

Halberstadt, the over 1,200-year old former episcopal city, looks back on a turbulent history. Once vaunted as the “Rothenburg of the north” for its ensemble of timber frame buildings, around 80 per cent of the historic building substance was destroyed in the bombings of WWII. The buildings of the cathedral precincts remained largely intact: the Gothic cathedral, the Romanesque Liebfrauenkirche and the grand residences of the cathedral canons along the cathedral square. With the new presentation of the cathedral treasury, tourism in Halberstadt has increased exponentially. Halberstadt’s cityscape still bears the signs of war damage, and this provided the impetus for the choice of the IBA theme, “Cultivation of Empty Space”. Halberstadt takes an audacious approach to its city and addresses a phenomenon – empty space – that is a matter of concern for all shrinking cities. On the “Vision Training Pathway”, new perspectives and opportunities for urban redevelopment were sought within the framework of the IBA ...

HALBERSTADT



## International Building Exhibition Urban Redevelopment Saxony-Anhalt 2010

# HALBERSTADT



INTERNATIONAL BUILDING EXHIBITION URBAN REDEVELOPMENT SAXONY-ANHALT 2010



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# THE IBA CITIES IN SAXONY-ANHALT





## CULTIVATION OF EMPTY SPACE

# HALBERSTADT

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THE EUROPEAN ADJUSTMENT AND FUNDING POLICY

## CITIES MAKE UP EUROPE

On the path to a united Europe it is important to diminish the differences between prospering and disadvantaged regions. Cities therefore, as the lifeblood of the regions, are central to the European adjustment and funding policy. Cities, particularly those in regions affected by unemployment and emigration, must be stimulated and promoted as vital centres.

From 2000 to 2009, all 19 IBA cities received funding for the operational programmes in Saxony-Anhalt to the tune of 1,958,409,397.05 Euro from the European Structural Funds.

From 2007 to 2013, the ERDF allocates 1,181.2 million Euro to Saxony-Anhalt in order to relieve economic, ecological and social problems in cities. The municipalities participating in the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010 will therefore benefit significantly from the support provided by the European Structural Funds.

With the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010, the federal state aims to contribute to urban renewal, to find solutions for social and economic problems and to improve economic development and employment opportunities in the 19 selected IBA cities. With this in mind, participative and integrative strategies and projects are developed for designated problem zones. Further objectives include measures towards the revitalisation of the inner cities, the regeneration of industrial sites and the restoration of wasteland.





### EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR THE CITY OF HALBERSTADT

**Funding 2000–2006, EU resources:** OP ESF 16,748,836.17, OP ERDF 24,033,923.46 of which urban development, redevelopment 3,855,881.92, total 40,782,759.63 | Funding 2000–2006 nat. public OP ESF 9,325,799.65, OP ERDF 15,616,011.17 of which urban development, redevelopment 2,029,419.14, total 24,941,810.82 | Funding 2000–2006 private OP ESF 1,645,148.27, OP ERDF 80,506,186.81 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 82,151,335.08 | Funding 2000–2006 sum of investment OP ESF 27,719,784.09, OP ERDF 120,156,121.44 of which urban development, redevelopment 5,885,301.06, total 147,875,905.53

**Funding 2007–2013, EU resources:** OP ESF 855,022.22, OP ERDF 3,331,153.50 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 4,186,175.72 | Funding 2007–2013 nat. public OP ESF 151,620.86, OP ERDF 1,026,194.86 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 1,177,815.72 | Funding 2007–2013, private OP ESF 79,413.60, OP ERDF 7,382,336.22 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 7,461,749.82 | Funding 2007–2013 sum of investment OP ESF 1,086,056.68, OP ERDF 11,739,684.58 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 12,825,741.26

**Funding 2000–2006 and 2007–2013, EU resources:** OP ESF 17,603,858.39, OP ERDF 27,365,076.96 of which urban development, redevelopment 3,855,881.92, total 44,968,935.35 | Funding 2000–2006 and 2007–2013 sum of investment OP ESF 28,805,840.77, OP ERDF 131,895,806.02 of which urban development, redevelopment 5,885,301.06

**Total:** 160,701,646.79

OP ESF – Operational Programme, European Social Fund

OP ERDF – Operational Programme, European Regional Development Fund

All figures in Euro



“Empty space is an incredible resource. To start something new, we need the blank page.”

Dr. Martin Peschken  
scholar of literature and cultural studies  
TU Braunschweig,  
department of architecture (left)

“We used actions to explore urban spaces and to discover the potentials of empty space.”

Detlef Weitz  
scenographer and architect,  
chezweitz & roseapple, Berlin (right)

AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. MARTIN PESCHKEN AND DETLEF WEITZ

## WE WANTED THE CREATIVE APPROACH

***Halberstadt's IBA theme focused on the “Cultivation of Empty Space”. What exactly is empty space or emptiness?***

**Detlef Weitz:** That's an interesting question, because emptiness as such can't be seen. That's the crux of the matter. Emptiness is the absence of function, of identification and of history. In the city, we experience this as empty space, as wastelands and as breaches within the urban landscape. Halberstadt has a conspicuous number of such spaces.

**Martin Peschken:** But there are also empty spaces we need: as free spaces, such as streets or squares or places, where people can gather, hold markets or celebrate festivals. Here, free space has potential. Empty space is an incredible resource. To start something new, we need the blank page.

***So empty space can be interpreted in a number of ways?***

**Detlef Weitz:** That's probably the most important thing. Emptiness is a spatial characteristic, not an objective situation. Whether empty space is seen as a deficit or as a potential depends on the experiences, expectations and hopes of the observer.

**Martin Peschken:** Empty space becomes a problem when we see it purely as a symbol of loss. Structural transformation brings this stealthy emptying of the cities, which is described in political terms as “shrinkage”. But we wanted the creative approach: empty space asks us questions about what these places once were, about their history and about our wishes for their future.

***... questions, which you have put to the inhabitants of Halberstadt along the “Vision Training Pathway” ...***

**Martin Peschken:** Exactly, because empty space can be given meaning, can be abstracted from the routine way of seeing things. We can develop sensitivity for it. We have tried to develop this perspective with the “Vision Training Pathway”.

**Detlef Weitz:** ... and animated the people of Halberstadt to experience empty space in all its manifestations including its most beautiful, such as the cathedral square. We opted for a performative approach, one which allows empty space to be experienced.



***What exactly do you mean by “performative”?***

**Detlef Weitz:** We used actions to explore urban spaces and to discover the potentials of empty space by simple means: a picnic in a car park at the Abtshof, a film evening on Heine-Platz, a square on a busy junction, where the participants could discover their own way of seeing and understanding a specific place.

**Martin Peschken:** The visual and experimental aspects of scenography can raise awareness of a space and generate experiences that outline the exact nature of the problem. It’s a step, which precedes the classical urban planning process and helps to formulate the task at hand.

***So the work with the “empty space” in Halberstadt initiated projects?***

**Martin Peschken:** Absolutely. The IBA put the empty spaces in the right light. The “Reading Picnic” at the Abtshof springs to mind. The privately funded building project there is now accepted as part of the overall design project for the derelict site. Then there’s the “Visual Bridge” at Martiniplan, an art installation that focused on the cathedral hill, which will be presented in its new guise in the IBA year.

***Could you briefly describe what the term “scenography” means?***

**Detlef Weitz:** Scenography means to convert content into space. Scenographers research themes and explore how these can be conveyed or presented. In doing so, we can apply far more tools than the classical urban planners do: drama, spectacle, music, the media ... We have far more freedom to act, have unforeseen ways of opening up a subject or theme, and we have the immediate public response.

***... which you can also expect from the IBA’s final presentation, “Entdecke die Leere!” (Discover emptiness!).***

**Detlef Weitz:** The exhibition has a strong performative and communicative aspect. Visitors will be explicitly invited to participate. We set the stage for the entire city and all the questions we asked ourselves. At the same time, the former swimming pool becomes the stage for a dialogue on two levels. We’re curious to see what response we get.





HALBERSTADT

## BETWEEN THE MIDDLE AGES AND MODERNITY

**Halberstadt is more than the much-lauded “gateway to the Harz Mountains”. With its Gothic St Stephen and St Sixtus Cathedral, unique cathedral treasury, Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) and the grand residences of the cathedral’s canons at the cathedral square, the city still emanates the pride and dignity of the medieval bishop’s see. Prominently situated on the hill in the city centre, the cathedral precincts have defied time; the cathedral is the dominant feature of Halberstadt’s skyline and stabilises the fractured urban landscape. After all, over 80 per cent of the once wealthy city of timber frame houses, the “Rothenburg of the north”, was destroyed in WWII. Under the motto “Cultivation of Empty Space”, Halberstadt takes a bold approach to its urban entity and addresses a phenomenon – empty space – that is a matter of concern for cities everywhere. Whether and where empty space has potential or presents problems is what Halberstadt aims to discover within the framework of the IBA.**

The critical date in Halberstadt’s development is the year 804, when Emperor Charlemagne chose the town, conveniently situated on the

junction of two trade routes, as the first bishop’s see in Central Germany. For over 800 years, important clerics held sway in the cathedral precincts in the city centre, and Halberstadt rose to become the political and religious centre of the Harz foreland. In the mid-10th century, the diocese already spanned the area between the rivers Saale, Unstrut, Elbe, Ohre and Oker.

The first bishop erected a castle, probably on the site of the present-day cathedral. The first cathedral, consecrated in the mid-9th century, collapsed some 100 years later. In 1179, Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, burnt down the next cathedral (and the city) on his campaign of conquest. The current cathedral, St Stephen and St Sixtus, was built on its remains. With its unadulterated Gothic formal vocabulary, distinct vertical articulation and sharply ascending interiors, the cathedral is one of Germany’s most beautiful sacred buildings. Work on its construction began around 1236, and the “work of art” was to take 250 years to complete. In the 19th century, the upper floors of the towers were renewed and in part freely redesigned. While the cathedral continued to





grow skywards, clerical buildings were built in the cathedral precincts: in the 11th century work began on the construction of the four-towered Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) on the opposite side of the elongated cathedral square, which formed a visual counterpart to the cathedral from the outset. The bishop's palace, the Petershof, was located nearby. In the 16th century, this was extended as a Renaissance-style residence. Residences for the canons were also built along the long sides of the cathedral square. At the time, there were 24 of these residences around the square, and some of these have been preserved.

As the centre of religious authority, the cathedral precincts were quickly surrounded by a massive circular wall, built not only for protection, but also to signify its distinction from the surrounding settlements for farmers, craftsmen and merchants, who thrived on trade with the clerics. It is therefore no coincidence that in 989, King Otto III gave the town market rights, the right to mint and issue coins and the right to levy taxes. As the religious power evolved and extended its administrative instruments, business improved for the farmers, craftsmen and merchants.

Consequently a flourishing trade centre developed parallel to the episcopal seat of governance, and it soon expanded around Martini church, situated to the southeast of the cathedral. The settlements below the cathedral precincts grew. Gradually, they were able to disengage from feudal control. In the 12th century, the settlement was awarded a city charter, and city walls were erected.

In the late 14th century, the city became a member of the Hanseatic League. However, in the 15th century, disagreements within the city led to military intervention by the clergy and the city was once again forced to acquiesce to episcopal control. The Reformation did not reach Halberstadt until late, towards the end of the 16th century. Halberstadt, along with other cities in Saxony-Anhalt, did not escape the resulting religious turmoil. During the Thirty Years' War, Wallenstein, supreme commander of the imperial troops, brought upheaval, terror and destruction to the city, which he occupied in 1629, forcing it under the command of Emperor Charles V. For a short time, he returned the cathedral and the collegiate foundation of Our Lady to Catholicism. With



the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the city became part of the Electorate of Brandenburg, the bishopric was dissolved and its property secularised.

With the Enlightenment in the 18th century, Halberstadt experienced years of great intellectual activity. In 1747 the poet Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim was appointed as cathedral secretary in Halberstadt, after years in the service of the Prussian King. Gleim knew all the important German-speaking authors of his time, and his house, his “temple of friendship” near the cathedral, was a meeting place for literary greats such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Heinrich Voß, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and Jean Paul. Today, Gleim’s house is Germany’s second-oldest museum of literature, and the poet’s extensive estate comprising letters, books and portraits makes it a cultural site of remembrance of national significance. Just a few years after Gleim’s arrival in Halberstadt, Baron Ernst Ludwig Christoph von Spiegel became the deacon of the cathedral.

This again was serendipitous for the city and its cultural development,

because the Baron acquired and afforested the bare chain of hills on the city’s peripheries known as the Kattfußberge and turned the area into a public landscape park based on the concept of an English garden. Today, the romantic “Spiegelsberge” area, with Renaissance hunting lodge, grottoes, hermitage, bathhouse and sculptures, is part of the “Garden Dreams” tourist route.

In the first half of the 19th century, industrialisation began in Halberstadt with the construction of sugar factories, oil refineries and tanneries. The city’s economic development was further fostered by its connection to the railway system in 1843. Small and medium-sized companies, primarily in the agricultural machinery and food production sectors, settled in the area. This was a period of prosperity, which found its architectonic manifestation in the construction of numerous late 19th century villas and, in culinary terms, introduced the world to the novelty of the “Halberstädter Würstchen”, tinned sausages produced by the manufacturer Friedrich Heine. Jewish merchants, who lived here in one of the largest Jewish communities in Germany, contributed to the city’s



economic rise. The Jewish quarter with synagogue, houses, school and ritual bathhouse was situated directly beneath the Petershof, outside the walls of the cathedral precincts. In 1926, the Dessau-based Junkers-Werke established a branch factory in Halberstadt.

The 20th century brought radical changes to Halberstadt. On 8th April 1945, allied bombing laid waste to some 80 per cent of the city centre, destroying one of Germany's most beautiful timber framework cities. In the GDR era, the city centre gained a new image. The damage caused by the bombing left so many derelict sites in the city centre that a decision was made to combat the housing shortage by building on these sites. Halberstadt subsequently gained modern housing complexes in the city centre instead of commuter towns outside the city gates. Initially traditional building methods prevailed, but in the 1960s they gave way to prefabricated concrete construction. The privation of the post-war years, the political taboo of private ownership and the economy of scarcity in the GDR meant that the remaining timber frame houses fell increasingly into decline. In the 1980s many of them were demolished.

Before the war, there had been 1,605 timber frame houses in Halberstadt. Of the 929 which survived the war over half – 489 – were demolished. By 1989, only traces remained of the timber frame architecture and of the Renaissance and Baroque era villas once so characteristic of the town.

Today in Halberstadt the Middle Ages and modernity collide: in the northwest of the city centre there are the cathedral precincts with their largely preserved clerical buildings, above all the cathedral and the Romanesque Church of Our Lady, and beneath the cathedral precincts, there is the old town, which with its remaining and now carefully restored timber frame houses exudes medieval flair. In the southeast of the city centre, once an area of tension between the clerical powers and a confident bourgeoisie, a new, functional city centre with a reconstructed town hall including the historic Ratslaube, its portal, as expressions of identity and public spirit was built after German reunification as part of the federal Model City programme. With a revived presentation of the unique Halberstadt cathedral treasury, tourists have returned to the city. Halberstadt is once again on the road to greatness.





## TRANSFORMATION

# EXEMPLARY RECONSTRUCTION

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German reunification in 1990 brought more than just political change to the towns and cities of the former GDR. The radical changes, which the municipalities faced, were of a more varied and far more complex nature. The municipal authorities were presented with immense challenges. Tasks arising from the political, economic and social turmoil and transitions had to be dealt with in Halberstadt as in other places. In Halberstadt, the structural transformation resulted in above-average unemployment figures, which reached 20 per cent in 2002. This had a significant effect on the employees of the former national railway's repair shops (RAW), which played an important role in Halberstadt. The population decline, which had already begun during the GDR era, progressed by contrast more slowly than in other cities in Saxony-Anhalt. Nevertheless, in the period from 1990 to 2000, the city lost 11 per cent of its inhabitants, irrespective of incorporations. While the population of the city of Halberstadt in 1989 was 48,851, this had dropped to 41,417 by 2000. By the end of 1999, 3,550 flats were empty – 16 per cent of the total housing stock.

Following German reunification, citizens' initiatives and the municipal authorities worked hard to rebuild the city centre. For decades, there was a large, neglected car park around the Martini church in the city centre – a situation that had to be remedied without delay. While the remaining historic substance was restored, the focus was on the construction of a new city centre with a reconstructed town hall on the site of the old town. As early as 1990 Halberstadt along with Meißen, Weimar, Brandenburg und Stralsund was accepted into the federal Model City programme, and it was soon awarded a national prize for the preservation and restoration of its historic urban spaces. The new development at the Fischmarkt and the Holzmarkt was considered unique in Germany. With funding from the federal Urban Planning Programme for the Protection of Monuments many of the timber frame houses so characteristic of the city, built in the traditional Lower Saxony style, were exemplarily renovated. In 2001/2001, Halberstadt won the gold medal in the national competition "Leben in historischen Innenstädten und Ortskernen" (Life in historic inner cities and town centres). In 2003, the foundation stone was laid for the University of Applied Sciences Harz.





In order to benefit from funding from the programme Urban Redevelopment East, in 2001 Halberstadt drafted an urban development concept. This aimed to continue to strengthen the centre and – geared to this end – to analyse the future viability and strengths and weaknesses of the remaining districts, to implement measures for improvement and demolition and to counteract a spatial expansion of the urban area. Buildings were torn down on the peripheries, and the residential area known as Am Nordring became the largest redevelopment site in Saxony-Anhalt. Here, with two exceptions, the entire stock of 970 flats was demolished at short notice. The housing associations concentrated on modernising and improving their housing stock in the city centre.















For Halberstadt as the administrative centre of the identically named administrative district, the overall development of the city was also geared to maintaining its profile as a regional centre with good services and provisions. Today, Halberstadt is an administrative centre for the region and a base for diverse supra-regional authorities. A number of medium-sized businesses have successfully established themselves in

the town. Medical engineering and machine construction companies and forest and food industries have settled in the industrial parks.



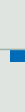









The objective of urban planning in Halberstadt has always been to rehabilitate the extensive empty spaces in the compromised urban fabric and to stabilise the characteristic elements in the urban landscape – and to achieve this by building along the roads that define the historic ground plan of the city. Sustainable usages will be found for the fragmented urban spaces, which will be reconnected with one another. Only the demand for new buildings has lessened, owing to the population decline. When the decision was made to participate in the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Urban Redevelopment Saxony-Anhalt 2010, the focus therefore remained on the existing empty spaces in the city.



## POPULATION

Year	1900	1950	1964	1971	1981	1989	1995	2000	2005	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
														
total	41,307	45,326	45,822	46,724	47,266	46,851	42,633	41,417	39,749	38,531	37,926	36,588	35,081	33,319
under 18							11,602	10,538	9,236					
over 65							6,563	7,444	8,990	9,568				

## POPULATION MOVEMENT

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
												
total migration	-23	-107	-452	-276	-514	-330	-120	87	72	-204	-178	-201
immigration	1,655	1,822	1,616	1,661	1,636	1,496	1,633	2,071	2,303	2,039	1,988	2,055
emigration	1,678	1,929	2,068	1,937	2,150	1,826	1,753	1,984	2,231	2,243	2,166	2,256

## Halberstadt in figures:

Halberstadt's population was at its highest in 1981: 47,266.

From 2002 to 2009, 2,088 housing units were demolished in the overall urban area.

Sources for the statistical specifications:

Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt

Raumeobachtungssystem Sachsen-Anhalt (RABE)

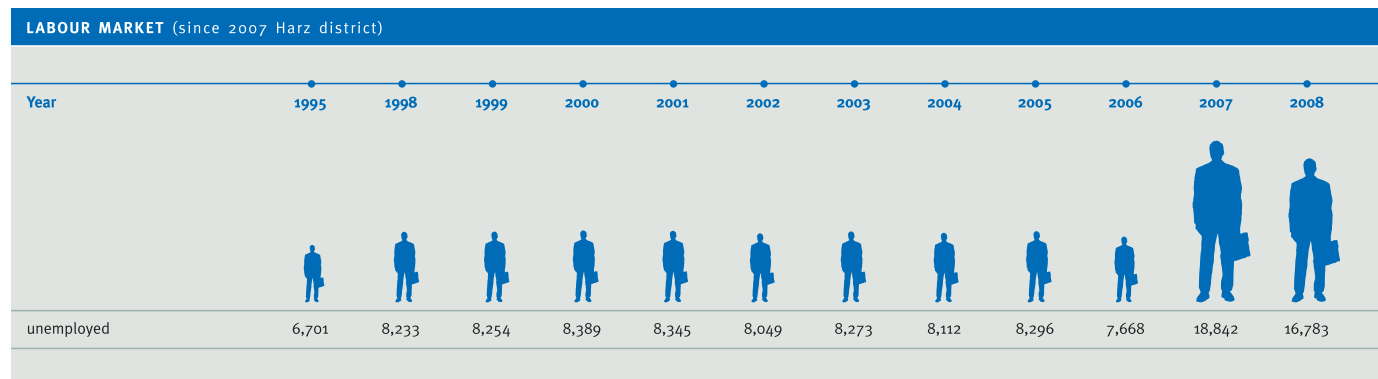
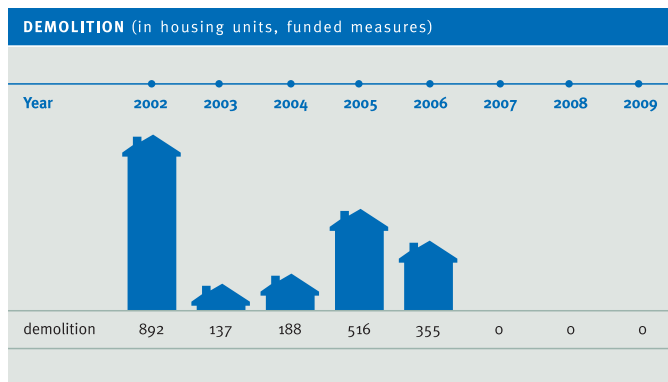
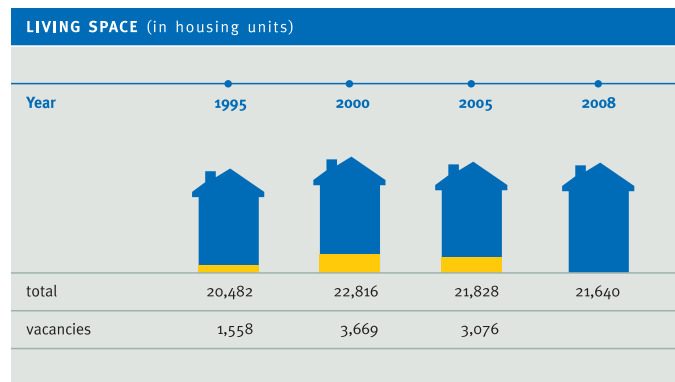
Statistisches Landesamt Sachsen-Anhalt

Halberstadt Urban Development Concept 2001

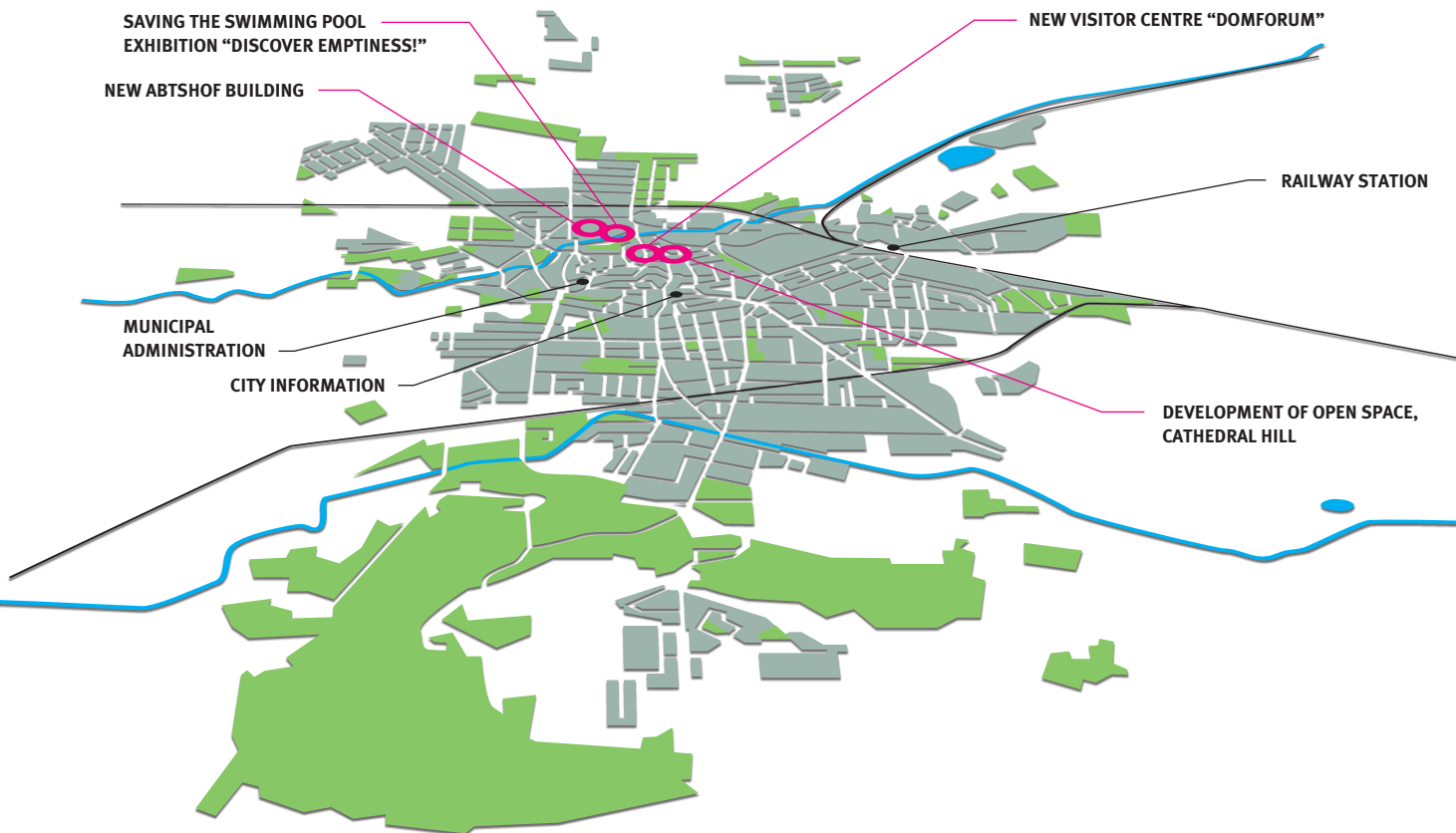
GDR statistics, 1989

www.iba-monitor.de

Status: 11/2009







### IBA PROFILE: CULTIVATION OF EMPTY SPACE

The destructions of WWII caused the loss of Halberstadt's medieval centre. Since then, Halberstadt's urban fabric has been characterised by empty spaces, perforated structures, long axes and small, related fragments of the historic old town. Due to population decline, the empty spaces will not be built on in the foreseeable future. Empty space as an aesthetic phenomenon associated with diverse values and patterns of perception will manifest itself in all shrinking cities. Empty space gains a positive quality only when it is perceived as a contradictory phenomenon, when it is taken up by the public as a projection surface and interpreted by means of design. Within the framework of the IBA Urban Redevelopment Saxony-Anhalt 2010, Halberstadt therefore dedicates itself to an active approach to the content, perception and design of physically empty space.







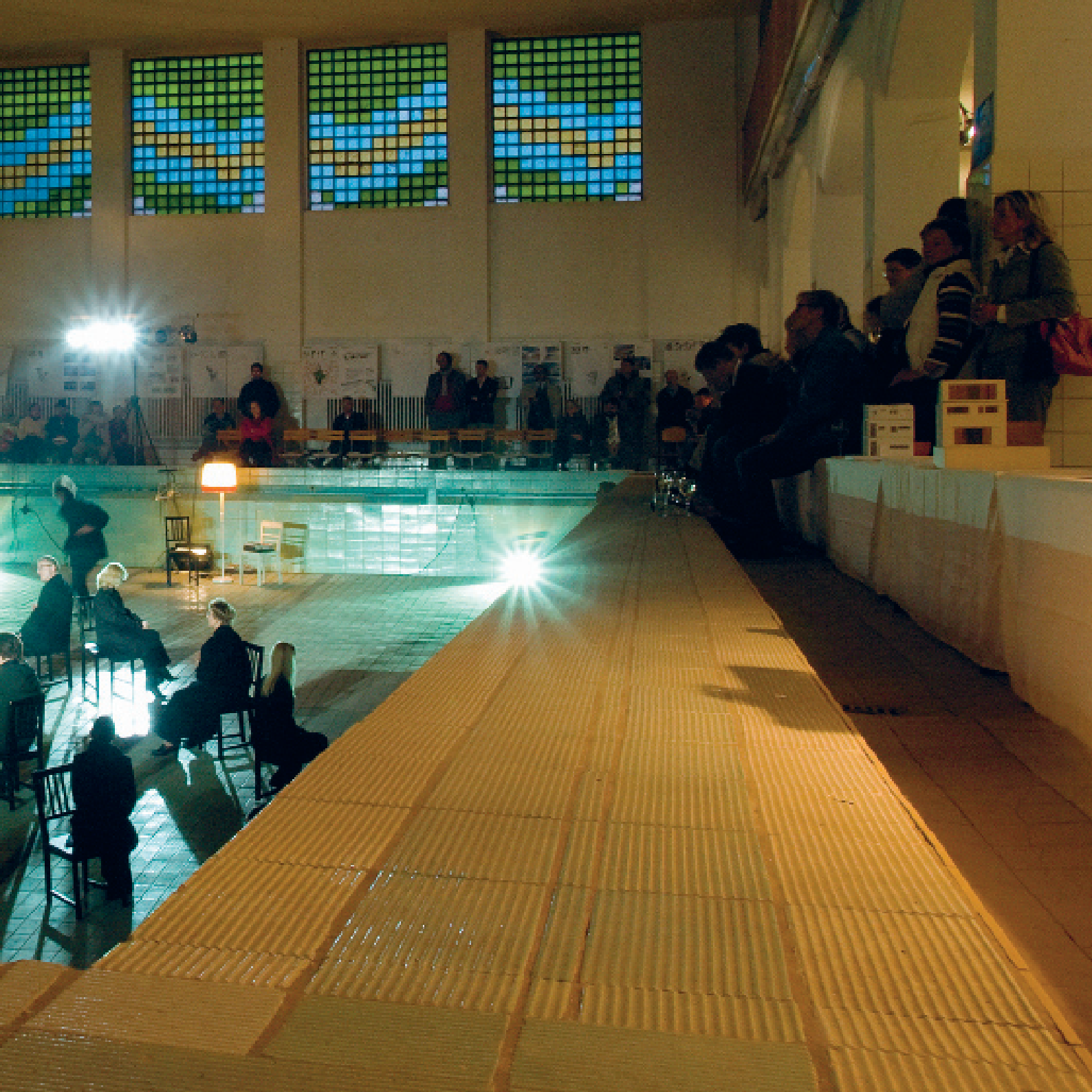
## INTERVENTION

# CULTIVATION OF EMPTY SPACE

With the momentum and experiences gained during the reconstruction work in the 1990s, Halberstadt aimed to continue to develop its city centre while acknowledging the signs of the times, which clearly indicated that less buildings were required. However, limited investment and a stagnating real estate market should not preclude an in-depth approach to public space. This must not be viewed as a “luxury” because public space, if left uncultivated, has tangible impacts on the economic, socio-political and cultural development of the city. After all, who wants to stay or settle and get involved in a city in decline? In 2005, Halberstadt chose its theme “Cultivation of Empty Space”, and the IBA steering committee nominated it as an IBA City. Halberstadt’s main goal was to redefine the empty spaces, which continued to define and “tear apart” the cityscape. It soon became clear that empty space is perceived and interpreted in different ways and generates different feelings in the people who encounter it. The lofty and expansive cathedral square is perceived in a positive light, whereas at the Abtshof, the empty space is interpreted in terms of loss. It seemed fascinating to develop this theme and to find out, why one space has a negative impact and the

other a positive one. By having a closer look at spaces like these, it becomes possible to develop a differentiated outlook in relation to the less clearly positively or negatively cast places. Given the prevailing conditions, it makes sense to depart from the fixation on a reconstruction of the past and to make a confident decision about the kind of cultivation each empty space requires. Here, a differentiation must be made between the memories of the empty spaces and the expectations and desires associated with them. Only by these means can the opportunities and potentials of the empty spaces and their future development be revealed. In this way, the empty space becomes a platform for the discussion about communal urban space, where residents have the opportunity to rediscover themselves and their identification with the city within the redevelopment process – a process, which results in a knowledge gain for all those involved and which is of surprising significance for shrinking cities worldwide.









## CULTIVATION OF EMPTY SPACE

What is emptiness? Today, Halberstadt is still distinguished by large derelict sites, empty spaces and oversized thoroughfares. These are leftover, forgotten or deliberately undeveloped places which relate to different periods in the city's development and create sharp contrasts in the urban structure.

Visitors to Halberstadt sense this emptiness. However, it is not only the material emptiness, but also the lack of contact and the absence of meaning that unsettle the observer. It will not be possible to build in these gaps and spaces in the near future.

Declining numbers of residents mean that there is no demand for new buildings with new usages, and the emptiness remains. It is part of the whole, although our understanding of the typical European city is defined by structural density, which is sometimes even idealised as traditional or romantic. Because around 80 per cent of the historic timber frame houses built on the medieval layout were destroyed in WWII and by erecting concrete block buildings and later on prefabricated concrete

buildings, this structure was negated during reconstruction. Thus empty space in Halberstadt is strongly associated with loss.

"After the war, the aim was to build a spacious and comfortable city rather than 'emptiness'. By now, the loss of the traditions linked with the historic urban structure has gained importance. Empty space therefore has always had different properties, and it depends on our perception which one we pick up on. It's all about the different qualities and perceptions of empty space", states Martin Peschken, who works with Detlef Weitz on Halberstadt's IBA concept. "The challenge is to recognise empty space as a deficit, but also to see it as an opportunity, like a new, blank sheet of paper." Depending on the point of view, empty spaces such as these can of course be underpinned by different assessments and patterns of perception. These patterns are "conditioned", and they underlie the personal and cultural transformation of values. There is just a fine line between "empty" and "spacious", between "inhospitable" and "casual". In order to reveal and raise awareness of these different perceptions, the "Vision Training Pathway" was developed





in Halberstadt. Scenographic interventions or performative actions in selected public spaces in Halberstadt were to put the perception of empty space in the city to the test. The “Vision Training Pathway” became the main tool, by means of which the spaces are reinterpreted, questioned, given meaning and accepted – all in all an ambitious experiment.

## VISION TRAINING PATHWAY

Over the course of the IBA process in Halberstadt, the “Vision Training Pathway” was created as a sequence of interventions in the urban environment, using artistic means. These interventions are rooted in a chain of locations, where since 2007 the citizens of Halberstadt have been provided with a new insight into the phenomenon of empty space. Detlef Weitz of chezweitz & roseapple, Berlin, describes the project as follows: “We aim, together with the people of Halberstadt, to try to transcend the everyday, fixed ways of seeing certain sites in the city.” Places that exhibit a specific kind of “emptiness” were sought out for these interventions. Halberstadt’s city centre, destroyed during the war and neglected during the GDR era, became an environment where, as in a laboratory, attempts were made to understand the properties and potentials of empty space.

The methods selected were however unusual and inspired by diverse artistic and practical strategic approaches to empty space. The first action – a “Reading Picnic” at the derelict Abtshof site – was jointly organised by the IBA Office and the municipal authorities. For one week,



this neglected site in the inner city, used as a car park and storage area, was in the thick of the action. Firstly, the 5,000 square metre area was radically “emptied” and the numerous potholes were filled in. Building site lamps were used to put the area “in the right light”. With the help of a marking wheel, a chalk grid was then set out, marking out the dimensions of the space that served as a “stage” for the action’s culmination on 9th May 2007. The people of Halberstadt were invited to attend the “Reading Picnic”. Actors from the Nordharzer Städtebundtheater read aloud from texts by writers, philosophers and architects to the approximately 100 residents who took part in the experiment. A dancer animated the public to move from one “island” – stations distributed across the area, from which the actors read – to the next. This action, where the townspeople symbolically “occupied” the inhospitable Abtshof, raised a new awareness of the area as a part of the town.

The “Badgang” (trip to the swimming pool) held on 27th September 2007 was the second event on the “Vision Training Pathway”. This

presented a unique concert experience set in the long-disused municipal swimming pool, again supported by the theatre’s actors and musicians. The musicians played in the now empty pool, and singers performed from the gallery balcony. This was preceded by the inauguration of the “Visual Bridge”, an artistic intervention, which helps bridge the visual and mental gap presented by the busy thoroughfare, “Hoher Weg” – a barrier between the most important signifiers of Halberstadt’s identity and its commercial centre, which sets the tone of everyday life.

A “Film Picnic” in summer 2008 led visitors to the Heinrich-Heine-Platz, a square surrounded by noise and traffic, with a surprising outcome. The empty lawn surrounded by A-roads proved to be a good place for a picnic: films were shown and the noise gave little cause for concern. The exhibition “Stadt(T)räume” (Urban Spaces, Urban Dreams) by Martin Peschken, which had opened earlier in a former furniture shop, provided an appealing presentation of past plans and visions for Halberstadt’s development – an important contribution to understanding the city and its self-perception. “HörenSehen – Klangpicknick” (HearingSeeing –



Sound Picnic) marked the finishing line of the “Vision Training Pathway” and was organised in October 2008. It was an invitation to come to the noblest and most beautiful square in the city, the cathedral square. Between the Church of Our Lady and the Gothic cathedral, the peal of bells, a trombone choir and an electronic “sound cloud” were heard in turn. The people of Halberstadt were invited to listen to this exceptional concert from their favourite chair. With its spatial dimensions marked out by acoustic coordinates, the main protagonist was the square itself, its beautiful emptiness and luxurious expanse, rather than the individual groups of musicians. That the cathedral square is the largest coherent empty space in the city centre and, as such, a place where the reality of empty space may be truly grasped, came as a surprise to many of the participants on the “Vision Training Pathway”, because the cathedral square is seen as Halberstadt’s prime location. The “Vision Training Pathway” has altered, sharpened and enhanced the inhabitants’ way of seeing their city. It has on occasion reconciled the people with the condition of their city, permitted them to discover new and unfamiliar places and to recognise their potential. This was a first step on the road

to the “Cultivation of Empty Space”. It has supported and sometimes triggered temporary or long-term reconfigurations in the urban environment. In each case, the new ways of seeing empty space help set priorities in relation to spatial design and find solutions for improvement that exploit the potentials of empty space and, moreover, make good economic sense.

Halberstadt’s highlight of the IBA year 2010 is the exhibition “Entdecke die Leere!” (Discover emptiness!) in the still empty municipal swimming pool.





AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE RUDEL AND SIEGRUN RUPRECHT

## THE IBA HAS CHANGED PERSPECTIVES

***What was the initial situation in Halberstadt when the IBA began?***

**Stephanie Rudel:** Right after German reunification, Halberstadt was included in the federal Model City programme. The available funding meant that it was possible to renovate the old town and build in the Fischmarkt and Holzmarkt area. To design a new city centre in an area, which had been empty and disorganised for decades, was a huge achievement, which fills the people of Halberstadt with pride.

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** Halberstadt suffered a lot of war damage. The reconstruction brought large-scale, industrially built housing into the city centre, but also left behind a number of empty spaces. The demolition in the old town mustn't be forgotten either. From 1990 the planning objective was to rebuild on these plots and to close the gaps.

***How did the theme “Cultivation of Empty Space” come about?***

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** At the turn of the millennium it became clear that it wouldn't be possible to build on certain areas in the city centre, because nobody needed new buildings there. The demographic development made this quite clear.

**Stephanie Rudel:** We asked ourselves what had to change in the city centre to make it more attractive. The empty space came to mind and so, in collaboration with the IBA Office in Dessau, we came up with the theme “Cultivation of Empty Space”.

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** Building on every empty plot of land is not the issue. It's a matter of seeing empty space from another perspective, exploring empty space and training new ways of seeing. After all, “empty” can have all kinds of meaning ...

***How can such a thing be trained?***

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** A concept for a “Vision Training Pathway” was developed with the office chezweitz & roseapple, Dr. Martin Peschken and the IBA Office. Actions at selected sites in the city took a unique approach to the theme of empty space.

**Stephanie Rudel:** The “Reading Picnic” at the Abtshof was the first and also most surprising encounter with the theme. It was quite a whimsical idea, but it really hit the spot. It generated a new awareness of the value and potential of the place.



“ We need external stimuli of the kind the IBA brought to the city.”

Stephanie Rudel  
head of department for urban renewal,  
IBA representative for Halberstadt  
(left)

“ It’s a matter of seeing empty space from another perspective, exploring empty space and training new ways of seeing.”

Siegrun Ruprecht  
town planner in the urban planning department,  
IBA representative for Halberstadt  
(right)

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** The picnic motif continued along the “Vision Training Pathway”, like a golden thread. There was the “Film Picnic” on the busy Heine-Platz and the “Sound Picnic” on our lovely cathedral square. All different kinds of places with different kinds of emptiness.

***Do the people of Halberstadt see their city in a different way today?  
What kind of impact has the IBA had?***

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** We think more actively and consciously about the cityscape, we’ve captured the public’s interest, and we’ve learned a lot. For instance that the empty space at the cathedral square is an appealing one and that empty space can be turned into something attractive, as it is at the cathedral hill. We’ve also found out where empty space is intolerable and really calls for something new, as it does at the Abtshof.

**Stephanie Rudel:** There was a risk that an “event mentality” would take hold and that the real issue behind the event would not be understood. It was nevertheless a good beginning, although we still have a lot to do to get the local population on our side.

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** The IBA has boosted the development of the places along the “Vision Training Pathway”. Building is now going on at the Abtshof, the cathedral hill has been landscaped and planning is underway on the “Domforum” (cathedral forum), a joint project by the parish and the city.

***Which aspect will you build on for the future?***

**Stephanie Rudel:** There’s no question that this new, different way of seeing things will continue to influence our renovation projects in the city. Personally, I’m much more likely to see the positive in an initial situation, and I know that there’s more than one answer to a question. We need external stimuli of the kind the IBA brought to the city.

**Siegrun Ruprecht:** We’ve definitely learned that it is important to involve the public in the development of ideas and projects from the outset and to look for allies.



Sabine Moczko  
head of the city's  
cultural office



## SAVING THE SWIMMING POOL AND THE EXHIBITION “ENTDECKE DIE LEERE!”

Halberstadt’s municipal swimming pool is a place with which everyone in the city is familiar. Many of the city’s residents learned to swim here, but it has now been closed for years – an empty building with an empty swimming pool and a stop on the “Vision Training Pathway”, which invited residents on a “trip to the swimming pool” and to listen to concert music.

Halberstadt has long sought an investor for the building – a feature of the cityscape – situated on Bödcherstraße in the city centre, although so far without success. In order to prevent its further deterioration, funding was secured so that the building could be saved and given a new roof.

In this condition, the swimming pool will host Halberstadt’s final IBA exhibition in 2010 with the challenging title “Entdecke die Leere!” (Discover emptiness!) The exhibition concept was developed by the office *chezweitz & roseapple*, Berlin. The exhibition links up with the “Vision Training Pathway” and encourages the visitor to experience the seemingly

empty, inhospitable places in the town for themselves. This active participation is an integral part of the exhibition, which takes a multimedia approach to empty space. Inside the old building, film sequences set in Halberstadt will be projected onto the floor of the empty swimming pool and the rear wall of the hall. “It is a dialogue on two levels”, explains the scenographer Detlef Weitz, “and deals with questions and answers relating to empty space in Halberstadt’s cityscape.”

Visitors can take what they learn in the museum outside, into the urban environment by following game instructions on postcards which ask them to spontaneously update the “Vision Training Pathway” in Halberstadt in their own way. The results and comments are recorded on the postcards, which are collected in the swimming pool. Steel cables, which secure the building, serve as a large-scale notice board for these recorded experiences. In this way, insight into the opinions of other visitors is easily gained, allowing the active exploration of first-hand and other ways of seeing.



In a wider context, “emptiness” is the subject of research in the field of cultural science. In December 2008, the first research symposium on the theme of “Dynamik der Leere” (dynamics of emptiness) took place with the Freie Universität Berlin as a cooperation partner. A large musicology symposium focusing on John Cage, a “specialist” for emptiness, is planned for July 2010 within the framework of the IBA exhibition in Halberstadt.





## AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH AUD MERKEL, CHIEF DRAMATIC ADVISOR OF THE NORDHARZER STÄDTEBUNDTHEATER

# WE CULTIVATE EMPTY SPACE

*How did the Nordharzer Städtebundtheater come to participate in the IBA and in the “Cultivation of Empty Space”?*

*How does that fit together?*

**Aud Merkel:** The municipal authorities approached us, invited us to a preliminary meeting and introduced us to the IBA theme. For us it's an exciting project and a good opportunity to fulfil our intrinsic theatrical function, which is showing. In the theatre world, we have our own way of looking at things, at the “Cultivation of Empty Space”. This has three aspects: Firstly, as a theatre, an institution, we occupy an important public platform in Halberstadt. Secondly, there is the phenomenon that with every new staging – given the right technical resources – we boldly and freely design and redesign an empty space, our stage. Last but not least, theatre can counteract the feeling of emptiness in a person, confront them with topics, ideas, figures and utopias. We can play with time, move forwards and backwards and through spaces ... in essence, cultivate empty space.

*As with the first action on the “Vision Training Pathway”, the “Reading Picnic” on the derelict Abtshof site?*

**Aud Merkel:** Exactly. That was an action that actors helped shape. Texts were read out, a dancer mapped out the empty space with his pantomimic gestures and animated the visitors to do the same. That is a challenge we want to rise to: How do we get the visitor to be open-minded? How do the visitors see this empty wasteland, this empty space with its puddles, and how do they perceive what they find there? The challenge was to give these points an artistic form.

*You did this in an equally successful yet very different way with the “trip to the swimming pool”, a second IBA action in the empty municipal swimming pool.*

**Aud Merkel:** The pool was a fascinating theatrical environment. Our choir and dancers performed in the empty basin, and a singer stood on the diving board and sang. We performed among others a piece called “Five” by the American avant-garde composer John Cage, who is a familiar figure in Halberstadt because “As slow as possible” is being

“ I hope that the citizens of Halberstadt have discovered new ways of seeing things, just as one sees things better when wearing a new pair of glasses.”

performed here in the Burchardi monastery. With a playing time of 639 years, this is the longest-lasting piece of music in the world. The visitors' response to the “trip to the swimming pool” was very positive.

***The local residents who had negotiated the “Vision Training Pathway” were especially positive. Has Halberstadt changed?***

**Aud Merkel:** It's certainly a good place to live, although Halberstadt wouldn't be as lively as it is without its theatre. The city has developed well in recent years. I'm here for the eighth repertory season, and I never would have thought that I could fall so in love with a city. Life here is varied, and there is always something to inspire you. This is also something we try to communicate with our participation in the IBA.

***Are there plans for another collaboration for the final presentation in the former swimming pool?***

**Aud Merkel:** A performance entitled “Die Vermessung der Leere” (measuring empty space), a tribute to the artist Yves Klein, will be shown at the opening of Halberstadt's final IBA exhibition. We are currently

working on the staging of the piece, which is conceived and directed by Hannes Hametner in collaboration with Jürgen Groetzinger of the European Music Project. Daniel James Butler is the choreographer. We're very excited about it, because it's an experiment for us too, not just for the audience.

***In your opinion, what has the IBA achieved in Halberstadt?***

**Aud Merkel:** I hope that it has managed to change the perceptions of the city and its form, that the citizens of Halberstadt have discovered new ways of seeing things, just as one sees things better when wearing a new pair of glasses. If one lives in one place for a long time, then the way of seeing things becomes rigid. The IBA has attempted to break with this everyday perspective and open it up to new ideas. If that succeeds, then the gains are considerable.



Jens Klaus  
urban development  
unit manager,  
IBA project representative

## DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN SPACE AT THE CATHEDRAL HILL

Halberstadt's venerable cathedral dominates the cathedral precincts in the northwest of the city. In former days, the slopes of the hill were densely packed with timber frame houses. Until their destruction in WWII, the old castle steps and the Domgang, a lane leading to the cathedral, were situated on its eastern side. After 1950, the remains were re-modelled, creating a green zone. In the 1970s, the castle steps were demolished when the Hoher Weg was broadened and extended as an arterial road to the city. Over the years, this image has become embedded in the inhabitants' memories.

As a top priority project of the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010 the redevelopment of the cathedral hill was considered. The green zone was showing signs of its age, and trees obscured the view from the newly designed city centre around the Martini church to the cathedral. The city had decided in principle on a planning objective, which ensured a "clear view" of the cathedral – a formal recognition that empty space would be given a chance. However, empty space must first be cultivated, and this space was lacking positive qualities of design. In August 2006,

an idea workshop entitled "Schaufenster Domhang" (vitrine cathedral hill) explored ideas for the open space development of the cathedral hill. The "Visual Bridge" on the "Vision Training Pathway" thematised the former development and the absence of a link between the cathedral hill and Martiniplan, from the city's memorial sites to its new commercial centre. The landscape architects lohrer.hochrein landschaftsarchitekten were commissioned to redesign the cathedral hill. The ideas and drafts were presented to the committee for urban redevelopment and to interested residents in March and November 2008. The favoured proposition used the historic development as a design concept for a terraced layout. This terracing meant that the cathedral hill would be accessible to pedestrians for the very first time. In 2009, some of the plans were realised in close cooperation with the State Office for the Preservation of Monuments. There is now a clear view of the cathedral from the Martini church and the now modern castle steps made from granite have been reintegrated into the historic axis. As an ensemble, this constitutes a worthy entrée to the cathedral and the cathedral treasury and ensures a clear view of the cathedral.







## NEW ABTSHOF BUILDINGS

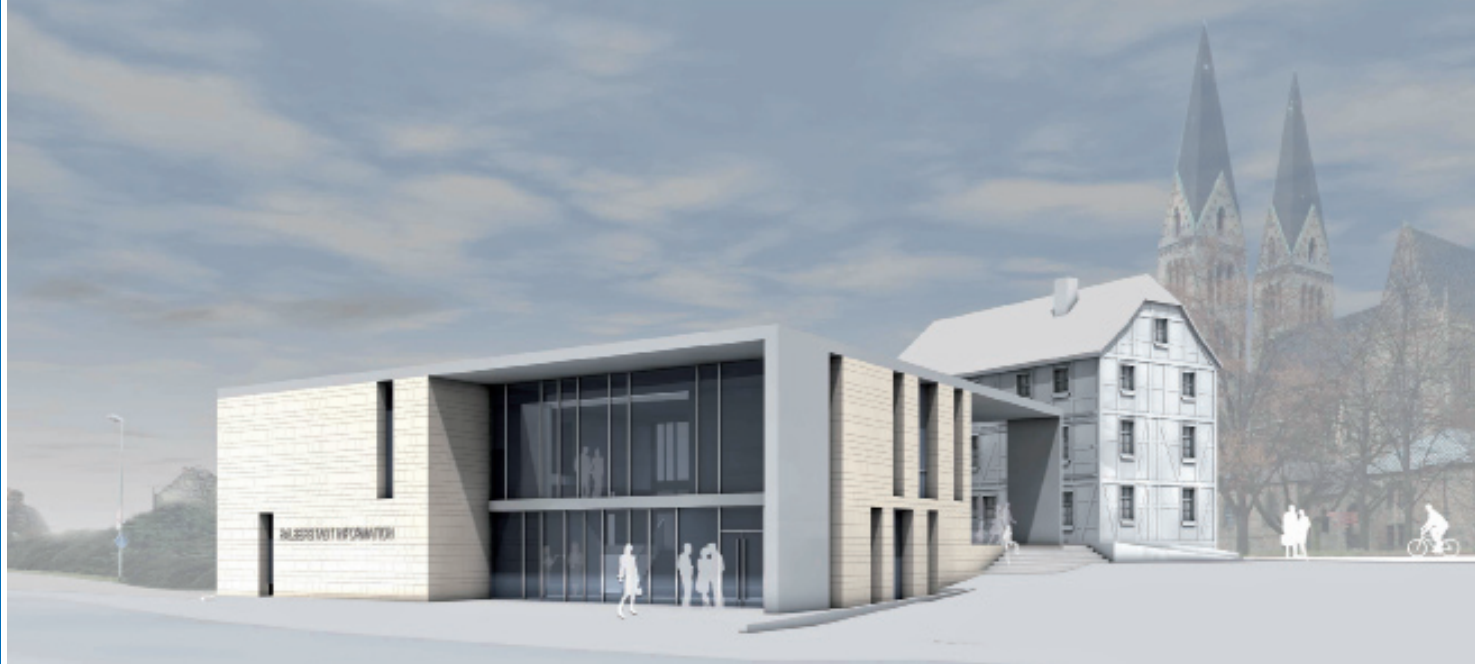
The Abtshof was once an intact residential district distinguished by timber frame houses in the lower part of Halberstadt, which today is the one remaining district that conveys an impression of Halberstadt's medieval timber buildings. In the 1980s the Abtshof was completely demolished. Until now, rough firewalls and the remaining surrounding buildings have confined the Abtshof area, and residents use it as a car park.

A private building contractor acquired part of the building plot from an insolvency proceeding and plans to build town houses of various sizes on it, meeting the requirements of the city's design regulations in doing so. In this context in 2008, the municipal authorities put to tender a cooperative design-based peer review process, which would clarify the locations and styles of the future buildings and, in addition, serve as a guide for the building contractor. The idea is to build houses in the contemporary style with balconies and patios, which fit in with the historic half-timbered houses. The Abtshof had already captured attention with the "Reading Picnic" as the first stop-off point on the "Vision Training Pathway". During the second action on the "Pathway" in autumn

2007, students of architecture at the University of Applied Sciences (HTW) Dresden presented designs for a possible development.

The planning application was handed to the city in late 2009. At present, archaeologists are digging at the site. Building is scheduled to start in 2010.





## NEW “DOMFORUM” VISITOR CENTRE

Since April 2008, when the new presentation of Halberstadt's cathedral treasury opened in the redeveloped and newly extended cathedral enclosure, the number of visitors to Halberstadt has grown exponentially. The parish reacted immediately by setting up a “Domschatz-Café” (treasury café) in order to cater to the tourists' needs. Despite this, the construction of a new visitor centre at the Hoher Weg/cathedral hill was thought to be essential. The parish and the municipal authorities agreed on the idea of a “Domforum” (cathedral forum), which as a “guest house” would welcome and provide for tourists and even accommodate pilgrims. The tourist information office is scheduled to gain additional rooms, and meeting rooms have been considered.

To this end in spring 2009 the municipal authorities put to tender an architecture competition. A joint jury consisting of the municipal authorities and the church district had six entries to choose from. The winner of the competition, Syperreck Planungsgesellschaft mbH of Berlin, was also responsible for the cathedral enclosure extension. The design was praised for its “structural organisation, architecture, accessibility

and functionality”. The “Domforum” is conceived as a two-storey building with a flat roof on a square ground plan and envisages a one-storey building, which will link the timber frame parish church office building with the new building. There are plans for a café, a souvenir shop, a tourist information office, an information point for the cathedral treasury and guestrooms. The building will have two large entrances set into glazed façades, which span the sides of the building. These will draw attention to the building from afar. Natural stone, glass and exposed concrete will dominate this innovative structure, which will set itself apart from the cathedral and its historic context as a contemporary building.

The parish church office and the municipal development committee are agreed on the building. The project planning process began in 2009. In the IBA year 2010, visitors will be able to see the building site.





## EPILOGUE

# PERSPECTIVE 2010+

Some participants on the “Vision Training Pathway” were heard to say, “I’ve never seen it like that before.” To be more aware of public space, accept empty space, recognise its potentials and look for new opportunities – this was the task, which Halberstadt set itself as an IBA City. This experimentation with selected sites in the city has precipitated new temporary and permanent developments. The cathedral hill has been remodelled and it frames a worthy entrée for the visitors, which have flooded into the city to see the new presentation of the cathedral treasury. There is also a splendid building project, the “Domforum” (cathedral forum), which signals Halberstadt’s new dynamism. The municipal authorities are working on a comprehensive overall concept for the city and for the approach to public space, giving priority to the improvement of the cathedral area. A “register of empty spaces” was developed in cooperation with TU Braunschweig. Step by step, the city’s “empty” spaces are being earmarked for structural or artistic projects, for open space developments or strategic measures, thus generating a resource for the architectural-spatial development of the city. The experiences gained by means of the many exercises geared to

ways of seeing empty space will in future be transferred to a “Halberstädter Werkzeugkasten” (Halberstadt tool box), which – as a type of manual – will provide the planning department with a comprehensive guide on the approach to empty public spaces. The new tools are identification, learning to understand and read, mapping and documenting, emptying, occupying, evaluating and setting priorities. Halberstadt’s final presentation for the IBA, “Entdecke die Leere!” (Discover emptiness!), held in the municipal swimming pool, will prompt the town’s residents and visitors to actively understand empty space and their ways of seeing it. For the duration of the exhibition, the swimming pool itself will again be a “public space”, which could in future become a platform for culture and discourse. A usage for the building along these lines would be a positive step for the people of Halberstadt, because the city lacks a cultural or civic centre. Halberstadt has set an example for other cities worldwide with an exciting and innovative apparatus for a proactive and creative approach to derelict and empty spaces. It has changed perceptions of the city and fostered urban developments.



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