





Press Release

Textile Installation “Peace Column” at Mehringplatz / Berlin-Kreuzberg February - April 2009

Textile artist Jan Bejšovec presents his installation at Mehringplatz.

The 166 year-old “Peace Column” of Christian Gottlieb Cantain becomes a “Pictorial Column” by the textile cover whose applications tell the history of Mehringplatz.

At the 64-th anniversary of the destruction of this district on 03.02.1945 by allied bombs in the II. World War, the column opens a time window for the viewer as the last witness of the original surroundings.

The Place was founded as RONDELL and called BELLE-ALLIANCE-PLATZ after the anglo-prussian victory at Waterloo. Renamed MEHRINGPLATZ in 1947, the place shows nearly 300 years of Berlin history.

Four population groups have stamped this district most clearly: Soldiers, citizens, workers and immigrants.
The textile installation makes their traces visible.

The textile installation symbolically quotes the history of these four population groups:



Soldiers

Drilling soldier - Since the foundation of the Rondell the place was used as drill ground. Nearby lay a huge number of barracks.

Iron cross - Till 1945 the column marked the anglo-prussian victory over Napoleon.

Bombs - In 1945 the place was destroyed by American bombing raids. With the defeat of the Nazis the militaristic interpretation of the place ended.



Citizens

During the time of industrialisation representative buildings for well-off citizens were erected and the sight of place changed. The park around the fountain was adorned with sculptures. The place was popular as a promenade and above all as a children's playground.



Workers

Ox-head - The poorhouse "Ochsenkopf" at Rondell No. 5 accommodated the losers of the Prussian society.

3 arrows - Till 1933 the SPD was headquartered in Lindenstrasse No. 3. The "Vorwärts"- house which was named after the party newspaper, was a place of fightings between revolutionists and reactionists in 1918. The three arrows of the "Iron Front" stand for the defense of the Weimar Republic. Since 1996 the SPD has its seat in Wilhelmstrasse.

Gearwheel - In the years 1848, 1918 and 1933 workers fought for their rights around this place. Since 1930 the metal workers union had its headquarter in Lindenstrasse. Today the IGM is there as a successor organization.



Immigrants

The Huguenot cross and Bohemian chalice - Both Protestant groups were persecuted and found asylum in Prussia. They influenced the district especially in the 18th century.

Halfmoon - Today many immigrants of turkish origin live in the apartment blocks. They supported the prosperity of West Germany as "guest-workers" and still strive for integration into German society.

Place-symbol - Until reconstruction after the war three important streets (Wilhelm, Friedrich and Lindenstrasse) met at Mehringplatz. The today's situation of a dead end both in traffic and socio-political sense will be improved by rebuilding after 2010.



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