

INDEX of structures, activities, and programs at the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst / Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig (GfZK)

The buildings **GfZK-1 and GfZK-2**: The GfZK-1 is located in a bourgeois villa, called Villa Herfurth, which was converted into an art institution by the architect Peter Kulka. The architect maintained the representative character of the *Gründerzeit* (Wilhelminian era) but reorganized the spatial structure and extended the building. A grey annex forms a contrast to the old building's substance and offers additional space. Inside, Kulka pursued the concept of the "white cube." Large glass panels and a grid floor in one of the central spaces establish visual relationships but do not connect to the outside. This first building of the GfZK opened in 1998. In 1999, Kulka was awarded the *Architectural Prize of Leipzig*.

So as to initiate a debate about the role and function of architecture and its relation to art, the second building of the GfZK, GfZK-2, opened at the end of 2004. From the outset, the new building by as-if berlinwien was conceived in terms of a stark contrast to the villa. The idea of the second building is based on the attempt to define a spatial structure as a reversible set of relational elements, representing specific institutional functions and modes of production. As a whole, these segments form a changeable infrastructure for the contemporary practice of exhibiting and curating. In 2005, as-if berlinwien were awarded the *Architectural Prize of Leipzig*. Also in 2005, they received one of the awards of the *German Architectural Prize*, in 2006 they were bestowed with the *austrian architecture award (aaa)*, and in 2007 with the *Bauwelt Prize*.

Café: The concept of having artists create alternating interior designs was retained in the new spaces, with Jun Yang taking up the offer after Anita Leisz. His café is called *Paris Syndrom*. "Paris syndrome" is the term used to describe a type of psychological disorder suffered by Japanese tourists, whose longing for the fulfillment of their preconceptions about Paris is thwarted by the reality of the city. They suffer a kind of negative culture shock akin to trauma. The café name chosen by Jun Yang is indicative of the entire notion, whereby longing and disillusionment are experienced simultaneously upon encountering the reality of that which is desired. Emulation and replication create an image, a surface onto which unfulfilled longing can be projected. The chairs are upholstered with imitation Louis Vuitton fabric; grandiose chandeliers hang from the café ceiling, which is decorated with stucco elements. The chairs are reminiscent of designs of Charles and Ray Eames, and photographs on the walls show famous buildings from architectural history, which have been reconstructed in various places around the world. Magazines such as the French *Vogue* and *Wallpaper* are laid out for visitors to read; cover versions of famous songs recall the originals, only to reveal themselves as imitations.

The café plays a significant role in the conception and mediation of the GfZK. It addresses audiences that are not typical museum visitors. A wide range of events takes place in *Paris Syndrom* each month; alongside established artistic programs, young bands primarily from the artistic scene are given the opportunity to perform their

music. Moreover, screenings of films and literary readings are held, which attract various different groups of people.

The collection: The GfZK dates back to the turbulent socio-historical period after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which is reflected in the collection itself. Works by Rosemarie Trockel, Michael Morgner, Marcel Odenbach, and Günther Uecker were initially presented to the GfZK as programmatic loans from the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI) e.V. (Cultural Circle of German Business within the Federal Association of German Industry) in 1990. When the GfZK opened in Villa Herfurth in 1998, these works were donated. In late 1990, the director of the GfZK – at the time, Klaus Werner – chose works for the collection by Hubertus Giebe, Hartwig Ebersbach, Werner Stötzer, and Friedrich B. Henkel from the Center of Art Exhibition in the GDR, which was on the verge of closure. In 1992, the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI presented long-term loans of more than fifty pieces ranging from artists whose works were partly influenced by the Bauhaus and labeled “degenerate” by the Nazis – such as Hubertus Glöckner or East German and West German (mainly informal) artists of the 1950s and 1960s such as Willi Baumeister, Ernst Wilhelm Nay, or Emil Schumacher. In 2006, these works were also donated to the GfZK collection.

Nowadays, positions that were not permitted in any GDR esthetic forum are shown next to younger artists from the post-communist era and artists from the western world up to the present. The collection is continually extended through donations from collectors and from artists who have exhibited at GfZK such as Horst Bartnig, Sibylle Bergemann, and Ilya Kabakov, along with works purchased by the GfZK’s Friends Organization of Olafur Eliasson, Tobias Rehberger, Tilo Schulz, Dan Peterman, Franz West, Dorit Margreiter, and others. The new acquisitions have been closely linked to the exhibition program since 2001.

Since 2007, parts of the GfZK collection have been annually presented in an exhibition addressing questions rooted in the history and cultural context of the GfZK. For the concept of the museum does not so much follow the idea of a huge storage facility, but rather provides the ground for public negotiations about the museum and its social role.

Conservation: Since 2007, the GfZK-1 holds changing annual collection exhibitions of various durations. Apart from exhibitions of the GfZK collection, examples and cases of artistic restoration are exhibited as well as discussed in the exhibition series *The Conservation Machine*. These public exhibitions give children, young people, and adults an opportunity to gain close insight into the processes of art preservation and restoration in unconventional ways. It becomes a means of explaining why, among other things, art also requires maintenance and “nursing,” and how best to prevent artworks from becoming “inpatients.”

Cooperations: The GfZK maintains local and international cooperations – within Leipzig, with institutions such as schools, kindergartens, theaters, and cinemas, as well as with free initiatives and groups. All curators plus the custodian teach at universities and academies, taking this opportunity to connect their teaching with

work at the gallery. The international cooperations are connected to various research projects. Past partners for more than one project were, among others, the Rosseum in Malmö, the Forum Stadtpark in Graz, the J.E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, the Bunkier Sztuki in Cracow, and the Institute of Contemporary Art Dunaújváros.

GfZK-3: The *GfZK-3* project was born in 2007 as a reply to the increasing importance of new technologies in perception and communication. It is a project that seeks new ways of conveying art while, at the same time, respecting the selective interests of individuals. The first project of *GfZK-3* is connected to *Carte Blanche*, the research project of 2008/2009. A comprehensive database will be gradually built up containing information about the selected artworks, their owners, and artists, as well as offering space for discussion. Reactions from the press, visitor opinions, and the views of curators are to provide different perspectives. The most diverse formats will be used such as texts, audio recordings, videos, and photography. All information will be arranged by keywords and can be downloaded.

gfzk garden: In the summer of 2006, parts of the garden were redesigned by the artist Jun Yang and transformed into a cultural and social meeting place. Museum visitors, students of the nearby academies, park visitors, and their children, as well as anyone seeking peace and quiet can make use of various special features ranging from a children's playground, rest areas, and platforms for individual use to a kiosk called *Hei Di* selling various goods. The individual elements are related to the tradition of the German corner shop, Japanese gardens and convenience stores, grocery stores, Bavarian beer gardens, and Asia shops. The project takes the economic situation of today's museums into consideration, opening up a debate on the circulation and distribution of goods, branding, local, and global contexts.

Grants: *The Blinky Palermo Grant* is financed by the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung/Sparkasse Leipzig, and is available for artists worldwide. This artist is invited to develop a work that is specific to the local area, which will then be presented in a large solo exhibition in the GfZK. Among the previous winners of the grant are Simon Starling, Francesco Vezzoli, Sofie Thorsen, Dorit Margreiter, and Dora García.

ROOM 107 is financed by the state bank of Saxony, Sachsen Bank, and supports younger artists from Leipzig. From 2008 onwards, four recipients each year will have their work displayed in *ROOM 107* of the GfZK-1. The *ROOM 107* exhibition series enables these artists to present their work to a wider public.

In 2002, the GfZK and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony in Dresden established a grant program for young curators from Eastern Europe especially intended for scholars who wish to improve their skills by working in a contemporary art institution. Each year, a contest for applications is held, and a young curator from a specific European country is invited to Leipzig. The grant fosters an exchange of different experiences and cultural influences. The contacts made through this scheme and the resulting collaborations, which often extend over many years, have flowed and continue to flow directly into the program of the GfZK. Past trainee curators at the GfZK were: Iliana Korálova (Sofia) in 2002/2003, Lena Prents (Minsk) in 2003/2004, Oana

Tanase (Bucharest) in 2004/2005, Andreja Hribernik (Gortina) in 2006/2007, Edina Nagy (Budapest) in 2007/2008, and Joanna Sokołowska (Warsaw) in 2008/2009.

Institution: In 1990, the Friends Organization of the GfZK under its chairman, Arend Oetker, was founded to promote the implementation of a contemporary art space in Leipzig. The director designate of the GfZK, Klaus Werner, therefore set up a series of activities in the city of Leipzig: exhibitions in vacant buildings, at the main station, or at the Völkerschlachtdenkmal (Monument of the Battle of the Nations). The aim was to test the concept of the future art space before it was given its own site. Bringing the Friends Organization into life was a means of reviving the link with the tradition of civic commitment which had come to an abrupt end under Nazism, and which the foundation of the GDR had made it impossible to resume. The early activities of the GfZK were not only grounded in a reanimation of bourgeois commitment, but a connection was also made to dissident forms of exhibiting in private apartments, which were brought outside and to the public.

In 1998, the GfZK moved to Villa Herfurth, which was architecturally converted into an art institution (see GfZK-1). The German name of the institution, "Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst," was chosen to distinguish it from the Museum of Visual Arts in Leipzig, the older museum in town founded in the middle of the 19th century. Since 2001, the proper English translation has been "Museum of Contemporary Art" to emphasize the fact that the GfZK is a museum, too.

Legal status: The museum was founded in 1996 as a non-profit limited company and, in 2003, it turned into a private foundation. The GfZK follows the model of the Public Private Partnership. Allocations come equally from the City of Leipzig, the Free State of Saxony, and the Friends Organization. These funds cover the institution's running costs. The GfZK has neither a budget for its program nor for its acquisitions; the required budget must be fundraised every year. The monies come from national and international foundations and, to a much smaller extent, from local companies. Fundraising for 2008/2009 is connected to the Museum's research on private commitment to art.

Leipzig: Leipzig is located in the east of Germany; the train line to Berlin is one hour. Around 500,000 inhabitants currently reside in the city. Prior to World War II, there were even around 750,000 people living in Leipzig. Leipzig was a famous center of commerce (for instance the Leipzig Fair) and industry, which reached its peak of growth in the 1930s. When the country was divided into East and West Germany, Leipzig was still one of the three biggest industrial cities in the eastern part. Since the changes and until the mid-1990s, thousands of people have left Leipzig to move to the west or to the suburbs; during the past years, however, the situation has stabilized somewhat. The economic circumstances are still relatively weak but, since a few years, large companies - for instance, Porsche, BMW, Siemens, and DHL (at Leipzig airport) - have settled and established themselves.

Library/Archive: The library's holdings, which have primarily existed since 1991, comprise approximately 30,000 volumes. Their contents focus on the themes of the collection and exhibits of the GfZK, but also include primary and secondary literature

on art of the 20th and 21st centuries. There is a programmatic integration of books from other fields of contemporary culture. The library also holds the archive of the GfZK, which provides insight into the institution's past and present programs. From 2008, a series of exhibitions and projects engage with the theme of "the library" and research the possibilities of artists' library designs. Realized and fictitious, ideological and playful approaches and statements are juxtaposed, showing perspectives that may offer ways towards future libraries of art institutions. Artists who have been invited in the past include Michael Clegg & Martin Guttman, Tobias Rehberger, Maria Eichhorn, Falk Haberkorn, Wilfredo Prieto, Clara Montoya, Gyula Várnai, and Till Exit.

Mediation/GfZK For You: The GfZK mediation program caters for adults, children, adolescents and young people, families, kindergartens, and schools. Mediation for adults, children, and young people takes place at the exhibitions or outside – in the city or at other external venues. The themes and activities in the program revolve around the current exhibitions or the current focus of the exhibition program. Children and young people are encouraged to take self-determined action and engage in committed debate with their social environment. For a project period over the course of several months, for instance, children investigate and photographically document changes in their immediate surroundings such as the change of the seasons or advances in building work around them. Kids and teenagers produce their own video clips examining notions of role-play and self-image. *GfZK For You* cooperates with various educational institutions in long-term projects, whereby the perception and design of surrounding environments, presence in public, and media competence are areas of special interest.

Audio tours, guided tours, and information desks form the basis of mediation for adults. Short video introductions have been presented at all exhibitions since the fall of 2006, in which curators explain concepts, artists are interviewed, and videos of the installation of the exhibition are shown. The form of videos changes, as they adapt to the individual artist and exhibition concerned. Lectures, debates, and podium discussions introduce themes with which the GfZK is involved. Audio tours, documentary videos, and introduction videos to the exhibitions are also available at *GfZK-3* (see *GfZK-3*) and can be downloaded.

Moreover, there are additional mediation projects outside the regular program, which altogether strengthen GfZK collaborations. For example, an art calendar was produced with the Sachsen Bank presenting works of both the Sachsen Bank and GfZK collections. This calendar followed two additional collaborations between the Sachsen Bank and GfZK, *The Writing Station* and *The Corridor as Display*. *The Writing Station* gave bank employees the opportunity of sending postcards of works of their collection, and the addressees were marked with pins on a world map. In *The Corridor as Display*, three different proposals for the design and display of the corridors in the Sachsen Bank premises were tested and discussed in an exhibition at the GfZK. They were then realized in the bank afterwards.

Neighborhood: The GfZK is located in Leipzig's Musikviertel (music quarter), which, in the late 19th century, was one of the bourgeois suburbs of the city. In the past, the

quarter has accommodated famous institutions such as the Gewandhaus concert hall or the Supreme Court of the German Reich. Factory owners and Leipzig publishers commissioned respectable villas. The GfZK-1, too, is located in a villa commissioned by Carl Hermann Credner, who founded the Palaeontological Institute in Leipzig at the end of the 19th century. In terms of style, the building reflects the Italian Renaissance. During World War II, almost fifty percent of the buildings in the Musikviertel were destroyed. During the GDR, prefabricated high-rise buildings were erected, offering low-cost living spaces also in the attempt to break with the bourgeois character of the area. Today, the Musikviertel is once again a sought-after residential area. Close to both the Johannapark and the Clara-Zetkin-Park, it is a quiet place in close vicinity to the city center and with recreational amenities close by.

The GfZK has organized projects in the neighborhood such as *High-Rise Fest* in 2003, a collaboration between the Leipziger Wohnungs- und Baugesellschaft mbH (Leipzig Housing Bureau) and the GfZK. Furthermore, projects by participating artists Marion Porten, Helmut & Johanna Kandler, and *GfZK For You* (see Mediation) offered children the opportunity to actively participate in the *Papperlapappstadt (Balderdash City)*, a built cityscape out of cardboard, which they then painted. The *Papperlapappstadt* was exhibited at the base of the high-rise buildings, thus bringing attention to and encouraging greater popularity for the event. During two days, the GfZK café (see Café) was open on the roof of one of the buildings.

Prizes: Since 2004, the IT service provider alpha 2000 has donated EUR 5,000 every year to support artists from Europe with a prize entitled *The Future of Europe*. During the first five years, the focus was on artists from eastern, north-eastern, or south-eastern Europe. In 2004, the winner was Kristina Leko (Croatia); in 2005, Rafał Bujnowski (Poland); in 2006, Jakup Ferri (Kosovo); in 2007, Ioana Nemeş (Hungary), and, in 2008, Kamen Stoyanov (Bulgaria). In 2008, an exhibition with these five prizewinners took place in the context of the GfZK's *Carte Blanche* project. In the future, the prize will be extended to include other European regions in the attempt to examine the construct "Europe" and its ideological implications.

From 2007 onwards, *INFORM – Award for Conceptual Design* represents an international prize awarded on a yearly basis. The prize of EUR 10,000 honors young graphic designers who in their projects, collaborations, and publications have come to adopt a singular standing in the world of graphic art. This expressly targets those working at the interface of graphic design, artistic publications, and contemporary art. An exhibition in the new library space of the GfZK is to accompany the award. The first winner in 2007 was the London-based graphic designer Laurent Benner. In 2008, the prize went to Julia Born based in Amsterdam.

Research projects: In 2002, the GfZK launched *Cultural Territories*, the first almost three-year-long research project, which involved a series of exhibitions and discussions on the role of art and culture in post-communist countries. Since then, the GfZK has taken on multi-annual research projects on the heritage of modernism (*Heimat Modernism* and *Shrinking Cities*), and on the role of artistic critique in capitalist and communist countries (*againstwithin*). The focus in 2007 was on collective and

individual cultural memories and, as a corollary, the social conception of art and its means. In 2008/2009, the focus is on private commitment to art. All research projects lead to a series of solo and group exhibitions, discussions, publications, as well as pedagogical activity. The programs are planned two or three years in advance and the subjects are chosen in relation to the particular situation of the GfZK – be it the role of the museum within a post-communist or global context.

Working structures: All themes come out of the context of the GfZK and are interpreted by the (guest-)curators, the custodian, the librarian, and the mediators. The departments are interconnected and in permanent exchange with one another. The mediation department (see Mediation) runs its own exhibition space. Its exhibitions are curated by the children and teenagers and supported by the mediators. A group of graphic designers works in various forms and configurations for the respective departments.