

Handout on

Com- munity Art

Concept — Methodology — Experiences

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Handout on community art

Concept – Methodology – Experiences

Dear reader,

This handout draws on over ten years of lived, practical experience of community art in the pioneering city of Mannheim. The concepts and methodologies explained here were developed by professional, full-time artists, and subject to continuous testing throughout the process. Where necessary, adaptations and developments have been made to reflect changing requirements.

Community art is a lively form of dialogue and transformative art, which serves to actively counteract behaviour that threatens democracy, social inequality and group-focused enmity as well as to promote social cohesion.

One of the main focuses is the artistic treatment of existing conflicts in a particular social environment which seeks to relax entrenched positions and broaden the perspective of all those involved. This results in a high potential for integration: Indeed, it is not possible to have equal participation and peaceful coexistence by suppressing or ignoring conflicts, only by engaging constructively them.

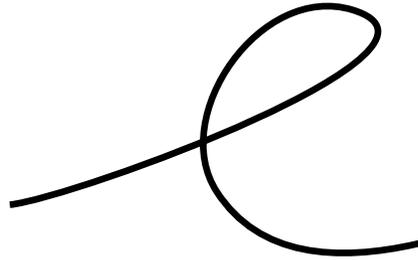
The guidelines for community art serve as a form of guidance without placing limits on specific regional contexts and artistic dynamics. The examples we give here are intended to illustrate central aspects clearly and provide inspiration for new projects.

Our goal is to build a growing, politically influential network of community art practitioners and ambassadors nationwide, who will use this art form as a means of advocating for long-term and lasting social change.

The following pages will teach you: what we mean when we talk about community art, what its background is, which criteria and methodologies it is based on, and how these can be implemented in practice.

Happy reading!

What is community art?



Community art is political art that is produced by professional artists for and with people of a social environment. This can be defined geographically, e.g. a neighbourhood, but it can also refer to different places that are significant to a particular group or subject matter. Community art is about dialogue, empowerment, and change. The vision of community art is a diverse, open community without exclusion, based on a democratic culture of equality that also respects difference.

Community art therefore relies on exchange and the establishment of relationships between people from diverse backgrounds and different walks of life. It creates moments and processes of community building that are based on

shared values rather than being motivated by ideology, ethnicity or class. It teaches individuals self-efficacy, creativity, empathy and critical thinking, and creates the conditions necessary for them to be able to play an active and affirming part in such a community.

In order for this to succeed, Community art focuses primarily on those groups who face discrimination, e.g. on the basis of their background, gender identity or social status, and deals with issues of conflict that are difficult to address. It relies on accessible, diverse artistic approaches, which reach many people emotionally and cognitively and which build bridges between people from different sections of society.



Community art is dialogue
and transformative art for an
open society without exclusion
and abasement by professional
artists of different disciplines.

When, where, and how did community art come into being?

Dadaism was the first movement to introduce socially oriented and participatory art projects in the 1920s. Previously valid boundaries between the creation of a work of art and its viewing were beginning to dissolve at this time, and the audience itself was invited to actively develop the art.

Audience participation became a central artistic theme in the 1950s and 1960s. Participation, however, still mostly took place within a restricted framework, with recipients being understood as vehicles for art, and not as autonomous agents. Some artists or art movements, such as the Fluxus Movement, which opposed elitist high art and advocated for new communal ways of living, had already started integrating their audiences into the creation of their works by making them co-producers. In this case, the recipients were involved in the creation of such art, but the creative act itself still came from the artists.

Inspired by the student movement, the concept of art was further politicised and became more critical of society. It was not until the mid-1960s that artists first began to see their audience as partners and art as a social process. The new demand placed on art was to raise awareness and bring about social improvement. Two movements were born out of these ideas: the "Artistic Placement Group" (APG) and

"Community art" whose origins date back to the end of the 1960s. The APG wanted to build bridges between art and the world of work, but the production of art was to remain in the hands of its creators. On the other hand, the direct participation of marginalised groups was at the centre of the work done by community art. "Giving Voice" is a basic idea that was inspired by the American Civil Rights Movement and incorporated into Community art. Community art can be understood as a direct, artistic response to the emancipation movements of the time. Disadvantaged sections of the population should be given the opportunity to express their concerns artistically, find cultural expression, and receive more widespread recognition. The origins of community art can therefore be traced back, for the most part, to the Anglo-American sphere, which then continued to spread through Europe, initially in England, Ireland and the Netherlands.

"Soziokultur" (or socioculture) emerged in West Germany, alongside community art, in the 1960s and 1970s, and this attempted to counter established, elitist art with a political "culture for all". The movement believed that culture should be democratised, be accessible to all people, and facilitate equal opportunities and participation. The term "culture" was deliberately chosen over "art" so as to cover different areas of life

thematically. Nevertheless, there are many overlaps that exist between community art and socioculture. Community art venues can also be sociocultural centres, but sociocultural centres do not necessarily produce community art. Community art's basic point of departure is a social-artistic one, which puts high artistic standards at the forefront. Sociocultural centres, on the other hand, focus on group activities as a means of networking, often with the involvement of social workers. Sometimes sociocultural centres only make available the spaces in which to run group cultural activities and events without actually realising any productions themselves.

The first time that participatory projects were awarded as service contracts by

municipalities and regions was during the 1990s. However, a new problem arose with the municipal contract award, namely: participatory art was appropriated by political interest groups. From then on, a distinction was made between "disruptive" and "non-disruptive" projects. "Disruptive" art lays existing conditions bare as a way of triggering discourses and enacting change together with marginalised groups. In direct contrast, "non-disruptive" projects serve to conceal grievances for the benefit of privileged groups. "Non-disruptive" participatory art must therefore be clearly distinguished from community art, which considers itself to be a "disruptive force" that focuses on addressing the concerns of those parts of the community with little power (Kressig/Kaess, 2015).

The community art movement emerged in the 1960s in the English-speaking sphere as an art form in which professional artists and population groups with little access to art and social resources could work together on an equal footing using new forms of expression, and this resulted in a sense of empowerment and the creation of new public discourses.

Community art using the Mannheim example

Location

Mannheim's Neckarstadt-West district: A problem neighbourhood, a neighbourhood for new immigrants, a gentrified, hipster neighbourhood?

The university city of Mannheim is the second largest city in the state of Baden-Württemberg with just under 310,000 inhabitants. The city is composed of six inner-city and eleven outer districts.

Neckarstadt-West is one of the inner-city districts and is centrally located in Mannheim's west. It connects directly to the city centre, which is divided into grids, via a bridge. Since the post-war period, Neckarstadt-West has attracted new immigrants and people with difficult personal circumstances because of its comparatively low rents. Unemployment is higher there than the city average, more people are in precarious employment as well as being dependant on welfare benefits. In many families, the common language is not German, and children's chances of attending a grammar school are lower than they are elsewhere. However, the district's urban flair and proximity to the city centre has made it popular among students and creators. A total of around 22,000 people from 160 nations were living in an area spanning 9.94 km² in 2021.

Owner-managed retailers that have grown over time and long-established restaurants have increasingly given way to betting shops, private clubs, and casinos in recent decades. Gang crime, violence and prostitution are also part of life in the district. At the same time, growing gentrification tendencies can be seen. In addition to large-scale private property purchases and luxury refurbishments, there are plans to "upgrade" the neighbourhood by building gastronomy and leisure facilities that are recognisably aimed at more affluent target groups.

Although the native residents live in one district, they often have few points of contact in everyday life and live in different milieus. Public life is lacking in both venues and cultural offerings that are accessible to all and allow for life to be experienced in a communal setting.



COMMUNITYartCENTER

man kann in der neckar...
...suchen
...weil...
...für kinder ist es schwierig im stadtteil...
...er...
...er...
...die...
...länder...

The first community art centre in Germany

Even before its founding, Annette Dorothea Weber, Founder and Artistic Director of COMMUNITYartCENTER-mannheim (CACM), ran a variety of artistic activities in the district together with other artists. These projects served to trigger a positive and community-building movement which was to be sustained by continuous artistic intervention. The first projects, such as the Neckarstadt-West Side Stories, were very well received. The play MEDEA that was adapted to reflect the current refugee situation in the home for asylum seekers, for example, also brought about real change: As a result, the toilet facilities for visitors were renovated. This served to confirm that the cultural workers were on the right track.

Questions for Annette Dorothea Weber:
Why was community art important to you, especially in the context of Neckarstadt-West?

"I have lived in the district for a very long time and realised that art was often failing to reach many groups. With my art, I wanted to dive deeper into people's lives, use it to reach them, and make a political impact."

It soon became clear to the artists that the key to working for and with the residents of the neighbourhood in a successful way and in the long term was to create a permanent, well-known venue that would facilitate encounters and that would establish itself as a meeting place for artistic experience and learning.

With this goal in mind, a first workshop discussion took place at the beginning of 2012 with artists, educators from schools/nurseries and professionals from the youth and cultural work sectors in attendance, during which the following question was raised: what can art achieve in terms of sociopolitics?

Thanks to the federal programme "Places of Integration in the Neighbourhood", the COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim was able to open in May of the same year inside a shop located at the centre of the district.¹ And thus, a space for experiencing and producing art was born.

In the first years of its existence, the COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim was run by the City of Mannheim and the Freudenberg Foundation before becoming an independent non-profit

A pilot project – created by professional artists.

association in 2015. Since then, the association, which is made up of artists and people from academia, the media and democracy promotion, has actively contributed to the centre's development.

Since its founding, the COMMUNITYart-CENTERmannheim has been receiving core funding from the City of Mannheim, the Freudenberg Foundation and the Heinrich Vetter Foundation. Other funding partnerships, including international ones, such as that with the Open Society Foundations, were added to the mix at a later date. Individual activities and programmes are also receiving project-related funding, such as the children's and young people programme which is funded by BT Spickschen Foundation.

The CACM currently employs four permanent (part-time) staff members who are involved in planning, coordinating, and implementing the programme at CACM, which is realised by a network of around 70 freelance artists from different disciplines from Neckarstadt-West, Mannheim, the whole of Germany as well as other European countries.

Over 100 projects have been realised since its inception – many in multiple or newly-staged performances – in the neighbourhood, in Mannheim, but also further afield, e.g. in Dortmund and Dresden. The Mannheim pilot for community art soon gained traction across both Germany and the wider continent, and even received requests for guest lectures and presentations at home and abroad.

The number of visitors grew – yearly until the COVID-19 pandemic: Around 4,000 people attended events at CACM in 2019, and this does not include the growing number of digital visitors attending virtual art projects, which are becoming more and more important.

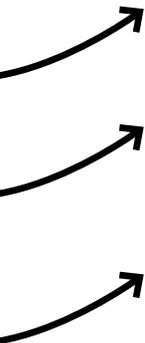
¹ Programme from the Federal Institute for Building, Urban and Spatial Research (BSSR) from 2011 to 2015

Guidelines for practical implementation



Formats

The COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim has developed three formats which are tailored to meet the special requirements of Neckarstadt-West, but which could also be applied to community art in an adapted form.

- 
- 1. Artistic activities for empowering disadvantaged children and young people** (e.g. landscape art with parents and children, a mobile children's theatre, monthly readings for children)
 - 2. Community-building activities through arts and music** (e.g. a music festival on the central neighbourhood square, photo exhibitions which focus on the district, a home project with an audible installation on Neumarkt, a dance project with the elderly "Myth of Age")
 - 3. Artistic engagement with key issues affecting the district** (e.g. growing antiziganism using the "Rumour Mill" or the classroom play "Gypsy Boxer")

The COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim specialises in productions that are embedded in long-term partnerships with nurseries, schools, multi-generation centres or NGOs. "Non-places" or "problem places" are either presented or subjected to artistic scrutiny.

Criteria

In practical terms, community art is defined by key criteria, the fulfilment of which results in effective work.

Political art

Community art is inherently political. It is not about representing party political interests, but about using art to educate people about politics, raise awareness about social inequalities and bring marginalised groups to the public's attention. This encourages community art to make a political contribution and allows communities to advocate for their own interests and rights, e.g. at the level of city politics. The experiences and results that emerge from such art projects are also translated into political demands which are then brought to the attention of the responsible authorities.

Unlike science, political art does not distinguish between "right" and "wrong". Using clear democratic values as its basis, ambiguities and contradictions are actively promoted as a means of encouraging people to change their perspective, to elicit empathy from them, and allow them to cope with complexities, different opinions, and uncertainty. These artistic products, and the emotional and cognitive effect of which, provide people with the means to trigger political processes that promote democracy and which will, in turn, have real consequences on their own lives.

The influential power of community art can be strengthened if creators join forces to form municipal and/or supra-regional alliances with actors from civil society and politics who advocate for a democratic and diverse world. Community art can raise issues and pave the way for political change – but it cannot do so alone: Ground-breaking developments are not possible without a response from the local administrative leadership and, where possible, from the local media too.

Project example:

Theatre installation project

What do we do with our Trauma

The diary of Ena Adamaralovic (a journalist born in Bosnia and Herzegovina who now lives in the district) tells the story of her escape from the country and was adapted into a narrative play to mark the 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In it, Ena talks about her childhood which was cut short by war. Themes of death, deportation to concentration camps, and a rumour about gas chambers such as those used in the Second World War suddenly became her new reality. The play was performed in what was then an unrenovated bunker in Neckarstadt-West. Audiences – of which many were school classes – were able to recreate “escape situations” using various spatial installations before the play began. Afterwards, audiences were able to use the garden café located near the exit to the bunker as a space for discussion. The play was also staged for classroom productions.



Art from all disciplines

Community art is realised with the help of art from all disciplines: with performing arts such as theatre and dance, with music or visual arts (installation, performance art, video, illustration and photography). Some projects are interdisciplinary, such as theatre with

installation (“What do we do with our TraumA”) or music with light art (“Music Worlds”). Such a wide range of artistic expression should make it possible to address as many people as possible in a variety of ways.

Project example:

Illustration art project **Tell me your story**



Illustrator Valentin Krayl spent around eight weeks in Neckarstadt-West collecting the life stories of very different people and then drawing them as comics in the outlines of the narrators. 18 illustrated stories were created in this way and these were exhibited as part of the “Tell me your story” project, accompanied by anonymised conversation excerpts as an audible installation at the COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim. Among other things, issues such as domestic violence, attempted suicide, and life as a trans person were addressed. A reading by the illustrator and several comic workshops for children were held alongside the exhibition.

Claim for social change

The claim for social change that community art pursues, refers both to a change in culture and values throughout the social environment and to concrete improvements in living conditions, especially for socially disadvantaged groups.

Community art would like to encourage people to recognise and question prejudices and stereotypes or structural disadvantages, and to actively confront these themselves.

Project example:

web series **#STRESS**



The eight-part sitcom and miniseries #STRESS is about the changing nature of work in the digital age and life in the city. The series is set in Neckarstadt-West and uses humour to tackle ongoing issues of conflict affecting the neighbourhood, such as precarious employment, gentrification, homophobia, racism, as well as income inequality. Common clichés are addressed, exaggerated and broken down as a means of exposing prejudices. The protagonists are never simply “good” or “evil”, instead apparent contradictions, ambivalences, and unexpected twists permeate the plot.

The series is free to watch on YouTube: The platform is not just used as a medium, but also criticized for being manipulative and commercial, among other things, through fictitious advertisements.

High-quality relationships

Artists are tasked with truly engaging with, and relating to, the people whose issues they address. The trust and closeness that are created are directly reflected in the depth and quality of the art, such as in the photographs of the "Mothers and Daughters"/"Fathers and Sons" and "livingRooms" exhibitions, which depict very close relationships between the protagonists.

The art projects themselves are always embedded in dialogue formats, such as the "Popper Café" which formed part of the play "Right: ex and pop". Theatre performances, (staged) readings and exhibitions are always accompanied by discussion events with audiences, often involving those affected or experts.

Project example:

performance installation The "Rumour Mill"

The Rumour Mill is a performance installation created by the artistic duo illig&illig that was first performed in 2014 on Neckarstadt-West's central square and later across several neighbourhoods. The people of the neighbourhood were invited to talk with the artists in a kitchen setting about what affects them in their neighbourhood and about the poisoned narratives that they have heard. In this way, underlying issues could be revealed. In the next step, illig&illig transformed the rumour into an edible work of art and discussed the vision they developed from it with their audience.



Questions for Constanze and Norbert Illig:

How do you go about engaging with people and learning about their fears and needs? And how do you use the information you have collected in your work?

"We call ourselves Concept Creators (BegriffsBilder) and try to create spaces with our art in which visitors can look at supposedly familiar terms (or even clichés) in a new light, experience them, feel them and grasp them in other expanded aspects. We are like street vendors. We create defined places using eye-catching spatial installations which the public can view casually and step into. The experiences of our various projects in the public sphere are what influences the sort of participatory formats we provide. These are always temporal artworks that exist 'in the moment' of their creation and can later continue to have an impact as 'experiential knowledge'. Sometimes, it is even possible to document and present the results as a 'relic exhibition' in a conventional art context."

Raising awareness for marginalised groups

Raising awareness for marginalised groups does not mean speaking "for" or "about" people who face discrimination or working them into projects in a superficial way. Raising awareness means using a genuine interest in such groups to facilitate genuine solidarity and equal communication.

The respective social environment defines which social groups hold a particularly weak social position. For example, queer people have spoken about their experience of hostility in Neckarstadt-West. The many Roma that have immigrated from South Eastern Europe not only live in precarious living conditions, but are also exposed to a constant string of anti-Roma discrimination. Generally speaking, homeless people represent an especially vulnerable group, regardless of their social environment.

Project example:

Staged reading **Life without shelter**



The staged reading of the biography of Mannheim's very own Richard Brox "Life without shelter" tells the story of his life as a homeless person at the fringes of society. The audience was immersed in Brox's bleak and deprived childhood and youth, until an eviction finally drove him into homelessness at the age of twenty-one. Afterwards, there was a Q&A session with the author, the artists, and an employee from Caritas Association Mannheim.



**Opposing group-focused enmity in defence
of a democratic culture of equality and an open,
diverse society**

Group-focused enmity is the focus of community art because the abasement of a group, e.g. of people of a certain gender, religion, ethnic-cultural origin or sexual orientation, is based on an “ideology of inequality” (Heitmeyer 2002) and usually does not occur in isolated circumstances but goes hand in hand with the abasement of other groups. Social hierarchies can supposedly be justified in this way and one’s own privileges secured (Küpper/Zick 2015).

According to Karl Popper, community art pursues the vision of an open society, which – in contrast to authoritarian societies – is always prepared to change and develop. An open society is always synonymous with democracy as well as with cultural and religious pluralism. Community art wants to contribute to managing the tensions created by these differences, and demands critical thinking and independent action from all people.

Project example:

Play/short film

Gypsy Boxer

The play and the short film “Gypsy Boxer” tells the story of German boxing champion Johann Wilhelm “Rukeli” Trollmann, whose unique boxing style and fighting spirit made him a crowd favourite and won him the championship title in 1933. Because he was Sinto, the National Socialists stripped him of his title and ended his career, accusing him of having a “non-German” boxing style. He was murdered in 1944 at Wittenberge concentration camp. The classroom play adaptation of his story toured Mannheim's schools. The short film of the same name was made during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and is available to watch on YouTube. Accompanying educational material which is free to download can also be found there.

High artistic professionalism

It is not always easy and objective to determine what artistic professionalism means, – especially given that the concept of art is becoming increasingly broad.

Artists are referred to as “professionals” if they practice an artistic activity for a living and/or have undertaken appropriate professional training or completed a degree. Approaches like these seem bureaucratically and unwieldy and always have to be applied to a real context and its respective objectives.

More than a century has passed since the co-founder of conceptual art and

pioneer of Dadaism, Marcel Duchamp, established that the key criterion was no longer the originality of genius or the artistry of craftsmanship, but rather the definition of the artist. Art is what artists define it to be. However, this is not indicative of mere assertions or questions of taste, but rather a creative examination that is evident in the artistic process. The traces of this examination, these works of art, can then be judged according to a clear set of criteria inherent in the work. Art is a profession and a vocation and, as such, it requires skills, abilities and knowledge through experience.



Project example:

Online exhibition **Laboratory: Work 4.0**

The “Laboratory: Work 4.0” exhibition is a website which involves visitors going through a series of virtual rooms in which actors and musicians use art to address the future of the working world and our creative possibilities. The laboratory therefore examined how the world of work has changed in light of digitisation, flexibility, and automation. Texts by Oskar Negt, Hannah Ahrendt, Ernst Bloch and others, including examples from the industrial world of work, the dystopian and the utopian, all play a role here. The online exhibition can be visited at: www.laborarbeit-4-0.de.

Addressing difficult societal issues of conflict

Community art lays weaknesses bare. It deals with conflicts in a social environment that are not discussed or in which obduracy exists. It focuses on issues such as gentrification, which are neither “sexy” nor headline-worthy, but which still need to be discussed because they

have an impact on coexistence. Community art does not lose sight of its focus on challenging issues, such as the threat of right-wing extremism which has long been underestimated in the political sphere.

Project example:

Theatre project

Rechts: ex and pop – or a proclamation for democracy

The play "Right: ex and pop" was staged in 2017 before the Bundestag elections and performed in buildings of democracy. After guest performances at the Mannheim town hall and at the town hall in Weinheim, the play toured in 2018 and was taken to the East German cities of Meiningen, Dresden, Saalfeld and Meerane as well as being performed across several schools.



The play raises questions about growing right-wing populism and extremism in society: Where do these ideas come from, why and where do they gain traction with people? It raises awareness of movements that represent a threat to democracy and aims to mobilize for the preservation and further development of an open society. Each performance was followed by a "Popper-Café", where artists and audiences could enter into a discussion and expand their knowledge in a playful way with the help of a themed "roulette" and video clips specifically designed for this purpose.

Dealing with issues in the long term

Community art deals with issues in the long term, often using different artistic approaches. The issue of "Life and Work", for example, was dealt with in several projects with different focal points in 2019/2020. The #STRESS series focused on precarious working conditions and new "professions" such as influencers in the age of digitisation, while the web exhibition "Laboratory: Work 4.0" and the installation project "Hurrah, work be gone?!" took a more philosophical approach to the future of the economy, of work, and our creative possibilities. The process of exploring topics in greater detail is something that often happens organically as a result of the projects themselves: The "Rumour Mill" project, for example, brought the prevalence of prejudices and propaganda against refugees in urban society to light, and prompted the development of the theatre project "Rechts: ex and pop", which addressed the issues of right-wing populism and extremism.

Project example:

Concert Series Music Worlds

"Music Worlds" involves a "musical picnic" which takes place in the summer at the central district square as well as one or two winter concerts which take place within a church. The central feature of the concerts is that they bring together musicians of very different genres - from classical singing to rock and jazz, electronic beats and oriental sounds - in a choreographed overall concert, and convey how supposed (musical) boundaries can be overcome and how enriching and constructive diversity and dialogue can be.

Long-term partnerships with institutions such as schools, nurseries or NGOs allow target groups to be reached over a longer period of time and past projects to be built upon. However, reliable (institutional) funding partnerships also represent something of a prerequisite if you wish to pursue issues without time constraints and the (misunderstood) pressure of producing results.

Using public spaces

Community art goes where the people are. This can be outdoor spaces, such as neighbourhood squares, or indoor spaces, such as churches or schools. The digital space – reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic – is becoming increasingly important for community art.



In the summer, visitors can spread out picnic blankets and bring food and drinks with them, and they are free to come and go from the site at any time. The winter concerts usually take place in the Diaconic Church, which serves as a place of refuge as well as a meeting place, especially for homeless people in the district. The virtual music world format "Compassion in times of pandemic" was created in 2021 in response to the pandemic.

Questions for Mike Rausch, the Musical Director of Music Worlds and Co-Chair of the Executive Board: **Was ist für Dich das Besondere an Musik-Welten?**

"For me, the special thing about Music Worlds is that this mélange of very different music styles, genres, and different musical origins does not just create a colourful juxtaposition, a mosaic of sorts, but also represents something new that combines all musical building blocks into a new "whole". This development of something new is further emphasised by the way the space is incorporated through choreography and made immediately tangible."

A low threshold

Community art must not be costly and must be equally accessible to everyone. Entrance fees can represent a major barrier to participation for poorer sections of the population. However, entrance fees do need to be charged when community art initiatives fail to receive sufficient funding. Voluntary donations are a way of paying often precariously employed artists appropriately and showing appreciation for their work, while also making sure not to exclude poorer sections of the population. If project funding is secured – as per the following example – art can take place in spaces used on a daily basis by children, young people, and adults.



Project example:

»In the beginning there was sound«: **Music stories for children**



Two musicians and an actor play, argue, sing, and create music together. They tell stories and pose many questions: Where is the music coming from? What came first: language or music? What is silence and what do birds sound like? What does work sound like? Like the wind? The play builds on children's open-mindedness towards different forms of music and, as such, it playfully promotes their perception, curiosity, and openness towards the new and the unknown. Performances took place at the COMMUNITYartCENTER in Mannheim, in elementary schools, kindergartens and at initial reception centres for refugees.



Community art needs:

Community art needs professional local artists who are committed to community art's social vision and its methods.

Structure:

Artists who want to get involved in community art must be willing to set up an organizational structure, such as a (registered) association, a gUG or a gGmbH (DE). This is the only way that the initiative will be seen to be a player, obtain stable funding, and create the internal prerequisites for qualitative projects. If necessary, they can join forces with other actors and develop flexible – hierarchical or collectively organized – forms of governance.

Funding:

Community art projects can be implemented well especially when stable institutional funding is guaranteed and supplemented by project-related donations. A proportion of institutional funding should come from the municipality concerned, which benefits significantly from community art and its impact. Further partnerships can be entered into with foundations and companies, for example.

A resonant local government:

In addition to financial support, community art depends on the political response of its community if the "soft" changes that it can bring about itself are to also have institutional and infrastructural consequences.

Urgent issues:

Community art is not art for its own sake. It should focus on strengthening democracy and cohesion where it is most at risk and on those issues that can leverage this.

Contact/Imprint

Contact persons

The Freudenberg Foundation, the COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim and the Arts & Democracy association are at your side when it comes to founding a centre or planning and implementing community art projects. For example, they can help you to make contact with artists and possible funding partners.

We look forward to building a dynamic, politically influential network for community art together with you, and continuing to strengthen professional community art in Germany and Europe: for a strong democracy in diversity and for a strong independent art scene.

COMMUNITYartCENTERmannheim

Annette Dorothea Weber, Tobias Frindt
Laurentiusstr. 16, D-68167 Mannheim
+49 621 4018 9884
info@communityartcenter-mannheim.de
www.communityartcenter-mannheim.de

Freudenberg Stiftung

Dr. Pia Gerber, Dr. Sarah Fuchs, Stefan Vogt
Freudenbergstraße 2, D-69469 Weinheim
a. d. Bergstraße, +49 6201 499 443 30
info@freudenbergstiftung.de
www.freudenbergstiftung.de

Kunst & Demokratie e. V.

Annette Dorothea Weber, Dr. Sarah Fuchs
Keplerstr. 27, 68165 Mannheim
+49 6201 499 443 30
info@kunstunddemokratie.de
www.kunstunddemokratie.de

Texts: Nathalie Leuerer, Sarah Fuchs, Annette Dorothea Weber

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Publisher

Freudenberg Stiftung GmbH
Freudenbergstraße 2
D-69469 Weinheim a. d. Bergstraße
+49 6201 499 443 30
info@freudenbergstiftung.de

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