

Press Release from July 4, 2018



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## Opposites join together!

**The MakeCity Final Symposium consolidates a cooperative exchange between the festivals's advisory board and the Berlin Senate.**

For the finale of MakeCity, the Festival for Architecture and Urban Alternatives it made a splash in the water with the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual River Swimming Cup Competition on the Spree Canal demonstrating how additional urban areas can be activated and used for livable urban spaces. The theme was also vividly discussed at the festival's final symposium, attended by members of the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, and the Berlin Chamber of Architects.

Under the motto **Berlin Remixing | Stadt Neu Gemischt** MakeCity offered a broad platform over the course of 18 days. For an public exchange, with focus on innovative and forward-looking projects in the fields of architecture, urban and landscape planning - with best-practice examples from across Berlin, as well as international success stories. The more than 280 events across the city of Berlin and its peripheries were attended by around 16,000 participants. Above all, programmes contributed by partners such as the "Day of Architecture" and the European Cultural Heritage Year could report record attendance

With a political breakfast and a subsequent discussion, a first summary of the extensive program was recapitulated together with **urban policy representatives of the government coalition, MakeCity Advisory Board** and **festival partners**. Senator for Urban Development

and Housing, **Katrin Lompscher** (Die Linke) and **Antje Kapek** (Alliance 90 / The Greens) had already expressed their desire for an **evaluation** at the opening press conference in order to receive concrete recommendations for their political work. This will now be created after the festival, along with a **publication** and a **film documentary** which will make the outcomes and results of the festival available to the public.



Swimming Cup Competition on the Spree / Flussbad-Pokal © Axel Schmidt

First of all, the **representatives of the party factions** summed up the advantages of the festival for their own work. *"Berlin is growing rapidly and we must make an effort to find good ideas. In this respect, the festival can help!"* said **Daniel Buchholz** (SPD) and **Michail Nelken** (Die Linke): *"Berlin has been relatively uncreative and not very innovative in recent years. The festival can contribute to a change."*

The city should be thought of as a complex organism and not as an area for real-estate development. **Daniela Billig** (Alliance 90 / The Greens) added that for the implementation of the different needs of a city, such as housing, business, green spaces or roads, expert knowledge is needed that the government does not have. *"The festival is a platform where we can discuss together with experts – this is what we need in order to implement our ideas."*

The desire for a professional exchange was expressly welcomed by **Francesca Ferguson** and **the MakeCity curatorial board** members in attendance. **Benita Braun-Feldweg** (BFstudio-architects) affirmed that the festival was ideal for showing models and processes. *"It also*

shows that there are already numerous ideas that must now be developed further with the coalition." And **Matthew Griffin** (Deadline): "A festival like MakeCity can provide good political arguments to make a better city of tomorrow possible!" **Manfred Kühne** (Senate for Urban Development and Housing) emphasized: "There is an unbelievably creative potential in the city, there is also a great willingness to think ideas together" Against the backdrop of a rising production pressure in Berlin, he asked the central question how to go from strategic "co-ignorance" to "co-creation".

During the ensuing discussion, representatives agreed that **improved communication within urban society** and the expansion of participation were prerequisites for a continuation of processes. "Exciting ideas are brought forth by affected citizens and non-experts alike!" said **Daniela Billig**.

Central demands included ending the **sale of municipally owned land to the highest bidder**, and land allocation in the form of **hereditary leaseholds**, where the development concept is the decisive factor. "I do not have to own a property to use it. Hereditary building rights must be discussed!" demanded **Michail Nelken** and **Daniel Buchholz** added: "We do not sell anymore, at most we distribute within the hereditary building right .... We would like to assign all plots via the 'concept procedure' (Konzeptverfahren). Unfortunately, that is a practical question. We must continue to struggle for this: many only look at the financial aspects; we pay attention to quality."

It was also **criticized that the federal government continues to sell land in Berlin to the highest bidder**, which is in stark contrast to the needs of the Berlin population, 85% of whom live in rented dwellings and 50% of whom are entitled to housing permits.

Another central concern is the preservation and promotion of the "**Berlin Mix**" of work, residential and social life. This requires an investment in mixed uses instead of mono-functional construction and the reactivation of ground floor areas. In this context, construction area limitations and a densification of districts were also advocated. "Small-scale re-densification is always preferable to large-scale housing estates!" emphasized **Martin Rein-Cano** (Topotek 1).

In this context, it is urgent to seek more **dialogue with investors** and to examine old prejudices. "Here in Berlin private investors in themselves, are unfortunately always demonized. There are many private investors who are interested in producing quality, such as building groups/cooperatives (Baugruppen) ... One has to differentiate between investment funds and small players who are getting out of the crisis," notes **Britta Jürgens** (Deadline). This was also confirmed by **Daniela Billig**: "For building cooperatives, I see a high level of creativity. It's not

*about returns, it's about creating living space."*

**The circular economy, ecologically sustainable construction and the food issue** are indispensable factors in future urban development. *"Construction devours 50-60% of the resources. How can one improve that? There must be clear means of measuring this, the ecological footprint of a building. ... We are covering 450 000 m<sup>2</sup> of surface worldwide with concrete every day. Re-wood the city! Berlin is the capital of urban timber construction!"* **Eike Roswag-Klinge** concluded (Natural Building Lab, TU Berlin).

Finally, to address these areas the establishment of **new senatorial posts** was proposed. *"We need a **Senator for resources** such as soil, water and air!"* demanded **Frank Schönert** (Hütten und Paläste) and **Florian Niedermeier** (Markthalle Nine) added: *"We need a **senator for nutrition**, because the topic of nutrition impacts on so many areas, from production to distribution and sales to preparation, supplying schools, and more!"*



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**How can these and other steps be initiated?** **Manfred Kühne** posed the question of how to best make use of the interim years until the next **MakeCity Festival 2021**. Here the attendees were in agreement: the communication channels between architects, urban planners, residents and politicians had to be kept open and expanded beyond the festival. *"We now want to continue the dialogue of the festival in various forums: e.g. in a round table on real estate policy,"* said **Daniela Billig**. **Daniel Buchholz** wants more spectacular and inspirational buildings for Berlin, creative designs, wild and sexy, but also feasible and solutions-oriented. *"Get involved, step on our feet."* **Michail Nelken** also hopes to leave well-trodden paths: *"We need to think about how we get out of planning cycles, not in dual budgets, in five-year plans, but over the long term. Architects must also approach the citizens."*

On the part of the festival advisory board, **Jan Wurm** (Arup) emphasized that a critical discourse was not so easy to achieve. *"It would take a longer-term process, repeating and constantly editing topics. It needs models and visions."* **Britta Jürgens** added: *"We need to continue networking with various formats of exchange. The next festival must already be a series of processes within the next three years and build on that!"* For the next edition of MakeCity she also wishes to see the participation of the finance policy representatives of the coalition government. For **Elizabeth Sikiaridi's** (Hybrid Space Lab) *"Make City is not just an architectural task. City is a social network, wherein one has to integrate all disciplines!"* and **Nanni Grau** (Hütten und Paläste) added: *"Our future field of work will also be the surrounding area of the city. We can implement new realities in the regional context and develop new opportunities to bring together the urban and the rural."* For **Benita Braun-Feldweg**, the MakeCity Advisory Board sets the course for the upcoming tasks: *"Opposites join together!"* **Christine Edmaier** (President of the Berlin Chamber of Architects) came to the conclusion: *"The greatest asset of a city is the people. We should be especially happy about the people who are actively involved in this city. This curatorial board is representative of these 'makers' of the city, and they show what treasure we have here."*

## **PRESS RESSOURCES**

### **Fresh Festival Pictures, further press images and information:**

<http://makecity.berlin/en/press/>

<https://www.artefakt-berlin.de/en/current-projects/makecity-berlin/>

**Festival Magazine:** The Festival magazine (dt./engl.) offers a close insight into the above-mentioned themes through expert interviews and short, informative texts, introducing countless fascinating projects. A preview of the Festival magazine can be found [here](#).

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