



World City

Refugees' Memories and Futures as Models

A petrol station on the outskirts of Aleppo, a school building outside Mogadishu, a fortified tower in Damascus: When in foreign lands, people who have fled their home often tend to reach for their smartphone to show others photos of their homelands – but also photos of places they have passed through along the way and of their new surroundings.

Each of the photos arouses memories, fears and hopes which then take concrete form in the models they have constructed. Places of remembrance have been created, their visions are now tangible. Berliners and guests from all over the world are invited to take a walk through »World City« and hear the stories of those who built it.

The model-making workshops

The S27 international youth, arts and culture centre housed eight fixed and mobile model-making workshops in the Berlin districts of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Lichtenberg, Neukölln, Pankow, Spandau and Tempelhof-Schöneberg, and also in Genshagen (Brandenburg), each for three to four weeks between September 2016 and March 2017.

The residents of nearby refugee homes and pupils from a »welcome class« (a German language class for refugees) attended the workshops to make their own personal remembrance sites and blueprints for the future based on photos they had on their phones and images they found on the internet and in books and magazines. The project centred around the model building, barely higher than a chair. Buildings made of cardboard, wood and all manner of different materials they had gathered are testament to life stories that have been knocked down and rebuilt.

Around 150 people from Afghanistan, Albania, Benin, Czech Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, and Ukraine took part in the project. German and refugee artists associated with Schlesische 27 assisted the international model-builders in their work.



The exhibition

The »World City« exhibition showcases the results of the model-making workshops. 130 models of homes, schools, houses of prayer or businesses in Africa and the Near and Middle East, as well as the modeller's ideas of architectural utopias, are all displayed on 500 square metres of exhibition space as a walk-through cityscape, or a »World City«. On their stroll through the city, visitors can see each of the 1:10 scale buildings up close.

Creative people from refugee circles, students from the SRH Academy of Popular Arts (hdpk) in Berlin and members of the band »Rising Sun Berlin« developed a sound design that lets visitors delve into a soundscape that will familiarise them with the stories behind each of the selected buildings and those who built them.

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