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Library School Museum Stadium Theater Church City Hall Education Base



Open Air Library

Architects: KARO Architekten
Location: Magdeburg, Germany
Commissioner: City of Magdeburg
Project Team: Antje Heuer, Stefan Rettich, Bert Hafermalz, Leipzig
Architektur+Netzwerk, Sabine Eling-Saalmann, Magdeburg
Collaborators: Christian Burkhardt, Gregor Schneider, Mandy Neuenfeld
Structural Engineer: Michael Kurt
Project Year: 2008-2009
Project Area: 488 sqm
Budget: \$325,000 Euro
Photographs: Anja Schlamann

The Open Air Library in an abandoned district centre in the southeast of Magdeburg, Germany, was developed from an installation that was established in 2005. In collaboration with the local residents on the fallow site of the former district library a 1:1 model of a possible Open-Air-Library is developed as a "bookmark". Remembrance, history and narratives provided the background for the "re-occupation" of the abandoned expanse.

The new building was constructed with more than 1,000 lent beer crates. The outdoor space as an addition has been designed together with the residents. Prefabricated pieces from a recently-demolished old warehouse from the 1960s were recycled to cover the façades of the new building. A thick wall containing shelving for the books shelters a green space where people can read in the open air and it culminates in a higher section that houses a cafeteria.

The residents which take care for the reading-café as well as for the open-air-library call it a "library of confidence": There is no registration needed. You can just take a book away and should bring it back voluntary or at least another one. The shelves are never closed; you can go there and take a book when ever you want. As another communal function a stage is included. This is used by the elementary school for theatre plays, as well as for public readings, for concert-gigs of local youth bands and other cultural and communal events.



