

This issue acts as a collection of materials and reflections on and about the artistic-academic symposium *sharing/learning: methods of the collective in art, research and activism*, which took place on June 28th and 29th, 2019, at (and in cooperation with) District * School without Center. In formats including round tables, workshops, and participatory performances, the event brought together artists, scholars, and activists - who work collectively or research collectivity - to probe and question different ways of (en)acting together. The online journal presents an index of the event, with essays, reports, photographs, transcriptions and videos that offer insights into the respective methods, concerns and contexts of the authors.

Edited by Juana Awad and Irina Raskin.

Issue #9 of wissenderkuenste.de acts as a collection of materials and reflections on and about the artistic-academic symposium *sharing/learning: methods of the collective in art, research and activism*. This symposium took place on June 28th and 29th, 2019 (at and in cooperation with) District * School without Center. It was organized by Juana Awad, Julian Bauer, Maja Figge, Elsa Guily, Verena Melgarejo Weinandt and Irina Raskin as part of the DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste" at the Berlin University of the Arts. Our invited speakers and participants consisted mainly of collectives (or members of collectives) with whom we gathered to practice different ways of (en)acting together. Foregrounding the understanding of the symposium as an assembly on the one hand, and the performativity of the methods on the other, the gathering was structured through three different formats: round tables, workshops and participatory performances - each initiating particular arrangements and means for doing, thinking and feeling together. The symposium did not aim at presenting research *about* methods of the collective, but rather at probing various forms of engaging with and in collectivity.



Certainly within the framework of this online publication, the practices of 'sharing' and 'learning' are enacted differently than during the symposium, but we hold onto its notion of assembly. In this way this online journal is driven by the effort to initiate a gathering of reflections and impulses; to become a medium for different modes of collective acts-thoughts-expressions-articulations; to recall and collect enduring physical traces, memories and artefacts, which occurred or were made collectively in the course of the two days. Therefore, the single contributions to this journal, while partaking in the documentation of the symposium, sometimes exceed it. The authors' reports account for a persistent engagement and struggle with their particular methods, concerns and living conditions - partially by giving us insights into their practical knowledge(s), partially by addressing the limits of traceability, mediation and understanding.

Friday Freitag 28.6.	Saturday Samstag 29.6.
<p>10:00 arrival and registration Ankommen und Anmeldung</p> <p>10:30 welcome and introduction Begrüßung und Einführung Barbara Gronau + concept team Konzeptteam</p> <p>11:00 round table: assembling/disseminating – versammeln/ verteilen Elif Cigdem Artan (sociologist, museologist, curator Soziologin, Museologin, Kuratorin) Ulrike Bergermann (media theorist Medienwissenschaftlerin) Serhat Karakayali (sociologist Soziologe)</p> <p>12:30 lunch Mittagessen</p> <p>14:00 workshops – Kollektive Zeit(en)reise – eine Probe mit den Theater- lingen mit Anika Lachnitt (Theaterwissenschaftlerin, Aktivistin) / AWO Theaterlinge – Reinventing the Political Compass: How to increase digital self-awareness in the age of Social Media with Francesca Del Bono (designer, curator), Noel David Nicolaus (researcher, curator), Tommaso Cappelletti (designer, videomaker) / Clusterduck Collective – cooking, playing, sharing with Pêdra Costa (performance artist, urban anthropologist)</p> <p>17:00 coffee break Kaffeepause</p> <p>17:30 round table: instituting/fleeing Suza Husse (curator, researcher, writer) and Andrea Caroline Keppler (curator) / District* School Without Center Friederike Landau (urban sociologist, political theorist) Ferdiansyah Thajib (researcher, community educator) / District* School Without Center + KUNCI</p> <p>19:00 eating, playing, sharing with Pêdra Costa</p> <p>21:00 end</p>	<p>10:30 arrival and registration Ankommen und Anmeldung</p> <p>11:00 round table: commoning/communing Selda Asal (artist) / Apartment Project Ulrike Hammann (sociologist, postcolonial theorist, urban activist) / Kotti & Co Zuzana Tabachková (architect, urban planner) and Zuzana Révészová (cultural sociologist) / Spolka Collective</p> <p>12:30 lunch Mittagessen</p> <p>14:00 workshops – The Practice of Resistance with Grupo Oito (dance collective) – Das Politische und das Gestische mit Irina Kaldrack (Medienwissenschaftlerin) und Timo Herbst (Künstler) – Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka Collective (architects, urbanists and sociologists)</p> <p>17:00 coffee break Kaffeepause</p> <p>17:30 Club of Im_Possibilities mit Nuray Demir (Künstlerin, Kuratorin) / District* School Without Center</p> <p>19:00 end</p>
	<p>in cooperation with in Kooperation mit DISTRICT</p> <p>with the support of Mit dankenswerter Unterstützung  Universität der Kluge Berlin</p> <p>DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft</p>
<p>Fig. 2. Program Design: Jenny Baese. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg “Das Wissen der Künste”</p>	

About the contributions

In this edition we present twelve contributions, each one corresponding to one session in the program, as well as a reflection from an individual perspective about the space and the proceedings. We have chosen to arrange the contributions within the publication according to the chronological order in which each program point took place. Consequently, the publication begins with the introductory words by the organizing team, which presented the central concerns and considerations with regards to the conception of the symposium, but also took some time to go through the more pragmatic instructions about the arrangement of the space, as well as to credit the persons and organizations that enabled the event. By publishing the script of the welcome note in its entirety, this contribution sets the tone for an edition, which attends to the performative and infrastructural as much as the discursive.

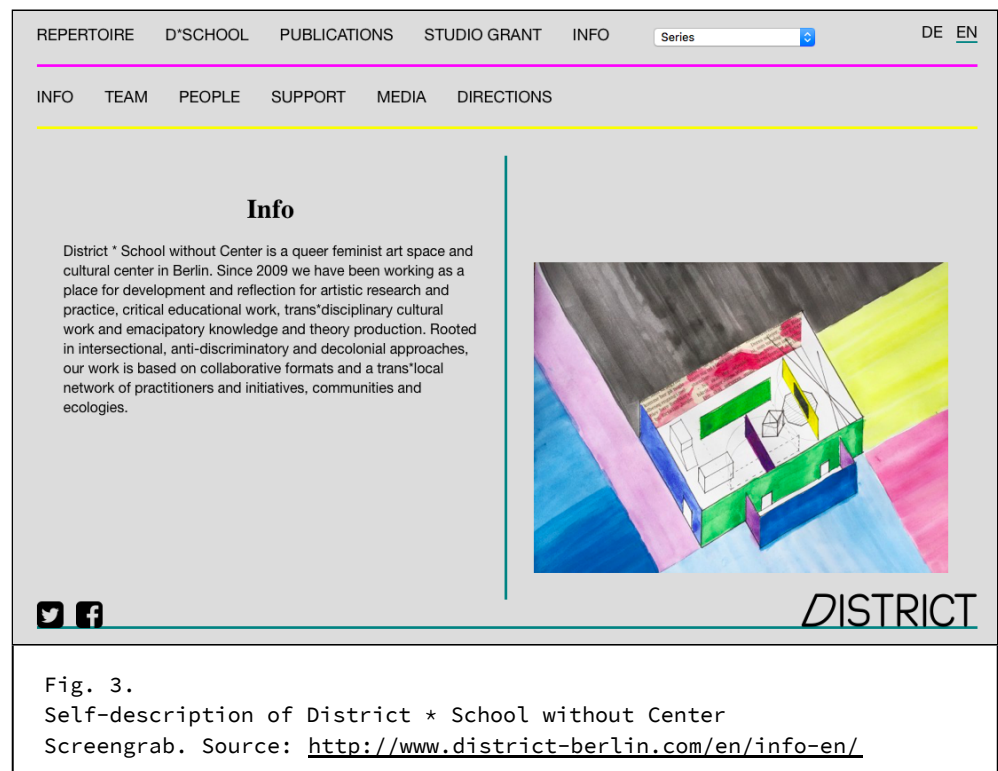
Conceptually, the symposium was organized through three central questions, which we chose to address as round tables. In them, we approached the tensions, collisions and cross-pollination arising when pairing concepts, which we considered fundamental in the practice of collectivity: assembling and disseminating, instituting and fleeing, as well as commoning and communing. The transcriptions of the roundtables document the discussions:

The sociologist Serhat Karakayali and two members of the Clusterduck collective, Noel David Nicolaus and Björn Heerssen, came to word in the round table *assembling/disseminating*, which focused on protest as collective practice against the background of the interplay between media and infrastructures.¹

District * School without Center, a queer-feminist art and cultural center in Berlin and our partner in the endeavor, was at the time in a process of evaluating and reorganizing its working structures. The round table *instituting/fleeing* gave space to its members Andrea Caroline Keppler and Ferdiansyah Thajib along with urban sociologist Friederike Landau to reflect on their process and delve into the relationships between institutions and collectives, as well as into experiences with institutional critique and oppositional practices.

In the round table *commoning/communing* Ulrike Hamann of the neighbourhood initiative Kotti & Co, Zuzana Tabačková of Spolka collective and the art critic Erden Kosova, who collaborates with the SiS collective, embarked on a conversation about collective engagements in the city, asking which forms of acting together could do justice to a relational understanding of the commons.

By providing transcriptions for all three round tables, the very different conceptual undertakings as well as the different participatory methods of each one can be recognized.



The second guiding principle of the symposium was its character as a space for collective practice. Recognizing the many possibilities of acting together, practitioners of several disciplines (i.e. theatre, dance, digital media, urbanism, among others) were invited to enable participatory workshops. Their contributions to this journal take different routes and formats: some look back to describe moments in the way in which memory, with its gaps, can allow; others take up the central questions in new directions; and others reflect upon the collective endeavour anew. In this way, fragmentary traces come together into a scaffold referencing the what, the how and the why of the encounters.

During the symposium Anika Lachnitt and the Theaterlinge from AWO Fanclub Neukölln directed the workshop *Kollektive Zeit(en)reise - eine Probe mit den Theaterlingen [Collective Journey through Time(s) - a Rehearsal with the Theaterlinge]*, where they invited the attendees to partake in the exercises of the group and demonstrated how collectivity is enacted within their practices of developing, rehearsing and staging different material. For this journal, Theaterlinge decided to develop a text collectively, however due to the ongoing pandemic crisis, this process has been delayed and the group shares with us their video *Superheroes*Heroines*.

For the symposium, Clusterduck conceived the workshop *Reinventing the Political Compass: How to Increase Digital Self Awareness in the Age of Social Media*, which explored how digital infrastructures and modalities of online behavior interrelate. For this publication, Clusterduck reconsiders their practices as a collective that situates itself between Digital Art and activism by revisiting the contradictions they find themselves embedded in.

Within the context of coming together, food also took a central role. After guiding a group during one complete afternoon in the preparation of, and interaction with the food we were all going to consume later together, Pêdra Costa reflects on anthropophagy, anthropoemy, sensual experience and learning as a bodily process.

The photo-essay by Fritz Schlütter focuses on the details: on those apparently unimportant objects that when together not only demarcate the space, but more so reflect a character, an intention, and will ultimately embody the memories of the ephemeral.

After guiding the workshop *The Practice of Resistance* in which trust was built and activated through movement and awareness, Grupo Oito contributes to this publication, reminding us about how short we still come, when trying to expand our notion of a 'we', and who does and does not belong to it; a central question, which traversed many of the sessions.

Irina Kaldrack und Timo Herbst review their lecture performance and exhibition *G20* - part of the multiyear project "The Entanglement between Gesture, Media and Politics" - in which the question of interdisciplinary collaboration takes center stage: how is it possible to create together, when each one is anchored and framed by the knowledge-frameworks of their own practice? What processes support a common and communal undertaking? What methods lead to what engagement? And how to reach beyond the limits and expectations of the individual to create and theorize as a group?

In the workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* the Spolka collective introduced their method of mapping as a means to negotiate individual experiences and the social constitution of space, while acknowledging the role of language in any collective act of space-making. The contribution traces the development of the workshop, including resulting maps sketched by the participants, and reflects on how the methods followed relate to Spolka's wider work.

Closing the issue is the photo documentation of *Club of Im_Possibilities*, a participatory performance led by Nuray Demir, in which we came together one last time. Rather than seeking for a summary or conclusion of the two days, the happening's final setting re-addressed the 'collective' by inviting the participants to create a mural commemorating the names of those, who have enabled each one to inhabit their own space.

In editing this issue, we aim to create a micro-archive of snapshots, voices, thoughts and communal undertakings, to promote the circulation of references, and engage in the potential of their enduring unfolding.

We would like to thank all authors for their contributions, as well as Marieke Grenzebach for her support in making this issue available online.

Juana Awad and Irina Raskin

Berlin, January 2021

- 1 In this framework, we would like to acknowledge the research practices of sociologist, museologist and curator Elif Çiğdem Artan, and media theorist Ulrike Bergermann, who were invited to the round table *assembling/disseminating*, participating in its preparatory meetings, but who were unfortunately prevented to partake in the event due to unforeseen situations.

How is it to act collectively when each one of us brings our own perspective, values, assumptions, and also our own language? How does from the many become 'one'? What compromises does one need to make on the way? These were the questions we explored during the workshop *Spaces of Collectivity*. The aim was to collectively experience and enjoy space, while noticing how different our perspectives on it are, and how being able to talk about them, is key to any collective act of visioning, making or caring for space. Maps, as final products, and map-making, as the process of making these, became the tools to visualise and thus be able to better discuss these challenges.

How is it to act collectively when each one of us brings our own perspective, values, assumptions, and also our own language? How does from the many become 'one'? And what compromises does one need to make on the way? These were the questions we explored during the three hours long workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* at the Berlin symposium *sharing/learning: methods of the collective in art, research and activism*.

Search for a collective through collective language

We are architects and sociologists, members of the collective Spolka. In our projects we aim at engaging people in the collective making of cities. Through this workshop, contributing to the general questions of the symposium, we wanted to collaboratively discuss with the participants *the challenges of building shared understanding in a collective*. The way we chose to thematize this topic builds on our practical experiences as facilitators and designers in the field of participatory planning, as well as active members of our non-hierarchical collective. The workshop, and this text consequently, could be thus of interest to city-makers (which, as follows below are indeed all of us) and also anyone involved in a collective.

During the three hours we had, we wanted participants to experience and enjoy space, while noticing how different our perspectives on it are, and how being able to talk about those differences, is key to any collective act of visioning, making or caring for space. For not only designers and planners in their work, but everyone, through their daily actions, is constantly negotiating their different views on what a good place is. Do I tolerate graffiti on the shared stairwell? Am I bothered by rents rising in my neighbourhood? Do I welcome Google campus in my city? Living in physical proximity to others, we all are, willingly or not, part of smaller and larger collectives that are constituted simply by the physical space(s) we inhabit. Within these overlapping and dynamic collectives, we are constantly negotiating our different perspectives. Sometimes we have diverging views on an issue, sometimes we don't even notice an issue until someone helps us to see it. These processes often manifest themselves through big gestures, but are otherwise mostly hidden in everyday interactions. In this workshop we wanted to make them visible, paying special attention to the importance of *finding a common language*

for enabling these processes.

The workshop employed spatial mapping and map-making as its central methods. Through these we aimed to *thematize* and at the same time *visualize* the process of negotiating and eventually finding a shared perspective on a place, while developing a collective visual language to express it. Each one of us has a unique visual language shaped by our setting – just like our views on space are. In coming together, our views and languages are gradually integrated, transformed and even excluded by others. Other times, we must learn the ways and the language of an existing collective to be part of it. During this workshop, we simulated the former scenario, while at the end also briefly reflected on the latter. It was crucial for us to discuss both. For while within our professional and cultural bubbles, shared language and views promote understanding and nurture identity, these acts of strengthening collectivity can also erect boundaries, as a collective language becomes obscure to outsiders. Maps as final products and map-making as the process of making these became the tools to visualise and thus be able to better discuss these challenges.

Spaces, maps and collectives in the Malzfabrik

In practical terms, the workshop was an exercise in collective mapping of the public space within the MalzFabrik – a large industrial area for culture, where District * School without Centre, the location of the symposium has its base. In groups of six people, the task was to create maps that represented the most important aspects of Malzfabrik for their collective. We, as facilitators, also became part of these collectives, observing and gently guiding the processes from within. These temporal collectives were formed ad-hoc and gradually:

_During an initial quick exercise, we collectively mapped the room we were in. This gave us an opportunity to discuss what various aspects made up the space: physical objects, people, light, smells, materials, sounds, associations, and how these could be visually captured on a map, either literally or through symbols. It was a chance to get to know others and their views, be inspired by them and recognise that there is no wrong way of going about the task.



Fig 1.
Workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* with Spolka
Photo: Fritz Schlütter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

_We then all ventured out and each of us explored the space individually. Through our own perspective, everyone tried to pay attention to the aspects that made up the space, while noticing which of these were important to them personally. Some sat for a long time in one place, while others tried to cover every inch of the area. We all enjoyed the luxury of time to just be in the space and notice its details. Our perceptions were captured on prepared base maps of the area.



Fig. 2.
Workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* with Spolka. Individual mapping
Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen
der Künste"

(Coming back from the 'field', we chatted during a coffee break. In this time everyone was asked to find a partner for the next step in the process.)

_Forming collectives of two, we took turns sharing our findings / perspectives of the space. Our individual maps were central in this activity. If anything was missing, the map was extended; if something was unclear, the map was redrawn. The partners were learning about each other's perspectives, as well as about each other's (visual) language.

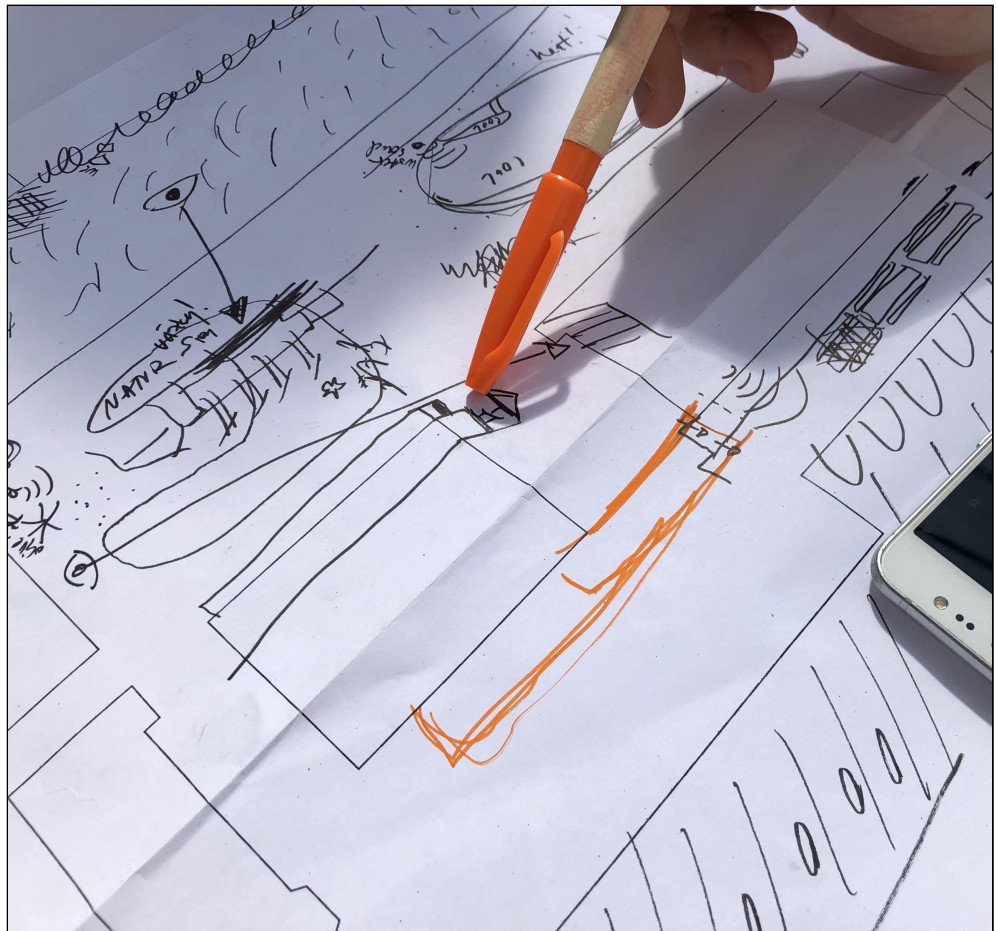


Fig. 3.

Workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* with Spolka. Map in process

Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

_The challenge of the final map-making step was to bring the findings into a yet larger collective of six and negotiate while making one map of the space: what should be on it - what do we find collectively important, *and* how should it be drawn - what is a language we can all understand? And most importantly: are we deciding all together? Are the voices of all being heard? Perhaps given the time pressure, in some groups, few more dominant persons took on the lead. In others, the process was more open.

_Each of the four groups produced a unique map that they then presented to the others. The questions asked reflected the extent to which the collective managed to create a visual language understandable not only to those in it, but also to those outside of it. Having a title and a legend of each map (structure given by us, borrowed from codified maps) made the collective language more accessible.



Fig. 4.
Workshop Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka. Presenting maps
Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen
der Künste"

_In the closing round, we collectively reflected on the process through which the small temporary collectives were created.

Forming collectives, opening collectives

Despite taking an active part in the collective making of the maps, it is now, more than one year later, difficult even for us to understand them. Some symbols bring images of space, but others are empty signifiers. This is probably how the maps must have looked back then to those, who didn't take part in the workshop. The temporal collectives found their language as they formed (it) through collaboration. But once formed, it seems rather difficult for outsiders to join. We unfortunately didn't have enough time during the workshop for a collective reflection on this specific aspect of collectives, even though this was the one we were most keen to discuss. For while as facilitators and designers we have many methods of bringing people together, we often struggle to keep the collectives open, once formed.

This balancing between identity and openness is a recurring topic especially in our collective Spolka as such. The collective is based on old friendships, thanks to which we share much history, and being a woman is the obvious commonality among us - things that make it rather easy for us to find a common language, but for many create a hurdle to join. What is wrong with closed collectives, you might ask. In practice, often nothing. In principle though, they mirror fortresses, like those built by us in the EU: protecting our comfort and losing sight of other perspectives than those we have already created mutual understanding for. To conclude, we thus leave you with a question, possible answers to which seem to lie only in training our sensibilities to each other: How to nurture a space of collectivity, while keeping it open for others?



Fig. 5.
Workshop Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka. Putting individual maps into collective maps
Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

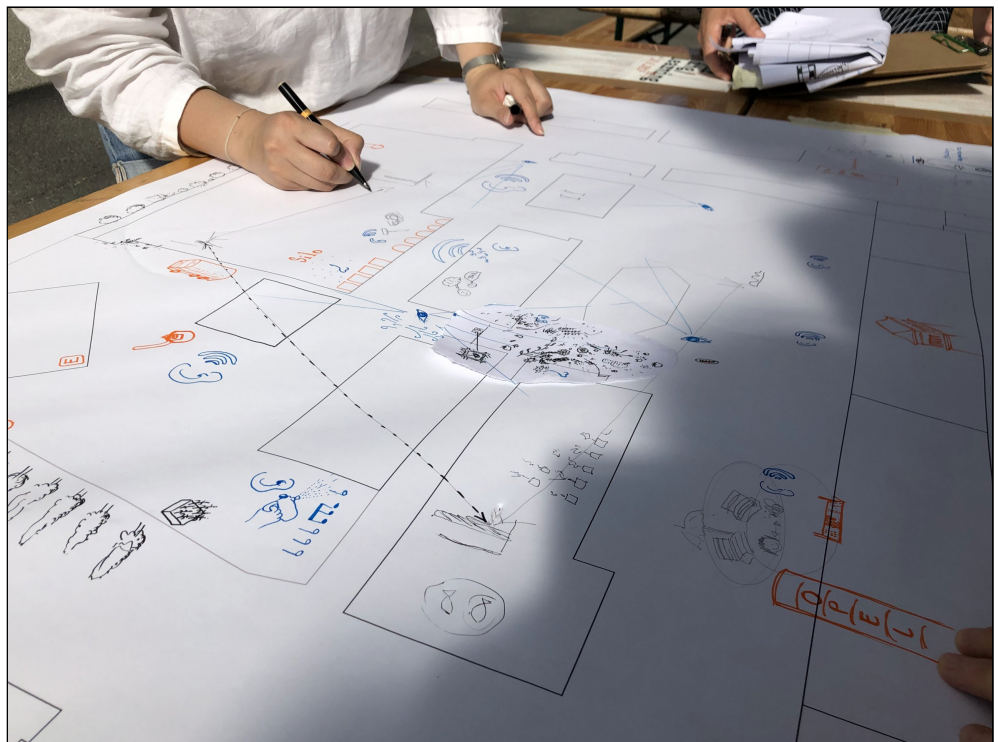


Fig. 6.
Workshop Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka. Designing a collective map
Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"



Fig. 7.
Workshop *Spaces of Collectivity* with Spolka. Designing a collective map
Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

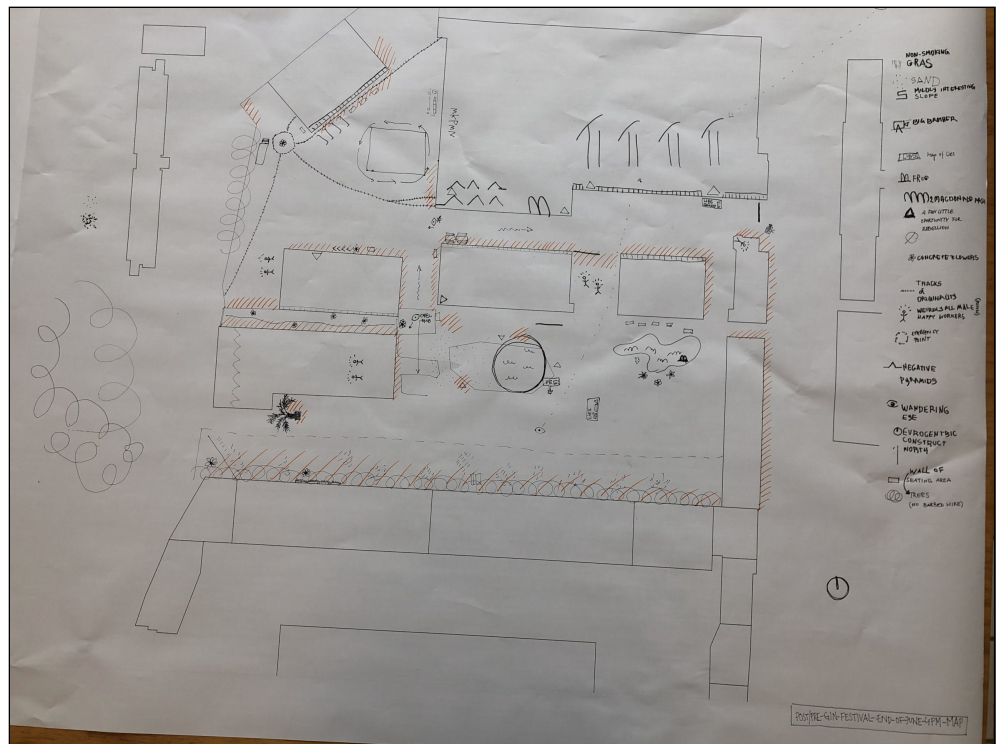


Fig. 8.
 Workshop Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka. Map in process
 Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"

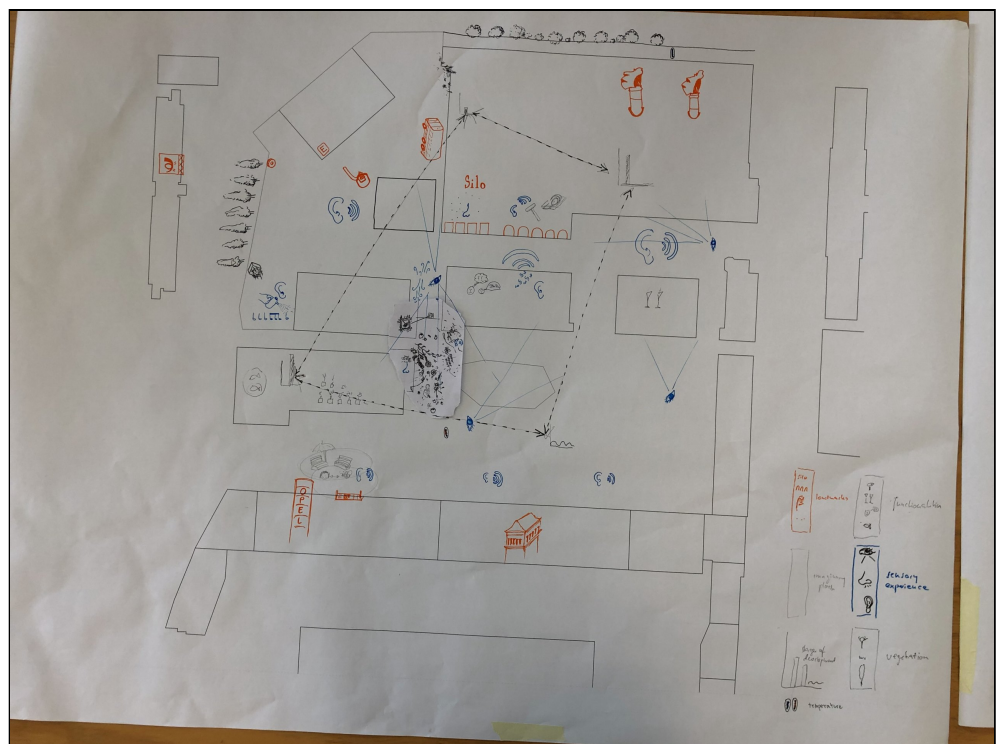


Fig. 9.
 Workshop Spaces of Collectivity with Spolka. Resulting map detail
 Photo: Fritz Schlüter. Courtesy: DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Das Wissen der Künste"