

## Discovering Perceptions through Art in Freiburg

Finally, the day arrived. The 2<sup>nd</sup> of February our group of master students prepared a mural session on the city of Freiburg to discover the citizens perceptions on how they feel of living on a green city. We wanted citizens to express through art how they understand being green, if they feel encouraged or pressured to be sustainable.

### *The Process Behind*

The process started one and half years ago when we started the master program. The director of the masters program told us that the 22 of us would have to decide to do a student organized event, on any environmental related topic. That's it. We were supposed to decide how to decide. We had to agree on what was an interesting, studenty, academic and fun topic to do as a group. And: How to do it? Should it be a conference? Should it be a workshop with other students? How do we make this an event to (even) promote a change in the world?

Through a long –and slow- process we decided to tackle environmental issues of Freiburg through the eyes of the people who live here. And we would do it through art. We aimed to use art as a tool to express feelings, values, expectations and interests.

### *The Set-Up*

The mural consisted of big wood panels with 3 questions about Freiburg: Is it an eco-tyranny? Is it an eco-paradise? What do you think? To answer it we had brushes, markers and tons paint to use. Also, we had a map of Freiburg where people could identify an issue on a specific spot of the city.

### *The Mural Day*

At 10a.m. people starting arriving. Some friends were there but mostly citizens walking by stopped to participate. To say the truth, we were happily surprised that so many people stopped by! They were interested on what was happening and we were interested on talking to them, the Freiburgers. Many citizens reflected on the benefits of living in this “good” city with the accessibility to environmental transport and infrastructure. However, they pointed out that there is an underlying condition, that rich people live here. For example, some people said that concept of Vauban (eco-district) is difficult to upscale because of its high living costs. Others compared Freiburg to other German cities: “building a house here is much more expensive“. Others reflected on the contradiction of having a sustainable life here and going far away for holidays: “what about the citizens ecological footprint, that is what should be measured“.

Several participants questioned the possibility to be



Mural Poster



The Mural

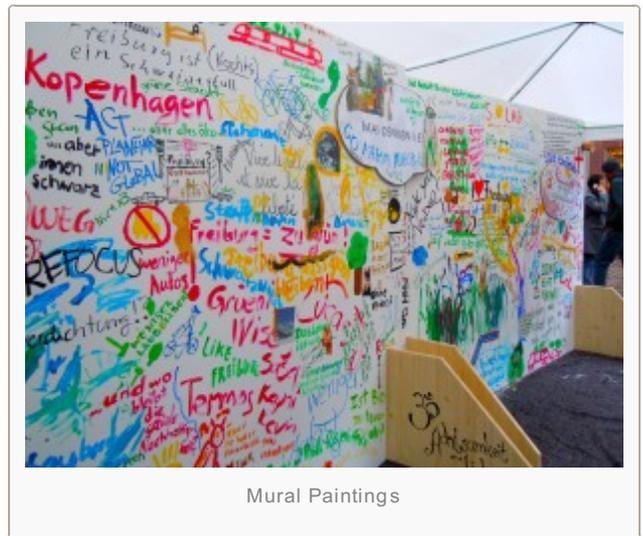
Several participants questioned the possibility to be sustainable: “how is it even possible to live sustainably within this [capitalist] system?!”, “what kind of sustainability are we talking about when people are not social anymore [when they are looking at their cellphones]” and “we have lost a connection to the farmers”. Also, some suggested an approach: “we need an holistic approach”, “it is not only about the environment” “we need to preserve god’s creation: humans and nature”.

Other citizens identified problems such as increasing trash on the streets, the one way ticket price on the tram, the noise during the night or the rudeness of cyclists. It seems Freiburg needs a re-connection of the environment and social dimensions.

*Some mural messages:*

- I love Freiburg
- More trees and flowers!
- Fuck you Vauban
- Bike city? No! The No1 is Copenhagen.
- Nuclear Energy? Yes please!
- Go farm yourself
- Don't eat animals
- Without cars is better
- Less cars!
- Bio=Trend
- Old vs. young
- Go walking and wake the kid inside you!

The next step of our project will be a reflection on the mural by discussing how environmental behaviour is encouraged or limited by social pressure. We would like to invite you to this event on the 1st of march at 7 p.m. in the Weingut Andreas Dilger ( Urachstraße 3 , Freiburg). See you there!



Mural Paintings



Drawings



MEG 7 Class

