

KuLe e.V.

An artistic community has occupied this house since 1990. They host Labor Sonor, a series of monthly concerts that attracts an international network of experimental musicians, performers and video artists, who travel from afar to play here. The house has become a vibrant meeting place for artistic experimentation, and offers facilities for rehearsal, recording, and performance. The 'Fassadengalerie' Mount Warning uses the building's facade as its exhibition space, employing a pulley system fitted to the front of the building to display artists' works as posters, images and light works.

Auguststraße 10, 10117
www.fernwaerme-berlin.net
www.mount-warning.de

General Public

There's a detached, scruffy and forlorn looking building on Schönhauser Allee. Venture inside and it secretes the Club Transmediale offices, studio and work spaces and a ground floor project space called General Public. A twelve-person collective runs and funds this organisation. There are exhibitions, screenings and music rehearsals. Tuesday is ping pong night, Monday nights are given over to 'Orginalfassung', a series of talks and discussions based on an understanding of collaboration rather than competition. They welcome a curious crowd who wish to tap into various fields of music, architecture, art, dance, theatre, film and politics. What was once a reception booth at the entrance is now a glass boudoir, hosting hot installations.

Schönhauser Allee 167c,
10435
www.generalpublic.de

List of artist-run spaces in Berlin

Compiled by Catherine Griffiths

This mapping of artist-run spaces in Berlin began as a project for Sparwasser HQ, was then extended and updated at the invitation of Fucking Good Art, and now functions as a web directory at: www.youkunst.de.

This is a list of artist-run spaces in Berlin. It invites fulfilment in your participation in tracking them down across the city. A functional and fun guide, inclusive of all those who play on the artist-run stage. I haven't sorted them or summed them up. The diversity is significant, that is definite.

I think that Berlin's circuit of artist-run spaces is where you can access the spirit of participation, snort the concoction of "anything is possible". There are just so many spaces functioning and staged in different ways: the producer galleries, project spaces, studio spaces, networks, warrens, collectives, platforms, apartment galleries, artists cum curators, the Kolonie-Wedding lot, the KunstSalon bandwagon. All make use of spaces across the city, working with their individual situations of location and previous inhabitation; there is rarely such a thing as a classic white cube without a wink. There are dirty white cubes, wood-chip white cubes and white cubes that are neither cubic nor white. It's mainly young at heart art, the rent is cheap, and with practically zero state funding, efforts seem to be directed at actually doing things rather than planning, framing and initiativ-ising; but just opening and then maybe closing after not so long. It's the DIY ethos that rapidly implements activity outside institutional frameworks, more often with very little money, and yet unquestionably concerned with a broader international context. There is an active, multifaceted and generous endeavour across artist-run spaces that facilitates a good deal of creative production and mediation, and yet they do not get much visibility and are sometimes unaware of each other.

The great loss is the free drinks.

So action is what counts, what makes the difference, and what is happening right now is the reason to visit. Less so, is the manner in which spaces often try to define their practices, in reality often taking form through notions and projections. Repetitive dialogue only homogenises this diversity. Words I heard a lot were: cooperation, partnership, entering into dialogues, site-specificity, hosting, networks and extending networks, which sounds super but is irrelevant without production. What I find interesting is the particulars of each location, the physicality of the spaces inhabited, often peculiarities that were not chosen, but which people learn to work with.

Also, apparently artists are not curators anymore, they are definitely just artists, and then sometimes they do curating as well.

This is by no means a comprehensive list, there are at least fifty other spaces I could have included, but didn't have time. Neither am I standing up for any idea of quality other than my own taste. There's bad spaces doing bad shows, and doing them well. Nor do I seek to pit artist-run spaces against the commercial, professional or Mitte scene. The commercial issue doesn't necessarily divide these spaces, except in their interests perhaps. The majority of artist-run spaces don't sell, but given the chance most would. The difference lies in whether they court it or not, a tricky one I know. And so what happens when they do? The 'Produzentengalerie' or Producer Gallery. Markedly different from most other artist-run spaces, primarily as the audience's only point of contact is with the gallerist, who is employed by the artists. Inescapably the feeling is more one of a PR job on how well the whole thing is going for everybody rather than any sense of opinion. And there's the KunstSalon art fair, which serves as a means for usually non-commercial spaces to generate some cash, representing artists, and working as gallerists under the umbrella of one big happy family exhibition. It does raise issues of whether some spaces see their status as a stepping-stone to bigger, better things, or see their role consciously as an alternative.

Future7

See McDonalds, there's some stairs on the left, two floors up, and it's there. You can't see it from the street, but it's up there laughing, with its grand balcony looking out to Alexanderplatz, whilst nestled nicely into a small cube. Here KOLLEKTORS take centre stage: a desire to consider a collection as a portrait of its Collector. Against the backdrop of impersonal institutional collections and the huge Flickr collection, which express so little of the personalities of their selectors and buyers, the artists Florian Wojnar and Nikolai von Rosen have taken the opportunity to give the small private Collector a public forum, reducing the statement of the single artist in the collection, and opening up the discussion about the art of collecting and the art of producing. Sometimes the Collectors are artists themselves.

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 11,
10178 (2nd floor above
McDonalds)
030 21230904
www.future7.de
future7@future7.de
Open by appointment only

Jet

This 'Jet' is the third on the street, alongside its neighbours the Jet dry cleaners and Jet photo shop. A renovated former tanning shop, the space emphasises the white of the white cube, as square beige floor tiles mimic the upturned square beige tiles of the ceiling that were discovered during renovation. This square grid runs overhead and underfoot, the upside down ceiling fondly smiling at the floor. This is a spatially poetic exhibition space that immediately encourages you to wonder amongst the rows of art works and the architecture. "What if?" shapes a yearlong

programme of exhibitions considering visions and alternative scenarios. Currently showing is the second instalment. Artist Lena Ziese has set up this project, which has just received funding from the Hauptstadt Kulture Forum, inviting other guest curators to shape the programme over the next year. Artists' talks and experimental music performances will take place in the periods between each show. Jet was recommended to me by numerous other spaces I visited as their favourite artist-run space.

Memhardstraße 1, 10178
0176 280 642 99
www.j-e-t.org
mail@j-e-t.org
Thurs–Sat 16.00–19.00

Galerie Foert

Kurt Winterlager. A gallery currently occupying an apartment. Relocated from Mitte to Friedrichshain and with plans to move on when the opportunity arises. Frederick Foert is an artist and commercial gallerist and I think the second most jolly artist I met. He has created a handsome exhibition space with a regular programme of shows. A collection of works by artists connected to other spaces in Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg meanders through the apartment.

Boxhagener Straße 25, 10245
030 2759 6360
www.galerie-kurt.com
frederikfoert@yahoo.de
Thurs–Sun 16.00–19.00

NewYorkRioTokyo e.V.

E4 are the project rooms in Prenzlauer Berg founded this summer by the group of young artists, designers, curators of NYRT. They cover a vast international network that precipitates a 'NYRT goes...' of sorts – tours of Slovenia, Iran, India and Chile (where they have a partner gallery, Atlantica-transart). The ensuing network

creates a dialogue that aspires to stimulate local and global social concern and participation. They operate an open-submission call for proposals. NB. there's no door as yet, flexibles can climb through a window, please no wheelchair users or old people.

Eberswalder Straße 4, 10437
030 4403 3678
www.nyrt.net
info@nyrt.net

Longing balloons are floating around the world, Green Light Pavilion

Sehnsüchtig gleiten Ballone rund um die Welt. Bathing winter evenings in green light, this could be a UFO landing site. The Green Light Pavilion is a temporary structure that was designed by Riccardo Previdi on an unused site in central Mitte awaiting an ugly new office building, probably. Caroline Eggel and Christiane Rekade have curated an 'exhibition in progress' lasting one year. Twelve artists have been invited to contribute to the space in a programme that will mutually transmute and extend through installation works. Additionally there is a growing archive inside the pavilion with documentation connected to the project and the artists involved. The aim is to create a public resource and a forum for the curators present work and discuss it with the public. Locals, families, the curious and the art crowd form its audience.

Gormannstraße/Mulackstraße
0176 22675956
www.longingballoons.de
LongingBalloons@GreenLightPavilion
Thurs–Sat 12.00–19.00 until the end of June 2006.

Galerie Mille d'Air

Such a very beautiful facade; arching stone over a conceptual window, it's just peachy, both in colour and feeling. And possibly

the newest space on the list. Benjamin Klunker is an artist and fashion designer working from his studio at the back of the gallery space. Inviting artists to make exhibitions, each adding to the space, which tinkers on the leftovers of its previous escapades. Mille d'Air pokes its head up in the space of potential energy and optimism.

Torstraße 230, 10115
www.kosmotrop.de
info@kosmotrop.de
Wed–Sat 16.00–20.00

Freie Internationale Tankstelle

A 1928 gas station, one of only two of its kind in Germany, and protected as a site of national heritage, an artwork as it stands, with the confidence that comes from knowing that nobody will be knocking it down to build a new one or renovate it ugly. The station itself is only 2m2 and so most events take place outside on the forecourt, permitting it to open only from May to October. The delightful Dida Zende has run the gas station as an art project for 2 years, welcoming a social crowd. FIT works with the symbol and situation of the gas station and its culture in the program, which reflects themes on social impact and mobility, this year hosting a television set for a 4-week World Cup-watching fest. In May there is a design exhibition to coincide with the DesignMai festival, and in March of this year they will participate in the Biennale for a Sticker/Street Art project. FIT references the avant-garde in considering the future of the gas station as redundant, due to empty oil reserves, and thus in need of a new function – the art project.

Some people like to hire FIT for birthday parties and other such fun, which conveniently funds the whole thing.

Schwedterstraße 262, 10119
0160 3022240
www.f-i-t.org
info@f-i-t.org
Fri evenings and Sun afternoons, May–Oct

Undenk

With somewhere between four and ten members, Undenk arose five years ago. They don't run a space and are not organised as a collective producing art, rather they take over spaces, stage events, stencil around, sticker places, reclaim the streets of the shrinking cities. From the Kunstsalon to a parking lot, they engineer situations of presentation. Undenk is an Orwellian reference to contradiction and convenient belief over truth and underlies the group's radical political interests.

www.undenk.com
info@undenk.com

Galerie Invaliden1

Five artists originating from the Iberian peninsular recently established this space. Having all arrived separately in Berlin and established their practices here, they met and opened a gallery to create a platform for themselves and invited artists to experiment with a freer and less precious space than the commercial gallery experience. Selecting from proposals, they cooperate with artists in making an exhibition, rather than curating presentations of work. Organised democratically as a self-funded collective, identifying with the producer gallery, though not as a commercial venture, and not claiming Spanish/Portuguese representation. They occupy a bright small space with a public window onto a prominent Berlin location. Ignore the funny shop next door, with which they share an entrance, but are otherwise unconnected.

Invalidenstraße 1, 10115
www.invaliden1.com
info@invaliden.com
Wed–Sat 15.00–19.00

Homie

This is a public project apartment space opened by Daniel Seiple in November 2005 and will run for one year. The space is dedicated to American, German and Spanish artists, showcasing the work of one artist per month. Homie is a small room in Seiple's apartment. It is separated from the main living space by a door and also has its own entrance, appearing as both private living space and a closet off the street. Its intimate scale and architecture create a setting in which ideas of public and private, visitation and residence, the owned and the for sale are in flux.

Stargarder Straße 71,
2nd Floor, 10437
0177 3689111

www.travelhome.org/homie
homie@travelhome.org
Sat and Sun 13.00–18.00

Nice & Fit

The building's hallway and staircase are grand, spooky and altbau. Enter the gallery on the first floor. This is not just white, this is white vinyl, it's gleaming. The space is actually contained in an apartment, but a much less familial affair than some of the other apartment spaces. This is more glamorous, astute, well – commercial. The audience is welcomed to a tour of the work, an invitation to look at things held precious, a much warmer experience than the usual commercial gallery format. Artist/historian Helena Papadopoulos, the hostess and gallerist came from Greece via New York to Berlin in 2004. She shows works by well-known artists and introduces new ones, embroidered with textual extracts from works of philoso-

phy and fiction. Stripped Bare is a bi-monthly on art published by the gallery. It takes the form of a foldout poster image on one side and critiques, poetry, interviews and meanderings on the other. It's super lovely for 2 euros. **Weinbergsweg 24, 10119, will soon move to: Brunnenstraße 13, 10119 030 44045976** www.niceandfitgallery.com mail@niceandfitgallery.com Tues–Sat 12–6pm

ZENTRALBUERO

Four years ago curator and art historian Dorothea Jendricke, architect Wulf Boettger and artist Erik Smith courageously rented two whole floors of rather large empty space on the corner of Alexanderplatz and Unter den Linden. ZENTRALBUERO has since emerged as a self-funding activity warren, generously supporting artistic practices and an ever-growing community. An upper floor provides affordable workspaces to a diverse group, including fashion designers, artists, editors, illustrators and scriptwriters. This funds the organisation and generates further reinvestment that has come to provide a budget for the ground floor project space and a residency programme. In collaboration with Rocketshop, another artist-run organisation operated from the ZENTRALBUERO site, they participated in the Kunstsalon 04, but this year, chose to remain out of the commercial and often self-representing arena.

Organised as a cooperation with invited artists, the site-specific project space enables artists freedom to create and present work, often with an architectural/theoretical slant. The 3-month residency programme, Schinkel-Progressiv, offers a private studio space and accommodation for

invited artists from around the world to work in the areas of architecture, design and urbanism. Musicians use the basement as a rehearsal space.

Networks and collaborations sprout from this busy environment, often stretching beyond that which ZENTRALBUERO houses.

Spandauerstraße 2, 10178, moving to Karl Liebknechtstraße 7 next month, just around the corner.

030 610 74 145

0172 3186443

0179 2267163

www.zentralbueroberlin.org

Korridor

A project space in a private flat that runs from the front door to the kitchen at a right angle. Run by Fanny Gonella and Sabine Schmidt, and inviting younger and more established artists in exchange, with an open framework. The current program of solo and group shows concerns Style. The previous took issue with 'The Failure'. This art work in the Korridor-style exhibition puts all other domestic decoration and community centres to shame.

Raabstraße 2, 10405

www.korridor.in

korridor@gmx.de

Sundays 18.00-20.00

Zagreus Projekt

Ulrich Krauss is the jolliest artist I have ever met, he caught me off guard. On my first visit I found myself licking the gallery walls. This is Koch/Kunst, an interactive gallery/restaurant/events space. Each project is made in collaboration with another artist, and specifically tailored to this space, inspired by the politics, aesthetics, and economics of what Koch/Kunst might conjure up. Projects have taken issues with the means of drug smuggling in which drugs

are swallowed and concealed in the stomach, and the common food additive Mono-Sodium Glutamate, where the walls of the gallery were covered with the barely noticeable additive against the white setting, whilst guests enjoyed a 5-course feast containing no trace of the additive. The majority of the audience reserve a table and participate in the eating experience. On site, there is a professional kitchen, which is also used to run a catering business, which partially funds the project.

Brunnenstraße 9a, 10119

030 28095640

www.zagreus.net

info@zagreus-berlin.net

Call for reservation or opening times

Galerie Zero

Communication that utilises visual art, music, architecture and journalism, situated to provide a network that spans Eastern and Western Europe, organised from a gallery and office space in Kreuzberg. Anna Krenz is an artist and Jacek Slaski is a journalist writing for the radio, both are Polish and interested in the space as a platform for Polish culture in Berlin. They opened two years ago working for an exchange and generation of communication and creativity. The gallery space uses a sedate white cube format, however over the last two years it has provided a diverse platform for film, performance, photography, sound installations, readings, discussions and music. Galerie Zero's work expands to outside events, including the Terrapolska festival in Berlin, an interactive bus tour that fuses art, performance, music and information.

Köpenicker Straße 4, 10997

030 74073309

www.zero-project.org

Wed-Fri 12.00-18, Sat 12.00-

20.00

Capri

A non-commercial space opened five years ago by Bettina Carl, Ina Bierstedt and Alena Meier. It began as an installation space for the three artists to show their own work, and has evolved to engage with other artists, and has become acknowledged internationally. Housed in an old flower shop, and retaining the original display structures, the space denies the white cube, refusing to play background, and demands interventions that are site-specific. A focus on artists concerned with policies and aesthetics of space. Capri takes part in the 'stability-mobility-network' of seminars and discussions.

Brunnenstraße 149, 10115

www.capri-berlin.de

info@capri-berlin.de

Thurs-Sat 16.00-19.00

Autocenter

Run by artists Maik Schierloh and Joep van Liefland in Friedrichshain. Large metal gates open onto a concrete and metal former car yard which houses an exhibition space in one building, a club Lovelite in another. Attracting a social crowd that is willing to venture from the traditional Mitte scene. Selecting from proposals internationally, artists are allowed to create a site specific exhibition. Usually open on Friday evenings, in the summer you can spend splendid evenings sipping beer until late in this industrial setting.

Lovelite is a club, also hosting theatre, video presentations and artistic productions and attracts a younger local crowd. Autocenter and Lovelite are spatially and economically connected. Run by Maik, Lovelite's commercial success provides funding for Autocenter's programme, the Autocenter audience adding to the Lovelite crowd, but otherwise the two are separate venues.

Autocenter was invited to make a presentation at the new Gagosian space for the Berlin Biennale. Since Schierloh and Van Liefland have never presented their own work at Autocenter, and neither of them positions themselves as actively representing artists or a Berlin art scene, they are taking issue with this self-presentation and instead trying to portray the spirit of Autocenter during its five-year life.

Simplonstraße 38/40, 10247

www.autocenterart.de

autocenter@gmx.de

Open selected Friday evenings and following Saturdays

Mainstream

This is underground, let me point out. Partially dictated by its north Wedding location, let's face it, and by the fact that Peter Farkas has a curly Elvis haircut, and because it calls itself mainstream. Project room since 2004, and studio of the English artist Peter Farkas. A largish room that's ungrounded enough to expect free-rein interventions to live up to its self-proclaimed outsider status, unless it's just a name. It is supported by the Kolonie-Wedding framework, which covers the rent of numerous creative/cultural producers to attract a greater diversity to the district and probably a better image too. Artists are invited to make exhibitions, group shows are curated, and exchanges are made with other spaces in Europe.

Due to a more sparse audience in Wedding, opening times are sporadic, but events are often in collaboration with other spaces to synchronise a Wedding-night-of-openings, of sorts.

Dronheimerstraße 21, 13359

0179 3972827

www.koloniewedding.de

mainstreamfarkas@web.de

Open by appointment only

Kunstverein INGAN e.V.

Making use of the letters that beacon out from the facade of the building they inhabit, incidentally the name of its previous tenant, INGAN is an artists' collective comprising Andreas Greusslich, Peter Rollny and Peter Schedler. Formed in 2004, they are interested in actively formulating discussions around the practice of curating through their own strategies of collaborating with other artists and groups to put on exhibitions. They print textual editions incorporating works and projects, distributed as a strategy of sharing information and generating networks. They have yet to acquire a permanent exhibition space, and currently coordinate their programme from an artists' studio complex.

Rosenthalerstraße 71, 10119

030 53672850

www.ingan.gmxhome.de

ingan@gmx.net

Fri and Sat 19.00-23.00

Foto Shop

There's the feeling of being in such a tiny space inside, a little dark hole, but one that I wanted to stay in and look around. It used to be a shop and still has the veneers of the run-down former establishment: dirty lino floors, wood-effect surfaces, damp walls. It's intimate, unselfconscious, damp and dirty; a bit funny, in the way that creeping around such a place, a photography gallery, would be funny. You get to climb up a wooden ladder to reach the room above, passing photos stuck directly to the walls, editions, stuff from past exhibitions collected on shelves. I think Foto Shop has been active for two years, and was conceived as a meeting place for all involved. There are eight artists who run and fund the space but the group changes with quickly revolving shows of their own work, invited

artists and friends. Then they host parties, intense previewing nights, which I imagine serve to shape the space and group. A guitarist played in the minute window display on one occasion, in fact there is a sense of a post-party aesthetic when you're in there.

Invalidenstraße 1

0172 9008852

www.foto-shop-berlin.de

info@foto-shop-berlin.de

Open Wed 16.00-20.00

Thurs-Sat from 20.00

Amerika

This is a clean white gallery space. Opening in March this year, this is a new addition to the landscape of artist-run spaces here. Photography, installation, sculpture. There are twenty artists involved, who established the space. They fund it themselves, employ a gallerist to represent them and organise the month-long shows that feature each of the artists, two at a time. It has been conceived as a two-year project. They are young, fairly, they studied together at Leipzig, and now, having combined economic and adventuring forces, they have their own commercial gallery in Berlin. Part of the Brunnenstraße group with Rekord and Diskus.

Brunnenstraße 7

030 40504953

gallery@amerika-berlin.de

www.amerika-berlin.de

Open Tues-Sat 11.00-18.00

Diskus

Part of the Brunnenstraße group that includes Amerika and Rekord. Diskus is another such artist-led space based on the commercial gallery format. Here ten young sculptors from Dresden have joined forces, together with Birgit Ostermeier their gallerist, also young and embarking on her

first project as a gallerist. Over the next two years they hope to create a platform for their work in Berlin, each having solo shows, whilst still living and working in Dresden. The space can be found in the third courtyard behind the main street, is private and small and offers no public window, so seems quite exclusive, and un-engaging.

See Amerika, Rekord too.

Brunnenstraße 196

030 27572140

www.diskus-berlin.com

art@diskus-berlin.com

Open Tues Sat 11.00-18.00

Fleisch

An art gallery, showroom, public space, run by Asim Chughtai. It looks like a display cabinet. The shop window extends into the wide pavement in front, pushing this art gallery out into the public space. It is always open; at night the lights are kept on. The work on show when I was there comes from Special X, bright large paintings proclaiming the collective's manifesto: "We will be the future, we will protect you, we will be artistic as fuck, we will sing on our bicycles." There's a voice too, reading the lines of the manifesto, sounding out, projecting the work further into an audience who might be there to see or just passing by.

See Glue too.

Karl Marx Allee 34/Cafe

Moskau

01772364998

www.fleischzeit.de

info@fleischzeit.de

Open 24 hours 7 days

Forever and a day Büro

Run since 2002 by the artists Mariola Groener and Ben Cottrell, who live and work on site. They curate a small space at the front, showcasing invited artists' work. Already having hosted forty shows since opening, there is an

energy to the space, defined by a broad visceral physicality in the work shown. It is a non-commercial space, which they describe not as an art project in itself, but as a venue for different projects. Currently, the space is operating an exchange with another artist-run space in Köln.

Schlesischestraße 32

030 69534537

aloiram@gmx.de

Open Thurs–Sun 15.00–18.00

Das Fundbüro

This is lost property, it is collected on some shelves on the left-hand side as you walk in, and on the right is a large mural of Daria who lives here. The colour scheme is red and black and white, cosy, fashionable, quite like how a young girl might choose her bedroom to be. This is Stephanie Bothor's 5-year project, which began in 2004. She will develop the character of Daria, her thoughts, stories, and memories in drawings, little sculptures, paintings, and books. Born out of a collection of people's lost property, her story evolves in the space. Fusing studio and fantasy at once, the intensity growing with the visitors who come by, Daria being a fracturing and melting together of us all. The artist works in the space, eager to engage with visitors and discover something about who has come to look. You are Daria's guests, as are the other artists who are invited to intervene in the space, holding exhibitions of their own.

Schröderstr 3, 10115

030 31 50 93 27

stephka@gmx.com

Thurs and Sat 15.00–21.30

Glue

In the third back yard, through the Gothic Corner on the right, second floor up, you will find it. It's rather hidden, you'd never find it without knowing about it

first. Run by Asim Chughtai, curator and Dag Przybilla, artist, Glue hosts week-long rotating group shows. They open, explode with the Friday evening preview event, and it is this event that everybody comes to. Then they close for the rest of the week, opening by appointment if you missed the preview. This isn't a space where they want to sit around waiting for a sparse audience who may or may not come by, they have too many other things to do, they told me. So the night is Friday, they have two large rooms, they have a bar, they show all sorts of works, things they like, proposals they receive, following no particular trend, and influenced by no commercial needs. They fund it themselves, but when I visited a few days ago, its future was uncertain because they had been told to move out of the current space.

See Fleisch too.

Prenzlauer Allee 34

The Gothic Corner

3rd Courtyard, 2nd Floor

www.payberlin.de

Open selected Friday evenings from 20.00

Projekt0047

Three Clean white gallery spaces, an office, a studio and a lounge form the Projekt0047 site. Funded by the Faculty of Fine Art and Architecture of a Norwegian university, this space is run by Norwegian students to show young artists' and architects' work, often from Norway, but also networking internationally in Berlin. They operate independently, receiving proposals, selecting works, curating the shows. I saw a painting exhibition that collected many small brazenly coloured pictures, in glues, and glitter, and fluorescents, but curated with such constraint for something so sweet shop-like in appeal. I wondered if there was a heavier influence

from the aesthetic formality of the architecture design aspect of the space. What did sound interesting though, was the group exhibitions that they held, utilising three separate rooms to show the work of three artists individually and integrated at the same time.

Tieckstraße 10

030 28041940

www.projekt0047.com

mail@projekt0047.com

Open Tues-Sat 14.00-20.00

Rekord

Twelve artists club together, pay 1000 euros each per year, rent a white cube and employ a gallerist to represent them. This is a commercial artist-run space, set up along the format of other highly selective commercial galleries in Berlin, but here the artists select themselves, each taking it in turn to give themselves solo shows. They work in all media, I saw large scale photography and digitally manipulated images. As a space for showing art though, it seems a bit of a dull room.

However a funny turn-around is about to take place. The gallerist Martin Mertens, is about to take over the space himself, continuing to represent the more commercially successful artists, whilst turfing the others out. A bit unfair maybe, but who am I kidding.

See Amerika, Diskus too.

Brunnenstraße 162

030 4403350

www.rekord-berlin.de

info@rekord-berlin.de

Open Tues–Sat 12.00–18.00

WBD

Opened in 2000 and run by three artists, this is one of the more established spaces in Berlin. I found it listed as, "one of the New European Arts Spaces". Exhibitions are selected from proposals and curated collaboratively

by the artists running the space and the artist showing. The gallery seems private, discreet, set back from the road. The space is small, a white cube statement. It offers no public window onto the street, so the focus is on the previewing nights, when the bar manages to sell enough drinks to fund the space.

Brunnenstraße 9

030 80589005

www.webede.com

wdb@webede.com

Open Thurs–Sat 16.00–19.00

West Germany

A rather elusive space that regularly changes its name and site in order to remain so. Not to be exclusive it seems, more so because of a few issues with the legality of the space. This is a collective of four artist/musicians who simply love Kreuzberg and occupy spaces to put on exhibitions and parties. They recently went by the name Clinic, an ode to the old x-ray rooms of the doctor's surgery below, which used to occupy this site. Their first exhibition here involved dismantling the interior x-ray cubicles, neon lighting and internal structure of the clinic and creating installations from the material. The space now looks like an excavated skeleton, funny cubic floor tracings of former walls, still partially tiled in white, dismantled, ready to be reworked. It all moves via word-of-mouth and an extensive mailing list, having no website, phone number or fixed address. **Skalitzerstraße 133 westgermany@gmx.de** 2nd floor, for now.

Spor Klübu

Situated in the northern district of Wedding, just out of the centre, this space insists on its status in this neglected part of town. Artist Matthias Mayer, also going by the name Mo Magic, runs

the gallery space alongside his practice in the studios next door. The space is sponsored by the local council to encourage other creative/new initiatives to move here. The name translates as sports club in Turkish, the type of venue where people congregate to watch sports rather than play them, thus referring to the many Turkish people that live around here. The gallery operates in an international network by inviting artists from across the world to exhibit, whilst Matthias Mayer himself exhibits internationally. **Freienwalderstraße 31/33**

01798593744

moju@momagic.de

Open by appointment only

Sparwasser HQ

One of the longer-running and professional spaces, Sparwasser is a bit radical and a bit fierce in its undertaking to forge a platform for hospitality, discussion and non-commercial production. Funded by the Danish Arts Council, it works with a rigorous programme of exhibitions, events and talks, collaborating with a wide international network of artists and curators. Projects often take issue with audience participation and discursive production. Sparwasser has participated internationally in institutional exhibitions, including the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin. Lise Nelleman is at the reins and whips the horses into action. Sparwasser is ambitious in its role of creative communication and alternative representation, and is one of the few spaces to come close to fulfilling this.

Torstraße 161, 10115

www.sparwasserhq.de

Wed–Fri 16.00–19.00

Sat 14.00-18.00

Brix

Anke Westerman plays the game master, running this space as a

kunstklub for exchange and discussion of ideas and possibilities for future projects, it functions as a social place, opening Friday evenings, to make co-operations between artists to try out new ideas, to give up artistic autonomy, to not to have to be good. Brix are actually the bricks that are used to build the bar, like Lego, it can be dismantled and transported, and carries the social, flexible, and DIY atmosphere. Once a month there is a mix tapes night when the audience are invited to bring along a sound recording of their choice, to weave the soundtrack for the evening, and add to the growing collection of mix tapes archived at Brix. Glue uses Brix to host their exhibitions once per month, as do the Secret Garden Klub. Brix is a place for meeting and participation rather than an extended network.

Greifswalderstraße 223,
10405
www.brixbrix.de
Open every Fri from 21.00

Kunst Salon Wilde Gans

Extending the art scene up to north Wedding, Swiss artist Harry Jo Weilemann opens his apartment and studio to the public for exhibitions, screenings, and musical performances. The kunst salon offers a private context amongst a very special interior: wood panelled walls and woodland murals are the background against which interventions are made. Unfortunately the story of the mural painter is lost. The profile is to show international and experimental work within the constraints of such a precious and private scenario. The crowd is smart and sweet.

Schwedenstraße. 13, 13357
<http://people.freenet.de/KunstsalonWildeGans>
030 49911778
Open by appointment only



In Berlin's waiting room

by Nathalie Zonnenberg

Berlin is a city of politics and history and has earned itself a reputation as an enclave for 'free spirits'. In the period before the fall of the wall, socially critical creatives flooded into West Berlin and then later relocated to East Berlin, where everything was still open.

I too came to Berlin, with a mediator's grant from the Fonds BKVB and a plan to research various exhibition and presentation models against the backdrop of the city's culture and politics. To ease my infiltration I settled in Schöneberg in former West Berlin. Before reunification this was the neighbourhood for the artistic intelligentsia (David Bowie lived there for a while). With the exception of the lively gay scene around the Nollendorfplatz, little of interest remains today. The DAAD gallery, representing Germany's most prestigious studio programme was just around the corner above one of Berlin's most beautiful grand cafés – Einstein – on the Kurfürstenstraße. I went there regularly but, apart from a handful of (mainly old) people at openings or special events, I never saw a soul there.

In search of a young cultural audience the DAAD Galerie also moved to Mitte (East Berlin). The openings on the Zimmerstraße are now very busy. A famous German artist once told me that when she and a group of progressive artist from West Germany settled around the Kastanienallee in East Berlin in the early 1990s with the aim of making 'kritische kunst' there was absolutely

nothing there: no telephone network, no television connection, you had to burn coal to heat your place and of course there were no shops with 'luxury products'. These sober and romantic circumstances were seemingly the breeding ground for the art scene in Mitte, which is so typical of Berlin. At that time the contemporary art centre KW (Kunst Werke) also opened on the Auguststraße and several leading galleries – Neugerriemschneider, Esther Schipper, Klosterfelde and NEU – established themselves in the same neighbourhood.

The city's cultural climate is characterised chiefly by its numerous artists' initiatives. Some are better known than others; many of them are almost impossible to trace unless you know the people who run them or the artists who show there. This circuit is what makes Berlin so lively and what gives the city a young and promising character. That Berlin's international status as an art centre seems far from established appears to be of little concern. Much that was once underground will remain underground and rarely has any ambitions of fulfilling a more important role in cultural life of the city. That is because in Berlin, as for so many things, there is no market for art and the investors remain aloof. According to some, it is precisely this aspect that makes Berlin so special; were the art scene to professionalise (read: commercialise) then Berlin would be just like any other cultural metropolis. The reason why so many artists and likeminded people are