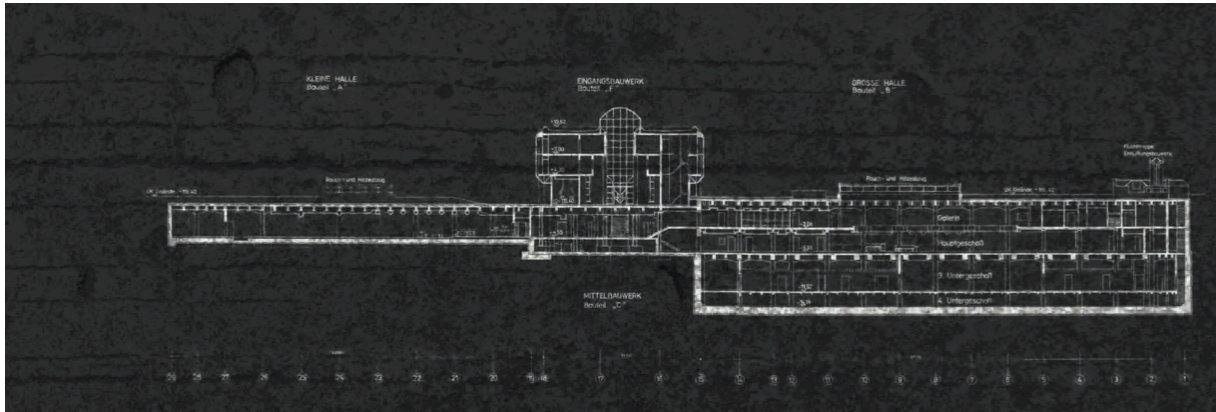


Soil Specimens.Site.Leipzig

The Last 500 Million Years

An Interdisciplinary, Artistic Site Investigation
into the Depths of Time



Performance.Exhibition.Discourse
at the former Bowlingtreff (Bowling Club)
on Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz
15-31 October, 2021

By: Thomas Goerge, Uwe Gössel, Niclas Reed Middleton, Mark Polscher, Annett Sawallisch, Bernhard Siegl and Brian Völkner

Abandoned 24 years ago, the former Bowlingtreff (Bowling Club) is located underground on Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz (square) in Leipzig. Here, beneath the city's surface, time seems to have stood still. Very little is reminiscent of how electricity was converted 100 years ago for the dance of the Roaring Twenties. It is hard to imagine that the Bowlingtreff – one of the so-called illegal constructions that cropped up in East Germany during the 80s – was once a place of longing. But something is still there: What do the old concrete walls, the warping oaken floorboards or the smell of silence say about our future?

At the moment, we dramatically shift our focus towards the world and what we, as humans, do to it. As a result, countless discussions nervously ensue. But underground, another era seems to reign.

Before the future Natural History Museum Leipzig is erected on this very spot, we are afforded a glimpse into the depths of time, a look at the geology of the soil beneath this site we now call Leipzig. Just like the wrinkles on our skin, the earth's soil gives an account of age-old events. For example, more than the top 20 meters of soil are not from Leipzig, that soil is migrant in nature. A 400-meter-high ice sheet shoved it here from Scandinavia. The

ground layers not only contain traces of sea cows which were eaten by sharks along the former southern edge of the prehistoric North Sea, they also raise a number of questions. How is it possible to investigate the soil in all its geological, ecological or ideological diversity? What does geology have to do with us today? What are the ancient answers to questions that currently confront us?

“Soil Specimens.Site.Leipzig” interweaves language, moving pictures, sound and numerous exhibits to create a performance, an installation and an exhibition. On the one hand, it specifically scrutinizes the soil around the bowling club, but, on the other hand, it deals with the question of how this soil was used in the past as the basis of our life.

“Soil Specimens.Site.Leipzig” has developed in cooperation with the Natural History Museum Leipzig and in a discourse with residents, scientists and other experts.





51°18'43.4"N 12°18'58.4"E // Goldrutenweg, Leipzig

Fact #1 History of Arrivals

The earth, the layers of soil as well as life itself have not changed in stages, they have changed in waves. Following phases which were, in part, steady and stable for longer periods of time, conditions sometimes changed radically – but never within a shorter period of time.

475 million years ago: Plants emerge from the water and colonize the land.

35 million years ago: The prehistoric North Sea reaches Leipzig, tropical conditions prevail.

From 300,000 to 128,000 years ago: The glaciers of the Saale glaciation arrive in Leipzig and cover the region with a 1,000-meter-thick sheet of ice. Scandinavian boulder clay and boulders are left behind.

7,000 years ago: The first settlers reach Leipzig and establish settlements.

Around 1830: The industrial exploitation of the earth begins in the Leipzig region.

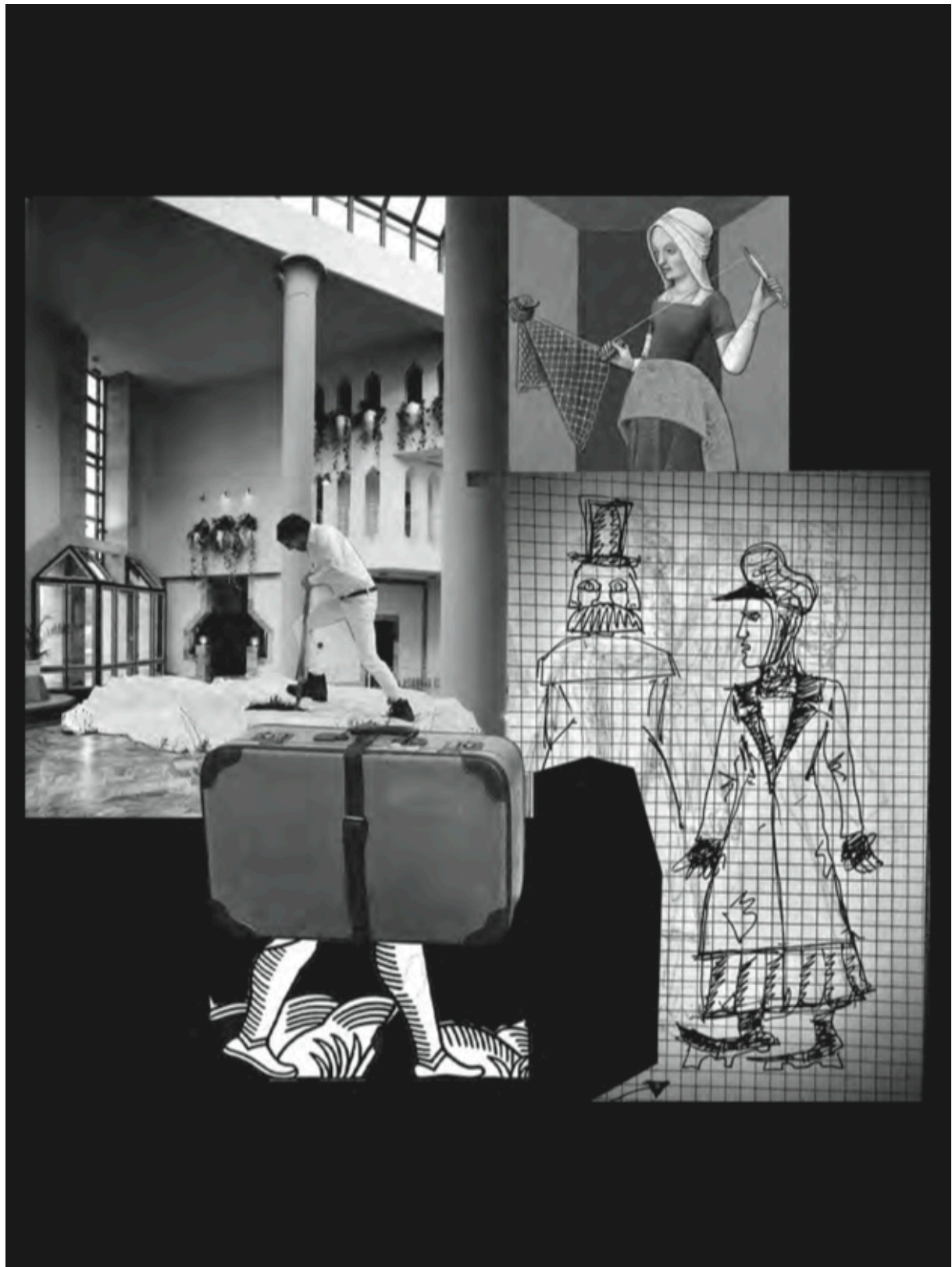
Around 1900: Rural exodus and mass immigration to Leipzig. Urbanization begins.

Around 22,000: A new glacial period reaches Leipzig as well?

Arrival of the Anthropocene: Since the beginning of the world 4.6 billion years ago, there have been four distinctive atmospheres. Today we are living in the fourth atmosphere with about 20% oxygen, and we profit from its stability. During the past 10,000 years, the climate has been as stable as ever before. Nature's reliability during the Holocene is the foundation of our development: That people began to settle in Leipzig 7,000 years ago was an inquisitive attempt to adapt to unknown conditions. They were not aware that during the preceding Saale and Weichselian glaciations so much mineral loess had been deposited that the soil was highly fertile. And yet they were able to profit from it. The abundance was made use of, then exploited.

Today, a tipping point has been reached. We still don't precisely know what consequences our intervention in nature will have. What are the long-term effects of deforestation, surface sealing, plastic and toxic substances which infiltrate systems everywhere? What happens when sea levels rise and floods and droughts force people to flee and look for new homes? The stable conditions which have existed for thousands of years are being jeopardized by human beings.

How can we utilize the intellectual skills we have acquired in the Holocene to find a solution to the challenges of the Anthropocene?



Bowlingtreff 1 »Bohre, spinne, bohre!« Collage von T. Goerge

EARTHEATRE

An Earth Theatre for the Bowlingtreff (Excerpt, Part 1)

What do human beings fear? Disease and death? Conception and birth? Becoming? Passing away? Aren't bodies nothing but the borrowed forms of infinite being, incorporated in the diverse systems of non-human beings?

Ask yarn. Ask yarn. Ask yarn.

What appears, what occurs, what appears, what occurs, what appears in yarn? I see a human body. A colony of hundreds of billions of bacteria. I see forest soil. Desert. Ocean floor. Sediments. Pore spaces. Everything populated by organisms. A global ecosystem. Human beings see it but don't want to see it. Don't they want to understand it? But it is there. The realm of microbes. Terra incognita. The network of bacteria and Archaea. Myriads of microbes. Sitting at an age-old buffet of sedimentary layers. Feasting on the chthonic tablets. Void of light. Void of air. But connected to everything. By means of countless intertwined and interwoven rules and laws. Everything is nature. Everything is nature. You, too! You, too, are nature. You pathetic human being. You self-proclaimed master and keeper of the earth. Why do you always exempt yourself from the Game of Being? Why do you always cling to the pettiness of your mortal body and your wretched existence? Why do you claim to know what is evil, what is good? Why do you claim to know what the world needs and what not? There is no nature!

Is what you call "the end of nature" not merely the stage of pupation? From which something new will be woven beyond human imagination. Isn't it the beginning of a complete metamorphosis? A metanoia that frees all of you from your species-specific arrogance? The earth is not human, and it doesn't belong to humans either. Human beings are not the focal point of life, just as little as any other species. Human beings are not important for life on earth. Human beings are nothing but a new, fast-growing part of a huge ancient entity. Sun, moon, heaven and earth – the whole universe – days and months linger only as the brief guests of eternal time. They come and go, constant growth and demise.

Thomas Goerge



51°09'29.9"N 12°22'39.3"E // Neukieritzsch

Fact #2: A Sea Cow

During the 20s of the previous century, Leipzig was transformed into an electrifying metropolis that attracted an incredible number of people. At night, illuminated billboards shone brightly, the electric streetcars thundered around the inner loop, and here, at Königsplatz (square), restaurants like “Panorama” summoned people to dance. It was like dancing on the volcano, fuelled by coal. Geologically speaking, people were actually dancing on the “Bitterfeld coal veins”. This brown coal seam extends underground from one end of Leipzig to the other, stretching in waves from south to north and almost hitting the surface right here in the centre of town. Beginning in 1924, brown coal was mined and burned to generate electricity.

The excavators also laid bare the petrified bones of a former resident of Leipzig: a sea cow. All that is left are four to five vertebrae and a rib with bits of soil, but approximately 29 million years ago it grazed on the ocean floor with its trunk-like snout, in search of algae. It would have needed about two to three days for Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz.

Time and again, in the context of cultural history, sea cows have emerged as sirens. Between their forelegs they have teats, just like humans, and a large number of unusual legends have been passed on about this creature. According to one Japanese tale, sea cows taught humans how to make love. Could that be a result of their peaceful social interactions? Sea cows cradle their offspring just as we do with our children. In his drama “Helena”, Euripides inferred that the earth goddess Gaia was the mother of the sirens.

A diver who encountered a sea cow in Florida describes the incredibly intensive experience: Inside that massive body there was such a sensitive and compassionate spirit that it was pure joy to dive together. Not exactly reminiscent of ecstatic human dancers in the big city at night.

Its gently powerful moves are more reminiscent of the parking attendant at today’s Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz. Day after day for nearly 20 years, he has been doing his rounds, selling parking tickets. After the Wall fell, he came from the south, to Leipzig, and he just stayed put. Now he casually does his laps around the lot, his watchful eye much more reliable than any barrier.



Bowlingtreff 2 »Spinne, Schwester und Singel« Collage von T. Goerge

EARTH THEATRE

An Earth Theatre for the Bowlingtreff (Excerpt, Part 2)

Bowlingtreff Leipzig. Lower Level, Westhalle, Darkness. Weak light. In the middle, on stilts: a kind of drill site in the shape of an octagon. The drill head is a rotating projector that ceaselessly retrieves images from the depths. The three FATES, the three goddesses of fate, cluster around the drill, writing and watching over the Archive of the World that is chiselled in ore. They are the daughters of the original goddesses GAIA (Mother Earth) and ANANKE (inevitable fate). ANANKE is closely associated with ARACHNE, the first SPIDER and PRIMAL TELLER of all stories. There is also a connection between the names of the FATES and the months of pregnancy, birth and death:

NONA spins the thread of life. DECIMA measures it, and MORAT cuts it off.

FATES: Let us bury the dead, the animals that are extinct, the landscapes that have vanished, the oceans that have filled with sand. Through them alone can we shape our future!

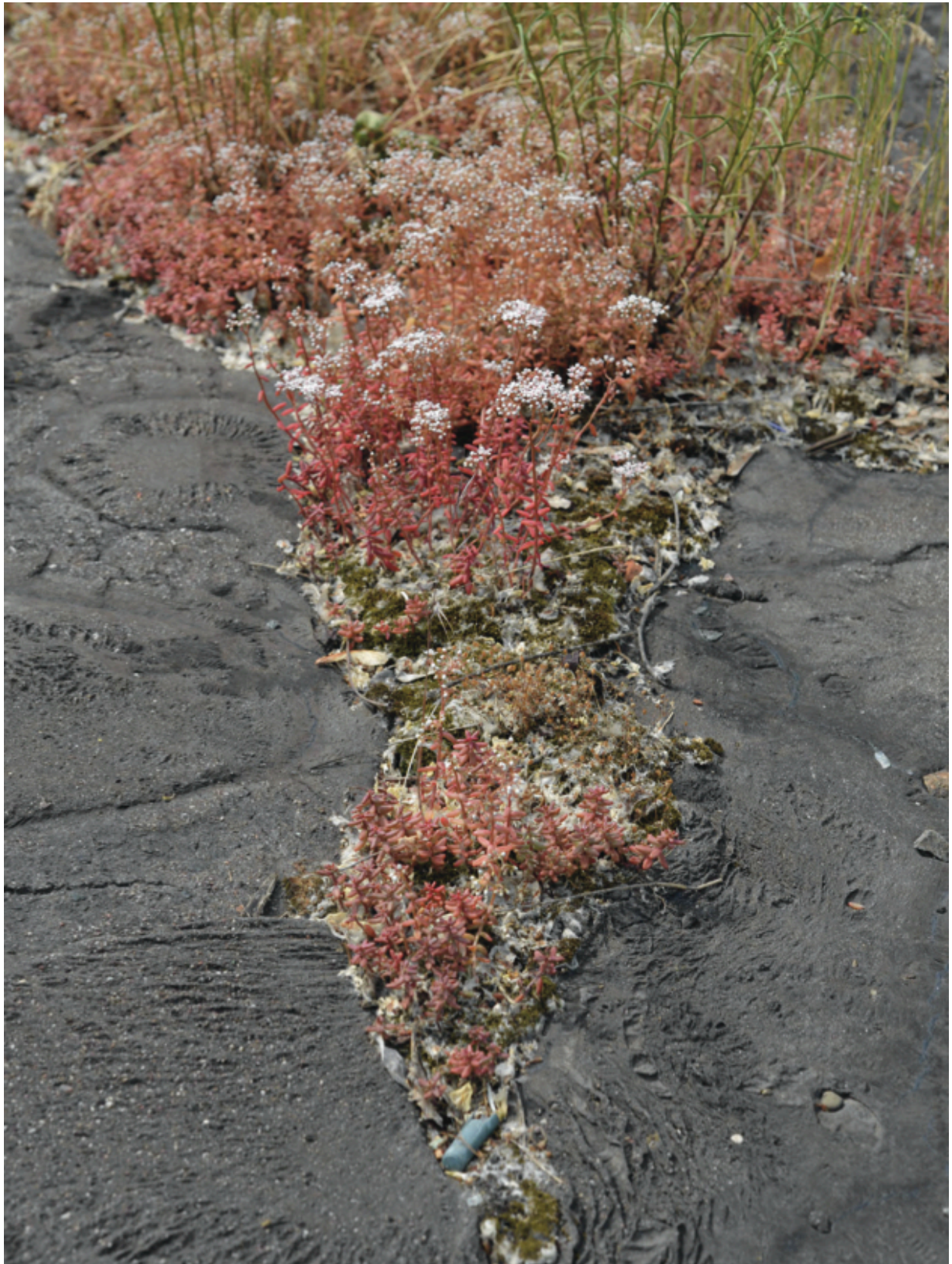
The CHOIR of the DEAD stirs, they rise from their tombs in the floor and the walls.

CHOIR of the DEAD: How did we get here? Are we dead? I always thought there was nothing afterwards. At least we can talk. Doesn't anyone want to drink? To laugh? Isn't there anything to eat? We don't want to lie in our caskets forever. Today it's time: To get up!

Suddenly the light goes on. In the middle, a long table has been set. The CHOIR of the DEAD sits down: all the dead celebrate, feast, drink, smoke, laugh. Their masks display fossilised plants, prehistoric animals like the sea cow, dinosaurs, spiders, trilobites and moles. Also literary figures like Arachne, Omphale & Hercules, Gretchen with Dr. Faust, as well as deceased residents of Leipzig such as Bach, Richard Wagner, C. Chun, Herman H. ter Meer. On the left, a band is playing on awesome-looking instruments. First, one of the dead begins to dance, then several others. A colourful pageant of streamers, balloons and confetti unfurls. Groups form. Some roll dice, others play cards, they all drink like drunkards, and in the background: the bowlers. As the bowling balls roll and the bowling pins tumble, the booming of thunder and earthquakes. Streaks of lightning on the walls.

CHOIR of the DEAD: We don't want to lie in our caskets forever. Today it's time: To get up! Spinning and playing in infinite being! Cards and bowling! With the ball (globe) of the world! Spit on the ball. Push it! Here we go! Wow! Cool! Strike! Strike!

Thomas Goerge



51°20'04.2"N 12°22'39.0"E // Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz, Leipzig

Fact #3 Gudrun

Before my mother, Gudrun, was born, her existence was supposed to be kept secret.

My great-grandparents had just married when they moved to Leipzig in 1904. They took out loans and bought two of the new houses in the town centre, one they lived in and one with a restaurant. The budding metropolis blossomed just like the restaurant, and the family soon had four daughters. The family is all smiles in a photograph from the 40s: Else, Alice, Lore and Renate.

During the 30s, my mother's mother, my Grandma Else, had an affair with a married man, Kurt. She became pregnant, and the family's good reputation was in jeopardy. So her pregnancy was hushed up, and my mother, Gudrun, was ostracized from her family – against Grandma Else's will. All Grandma Else could do was to prevent Gudrun's biological father and his wife from adopting little Gudrun. Kurt died in 1939.

Gudrun was passed around. From one foster family to the next. At the age of six, she had a family she felt at home with. She even had a kind of brother who liked her very much. As a pilot in World War II, he sent her chocolate from the front for the traditional school cone she was given on her first day of school. Then his plane crashed into the sea when Germany invaded Norway, and he was never found. During the bombing raids on Leipzig, my great-grandparents' restaurant was completely destroyed. After the bombardment of Leipzig, Gudrun, in the meantime about ten, was sent back to her biological family who were now forced to live in rather cramped quarters. Gudrun wanted to be part of the family, but the others continued to shun her, and she had to live in the cold attic. At the age of 15, she began working at a machine factory. On 17 June, 1953, she took part in the worker's uprising in Leipzig. Meanwhile, the property with the bombed-out restaurant had been expropriated by the city and used for a transformer station.

After the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was founded, about three million young women and men left Leipzig or the country of East Germany for various reasons. My mother included. She had nothing left to lose in Leipzig either. Except for her homeland. While visiting a girlfriend who had already fled to West Germany, she spontaneously decided not to return home.

Her decision meant that she couldn't go back to Leipzig for many years.

Because in 1952, the East German government ended their liberal attitude which had been valid until then. Of course, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights continued to grant everyone *"the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country,"* but an unsuccessful attempt to "escape the German Democratic Republic" meant prison.

My mother started a new life in the West. But it wasn't until 1972 that she dared to visit the Leipzig Trade Fair. Border controls were no longer as strict. In 1976, we – my mother Gudrun, my sister and I – drove to Leipzig for the first time to visit family. Now all three of us slept in the cold attic. In 1986, my Grandmother Else died. Gudrun's aunts, Lore and Alice, thwarted her wish to attend the funeral in Gohlis.

When my mother drove with me and my sister to Leipzig in 1991 after the Wall came down, it became obvious how heavy the burden had been for her to be separated from her hometown. It made her very happy to be able to walk freely through the city. The nameplate

of her last foster family was still mounted in the hallway. But wild birch trees were now growing from her former bedroom. The city's renaissance was something she never experienced, she died in 1993 and is buried far away from Leipzig, in Pforzheim.

In the meantime, almost 120 years since my great-grandparents moved to Leipzig, the remaining members of that side of the family have died. The city's development, its growing prosperity after the turn of the previous century and the way the population kept decreasing up to 2010 are apparent both in my family history as well as in many other families. The city is home, a promise or a place of longing. It is the sum of every trace. Not all of them remain or are lastingly remembered.

This little story about Gudrun and her relationship to Leipzig only delays the original plan of my great-grandmother – in comparison to human history – by a little bit.

2021
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Kumharin
Hedyside

Eule nicht hier
Gruppe
schlafen
und Mahlen

Tiefenwasser
Der aus Juli 21
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0 - 0

Fortplanung durch ^{14 Goldenen} Zwang:
Es werden nur alle Sozialisten
aus dem Moskauer und der westl.
Organisationen entfernt aus der Partei
h. x. g. l. Durch Teilung von Est-
und Expaten sollen entsteht eine
neue Zwang *Austellung*

Fodyllung durch Sporeu:
Durch Enzymen werden
Sporen hergestellt. Die sporenen
Stadien von *Aspergillus* sind
eine Zelle in der Wirtszelle
in der Wirtszelle. Die Zelle
ist kleiner, dunkler und
sporenen mit der Zelle
verbunden. Live

Bestenfalls

Clauz

Friction / Heat Ducts

Handwritten work for the "Solve Me!" problem. It shows a grid of numbers and arrows indicating the sequence of operations. The grid is:

7	70	10+2
6	11	10+2
5	1+10	10+2
1	7+10	1+5
3	70	10+10
4	10+4	10+5

Arrows indicate the sequence of operations: 70 → 10+2 → 10+2 → 10+2 → 1+5 → 10+10 → 10+5 → 10+4 → 70 → 7+10 → 1+10 → 11 → 7.

Below the grid, the numbers 70, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10 are written, with arrows pointing to the corresponding numbers in the grid. The final result is 7.

Solve Me!

Luftwaffe

Stirze

Medusaide / Zeit / Lage /

Eutoderm

Fact # 4 Timefulness

The long history of the world and its deep time unfold gradually in intervals and rhythms that are reminiscent of music, writes the American professor of Geology Marcia Bjornerud. Describing a piece of music on the basis of the total number of measures would be like zeroing in on the age of the earth. “Without time, a symphony is a heap of sounds; the durations of notes and recurrence of themes give it shape.”

It is appealing to describe the connection between processes in nature and in music. Just as appealing as the longing to understand the reasons for the morphology of a particular landscape. When we succeed, she writes, it is as if a window is opened, illuminating a distant yet recognizable past – “almost like remembering something long forgotten. This enchants the world with layers of meaning and changes the way we perceive our place in it.”

Bjornerud essentially finds words of comfort for time in relation to deep time when she writes: “We may fervently wish to deny time for (various) reasons (...) (but) we diminish ourselves by denouncing our temporality. Bewitching as the fantasy of timelessness may be, there is far deeper and more mysterious beauty in timefulness.”

From. “Timefulness: How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save the World“, by Marcia Bjornerud. Princeton Univers. Press; Illustrated Edition (11. September 2018)



51°20'05.5"N 12°22'35.9"E // Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz, Leipzig

Fact #5 Revolutions of Soils

Shortly after the current interglacial warm period began, nomadic hunters roamed this region. They moved with the animals they hunted. Eventually about 7,000 years ago, when they first began to settle permanently in Leipzig, they had their eye on the soil: It was fertile, and its ridges offered protection from flooded wetlands. Using the flint stones they found in the riverbeds, humans invented and shaped stone axes. They domesticated animals, cleared forests and cultivated plants. The early settlement here already encompassed 90 hectares. Today we call this the Neolithic revolution, the transitional period from a nomadic lifestyle to one of agriculture and settlement.

As trade developed, people began to exchange goods with areas which were further away. Leipzig was located on a significant crossroad between east and west, north and south. More and more people were coming with new ideas. Technical devices were invented and implemented. Europe's first train connection was established between Leipzig and Dresden. Coal combustion generated the energy needed to establish a metropolis on Leipzig's soil. Karl Heine was the protagonist of this dynamic development. Industrious as he was, Heine made Leipzig attractive for industrial expansion by changing the course of rivers and annexing the marshlands on the western outskirts of Leipzig. During the Industrial Revolution, Leipzig's population grew from 150,000 in 1880 to 600,000 in 1920.

In the 20s, Leipzig seemed to be unleashed. Airships were being built, streets were electrified, more and more rural people kept moving to the city. Class distinctions were liberalized. Everything seemed possible. But inflation and the existential needs of large sections of the population were the downside of the Golden Twenties. Extremes flourished.

With the emergence of the Nazis, the meaning of soil took on a new significance as it was exploited for their "blood and soil ideology". Absurd criteria suddenly applied, for example, which people belonged on which soil, or who had the right at all to live on certain soil. Even after the war, the relevance of soil was still influenced by ideology. People's freedom of movement was suspended. The soils were permanently exploited, even radically poisoned to a certain extent. The first Leipzig demonstrations in the 80s were against the over-exploitation of the earth and against air pollution. They culminated in the peaceful revolution. As a result, lots of people emigrated. Today, we know that nearly 600,000 people are living on 297.6 square kilometres. But the political, ecological and social questions are still unanswered and how the next revolution will be called is still written in the stars.



Bowlingtreff 3, Ausstellung in der Westhalle von Bernhard Siegl

Fact # 6 A Man Digging

In one of his *Denkbilder* (Thought Figures) entitled *Excavation and Memory*, Walter Benjamin associates the act of remembering with an archaeologist's "excavation of the soil".

"Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as the earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. Above all, he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the "matter itself" is no more than the strata which yield their long-sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation. That is to say, they yield those images that, severed from all earlier associations, reside as treasures in the sober rooms of our later insights—like torsos in a collector's gallery. It is undoubtedly useful to plan excavations methodically. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark loam. And the man who merely makes an inventory of his findings, while failing to establish the exact location of where in today's ground the ancient treasures have been stored up, cheats himself of his richest prize. In this sense, for authentic memories, it is far less important that the investigator report on them than that he mark, quite precisely, the site where he gained possession of them. Epic and rhapsodic in the strictest sense, genuine memory must therefore yield an image of the person who remembers, in the same way a good archaeological report not only informs us about the strata from which its findings originate, but also gives an account of the strata which first had to be broken through."*

What are our "facts"? How Leipzig's soil became what it is? What its history has to do with our society? What it has to do with us and our future?

*Walter Benjamin: Thought Figures. *Excavation and Memory*, undated, ca. 1932



Bowlingtreff 4, Ausstellung Westhalle, fossile Seekuhknochen

Fact # 7 The Greywacke

Goldrutenweg (Golden Rod Lane) is hidden behind dense foliage. The sure-footed geologist Dr. Frank W. Junge leads the way. "Hardly anyone knows, but you can find one of the oldest sites in Leipzig here." The documentary filmmaker Niclas Middleton and I follow Dr. Junge through a construction barrier and gaze at a hollow full of magnificent nettles. The urban sounds can no longer be heard.

"Due to weathering, tiny bits and pieces no larger than a grain of sand broke off one of the original continents and were eventually washed out to sea – somewhere in the vicinity of today's Mediterranean – creating a sandy seabed which was gradually moulded into solid rock. It was then shoved northward by the continental drift, and, in the course of time, it folded itself upright. The greywacke now stands more than 100 metres above sea level. A completely different atmosphere prevailed over 600 million years ago with an oxygen content of 5-10% in comparison to 20% today. Back then it would have been impossible for us to survive."

We find out that this greywacke was not always above sea level as it is now. "65 million years ago, marine water came from the north and covered the greywacke with sea sand. During the brown-coal-bearing period, the beach of the prehistoric North Sea was located south of Leipzig. When the water receded northwards again, a primal forest similar to what we now find in the Amazon region grew and thrived. Here in Goldrutenweg the greywacke jutted upward like a so-called "inselberg". The remaining greywackes are located in other parts of Leipzig, partly 100 metres further underground. Nevertheless, on the whole, Leipzig's landscape is relatively flat. That's because sediment has been deposited here for 50 million years, but, at the same time, the rocky surface has been weathering for millions of years. So the only thing that juts out now is this little leftover inselberg."

From 1830 to 1890, the greywacke was used for building homes on a large scale. Around 1940, this little remaining hollow with the oldest rock in northern Saxony was declared a natural monument by the city of Leipzig and on behalf of the city's population. In the meantime, it is cordoned off with a construction fence. A new layer of sediment is threatening to accumulate. Citizens of Leipzig illegally dump their rubbish here, posing a new threat, a new form of sediment: anthropogenic rubbish.



Bowlingtreff 5, Performance mit Mark Polscher, Annett Sawallisch, Installation Thomas Goerge

Fact # 8 Maximilian Speck von Sternburg and Karl Heine

Towards the end of the 15th century, nearly 8,000 people were already living along the banks of the three rivers Pleisse, Elster and Parthe which were abound with fish. Since the most recent ice age, loam, clay and sand had been accumulating on the embankments and were used as raw materials for the early settlements.

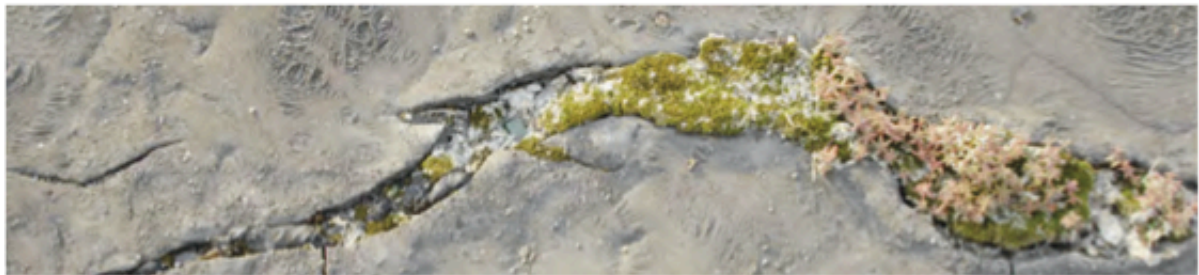
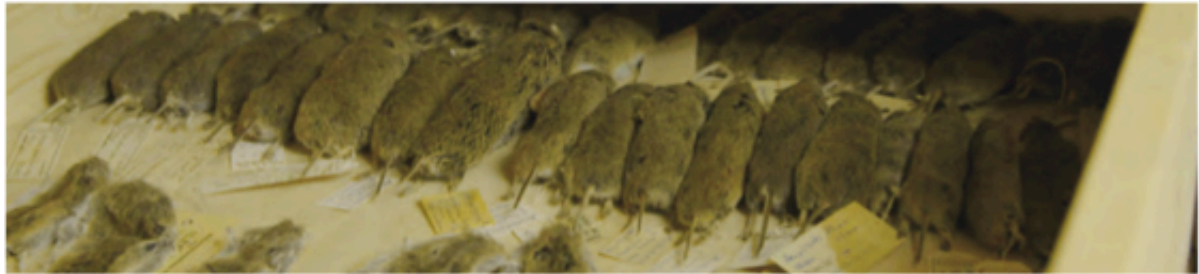
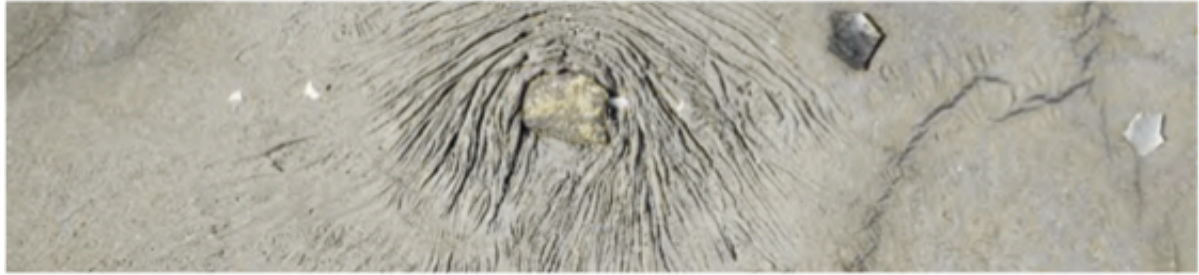
During the Middle Ages, nature was important for cultivating grain outside the city walls. But it also instilled fear in human beings and commanded their respect.

In the 18th century, residents of Leipzig who had grown wealthy as traders in a city renowned for its trade fair started designing French-style gardens outside the city's gates. However, those lush plots of land had nothing to do with agriculture. In fact, they were modelled after the gardening culture of the princes and served to demonstrate their position of power: axes, swaying flowers and borders spread across several terraces.

In 1822, Maximilian Speck von Sternburg bought Lützschena Estate northwest of Leipzig and transformed it into a park. He wanted a garden landscape that educated people, one that was alluring and that also experimented with horticulture. Furthermore, he posed economic challenges to the land. He applied the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: no more walls, no hedges, an unhindered view and the bond between nature and house. Two statues stood at the entrance to the park: "Virgo" and "Chronos" as a reminder of life's fleeting nature from youth to old age and humankind's inherent embeddedness in nature.

After 1871, the soils were changed with the full force of machines: expansion, restructuring, growth and utilisation with no consideration for the balance between creation and design.

Something Karl Heine stood for more than any other person in Leipzig.



Bowlingtreff 6, Stills aus der Videoinstallation von Niclas Reed Middleton

Fact #9 Gottfried Herder's Question for the Future in 237 Years

When Gottfried Herder published his chief work in the 18th century, "Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man", he described the virtues of humankind: "...geographically, or climatically, we find Nature intended mankind to be neighbourly beings, dwelling together, and imparting to each other climatic warmth, and other benefits, as well as the plague, diseases, and climatic vices."

But Herder doubted whether that would work: "We may consider mankind, therefore, as a band of bold though diminutive giants, gradually descending from the mountains, to subjugate the earth, and change climates with their feeble arms. How far they are capable of going in this respect futurity will show."

His book was first published on 23 April, 1784.

Today is the future of Herder's world: 237 years after Herder's questions for the future were put in print. What answers do we have in the meantime?

Rosspatz (square) was described as desolate and barren over 200 years ago. It served as an open field of fire in case the city were ever under siege.

Today there is still an open field on the same spot at Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz, the result of a war.

After more than 70 years, plans have finally been submitted for developing the site. In the year 2029, the new Natural History Museum will open at the former transformer station, at the former Bowlingtreff.

Gottfried Herder's question about what the band of diminutive giants has achieved in regard to the climate remains unanswered. It is, however, the most urgent question of all.



Bowlingtreff 7, vlnr: Annett Sawallisch, Victoria Findley, Michaela Henze, Emily Huber, Mark Polscher, Stefanie Garbade, Viviane Griesche, Michael Oswald, Holger Freund, Anke Völkner, Uwe Gössel, Bernhard Siegl, Jakob Tornau, Thomas Goerge, Niclas Reed Middleton

Fact #10 Bowling Ball and Globe (Earth Ball)

24 years ago the Bowlingtreff was shut down. The balls only rolled here for ten years. Where are they now? Nobody really knows. But the world never loses anything. They must be somewhere. Most of the bowling balls are probably lying around in cellars, cupboards or in attics, or they were pulverised, incinerated or cut up into microscopic bits. Perhaps numerous bowling balls are being decomposed by microbes in waste dumps. But we will never be able to know for sure.

What we do know: The bowling ball in the performance is not from here. We don't know exactly how old it is either. At the moment all we know is that it weighs 4.5 kilos, and it costs 30 euros on Ebay. We don't know which bowling alley it rolled down in the past. But we can say with certainty that it sidespins. It has a so-called reactive core that makes the bowling ball curve down the lane. Just like the earth.

It also sidespins slightly while moving around the sun. As a result, we have alternating cold and warm periods in our part of the world.

That is something we all know today. And we assume we know a lot more than the first settlers. But what of it? What does each of us know about the soils? Do we really know more than the Neolithic settlers who made Leipzig their home 7,000 years ago? And what will people know about us in 100 years?

All we know is that this bowling ball weighs 4.5 kilos, we don't know where it will roll.

Credits:

Production “Boden.Treff.Leipzig”

Artistic Team

Thomas Goerge (Installation)
Uwe Gössel (Artistic Director, Text and Performance)
Niclas Reed Middleton (Video Installation)
Mark Polscher (Composition and Performance)
Annett Sawallisch (Performance)
Bernhard Siegl (Installation and Design)
Brian Völkner (Performance and Choir)

Citizens Choir

Victoria Findlay, Holger Freund, Stefanie Garbade, Viviane Griesche, Michaela Henze, Emily Huber, Michael Oswald, Matthias Präg and Anke Völknerer

Video Projection

Stefan Pfaffe

Production Manager

Elisa Calosi

Production Assistant

Emily Huber

Technical Assistant

Jakob Tornau

Graphic Design

makena plangrafik

Public Relations

Yven Augustin

Leipzig Natural History Museum

Director

Dr. Ronny Maik Leder

Project Manager New Concept/New Building

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Schauspiel Leipzig

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