

ABSTRACT OF THE STUDY ‚ART CREATING CITY ?!’

The present study analyses Viennese art projects which refer to the surrounding urban space. Relating to the term ‘new public genre art’, these projects are considered urban-quarter-projects which initiate processes of upgrading, make use of existing resources and realise hidden potentials. The art projects’ interaction with the surrounding urban space has to be seen in the context of discourses on the upgrading of urban areas affected detrimentally by a lack of investment. The ‘creative class’ (cf. Florida 2005) not only triggers substantial socio-cultural changes in the context of gentrification but also plays a major part in the economic and spatial conversion of Vienna into a creative city.

As regards urban planning and renewal, the city of Vienna has acknowledged the decisive role of art projects in backing efforts to upgrade neglected areas profoundly. Since the interaction between art projects and urban quarters has not been analysed so far, no corresponding data is available.

RESEARCH INTEREST

The study ‘ART CREATING CITY?!’ deals with the interrelation of city and art in two different ways:

1. What kind of effects do art projects have on urban structure? Giving the example of the ‘Brunnenviertel’, the effects of the art festival ‘SOHO IN OTTAKRING’ are analysed, taking into account that there is no sense in differentiating between cause and effects because of the complexity of processes of upgrading.
2. Which basic conditions determine art’s impact on urban planning? Basic conditions which have restricted or supported the art projects ‘SOHO IN OTTAKRING’, ‘Aktionsradius Augarten’, ‘Cultural Sidewalk’ and ‘WOLKE 7’ are examined.

The collected results were meant to obtain information which can be used for future projects in other urban quarters. It is important to note that the present study does not suggest that those involved in urban planning should expect art projects to offer easy solutions for difficult urban areas.

METHODOLOGY

The study’s research interest required the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Due to the study’s task to focus on interdisciplinary and applicable findings, conversational elements and the assessment of knowledge of individuals were of major interest. The four case studies (‘SOHO IN OTTAKRING’, ‘Aktionsradius Augarten’, ‘cultural sidewalk’ and ‘WOLKE 7’) have been selected together with a ‘Resonanzgruppe’, consisting of politicians, officials and academics.

Examining the interrelations between ‘SOHO IN OTTAKRING’ and the Brunnenviertel required to map the buildings and to pay attention to the type of use on the ground floor. The resulting maps were used for further analysis of spatial developments. Quantitative statistic data provided by the MA 18 was used for the analysis of demographic changes. Interviews with fourteen experts working in the Brunnenviertel and seven initiators of art projects provided essential first-hand information. The results of the analysis of networks and the interaction between art projects have been represented in an interaction matrix.

Reports from the media were used to analyse the changing image of the Brunnenviertel during the past ten years.

ART CREATING CITY - INTERRELATIONS

The interactions between 'SOHO IN OTTAKRING' and the Brunnenviertel have been subdivided in six dimensions. As a result of the complex interaction between the city council, politicians, institutions, lobbies and participants, there has been a noticeable upgrading process of the Brunnenviertel since the late 1990s. It shows in an impressive number of renovations, public funding, the renewal of public space, a restructuring of the local economy towards 'Creative Industries' and the new image of the Brunnenviertel as attractive artists' quarter. The quantitative data does not indicate a significant change in the socio-cultural composition of occupants. The qualitative data, by contrast, suggests two major changes in the socio-cultural composition, which result from the arrival of young, educated persons with money to spend and the arrival of migrants. Since there is little social interaction among the different sections of the population, which also shows in the spatial distribution, the term 'urban islands' applies. In the framework of the present study an in-depth analysis of this development was not feasible.

As regards the impact of 'SOHO IN OTTAKRING' on the above mentioned developments, complex interrelations between art and city can be assumed. The art project 'SOHO IN OTTAKRING' which focuses on the surrounding urban space, has been launched as a kind of trademark since 1999. The fact that the project has remained open-minded and flexible nevertheless, has influenced the processes of upgrading and their public perception. Having been conceptualised as local platform, the annual art festival functions as network node, which connects art, economy, politics and the local community. The fact that the art festival is limited to two weeks reinforces the sense of peculiarity and suggests potentials that could be realised. The media's great interest in the annual festival indicates that the Brunnenviertel's image has changed considerably in recent years. Relying on a decentralised spatial concept, the festival's creative dealing with the public space serves to change the perception of the area and to suggest hidden potentials of the Brunnenviertel and of public space in general. Besides the art project 'SOHO IN OTTAKRING', the established art scene and well-run companies have contributed to the Brunnenviertel's upturn. The urban planning's renewal of the Brunnenviertel was continuously supported by the local government and changed the urban quarter into an area attractive for investors.

ART IN THE CITY - THREE PROJECTS

In order to improve knowledge of processes accompanying the formation and development of art projects, the following three selected art projects have been presented in the present study:

Founded in 1989, the **Aktionsradius Augarten** derived from various initiatives in the neighbourhood which were meant to stimulate marked changes in the Augartenviertel and to set up a centre at the Gaußplatz. These initiatives were supported by the urban renewal office and funded by the government. Characteristically, the Aktionsradius Augarten is engaged in social politics and is critical of certain developments in the adjacent urban area. It has managed to draw attention to the Augartenviertel and to present the Augarten

as a modern park.

Cultural Sidewalk was performed in autumn 2000 at the lower Gumpendorferstraße. The art project featured contemporary art and was meant to discuss the state the urban quarter was in by living up the Gumpendorferstraße. Conceptualised as a 'shooting star', the Cultural Sidewalk presented 35 events at twelve different outdoor and indoor locations and involved the participation of 80 creative artists. The funding of this art project was particularly difficult. It was finally financed by a local company, the government and private sponsors.

Starting as a district-project in 2002, the art project **WOLKE 7** was accepted as INTER-REG-project by the European Union. The period of validity was limited from 2004 to 2006. Since 2007 the project is supported by the local administration. WOLKE 7 is an urban-quarter-project which aims at upgrading the area surrounding the Kaiserstraße. Art is considered a potential means to enhance participation and discussion and to further the development of efficient networks. The project's interdisciplinary team was commissioned by the city of Vienna. Notably, the members of the team were partly allowed to define their tasks themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

All three analysed projects had a strong relationship to the surrounding space and developed their ideas as a response to the particular features and needs of the respective area. It has to be noted though that unused and underused places and buildings do not only represent sources of inspiration but also impose severe limitations on the development of projects. Usually, the expected participation of inhabitants depends on their number and structure and spatial distribution. The combination of different forms of art is meant to appeal to persons from different social groups. Since the presented art projects took place in public space, the public space's structure functions as a major resource. It is vital for the establishment of projects to allow activities and initiatives without being able to assess their impact in advance.

Since the local administration plays a major role in the initial stages of an art project, the officials' interest in art is helpful indeed. In order to come into being, art projects need the backing of politics and administration. Among the factors likely to prevent projects from becoming successful are the lack of funding, precarious working conditions and the fact that sponsors tend to have self-interests and to make demands on the artists. By contrast, well-defined concepts, an openness about the project's actual outcome and the creative artists' work have proved to be helpful.

Social networking, especially with the local economy and local authorities is important for the success of a project, but whether a project actually fails or succeeds is attributed to the initiators. According to the initiators interviewed, the abilities to communicate successfully and to build up an efficient network are essential qualifications. In addition, one needs to be self-confident, persistent and to be able to cope with disappointments. Friendly contacts with marketing agencies, the media, sponsors and especially the urban renewal office have proved to be definitely advantageous.