



Kulturpark West – Augsburg's Center for Creative Urban Culture

Augsburg has developed a unique project known as "Kulturpark West", which has attracted the attention of experts in the world of culture and creativity in Bavaria, Germany and Europe. In January Kulturpark West was even invited to Essen for the European conference "Creative Quarters as a Source of Inspiration for Medium-Sized Cities." The Augsburg project will be presented there in March.

Kulturpark West is located on the grounds of the former Reese Kaserne, in the Kriegshaber section of Augsburg. With a total area of about 7,500 square meters, in addition to a few commercial users, there are about 1500 active users, including 200 bands, 50 artists and twenty projects, groups or initiatives.

Since the entire space was fully rented shortly after opening, in 2010 the first branch location of Kulturpark West was opened: the Balloon Factory. This former factory building, located in Oberhausen, has been part of the Kulturpark West project ever since. A further 200 users work there in a space of about 2,000 square meters.

The Kulturpark West project, with its Reese Kaserne and Balloon Factory locations, is essentially dependent on the participants in the project, who shape the spaces allocated to them. The project, which is organized as non-profit corporation, is led by Peter Bommas and Thomas Lindner, who act only as moderators, supporting the users as needed without unnecessarily interfering in the creative process.

Kulturpark West is:

- A loose network of artists, artistic institutions and creative people with a strong connection to the local scene and with impact beyond the local region.
- A creative laboratory which creates scope and synergy, out of which new forms of collaboration can arise
- A vibrant center for cultural education
- an unconventional platform for economically viable creative work.

Various levels of professionalism among the actors as well as a mixture of commercial, economic, civil, non-profit and hobbyist effects are quite deliberately so produced and desired. On top of that this approach aims at the networking of resources and potentials in literally creative ways, thus discovering and unfolding new possibilities of work and encounter. What was an aspiration at the outset in April of 2008 has in recent months proven itself a successful strategy.

"The plaster is crumbling, the iron railings are rusting. Nevertheless the three buildings are a showcase, of which the city can be proud. [...] The cultural biotope behind the bombproof walls and the soundproof windows is a success story which enriches the life of the city."

(Sueddeutsche Zeitung)