

BRÜCKENGESCHICHTEN - THE PROJECT

We all come from somewhere. We all live somewhere, too. But what exactly characterises the place in which we move about every day, encountering people we know, but also unknown people? Did chance bring us to this particular place, or are we generationally tied to it by family and tradition? Who or what keeps us there? Why is it precisely there that we feel at ease and have a sense of belonging, or perhaps the opposite, we feel left out and eternally foreign? Which places do we visit regularly, which do we identify with? What has remained unchanged, what persists, and what is subject to permanent change?

The project "Brückengeschichten" ('Bridge Stories') addresses these questions in relation to a specific place: Hörde. Here, as everywhere in the Ruhr region, distinctive social and cultural orders and practices have developed over centuries in which the steel industry was prevalent. Not least of all, it was the labour migration from the 1960s onwards and the resultant meeting of different people that enriched this place. However, due to the structural change, the well-established and the familiar disappeared. In Hörde, this change manifested itself especially in the creation of the Phoenix See, which from then on shaped the public perception of this part of town. The gradual disappearance of the mining and steel industries led not only to infrastructural changes, but also to a disappearance of certain practices and idiosyncrasies in everyday culture.

Yet change and transformation always ensure a future, innovation and diversity. It is this process of change which transforms the past into something new in the first place, which builds bridges between Hörde's cultural heritage and collective memory and new communities.

The project „Brückengeschichten“ would like to offer these experiences a platform in order to find out what constitutes Hörde’s identity.

For this purpose, Hörde residents of all ages and backgrounds are invited to participate. In individual conversations, personal stories, memories and anecdotes are to be told and connections are to be made across generations and origins in order to narrate the history and the future of the district with one voice.

The collected stories will be compiled into audio pieces, which will then be publicly accessible at various central contact points in Hörde as well as on the internet. In the further course of the project, the recordings will also be used for different artistic impulses within the vicinity.

PHASES OF THE PROJECT BRÜCKENGESCHICHTEN

1. Oral History Collage

In the first phase of the project, Dortmund-based artist Silvia Liebig will enter into dialogue with the residents of Hörde. In short interviews, she will find out what in Hörde it is that gives the individual residents a sense of identity, how they define their home and which favourite places are decisive for this identity formation. These answers will be compiled by Liebig into an atmospheric soundscape that reflects the life in and the diverse cultural landscape of Hörde. These edited original recordings will be audible at central locations in Hörde as well as on the internet, so that participation in the discourse is as accessible as possible and further people can be won as interlocutors.

Building on these original sound recordings, in-depth individual interviews will be conducted, themes and motifs of identity specified and related to one another. This is less about spontaneous, associative impressions, but rather about orally passed on memories and individual stories, which as a whole constitute the "Brückengeschichten" of Hörde. A dialogical connection is created by relating these narratives to each other and highlighting similarities, but also differences. Liebig will then use this pool of interviews together with material from Richard Ortman's sound archive to compose the oral history collage.

2. Hörde Street Art Collage

In the second phase, the finished oral history collage will provide a stimulus for street artists for the creation of five large-format murals on house facades in the district. An agency (N. N.) will select ten international street artists in a competition and will work out the mural designs with them in winter 2021.

Inspired by the multi-layered compositions of the oral history collage and the interwoven narratives of the Hörde residents therein, the artists will find visual expressions for the way the various residents define the district. Finally, an audio guide that residents can use to take a tour of their neighbourhood will link the respective murals with the associated recordings to form a *gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art. And the bridge is created, a connection between people and times.