

Sculpting and playing with clay and adobe structures by Rainer Warzecha & Interglotz artnetwork.

**Titel: Makunaima – the adobe village and seasonal training camp for cultural heritage on earthbuilding, located in Berlin**

- Keeping the heritage of the natural alive!

Our group of artist, united in the earthwork-art network and Interglotz-team erects playgrounds and sculptures made of adobe and natural structures (using wood, bamboo, stone) since 1990. We are located in Berlin's beautiful park area Britzer Garden from that time, spreading our activities into northern and southern Europe.

In self built ensembles of village-like structures we interact with children of all ages, playing and building with earth and serving a magical kind of service toward cultural heritage. This work is important in our big cities, where so many inhabitants have lost their connection to the soil.

Our standard earth-constuction-workshop - open to anyone - lasts six weeks during summer school holidays and has continued since 1990.

In the beginning our own activities where simple sticks and mud constructions. We continued with archaic huts, like people might have made in the stone age. Quickly we developed our own style of sculptures, buildings resembled large animals, earthen heads, as the Maya created, and native igloo type of huts.

Actually our village is reconnecting to the roots and heritage of architecture in it's developement. We use something, very old, pure earth, the most likely first building material, always from local sources.

As in history, the time between spinnig and discussing an idea toward a completed building or sculpture is quite close. Children also have the chance to erect something quite large, not the usual matchbox level, that is reserved for them in most cases. Now they experience, that building is a natural process, and that many hands have to work together to build a hut or house. Our kind of teamwork brings a spirit of community and identification with the structure in the process of building a hut or house. Teamwork brings a spirit of community to the participants and develops identification to the...made my own hands...process. In this way a playground is created with those that are going to use it later.

But also the adults engaged in this process learn a lot about how to work in a creative and joyful atmosphere, lost in so many of our normal working-worlds. So by touching a genuine heritage of mankind, we regain something lost, togetherness, help and brotherhood. And some...do it yourself spirit... may be taken home, after having worked some hours or days with our creative team. Even architects are astonished and convinced of the qualities, that simple building with clay can serve. The important impulse is...simplicity! I can do it myself! We are so far from that point, in the complex world of today.

Beneath that communicative, psychological and social experiences the specific sensual attractions of clay are deterring. Often I heard that children called „Lehm“ in their own words as „Leben“, which means „live“. And indeed its a central truth of the material and element earth, that we deal with.

„Makunaima“ is a symbolic hero and figure out of a south-american religion and philosophy, stating, that children are ‚elder spirits‘, bringing in their own viewpoints, a heritage of beyond, when they come to birth. They have magical abilities, as each of us, as parents themselves will agree. This legendary figure „Makunaima“ tells us more:

We adults should try to keep the child in ourselves alive. Trying to follow the words of Bob Dylan , „I was so much older then, I´m younger than that now!“. And so we try to keep it young, seeing things from the edge of a child's eyes.

Adobe is an unformed basic substance. EVERYONE can get it for free at no costs, or only costs for transporting it. This also is part of our human heritage. Hopefully we can maintain this, as we all should have the freedom to breath fresh air and drink pure water.

Surely - until now - our work with clay is more an example, a model of continued heritage and the joy of experiencing something new. The effort to maintain a building and making it last over decades is another point. Although, we have already begun to survey and service the space we have created, this garden and village like setting has been growing into shape through one and a half decades in Berlin´s ‚Britzer Garden‘. And it will be maintained, as we service it through the seasons.

Often we are asked whether we immitate African traditions or tribal architecture. In fact we don´t! But we know about them, continuing a certain approach, pointing out community and togetherness, traditional skills and handicrafts. The concept that guides us may be of course related to native philosophies, as it is based on the believe, that every creation has a spirit living within it. This is, why many of our works have faces showing „imbedded souls“.

In this way we touch the fantasy of children, reconnecting to the past and the spirit of traditional native art of African, the Maya, aboriginal, indian roots. Beyond the TV-legends, that are consumed daily, we travel forward looking backward from time to time, seriously.

We are also trying to reconnect joy and playing into the process of work, not just seperating it! Music performances also follow quite engaged periods of work.

Interglotz - art network erects adobe playgrounds, single structures and sculptures made of clay and natural materials, primarily wood, clay and stone.

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