

Transcript: Absence of Monuments Part 1

(Two Interviews cut together, interviewers Marvin and Margarethe, interviewees Lisa Plich and Martina Kapuschinski)

Margarethe: First question, what is your profession and how is your work linked to the queer community? Just explain a little, just tell us a little.

Lisa: Yes, we're the WuF Zentrum here in Würzburg, we've basically existed since 1972, and now we're existing here in Niggelweg 2 with our own centre and about 300 events per year.

Martina: Mein Name ist Martina Kapuschinski, ich bin Mitte 50 Jahre alt und hab so die letzten gut 15 Jahre viel im WuF Zentrum - das ist jetzt das Queere Zentrum hier in Würzburg - gemacht; Veranstaltungen, Parties, Abend für Lesben, beim Umbauen entrümpeln geholfen, und so weiter und so fort, und vor 4 ½ Jahren etwa, nachdem es zwei Jahre lang keinen CSD in Würzburg gegeben hat, hab ich mich mit anderen Leuten zusammengesetzt und wir haben überlegt "was machen wir denn, dass es wieder einen CSD gibt in Würzburg?" Und haben dann einen Verein gegründet, und dann war ich dort mit dabei als wir 2019 jetzt wieder einen CSD in Würzburg organisiert haben.

Martina [in German]: My name is Martina Kapuschinski, I'm in my mid 50s and in the past 15 years I have done a lot in the WuF Zentrum - now the queer centre in Würzburg: events, parties, evenings for lesbians, lend a helping hand with renovations and clearing out, and much more. 4 ½ years ago, after not having a CSD for two years in Würzburg, I sat down with others and we thought to ourselves "was can we do to have a CSD in Würzburg again?". And then we founded an organization, and I've been there when we organized a CSD in 2019 in Würzburg again.

Margarethe: What is your perspective on Queer Remembrance Culture in general first of all, and then on Queer Remembrance Culture in Würzburg especially?

Lisa: That's a hard question. Queer Remembrance is a theme which is vanished.

Margarethe: Yes, somehow.

Lisa: People don't want to think about queer people, so there was no remembrance culture and in the last few years, it started to emerge, to celebrate IDAHOBIT, to celebrate CSDs, to celebrate Pride. It was not non-existing in Germany or in Würzburg, but it was just for the community and it was not outgoing, it was not on the streets and not in town, it was just for the community.

Margarethe: It was for the community, a safe space for the people who knew where they wanted to be, but it didn't provide the visibility that's needed to make a bigger impact.

Martina: Die gibt's jetzt so sichtbar, wenn man durch die Stadt läuft, gar nicht. Das find ich schade, hab mir da auch schon Gedanken gemacht, was man da halt vielleicht so angehen kann, dass das in Zukunft mal anders ausschaut und in Erinnerungskultur gibt es zum Beispiel während der Jubiläumsgala, also weil eben vor 50 Jahren, 1972, sind zum ersten Mal schwule Studierende auf die Straße gegangen und da war eine Frau da, die das aus Lesben-Frauen-Sicht erzählt hatte. Das ist schon auch ein Stück Erinnerungskultur, dass eben dann die jüngeren Menschen, die da sind, von der Zeit erfahren, wie die Situation war, wie kompliziert es war sich zu treffen. Das gehört für mich auch dazu, dass man eben bei Jubiläen sich an die Zeit von früher erinnert.

Martina [in German]: It's not really visible, when walking through the city, not at all. I think that's a shame, thought about it as well, what could be done to change that in the future. In our remembrance

culture, for example, during the anniversary gala, because 50 years ago, in 1972, gay students went out into the streets for the first time and there was a woman who told everything from a woman-lesbian-perspective. That too is a part of remembrance culture, that the younger people who are there (at the gala), get to know about that time, how the situation was, how complicated it was to meet up. That is also part of it, to remember the past times on anniversaries

Margarethe: So, we just had it about the remembrance culture in general, in Würzburg, in the world, Germany; what do you think is currently good or bad about the remembrance culture that already exists and what would you change if you had the power to?

Lisa: There are some good things, but remembrance is not enough.

Margarethe: The old law we had - the 175 one, we could talk about that for a bit to just show how young this new justice is that is nowhere near justice enough.

Lisa: It's an old law, it's from the 1880s, and it wasn't until 1993, it's just about 30 years, since its abolishment.

Marvin: There's very few monuments in Würzburg, and Germany in general; what do you think an absence of especially monuments signifies?

Lisa: I think an absence of monuments is not that bad because monuments are always connected to something bad happening. But it is kind of queerbaiting to not see when something bad happens in the past, so maybe some monuments would help to show the people what happened in Germany, or in the world, to queer people.

Marvin: Because monuments exist, it's just hard to find out that they're actually dedicated to queer people, and very few people recognise them as such.

*Martina: Ja, dass da noch nicht genug Augenmerk drauf gelegt wurde von entweder Aktivist*Innen oder von den städtischen Behörden, aber die machen meiner Meinung nach auch immer nur das, wenn man sie drauf stößt, also wenn jemand eben sagt "mir sind die Stolpersteine wichtig", dann passiert was, wenn man lange genug redet. Ich denke es muss auch aus der Community kommen, sonst ändert sich nichts.*

Martina [in German]: Well, that there hasn't been brought enough attention to it by activists and the local authorities, but in my opinion those only ever do anything once they get a push, like when someone says "the Stolpersteine (ger., stumbling stones) are important to me", then something happens, when it's been talked about long enough. I think it has to come from the community, otherwise nothing will change.

Marvin: Queer history is laced with terror, sadness, violence and death. And in this interview we talked a lot about that side, yet the queer community is still so full of light and hope. Do you think that remembrance culture should move into that brighter direction? Or do you think it should move into a different direction?

Lisa: When you as a person on the street, "what do you know about the queer community?" "Oh, these are the funny guys in dresses." No.

Marvin: No, it's so much more.

Lisa: Yes, and we should be visible and show the diversity of queer culture, and that's what maybe can change remembrance. Not to go back to the people who died because of their queerness, go back to

the people who were there and who were diverse and who were- there is no word in English I think, which is, they were *bunt*.

Marvin: They were colorful.

Lisa: Yeah.

Marvin: They were proud and out and brave enough to show who they are.

Lisa: Yes, they were brave. And I think that should be the way of remembrance, of good remembrance, and to focus more on the living and not the dead people. But that's a part of remembrance too, to remember dead people.

Marvin: It is. And it's an important part.

Lisa: Yes, of course, but it's not what we want to be.

Marvin: Exactly.

Lisa: The queer community is colorful, is proud, is diverse, so we should show it.

Marvin: We should show it, and we should show it in our remembrance culture.

Lisa: Of course.