

FEATURE

A month of independent art: The Project Space Festival

25.08.2015

Berlin counts more than 150 project spaces, and remains one of the most active and experimental art scenes in Europe.

Throughout the month of August, the Project Space Festival invites visitors on a month-long trip through Berlin's independent art scene. During the Festival, 30 Project Spaces were scheduled to open their doors for a new event occurring every day of the month, introducing their work and different concepts of a project space.

ArtRabbit caught up with organisers Marie Graftieaux, Nora Mayr and Lauren Reid.

ArtRabbit Berlin counts more than 150 project spaces, and remains one of the most active and experimental art scenes in Europe. What was the motivation behind establishing the Project Space Festival? And why does Berlin need a festival like this?

Project Space Festival When we started the Festival in 2014 we had the aim to create an event platform which highlighted the rich and diverse work of project spaces in Berlin. Running a project space ourselves [ed. note: insitu, Kurfürstenstraße 21-22

10785 Berlin], we had the feeling that even though the independent scene is recognised by a sort of inner circle of the art crowd, a wider audience was not so familiar with all of the different types of project spaces that exist. Additionally, we were interested in initiating a format that connects the project spaces, and creates dialogues around the work that they do.

AR The festival is currently in its last week. What were your expectations coming into this second edition; were they met, perhaps even exceeded?

PSF After last year's edition became a greater success than we had expected, we were hoping this year would continue that momentum. And we're very happy that this is the case. It has been fantastic to see how the festival is sparking dialogue about the independent scene itself. Two spaces - General Public and Neue Berliner Räume - are both dedicating events to the definition and future of project spaces respectively. Neue Berliner Räume's event is coming up on 30 August, and the event at General Public facilitated a rich and lively conversation involving both its panel and audience. What is also nice to see is that a lot of the participating project spaces are choosing to realise their projects either at other project spaces or in collaboration with another project space. In that sense, the festival is actually presenting more than the initially selected 30 participants.

AR This year's participating spaces were selected by a jury consisting of artists, journalists, and other art practitioners. What were you looking for when selecting the final thirty projects?

PSF We want each year to have a focus determined by the jury, so while our Co-Director Marie Graftieaux was on this panel, we as the Festival wanted the jury to choose how they would like to base their selection. From the very beginning it was clear that the concept or definition of a project space is very slippery. Specifically the jury found it difficult to define what makes up a good programme. Shall one, for example, judge the programme without taking into account the financial conditions of the space? In the end, the jury decided on a subjective selection, while criteria like the space's role in the city, political attitude and financial conditions were especially considered.

AR You have had experience running your own non-profit project space, and have

organised the festival on a low budget. What are the challenges when you want to ensure high quality discourse and great art?

PSF While it is important to us to run the festival as professionally as possible, we are, of course, offering a framework which is filled by the 30 participating project spaces. It is important to us that we do not curate the events in any way. Each project space is responsible for their programme, and how they would like to present themselves. In that sense, we can't always assure complete functionality of all the events we promote, but our experience is that the spaces, most of which have been running for many years, create events that present a very specific approach to art. For times, when perhaps something doesn't happen as it was supposed to, we trust on the ingenuity and spontaneity of our colleagues to deal with this. In the end, project spaces are spaces for experimentation outside of the mainstream, so polished events are not the final goal of our programme.

AR Can you share your personal highlights with us? What spaces / programmes would you recommend to people new to Berlin, or new to the alternative art scene?

PSF Of course we like all of our participating spaces! But some project spaces presented events that were unexpected, and differed from their usual programme. Berlin Weekly for example turned the audience into artists by having nude models in their window display along with art supplies so that visitors could draw them. Kleine Humboldt Galerie guided their visitors to the wonderful Tieranatomische Theater of the Humboldt University, and offered it as a stage for unrealised art projects. Kinderhook & Caracas along with curator Lorenzo Sandoval developed a performance based on Homer's Odyssey which was performed on a boat floating on the Landwehrkanal. Nevertheless, the festival offers just a small slice of what is happening in the independent scene. We created our website as an archive of these moments. We do recommend using our maps both this year's and last year's as a good resource of some very interesting approaches to project spaces.

AR Thank you for your time!

[Project Space Festival Berlin 1 - 31 Aug 2015](#)

[Berlin](#)

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Images by Philippe Rives: (left) 3 August: Berlin Weekly. NUDE MODEL 2GO; (right) 6 August: Kleine Humboldt Galerie. STAGE FOR THE (IM)POSSIBLE

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PARTNERS





EVENT

On the End of the Project Space

30 Aug 2015 30 Aug 2015

Neue Berliner Räume

Berlin, Germany



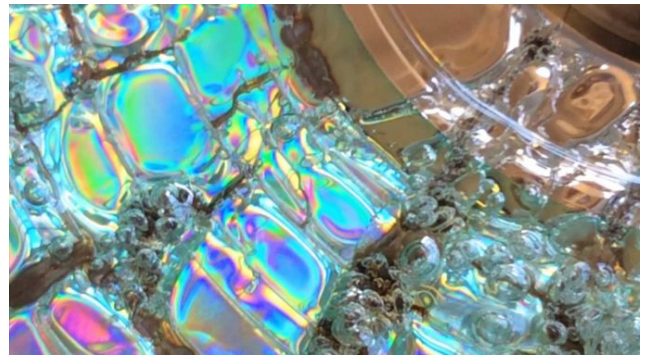
EVENT

Marco Montiel-Soto and Cristina Moreno García

27 Aug 2015 27 Aug 2015

Vesselroom Project

Berlin, Germany



EXHIBITION

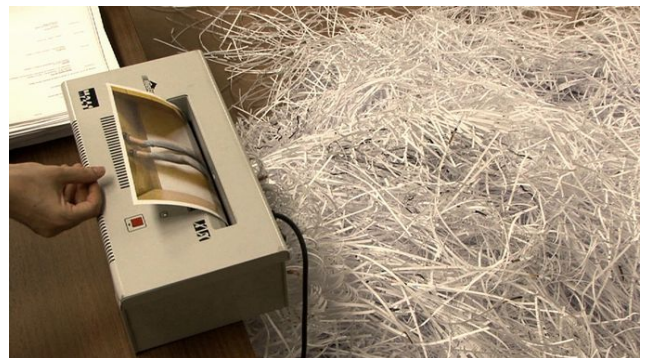
Paul Kneale - Free Software

29 Aug 2015 29 Aug 2015

Opening: 29 Aug 2015

IMPORT Projects

Berlin, Germany



EXHIBITION

An evening with Adrian Melis

26 Aug 2015 26 Aug 2015

Opening: 26 Aug 2015

Centrum Berlin

Berlin, Germany



EXHIBITION

Blue, White, Red - slide shows

28 Aug 2015 28 Aug 2015

Opening: 28 Aug 2015

exp12 / exposure twelve, space for
photography

Berlin, Germany



EVENT

Press LMP Launch

25 Aug 2015 25 Aug 2015

Decad

Berlin, Germany
