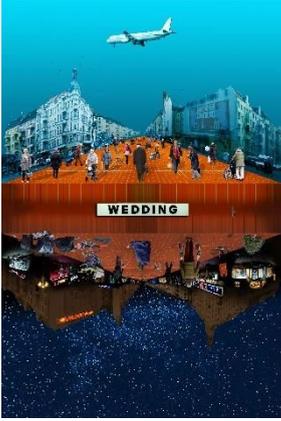


Die Müllerstraße



The Müllerstraße is the main road through Wedding, connecting the North and the South. It gets its name from the many mills that were located there in the early 19th century, capitalising on the high winds in that area.

These mills gradually disappeared due to industrialisation, yet the name remained. Like the wind brought mills, the industry brought men. During this time, the Müllerstraße was part of what was called the 'men's wall', a city area where a surplus of men lived. Following these men was various establishments catering for their 'needs'. Further in its life, during the Weimar Republic, the Müllerstraße would become a central street in 'Red Wedding' for the Communist Party of Germany, and later it would lead directly to the Berlin wall.

Despite its various becomings, today the Müllerstraße has a humbler identity. If you look one way you can see Berlin's iconic Fernsehturm in the distance at Alexanderplatz. If you look the other, planes constantly fly overhead preparing to drop thousands of tourists at Tegel airport. Sitting between these two points, you are more likely to see locals shopping at the market, drinking and socialising in the streets, than a tourist with a map and camera.

Small owner-managed businesses line the streets - numerous kebab shops, bakeries, fresh produce stalls and barbers. Although each shop seems to vary in name only, the locals each have their favourites. Come night, some shops disappear behind roller doors, while others illuminate in lights. The brightest of these is often the numerous casinos, at once both welcoming in their bright flashing lights and sinister in their private interiors. This night time also brings out a different kind of local, one searching for a place to sleep, scouring the bins for bottles, making their way to one of the numerous bars, dumping disused items on the street or scribbling graffiti on residential walls.

With such numerous activities taking place along it, the Müllerstraße has a diverse history which will continue to form. Perhaps then it is fortunate it was named after its original innocent mills, rather than one of its darker uses that were to come.

Freie Presse



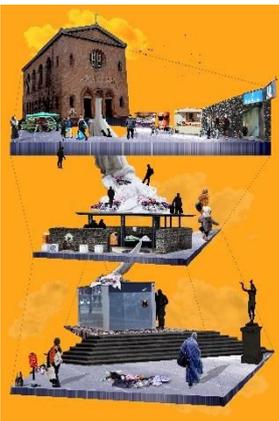
Otto and Elise Hampel were a working-class couple who lived in Wedding and created a simple method of protest during World War II. They wrote postcards that denounced Hitler's government and left these in public spaces. Often beginning with the phrase 'Freie Presse!', each postcard urged the public to undermine and uprise against the Nazis. They transformed the humble postcard, usually reserved for city icons and well-wishes, into meaningful resistance.

Hiding their identities from the Gestapo and the community around them for 2 years and over 200 postcards, they were eventually caught and convicted of treason. They were both decapitated on 8 April 1943 in the Plötzensee Prison. This much is true, however, Otto and Elise's story goes further.

Shortly following the war, their Gestapo files were given to author Hans Fallada. Fallada took their case and created a fictionalised story around it, which would later inspire a TV miniseries and a movie. These fictionalised accounts speak of the hardships of war, where the characters based on Otto and Elise stick together until the end, an illustration of the ultimate power of hope, resistance and love.

It would be nice to end the story there, however, as one Weddinger revealed, this is not the full story. Rather, Hans Fallada was not given the full Gestapo file, the one where Otto and Elise turn on each other, blaming the other in the hope that they might be spared. It's an account left out of the larger narrative of this couple, and perhaps it doesn't matter in the end, but it is also worth considering.

Platzmanagement



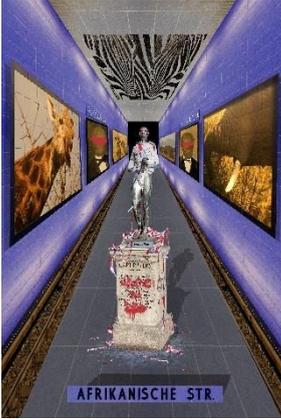
Like many areas of Wedding, Leopoldplatz gets its name from a historical male, in this case Leopold I, an 18th century German Prince and military hero. The site is owned by The Nazareth church, which looks over the square. Here, all the positive elements of Wedding can take place - a local market, a place for friends to meet, and spaces for children to play. Traditionally however, it has also been a place for many activities that the community would rather not occur, or at least not there.

Leopoldplatz has a history as the meeting places for groups using alcohol and drugs. Especially the stairs in front of the church were a popular gathering location. This is prohibited by the house rules of the church. Next to the church being unwilling to host this 'drinking scene', there was the frustration of the community who said these groups dominated this central space. As a 2012 report on the 'social space management' at Leopoldplatz told, there was a push to return it to a 'safe space for all'.

In 2013 a new Leopoldplatz was unveiled and a new residence set up behind the church for the drinkers. It was far enough away from the stairs that the church and broader community were happy, but also close enough for social workers to maintain their care. And so, Leopoldplatz can appear serene once again - 'issue' solved. In truth it's an issue moved not removed.

In the new back space there is also a new toilet, brought about by complaints of people urinating on the Kita fence close to the church. While urination can now occur away from sight, so too can many other things. Despite having a sign warning against group usage of the toilet, a measure to complicate drug use, groups are regularly seen moving in and out of the spacious area. And so the tricky balancing act of Platzmanagement continues.

Mikono Wa Damu (blutige Hand)



Carl Peters, born in 1856, was a German explorer who founded the Society for German Colonization in 1884 and advanced the establishment of German East Africa Company. He was responsible for putting a vast area of East Africa under German domination.

In what became known as the 'Scramble for Africa', the story of Germany's colonial past is told in the streets of Wedding. Beginning in the underground train station of the Afrikanische Straße, vivid images of elephants, giraffes and Mount Kilimanjaro proudly adorn the purple, tiled walls. Above the ground, there are street names such as Sansibarstraße, Kongostraße and Ugandastraße. Names that would attract African migrants, who then stayed because of cheap rent. Alongside these names however are streets dedicated to the men who led Germany's colonial 'scramble' - Adolf Lüderitz, Gustav Nachtigal and formerly, Carl Peters.

It is said 'formerly', because while a Petersallee remains in the Afrikanisches Viertel, in 1986 it was rededicated to the more amicable Hans Peters, a member of the anti-Nazi resistance. Despite Carl Peters' great explorations, he was also a proponent of Social Darwinism and held an attitude towards the indigenous African population that made him one of the most controversial colonizers even during

his lifetime. As can be read on the statue graffiti in the image, in Africa he became known as "Mikono Wa Damu" - "the man with blood on his hands".

The stories that follow the men behind the others street names are no less troublesome. As a result, there is now a push to change the remaining colonial leader streets - Nachtigalplatz and Lüderitzstraße. While some search history for kinder figures also with the name Lüderitz or Nachtigal, others want a complete change. Many say this is more significant, while others protest the cost and administrative burden this renaming would cause to the houses and businesses on these streets. With no resolution to date, the scramble for street names so far remains ongoing.

Fluglärm: I ♥ TXL



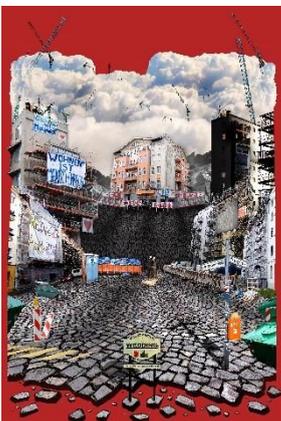
Most visitors to Berlin know Tegel airport, the main international airport of the city. However, since 2012, these visitors should have known a different place - Brandenburg Airport.

Brandenburg was intended to replace Berlin's two other airports, and after 15 years of planning began construction in 2006. Originally planned to open in 2011, construction planning, execution, management, and corruption have meant that, as of 2019, it remains under-construction and already largely outdated.

As such, Tegel has long outgrown its city location. The result for those in Wedding, the neighbourhood right next door, is the continual roar of aeroplane engines above. Standing on the end of the Müllerstraße during the day, planes are more frequent than birds and all sounds becomes secondary to that of the planes above.

When Brandenburg does finally open, it is unclear where this leaves Wedding. Many locals love the airport, graffiti on the streets tells you this. Or for those sick of the noise, will there perhaps be a form of 'Tegel Syndrome' like the Stockholm syndrome. Where once free, locals will develop a psychological alliance with the missing airport. Will the various residents of Wedding once employed there now move closer to their jobs in the new airport? Will the new silence attract more investment and more people to the area, pushing out those who latest all these years? Perhaps most importantly, will Brandenburg airport ever be completed?

Wohnen ist keine Ware:



To best understand the prominent issues in Wedding, one does not necessarily have to refer to newspapers, the internet, the TV or neighbour, but rather the street. Here, graffiti adorns all surfaces, from one's doorstep to the large building walls above. They tell you many, often contradictory things, such as "no borders" next to "fuck off". Some are warm, "welcome refugees", while others are sad "Alles ist Scheiße". One theme that continually adorns walls however, is that of gentrification.

Gentrification is a prominent theme as its negative effects are seen close by in areas like Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg. It results in the displacement of former residents by increasing costs and the social changes resulting from the new residents. A constant shift in social and cultural dynamics in a city is nothing new, it just depends on your place in that dynamic whether that is a good thing or not. If you have the money and crave more options for your morning coffee, it can be a good thing. If your rent suddenly doubles and your local shops are forced to close, your community feels like it is slipping away.

Faced with an issue that is the result of the rich, it can be hard to respond. The residents of recently sold apartments on the corner of Amsterdamer Straße and Malplaquetstraße, hang banners from their windows, highlighting their worry at being pushed out. These residents directly affected have created an active group to find solutions, yet others hope to stop the flow of gentrification in smaller ways. As one Weddinger told us, their protest involves not buying anything from the new cafe close to Leopoldplatz with the 'Mitte like interior'. It's an action they are somewhat torn between, as they do say the coffee is good there.

It's a community joke that Wedding is 'coming', a phrase that has been repeated every year for over a decade. So, while it is close, it remains unclear exactly how gentrification will affect Wedding. For the verdict, perhaps it is best to look around at the ever-changing, daily scribbles on the streets.