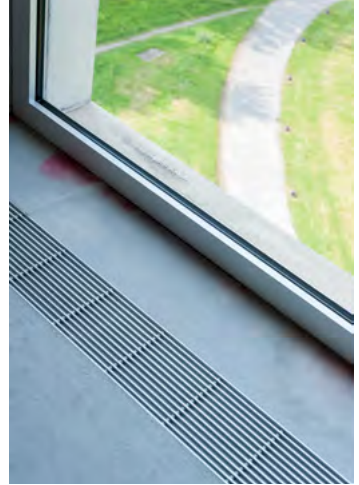


# HETEROTOPIA



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Andere  
Räume  
gestalten

## I. DAS GRADUATE-PROGRAMM HETEROTOPIA

Marion Digel  
Heterotopia Years  
12

Ruedi Baur  
Das Außerordentliche  
oder die Heterotopie  
22

Denise Werth  
Erfahrungen des  
Dazwischen  
23

Eicke Riggers  
Nicht am Platze und  
doch am richtigen Ort  
32

## II. ANDERE ANDERE RÄUME

Sibylle Peters  
Heterotopian Research  
and the Performative  
'What if?'  
46

John Jordan und  
Isabele Frémeaux  
Becoming the Territory  
60

Esther Pilkington  
geheimagentur  
Other other spaces  
76

Carolin Schreiber  
Ein Stuhl am Wochenende  
86

Sophie Gnest  
Carolin Schreiber  
Wir sind Nachbarn  
92

## III. HETERO-TOPIISCHE ORDNUNG DER DINGE

Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius  
Heterotopien als  
Verhandlungsräume  
für die wirkliche Welt  
102

Sebastian  
Goldschmidtböing  
Von der heterotopischen  
Ordnung der Dinge und  
Aschenbechern  
112

Christof Tochtrop  
Aktion Produktrecht  
118

Tina Boes  
Die philanthropische  
Ordnung der Ringe  
122

Negar Foroughanfar  
Skript einer  
Schmerzperformance  
128

Christian Berens  
Zwischen den Stühlen des  
Heterotopian Summit  
132

## IV. HETERO-TOPIISCHE ZUKUNFT

Alan Shapiro  
Science Fiction Heterotopia:  
The Economy of the Future  
142

Sabrina Großkopp  
Oberhausen –  
Schlaraffenstadt 2040  
154

Daniel Rauch  
Gestaltung des Solarautos  
thyssenkrupp blue.cruiser  
168

Joachim Liu  
Fabrication  
174

Yuliana Gorkorov  
Global Alphabet  
180

Christian Berens  
Docking-Station  
184

## V. ZUR PRA- XIS HETERO-TOPISCHER FORSCHUNG UND LEHRE

Marion Digel  
Dustin Jessen  
Hochstapeln  
194

Katharina Umbach  
Irmí Wachendorff  
Texte ausstellen  
204

Judith Pollmann  
Inszenierte Räume  
216

Christian Berens  
Let's figure out that shit to-  
gether: Learning Community  
226

Dustin Jessen  
Orte des Gestaltens: Auf der  
Suche nach der Profession  
234

Elina Nikolaeva  
Die perfekte Bewerberin.  
Regieanweisungen.  
240

Katharina Atkinson  
Helena Leinich  
Benjamin Gages  
Gelassenheitsgebet  
252

## VI. EPILOG & NACHWEISE

Marion Digel  
Sebastian Goldschmidtböing  
Sibylle Peters  
Epilog / Epilogue  
257

Abbildungsverzeichnis  
258

Impressum  
260

Marion Digel  
Sebastian Goldschmidtboing  
Sibylle Peters

## SEARCHING FOR HETEROTOPIA VORWORT/PREFACE

Der vorliegende Band ist aus dem Folkwang Graduate-Programm Gestaltung *Heterotopia* hervorgegangen, einem experimentellen Studiengang für transdisziplinäres Design. Er versammelt Beiträge von Mitgliedern und Gästen des Programms, von Studierenden, Lehrenden, Künstler\*innen und Forscher\*innen.

Die Heterotopie als Format und als Konzept von Gestaltung steht dabei im Fokus: Was heißt es, den ‚anderen Ort‘ gestalten zu lernen, aber auch, die Hochschule als Heterotopie zu verstehen, in der anders gestalten erst erlernt und erfunden werden kann. Die Heterotopie wird zum Labor gestaltender Forschung. Sie ist zugleich Werkzeug, Gegenstand und Perspektive von Gestaltung und eignet sich dafür nicht nur ihrer Stellung zwischen Dystopie und Utopie, Realität und Fiktion wegen, sondern auch, weil sie ein *per se* transdisziplinäres Unterfangen ist. Ein Unterfangen, an dem nicht nur die verschiedensten Gestaltungsrichtungen, sondern auch soziale, politische, naturwissenschaftliche und alltägliche Faktoren und Akteur\*innen beteiligt sind.

2012 führte die Auseinandersetzung mit der Neu-Ausrichtung des Fachbereichs Gestaltung als Teil der Folkwang Universität der Künste zur Gründung des Folkwang Graduate-Programms Gestaltung *Heterotopia*. *Heterotopia* stand dabei als Name nicht nur für das neue dreijährige Studienprogramm, sondern auch für das Institut für transdisziplinäre Gestaltung. *Heterotopia* benennt zugleich einen besonderen Ort (das renommierte Gebäude der japanischen Architekten SANAA) und eine Design-Haltung: die Akzeptanz von Differenzen, das Primat des Pluralen und das Pflegen von kulturellen Unterschieden.

This volume has emerged from the Folkwang Graduate Programme Design *Heterotopia*, an experimental course for transdisciplinary design. It collects contributions by members and guests of the programme – students, teachers, artists and researchers.

The focus is on heterotopia as a format and concept of design: What does it mean to design the ‘other space’, but also, what does it mean to understand the university itself as heterotopia, where a different way of designing can be learned and invented? *Heterotopia* here becomes a laboratory for design research. It is at the same time a tool, an object and a perspective for design, not only because of its position between dystopia and utopia, between reality and fiction, but also because it is *per se* a transdisciplinary undertaking, an undertaking which involves not only diverse design approaches, but also various social, political, scientific, and everyday factors and actors.

In 2012, the re-orientation of the Faculty of Design as part of the Folkwang University of the Arts led to the foundation of the Graduate Programme Design *Heterotopia*. *Heterotopia* is not only the name of the three-year programme, but also of the Institute of Transdisciplinary Design. It also names a unique place (the renowned building by the Japanese architects SANAA) and a position towards design: the acceptance of differences, the primacy of plurality and the care for cultural diversity.

In the Graduate Programme the students could research and creatively work on and develop individual topics of social, cultural and artistic relevance in the frame of seven studios

ado



Im Studienprogramm konnten die Studierenden im Rahmen von sieben Schwerpunkt-Studios und einem transdisziplinären Institut individuelle Themenstellungen gesellschaftlicher, kultureller und künstlerischer Relevanz forschend und gestalterisch bearbeiten und entwickeln. In den einleitenden Essays von Ruedi Baur, Marion Digel, Eicke Riggers und Denise Werth erfahren die Leser\*innen die Hintergründe der Konzeption, Installation und der gelebten Praxis des Graduate-Programms *Heterotopia* aus Sicht des Impulsgebers, der Dekanin und Initiatorin eines Schwerpunktstudios und zweier Absolvent\*innen.

Im Folgenden dokumentiert der Band Ergebnisse, Erkenntnisse und Experimente des Programms in vier Abschnitten: Im zweiten Abschnitt, *Andere andere Räume*, finden sich Essays von Expert\*innen, die an konkreten Beispielen eigener Projekte und Unternehmungen den aktuellen Stand der Dinge in Theorie und Praxis heterotopischer Gestaltung und Forschung diskutieren. Die Heterotopie zeigt sich hier als jeweils spezifisches Format künstlerischen Forschens und aktivistischen Lebens: als *Akademie der Zerstörung* (Sibylle Peters), als *Free Port* und als *Neue Stadt* (geheimagentur/Esther Pilkington), als *Zone à Défendre* (John Jordan/Isabelle Frémeaux), als Labor kollektiven Gestaltens (Carolin Schreiber), als Nachbarschaftszentrum (Carolin Schreiber/Sophie Gnest) oder als Verhandlungsraum (Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius). Zugleich beschreiben die Essays die Prozesse und Probleme heterotopischer Gestaltung und diskutieren andere Spielarten der Heterotopie außerhalb von Kunst und Aktivismus – Industriedenkmäler, Kreuzfahrtschiffe, Tempelanlagen.

Im dritten Abschnitt, *Die heterotopische Ordnung der Dinge*, geht es um die Wirkung von Objekten und Räumen auf das soziale Miteinander. Wie gestaltet uns die Heterotopie, lange bevor wir sie gestalten? Wenn heterotopische Rahmungen den Bezug zwischen Menschen und Dingen verschieben, kann Seltsames geschehen. Plötzlich gestalten sich Aschenbecher wie von selbst (Sebastian Goldschmidtböing) und die Akkuschauber fordern ihr Recht auf Nutzung in der Küche ein (Christof Tochtrop). Ist das schon eine andere Welt, in der Beziehungsringe bewusst aus zerbrechlichen Materialien hergestellt werden (Tina Boes) und Tagungsteilnehmer\*innen ihre Erkenntnisse auf ihren Stühlen notieren (Christian Berens)? Jedenfalls scheint sich hier niemand zu wehren, wenn die Performance-

and a transdisciplinary institute. Through the introductory essays by Ruedi Baur, Marion Digel, Eicke Riggers, and Denise Werth the reader will learn more about the background of the conception, installation and the lived practice of the Graduate Programme *Heterotopia* from the perspectives of the idea giver, of the dean and initiator of a studio, and of two graduates.

Hereafter, the book documents findings, insights and experiments of the programme in four parts: The second part, *Other Other Spaces*, contains essays by experts who discuss the present status of the theory and practice of heterotopic design and research on the basis of concrete examples of their projects and endeavours. Heterotopia in each case emerges as a specific format of artistic research and activist life: as an *Academy of Destruction* (Sibylle Peters), as a *Free Port* and as a *New City* (geheimagentur/Esther Pilkington), as a *Zone à Défendre* (John Jordan/Isabelle Frémeaux), as a laboratory for collective design (Carolin Schreiber), as a neighbourhood centre (Carolin Schreiber/Sophie Gnest), or as a space for negotiation (Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius). At the same time, the essays describe processes and problems of heterotopic design and discuss varieties of heterotopia outside the realm of art and activism – industrial monuments, cruise ships, temple grounds.

The third part, *The Heterotopic Order of Things*, is about the effect of objects and spaces on social coexistence. How does the heterotopia shape us, long before we shape it? When heterotopic framings shift the relation between humans and objects, something strange can happen. Suddenly, ashtrays design themselves (Sebastian Goldschmidtböing) and cordless screwdrivers demand their right to be used in the kitchen (Christof Tochtrop). Is it already a different world, in which relationship rings are made out of fragile materials (Tina Boes) and participants of a conference write down their notes on their chairs (Christian Berens)? In any case, nobody here seems to defend themselves when the performance artist scrapes the audience with wire brushes (Negar Foroughanfar).

The fourth part, *Heterotopian Futures*, starts with a contribution by Alan Shapiro about science fiction replicators, the economy of the future and the connection between virtual, fictional and real spaces. That Alan Shapiro's two-year work in the Graduate Programme *Heterotopia* itself has had the effect of a replicator shows in the further contributions that can be found in this part, all

künstlerin die Zuschauer\*innen mit Drahtbürsten traktiert (Negar Foroughanfar).

Der vierte Abschnitt, *Heterotopian Futures*, wird eingeleitet vom Beitrag Alan Shapiros über Science-Fiction-Replikatoren, die Ökonomie der Zukunft und den Zusammenhang zwischen virtuellen, fiktiven und realen Räumen. Dass Alan Shapiros zweijähriges Wirken im *Heterotopia*-Programm selbst wie ein Replikator gewirkt hat, davon zeugen die weiteren Beiträge dieses Abschnitts, die allesamt studentische Projekte dokumentieren, die die Heterotopie in der Zukunft suchen oder in die Zukunft hinein entwerfen, wie Sabrina Großkopp in ihrer Design-Fiktion *Oberhausen – Schlaraffenstadt 2040* oder Daniel Rauch mit seinem – allerdings sehr realen – *blue.cruiser*. Mehr Spiel haben die Entwürfe und Designs von Joachim Liu und Yuliana Gorkorov, gefolgt von der Erfindung der Flusenforschung, die wir dem Projekt *Dockingstation* (Christian Berens, Moritz Kotzerke) zu verdanken haben.

Im fünften Abschnitt, *Aus der Praxis heterotopischer Forschung und Lehre*, wird anhand von Beispielen einschlägiger Projekte anschaulich beschrieben und untersucht, wie der Foucault'sche Begriff der Heterotopie in einer dem Pluralen verpflichteten Forschung und Lehre wirksam wird. Gestalterische Bildung wird dabei immer zur Transformation von Kultur und Gesellschaft in Beziehung gesetzt. Welchen Chancen und welchen Herausforderungen begegnen Studierende und Lehrende bei der Bewältigung von Unterschieden qua Transformation in neue Konzepte und Formen? Wie können Synergien zwischen unterschiedlichen Disziplinen entstehen? Den Akteur\*innen in der Schnittmenge von Theorie und Praxis geht es dabei auch darum, neue Qualitätskriterien zu diskutieren, die sich nicht aus der Abgrenzung zwischen Wissenschaft, Kunst und Design herleiten. Die Beiträge über das Hochstapeln (Marion Digel/Dustin Jessen), über die Inszenierung von Text im Raum (Katharina Umbach/Irmi Wachendorff), über Resonanzräume (Judith Pollmann/Pia Kintrop/Anastasija Delidova), eine studentische Learning-Community (Christian Berens), über die Suche nach der Profession (Dustin Jessen), die perfekte Bewerbung (Elina Nikolaeva) und die gebotene Gelassenheit (Katharina Atkinson/Helena Leinich, Benjamin Gages) öffnen den Leser\*innen andere Räume des Forschens und Gestaltens, die die Protagonist\*innen verändert haben.

documenting student projects students that look for heterotopia in the future or that project it into the future – like Sabrina Großkopp in her design fiction Oberhausen – *City of Plenty 2040* or Daniel Rauch with his – albeit very real – *blue.cruiser*. More play can be found in the concepts and designs by Joachim Liu and Yuliana Gorkorov, followed by the invention of fluff research, which we owe to the project *Dockingstation* (Christian Berens, Moritz Kotzerke).

The essays in the fifth part, *From the Practice of Heterotopic Research and Teaching*, vividly describe and analyse on the basis of examples of relevant projects how the concept of heterotopia by Foucault becomes effective in a practice of research and teaching that is committed to plurality. Here, design education is always seen in relation to the transformation of culture and society. What possibilities and challenges do students and teachers encounter when overcoming differences via transformation into new concepts and forms? How can synergies between different disciplines emerge? The actors who work at the interface of theory and practice also aim to discuss new quality criteria, which are not deduced from the differentiation between science, art and design. The contributions on imposture (Marion Digel/Dustin Jessen), on the staging of text in space (Katharina Umbach/Irmi Wachendorff), on resonance spaces (Judith Pollmann/Pia Kintrop/Anastasija Delidova), on a student learning community (Christian Berens), on the search for a profession (Dustin Jessen), on the perfect application (Elina Nikolaeva), and on serenity (Katharina Atkinson, Helena Leinich, Benjamin Gages) all open up different spaces of research and design that have changed the protagonists.



# II. ANDERERE ANDERERE RÄU ME

Sibylle Peters  
**Heterotopian Research  
and the Performative  
'What if?'**  
46

John Jordan und  
Isabele Frémeaux  
**Becoming the Territory**  
60

Esther Pilkington  
geheimagentur  
**Other other spaces**  
76

Carolin Schreiber  
**Ein Stuhl am Wochenende**  
86

Sophie Gnest  
Carolin Schreiber  
**Wir sind Nachbarn**  
92



# HETEROTOPIAN RESEARCH AND THE PERFORMATIVE »WHAT IF?«: FROM THE SALON OF DESTRUCTION TO THE ANIMALS OF MANCHESTER

The first heterotopia I worked on with students of the *Heterotopia* programme was the *Salon of Destruction*. What if, the *Salon of Destruction* was asking, designers would think of what they do as destruction?

It can be argued – in a more and in a less informed way – that design actually is destruction. Product design, for example, has an immense responsibility with regard to global plastic trash output. Moreover, it is stating the obvious that design helps selling us stuff and services we do not actually need.<sup>1</sup> And on a different note: All around us, assemblies of things and people in coincidental and collective becoming are constantly submitted to and effectively destroyed by some overall design vision that replaces collective creation and coincidental becoming without ever acknowledging the beauty of decay. However, what if designers would start their work and approach with an interest for and an expertise in destruction? Not in a cynical way, but by acknowledging destruction as an important part of everything and as an interesting process offering an endless spectrum of possibilities.

## Design actually is destruction.

The *Salon* brought together an amazing program of students' works – from a landscape designer contemplating the beauty of the puddle to a designer of solar cars<sup>2</sup> who invited the audience to change the shape and impression of a car using hammers: destruction as cocreation (Daniel Rauch). We also had a lecture on the problems of contemporary burial culture (Nathalie Pechan), a presentation of extremely fragile relationship rings<sup>3</sup>, and, of course, we smashed our shot glasses on the wall in between acts<sup>4</sup>.

Initially, the *Salon of Destruction* was a spinoff of the *Academy of Destruction*, which I developed with the Theatre of Research, the Live Art Development Agency and Tate Modern, which will be



a 1 Auto, Arbeit von Daniel Rauch bei dem Salon der Zerstörung, Essen 2018

1

Thanks to Sophie Gnest, who pointed this out in her exam paper on co-creation in design. See also her contribution to this volume (*Wir sind Nachbarn*).

2

See Daniel Rauch's contribution to this volume (*blue.cruiser*).

3

See Tina Boes' contribution to this volume (*Die philanthropische Ordnung der Ringe*).



b 1 Auto, Salon der Zerstörung, Essen 2018

4

An action devised by Katarina Atkinson; see also her contribution to this volume (*Gelassenheitsgebet*)

discussed in more detail below. However, the high quality of the students' works in the *Heterotopia* Programme sparked a new research process – not about destruction, but about reconsidering big parts of my own practice in terms of heterotopia: What if there was something like 'heterotopian research'? This essay is my report on this question. It is situated within the context of debates and developments around artistic or art-based research. Having been a part of that discussion since roughly the year 2000, I am looking at a rich and quickly developing landscape of art and research. And instead of trying to come up with overall definitions to contain the field, I am currently more interested in identifying formats and specific ways of doing this kind of research. What if heterotopian research was one of these formats, one of these specific ways of working?

Let us once again start with Foucault, whose famous definition of heterotopias might be as productive as it is because it is not a consistent theoretical concept, but instead full of tensions, fragmentariness and contradictions. However, Foucault started the game by naming real places that somehow produce their own reality 'heterotopias'. He said that within heterotopias, norms of conduct are shifted, that they are places of crisis and deviation, that they have an entrance and an exit and are all about being gone through, getting stuck, or not getting in in the first place. Though 'heterotopia' is initially a spatial concept, heterotopias also have their own kind of time and temporality, they are temporal spaces. The most cryptic part of Foucault's introduction to heterotopias might be his characterisation of them as both representing

and contradicting the outside world, as creating counter-realities. Prisons, cemeteries, hospitals, brothels, theatres, ships and, under certain conditions, even Arabic carpets<sup>5</sup> – these are Foucault's heterotopias. We note: Heterotopias can be small or big, horrible or beautiful, or both. They can be lasting, almost eternal, but they can also come and go. Heterotopias are changing, but they also change you whenever you go through them.

#### First research question:

##### Do you remember a real place that was different from all the others and changed you when you went through it?<sup>6</sup>

I personally recall 11 June 1987, when during a student rebellion in high schools all over Northern Germany we, too, squatted our school. To change this all too familiar setting into a different space, a school led by students, we built a barricade to block the main entrance, but left the back entrance open for everybody. We played live music in the main hall and organised a student-led programme of workshops in the classrooms.<sup>7</sup> What was most striking for me about that day in 1987 was that with some courage, preparation and determination, it seemed comparatively easy to perform as if we, the students, were in power. Another important heterotopian experience was taking part in *Passion Impossible*, an action by Christoph Schlingensiefel, who, in 1994, opened up a different kind of Bahnhofsmision<sup>8</sup> at Hamburg Central Station, a place that provided passionate empathy and a public stage for people living in the streets around the Hauptbahnhof. It was a place that highlighted the heterotopian features of the Bahnhofsmision, more than turning it upside down: Schlingensiefel and his team from Schauspielhaus Hamburg performed as pope, policemen, angel and soup kitchen – all at the same time. They seemed to understand that for people living around the central station things were often pretty existential and sad and dramatic anyway. Their dramas and Schlingensiefel's performance of passion created an exciting and confusing, sometimes intoxicating mix, used by Schlingensiefel to literally initiate friendships between people from the art world and homeless people. Visitors and participants attending the Bahnhofsmision (nobody knew who belonged to which category) were repeatedly asked to form circles and sing a song that ended with everybody pointing at everybody else, calling out "friend, friend, friend".

Schlingensiefel's heterotopia was not achieved by spatial design. The site of the Bahnhofsmision was basically just an empty shop. In this instance, the heterotopia was created by performative protocols, by inventing and hybridising practices, including processions and storytelling, AA meetings, preaching and singing, and – above all – listening to those who finally felt entitled to share their drama, finally found a public that was on their level of intensity, that was warmed up to their level by performers. Officials of the social services attacked Schlingensiefel for tricking the homeless into sharing their drama in public with fake empathy. Everybody came to see what was going on, found that the critics were right and nonetheless fell for *Passion Impossible* within three minutes. Schlingensiefel's team was performing their stolen, contradictory repertoire as if they were authorised by a higher power. As if pas-

5

See Sebastian Goldschmidtboing's essay in this volume (*Von der Heterotopischen Ordnung der Dinge und Aschenbechern*).

6

On page 106, you find Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius' answer to this question: visiting the temple of Amritsar. Feel free to take a minute and answer the question yourself before you proceed.

7

Interestingly, referring back to the interview with Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius in this volume, it seems that blocking the main entrance also appears to be an important strategy of Raumlabor when it comes to transforming given spaces into heterotopias.

8

A Bahnhofsmision is a place in big railway stations, run by Christian organizations, providing food, shelter and counselling to people who are stranded there.

sion was possible – at Hamburg Central Station in 1994. *Passion Impossible* lasted just seven days and left everybody puzzled: Was it real, was it not? Did this experience that we all had actually happen? And most of all: Were we actually friends now (in 1994 still a valid question)? Was passion possible after all? Nobody knew. And it might have been this confusion that inspired people in Hamburg to open a new cultural Bahnhofsmision that was going strong for years after the event. This real one, however, was sadly missing the intensity of drama.

Coming out of *Passion Impossible* I found myself changed: Schlingensiefel's Bahnhofsmision had made me understand what Hakim Bey has famously described as "temporary autonomous zones" (1991). I understood that performance was an artform that allows us to create alternative realities. That this requires a blurring of the lines between artists, participants and visitors. And that it was worth it, even if it lasted only seven days. I understood that any alternative reality should aim for something desirable, while also having to embrace the theatricality and the awkwardness that necessarily comes with an alternative draft of reality and the urgencies of making it real. In short: I understood what it means to aim for heterotopia, instead of trying to make utopias come true and then eventually end up in dystopian ruins.

#### Second research question:

##### What causes heterotopias to spread?

I was not the only one having this insight: The theatre had already been one of Foucault's examples, but it seems that when live art leaves the theatre space to conquer other public spaces it takes the heterotopian potential of theatre with it and starts to produce 'other' other spaces<sup>9</sup> through performative practices. While Foucault's examples of heterotopias are all longstanding historical institutions, heterotopia has since the 1960s increasingly become a format of creation in design, architecture, fine arts and performance (even if the term itself is not always used). The monuments by Thomas Hirschhorn are outstanding examples from the world of fine arts: The monument – formerly dominated by traditional sculpture – is reinterpreted in Hirschhorn's work as a heterotopian space in which practices of gathering, learning, relating and remembering are hosted, triggered and performed. Another example is Banksy's *Dismaland* (2015), a dark version of Disneyland set against the background of migration and European crisis. *Dismaland* also reminds us that the fairground and the circus have always been heterotopian experiences and at the same time shows us how Banksy turns the amusement park into an artistic format. And Raumlabor with Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius in 2018 finally created their own version of the temple of Amritsar: the *Floating University*, an island standing in the midst of an artificial lake, or rather a drainage basin, next to the former airport Berlin Tempelhof.

The reasons for heterotopia's new career as an artistic format are manifold: It is supported by transdisciplinary developments in the arts, which since the 1960s brought together theatre makers, performance artists, designers and architects in so-called

9

See the contribution of Esther Pilkington/geheimagentur to this volume (*Other Other Spaces*).





c Dismaland, Banksy,  
Weston-super-Mare 2015

'projects'. Heterotopian art is also fuelled by 'festivalisation', i.e. cultural production focussing on temporary events with a certain fairground appeal rather than on longstanding structures. But heterotopias in the arts are not only transdisciplinary and temporary, they are first and foremost participatory. The production of heterotopias is an intrinsic part of the participatory turn in the arts and could possibly be claimed as its very own format. However, heterotopias are not only found in the arts, their career is much more diversified: Heterotopia has also become a crucial concept for urban studies and also, albeit maybe not knowingly, of urban planning. The publication *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in Postcivil Society* by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven de Cauter shows what can easily be forgotten in considering art-based heterotopias, namely how ambivalent the pervasiveness of heterotopian space in contemporary urban space really is, given that malls and gated communities are heterotopian structures, too (2008). Considering furthermore the rise of tourism as a key sector of the global economy it seems clear that heterotopia has not only become an artistic format, but also a product – cruise ships, wellness resorts, conference environments, resident estates, all these can be conceived as fully designed environments, which ultimately sell immersive heterotopian experiences of body and mind<sup>10</sup>.

Foucault's heterotopias are set before a background of normativity, a unified space of national society that is surrounding the other space, co-creating its otherness through sameness all around. The initial discourse on heterotopia is determined by national institutions, their archives, their power structures, their sys-

10

See Jason Silva:  
*Heterotopia: Designing  
Our Mindsapes*, video.  
([https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=cKxQMyBl2zo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKxQMyBl2zo),  
accessed 3 May 3 2019).



d Floating University,  
Raumlabor Berlin 2018

tems of law and order. In a world like that heterotopias seem easily identifiable and rather stable in their otherness. But ever since, we have seen the power of nation states, their social systems, their norms and their (post)colonial orders crumbling. The career of heterotopias in the arts, but also in markets and in cities, might be spurred by the erosion of that national normativity that came along with the idea of the one public, the one society, the one code of conduct. Today, a heterotopia is no longer an island of crisis in a sea of civic normality. It seems more as if public space in a post-civil society disintegrates into a loose pattern of heterotopias, all of them different from one another. And at best, these heterotopias are set up to negotiate what common space, what commonality could be in the context of the erosion of these old eurocentric norms.

Therefore, heterotopias have also become a laboratory of collective research. And it is exactly the ambivalence of the concept, its position between utopia and dystopia, and the fact that heterotopias are nevertheless embodied and to some extent 'real', that predestines them for research. Which brings us back to the *Heterotopia* programme and the Department of Design at Folkwang University Essen, where students are not only preparing for a life as activists, making the world a better place, but also to become industrial or communication designers, whose research is always also about eventually finding for themselves an income and a place in society. In a way, their research is about making the world a place to better fit in. From this perspective, questions are



still infinite: Research might for example be about how to promote and organise urban gardening, or it might be about one of Foucault's heterotopias – the cemetery and its contemporary use. It turns out that even cemeteries can be in crisis. As more and more people buy alternative burial products and decide to have a forest or the sea as their final resting places, as people tend to move around more during their lives and live far from the graves of their families, traditional cemeteries are more and more deserted, even from below. The *Heterotopia* programme – bringing perspectives and people together – has often been a place for research by means of clash and combination: What about an urban gardening association situated at your local cemetery? *Gemüse von unten* (*Vegetables from below*) was the name of the project group working on this heterotopian experiment, which was presented at the Heterotopian Summit in 2018: It was obvious that to grow crops on a cemetery would raise all kinds of religious, cultural and even chemical issues, but then – was that not exactly what was appealing about it? How could these issues be used to create communication, ritu-

## Heterotopias have also become a laboratory of collective research.

al, common practice, possibly new urban forms of life? Designs were made and try-outs at the local cemetery were performed, official institutions were approached, statistics were interpreted and feedback was taken.<sup>11</sup> Donna Haraway's idea of "us as compost" (2015) was brought into the discussion. Eventually the world did not seem quite ready for *Gemüse von unten*. Nevertheless, many lessons were learned.

### Third research question:

#### What are features and guiding principles of heterotopian research projects like this?

As laboratories of research heterotopias are often situated in-between art and activism, yet are taking into account that the draft in question might ultimately turn out to be a bad idea or merely a passage to something completely different. They are try-outs of ideas in social design, but rather than simulating another world they are trying to make it real. They fake it till they make it. However, these try-outs are not necessarily about the results, but about the game itself, not ideal spaces, but daring ones. Spaces of crisis and play. In crisis and in play heterotopias negotiate what might be a common space outside of common space. A common space for a commonality that has not quite been determined yet, a commonality and a collectivity partly or potentially brought about by the heterotopian experience in question. Still, being defined by entrance and exit, and being an essentially collective, transdisciplinary and arguably often a transnational endeavour, heterotopias and their creation pose all kinds of questions about how to

perform as participant, visitor, host, co-creator or client, how to perform together, how to perform some version of heterotopian citizenship.

Before I became guest professor of the *Heterotopia* programme, I was the speaker and founder of a PHD programme for art-based and participatory research around questions of performing citizenship, of assemblies and the crisis of political participation.<sup>12</sup> We referred to the research projects conducted in this programme as 'improbable assemblies' or 'institutions in rehearsal' rather than heterotopias. However, it can undoubtedly be called heterotopian research to try and transform a theatre stage into an *Entscheidungsspielraum*<sup>13</sup>, a space to perform collective decisions in different ways: The space is equipped with all kinds of tools and options allowing heterogeneous collectives to gather, to discuss and to decide in ways which actually fit their group and the issue in question. No less heterotopian is the attempt to found the *School of Girls* as a space to create alliances between women and girls in post-migration society by means of performance and instruction art (see Gunsilius 2019). Or to host an assembly of assemblies experimenting with the practice of gathering, with the art of "being many" (see geheimagentur et al. 2016). Or to do choreographic and historical research on barricades like Moritz Frischkorn did in his research project within the programme, investigating how things and people work together to demarcate spaces as other spaces: for example as spaces of civic freedom defended with barricades built out of barrique barrels, just because they were at hand when cities themselves first became heterotopias.

When self-made institutions are embodied and performed, when counterpublics are called to gather, these publics and institutions do often not quite exist yet. Instead, they partly come into being by being called, by an invitation to people to take and try a new subject position. Their existence depends on people who hear the call and decide to perform the subject position in question: What does it mean to come together as girls or as the many?

The spaces of discourse that are opened up in these projects, however, prove real only when they also engender new practices, new ways of doing, when they empower people to act as someone different. Of course, this goes wrong ever so often, and a call is not answered. Yet even that can produce insight in heterotopian research.

In the recent publication of the programme *Performing Citizenship*, Engin Isin wrote an essay about the intrinsic relation between performativity and citizenship (2019). Looking at Austin's first definition of what he called a performative – a statement that creates what it speaks of – it is obvious that many of those first example are civic acts, like marrying or inheriting, acts in which civic rights are called upon and performed to create a new civic reality (see Peters 2016). And conversely, citizenship can actually be defined as the power to change civic reality when civic acts are performed in accordance with laws and institutional protocols. However, there is another side to this intrinsic link of performativity and citizenship: Apart from being a legal status, citizenship is something to be claimed and to be changed. Given that the par-

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Members of the group were Yiyang Gao, Jie Ji, Marcel Kather, Nathalie Pechan and Sabrina Großkopp.

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The PhD programmes *Assemblies & Participation* and *Performing Citizenship* (www.performingcitizenship.de) were a collaboration of FUNDUS THEATER/Theatre of Research, K3-Centre for Choreography, the Hamburg University for Applied Science (Design Department) and the Hafencity University Hamburg. See also Burri et al. 2014.

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This is a project by Hannah Kowalski.



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ticipation of everybody is never accomplished, citizenship and non-citizenship constantly have to be renegotiated. But how does this change of citizenship actually happen? Isin answers: It happens through acts of citizenship, acts which perform not merely one right in accordance with the law, but the right to have rights, acts which appear as if they performed a right that just has not been written down yet.

What if this performative mode of 'what if' was a guiding principle of heterotopian research? What if heterotopian research was about embodying a specific 'what if' - in a way that allows it to become real as much as to become fiction? I would like to illustrate this mode of 'what if' with two projects I am currently working on. This brings us back to the beginning and to the question: What if we had the right to destroy? A great part of political discourse seems to be about who has the right to destroy and who has not, about what is actually called destruction and what is called something else, like 'upgrading' or 'security'. And great parts of education respectively are about training people to turn destructive impulses into something else, into discipline, sports, competition, career, performance. In the 1960s, the German-British artist Gustav Metzger, who had survived the Holocaust as a child by being sent to Britain, invented what he called Autodestructive Art. In 1966, he hosted the international *Destruction in Art Symposium*, DIAS, which brought the avantgarde of live art from around the world to London. Interestingly, he claimed his engagement for destruction in the arts was the attempt to start a peace movement.



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His argument goes like this: Let us assume destruction was something intrinsic to all being. Then, by turning destruction into a forbidden fruit that has to be overcome, societies are conditioned to identify an enemy that entitles them to be destructive anyway, to overcome the taboo, to legitimise destruction. Therefore, the initial non-acknowledgement of destruction is the most destructive force of all.

What if Gustav Metzger was right about this? Working in the Theatre of Research for many years I could not help but notice that kids and adults share a lust for destruction, while destruction at the same time keeps them apart. Obviously, we are not supposed to destroy. Neither kids nor adults. We are supposed to be productive, creative and safe. We are not supposed to speak too loudly, to write on walls, to eat too much sugar, to tear our schoolbooks apart, to smash the china, to cut ourselves, to step out of line. We are not supposed to destroy anything. Children, adults, all of us. And especially not if we are around each other. Strangely, while we try hard to be good, we see all kinds of things around us being destroyed. So who decides what is or what is not destruction? Who has the permission to destroy and why? These seemed to be questions worth exploring by a transgenerational team of researchers, in a transgenerational academy for people from all ages.

What if we had the right to destroy? *KAPUTT: The Academy of Destruction* first became real as part of the programme Tate Exchange in October 2017. It proved to be a truly heterotopian institution, given the reaction of new visitors who were introduced



to a space where destruction was not regarded as something necessarily bad, but where it was, on the contrary, encouraged. The *Academy* also proved heterotopian by performing a slightly different ‘what if’ that governs the more diversified heterotopia of the Theatre of Research: What if kids and adults could do their best research together instead of apart? What if kids’ voices were just as important and as influential as those of adults? Six kids and six adults formed the faculty of *The Academy of Destruction*, each one conducting one experiment in destruction of their choice informed by their practices as kids and students as much as by their practices as artists and researchers. Public faculty sessions were framed by other parts of the *Academy*: the Live Art Library, the reception, the common room. The writer Mary Paterson describes the atmosphere of the *Academy* like this:



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*The space hums with a shared focus that transforms destruction into community. ‘The ‘we’ I have in mind is not identity-based’, writes the critical theorist Irit Rogoff, talking about alternative ways of participating in culture. [...] Rather, it comes into being fleetingly as we negotiate a problem, a mood, a textual or cultural encounter, a moment of recognition.’ Likewise, KAPUTT requires participants to engage in an active community of thought. It is inclusive because it is bound by time rather than identity – what you think is less important than the fact that you are thinking. More viscerally, however, the space feels institutional. Specifically, it feels like a space of quiet industry, like a local library. People – not just faculty members, but also the visitors who weave easily between sessions and activities – listen carefully and respectfully to each other, clicking fingers to signal agreement. People speak in gentle, low voices. People watch and listen and wait, with the same concentrated energy they use to speak, dance, sing. Before I came, I expected the ‘destruction’ of KAPUTT to out-perform the ‘academy’, but in fact I find it is the other way round. The deliberate frame of the Academy distributes destruction to everyone participating in its community of thought. This is a form of institutional critique that doubles back on itself – the Academy of Destruction is both the subject and the method of enquiry. I brought my son along even though, at four years old, I worried he would be too young; I was wrong about that, too.*

*My son spends a very contented half hour studiously cutting up pieces of wool and sticking them onto cardboard. ‘He’s never this quiet’, I mouth, wide eyed, to other adults. After a while I realise that his fascination is due, in part, to the fact that he’s never been allowed to use scissors before. I may have brought him here for the destruction, but it seems he stayed for the feeling of trust. And that trust is all the more meaningful because it exists in an environment in which power is being performed. This (fictional) institutional questions all the other institutions we live by – my son’s school, for example, and our family. (Paterson 2018)*

Conceived as a try-out institution, *The Academy of Destruction* creates a heterotopian research experience for everybody, kids and parents, artists and citizens. Visited by students from the *Heterotopia* programme, who then embarked on their own experiments

for the *Salon of Destruction*, the *Academy* is also the place where I first learned to explicitly use heterotopia as a concept for creating collective research settings: Find a zone and an institutional framework, find resources and publics to turn this zone into a heterotopian space in which clear and distinct ‘what ifs’ are performed to test their potential for reality. Another one of those ‘what ifs’: What if animals had equal rights, had civic rights, what if we humanz had the right to claim our animalship, be animals together, no species better or worse than the other? In recent years Animal Studies have developed a discourse around a new understanding of relationships between humans and non-humans based on companionship, questioning and crossing the binary between humans and non-humans in different ways (see Haraway 2003).

Live Art from its beginnings has been interested in encounters between humans and non-humans. Therefore, for *The Animals of Manchester* (including HUMANZ), Theatre of Research, Manchester International Festival and the Live Art Development Agency set out to create an alternative city of animals in and around Whitworth Gallery:

*Imagine a city in which animals of all kinds, including humanz, lived together in peace. Or at least in search of what peace between species might be. Imagine what Manchester could look like then! That would be quite a change. For ages human beings thought they were different from all other animals – they thought they were superior, they thought they were the masters, they thought only human beings had free will, they thought only human beings had language. But children always had their doubts about that. Therefore, across one weekend, artists, children and other animals will create an alternative city in and around Whitworth Gallery and Park in which humanz and other animals live in companionship – a heterotopian zone complete with an edible shopping centre for squirrels and birds, a townhall with a standing conference of animals including the mayor, a retired milk cow, pigeons and microbes, a cemetery to remember extinct species, a university for dogs and other pets to teach humanz, a beetles’ film institute and a life art library.<sup>14</sup>*

#### **Fourth research question: What are the outcomes of heterotopian research projects like these?**

As heterotopian research setups are made for collective research, their outcomes cannot be determined once and for all by those who started the experiment. The outcomes of the *Academy of Destruction* are manifold and quite different for the four-year-old son of writer Mary Patterson, for herself, for each member of the faculty, for the students of the *Heterotopia* programme, for someone looking for alternative ways of education, or for me. But what we share is that we all know from experience now that, yes, if we had the right to destroy, our relation to destruction would change. The close link between destruction, hatred, violence and fear would loosen and destruction would emerge as something ubiquitous and potentially beautiful, something worth claiming back from the ‘bad guys’. Speaking of which: It seems that when they have

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Animals of Manchester (including HUMANZ). Project announcement. (<http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/whats-on/mif-2019-animals-of-manchester-including-humanz>, accessed 11 June 2019).

the right to destroy, people look at and perform destruction not with less, but with more awareness, more attention, more curiosity and care. Setting up a heterotopian space means fighting for the rules that are supposed to govern the zone – rules such as ‘kids and adults are equal’, ‘destruction is allowed’, ‘all species are equal’, and make them prevail over the rules which govern conduct otherwise. The new rules will contradict all kinds of other rules that are in place in terms of legal, social and material conditions. Not all of these clashes are foreseeable, but for all of them a workaround has to be found, or a default has to be noted and reflected upon. Much can be learned in this process. It is actually quite a scientific approach: In trying to pause a given rule, we find out where it is rooted, how it is related to other rules, how it is ingrained in our practices and materials.

Moreover, a heterotopian zone is made for interaction, creating

## A heterotopian zone is made for interaction.

it means making all kinds of prognoses and forecasts about what is going to take place there. To make these forecasts forces the team to be really clear about all aspects of their heterotopian intervention into the real. The ‘what if’ has to be articulated and answered to a certain extent before the public enters. The forecasts then become material, become practice, become programming and therefore it becomes really clear in the following whether they have been correct or not, simply by people relating to it or not or, most possibly, relating to it in a way that is not quite covered by the forecast. Heterotopian research in this sense is similar to scientific experimental approaches, but also to everyday life planning and failing and trying again. However, heterotopias, just like scientific laboratories, are specifically set up so that people can take risks, that they can go for the wild card, the improbable, that one version of reality that might seem like a fairytale at first sight, because, as heterotopias of this kind are temporarily and spatially limited, it is perfectly fine if they fail. As long as they – being financed by public money and hosted by public institutions – make an effort to open the research, the risk and the option to fail to as many (and that usually means, as diverse a group of) participants as possible.

This might finally be the ‘what if’ that governs all heterotopias of research: What if we all had a right to research? I would like to close this essay with words by Arjun Appadurai, who has claimed “that research be recognised as a right of a special kind – that it be regarded as a more universal and elementary ability [...]. [A] specialised name for a generalised capacity to make disciplined inquiries into those things we need to know, but do not know yet. I maintain that knowledge is both more valuable and more ephemeral due to globalisation, and that it is vital for the exercise of informed citizenship.” (2006: 167)

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