

We'll do it ourselves, then – 40 years of self-organised spaces in Berlin

In taking part in self-organised projects, we express our wishes and our hopes for a city belonging to all. Self-organised spaces are resistant spaces in the city where we negotiate which social and political relations we want to live. Especially in the 1980s, numerous houses were squatted in West Berlin and especially in Kreuzberg, which were used for more than just housing: Women's spaces, cultural centres, and health and community spaces emerged that realised other social possibilities. Forty years later, these spaces are holding their own against the increasing economic pressure on this city. Today, with their colourful gateways, gardens and courtyards, renovated factory floors, cafés, workshops and work spaces, they are places of retreat where other political realities have persevered.

In the exhibition "We'll do it ourselves, then", five self-organised initiatives introduce themselves. In a podcast series, in interviews, and with the help of photos and documents, we look back at the early days of the initiatives and

An exhibition project at the FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum, a website and podcast series on strategies of self-organisation in Berlin from 1981 to today.

With: Casa Kuà, HeileHaus, Kinderbauernhof am Mauerplatz, Regenbogenfabrik, Schokofabrik

Opening
26 August, 7pm
Exhibition duration
27 August until
12 December 2021

Opening hours
Tue - Thu, 12 - 6pm
Fri - Sun, 10 - 8pm

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also talk about ambivalent experiences in self-organisation: Rotation models, shared cash boxes, cooperatives or trying out other work models create much-needed alternatives in a competitive society. However, precariousness, self-exploitation and dependence on funding also bring tensions and conflicts.

Conflicts and knowledge transfer "We'll do it ourselves, then" goes back to the impulse of four initiatives (Schokofabrik, Regenbogenfabrik, HeileHaus and Kinderbauernhof am Mauerplatz) that were occupied in 1981. Casa Kuá, a QTBIPOC^[1] organised health and community space was founded in 2020. The self-organised spaces in Berlin that emerged in the 1980s are also in a moment of generational change and are confronted with the question of which socio-political issues still need to be negotiated within their own organisations. Even in self-organised structures, there is an unequal distribution of resources, access and privileges. Today, often white-dominated spaces have to ask themselves who is self-organising in them, for whom their spaces are open and whose interests they represent. In each individual initiative looking both forwards and back, fractures are addressed, and demands are being put forward.

What strategies for self-organisation do we want to pass on?
How do we build alliances and share spaces and knowledge in order to pass on the resources we have gained and fight against discrimination?
What resistant core have many self-organised projects preserved over the decades? What challenges lie ahead for the different initiatives?
How can we work through exclusion in self-organised spaces?
What role can self-managed spaces play in this city in the future?
We want to use this exhibition to explore these questions.

Project group "We'll do it ourselves, then": Heike Böziger, Barbara Bohl, Anke Peterssen, Hermann Schlegel, Andy Wolff, Christine Ziegler
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Interviews with: Heike Böziger, Barbara Bohl, Naikee and Tzoa, Anke Peterssen, Hermann Schlegel, Andy Wolff, Annelie Quitt, Christine Ziegler
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(1) Queer Trans* Black Indigenous People of Colour