

THE FREIRAUM: MANIFESTO TO ALIGN UTOPIA AND PRAXIS

Freiraum is a space for Freedom: a space for one to feel safe, angry, critical, accepted, included, respected and empowered. A space where freedom, democracy, community and other shared, collectively determined ideals become actionable verbs, through the practice of which citizenship and belonging happen. As a space of creative confrontation and political imagination, Freiraum wishes to be an agent for positive change, through inclusive collectivity, solidarity, exchange, and negotiation.

Freiraum is also a tool-kit of practices, and a network of actors and places, creating new narratives and alternative futures. In this era where there is a pressing need for changes to rights, welfare and freedoms, Freiraum investigates how righteous anger can be channelled into creativity and enactments of freedom. To be free demands greater responsibility than to be oppressed: it requires action.

1. VALORISING DIFFERENCE TO FIGHT INDIFFERENCE

Freiraum is not singular but multiple, and it continuously strives to be presented, articulated and disseminated as such.

Freiraum gathers different voices, practices, dreams and visions, from as many parts of Europe as possible. Art for social change, commoning, post-industrial design, non-formal learning and education are only a few of the strategies that may be employed. We strive towards a space that invites and enables people to be themselves, through a diversity of pragmatic, actionable down to earth approaches.

2. A LOCALLY GROUNDED GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Freiraum is a call to the silent and for the silenced to become audible. We want to disseminate the knowledge and tools needed to cope with complex, uncertain, and often precarious circumstances. Empowered people who self-organise, share resources, enact their identities, improve their environments, and are aware of what's going on around them, are better positioned to address problems locally with a global perspective. Freiraum announces its presence through calls to be more visible and to actively participate in public life in the squares, the streets and everywhere people exist politically. In the course of real change new dynamic spaces can be made.

3. A MESSAGE INSTEAD OF A BRAND

Freiraum acknowledges the importance of the message, and the historical prominence of the 'billboard' as a place where the story of the world is advertised. However when resistance and protest 'sacrifice' legitimate anger in the name of the 'brand', we cannot consider it a strategy for

change, it becomes merely a moment of excitement only capable of a few steps forward. In order to go beyond superficial change-making, Freiraum brings content, imagination and political thinking back to the billboard.

4. A CULTURE OF REFLECTION AND LEARNING

Freiraum asks: How can we learn from each other and do small things with great impact? Who can be, and who is dissident now? How do we align utopia and praxis, prioritise freedom before necessity, organise the idea, organise the revolt?

In search of answers, Freiraum strives to make a step ahead, through transgression, diversion, shared responsibility, and subversion. We want to transform silence and whisper into informed public speech and action.

The Freiraum Manifesto was written at the beginning of 2020 by a group of volunteer Freiraum partners consisting of Lydia Chatziakovou (Thessaloniki), Jane Dudman (Carlisle), Ira Bliatka (Paris), Iskra Geshoska (Skopje), Jelena Joksimović (Belgrade) and Milan Zvada (Banska Bystrica). This Manifesto describes what the Freiraum platform stands for; what its philosophy, aims and expectations are.