasting impact on this institution. The qualitative and quantitative success of this era was impressive: in 1926, 270,000 flats were built by independent organisations alone – more than during the 'economic miracle' of the 1950s.

links: Albert Kohn
(Jörg Becken: AOK Berlin:
von der Ortskrankenkasse zur Gesundheitskasse –
ein Stück gelebte Sozialgeschichte.
1. Auflage. bebra wissenschaft, Berlin 2008,
ISBN 978-3-937233-49-9, S. 27)



Friedrich Ebert Ring Housing Estate in Rathenow, Architect Otto Haesler, 1924/25, (Stadtportal Rathenow)

Today, with a shortfall of almost one million flats in Germany, these historical role models are increasingly being remembered.

To mark the 100th anniversary of GEHAG in 2024, the Berlin-Brandenburg Association of Architects and Engineers and the August Bebel Institute are organising a commemorative event with the aim of drawing inspiration from this historical legacy to tackle today's housing crisis.

Conclusion

The history of the AOK and Albert Kohns impressively demonstrates how health care, social responsibility and architectural progress can work together to create humane living conditions. These insights are more relevant today than ever before.



Above: Premnitz Masterplan | Cooperative Block (SWA Innovation Studio)

Studio 3 - A Summary

Cooperative | Manifesto

Steffen Adam, Thomas Bestgen, Thilo von Haas, Vite Joksaite, Andreas Rasch , Wolfgang Schuster, Sebastian Wagner

In a time of tense housing markets, social division and ecological crises, a model that was long considered niche is coming to the fore: the cooperative. It stands not only for an alternative form of housing, but also for a democratically constituted, economically stable and solidarity-based organisational principle. Where market mechanisms fail and state systems reach their limits, cooperatives unfold their potential: they create affordable housing, strengthen social participation and think in terms of the common good, not returns.

More and more voices from urban development, politics and civil society are therefore calling for them to be strengthened – as part of a resilient, sustainable urban society.

Renaissance of Community Spirit

Cooperatives are experiencing a new boom: as a fair form of housing and as a stable, resilient organisational structure. Solidarity-based self-help is gaining importance where market-driven solutions fail.

Housing as an Investment in the Common Good

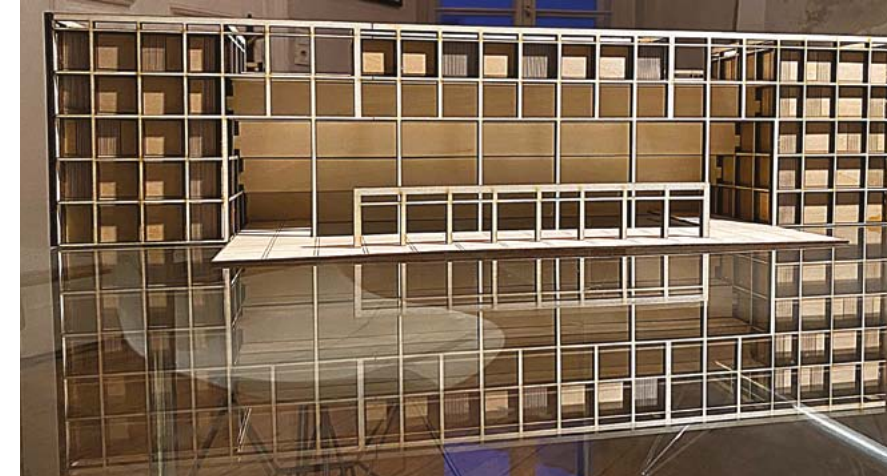
Thomas Bestgen (UTB) sees cooperatives as the key to affordable housing, beyond speculation. They build for the long term, ensure stable rents and take on social functions – from community spaces to mobility and education services. Prerequisite: political support through affordable land and concept awards.

Local Roots and Regional Strength

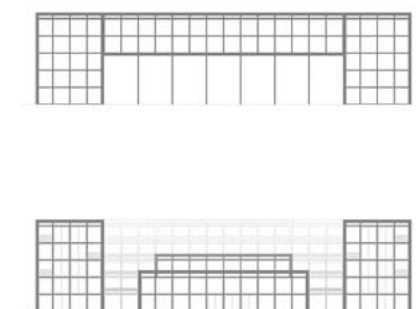
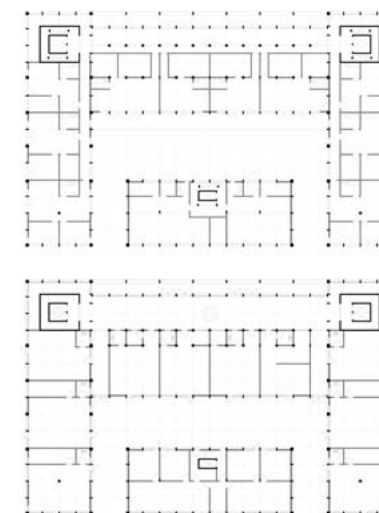
Thilo von Haas (Energisto) emphasises the role of cooperatives as infrastructure for self-sufficiency: they close supply gaps, promote regional cycles and strengthen resilience. Members become co-creators, not just consumers.

Solidarity-based Economy with a System

Andreas Rasch sees cooperatives as a counter-model to the speculative real estate industry. Through collective ownership, profits are reinvested and speculation is prevented. Networking between cooperatives could create new economic leverage – for example in construction, energy or purchasing. His goal: a 'cooperative ecosystem' as a third sector alongside the state and the market.



Design for an Affordable Cooperative Building in Prefabricated Timber Construction, Grid 2.70 m x 2.70 m, (SWA Innovation Studio)
Top: Model
Bottom: Floor and Elevation Plans
(SWA International www.swainternational.info)



Social Innovation and Cultural Spaces

Vite Joksaite sees cooperatives as real-world laboratories for social and cultural innovation: architecture, art, education and neighbourhood merge. Participation becomes the logic of planning, and communal spaces become places of collective identity.

Architecture as Social Infrastructure

Steffen Adam translates cooperative principles into architecture: open ground floors, communal spaces, flexible floor plans and durable materials create sustainable, vibrant neighbourhoods.

Political Responsibility

Wolfgang Schuster calls for a land policy oriented towards the common good. Cooperatives strengthen political participation and take on tasks that would otherwise be performed by the public sector – from daycare centres to neighbourhood centres.

Collaborative Architectural Practice

Sebastian Wagner emphasises planning as a collective process. Shared spaces reduce costs and resource consumption, while creating identity-forming, resilient spaces. Cooperatives are often pioneers in ecological innovation in this area.

STUDIO
Vacancy | Prosperity | Cooperative



Logo Cooperative Year 2025
Baden-Württemberg

'Be part of it and make what moves you a reality' – this is the motto of Baden-Württemberg's Year of Cooperatives.



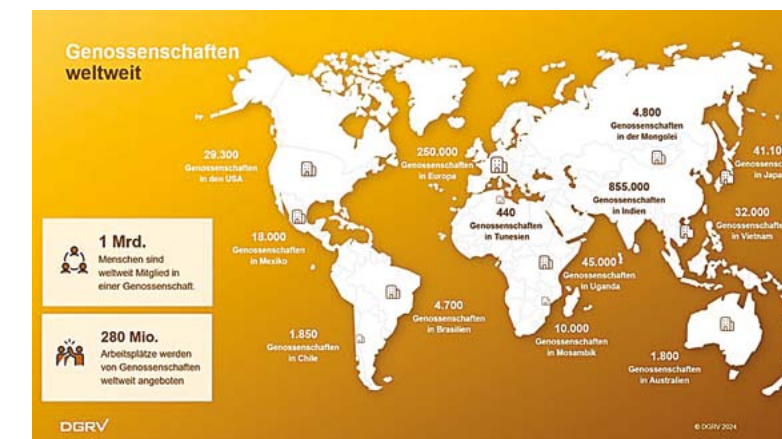
Logo for the International Year of Cooperatives 2025. UN

The theme 'Cooperatives Build a Better World' is intended to highlight the global importance of co-operatives for economic and social development in countries around the world. The United Nations emphasises the special contribution made by cooperatives to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conclusion: The Common Good is Economical

Cooperatives act as economic catalysts not despite, but because of their focus on the common good. They stabilise neighbourhoods, reduce follow-up costs, promote innovation and answer key questions of our time: How do we want to live? Who owns the city?

What is needed now is a change of perspective: away from the idea of cooperatives as a niche phenomenon and towards their recognition as a cornerstone of a resilient urban society in the 21st century.





Tourism | Museum | Health | Studio 4

MUSEUM PANTHOSCOPIUM (WIDE ANGLE) RATHENOW

Text and Images by Prof. em. Dr. Bernd Nicolai

Architecture as a Medium for Identity, Encounter and Transformation

In Rathenow, a town in Westhavelland with a rich industrial history and an exceptional location, a museum project is being developed that goes far beyond traditional exhibition activities: the Panthoscop (wide angle) museum aims to create identity, open up cultural and historical spaces, and reweave tourism and urban society together. Panthoscop pursues a radically interdisciplinary concept – both in terms of content and architecture.

Fourfold Good: Genius Loci: The Power of Place

Rathenow literally consists of river landscapes, lakes and starry skies. As one of the regions with the least light pollution in Germany, Rathenow is part of the Westhavelland Star Park, which has already established itself as a tourist attraction. At the same time, the city has a significant industrial heritage: the optical industry, founded by Johann Heinrich August Duncker (1767-1843), shapes not only the collective memory but also the cityscape. The question of genius loci does not lead to a romanticised return to the past, but to a programmatic opening: what makes Rathenow unique today? How can this be used to develop a sustainable cultural space?

The 'Fourfold Good' Principle

The planned museum is based on four pillars – an integrative guiding concept for curatorial, architectural and urban planning decisions:

Good Subject Matter:

The collection and narrative are based on real objects with social depth. The focus is on industrial and technological history (including Busch, ROW, OIMR), biographies of resistance (Zie-then), and the natural phenomenon of darkness as a resource – 'reaching for the stars'.

Good Story:

The content is based on multi-perspective storytelling: historical layers, personal life stories and global references (such as the Anna Göldi Museum in Glarus, Switzerland, as a museum model for biography and questions of justice) are curatorially linked.

Good Architecture:

The architecture should be a shell, a medium and a brand: a design that blends into the topography while also setting new urban impulses. The Tabakfabrik Linz by Behrens/Popp (conversion by Ph. Weinberger into Art Magazine) and the Pommersche Landesmuseum in Greifswald in the school building by J.G. Quistrop (conversion and new construction by Sunder-Plassmann into a cultural centre) show how conversion buildings can become places that create identity.

Top Left: Rathenow Warehouse, Hässler Settlement, Kulturzentrum Rathenow
Bottom Left: Examples: Linz Tobacco Monopoly, Peter Behrens, Alexander Popp, 1930-1934, including Vally Export Centre Headquarters, 2015, Hänggigturm 19th Century, now Anna Göldi Museum, Ennenda/GL, Switzerland, Poorhouse, town School, and Library Graues Kloster, now Pommersches Landesmuseum, Greifswald, Sunder Plassmann, 1998-2005
Top right: Ballyana – Industrial Culture, Schönenwerd/SO, Switzerland, Bally Shoe History and more, PLM Greifswald, Department of New Beginnings after 1945, Bertron and Schwarz 2020, Anna Göldi Museum, Ennenda/GL, Switzerland, Raumprodukt 2017 (German Design Award 2020, Honourable Mention)
Bottom Right: V&A Dundee, Kengo Kuma, 2011-14, Vally Export Centre, Linz, 2015, Museum of Forced Labour, Weimar Junk & Reich, 2024; Passage. PLM, Greifswald, Sunder Plassmann, 1998-2000

Good Exhibition Design:

High quality, interactivity, mix of materials. Here, design is part of the narrative. The aim is to create an exciting, adaptive space that enables multi-sensory access. References include Ballyana in Schönenwerd/CH, the Anna Göldi Museum (Ennenda/GL, German Design Award 2019 mention for successful design) and the 'Aufbruch nach 1945' (New Beginnings after 1945) section in the Pomeranian State Museum (Bertron Schwarz Frey). V&A Design Museum Dundee/Scotland/UK, architecture and design Kengo Kuma, 2014-18, as a place of encounter and the history of products.

Museum and City as an Interlinked Space

The central idea of the project is the interlinking of public and museum space. The museum is understood as part of an urban health and cultural system. It is connected to riverside paths, local recreation areas, rehabilitation facilities, schools and tourist infrastructure. One possible source of inspiration is the Greifswald solution: there, the exhibition architecture was designed to remain in dialogue with the urban space. Rathenow could transfer this principle to the context of health prevention and resonance experience – as a 'museum on prescription', with mindfulness zones, sound rooms and deceleration architecture.

Architecture as an Invitation to Vision

'Panthoscop' – the name says it all: wide-angle, transparent, reflective. It is about seeing in the optical sense and an expanded understanding of perception: memory, active presence and awareness of the future.
At a time when rural towns are searching for a new identity, Rathenow exemplifies the question: how can architecture be socially effective without dominating? The answer may lie in the 'fourfold good' principle – and in the courage to think of museums as open, breathing systems.

Reference Projects

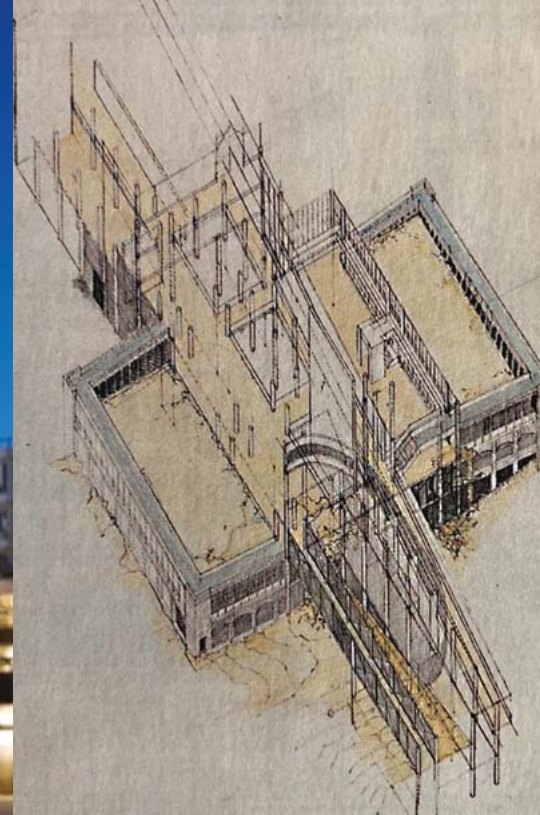
Tabakregie Linz (A), architects: Behrens, Popp, use from 2015: including Vally Export Centre, conversion Philipp Weinberger Anna Göldi Museum, Ennenda/GL (CH), conversion 2017, design: Raumprodukt | German Design Award 2020, mention Pommersches Landesmuseum, Greifswald (DE), extension 1998-2005, architects: Sunder-Plassmann Ballyana, Schönenwerd/SO (CH), industrial culture with biographical reference to shoe design and manufacture of the Bally brand.

Image Credits

Bernd Nicolai plus Wikimedia



Technoseum Northern Side of the Park, Source: Technoseum, Zooey Braun)

Draft Sketch Technoseum 1982
(Ingeborg Kuhler)

SWR Studio Building (Technoseum, Zooey Braun)

Tourism | Museum | Health | Studio 4

Museum in Transition

The Technoseum with Park and Broadcasting Building in Mannheim

Sebastian Wagner in Conversation with Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler

Technoseum Mannheim

The museum building, now known as the Technoseum, marks an important urban development at the eastern entrance to Mannheim. Together with the park with its lake, designed by garden and landscape architect Dirk Jürgen Zilling, and the SWR studio building in front of it, it forms a complex of outstanding architectural and artistic quality. Conceived as a museum of technology and work, the museum focuses on the industrial revolutions and reflects on their social significance.

The design also sees the architecture, with its steel composite construction, the cut-through cross-ribbed vault in contrast to the filigree steel supports and the steel truss bridges, as a demonstration of technological history. Playful refractions such as the revolving doors at the entrance add lightness to the cool elegance of the building.

The space-time spiral developed by Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler determines the choreography; visitors walk along the façades, look out over the urban space and, with the light, onto the exhibition on technological and social history.

The concept of the working museum not only allows for a pure display of exhibits, but above all for a tangible demonstration of technology in operation. The building thus marks a paradigm shift from the classic exhibition space to a participatory space of experience.

Stylistically, one is tempted to classify it as classical modernism, i.e. to categorise it as neo-modernism. Who hasn't been mentioned in the context of this museum building, starting with Peter Behrend, Le Corbusier, Hans Scharoun and others? Both buildings that characterise the city here are architecturally argued. The museum is not a predetermined building type, but rather the result of a 'discovery' of the task at hand at this location.

The high quality of the urban design elevates the ensemble to a landmark building with an unmistakable character. It contrasts sharply with the historically grown urban structure, forming a new beginning for the city and serving as an identity-forming landmark. Moreover, the building illustrates the claim that technology should be interpreted not only as an economic foundation, but also as a cultural narrative.

From a heritage perspective, the Technoseum is classified as a cultural monument in accordance with Section 2 of the Baden-Württemberg Monument Protection Act. It represents an outstanding example of museum architecture of the 1980s and stands for the transition from functionalist exhibition buildings to immersive, narrative spatial concepts. The synthesis of industrial history, architecture and landscape design creates a multi-layered ensemble that continues to resonate strongly with both experts and the urban community.

With its complex design language, the Technoseum functions not only as a museum, but also as a walk-in manifesto of architecture in Germany. It combines reflections on the history of technology, urban representation and artistic experimentation to create a building with supra-regional appeal. At the same time, the Technoseum is more modern than ever thanks to the planned 'Centre for Digital Change', a national hub for initiatives and projects promoting media literacy. Mannheim's combination of historical radio and television technology, current media education in original studios and forward-looking technology is unique in Germany.

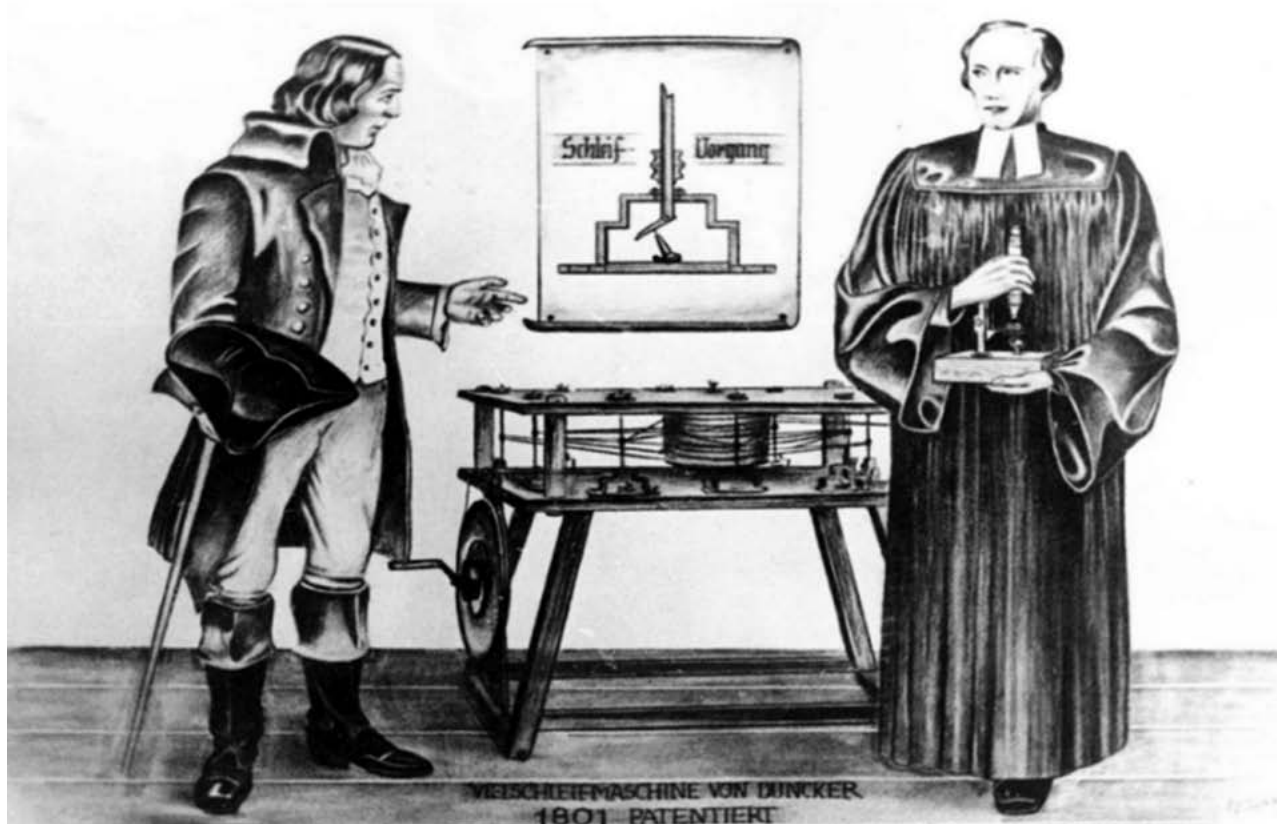
Studio 4 | Tourism | Museum | Health

Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler was invited to contribute her expertise to Studio 4 of the exhibition and event series Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten (Worlds > Connecting | Travelling through Dreams and Realities). This studio focused on the theme of 'City Identity – Yesterday | Today | Tomorrow'.

The panel of experts highlighted the potential for the urban future of the Golden Circle of Second Tier Cities around Berlin.

Particular attention was paid to the Optical Industry Museum Rathenow (OIMR), which is to be embedded in a multifunctional museum of the future as an identity-forming element for the development of the Körgraben in Rathenow.

From Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler's point of view, light and shadow – and their constant change – play a central role in the experiential space of architecture. For her, despite all technological advances, a purely digital museum can never fulfil the demand for a holistic experience. Only through clever, space-related design can museum spaces be created that leave a lasting, immediate impression.



Duncker (right) with patented Multi-Grinding Machine, Source: Optik Industrie Museum Rathenow

Tourism | Museum | Health | Studio 4

Discussion and Outcome - OIMR Event Museum

Expert Panel Museum for the Future – Rathenow on the Way to IBA34

Between Identity, Innovation and Integration of Health, Tourism and Culture

Following LAGA 2006 and BUGA 2015, the planned IBA34 – the International Building Exhibition in the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan area – offers a new opportunity for Rathenow. The city could once again become a model location for future issues. The focus is on the question of its changing identity: yesterday – today – tomorrow.

At the event on 29 October 2024, this change was discussed under the umbrella theme of ‘**Tourism | Museum | Health**’ with a number of renowned experts. A central project was the OIMR event – the further development of the ‘Optik Industrie Museum Rathenow’ (Rathenow Optics Industry Museum) into a multifunctional museum for the future at Körgraben.

The Participants

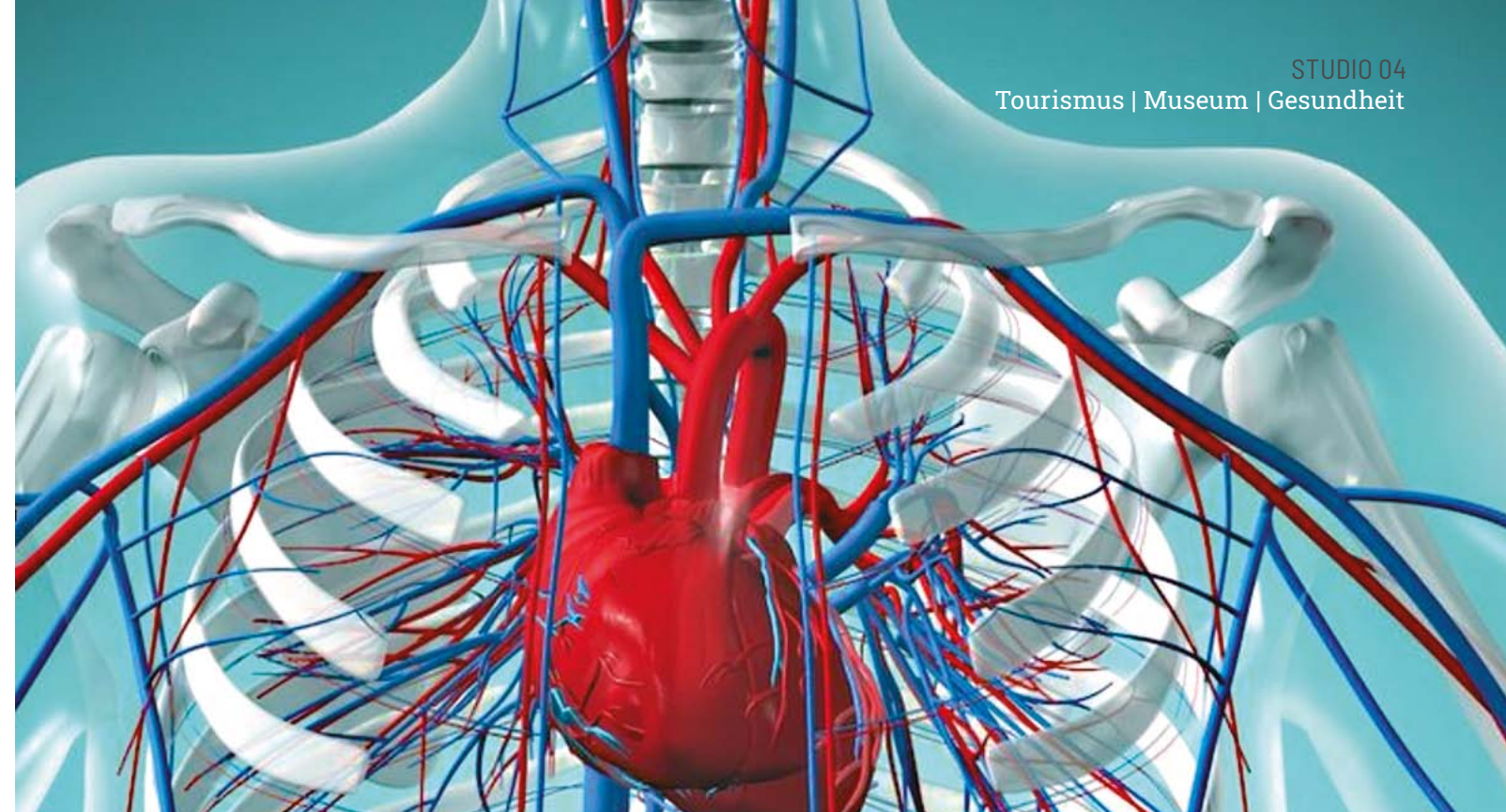
The event brought together an interdisciplinary panel representing a wide range of perspectives:
Prof. em. Dr Bernd Nicolai, art and architecture historian
Sebastian Wagner, architect, SWA International
Prof. Eku Wand, digital media designer
Prof. Dr Justus Eichstädt, expert in ophthalmic optics / optical device technology

Dorit Zahn, Commercial Director of Havelland Clinics
Dr Holger Hotz, heart surgeon and health expert
Dr phil. Peter Dietze, historian, Rathenow Local History Museum
Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler, architect, designer of Technoseum Mannheim

Four Theses for a Museum in Rathenow (Prof. em. Dr Bernd Nicolai)

A museum for the future must combine four key qualities:
Good subject matter – with local and global relevance
Good story – told in the context of the past, present and future
Good architecture – identity-forming, public-friendly and atmospheric
Good exhibition design – analogue, digital, interactive and inclusive

The aim is to create a real building that is complemented by state-of-the-art exhibition technology and offers a visitor-oriented, multifunctional experience. Rathenow's unique character – its genius loci – lies in the interplay of its water landscape, industrial history and astronomical significance as one of the darkest cities in Germany (star park).



The Heart forms the Centre of the Cardiovascular System and connects the Pulmonary Circulation with the Systemic Circulation (Dr Holger Hotz)

Space, Light and Architecture (Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler)

Ingeborg Kuhler referred to the Technoseum Mannheim, which is evolving from a classic state museum into a laboratory for the future. She particularly emphasised the necessity of a built space: only through the experience of light, materiality and spatial effect does a place become emotionally effective. Virtual space can complement this, but not replace it.



Technoseum Mannheim (Ingeborg Kuhler)

Digital Dimensions (Prof. Eku Wand)

With the ‘Museum Maya Indonesia’, Eku Wand presented an immersive prototype that combines cultural education and digital technologies. Narrative spaces, VR and participatory formats make cultural heritage a global experience. Wand advocated a hybrid museum concept that combines physical experiences with digital access – as a ‘new level of museum practice’.



Museum Maya Indonesia (Eku Wand)



Localisation of a Potential Museum Location (Sebastian Wagner)

Home needs Space (Dr. phil. Peter Dietze)

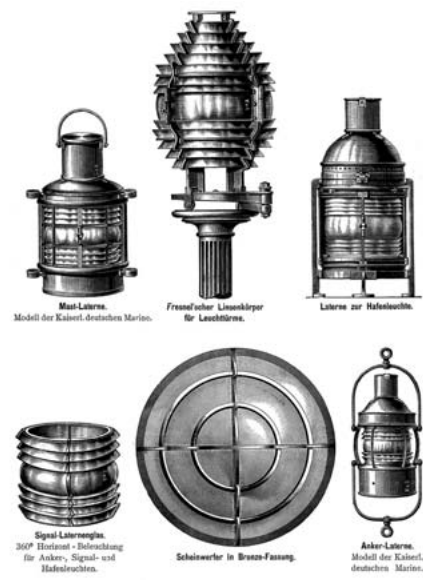
Dietze presented the work of the Heimatmuseum support association with its 43 members, who come from all parts of the community. He emphasised the need for dedicated spaces to showcase local history and called for a constructive solution regarding location and financing.

Optics as Cultural Capital (Prof. Dr. Justus Eichstädt)

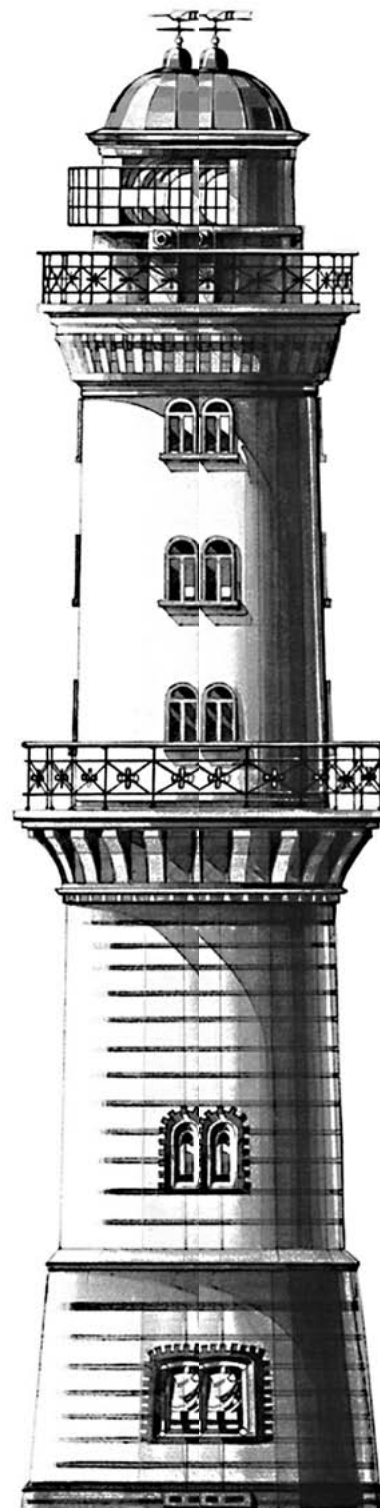
Rathenow is considered the cradle of German eyewear optics. Eichstädt emphasised that the 'Optik Industrie Museum Rathenow (OIMR)' offers a unique selling point in terms of content that extends far beyond the city. This technical and cultural-historical expertise was already evident at the BUGA 2015 – and can be further developed for the IBA34 in an experience-oriented format.



Time Capsule Officers' Mess Rathenow



Beacon (OIMR Rathenow)



Leuchtturm W: Warnemünde

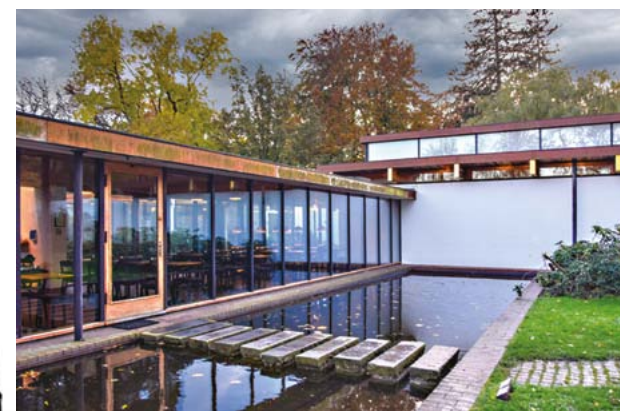


Visualisation of an OIMR Event Pavilion (Sebastian Wagner)

Health as Part of the Overall Concept (Dorit Zahn & Dr Holger Hotz)

Dorit Zahn described the role of the Havelland Clinics as a partner in a changing healthcare system. In addition to basic care, telemedicine services and projects such as the 'Mobile Country Doctor' are being expanded. The history of psychiatry – including a small museum – is also historically rooted and can be integrated into the overall picture of a health campus.

Dr Holger Hotz, heart surgeon and co-developer of digitally networked healthcare solutions, emphasised the role of decentralised healthcare pavilions embedded in the landscape. His conclusion: 'Health, tourism and museums belong together. When cultural and natural experiences are combined with healthcare services, this also boosts visitor numbers.'



Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen

Architecture in the Urban Space (Sebastian Wagner)

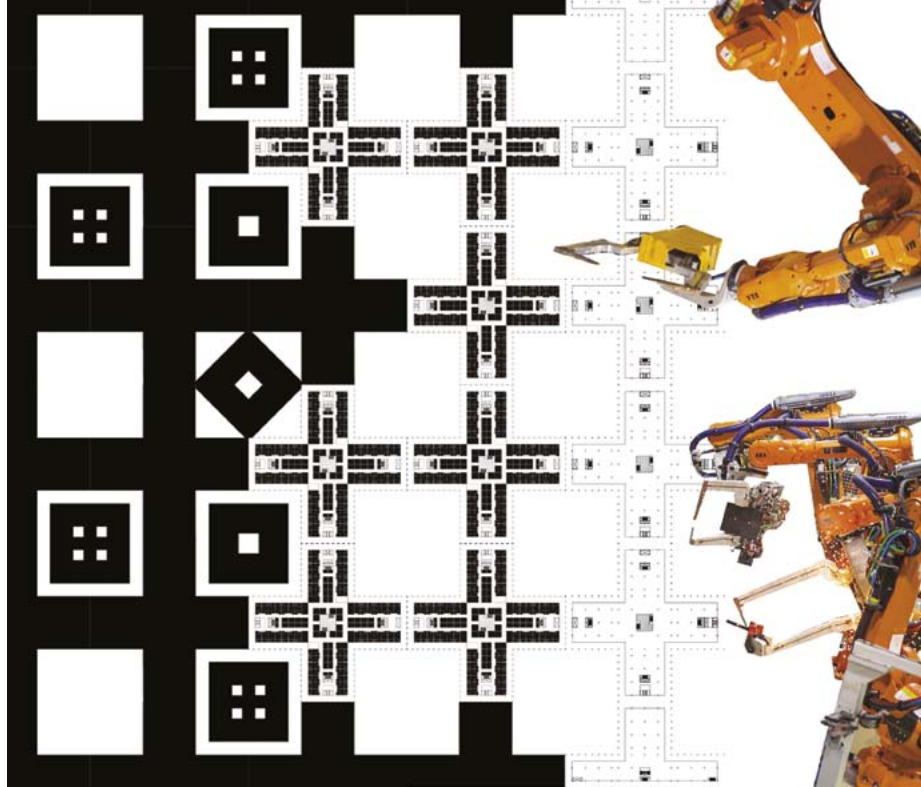
Sebastian Wagner referred to the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen as a model for Rathenow, where architecture, landscape and exhibition intertwine. He proposed a multi-layered use for the Körgraben area: museum – health – tourism under the umbrella of an OIMR event location. The vision: a real and virtual place for new narratives.

Basic principles for the 'Museum of the Future'

- Unique selling point – 'First City of Optics'
- Space of the past – historical location and identity creation
- Real space – space of experience for all the senses
- Virtual space – flexible, open to the future
- Multifunctionality – efficient use for culture, education, health, co-working and more.

Conclusion

Rathenow has the historical resources and the creative and interdisciplinary energy to realise a forward-looking museum and cultural project. IBA34 offers a unique platform for this, bringing together the forces of urban planning, architecture, health, culture and tourism. The Museum of the Future at Körgraben could serve as a model project for a new generation of cultural venues in rural areas.



Al Daayan Health District | Prefabrication with Standardised basic Elements and 3D Printing Technologies (OMA/ Reinier de Graaf)

Innovation | Trade | Energy | Studio 5

Discourse and Results – Economy 5.0

Expert Panel New Technologies – Summary

Participants

Felix Menzel | Mayor of Milower Land
Carola Kapitza | Deputy Mayor of Premnitz
Kaj Mertens-Stickel | Naturwind
Michael Kuhn | Architect
Mihai Ichim | CEO of 3DX Printing and Construction
Sebastian Wagner | 3D Printing

The Havelland: Architecture in the Age of Transformation – A Laboratory for the Future of Building and Living

The Havelland, a region in Brandenburg with a rich industrial history and the challenges of post-industrial change, is currently transforming itself into a laboratory for forward-looking architecture and integral regional development. Away from the urban centres, a paradigmatic approach is taking shape here that synergistically links economic vitality with ecological sustainability and a redefined quality of life. At the heart of this vision is a comprehensive concept that combines co-working and co-living models with innovative commercial space development, supported by the principle of sector coupling¹⁾ and holistic energy concepts. Premnitz is the protagonist of this transformation.

1) Sector coupling (also known as sector integration) connects the electricity, heating and gas networks as well as the mobility sector. It is a key technology in the context of the energy transition on Germany's path to achieving its climate neutrality goals.

Architecture as a Catalyst: from Production Site to vibrant Living Space

The traditional designation of monofunctional industrial estates, which historically often led to isolated and poorly integrated zones, is being replaced in Havelland by a much more ambitious architectural vision. The primary goal is to design 'living spaces' that go beyond the purely utilitarian function of 'production sites'. This implies a profound intertwining of working environments, quality of life, cultural offerings and sensitive integration into the natural landscape.

The development of a significant 100-hectare commercial area in Premnitz forms the nucleus of this strategy. These areas are not solely dedicated to the establishment of innovative companies; they also serve as experimental platforms for forward-looking urban and construction concepts. The application²⁾ Participation in the International Building Exhibition (IBA34 Berlin - Brandenburg) manifests this innovative approach. An IBA acts as a powerful catalyst, significantly accelerating planning processes and enabling the testing of architectural and urban planning concepts that go beyond established norms. It offers a rare opportunity to realise visionary architectural designs that would often fail due to bureaucratic restrictions in the regular planning process.

2) Letter of Interest from the municipalities to Minister President Woidke 07/2025



The transport infrastructure is a constituent element here. Premnitz already has an established industrial park with rail connections, whose expansion potential is to be tapped by the planned B102n bypass – even if this requires complex planning procedures in the landscape and forest conservation area, it emphasises the architectural potential of integration. Selected companies such as Naturwind and Notus energy are already implementing integrated energy projects here.

Sector Coupling: the Baruth Model as Architectural Energy Synthesis

A central foundation of this innovative concept from Naturwind is the comprehensive implementation of sector coupling and the complete utilisation of renewable energies. The project in Baruth, in the district of Teltow-Fläming, serves as a beacon and pragmatic blueprint for the Havelland region. Naturwind, which originally specialised in onshore wind energy, has expanded its business model to develop local, integrated energy solutions. The underlying philosophy is the direct generation and use of energy at the point of consumption in order to achieve maximum efficiency and regional value creation.

The Baruth model is an impressive example of an integrated energy cycle: A wind farm with up to 21 turbines is expected to generate 480 GWh of electricity annually. This electricity will be made available primarily to the adjacent Classen fibreboard

plant, a global leader in this segment. This not only enables the decarbonisation of industrial production and secures around 1,000 jobs, but also uses wind power to produce hydrogen by means of electrolysis.

The hydrogen produced in turn serves as a raw material for climate-neutral glue, which is obtained from recycled CO₂ from the plant's exhaust gas. The waste heat from methanol production and industrial processing is fed into a local heating network that supplies neighbouring towns with renewable heat – a direct socio-ecological benefit that significantly increases the acceptance of the wind farm. Even the oxygen produced during electrolysis is used in the town's sewage treatment plant. The Baruth project thus demonstrates a closed, synergistic cycle that combines energy generation, industrial processes, heat utilisation and waste recycling in an architecturally functional unit. It is a living testimony to how architecture and engineering can lay the foundation for climate neutrality and regional strengthening.

Architecture
Biennale
Venice 2025

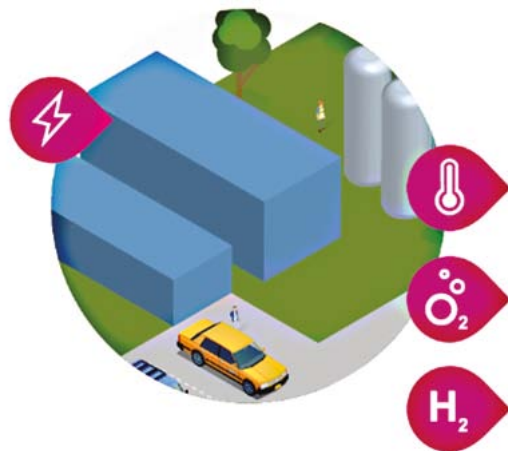
'Intelligence.
Natural. Artificial.
Collective.'

Robot deployment
Brick wall

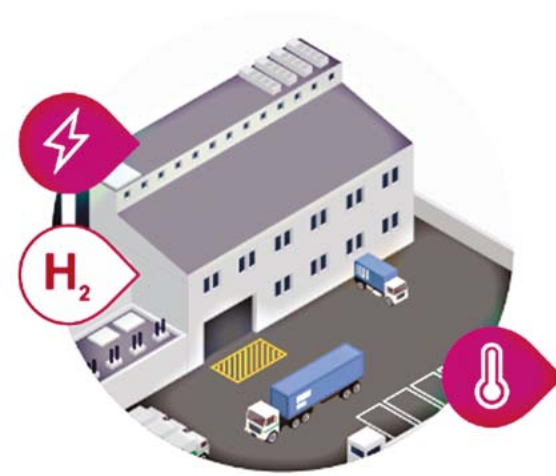
(Lais Hotz)



Electricity from the Baruth-Mückendorf Wind Farm



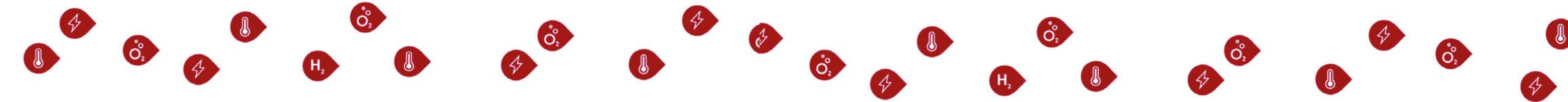
Energy Conversion Plant



Fibreboard Factory Classen Group



Residents of Mückendorf | Residents of Baruth



Sector coupling: The Baruth Model as Architectural Energy Synthesis

Modular Architecture and the IBA as an Accelerator

Urban development and architecture play a key role in implementing this vision in Havelland. The IBA is not only a platform for experimentation, but also a strategic instrument for accelerating planning processes. It enables innovative construction and urban development concepts to be tested that would be difficult to implement in regular planning procedures, and positions Havelland as a showcase region for sustainable development in Germany. The Architecture and Engineering Association of Berlin and Brandenburg (AIV), known for its international networking, is integrated as an important partner.

One visionary aspect is the discussion about the 'Hospital of the Future', the AI Daayan Health District, inspired by Rem Koolhaas' conceptual ideas. This concept criticises the short-lived nature of traditional hospital planning and advocates a flexible, adaptable and modular construction method. The central premise is the use of prefabrication and state-of-the-art 3D concrete technology by companies such as 3DX Printing and Building (Mihai Ichim) and the application of 3D house printing technology (Sebastian Wagner). This not only enables high construction speed, but also remarkable flexibility and dismantling capability. Components can be pre-produced on site and assembled using a 'Lego system', which generates a high degree of urban intensity and expressiveness.

This principle of the 'Lego system' in construction – based on prefabrication and modular elements – is the key to the rapid and flexible development of infrastructures that meet the constantly changing requirements of modern societies. It is equally relevant for the planning of business parks, which require similar adaptability in order to respond to dynamic economic developments.

Regional Identity and Global Relevance: The Havelland as a Testing Ground

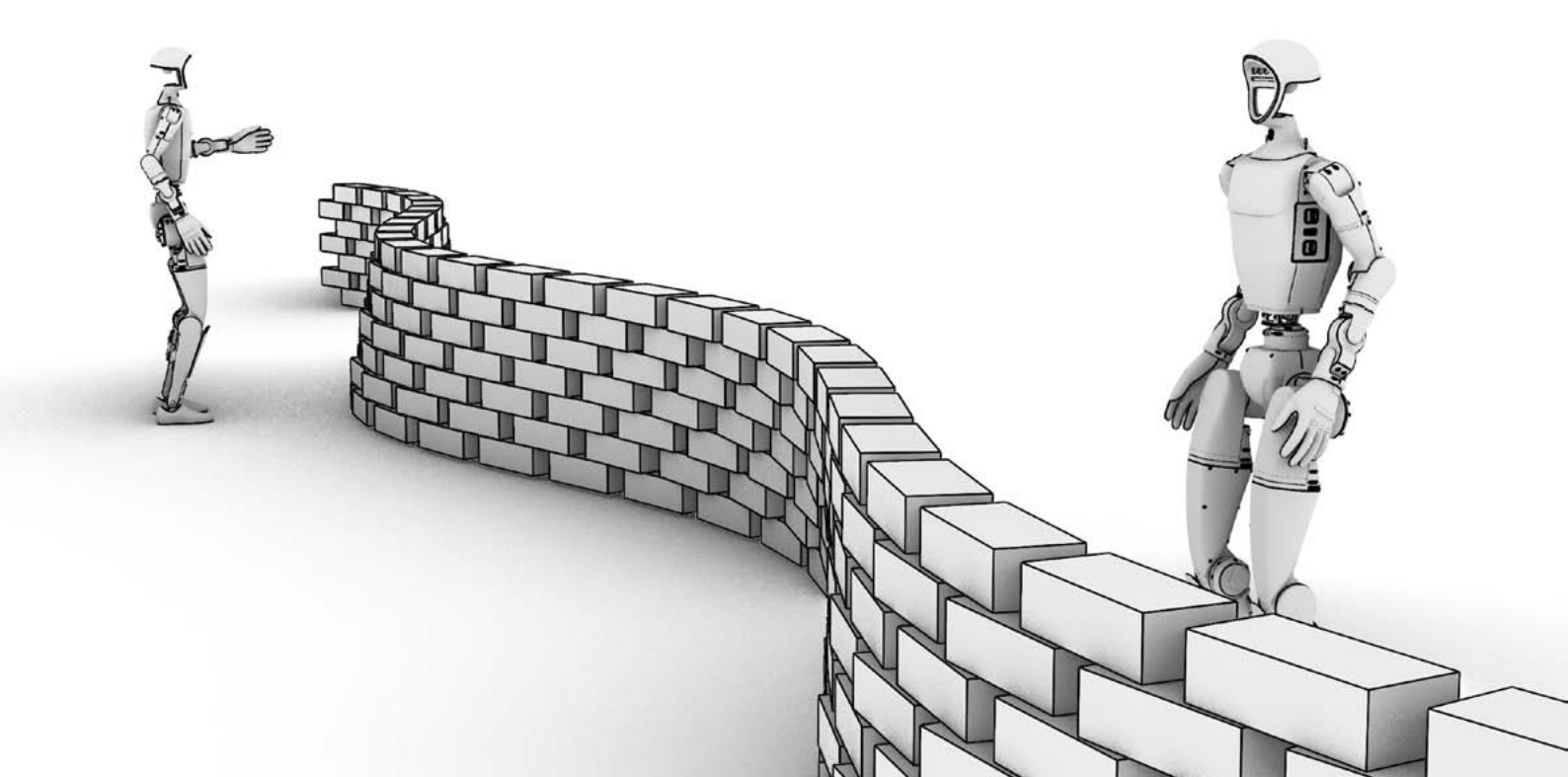
The initiatives outlined above are shaping a new regional identity based on innovation, sustainability and collaboration. The Havelland region, especially the economic area of West Brandenburg, is considered an area with significant potential for innovative developments and international relevance. Germany has historically been characterised by its small-town structure, which has contributed significantly to its economic development. This thesis postulates that it is precisely these small towns that represent the capital with which Germany can succeed in the field of innovation and sustainable development. They offer space for experiments and novel approaches that are difficult to implement in crowded metropolises.

Regions that have experienced phases of demographic or economic decline – often stigmatised as 'no-go' areas – harbour enormous potential for revitalisation. The Havelland region is a striking example of this, where, after periods of migration, immigration and the establishment of new industries (Kaj Mertens-Stickel from Naturwind) can now be observed again. 'Comprehensive concepts' can be implemented more easily in such regions (Felix Menzel, Mayor of Milower Land; Carola Kapitza, Deputy Mayor of Premnitz) than in established areas with more rigid regulations. The availability of land is a decisive factor that favours these developments and enables international relevance.

The success of these initiatives is based on in-depth collaboration between all stakeholders – local authorities, companies, research institutions and civil society actors. Continuous communication and information-intensive exchange are essential for exploiting synergies and driving projects forward. Cooperation with media experts and the involvement of international actors underline the ambition to reach a broad public and establish Havelland as a supra-regional and international model region.

Conclusion: Havelland as an Architectural Manifesto for a Resilient Future

Havelland has the potential to establish itself as a leading model region for forward-looking and sustainable regional development in Germany. A holistic approach is being pursued by combining innovative commercial area developments, co-working and co-living concepts, comprehensive sector coupling and the use of state-of-the-art construction methods. It is an ambitious project that not only generates economic growth, but also ensures a high quality of life and promotes a sustainable, circular economy. Close collaboration between all stakeholders and transparent communication are key to turning visions into concrete projects and positioning Havelland as a pioneer for sustainable regional development. This is the cornerstone of a sustainable identity for the region and a groundbreaking example for future architecture and urban planning.



'Humanoid Visions' – Study by the Construction Futures Research Group, Venice Architecture Biennale 2025 (Lais Hotz)

Innovation | Outlook | Studio 5

Humanoid Robots | Visions of Architecture

Lecture Lais Hotz | Closing Event "Worlds > Connecting"

As part of the closing event

'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten'

(Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities)

at KUZ Rathenow in 2024, Lais Hotz (ETH Zurich) presented a contribution on the role of modern technologies in architecture entitled 'Architektur weiterdenken' (Rethinking Architecture).

Modular building systems, digital fabrication and robotic architecture open up a wide range of possibilities in the design and construction of buildings. Their integration offers the opportunity to take efficiency and creative freedom to a new level.

Topics such as these will also be addressed at the 2025 Architecture Biennale as part of the Construction Futures research environment. There, architects, designers and robotics and AI researchers from institutions such as ETH Zurich, Politecnico di Torino, Tongji University Shanghai and MIT are working together on the potential of humanoid robotics. Experimental setups with humanoid robots and bricklaying demonstrate how technology and craftsmanship can interact (MIT Project).

'...The humanoid form instinctively makes us believe in autonomous abilities – in the capacity to think, act and make decisions. This attribution creates mental spaces in which new possibilities emerge...'

Visions Humanoid Robots

What long sounded like science fiction is now part of the architectural discourse. Humanoid robots are the topic of conversation – not because they can already do everything, but because their potential is developing rapidly. This raises new questions: How is the interplay between craftsmanship and technology changing? What does autonomy mean in construction? What ethical questions arise in this context? And how would humans and machines work together?

The implementation of humanoid robots could open up new perspectives for architecture. A key element here could be a robotic design-to-build system. This would allow 3D models and digital design guidelines to be created in such a way that robots can work with them independently – for example, when placing, measuring or assembling components. This could result in a streamlined process between design, production and execution. Planning and implementation could become increasingly interlinked.

Unlike traditional industrial robots, humanoid systems move on a human scale. Their body-like anatomy allows them to bend, stretch, turn and grasp – movements that many other robot systems, such as 'robot dogs', cannot perform with this degree of variability.



STUDIO
Innovation | Trade | Energy

Architecture
Biennale
Venice 2025

'Intelligence.
Natural.
Artificial.
Collective.'

Robot Deployment
Brick wall

(Lais Hotz)

This flexibility, combined with a large range in three-dimensional space, could make humanoid systems particularly suitable in the future for situations in which adaptability and special interaction with the environment are required.

With increasing development, humanoid systems are becoming more economically interesting. Their growing precision in assembly could be an advantage, especially for small series, unique pieces or experimental designs.

A particular opportunity for the future lies in the combination of mobility and the ability to act: humanoid systems could not only traverse rooms, but also position or adjust elements at the same time – wherever many hands and careful coordination were previously required.

They also have the potential to act as autonomous assistants on construction sites. They could transport materials, support processes and coordinate with digital construction plans. In conjunction with digital twins, this could result in a clear advantage: digital planning data could be accessed more directly and easily on the construction site – while, conversely, information would flow back into the model via scans or sensors. This could create a continuous exchange between the physical construction process and the digital twin.

Mindful handling of building culture remains essential – especially in the case of historic buildings. This could open up a field of application for humanoid systems, for example in the autonomous documentation of existing architecture or precise inspection and inventory maintenance.

At the same time, the challenges must not be overlooked: the construction environment presents autonomous robots with complex conditions – from changing weather and lighting conditions to dynamic situations. In addition, the capabilities of humanoid systems in real-world environments are currently still limited. Intensive research is being conducted into whether and what role they can play in the future.

A vision of the future could be outlined as follows: Humanoid robots could be thought of as a piece of the puzzle in a growing robotic ecosystem that combines human expertise, digital fabrication and modular components. Autonomous systems with different anatomies and capabilities could operate within this ecosystem. Together, they would enable new forms of collaboration between humans and machines and transform the construction process. Such an ecosystem could help to create new scope for design thinking, efficient processes and architectural diversity, with the aim of creating valuable spaces for people.



Children's Art Exhibition at the Rathenow Cultural Centre in 2024 (Sylvia Wetzel)



Collage of the Results of the Work (Sebastian Wagner)

Demographics | Generation | Change

My Favourite Place in Rathenow

Kids design their Town

Children's Art Exhibition in Rathenow:

Creative perspectives on urban development and favourite places as part of the urban development project 'Welten > Verbinden' (Worlds > Connecting), an innovative children's art exhibition took place at the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Primary School in Rathenow, focusing on the creative potential of the younger generation. Under the motto 'My favourite place in Rathenow', works by pupils in grades 2 to 5 had been presented from 5 September to 21 November 2024, reflecting their subjective view of the city and their personal favourite places.

This exhibition was an integral part of a multi-month urban development concept initiated by architect and urban planner Sebastian Wagner, who wants to highlight Rathenow's potential. He presented the idea to the pupils of the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Primary School in advance. While the main exhibition 'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten' (Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities) comprehensively addresses urban development, the children's art exhibition was conceived as a separate welcome and expression space that highlights the perspectives of the youngest generation.

Concept and Educational Approach

The concept is based on a participatory approach in which the pupils are actively involved in the creative design. Preparation takes place through workshops held both at the school and as part of external courses. In June 2024, an opening was held where the children were given their first insights into the project and tips on image design and the use of colours to encourage their creativity. The workshops with artists Linda Furker and Franka Geiser guided the children in realising their creative ideas.

The works were completed by 20 September 2024 and presented at the Rathenow Cultural Centre on 23 September. The 60 works were exhibited on the first floor on an approximately 15-metre-long wall, supplemented by sculptures and handicrafts displayed in showcases to ensure a varied presentation. Local partners were asked to frame the pictures. Favourite places in the city include the Optikpark, Wolzensee, the banks of the Havel, Echsen playground and the library – these places and many other impressions are reflected in the pictures.

Curatorial Framework and Supporting Programme

The opening took place on 1 October 2024 at 5 p.m. in the Blue Hall of the Cultural Centre. In addition to the exhibition opening, musical contributions from the Rathenow Music School and a photo documentation of the creative process were planned. Speakers included representatives of the city and the cultural centre, who emphasised the importance of the project in the context of urban development. The aim was to highlight the connection between city history, public art and creativity.

Another aim was to strengthen the children's self-efficacy through the exhibition and to raise public awareness of their views on the city. The documentation and public relations work make the results visible in the long term and serve as an example of successful participation. Organisational support was provided by Sylvia Wetzel, Anja Brunow and Johanna Burrasch. The project was documented with photos and videos to capture these precious moments.

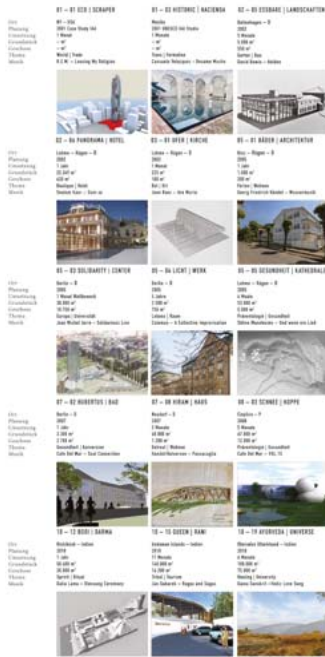
Future prospects and opportunities for cooperation
The project is a successful example of the integration of creative, educational and urbanistic approaches. It shows how participatory art projects can raise public awareness of young people at an early stage. In future projects, the conceptual approach could be transferred to other neighbourhoods in order to win over further generations to urban change.

Conclusion

The children's art exhibition in Rathenow demonstrates how creative forms of participation can contribute to the positive development of public space. It creates a space in which young people can make their views and dreams publicly visible and thus actively participate in urban society. Such initiatives are a valuable element of contemporary urban planning and urban education, underlining the importance of participatory art in public space.

Children's Art Exhibition (Sebastian Wagner)





SWA | WERK

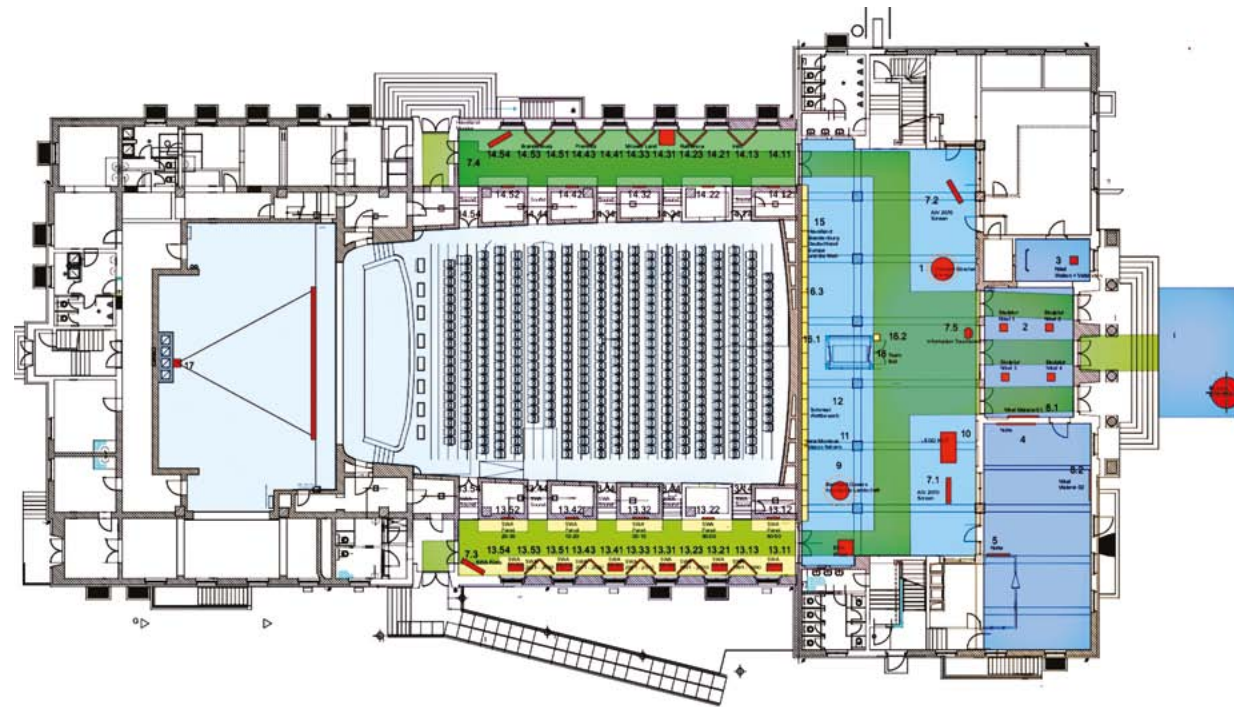
SWA Group Exhibition

Sebastian Wagner, an internationally active architect and urban planner, practises his holistic approach and combines architecture, culture and the environment in a sustainable and future-oriented manner.

He attaches great importance to the preservation of cultural heritage and the transformation of existing buildings.

He attaches great importance to intensive exchange, which forms the basis of his 'Sacred Texture', based on classical rules of proportion and beauty.

This philosophy shapes his master plans for cities such as Spitak (Armenia) and Lomas del Gran Jardin (Mexico), his conversion projects in Brandenburg and the exhibition 'Welten > Verbinden' (Worlds > Connecting). His works, some of which have won multiple awards, provide comprehensive insights into his creative process.



Left: Exhibition Panel from the SWA Group Exhibition | Centre: Exhibition Plan | Right: 'Exhibition Stamp' KUZ - Kulturzentrum Rathenow
The Exhibition can be viewed virtually and interactively at <https://welten-verbinden.com/was/ausstellung/>.

Local | Regional | Europe | Architecture + Art

Exhibition at the Kulturzentrum Rathenow

A Strategy for Transforming a Region

The series of events entitled 'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten' (Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities), which took place from 5 September to 21 November 2024 at the Rathenow Cultural Centre and was designed by Sebastian Wagner as an exhibition of his work and a glimpse into the future, has, with its four pillars

Exhibition | Havelland Mission Statements | Europe | Culture

It earned a reputation among critics as a Gesamtkunstwerk of art and delivered significant results and impetus for the West Brandenburg region (Rathenow, Premnitz, Milower Land and Brandenburg an der Havel), which can be summarised as follows:

1. Laying the foundation stone for the IBA Berlin-Brandenburg 2024-2034 in Rathenow: One of the central goals of the initiative was to lay the foundations for the International Building Exhibition (IBA) 2024-2034 and to position Rathenow as its location. The exhibition and accompanying workshops highlighted the region's potential and emphasised Rathenow's importance as a 'second-tier city' in the 'golden circle' around Berlin. The intensive discussions and concepts contributed significantly to Rathenow's qualification for the IBA and strengthened the anchoring of the topic in regional perception. The IBA is now in its exploratory phase (2024-2026), and 'Welten > Verbinden' played an important role in providing the initial spark.

2. Development of guidelines and master plans for sustainable regional development:

Through five workshops on topics such as urban and regional development, economy and tourism, cooperative models, future technologies and the IBA, concrete ideas and approaches for a master plan for the development of a sustainable and liveable West Brandenburg region were collected and developed. The results of the discussions, in which experts, regional stakeholders and the population were involved, are now being incorporated into future urban and regional planning. The aim was to promote the integration of architecture and urban planning with cultural, economic and tourist conditions, and this has been successfully initiated.

3. Promotion of citizen participation and interdisciplinary exchange:

The event placed great emphasis on the active involvement of residents. Through workshops and discussion rounds, including special programmes for children and young people, their ideas and needs were taken into account comprehensively. This created a strong sense of co-creation in the region and laid the foundation for future participatory processes. The exchange between architects, urban planners, artists, musicians, business representatives and the public was a key outcome of the series.

4. Strengthening regional awareness and networking:

'Welten > Verbinden' has strengthened regional identity and awareness of the potential of Western Brandenburg. The support of the mayors of the participating municipalities, the West Brandenburg economic region and the Havelland district underlines the relevance and backing of the initiative. The event showed how the 'Second-Tier Cities' can form a counterweight to the Metropolis of Berlin and develop their own qualities.

5. Cultural enrichment and thematic deepening:

The integration of art, music and lectures, supplemented by contributions from the AIV Berlin-Brandenburg (with projects such as 'Unfinished Metropolis' and the competitions 'Berlin-Brandenburg 2070' and 'AIV-Schinkel Competition 2024'), not only enriched cultural life, but also enabled a deeper exploration of the topics of architecture, urban planning and sustainability. Like the opening, the closing event on 21 November 2024 attracted great interest and confirmed the success of the format.

'Welten > Verbinden | Reisen durch Träume und Realitäten'

In summary, it can be said that the event was much more than a temporary exhibition. It was a decisive catalyst for shaping the future of West Brandenburg, providing concrete guidelines and master plan ideas, promoting citizen participation and positioning the region sustainably for the IBA 2024-2034. The results now form the basis for the further development of a liveable and sustainable region.

HAVELLAND 2023 > 2034

Der Goldene Kreis
Städte der zweiten Reihe
Quo vadis?

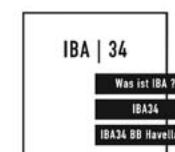
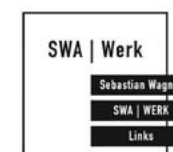


Right
Exhibition Panel
Havelland Mission Statements

Bottom
Exhibition Design
Video monitors



GESTERN | HEUTE | MORGEN







PREMNITZ

2024 > 2034

MASTERPLAN



WASSER | STADT

Top Left: Exhibition Plan | Top Right: Exhibition Panel | Right: Pictures of the Exhibition

Premnitz Water Town

Exhibition at Premnitz Municipal Library

Premnitz Master Plan | Raumlabor | The Third Place

The exhibition in Premnitz in 2025 is an extension of the exhibition and event series Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities at KUZ Rathenow in 2024. The exhibition consists of three parts: the Master Plan, the Space Laboratory for the transformation of WBS70 buildings, and the Third Place.

Part 1 | Master Plan for the Water City of Premnitz

In cooperation with PWG¹⁾ and WBG²⁾, the city of Premnitz has launched a master plan with the aim of making the city attractive on a supra-regional level by establishing new forms of production and creating high-quality residential and living spaces. The step-by-step plan envisages realising the waterfront within 10 years as part of the IBA '34 Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Region. The BUGA 2015 axis to the industrial area will be further developed and densified with infrastructure for tourism, culture and urban life. A city canal will bring water into the city and create a green corridor from the sports field to the Havel River. These measures are intended to promote the revitalisation of industrial areas over a period of 25 years and create a symbiotic relationship between nature and urban space.

1) PWG - Premnitzer Wohnungsbaugesellschaft is the Municipal Housing Association of Premnitz with appr.1600 keys

2) WBG - Wohnungsbaugenossenschaft Premnitz eG t is a Housing Co-operative with appr. 1500 keys

Part 2 | Raumlabor

TU Berlin: WBS 70 Transformation for IBA '34, Prof. Nanni Grau, Dr. Tobias Schrammek and students. The master's design studio at TU Berlin has developed innovative transformation strategies for the WBS 70 prefabricated building series³⁾. The aim was to adapt this type of housing to current social, ecological and economic standards. The focus was on organising new forms of living and integrating green spaces in order to create sustainable models for IBA '34 and thus revitalise this housing construction in a sustainable manner.

Part 3 | The Third Place

'Third Place' in Rathenow: library as an anchor of identity Prof. Ayse Hicsasmaz-Heitele and students. The impromptu designs for the former officers' mess in Rathenow led to the development of the concept of a 'Third Place'. This multifunctional space is primarily designed as a library, but also functions as a safe space intended to strengthen local identity and enable a wide range of cultural and intellectual activities. The significance of these designs led to the integration of the 'Third Place' as an important element in the Rathenow master plan, underlining its relevance for urban development.

3) WBS 70 is an abbreviation for Wohnungsbauserie 70

(housing series 70). It was a standardised type of residential building used in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) that was constructed using prefabricated panels.



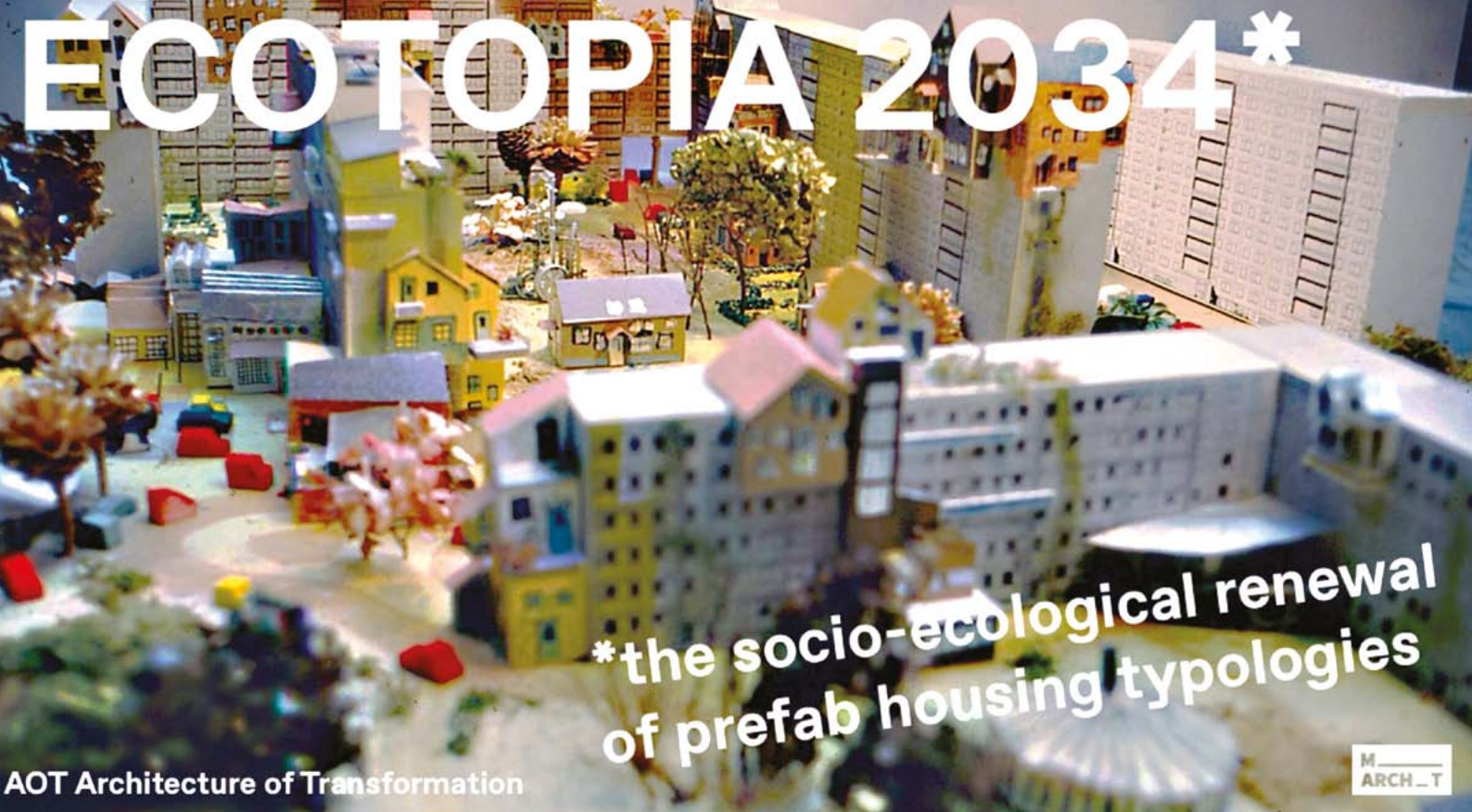


Photo Lucien Simone Kroll Architecture

Raumlabor | Premnitz

Research

WBS 70 Transformation | Prof. Nanni Grau, Dr. Tobias Schrammek and Master's Students

Plattenbau 2.0: Ecotopic

Transformation of Rural-Industrial Residential Landscapes

Inspired by Ernest Callenbach's 'Ecotopia,' a master's design studio is dedicated to the forward-looking transformation of prefabricated buildings from the 70s housing series (WBS70). These once progressive buildings, which provided housing for large sections of society in the GDR, no longer meet the diverse requirements of residents, especially in rural areas. Despite their original efficiency, they suffer from a lack of floor plan variability and a top-down implementation that restricted social life.

The studio explores how this typology can be adapted to future social, ecological and economic needs. The students developed new 'ecotopic' narratives and concepts that include alternative operating, organisational and financing models, novel and collective forms of living, and passive low-tech strategies for building technology and climate control. A central aspect of the designs is the integration and potential of green spaces within the urban prefabricated concrete slab blocks.

The projects presented offer experimental socio-ecological transformation strategies, implemented on a trial basis at locations in Marzahn (Berlin) and Premnitz (Brandenburg), which

represent urban and rural challenges. Here, insights into the work on Bergstraße 75-81 in Premnitz are presented, which deals with an example of second-tier cities in rural industrial areas and demonstrates the potential for implementation within the framework of IBA34:

ComPine | A Forest Habitat for Circular Living

Juliane Alber and Chantal Rohde

INTERTWINING BIODIVERSITY*

Jean-Marc Angeland Jun Wang Maximilian Meier

BEYOND RIGIDITY

Ludovica Corbetta Alberto Luna Reynaldo Peralta



Aerial View of the Location in Premnitz

ComPine

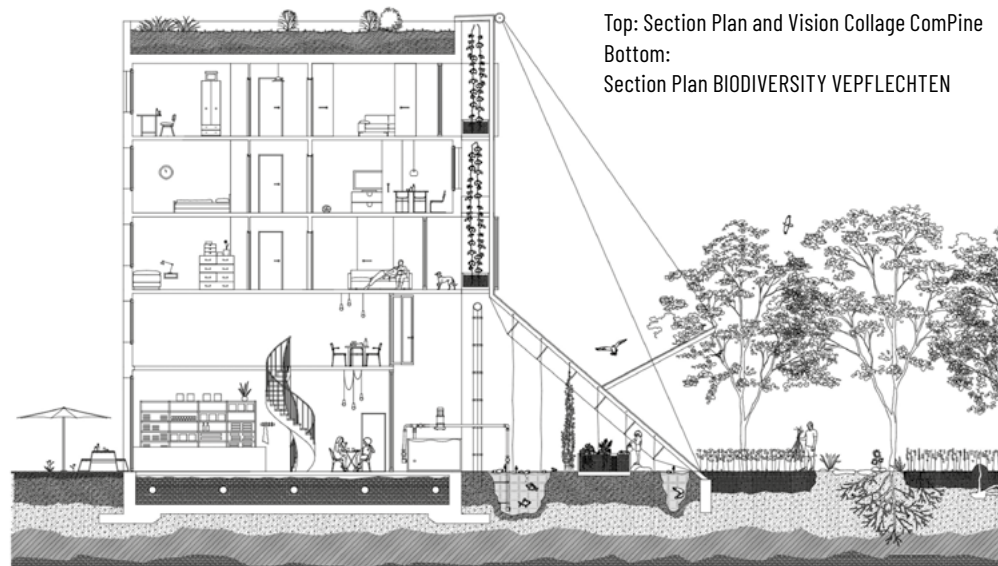
A Forest Habitat for Circular Living

The design of a circular concept that transforms both the existing forest and the prefabricated buildings into a self-sufficient economic and supply system, describing the stages of transformation in detail.

Juliane Alber, Chantal Rohde

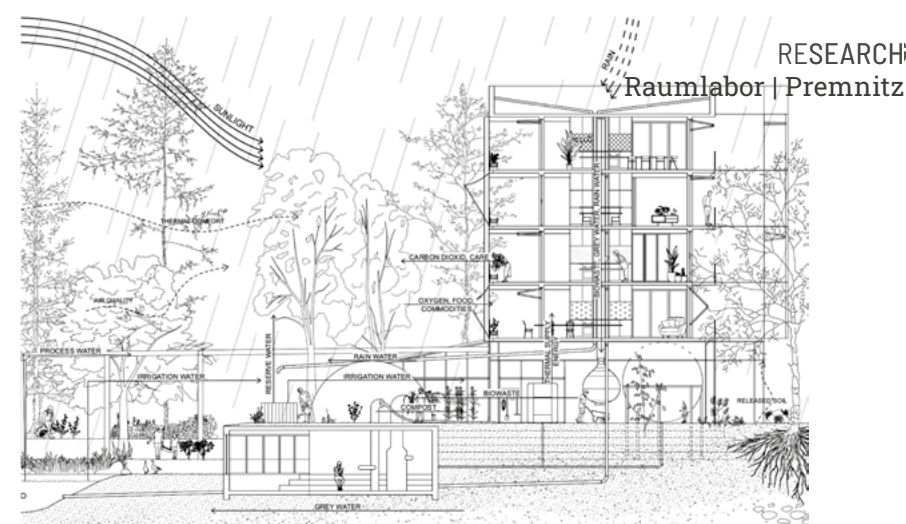
INTERWEAVING BIODIVERSITY*

The division of habitats requires a shift in thinking from industrial monoculture to ecological strategies. The New Alchemy Institute promotes the harmonious coexistence of nature and humans through private gardens and aquatic biotopes in order to strengthen sustainable lifestyles and biodiversity. Jean-Marc Angeland, Jun Wang, Maximilian Meier



Top: Section Plan and Vision Collage ComPine

Bottom: Section Plan BIODIVERSITY VEPFLECHTEN



RESEARCH:
Raumlabor | Premnitz



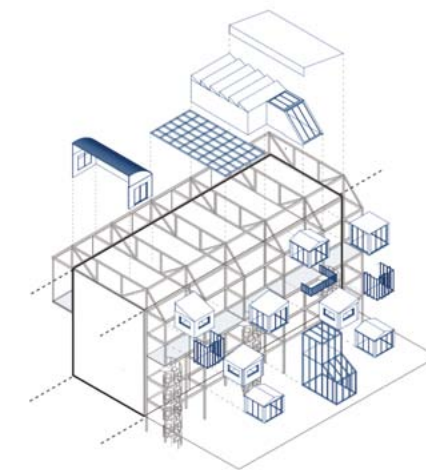
BEYOND RIGIDITY

The collage as the basis for a sophisticated modular system that expresses the individuality of each person and the diversity of the existing environment, and through careful distribution creates parcels for the individual development of each person without losing sight of the whole.

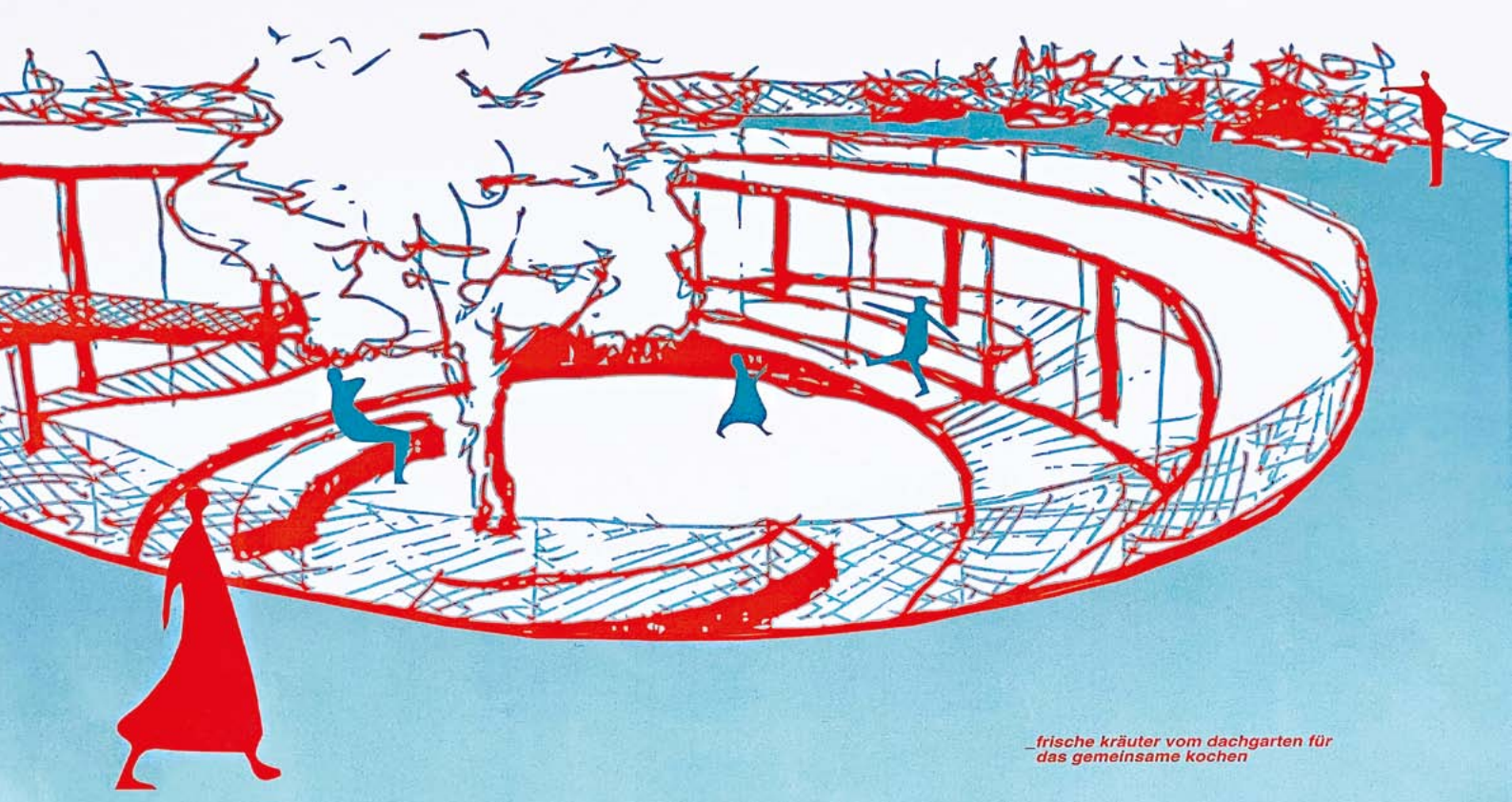
Ludovica Corbetta, Alberto Luna, Reynaldo Peralta



Above Ecotopia Narrative BEYOND RIGIDITY



Isometry Appropriation Framework



frische kräuter vom dachgarten für
das gemeinsame kochen

The Third Place | Rathenow

Research

Berlin University of Applied Sciences | Prof. Ayse Hicsasmaz – Heitele and Students

Impromptu Designs by the Department of Architecture and Building Science

The concept of the **'Third Place'** – beyond home and work – is becoming increasingly important as a social meeting place, as evidenced by a 2023 study by the Körber Foundation and the Berlin Institute for Population and Development. These principles were tested in a recent studio design at the historic site of the former officers' mess in Rathenow, Brandenburg. The villa-style mess, which once dominated the Platz der Freiheit (Freedom Square) and served as a meeting place for the officers of the Zieten Hussars, fell victim to a fire after years of decay.

The redesign of a **'Third Place'** in Rathenow addresses a deficiency that manifested itself after reunification in eastern Germany due to the loss of many such meeting places. Historically understood as places of social interaction, as Heiner Müller aptly described them in 1992 as **'subcultural meeting points,'** they are essential for social cohesion.

The present draft space allocation plan envisages an integrated library as a central element, with a minimum area of 2,000 square metres. This will be supplemented by multifunctional areas for young children, young people and for educational, cultural, sporting and recreational activities. The aim is to create an inclusive **'public place'** atmosphere that promotes interaction and communication.

The functional design includes optimised lending and reading areas for multimedia applications as well as administrative areas. A flexible room structure model ensures logical routing, optimal natural lighting and ventilation, and allows for future adjustments.

The location of the former officers' mess was subjected to a comprehensive SWOT analysis. This identified opportunities, such as the expected increase in user numbers, but also risks, particularly in terms of financing. The strengths of the concept lie in the differentiation of the services offered, while the challenges lie in its integration into existing urban structures.

The impromptu designs aim for harmonious integration into the surroundings, with the outdoor space being actively used for communicative offerings. The documentation, property analyses and atmospheric details provide a well-founded overview of the development of this forward-looking **'Third Place'** in Rathenow.



Sketch from the Impromptu design SAND | SEITEN

Right
Location Aerial View

SAND | SEITEN

is an iconic work of holistic beauty, sensuality and poetry. It brings together transparency, design and uniqueness of appearance in an excellent way. The poetry of the architectural elements, the herb roof garden and the helix-shaped staircase in the centre is captivating and calls for implementation...

Minh-Phie Truong, Anna Doerr



Floor Plan Diagram



View of Impromptu Design SAND | SEITEN

Below: Photomontage of Impromptu Design INNOVATION | SPACE



INNOVATION | SPACE

A space landing on truncated stilts presents itself as a monolithic block, yet with transparent openings into the space in front of Freedom Square, and appears like a city lamp. The selected stone references classical architecture, while the steles lift the heavy structure higher and lend it a sense of lightness.

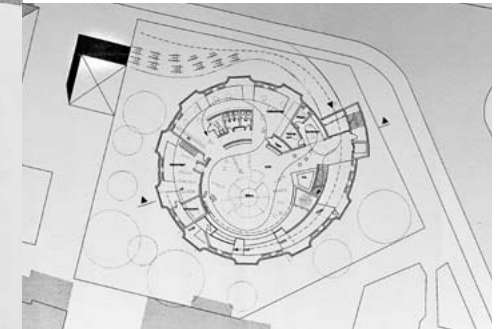
Hamdan Abo Assaf, Paul Hendschke

Sketch and Floor Plan STERNEN | TALER | TURM

STERNEN | TALER | TURM

The urban signal, reinforced by the tower's long-distance effect, is emphasised by its **'viewing window'**. Three structures – the tower, the disc and the city window – create a highly recognisable building in the space. The accents set by the work permeate all important aspects in a holistic form, from micro to urban design.

Bat-Erdene Tsoodol



Perspective and View H2 CAMPUS

H2 CAMPUS

The H2 Campus, designed in a strict rationalist style, sees itself as a fusion of a civilised, technical and research location and stands in front of the Place of Freedom to provide new perspectives for technology and science-oriented development. In this way, it suggests calculable security and prosperity.

Moaas Al Waich





Europe Installation, Wooden Model

The Third Place | Rathenow | Draft of a European installation

Urban Sculpture

Gerhard Göschel

Thoughts on the Model of a EUROPE Installation

The model on the theme of EUROPE was created out of the conviction that only a united Europe can secure the quality of life, peace and significance of this continent in the long term. It is intended for a larger scale in public spaces.

Given the diversity of the countries belonging to Europe, it will be the efforts and power of shared visions for this continent and our planet that will contribute to solutions in many areas of human coexistence. They can highlight the importance of Europe in the world. This model was developed based on this conviction.

The iconographic concept is represented in a design language developed from Gerhard Göschel's earlier works, which are characterised by geometric/abstract forms. The asymmetrical, off-centre arrangement of the circular planes can refer to the tension between the centre and the periphery, as well as suggest the idea of 'Panta Rhei'.

The triangular shapes, in their combination and arrangement into clusters, represent the diversity and individuality of European countries with their people, landscapes, regions, cultures, mentalities, economic areas and political orientations. It is intended to be an image of the essential characteristic and strength of Europe: **Diversity in Unity**.

The diversity of the countries leads to movement, and also to turbulence, which is represented by the curved bands above the circular discs, reminiscent of wind and turbulence. This dynamic embodies the power and opportunity to learn from each other, to cooperate and to interact: a movement that does not level out differences, but rather utilises them.

The unification of Europe has ensured peace on this continent for decades. The crimes and destruction of the last world wars must not be repeated. The burnt, charred ruins beneath the glass pane symbolise that this peace cannot be taken for granted. Nationalist, right-wing extremist ideas are threatening to become socially acceptable again in many places. Today, it is therefore all the more important to stand up for tolerance, the rule of law and humanity. This requires places of dialogue.

The idea of accessibility is crucial to the implementation of the model on a larger scale. It allows the viewer to take different points of view and, through this multi-perspectivity, to perceive the idea of EUROPE as a space for action and experience, to discover the familiar in the unfamiliar. The installation is intended to be a place to linger, a place of encounter and communication about Europe and the EU as a democratic and peaceful future for a society of diverse people. One's own movement and the daily and seasonal lighting conditions also allow some perspectives to literally 'appear in a different light'.



Kinetic Object Makrokosmos, Remake, 2015, Diameter 180 cm
Wood, Oil, Plexiglass Motors. The first Makrokosmos was created in the 1960s.

Bottom Right: Freedom Square, Rathenow

1. Europe Installation, Gerhard Göschel
2. The Third Place, Minh-Phie Truong, Anna Doerr
3. Square Closures, Urban Development SWA Innovation Studio

The object should not only be accessible, but also offer the possibility for cultural events such as concerts, theatre, readings, dance, etc., both inside and possibly also in its surroundings. It should become a space for action and interaction in order to intensify dialogue on the topic.

Europe Installation, Gerhard Göschel and Sebastian Wagner

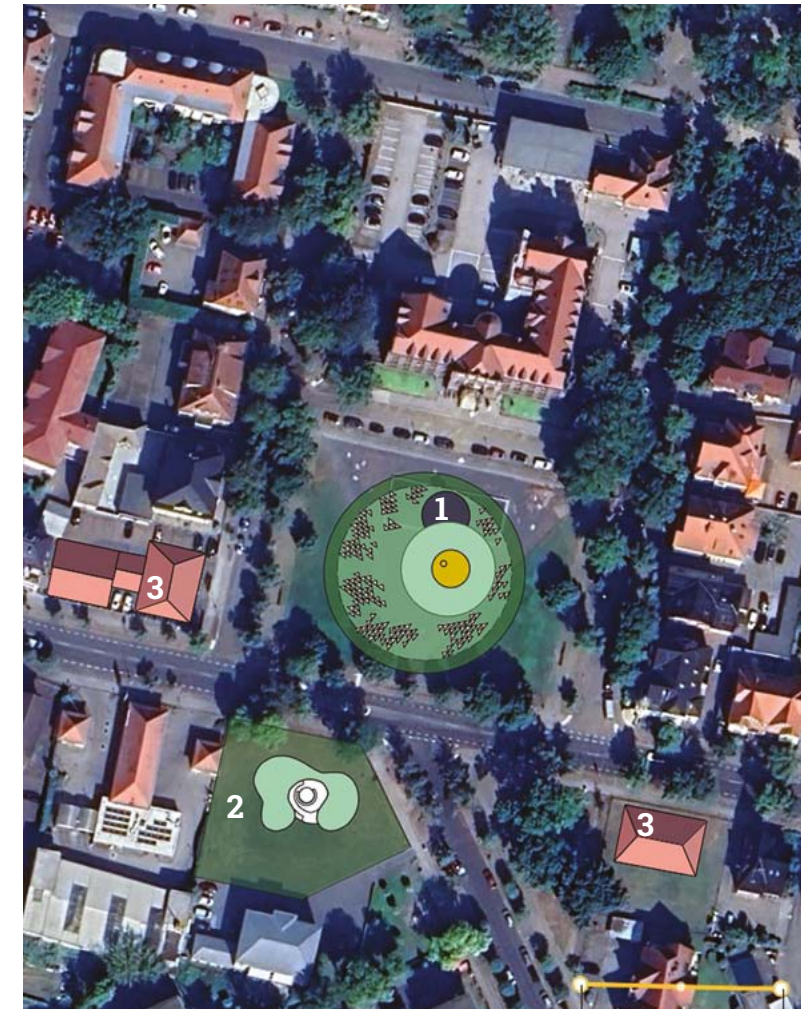


Gerhard Göschel
*1940 - †2025

EXHIBITION
Urban Sculpture

"...We can consider ourselves fortunate to have had an artist and great mind like Gerhard Göschel participating in the "Worlds > Connecting" exhibition with his Europe installation. In difficult times, his work offers a glimpse of a better future. The fact that he left this earth soon afterwards should motivate us to understand kinetic energy in the spirit of his art. I think it makes sense to build his Europa installation as a public space on Freedom Square in Rathenow - it embodies all times and offers a positive outlook on our future..."

Sebastian Wagner





The Third Place | Rathenow | Cosmic Landscapes

Urban and Landscape Sculpture

Bernhard Gewers as seen by Sebastian Wagner

Back to the Future

There are no coincidences, and as luck would have it, certain people and their works cross paths with me in my life and inspire my work. This is also true of the work of Bernhard Gewers, whose son Georg Gewers showed me his father's work one day. I was immediately moved by the depth of the works, whose visionary aura reminded me of an intergalactic star colony that I encounter again and again in my dreams. From the mid-1960s to the end of the 1970s, this visionary sculptor began to develop in an increasingly abstract, non-figurative, highly imaginative and experimental direction. International trends and the search for new forms of expression promoted purely abstract work and were an important discourse among that generation.

These were often not commissioned works but free art. Even in some church designs and commissions, very modern, free approaches and bold compositions were pursued. In some cases, this led to conflicts and the subsequent removal of works against the artist's will. New materials included concrete, aluminium and bronze castings, which in this phase were mostly green patinated and rough.

These works represent a high point in Bernhard Gewers' diverse oeuvre. They are reminiscent of early sci-fi art and anticipate a self-styled 'cosmic aesthetic' as early as the mid-1960s. His futuristic "constellations" and 'ray beings' bear witness to this in drawings and filigree sculptures.

"...Bernhard Gewers, as I knew him, was a religious man with a high degree of artistic sensitivity, whose works are based on Christianity and which equally embody a high level of craftsmanship, an unmistakable artistic ability and an always apt creative statement. We owe a great deal to Bernhard Gewers. His works of art show us that he understood how to make art his life's work..."

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Lohmeier

Man's Conquest of the Earth, 1969
Patinated Bronze and Cast Stone, 100 x 45 x 30 cm



Left and Right Below
Cosmic Landscape, 1967, Plaster with Cast Skin and Patina,
100 x 70 cm, Scale 1:3 for Stone Cast 350 x 200 cm

Above
Large Colour-Light-Water Feature, 1976, Glass, Concrete, Coloured Water,
Coloured Light, 50 x 40 cm, Scale 1:10 for approx. 350 cm Height
Competition Design for an Interactive Colour Sculpture in a Clinic, intended to encourage Creative Collaboration

The way Bernhard Gewers handled materials already indicated that he was going far beyond the usual boundaries in terms of form and choice of materials. For the first time, light became sculpture and water became part of the overall work. Where modernism made strict distinctions, Bernard Gewers brought things back together again, yet still maintained a clear order. His teacher Neufert was more of a mirror, which he did not want. He preferred freedom of design without losing the ability to structure, thus penetrating deeper and more complexly into abstract space, a journey through endless space, where everything comes together in a complete work.

He calls his flat reliefs '**Cosmic Landscapes**,' which are characterised by rays, sunlight collectors and accumulator-like devices. The plaster model has its origins in the dystopian 1970s, which makes the surface of these machine-like installations appear as technoid as they are apocalyptic, yet radiating infinite beauty.



Left
Structured, Technoid and at the same time imbued with a Futuristic, Timeless Beauty, this is a Piece of the Universe. As Concrete matter, this Design for a Sculpture is a Moment of the incomprehensible Infinity of the Cosmos Made Manifest: Created for us Tiny Humans in 1967 and inspiration for the Pavilion Model in the 3D-Print Concrete Process by Sebastian Wagner.

EXHIBITION
Urban Sculpture

Bernhard Gewers

Born on 27 April 1927 in Vreden, Westphalia, trained as a stone and wood sculptor in Münster. Collaborated on the reconstruction of the city of Münster. Studied at the Münster School of Applied Arts under Prof. Kurt Schwippert and architecture at Darmstadt Technical University, graduating under Prof. Ernst Neufert. Worked as a freelance artist for the state, the church and private clients. Worked in bronze, aluminium and concrete. Continued working until his death in early 2012.



Above The Song is You | Nina Nolte
Left Oil and Acrylic on Canvas | Volker Nikel

Nina Nolte

Born in El Salvador to German parents, she grew up in Barcelona and Germany and now lives in Marbella. Exhibitions in Europe, Asia, Central America and the USA. Her art is a mixture of pop art, realism and the right moment. She creates lightness and summery cheerfulness. Every glance at her art awakens a longing to enjoy mere existence and brings healing through serenity.



Above
Works from 34 Years
The Collection
A Retrospective of
Diversity
Nina Nolte

The Third Place | Rathenow and the World Sculpture and Colour

Volker Nikel and Nina Nolte at the Exhibition "Worlds > Connecting"

The artwork often has an invisible history of its creation inscribed within it. This begins with the initial idea, the creative inspiration, which can be a flash of insight or inspiration – which literally means inhalation, and metaphorically the perception of those special circumstances – that turn an everyday situation into something extraordinary, into that moment that will ultimately transform the idea, the spirit, into matter, be it a painting, a sculpture or any other object.

Art is always a bridge between the act of creation, which is ideally linked to innovation and thus reaches into the future. A work of art shows us an experience that we have not yet had, perceived or seen. This freedom of art can be enlightening and beneficial; it always depends on our openness as to how much we want to be moved by a work of art.

Architecture and art are connected. They provide design possibilities for buildings. Art also opens up the space itself when it thinks in new ways and thus inspires new things. It is no coincidence that paintings can be found in the earliest human dwellings, caves. This could be considered the starting point for the human need for beauty in a holistic sense.

Volker Nikel

Born in Berlin in 1959. Painting, Sculpture, Performance, figurative and abstract, with connecting Stylistic Features in all Art Forms, Sculpture Groups for Public Spaces (e.g. Potsdam State Authority Centre). Powerful Compositions in Balance and Actionist Forms in the Tradition of Fluxus and Political Happenings are expanded through Engagement with Modernism. Lives in Hindenberg.

Top
Volker Nikel
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas
Bottom
Volker Nikel
Steel



Volker Nikel and Nina Nolte played an essential role in the exhibition "Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities", among others. In order to create new models, the art of painting, sculpture, materials, as already shown by Bernard Gewers, and immateriality through abstraction, as expressed in Gerhard Göschel's Europa installation, are necessary impulses.

The juxtaposition of Nikel and Nolte brings together abstraction and photorealism, yet they are united by their choice of colour and aesthetics. Both wander through many layers and, with a final stroke or weld seam, mark a point in time with a pointed statement: beauty in depth, on the surface, in the moment and in the eternity of momentum. They create a space for contemplation which, in its juxtaposition, represents the diversity of possibilities in an exciting way and at the same time makes a statement in the here and now.



Left
Portrait
Painting on Wood
Volker Nikel

Above Right
Part of Nikel and Nolte's
Works in the Exhibition
Worlds > Connecting
Right
You and the Night
and the Music
Nina Nolte



People

UFO Hawaii & John Jones



STAGE
Musik

Top Left Album Cover People | Ufo Hawaii & John Jones, (Achim Treu)
Top Right Achim Treu and JJ Jones Performance at KUZ (Sylvia Wetzel)

Top Left: Achim Treu and JJ Jones Performance at KUZ (Sylvia Wetzel)
Bottom left: Detail of stage design People Performance (Achim Treu)

Top Right Anouk Bergh (Sylvia Wetzel)

The Third Place | The Sound of the World

Music

Niels Fölster, Sulah, JJ Jones, Achim Treu, Anouk Berg | Event "Worlds > Connecting"

Since all our senses accompany us, attention was also paid to sound in the exhibition and event **"Worlds > Connecting"**. Music can be considered an international language because it does not require translation, nor does it need to be visually absorbed and mentally processed like text or art. With music, it seems to be the other way around: music is perceived directly and emotionally through hearing and intuition, and only then (perhaps) considered. This immediacy also corresponds to the process of making music: no one would stand on stage and first think about which note could follow the previous one. Nevertheless, the sensation for it is in the mind, is translated into sounds by the body and thus becomes an inspiration for the listeners again. Rousing music entices movement and dance, and like architecture, it opens up spaces, building the most beautiful halls and largest auditoriums so that it can be heard.

'Music is the healing force of the universe' is the title of a piece by Albert Ayler.

The musicians are closely connected in their music to 'Journeys through dreams and realities'. Niels Fölster quietly accompanied Sebastian Wagner's architectural life journey with a dramatic arc between James Bond themes and sound moments by David Bowie.

He thus guides the viewer through the exhibition and the associated objects. As before, Sulah has prepared a new series of songs for Rathenow, reflecting on travel and the search for oneself, expressing this with her beautiful voice and enchanting visitors with the Adi Shakti mantra^{1]}. JJ Jones and UFO Hawaii accompanied the finissage with avantgarde music and then into the starry sky... summed up with minimalist poetry by Anouk Berg.



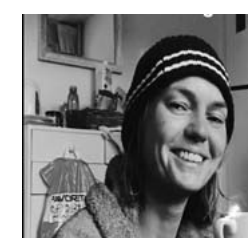
1] The Adi Mantra, 'Ong Namo Guru Dev Namo,' means 'I salute the creative energy that leads me from darkness to light.'



Niels Fölster
born in Kabul, Afghanistan as a German citizen, grew up in Switzerland and Germany. Sound engineer at HDK Berlin, music producer and composer for theatre publishers, Chemnitz State Theatre and the production 'Apassionata - Sehnsucht'.

Head of department at the Havelland School of Music and Art. Musicals for children/young people, KUZ Rathenow, Stadthalle Falkensee and Brandenburger Theater.

Left
Sulah during Rehearsals and on Stage
Source: Friedrich Schöning



Sulah
The Dutch singer-songwriter first came to Rathenow in 2020.

'I love writing lyrics about life, spirituality, love and consciousness - they're the perfect way to express my thoughts, reflections and feelings.'

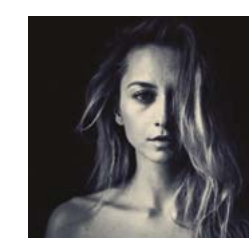
I hope that my lyrics can spread a message of love and wisdom and contribute to a more harmonious planet.'



JJ Jones
Born in Detroit/Nashville. Singer, artist, presenter. Lives in Munich. 1996 Berlin Performance artist and lead singer of Fuzzy Love. Relaunch of the band 'Der Plan'. Nashville Orthodox Church Choir, founding ecclesaudio project. The Human Snow Globe Performance. Radio plays, film soundtracks, band Tosca (Dorfmeister, Huber). Concept/presentation Same Old Song, Vox on Vinyl. Sound collage Nils Frahm - Meister Eckhard and David Bowie.



Achim Treu
Musician, producer and composer, lives in Berlin. 1985 band Dauerfisch, released various albums. Music compositions for computer games and films, collaboration with pioneer Jon Appleton. Berlin rock band Mutter. Member of Neue Deutsche Welle legend Der Plan. Host of the UFO Hawaii radio show on byte.fm, with the aim of mixing 'things that never really belonged together, but in the end fit together as if by magic'.



Anouk Bergh
is a multidisciplinary artist based in Berlin who works in the fields of visual arts, theatre and performance. She explores the interactions between the medium as a tool and its influence on artistic vision. Storytelling is at the heart of her work, with a keen interest in the traditional approach to stories as a means of preserving social identity and as a bridge between tangible reality and the imaginative creations of the human mind.



Klaus Theo Brenner
Mentor



Sebastian Wagner
Idea - Initiator
Director



Amrit Kaur Khalsa
Soul of the Project



Michael Omilian
Management and Public
Relations



Jens Hubald
Strategies

Worlds > Connecting | Journeys through Dreams and Realities

Creators

The Network



Florian Franke-Petsch
Texts, Market | Strategies,
Philosophy, Optimisation



Leo Finn Trichard
Assistant to the
Management



Finn Grau
Assistant to the
Management



Isolde Nagel
A - Trans
Potsdam e.V.



Fabian Burns
AIV
Berlin Brandenburg e.V.



Florian Kunz
Web Design



Jörg Reineke
Typology



Hayley Clarke
Multimedia



Friedrich Schöning
Film



Michael Kuhn
Back-up Partner



Raoul Kevenhörster is a photographic artist based in Berlin whose work is characterised by the technique of multiple exposure and the combination of reality and inner imagery. In his photographic compositions, different layers overlap to create poetic image spaces that oscillate between dream and reality. A central element of his creative process is a state of extreme inner concentration, which the artist describes as a 'vacuum'. In this moment of mental clarity, his image concepts arise instinctively, often in a matter of seconds, before being manifested in the camera through multiple exposure. Raoul Kevenhörster's works are not only aesthetically condensed visual worlds, but also a powerful appeal to conscious seeing. His works invite us to understand reality as a multi-layered, often contradictory structure and open up a space for reflection on perception, identity and human existence.

Excerpt from the artist portrait written by Klaus Memmert,
BEYOND.REALITY Gallery
Portrait photo by Jan Sobottka (catonbed.de)
Raoul Kevenhörster
(Raoul.Kevenhoerster@web.de)

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Stadt Rathenow



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WRWB



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RWG Rathenow



PWG Premnitz



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Klaus Theo Brenner STADTARCHITEKTUR



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Florian Franke-Petsch

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Mihai Ichim, Vite Joksaite, John JJ Jones, Bruno Kämmerling, Amrit Kaur Khalsa, Harald Kraft, Ingeborg Kuhler, Peter Lemburg, Mik Kuhn, Florian Kunz, Jan Lierse, Stefan Lüdke, Susanne Lutz, Britta Mau, Felix Mentzel, Christian Müller, Isolde Nagel, Bernd Nicolai, Volker Nickel, Nina Nolte, Tobias Nöfer, Michael Th. Omilian, Bernd Petrol, Peter Poschmann, Katja Potschmann, Jörg Reineke, Wolfram Ritschl, Elisa Ruppel, Friedrich Schöning, Wolfgang Schuster, Ratan Singh, Georgi Stanishev, Jörg Steinbach, Leo Finn Trichard, Eku Wand, Christopher Weiß, Sylvia Wentzel, Mathilde Wesdorp 'Sulah' and others.

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Atelier Tilman Burgert Marzahne



Webprojekte



Brandenburgische Ingenieurkammer



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SWA Group International



ffp-texte@gmx.net
Florian Franke-Petsch

Thank you for combining architecture and art. In doing so, you provide design possibilities for buildings and art and open up space for something new. It is no coincidence that paintings can be found in the earliest human dwellings, caves, which are the starting point for the human need for beauty in a holistic sense.

Thank you for your donations in kind and in cash, and for your belief in our mission.

With your help, we were able to embark on the 'Journey through Dreams and Realities', enabling the exhibitions, events and this publication to come into being.

Steffen Adam, graduate engineer and architect, studied at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences. Construction experience in Berlin on listed transport structures. Self-employed since ²⁰⁰³, including as a lecturer in the history of civil engineering at Berlin University of Applied Sciences. Worked at the W. Brenne and Bertsch Architekten offices and is a member of the AIV executive committee.

Thomas Bestgen, graduate in business administration and banking, founded UTB in ¹⁹⁹⁶ and has been managing partner of the UTB Group ever since. In ²⁰¹⁷, he became managing partner of the planning consortium ‘Das Neue Gartenfeld’ GmbH & Co. KG in Berlin.

Klaus Theo Brenner, Berlin architect with close ties to Milanese Modernism. Influenced by Josef Paul Kleihues and Vittorio Gregotti, he taught at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam. His focus is on the urban context. In numerous publications, he reflects on European urban culture and the idea of the ‘Good City’.

Justus Eichstädt, Rathenow-based optical engineer and professor in the Department of Technology at Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences, specialising in ophthalmic optics/optical device technology with a focus on teaching, research and transfer, engineering topics in the field of optical technologies, in particular ophthalmic optics, optical device technology, ophthalmic technology, optics development, optics manufacturing and laser technology.

Nanni Grau, professor of architecture of transformation at the Technical University of Berlin since ²⁰²⁴, architect with her own office Hütten & Paläste, ^{2021–2024} full professor of building in existing contexts – architecture of transformation, Munich University of Applied Sciences, ^{2017–18} visiting professor at the University of Kassel, and member of the DieNachwachsendeStadt network.

Ayse Hicsasmaz – Heitele, architect and professor at the BHT since ²⁰²¹. After studying at the TU Berlin, she founded the Architekturwerkstatt Berlin. Among other things, she was project manager, research assistant and member of the Schinkel Committee.

Lais Hotz studied architecture and was active in innovative robotics projects at ETH Zurich. His interdisciplinary work combines elements of architecture and robotics.

Jens Hubald, Chairman of the Board of Rathenower Wohnungsbaugenossenschaft eG since ²⁰²². Urban developer, city manager and climate protection manager in Rathenow. He has realised numerous participatory urban and open space projects, including ‘Rideplatz’ and ‘Baum des Lebens’ (Tree of Life), and has worked closely with universities of applied sciences and renowned urban planners such as Prof. Brenner.

Vite Joksaite, cultural manager and curator with a focus on participatory projects on social integration, sustainability and creativity. Studied cultural management in Vilnius and curatorial studies in Frankfurt am Main. Has been with kitev in Oberhausen for several years, co-founder and board member of village e.V., a laboratory for forward-looking, global cultural projects.

Harald Kraft, hydraulic engineer and managing director of HYDROPHIL Berlin, is developing the integrated water and energy system for the Gartenfeld Berlin project, among others, and is making a lasting impact on the infrastructure. The project, initiated by Thomas Bestgen, anchors the common good and participation for a sustainable model neighbourhood.

Ingeborg Kuhler, first female design professor in Germany at the HdK Berlin. Her main work is the TECHNOSEUM in Mannheim, for which she received the European Award for Museum Design in ¹⁹⁹². She has also served as a juror, lecturer and chair of the design advisory board in Salzburg.

Bernd Nicolai, architecture and art historian and professor of architectural history and monument preservation at the University of Bern. He focuses in particular on the architecture of the industrial and post-industrial age and on transcultural processes in architectural history.

Andreas Rasch, visual artist, cultural worker and managing director of the FAIR-KULTUR cooperative, which focuses on solidarity-based cultural industries. Board member of the Netzwerk der Kreativen e.V. (Network of Creative Professionals), which aims to raise the profile and promote the cultural and creative industries in Berlin and Brandenburg.

Wolfgang Schuster, ^{1979/80} diploma from the Technical University of Darmstadt. In ¹⁹⁸⁵, he founded the Bayerer Heidenreich und Schuster office. Since ¹⁹⁹³, he has been professor of building construction and design at the Technical University of Cottbus. Since ²⁰⁰², he has headed the SMSH office. He led the AIV as chairman of the board and is still active on the board today.

Tobias Schrammek, architect and urban researcher in Berlin. He studied in Berlin and São Paulo and works on participatory construction projects in Latin America. He teaches at the Technical University of Dresden and the Technical University of Berlin and is doing his PhD on alternative construction systems in social housing.

Georgi Stanishev, architect, professor and long-standing Secretary General of the International Academy of Architecture. He teaches at the University of Architecture – Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia. He has realised international projects with his office ‘Projects’ LTD. He promotes young architectural talent and has received numerous awards for his work at home and abroad.

Thilo von Haas, born in Baden, a staunch Swabian and adopted Munich resident. As co-founder of ENERGISTO, he is responsible for projects, looks after customers and develops the international network. He has held management positions in timber construction and was COO of an international project developer for hydro-power and photovoltaics.

Sebastian Wagner, architect, project developer, cultural mediator and transdisciplinary networker. Studied in Münster, Berlin and Chicago. UN agent in Sarajevo, ^{2001–2005} President of the International Forum of Young Architects (IFYA), guest professor at the International Academy of Architecture (IAA) and involved in integrative urban development, yoga and education.

Christopher Weiss, architect and project developer, founder of Glockenweiß GmbH. He is realising the Creative Quarter Potsdam with offices, studios and apartments for the cultural industry. Weiß focuses on integrative planning, sustainable urban development and social responsibility. He is also involved in the board of the BfW Berlin-Brandenburg.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE COLLOQUIUMS (STUDIO ¹ – ⁵)

Studio ¹ – Westhavelland in the Context of IBA ³⁴
Julia Feier, Nanni Grau, Jens Hubald, Sebastian Wagner, Christopher Weiß, Deborah Weiss

Studio ² – Second Series Cities International
Plamen Bratkov, Rositsa Bratkova, Georges Heintz, Amrit Kaur Khalsa, Georgi Stanishev, Sebastian Wagner

Studio ³ – Cooperative | Health
Steffen Adam, Thomas Bestgen, Thilo von Haas, Vite Joksaite, Mik Kuhn, Andreas Rasch, Wolfgang Schuster, Sebastian Wagner, Florian Franke-Petsch

Studio ⁴ – Tourism | Museum | Health
Prof. Dr. Justus Eichstädt, Dorit Zahn, Dr. Holger Hotz, Dr. phil. Peter Dietze, Prof. Bernd Nicolai, Sebastian Wagner, Prof. Ingeborg Kuhler

Studio ⁵ – Innovations
Felix Menzel, Carola Kapitza, Kaj Mertens-Stickel, Michael Kuhn, Mihai Ichim, Sebastian Wagner, Florian Kunz

UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Ecotopia ³⁴
Prof. Nanni Grau, Dr. Tobias Schrammek
Juliane Alber, Chantal Rohde, Jean-Marc Angeland, Jun Wang, Maximilian Meier, Ludovica Corbetta, Alberto Luna, Reynaldo Peralta

The Third Place
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Painting
Nina Nolte, Volker Nikel

Photography
Raoul Kevenhörster

Graphic works
Nana Moniava

Music
Sulah, John JJ Jones, Achim Treu, Niels Fölster

Performance and Poetry
Anouk Bergh

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Building Culture Day ²⁰²⁴ and Building Culture Day ²⁰²⁵
Rathenow and Premnitz
Brandenburg Chamber of Engineers

A Glimpse into Outer Space

The Schinkel Competition 2026

What happens next?

The AIV announces the Schinkel Competition 2026 worldwide: 'Luckenwalde' – Rethinking a City in Transition

The Association of Architects and Engineers in Berlin-Brandenburg (AIV) has announced the Schinkel Competition 2026. This time, the focus is on the Brandenburg city of Luckenwalde – with a visionary model neighbourhood that is intended to provide impetus for future-oriented urban development.

The long-established ideas and funding competition is aimed at young talents up to the age of 35 from the fields of architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, mobility & transport planning, structural engineering and fine arts. Interdisciplinary collaborations are expressly encouraged and will receive special support. Prize money totalling up to €30,000 will be awarded. The competition documents are available online at <https://www.aiv-berlin-brandenburg.de/aiv-schinkel-wettbewerb/>. Registration is via the cooperation partner 'wettbewerbe aktuell' at <https://ovf.wettbewerbe-aktuell.de/de/wettbewerb-50027>.

An Area as a Space of Opportunity

The district town of Luckenwalde, 50 kilometres south of Berlin, is undergoing change. As a modern city with a rich industrial history and iconic buildings, which first experienced decline and then radical deindustrialisation, it must now face up to the current structural challenges. As part of the EU's URBAN II funding programme (2000–2006), steps were taken at various levels, some of which can now be questioned. The inner-city 'Karree' area, with its dissolved block grid, embodies this structural change, which is reflected in the urban landscape and open spaces through breaks, gaps and contrasts.

This year's Schinkel Competition task focuses on this 'Karree' – an inner-city area in Luckenwalde, nestled between the railway station, the former castle and the city centre. It combines vacant properties, derelict industrial sites, scenic potential and well-developed residential areas. The competition is seeking a model for a model neighbourhood that inspires confidence and actively and enthusiastically shapes the transformation of Luckenwalde.

Overview of Specific Tasks:

Architecture: Design of an exemplary building or scenario that contributes to the development of the neighbourhood based on the existing stock.

Urban Planning: Development of multifunctional concepts for the activation of brownfield sites and social infrastructure – in response to demographic challenges.

Landscape Architecture: Development of a model for open space planning between the 'Karree' and Nuthepark – going beyond classic growth logic.

Structural Engineering: Design of a hall that can be used for festivals and is easy to assemble and dismantle. A vacant super-market serves as a resource (urban mining).
Mobility & transport planning: Holistic concept for a 'Smart Transit City Luckenwalde', with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as innovative public transport.

Fine Art: Artistic exploration of Luckenwalde's transformation from an industrial city to a potential residential suburb of Berlin – using free forms of expression.

Christian Müller, AIV Chairman, emphasises: *'With this competition, we want to motivate young planners to develop bold visions for a city in transition – technically sound, interdisciplinary and socially relevant.'*

Christoph Kollert, who maintains contact with the city administration on behalf of the AIV Schinkel Committee, adds: *'Luckenwalde is a prime example of many medium-sized towns undergoing change. The competition therefore also offers the opportunity to develop transferable ideas for the social, aesthetic and climatic challenges facing these towns.'*

Sebastian Wagner, AIV board member and board spokesman for Brandenburg, aims to: *"In 2028, as part of the IBA34 preparations, we should continue to deepen our knowledge of possible IBA34 locations in Brandenburg so that the necessary conditions for implementation can be created, as was the case in 2009 with the Weinbergbrücke in Rathenow (<https://www.aiv-berlin-brandenburg.de/schinkel-wettbewerb-2009-2/>), the necessary conditions are created."*

Dates for the AIV Schinkel Competition:

Question | Answer Session: Online on 7 November 2025, 5 p.m.
Registration Deadline: 26 January 2026
Submission: 9 February 2026, 4 p.m.
Award Ceremony & Schinkel Festival: 13 March 2026

AIV·SCHINKEL· WETT_2026 BEWERB LUCKENWALDE

STÄDTEBAU
ARCHITEKTUR
LANDSCHAFTSARCHITEKTUR
KONSTRUKTIVER INGENIEURBAU
MOBILITÄT UND VERKEHR
FREIE KUNST



Architekten-
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