

Online-Programme SOFT SOIL III/III

RIVATE POLICE PARTNERSHIP Solidarities in the city under pressure

Friday, 27 November 2020, 19:00–21:00

»Wir – Gespräche zum demokratischen Alltag in Berlin [We – Conversations on democracy and everyday life in Berlin]« (de*)

Reading with Eva Löbau & Asad Schwarz-Msesilamba followed by a discussion, moderated by Anna-Lena Wenzel

»It's [about] taking up spaces. I don't know how other people visualise change, but for us, we are already taking the spaces that are necessary.« — Jennifer Kamau

»It is crucial that white people understand that being white is not a neutral perspective from which they might objectively consider racism.« — Josephine Apraku

The actors Eva Löbau and Asad Schwarz-Msesilamba read from the recently-published book »We – Conversations on democracy and everyday life in Berlin«. Eleven Berliners voice their opinions in interview with the artist Sonya Schönberger: Jennifer Kamau, Josephine Apraku, Katalin Gennburg, Gülcan Nitsch, Till Egen, Christian Herwartz, Hans-Christian Ströbele, Niloufar Tajeri, Marianne Birthler, Christiane Bergmann, Tamara Hentschel. They are unified by the fact that they stand up for democratic values in civil society or politically.

The interviews and publication came into being in collaboration with the Stadtmuseum Berlin.

Saturday, 28 November 2020 , 12:00–15:00

»Zur Dekolonialisierung des Städtischen / On decolonising urban space« (de/en)

With: Tahir Della (Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland ISD), Mnyaka Sururu Mboro (Berlin Postkolonial), Adetoun Küppers-Adebisi (AFROTAK TV cyberNomads), Coalition of Cultural Workers against the Humboldt Forum (Raphaël Grisey, Laura Horelli & Tanja Ost ojić), Dierk Schmidt. Discussion moderated by Michael Küppers-Adebisi

In June, 2013, the initiative *No Humboldt21!* published a statement entitled "Stop the planned construction of the Humboldt Forum in the Berlin Palace!". The Berlin Palace was built in 1443 by the Hohenzollerns, who occupied it until 1918. This dynasty was responsible for the enslavement of thousands of people from Africa, as well as for genocides and concentration camps in Germany's former colonies. *No Humboldt 21's* statement makes clear that the German state's decision to reconstruct the Berlin Palace disrespects descendants of the colonised worldwide, and lies in direct contradiction to the aim of promoting equality in a (post-)migrant society.

Despite the active work of numerous organisations, including the *Initiative Schwarze Menschen im Deutschland* and *Berlin Postcolonial e.V.*, the Berlin Palace's facade has been reconstructed on Unter den Linden – on the site of the German Democratic Republic's *Palast der Republik* – where the Humboldt Forum will host over 500,000 'non-European' objects, the majority of which were acquired through colonial conquests.

In May 2020, funded by private donations, a ›Reichsapfel‹ – a symbol of imperial power and Christian global domination – was added to the building. In response, the *Coalition of Cultural Workers Against the Humboldt Forum (CCWAH)* was founded to »tear it down and turn it upside down«.

In this discussion round, which will include a performative contribution from CCWAH, the following questions will be discussed: What are the consequences of the State's decisions around the Humboldt Forum for the ongoing work of decolonizing Berlin's cultural institutions and urban spaces? What role do donors from the private sector play in the decision-making around the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace? How does the Humboldt Forum contribute to a new model of city marketing and gentrification? If lipservice to ›cultural exchange and diversity‹ here replace urgently necessary structural change, in what form can cultural workers and artisans take a stand against these developments and their deep repercussions for decolonial and critical cultural practice in Berlin?

15:30–17:30

»Corona Lager Reports« (en)

Listening session, discussion with Lavender Samuel and Beatrice Wanjiru, Break Isolation Group, International Women* Space, and Jennifer Kamau, Co-founder, International Women* Space

Finsterwalde, Doberlug-Kirchhain, Eisenhüttenstadt, Fürstenberg/Havel, Michendorf, Wünsdorf, Nauen, Wusterhausen, Neuropin: Refugees and asylum seekers are often shunted between accommodations on the outskirts of small towns in rural Brandenburg, often under the surveillance of private security services. This systematises racialised exclusion in and from urban centres such as Berlin, where functional public transport, basic support, connection to communities, and access to legal advice may be easier to find.

The *Break Isolation Group* was founded by International Women* Space in February 2020, when it began to build a support network between the organisation in Berlin and women* isolated in refugee centres across Brandenburg. As the COVID-19 lockdown came into force, women in refugee centres were doubly isolated: already locked down, and now dealing with often confusing, contradictory, and apparently arbitrary quarantine measures. Women* in the centres became reporters, documenting their experiences under double isolation through voice messages shared within the *Break Isolation Group* and published on the IWS' website.

In this listening session and discussion, excerpts from the "Corona Reports" will be played, followed by a discussion between Lavender Samuel and Beatrice Wanjiru from Break Isolation Group and Jennifer Kamau, co-founder of International Women* Space.

The full Corona Reports archive is still growing and can be found here:

<https://iwspace.de/corona-lager-reports/?v=3a52f3c22ed6>

Sunday, 29 November 2020, 13:00–15:00

»Haus verkauft! Oranienstraße 25 und damit verbundene Kämpfe [Sold!: Oranienstraße 25 and its connected struggles]« (de)

Discussion hosted by the nGbK groups: Arbeitskreis (AK) Standort/O-straße and project group SOFT SOIL

With contributions by: Berlin Tech Workers Coalition, Initiative Hermannplatz, liebigs34 - Anarcha-Queer-Feminist Collective, Kein Generalverdacht, KiGe (Kiez & Gewerbe) und OraNostra (Bündnis aus kleineren und mittelständischen Gewerbemiet*innen)

The recent sale of the nGbK's main location, Oranienstraße 25, to the postbox company Victoria Immo Properties, will lead inevitably to rent levels that are unaffordable for a publicly-funded cultural institution.

Together with the nGbK's AK Standort O-Straße, which is addressing the ramifications of the sale, SOFT SOIL is approaching six different groups, including anti-gentrification and anti-racism activists, cultural workers, and tech workers, to compile an online reading-room together. Selected material connecting past and present struggles will be uploaded and made available to others and form the basis for a shared discussion: what does it mean to say ›wir bleiben alle‹ [we will all stay!] today?

The slogan ›wir bleiben alle‹ has a long and rich history in Berlin's various anti-gentrification movements. But today, Berlin's legislation exposes those who dare to occupy a property to immediate eviction. Legal protections to curb the exorbitant increase in commercial rents are non-existent. Police raids targeting so-called ›migrant‹ businesses are increasingly common. Spaces for a new, digitised, and seemingly flexible workforce are rapidly being superimposed on vital, long-standing neighbourhood structures.

The AK Standort O-Straße and SOFT SOIL ask the following questions:

- 1) How is it possible to say ›wir bleiben alle‹ and mean it?
- 2) If ›we‹ do not stay, who will replace ›us‹ and what does this mean for the neighbourhood?
- 3) What pre-existing resources can be shared in order to build on existing affinities, and create new ones?

During this event, the invited groups and initiatives will introduce themselves. Together, we will read selected excerpts from the reading room, before opening a discussion with the above questions.