# VOLUNTEER

## Wie kann ich helfen?

Chemnitz

2025

OUR VOLUNTEER REPORTS FOR 2025


THE UNSEEN

# OUR VOLUNTEER REPORTS FOR 2025

Chemnitz European Capital of Culture 2025

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# Forewords

**Dear Volunteers,**
**When you look back at the European Capital of Culture 2025, it is the people who stand out above all else: they have taken on responsibility and, through their personal commitment, have helped shape and support this year.**

Your contributions went far beyond just occasional support — it was you who took on key roles in this major European project, and especially in this major Chemnitz project, thereby contributing significantly to the success of the Capital of Culture throughout the entire region.

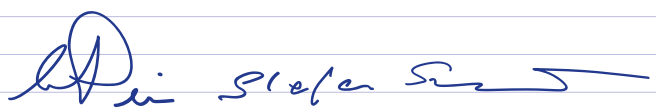
Feedback from the "full-time" Chemnitz2025 team, from project managers, and from partners in the city, the region, and internationally has consistently highlighted how reliably, thoughtfully, and solution-oriented your outstanding volunteer work has been. Whether in visitor management, supporting international delegations, at the intersection of logistics, communication, and programming, or in handling on-site challenges — your efforts have set standards that will have an impact far beyond the year 2025.

The fact that 1,300 volunteers completed around 45,000 hours across 10,000 assignments is not just an impressive figure, but a testament to a commitment that carried the entire spirit of the Capital of Culture year. Many of you took on responsibilities that went far beyond what is traditionally associated with volunteer work. You ensured quality, shaped the atmosphere, and, with your knowledge and attitude, played a key role in ensuring that guests from Europe and around the world experienced Chemnitz as a professional, open, and modern host city.

The reports in this brochure not only share personal experiences — they also document the processes, procedures, and collaborations that were made possible by you. They highlight how deeply you were involved in the daily decision-making processes and how naturally you embraced the challenges that a project of this scale entails.

This year has demonstrated the potential inherent in well-structured, well-supported, and seriously taken volunteer work. We want to carry this potential forward together — into the urban community, into new projects, and into the region's cultural and event landscape.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone – not only for your dedication, but also for your professionalism, your willingness to take on responsibility, and the spirit with which you helped shape 2025.



Andrea Pier, Stefan Schmidtke
Management of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH

**What a year we've had! A year that will hold a special place in our city's history — marked by encounters, ideas, emotions, pride, and a strong sense of community. In 2025, Chemnitz was the European Capital of Culture.**

Many people contributed to this: project teams and planners, artists and technicians, tour guides, restaurateurs, hoteliers, bus drivers, media professionals, the citizens of our city, and many others. They all helped ensure that Chemnitz could present itself to the world just as we have long experienced our city: open, creative, and warm — characterized by a unique blend of down-to-earthness and a spirit of renewal.

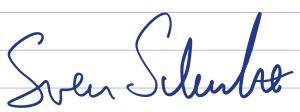
But none of this would have happened without our 1,300 volunteers — my thanks go to you! With your dedication, your time, and your enthusiasm, you had a decisive impact on the Capital of Culture year. You welcomed guests, assisted at events, set things up, provided information, and helped wherever support was needed. You were simply always there. This commitment was the heart of our Capital of Culture — and carried the year 2025.

In the process, far more emerged than just a successful year of events. New initiatives have grown, neighbourhoods have drawn closer together, and creative ideas have become visible far beyond the city limits. Chemnitz was experienced and perceived anew — by many guests, but also by ourselves.

Perhaps this very sense of togetherness is the most valuable legacy of this year: the conviction that we can shape our city together. The confidence that change is possible when many people get involved, share ideas, and take responsibility.

Let us preserve this spirit — the joy of making a difference, the courage to embrace new ideas, and the awareness that sustainable development stems from commitment and solidarity.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who made this special year possible, who shaped the image of our Capital of Culture through their dedication.



Sven Schulze
Mayor of the City of Chemnitz

# 18 Jan 2025 Our wonderful and fantastic experiences on the opening day

My day began on Saturday morning with an exciting programme showcase in the Stadthalle.

Our shift started shortly after ten o'clock. Unfortunately the security team had to check every corner of the Stadthalle very carefully due to a bomb threat. The atmosphere leading up to the official opening was electric; there was a palpable tension in the air as many people were eager to see what was in store for them.

After my first shift as a volunteer, it was time for a quick change of clothes. My wife and I got dressed up and went to the opera together. We had a limited time slot between 2.00 and 2.15 pm to get in. Martina Schneider, Hanna Skovgaard-Sörensen and we were invited on behalf of all the volunteers.

The celebratory programme began punctually at 4 pm, starting with the scene “The Study” from Goethe's “Faust”. Afterwards, Mayor Mr Schulze gave a very good introductory speech. This was followed by the wonderful songs “Kiss of Fire” and “Meeting on the Ocean”, before Federal President Mr Steinmeier gave the second successful speech of the evening. Minister-President Mr Kretschmer rode onto the stage on a diamond bicycle and had an excellent conversation with the presenter about the opportunities of the Capital of Culture and the region. After an impressive performance of “The World Enjoys a Rendezvous”, Mrs Claudia Roth, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture, was interviewed. The Robert Schumann Philharmonic Orchestra continued to accompany the afternoon with some great pieces. Finally, the European Commissioner for Culture, Mr Glen Micallef, spoke before the evening was wonderfully rounded off with “The James Bond Theme” and Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

Mr Micallef presented the City of Chemnitz and Europäische Kulturhauptstadt Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH with the Melina Mercouri Award, which comes with a prize of 1.5 million euros. The ceremony was accompanied by wonderful films about Chemnitz and the surrounding area.

For us, it was a very successful opening ceremony with lots of great moments, for example the greeting of our Mayor by an eleven-year-old girl, but also contributions with a certain humour and a twinkle in the eye, as in the song “In Chemnitz am Sonntag um 4”.

Another unforgettable moment for us was seeing the Federal President, the EU Commissioner and our Minister President sign the Golden Book of the City of Chemnitz. After a short get-together, we then enjoyed the open-air show in front of the Karl Marx Monument. Our Federal President, Mr Steinmeier, opened the Capital of Culture year with a short welcome address.

The one-hour show was entertaining and very amusing.

It was a cheerful atmosphere. Whether spectator or guest of honour, everyone enjoyed the outdoor event.

For us, the performances of the Philharmonic Orchestra on the rooftops and the musician Fritz Kalkbrenner were the highlights of the show. The opening ceremony was perfectly complemented by an impressive light show. All in all, it was a moving day full of unforgettable impressions and moments that will certainly not be repeated any time soon.

Authors:
Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



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# 18 Jan 2025 Deployment in the Hartmannfabrik for the opening

Today is Wednesday, 22 January 2025, and it's been four days since the opening of the Capital of Culture. My voice sounds normal again and I'm back to my everyday life, which wasn't easy after such a weekend. The enthusiasm was great and I could have gone on like this for a few more days.

But right from the start. I had signed up to receive the guests at the Hartmannfabrik, starting at 10.00 a.m. on Saturday and finishing at 4.00 p.m. on Saturday. When I got there, after registering at Schmidtbank of course, there wasn't that much going on yet. I had the impression that there were mainly guests who had already travelled from further away on Friday and wanted to find out what Chemnitz has to offer as the Capital of Culture. This had the advantage that I had a lot of time for the questions and requests of our visitors and was also able to present the Hartmannfabrik and its history in detail. For example, there was a couple from Hamburg who were very interested, asked a lot of questions and were very impressed. Before they made their way to the city centre, they assured me that they definitely wanted to visit the city again in 2025. Or a journalist from Heidelberg, who repeatedly emphasised that her image of Chemnitz after this first visit differed from the image that had been communicated to the public in the past. She wanted to write a positive text about a city that presented itself in an impressive way. I would have loved to hug her, I was so happy to hear her praise.

It went on like this in a pleasant way and I began to like the day more and more.

And then it was just before midday and things really got going! You could tell from the dialects which train had just stopped at the main station: a group of Franconians from Hof or Nuremberg conquered the hall and our hearts with their interest, half an hour later you could hear the Saxony-Anhalt dialect. They came from Halle, Magdeburg or Halberstadt and left with the last sentence on their lips: “We absolutely have to come back again!”

When Matthias patted me on the shoulder and told me that food and drinks were ready for us, I realised that quite a lot of time had passed since breakfast. But eating now and perhaps missing guests? No, that was out of the question! It was all far too exciting for that! And there were so many people that there was a queue at the entrance to the hall.

I ended up eating a sandwich after all, very tasty by the way! And when my service ended at 4.00 pm, I felt like I was on cloud nine with happiness at being able to share such an event with so many others. I was also relieved that the figure of 80,000 guests on this day would perhaps not remain a utopia after all. I kept asking newly arrived volunteers whether there was already a lot going on in the city centre. And when my husband, also a volunteer, turned up and confirmed this, my happiness knew no bounds!

I didn't go home, but started my second shift at the information container, where I was able to continue answering our guests' questions and requests with others until 10.00 pm. On Sunday we finished up by handing out flyers on the Neumarkt, informing people and asking them about their impressions and experiences.

And now you're probably no longer surprised that my voice sounded a bit hoarse for three days!

Author:
Andrea Oelsner

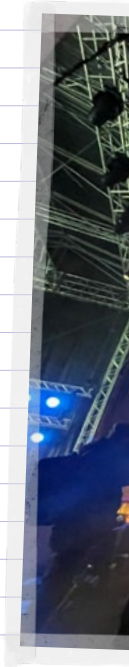



Andrea Oelsner

# 18 Jan 2025 Deployment as a stand-in and in the emergency team for the opening of the Capital of Culture year

I arrived at the Chemnitz 2025 office in the former Schmidtbank around midday on 18 January, the day of the opening, and there was already a hustle and bustle of volunteers there. On this day, the Chemnitz 2025 office served as the "volunteer centre" and a retreat for breaks and catering. Accreditation on site went quickly, wristbands on my wrist and Dirk, the head of the volunteer programme, arrived with the first assignment for me as a "jumper". There was still time for a game of "Capital of Culture-Name-Land" with well-known volunteers. I was given Colin, a debut volunteer on his very first assignment, and we were told to go to the Nischel stage, the big stage for the opening show at the Karl Marx Monument. Once there, two volunteers were waiting for us for the handover/task. The task was to clear the stage of snow/ice and moisture. However, the sunshine had already cleared the stage of all moisture, so our task was now to make it "broom clean". So broom at hand, off we went! After the job was done and we had taken a few photos of the Nischel, we waited a while and asked whether we were still needed on site. We were no longer needed, so we went back to the Chemnitz 2025 office to be deployed for another stand-in task.

On the way, we received the message via the pilot community that we were expected behind the Parteifalte, the office building behind the big stage, for "technification" with additional reinforcements. Due to various demos taking place at the same time, we had to go straight there. Bea and Bernd reinforced our small team, the four of us were given radios and a briefing on an overview map with a zone marked in red, which became our task. The planned "drone ballet" needed a certain flight radius within the red zone. According to the map, we were to report people who were in the red zone to air traffic control via radio at four points so that air traffic control could respond. If one of the aircraft crashed, there was a risk of an accident, which we wanted to avoid. "Please be at your assigned points by 6.30 pm." "Ok, all right." We decided to use the open time slot of one hour for a break/strengthening, so off we went to the Chemnitz 2025 office. We watched the livestream of the ceremony in the opera house, accompanied by a potato soup and a cup of coffee. 6.20 pm, we returned as a team to our pre-selected positions behind the party fold. Reinforced by teams from security, who politely delegated people around the red zone, our deployment became very easy. When the message came over the radio that the planned action could be postponed or even cancelled, we stayed on site until, unfortunately, the announcement came that the planned drone ballet could not be started due to a technical fault.





Danny Kollwitz

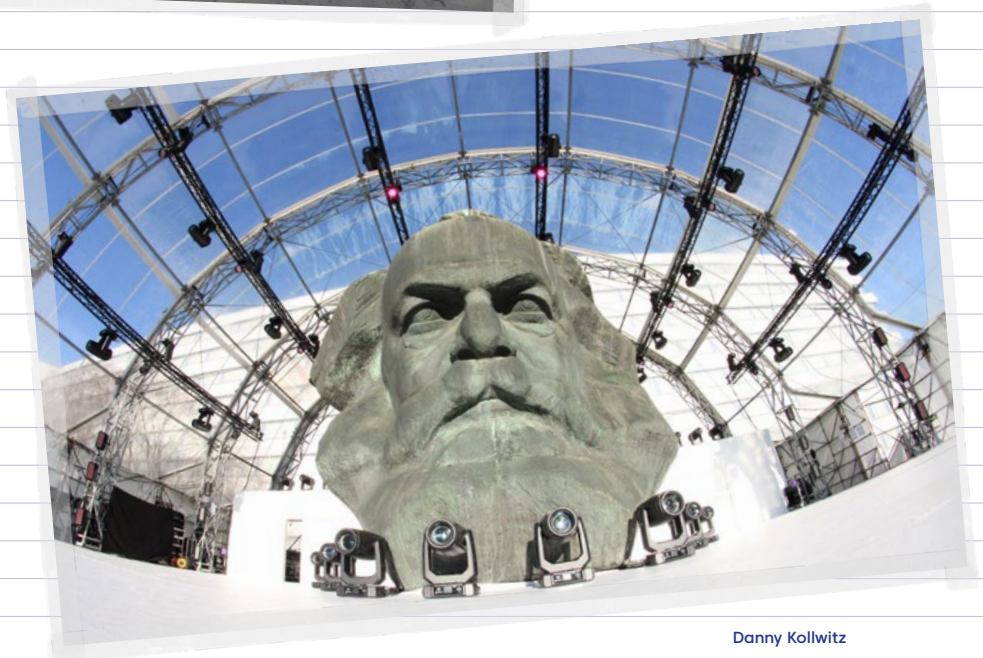
We were all disappointed by the cancellation. Well — that's life!

A little later, I got the message that all the pilots should gather at 9.00 pm on the Nischel stage for the photo session. The photo was then taken with all the people who were involved in the opening day, such as the police, stage crew, our volunteer leader Dirk, the programme director Andreas Schmidtke and colleagues from Chemnitz-2025 and many more. A few of the pilots were now in a party mood and we went as a small group to the rave on the market square, where my assignment was coming to an end. A crazy, unexpectedly wonderful assignment.

Author: Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz

## 18 and 19 Jan 2025

# The (Trans)Formable

The opening of the visitor and information centre in the Hartmannfabrik was one of the highlights of the opening weekend of the Capital of Culture year Chemnitz 2025.

I deliberately chose to volunteer on 18 and 19 January 2025.

Since the handover of the restored building from the landlord to the Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH on 3 May 2024, I too had been wondering how the listed building would be used as a visitor and information centre for the public from January 2025.

Many Chemnitz residents and their guests made their way to Fabrikstraße 11 on 18 January. The entrance doors were opened at 10 a.m. on the dot. It didn't take long for the hall to be filled to capacity, just like on 3 May 2024. Probably for security reasons, security staff briefly stopped the 400 visitors from entering the Hartmannfabrik. People were able to look around in peace.

Families, friends and guests of the city used the now hundredfold-used frame with the slogan “C the Unseen” to take photos. Chemnitz residents and guests waited patiently at the information desk to purchase the Chemnitz 2025 programme book for EUR 10. The generously designed cloakroom in the hall was sometimes used as a changing room. After all, the T-shirts, jumpers and baseball caps with the “C the Unseen” logo offered for sale in the merchandise were designed to fit perfectly.

Key rings, mugs, umbrellas, cloth bags and much more are also part of the range. Programme books and merchandise can of course also be purchased online.

Matthias Vogel, the experienced reception manager, would not have been able to cope with the rush of visitors without the support of friendly and competent staff from Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH. The staff of the volunteer programme team had also planned the deployment of us volunteers well. There was plenty to do. We supported the visitors by taking photos on the large photo frame with a click on their mobile phones.

Sufficient programme flyers were very popular and went like hot cakes. The flyer for the opening weekend programme was particularly popular. Our reference to the QR code on it for the survey on the Capital of Culture year met with great interest.

Grateful for all the new things that could be learnt on both sides, there were — as usual — interesting conversations between us volunteers and the visitors. It was not uncommon for things to get emotional.

An elderly woman from Chemnitz, for example, looked in the direction of the entrance to the Hartmannfabrik during our conversation. Her father used to stand at the lathe right there. She had often visited him at work as a child. Several visitors told us how they had got to the city centre. The buses and trams were as full as the “workers' transport” to Altchemnitz

or Siegmar back then. I immediately had an idea of how packed the crowds must have been in front of the stages in the centre. Juliane Jelinek proudly showed me her long cardigan with Chemnitz2025 logos. She had bought it several years ago in “Karls Kunsthaus”. The conversation with her and her mum was very pleasant. A man from Dresden had travelled with three women to see an artist he found interesting at the big opening party in the evening. A former Chemnitz resident had travelled from Hanover. She was accompanied by a local. Three ladies from Lugau, Chemnitz and Frankenberg helped themselves cheerfully at the bar. Equipped with plenty of flyers, the trio thanked us for our information. A woman from Bayreuth thanked me for — as she said — background information. I noticed a very large group of interested visitors on the morning of 18 January. I learnt that they were people from České Budějovice (Czech Republic), who have the year 2028 in mind for their Capital of Culture. They left with a lot of ideas and inspiration.

Speaking of gratitude. On 19 January in particular, the magic word “thank you” was heard remarkably often and mostly in connection with the words “we'll be back”. One explanation for this is certainly the work of the volunteers at the information stands and on the streets in the centre of the city. Competent, friendly and full of enthusiasm — that's what the volunteers are like. By the afternoon of 19 January at the latest, my idea of how the visitor and information centre would function was taking shape. The front part of the hall, with its information desk, huge cloakroom and, not to forget, a modern catering counter, was buzzing with visitors. The rear part of the hall was reserved for a conference with 100 participants from 2:00 p.m. The title: “And now? — Europe! Discussion: What can the Capital of Culture do in Chemnitz? #7”

Looking back and looking ahead to the coming years, the programme managers from Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024, Chemnitz 2025 and Wrocław 2016 entered into discussion.

The balance between events open to the public and ongoing visitor traffic will therefore be able to be maintained without disruption. More and more Chemnitz residents will be able to explain to their guests and the expected tourists what is behind the name “Hartmannfabrik”.

Author: Kristina Köhler




Kristina Köhler

## 23 Jan 2025 Tandem Learning Workshop

On 7 November, I will be taking part in the kick-off workshop at INSPIRE am Brühl. It's an offer for volunteers who want to brush up on their English language skills for successful contact with English-speaking visitors to the Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025.

As I enter, I am greeted by a friendly welcome in the familiar atmosphere of this culturally rich place. “Hello, I'm Luise — nice of you to come!” At a table, four young women introduce themselves as tandem partners who are organising and actively supporting the workshop as students at Chemnitz University; all around them are people of different ages, engaging in friendly conversation.

I find a free seat at one of the tables in the cosily furnished room with large windows overlooking Brühl Boulevard. Introductions, objectives, programme, outlook. There's a lot of laughter, we're all on the same wavelength.

After about two hours of relaxed exchange, the tandems say goodbye, armed with tips from the organisers, a small brochure with common phrases and good wishes for lively exchanges in the coming period. A few days later, I have an appointment with Guli from Uzbekistan and Andrea from Chemnitz in a bistro Am Wall, we chat about this and that over delicious Russian tea, and I even manage to slip a German word into my somewhat slurred English ;). Five meetings followed, all of which I really enjoyed, for example when I learnt interesting things about Guli's home country.



Over the weeks, I had many chances to practice my English, including using the language app a lot. (I even dreamed in English once! :)). From my point of view, the workshop was a great thing. I also found the interaction between younger and older people wonderfully unifying and enriching.

I would like to sincerely thank all those who created this opportunity to organise something together with so much joy and commitment. Capital of Culture Chemnitz2025 — here we come!

Author: Ilona Helena Richter




Marie Piefke

# 01 Feb 2025 Opening of the Makerhub and the winter village in the former car dealership

The opening of the Makerhub, including the event kitchen and winter village, on 1 February 2025 in Neukirchen/Erzgebirge was a wonderful event that captured people's hearts. For weeks, the residents of the community and from Chemnitz and the surrounding area had been eagerly awaiting this special event of the Capital of Culture Chemnitz.

Our shift started at 6 p.m., but we wanted to experience the exciting atmosphere beforehand. So we made our way to the Makerhub at 4:30 pm. Even from a distance, we could hear the rousing music and the enthusiastic voices of the visitors.

In front of and inside the Makerhub, numerous highlights were organised by local associations and clubs: The official opening of the event kitchen at 3:00 pm, followed by a performance by Tanz AG at 4:30 pm. The warmth and joy of the staff and the Managing Director of Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH, Stefan Schmidtke, who welcomed us, was palpable everywhere.

The children in particular got their money's worth: They were allowed to bake together with the mayor and representatives of the local council in the event kitchen. The live music and DJ created a wonderful atmosphere — from relaxed to exuberant party sounds in the evening.

There were lots of creative activities for the whole family, such as face painting, nail painting, marbles and a memory game organised by the Kulturhauptstadt Europas Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH. We were impressed by the huge number of visitors, which continued until the end of the event. There was laughter and celebration everywhere and the good humour was palpable. The weather also played along and contributed to the perfect atmosphere.

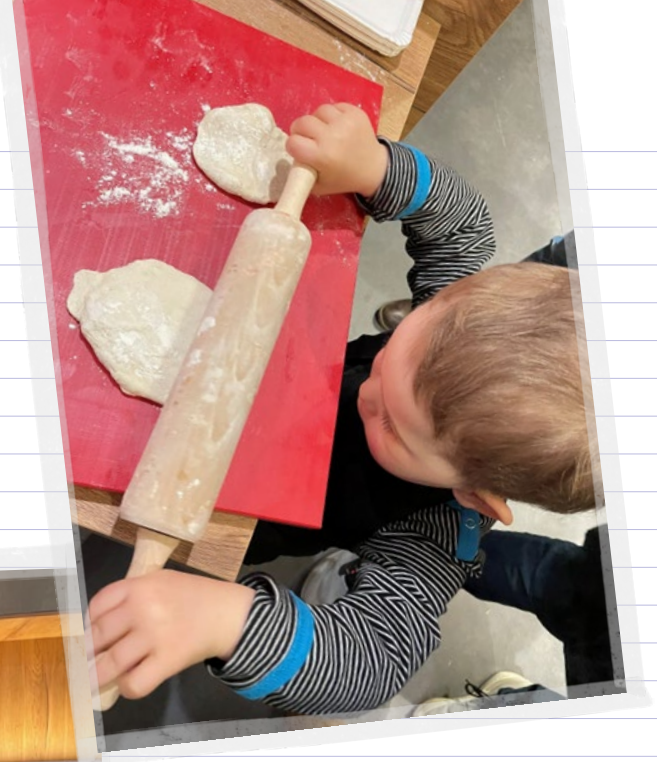
Our job was to bake and supervise the mini pizzas created by the children and adults in the oven. The pizza dough sponsored by Adorf's Viertel bakery tasted excellent and many members of the Neukirchen community as well as us volunteers lent a helping hand at the pizza stand. Mayor Mr Tham was everywhere and spread good cheer. Outside, live music with Mason's one-man band and DJ Egge rounded off the programme with mulled wine, beer and snacks.

Things quietened down around 9 pm as families with small children left in good spirits. At 10:15 pm we were bid a friendly farewell and everyone agreed:

This event was a great success for Neukirchen and for the Capital of Culture and will remain in our memories for a long time.

We are already looking forward to another highlight in 2025: the 48-hour cooking marathon at Makerhub Neukirchen from 15 to 18 August.

Authors:
Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern




private



Bodo von Wenckstern

# 11 Feb 2025 “Discovering cultural capitals — Europe on a visit” — New Year's reception of the Lord Mayor

“Hello Andrea, would you have the time and inclination to come along to the Mayor's reception at the Carlowitz Congress Centre Chemnitz?” The question comes from Bodo, a volunteer from the very beginning. I don't have to think long and say yes.

We meet at 4.30 pm on 11 February at the staff entrance to the Stadthalle and find out from Iris, an employee of the gGmbH, what tasks await us: looking after the information stand together with her, answering guests' questions about the Capital of Culture, banging the drum for our programme, distributing flyers. So nothing new for us “old hands”. So that we are visible to everyone present, we have of course put on our blue shirts again!

The first guests arrive around 5.00 p.m., chat to each other and one or two people pop in to see us before the ceremony in the hall begins punctually at 6.00 p.m. Curious as we are, we stand at the entrance and have a look at the programme that the “Dancing Neighbours”, another Capital of Culture project, are performing at that very moment. I am thrilled by this performance, which impressively demonstrates the togetherness of old and young. Unfortunately, we soon have to vacate our seats and the doors are closed.

Contrary to my expectations, the time until the end of the programme in the auditorium flies by with conversations on the topic that occupies all three of us: Capital of Culture! Then the doors open and things really get going from 7.30 pm. We approach the invited guests, hand out flyers, answer questions and receive a lot of praise for our voluntary work.

And I would like to take this opportunity to pass on this praise to all the volunteers, who now number almost 1000! We are seen and our work is recognised! I met and spoke to some interesting people that evening, including the treasurer of our city, Ralf Burkhardt, and the mayor for construction, Michael Stötzer. When do you ever get the chance to do that?

At the very end, I had a wonderful experience: one of the guests, unfortunately I don't know his name, sang a song for us! That was a “goosebump moment” that I won't forget in a hurry!

Author: Andrea Oelsner

Bodo von Wenckstern




Andrea Oelsner




private



# 05 Mar 2025 Assignment at Chemnitz Peace Day

Peace Day took place in Chemnitz on March 5, 2025. A large memorial and action area was set up on Neumarkt, including “DemokratieStützPunkt Chemnitz” (Democracy Base Chemnitz).

As many people are talking about the threat to democracy, I, of course, took part in the DemokratieStützPunkt. Here, visitors could take part in a survey on what they understand by democracy and what is needed for democratic coexistence. They were able to record their answers on boards. These will be collected and evaluated by the Chemnitz Peace Day working group and published at a later date. Supporters were also able to obtain stickers and coasters.

Since the last Peace Day in 2024, many new banners with messages of peace have been created during workshops at various schools. These were also presented at the Neumarkt for Peace Day.

The following exhibitions were also included this year: “C the diversity — Colorful chairs for diversity”, “History construction site Chemnitz: March 1933 to March 1945” and a small exhibition by Greek photojournalist Wassilis Aswestopoulos called “Democracy and Culture”.

There was also a stage on which music, lectures, interviews and actions – all on the subject of peace, reconciliation and democracy — in our city and worldwide — took place.

After two hours, my assignment was over. I had many conversations with visitors about democracy and peace. I was given homemade yeast pastries by Etelka Kobuß, the city of Chemnitz's migration officer, as a gift of gratitude. Thank you once again for that!

Author: Sophie Behrendt



Sophie Behrendt




Sophie Behrendt

# 21 and 22 Mar 2025 After the opening is before the opening

I thought 'too late' when I wanted to sign up as a volunteer for the opening of the Chemnitz Garage Campus. The volunteer shifts on offer were already full. “No big deal. Taking part as a visitor is also something!” It was a good thing that the organisers had booked enough parking spaces on the Chemnitz Messe exhibition grounds for 21 and 22 March 2025. A shuttle bus shuttled incessantly between the trade fair centre and the garage campus during the two days of the festival.

The programme for the opening of the Garage Campus on Zwickauer Strasse was to be colourful, varied, entertaining and informative. It immediately brought back memories of the grand opening of the Capital of Culture year in January 2025. Except for the size of the event area. Here, the January weekend had the edge. Although — with 30,000 square metres of garage campus, this CVAG site is probably the largest of the 30 intervention areas next to the old Stadtwirtschaft. I didn't realise that. Over the decades, I had only noticed the administration building with the clock tower at the Kappel “tram station”.

The tram museum is of course part of the garage campus. It has been housed in the former depot since 2002. Various trams and buses from all eras of Chemnitz tram history are exhibited here. Incidentally, one or two “Ikarus” buses will play an important role in one of the next projects in the Capital of Culture programme. My recommendation: make sure you get your tickets! It's worth it.

**21 March 2025, first day of the opening**

I had to be patient with other people waiting to get in until 6.00 pm. The official opening of the Garage Campus was planned for 5.30 pm and reserved for invited guests.

Shortly after 6.00 pm, I headed straight for the main workshop — i.e. the big stage. The programme had already started. Musicians, singers, dancers and athletes took turns. The audience applauded enthusiastically. The atmosphere couldn't have been better.

“Culture arrives — CVAG” could be read on the attractively designed stage set. Aptly formulated. I liked it — the slogan. As soon as the programme was over, I was drawn to the neighbouring Alte Lackiererei.

A panel discussion had already begun. Conny Hartmann (moderator) was still introducing the participants. The General Director of the Chemnitz Art Collections, Dr Florence Thurmes, the city guide Ramona Wagner, also known as Bertha Hartmann, the Mayor of Culture Dagmar Ruscheinsky and the Mayor of Amtsberg, Mr Krause, together with two other guests, addressed the topic of “How will the Chemnitz intervention areas become part of the cultural landscape after 2025?” The talk was relaxed, informative and popular with the audience. There was no shortage of humour. Like me, many listeners probably had one or two aha moments. People not only want to realise their own ideas in the Garage Campus in 2025, but also

beyond. The message of this talk has been doing the rounds ever since. New opportunities are opening up for all those who have not yet had their projects approved. This location will continue to thrive on the active participation of Chemnitz citizens.

**22 March 2025, second day of the opening**

I definitely didn't want to miss the sign language choir Monael & Friends. It worked. Listening to the song “Seite an Seite” by Christina Stürmer and seeing the choir signing at the same time was impressive. The deaf amateur artists received their well-deserved applause not by clapping their hands as usual, but by raising and turning their hands. The presenter had pointed out this special feature before the formation's performance. Music, sport and dance also dominated the programme on this day. Dirty Dancing, Udo Lindenberg and even a Chemnitz dance were honoured. The Köhler-Schimmel dance school, known across generations, delighted the audience with their choreographies. Speaking of Chemnitz dance and Chemnitz song. If my perception doesn't deceive me, there are several of them. I also discovered two podcasts on the net. You could organise them, choose THE Chemnitz song and have it danced to. Sorry — just an idea. Sorry again. Maybe I've missed something?

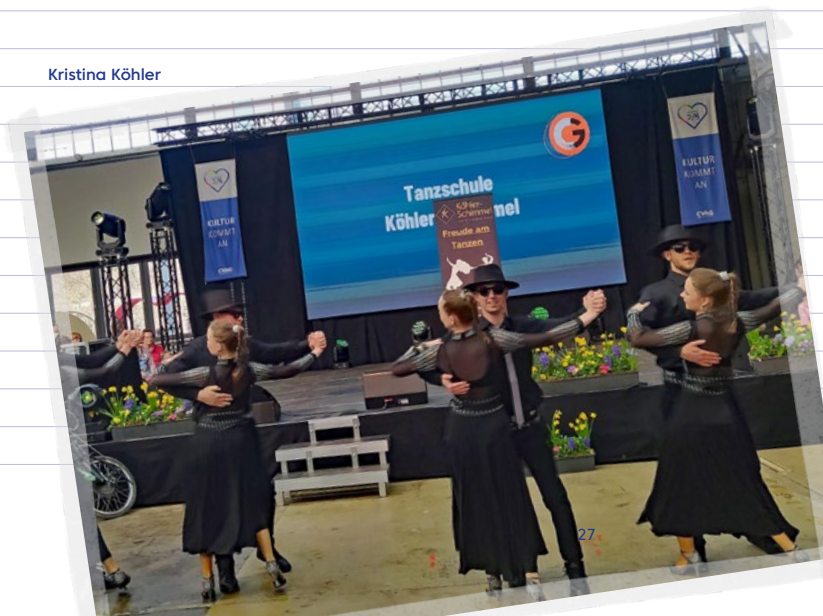
I used the rest of the afternoon to take a closer look at the hustle and bustle on the barrier-free site. There were plenty of offers for the physical well-being. A tram carriage that had been converted into a disco provided a great atmosphere. Younger visitors had fun with face painting and arts and crafts. The creative workshop was a hive of activity.

In the evening, I wandered through the tram museum again on my way to the exit gate. Selfie after selfie was taken. Children young and old operated the hand-operated bells on “my” line 8 without interruption. My journey to school had started at Weststraße in the early 1960s and ended for me at the Kaßberg slip road. Line 8 continued to Ebersdorf and — of course — back again.

I must have been distracted by memories for too long. The last shuttle bus was gone. Bad luck. I was late again.

Author: Kristina Köhler

Kristina Köhler



# 25 Mar 2025 Welcome! How can I help you? — Our assignments at the Hartmannfabrik

We have now completed several volunteer assignments, sometimes together, sometimes each in our own area of interest. So far, we have particularly enjoyed our assignments at the Hartmannfabrik. You get really close to the visitors here.

It's so exciting to look at the faces of the guests as they enter the visitor centre. Curiosity, amazement, expectation and sometimes scepticism as to whether their needs can really be met are reflected in people's eyes. They come from Chemnitz, the surrounding area and from all over Germany. All age groups are represented. And what a pleasure it is on both sides when the question “How can I help you?” leads to a conversation! The visitors eagerly absorb the information, try out the merchandise products, collect brochures and tips, have their photo taken ... And the volunteer? He/she enjoys a smile, friendly eyes, appreciative comments about our work and the feeling that the recommendations are gladly accepted. And what's really great? When visitors are enthusiastic about the city, praise its cleanliness (which sometimes brings a quiet smile from us, we know “our dirty corners”), marvel at the architectural features and also tell us with a smile that it is sometimes difficult to understand the locals, i.e. in terms of language.

By the time we say goodbye, our scepticism has turned into delight at an interesting stay, we have absorbed a lot of information about the Hartmannfabrik and the Capital of Culture projects and made plans for the near and distant future.

And the next guest is already waiting. A warm welcome! How can I help you?

Authors: Sylvia and Reimund Gottschall




Moritz Mahltig



Peter Rossner

## 26 Mar 2025 Surprising encounters

As usual, the first stop on 26 March 2025 was the bakery. Giving cinema-goers a little refreshment is already a tradition.

Many people were already waiting outside the Metropol Chemnitz cinema to get in. The monthly cinema morning, which takes place on the last Wednesday, is primarily aimed at the interests of older people. The “Team Generation” of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH and the Metropol Chemnitz cinema are the initiators of this film series. The programme included the comedy “Toni and Helene”.

What is this film about? Helene, a once celebrated theatre diva, lives in seclusion in a retirement home. At well over 80 and diagnosed with a terminal illness, she has already organised an appointment for euthanasia. By chance, Helene meets Toni, a pragmatic bon vivant. The initial dislike between the two involuntary roommates slowly gives way to a “pretty good” friendship and soon the unlikely duo are sitting in a stately vintage car and driving towards Switzerland. The fact that Toni doesn't have a driving licence, but the two arrive safe and sound at a hospice in Zurich, provides plenty of material for satire, drama, turbulence and tests of endurance. Toni and Helene do things that, according to the cliché, older ladies “normally” don't do. Their actions come dangerously close to minor offences, if not criminal offences. In one scene, Helene shouts loudly and insistently to a policewoman: “It's not a criminal offence to be older, but it's very, very difficult.”

After the screening, I wanted to talk to cinema-goers as usual. Nothing came of it. A young man came up to me. He invited me to talk to his vocational students. Mr Radtke, a teacher at WBS Schulen gGmbH Chemnitz, and his students wanted to hear my opinion on the film from the perspective of a pensioner. Questions such as: “What challenges do you face as a pensioner? What is it like to get older? What is the meaning of life? What about euthanasia? How do you want to die?” were to be discussed.

I did feel a little uneasy going into the class. It later turned out that my worries were unfounded. After completing their apprenticeship, the future social assistants will be able to start their careers in the care sector as well as other areas. Giggling, smirking, disinterest or rejection — none of this was noticeable during the conversation.

I didn't want to go alone after all. I looked for reinforcements. Heike Steege, a volunteer over 60, agreed.

On the ninth of April, the time had come. At the beginning of the discussion round, the young people described their impressions of the film. My fellow campaigner and I spoke openly about our thoughts. For example, each of us talked about how we had felt and dealt with the deaths we had experienced in our private lives.

Mr Radtke moderated the event skilfully and thoughtfully. The discussion did not stop at the questions and topics suggested in the invitation. We exchanged questions and perspectives from the other generation in a relaxed and informal manner.

The two hours passed too quickly. Many questions remained unasked.

Author: Kristina Köhler

Peter Rossner







Peter Rossner

# 31 Mar 2025 165 different varieties of apple trees

On 31 March 2025, the “living neighbourhood” team invited people to the “Aufbruch” planting festival in the city park. A planting event for all people who would like to plant an apple tree. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind to us on this day, it was either pouring out of buckets or it was pouring with rain. The Living Neighbourhood team reckoned that maybe 40 trees would be planted because of the weather. My work began at 4 p.m. when project coordinator Tina Langklotz said: “You can plant one of the last two trees and then we're done. I learnt that, shortly after the opening, groups from Volkswagen and Deutsche Post and volunteers were already hard at work. Wow!!! Chemnitz!!!

All volunteers received a video tutorial by email before the planting campaign in which Dr. Julia Naunin briefly introduces the “Living Neighbourhood” project, and plant expert Mr. Rainer Amme explains step by step how to plant an apple tree. I took my little tree to one of the remaining planting holes that had been dug in advance.

First, I put the vole basket in with some substrate, then the sapling, pressing the vole basket together a little so that the root is protected. Next, fill the planting hole with substrate and soil. Now the tree is fixed to the pre-drilled stake with a certain knotting technique, which unfortunately I can't put into words. That's it. A few volunteers were busy with the so-called volcano crater, the last step. This is a small earth wall around the trunk.

All the remaining volunteers packed their tents, benches and shovels into the transport vehicle and a very rainy day came to an end.

Author: Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz




Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz

# 02 Apr 2025 A day with five Italian journalists

On 2 April 2025, I had the pleasure and honour of accompanying five Italian journalists to Chemnitz. I had the perfect partner at my side: Peter Strauss, a German who was born in Chemnitz but speaks excellent Italian.

Peter and I arrived at the hotel on time and met Michela Nicolussi Moro, a journalist from the “Corriere della Sera”, one of the most important national daily newspapers. Michela doesn't look like a typical Italian, she spoke to me in perfect German. Shortly afterwards, Maria Grazia Leporati arrived, the eldest of the group, who writes for three important national newspapers. Margherita Grotta was the youngest in the group and speaks fluent English. She writes for a travel website aimed mainly at families. As I know my way around her field, I knew what was important to her and asked two particularly well-informed counsellors ;-), Teresa (5 years) and Aurelia (9 years), which sights in Chemnitz are particularly popular with children and young people. I was happy to pass on this information. Margherita was immediately enthusiastic and very grateful. Giovanni Bosi, another guest in Chemnitz, is editor-in-chief of the “Turismo Italia” portal, which mainly specialises in tourism. And then there was Domenico Vita, who works in television and publishes programmes on “Canale Italia”.

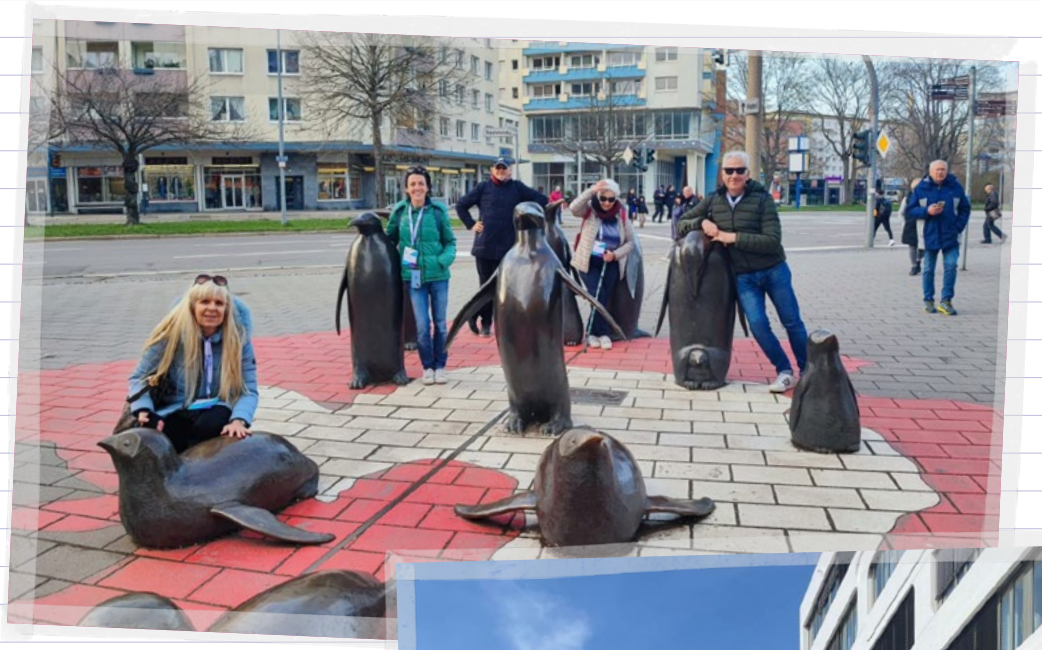
One of our destinations that day was the Garage Campus. When we arrived there, we were warmly welcomed by Tina Winkel, who introduced us to the project. The journalists responded enthusiastically.

One of the guests' big wishes was to visit the penguins, a group of penguin sculptures in Innere Klosterstraße, which they had already heard about. We were happy to fulfil their wish. From there we went on to the Karl Marx Monument.

At the end of the city tour, we said goodbye. However, we stayed in touch because the journalists had set up a WhatsApp chat in which I continued to receive updates on the articles they had written and answer their questions about Chemnitz.

Author: Maria Eugenia Maxia





Maria Eugenia Maxia



Claudio Giardino



Mareike Holfeld

# 05 Apr 2025 A different kind of city tour

What was a funny idea a few years ago and meant many months of work for the organising team finally came to fruition at the beginning of April: Chemnitz now has a Free Walking Tour — just like the megacities of Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Paris and Barcelona.

But let's start at the beginning: the first information event for those interested in the volunteer programme took place in December 2024. The organising team introduced themselves, as well as the idea of launching the “Free Walking Tour” project to mark the Capital of Culture year. The initiators had already been working on the topic for several months beforehand and had given some thought to its realisation. The spark of enthusiasm quickly spread from the core team to the audience. And there were questions upon questions: Will the tours also take place in the rain? Which languages would you like to offer? Is it really free of charge for the participants? At the end of the event, the list of interested parties quickly filled up with the most important information: Name, contact details, languages.

I was also enthusiastic about the idea right from the start and joined the social media team in January, because in these fast-moving times, the best way to spread news is via Instagram. But a website also had to be set up and filled with content.

In February, there were two training sessions for the future guides: first a theoretical part about the various stops on the tour, including important facts and background information about the city's history, before the walking route and stops were tested in individual teams for each stop. Some guides also led friends and family on a kind of “dress rehearsal” through the city centre.

On 5 April, the time had finally come: the start of the “Free Walking Tour” in Chemnitz! 10 a.m. Meeting point at the “Sleeping Horse” directly behind the Hartmannfabrik. Good weather and a good mood among the guides were guaranteed, but how many people would turn up? Because you can't sign up. The tours start every Saturday at a fixed time and always at the same location; so it's kind of our own “fate” that maybe only 5 guests come, 15 or 50. In the worst case, no one comes... But we are always on site, unless a severe weather situation does not allow us to (hail, heavy storms/storm) — in these cases, of course, safety comes first and we inform early on the homepage and social media.

Many flyers were distributed in the city, and the day before there was also a large article in the local press with the initiator of the idea. And indeed: the first guests arrived shortly after 10 a.m. and the number kept growing, much to our delight. We counted 68 participants. It was truly incredible and a tremendous response that we had never expected. Above all, there were many guests from abroad: from Leipzig, Berlin, Nuremberg, Lower Saxony and Düsseldorf! Our guides then led four groups on a 90-minute walk through the city centre, the guests were amazed at what they learnt on the tour and gave positive feedback. A really nice feeling for a premiere.

We are very excited about what awaits us in the coming weeks and months and which guests from Germany and abroad we can welcome on our tours, because the Capital of Culture year is now really picking up speed with the many major weekly events and happenings.

Author: Cathleen Nobach



private



Danny Kollwitz

# 08 Apr 2025 Safer together: first aid refresher course for volunteers

On April 8, 2025, I had the opportunity to take part in a first aid refresher course for volunteers in the Capital of Culture Chemnitz on Hartmannstraße — a chance to brush up on life-saving skills.

I was surprised at how much knowledge had been lost over the years. Being able to administer first aid is a life-saving skill and its importance should never be underestimated.

**Competent training by Johanniter**

Our first aid trainer, Ms. Köhler, inspired us with her passion and expertise. She explained key topics in an understandable and practical way.
With her patient and understandable manner, she guided us through important topics such as:

- Stable lateral position
- Behaviour in shock situations
- Using a defibrillator
- Applying bandages correctly

Each of us was impressed and felt we were in good hands. The course was tightly planned so that the time flew by. What became particularly clear to me: Everyone should take advantage of this opportunity. Providing first aid is not always easy, but it could be crucial one day — perhaps even for the life of a loved one. And who knows, you might find yourself in a situation where you need help.

We would like to thank Ms. Köhler and the Johanniter for the training that helped us to deepen our understanding of first aid. Would you like to refresh your knowledge of first aid? Find out about the next course dates in the volunteer database or on the provider's website.

Author: Bodo von Wenckstern




Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern

# 13 Apr 2025 Curling Cup 2025 — The grand finale at the Jutta Müller Ice Sports Centre

What were we thinking when we signed up to volunteer on the volunteer page, because our alarm clock rang at 5.30 am on Sunday, as our work in the ice rink started at 7 am on the dot!

We had only seen curling on television, so we were excited to see what was in store for us.

On the Thursday before the tournament, we had a briefing in the ice rink. The tournament organiser and the treasurer of the Chemnitz Curling Club took a lot of time for us, even though they were busy with the competition. We were given information about the history of curling, the tournament schedule, our tasks and all our questions were answered in detail. We were really integrated into the “curling gang” and we had the feeling that our support was very much needed.

The competition started at 8 am on Sunday. Together with the ice-master, we were responsible for the playability of the ice surface. First, a layer was planed off with the ice machine and we had to sweep away the excess surface, hold the electric cable of the ice machine, smooth the ice rink with large mops and let the tokens glide over the rink. Only then was the rink ready for the competition. This procedure was repeated during every break in the competition and we were now almost perfect “ice-master assistants”!

During the competition, we had free time and could watch the game. Chemnitz was the last of three tournament weekends this year. The ECoC Curling Cup took place for the 21st time and the final tournament was also held in Chemnitz. The curling department of the CEC (Chemnitz Ice Skating Club) is the organiser as part of the official Capital of Culture programme, together with the curling clubs of Trutnov (Czech Republic) and Swidnica (Poland), where the first two tournaments took place.

Curling is particularly popular in Canada, where it is a national sport. Two teams, consisting of four players and a substitute, always play against each other. Each player has two stones (these stones are made of polished granite and must weigh exactly 19.96 kg) so that eight stones per team are played on the ice during a round, alternating between the two teams. Only stones that remain in the house (i.e. in the coloured circle) or touch the house (the outermost ring) are counted. The counting is done in such a way that all stones that are closer than the nearest of the opponent's stones are counted. Each team uses a different colour so that the audience can see who owns the yellow or red stones, for example, and so the current game situation can be easily read. As five rinks fitted onto the ice surface, 10 teams were on the ice at the same time.

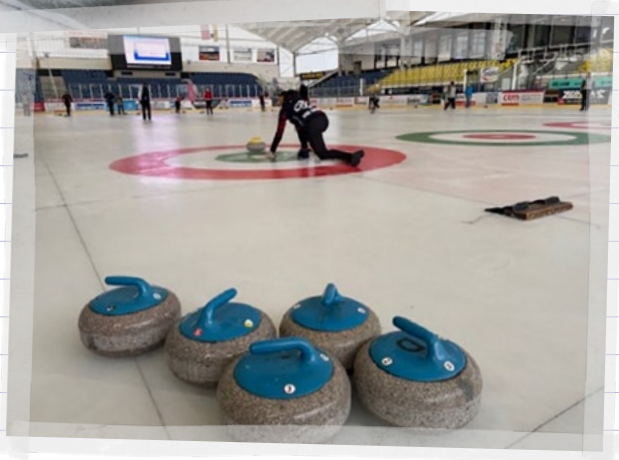
Author: Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher



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# 16 Apr 2025 A heart for Chemnitz citizens

**On 16 April 2025, it was all about sewing, sewing and more sewing in Chemnitz.**

The Capital of Culture's oldest volunteer, Annelore Krauß, has launched the “A Heart for Chemnitz Citizens” project. This is primarily intended to benefit people who are unable to actively experience the Capital of Culture year 2025. Small, colourful heart-shaped cushions are therefore being sewn and will be given away during the year.

In order to realise the project, many hard-working hands are needed to sew the fabric into heart shapes, then fill them with wadding and finally sew a final closing seam. The project is being realised in cooperation with the Volkssolidarität Chemnitz, the experienced women of the sewing circle at the Montessori School and the volunteer project of the Capital of Culture and us volunteers.

That's why I couldn't resist the opportunity to support this project on 16 April. It was definitely a lot of fun doing something good together. We talked and laughed a lot across the generations and created a fine piece of the Capital of Culture. The two hours flew by.

Author: Sophie Behrendt



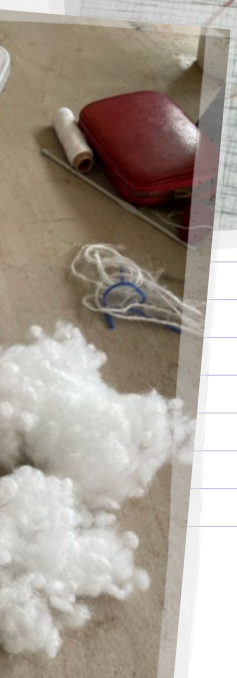
Sophie Behrendt

Sophie Behrendt



Sophie Behrendt







Sophie Behrendt

# 19 Apr 2025 My first assignment as a volunteer at Kunstbahnhof Flöha

Carsten, an employee of Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH, sent me an email with information about the Ifa exhibition “Verstrickungen” at Flöha station. The handout was important and good for the necessary actions for the opening of the gallery and the commissioning of the technical equipment.

There were already many visitors at the entrance to the gallery. The responsible contact person from the town of Flöha came by in person and I was able to set everything up under his direction. I was then introduced to an Indian student who was also working in the gallery that day.

The multilingual texts accompanying the exhibition are very detailed and informative. It turned out to be a good thing that I had worked through the brochure beforehand.

There were many conversations with the guests about Flöha railway station, the newly designed subway as part of the Purple Path and the wonderful exhibition Verstrickungen. Everything has to do with the history of the former Flöha cotton mill.

I was also asked about the Capital of Culture and its region and asked for suggestions for a varied programme of activities.

I also experienced great gratitude for such help and advice. My own stories, which I have collected over many years with Flöha railway station and the Capital of Culture Chemnitz, were beneficial.

Sometimes I had the feeling that a visitor was strolling quite timidly through the gallery, sometimes guests used the exhibition as a passageway to the platforms, as was once possible when there were still ticket offices and snack bars in the concourse. I often spoke to people and we got talking shop about this or that work of art in the exhibition. Sometimes guests told me their own stories in connection with the place.

One encounter was particularly close to my heart. Two elderly ladies came in. One of them sat down, the other was immediately interested in the etchings by Käthe Kollwitz. I drew the woman's attention to the film by Antje Engelmann. She watched the film hesitantly and then came up to me deeply moved. “Thank you,” she said to me, “the film shows my story.” I was touched, because encounters like this are a reward for our efforts as volunteers in the Capital of Culture year 2025.

Author: Heidi Guderian




Heidi Guderian




Heidi Guderian

# 23 Apr 2025 Reception of Erasmus students

On Wednesday, **23 April 2025**, I was on duty at the Hartmannfabrik from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., where we volunteers support the permanent staff in providing information to visitors.

At around 3.30 pm, we were approached by a group of five young people who introduced themselves in very good German as an Erasmus group with participants from France, Spain and the Czech Republic. They were interviewing some volunteers to prepare a report on their stay in Chemnitz. I gave my first interview in German!

But my working day as a volunteer in the European Capital of Culture didn't end there. At 11 pm, seven young people from Italy, more precisely from the city of Matera, which was the European Capital of Culture in 2019, arrived at the main railway station.

They were joined by Alexander, a “brave” volunteer who wasn't afraid to go to bed late. The train arrived on time and we immediately spotted the group of seven people. We greeted them with “Benvenuti a Chemnitz” in Italian.

Together with Alexander, we gave them some initial information about the city. They had never been to Germany before and were immediately impressed. On the evening of Sunday 27 April, we met again and got to know each other better. I asked them about their impressions. The nicest sentence was: “Chemnitz is a city that radiates calm.”

One of the girls experienced the efficiency and friendliness of the hospital staff and admired the beauty of the building: “It looks like a hotel”.

After dinner, we took a photo showing everyone.

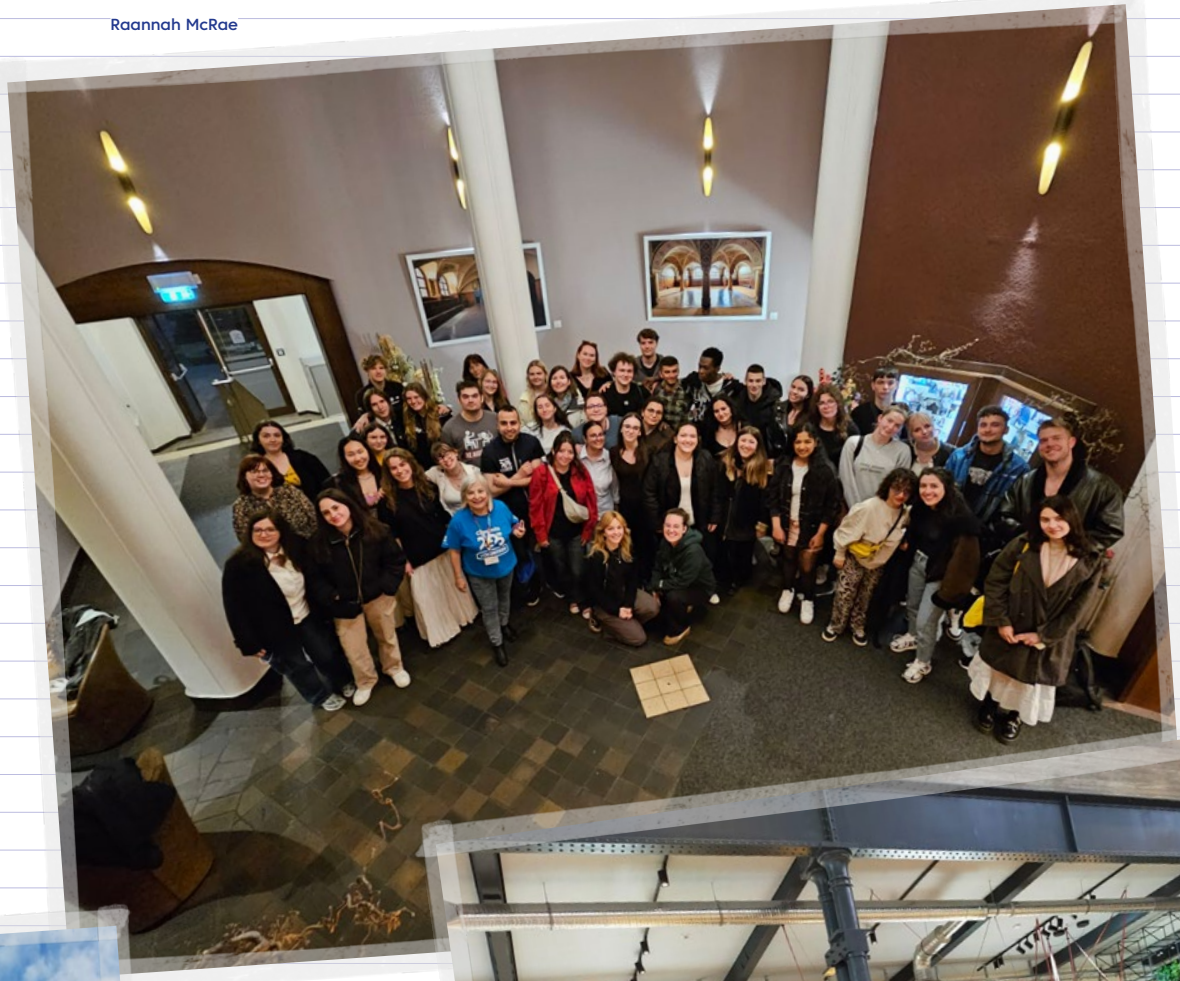
We talked about racism with the foreign students studying at Chemnitz University. Some admitted to having been victims of intolerance and racism, but fortunately these were few and far between.

The participants return home with the awareness of having seen Chemnitz, a city that was “the unknown” until today, but will be visible in the future.

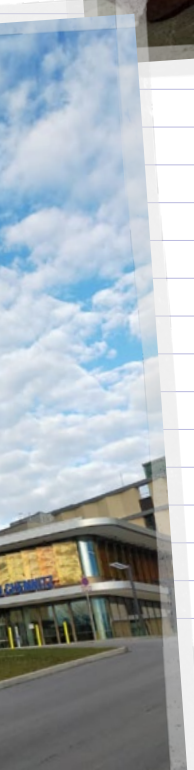
Author: Maria Eugenia Maxia



Raannah McRae







Maria Eugenia Maxia

Maria Eugenia Maxia

# 01 May 2025 The city is filling up! Many guests are coming!

On 1 May, I volunteered to work at the information desk in the Hartmannfabrik. I thought the long weekend would certainly attract many visitors to the Capital of Culture for a few days.

And indeed, when the doors opened at 10 a.m., the first point of contact filled up with interested visitors. I and four other volunteers tried to answer all kinds of questions, in general terms: “What can you recommend at the weekend?” or “What's going on today?” or very specific questions about exhibitions, museums and events on the long weekend in May.

Not only were the various flyers and brochures very popular, but the touchscreens on which I showed the guests the calendar of events on the Chemnitz 2025 website were also met with great enthusiasm.

So we volunteers had a lot to do in the first shift until midday. The conversations usually ended with “Can I ask where you're from?”, because I find that exciting. And of course with a friendly farewell: “I hope you have fun and a good time in Chemnitz.”

Surprisingly, I met an older couple who were still standing at my bar that morning at a cosy Brass Open Air event at Club Subbotnik later that day. I bumped into another couple over the next two days in the city and again on the free walking tour.

And when I ask them about their impressions and experiences, I am always happy when the guests speak almost predominantly positively about their stay in Chemnitz.

And I'm already looking forward to the next visit to the Hartmannfabrik so that I can talk to more people from Germany and abroad and give them recommendations for their visit to our city.

Author: Cathleen Nobach






private




private

# 05 May 2025 I am now a volunteer

My husband was already here a fortnight ago — today is a good day for me: I'm attending the get-to-know-you event at Schmidtbank. The comment that people are on first-name terms here — that's the Capital of Culture spirit — wipes away my first little uncertainty. A short speed dating session then follows as an introduction. Three times three minutes, one question, then an exchange of conversation partners — oh no, that's already over.

**I get to know:**

Marko, the Karl-Marx-Städter, who talks almost tenderly about his city, which is both urban and rural at the same time. Chemnitz can now finally and deservedly shine alongside the class leaders Dresden and Leipzig.

Katrin, who looks sporty and smart and is convinced that 7 euros admission to the butterfly show at the Botanical Gardens is not too much, but a well-invested donation.

Jana, the teacher, from whom I take the motto “You don't say no to good merchandise”.

Lina from Brazil, who loves the charm of East Germany and thinks it's cheeky that Chemnitz has such a bad reputation in other regions of Germany.

Susi, the industrial clerk, from whom I learn that our “Lulatsch” doesn't want to be called Esse, but Schornstein. Even the tallest building in Saxony has feelings. I vow to do better.

Last to speak is Danny, the volunteer mascot, as he calls himself, a volunteer from the very beginning. He tells us that the organisation has steadily improved over the past 2.5 years, that it's great to be able to look behind the scenes of the cultural sector, that you can also contribute your own ideas and that volunteering means exactly that: volunteering. He tells us about this and looks as fresh as the introductory meeting feels to me. At the end, there's pizza, initial equipment and a volunteer T-shirt.

Now I'm a volunteer. I'm delighted!

Author: Maxi Uhlig




private

# 07 May 2025 Assignment at Europe Sounds during Europe Week

From 7 to 9 May, a different kind of concert series took place on the Neumarkt in Chemnitz city centre. With “Europe Sounds — Music connects Europe in Chemnitz”, the cultural programme of the Europe Week was further enriched.

The stage programme on Neumarkt offered a varied mix of traditional and modern dance, choirs and bands. It served as an opportunity to experience the musical diversity of Europe and familiarise oneself with European traditions.

International artists performed in cooperation with Chemnitz's twin cities, European Capitals of Culture and embassies.

I supported the event backstage on 7 May so that all the artists could start their performance on time. It was a completely new experience to experience such a big event behind the scenes! There were also one or two chats with the artists.

It was another opportunity to exchange ideas in a different way. I had a lot of fun and at the same time I was able to learn something from the technical side.

Artists from Kosovo, Chemnitz, Andalusia (Spain), Occitania (France) and Timișoara (Romania) performed on the day. The event was hosted by Chemnitz radio presenter Conny Hartmann. I also enjoyed chatting with her during our breaks.

Author: Sophie Behrendt



Sophie Behrendt




Sophie Behrendt



Sophie Behrendt

# 17 May 2025 Am I still in Chemnitz or already in Berlin? — Childcare in the “Stadtwirtschaft”

Since 2021, the site of the former Stadtwirtschaft at Jacobstraße 46 has been transformed into a place for art, creative work and encounters. On the edge of the Sonnenberg is a place that can hold its own with any Berlin artists' centre.

The Gründungsgarage, part of the extensive Tolerant Saxony network, hosted a social hackathon there on 17 May. Young, modern people with a social and sustainable entrepreneurial spirit came together and pitched creative start-up ideas. There was also a scholarship to be won.

**I won encounters.**

Children's make-up was available for childcare. Butterfly and cat stencils were quickly exchanged for free improvisation. Faces and hands were canvases and all the colours were water-soluble, of course. Finally, soap bubbles floated. Small children's fingers made them burst — a self-runner. Child happy, volunteer happy.

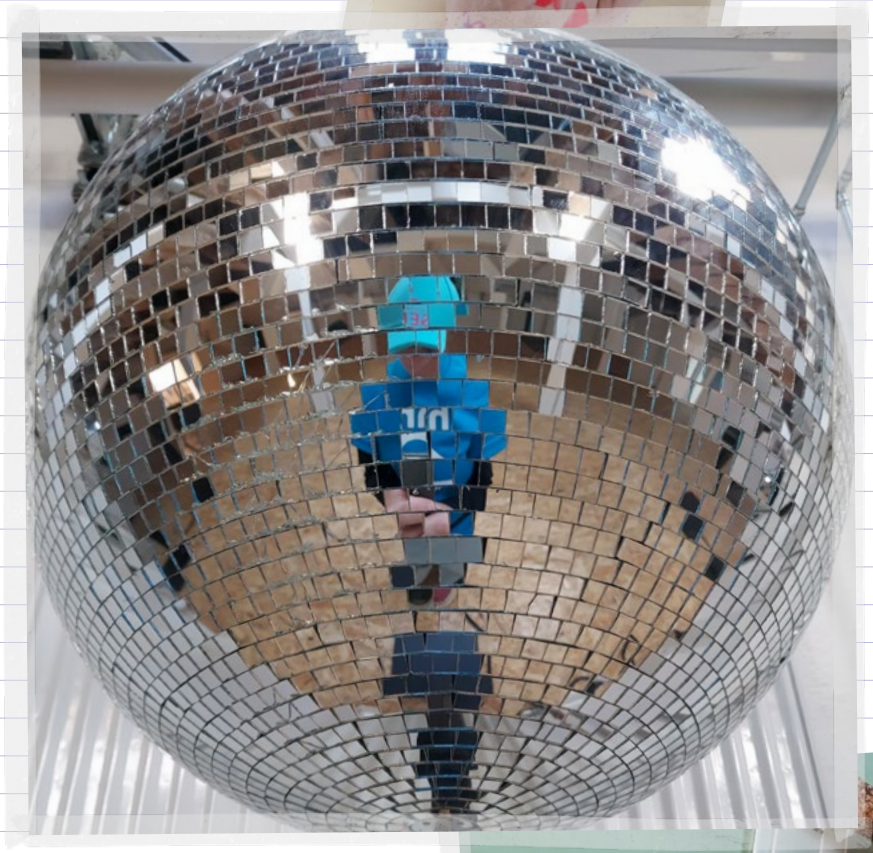
And then I met the snail man. He wasn't presenting a start-up, but a passion: gastropods and photography. After some shop talk about the existential loneliness of the snail in contrast to the anarchic sociability of the isopod, my first assignment came to an end.

If it hadn't been for the pending lunch at my grandparents', I would have liked to try the vegan goulash from Catering Subbotnik. But I did manage to try a vegan liver sausage slice. Mhm-yes, there's something going on on the Sonnenberg. Am I still in Chemnitz or already in Berlin? It's nice to be in Chemnitz!

Author: Maxi Uhlig



Maxi Uhlig



Maxi Uhlig



Maxi Uhlig

# 21 and 22 May 2025 Volunteering at the “Bandoneon — Exhibition in the Hartmannfabrik”

My assignment as a volunteer at the “Bandoneon—Exhibition in the Hartmannfabrik” on 21 and 22 May 2025

When I read in the volunteer rota: “Volunteers needed to set up the bandoneon exhibition at the Hartmannfabrik”, I immediately ticked the box. This assignment was extraordinary for me because I am particularly fascinated by the theme of “Tango and Bandoneon” in the Capital of Culture year.

This project is intended to honour Carl-Friedrich Uhlig. The Chemnitz instrument maker invented the predecessor of the bandoneon, the concertina, in 1834. His factory was located very close to today's Karl Marx Monument.

The exciting history is made visible through exhibitions, storytelling, bandoneon lessons, milongas and concerts.

The brilliant idea in the Capital of Culture year was to bring the instrument back to its origins together with the Tango Argentino. The marvellous danced tours of the city are a successful example of this.

The presentation of around 40 of these historical instruments in the Hartmannfabrik can be seen as a special highlight. On 21 May, a minibus arrived from Naunhof with the extraordinary exhibits. The specialist and expert in the trade, Heiko Guter, and his wife brought the valuable cargo to Chemnitz.

They were later joined by Jürgen Karthe, a legendary Saxon bandoneon specialist.

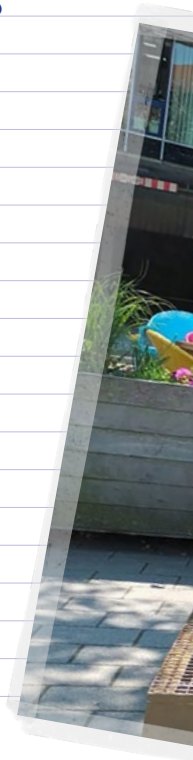
The valuable instruments and packing boxes were skilfully draped on velvet cloths under their direction. The idea that I was carrying an AA (Alfred Arnold) bandoneon that had travelled the world gave me goose bumps.

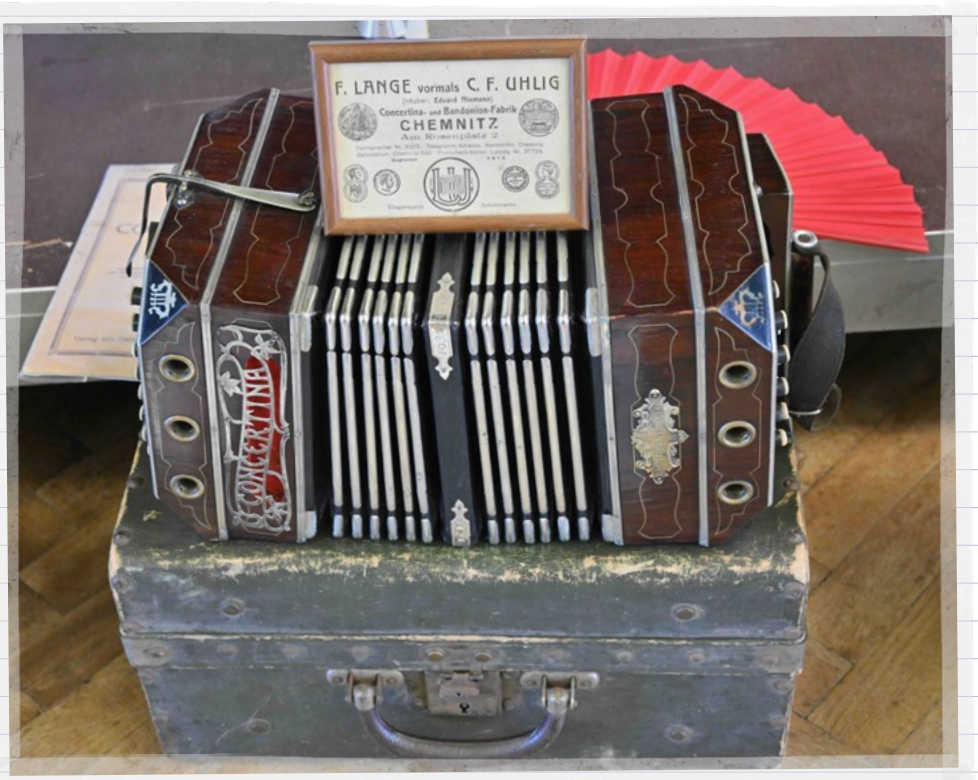
The grand opening of the bandoneon exhibition took place on 22 May.

It was exciting to experience the expertise of Mr Guter and Mr Karthe and how patiently they passed on their knowledge to the many visitors.

The Naunhof factory band (bandoneon, bass, saxophone and violin) played two concerts, which were enthusiastically received.

Author: Heidi Guderian






Heidi Guderian



private

# 27 May 2025 Volunteers for volunteers — Painting with acrylic

I generally think it's a good idea to utilise the opportunities that are available in our volunteer community. When the offer came up to paint with acrylics under expert guidance together with other volunteers, I signed up straight away. I had always wanted to try it out. On 27 May, the time had come. Full of anticipation, I made my way to Schmidtbank, where the event was taking place. I was even more excited when I saw who was going to give us guidance and help: Norma, a dedicated volunteer whom I know from free walking, and Martin, also a volunteer whom I really appreciate. Both of them had already prepared the room, the brushes were ready on the tables, the water was in the cups and the colours? There were exactly 5 bottles in the basic colours red, white, black, blue and yellow. That should be enough for all of us? And why only five? There are also green and brown, not to mention the intermediate colours. How was that supposed to work? I already saw myself as a representative of my own art movement: bright colours with little reference to reality. But hasn't this been done before? My thoughts were interrupted by Norma's introductory words, after which the participants introduced themselves. Yes, you read that right, participants. Apart from Martin, there wasn't another man in the room. They were probably at the garages. Then we were allowed to get started with motifs on the subject of Chemnitz. Some had prepared themselves and brought something with them, for the others there were enough wonderful pictures to put them on paper in their own style. I learnt how to mix colours so that they came across in the picture the way I wanted them to. In hindsight, I only needed to remember my art teacher, but that was a while ago. So thanks to Norma and Martin for their useful advice, which enabled me to paint a great picture of the beer bridge in Chemnitz. I was also very impressed by the paintings of the other participants, they were small works of art. And the best thing: We will be allowed to exhibit them!

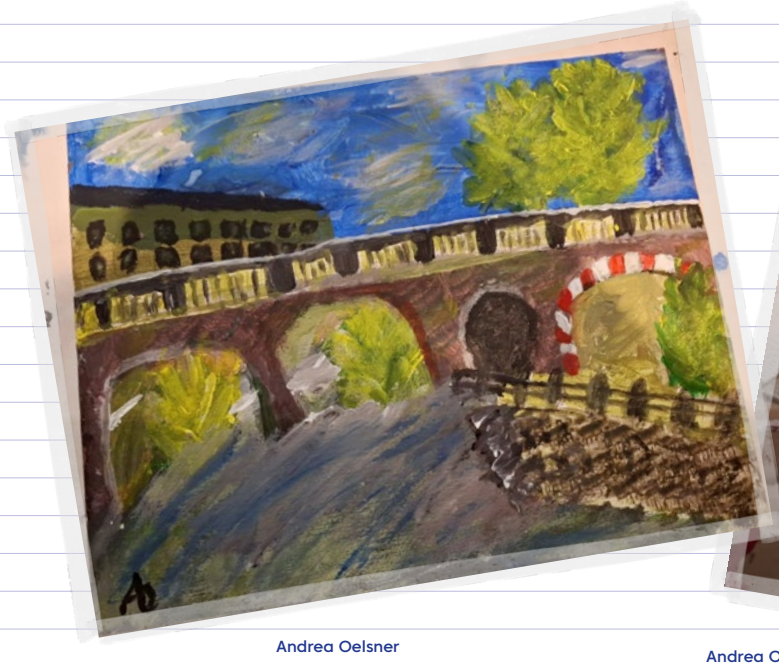
Author: Andrea Oelsner



Andrea Oelsner



Andrea Oelsner



Andrea Oelsner



Andrea Oelsner

## 27 May 2025 An afternoon at the Garage Campus — encounters, memories and new perspectives

It was with a mixture of curiosity and anticipation that I began my supervision on Tuesday, 27 May 2025, at the newly opened #3000Garages exhibition in the Garagen-Campus. After the great success of the opening event, how would visitors receive this exhibition?

For me as a typical GDR child, garages were the most natural thing. They were just there and we played in the garage yards and could run around there undisturbed. A paradise for children, but also places of retreat — little islands of freedom. Now, as #3000Garages, they are a cultural flagship of the Capital of Culture Chemnitz. The first visitors arrived as early as 12 noon. There was scepticism at first — an exhibition about garages? But the scepticism quickly gave way to curiosity. Memories were awakened and conversations about life in the GDR unfolded. The garages were much more than workshops — they were social meeting places, places of exchange, support and celebration. Over the course of the afternoon, numerous visitors arrived, many from the old federal states. Some had travelled especially to experience this unusual exhibition. Although only two garages of the parcours were open, this made the conversations all the more intense. Personal experiences were shared, the past was reflected upon and



Peter Rossner



new perspectives were gained. It was a day full of inspiring moments and lively encounters. People from Vienna, Mainz, Regensburg and Chemnitz came together to discover a story that may not have been their own, but touched them nonetheless. An afternoon that proved that the past can not only be preserved, but also experienced anew — in garages that were once commonplace and are now cultural bridges.

If you are curious about the stories behind the #3000Garages, don't miss the opportunity to immerse yourself and experience the special atmosphere of this unique exhibition! We look forward to seeing you.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern

Peter Rossner







Peter Rossner

# 31 May 2025 Hat Festival

The Hat Festival in Chemnitz has been held annually in May since 2018. It was something very special in the Capital of Culture year.

31.05.2025, it's 10.15 a.m., I get ready and set off to be at the Red Tower at 11 a.m. on the dot, because that's where the Sports United tent is. The “Fanschal” project is being promoted here. A lot of fan scarves are needed for this project, which will then be sewn together and draped decoratively as a surprise (longest fan scarf) at Sports United on 6 September 2025.

**I'll be helping from 11 am — 2 pm.**

The weather is fine and I meet a lot of cheerful people on the way to work, which is not quite so “normal” for this time of year in Chemnitz. I approach some of them because I see that they are trying to take a selfie.

I offer them my help to photograph them together so that the background motifs, e.g. “My home” on the Brühl or the Chemnitz 2025 logo, are clearly recognisable. We get into conversation.

They are tourists from Nuremberg, Berlin and Düsseldorf who are in Chemnitz for the first time because of the Capital of Culture and tell me enthusiastically about my home town. In their eyes, I live in an interesting city where there is a lot to see, it is very green and the inhabitants are friendly and helpful.

This feedback alone has made all the efforts for the “Capital of Culture” worthwhile and I am happy to be part of it with my commitment.

My involvement with Sports United was organised like this: We approached people and drew their attention to the campaign, distributed flyers and invited them to join us at the CFC stadium on 6 September 2025. Most of them didn't know about the event and were happy to take the flyers so they wouldn't forget the date.

There were already an incredible number of people in the city, even though the official start of the Hat Festival was not until 2pm. The short conversations are always the best thing about the event, because you often get a smile back when you are in a positive mood, even if the faces were still negative when you approached them.

Incidentally, we also collected a fan scarf. I finished at 2 p.m. and my fellow volunteers took over.

It was a great job and it showed that you can activate the people of Chemnitz and that our city doesn't look grey and unfriendly in the eyes of our guests.

Author: Gabriele Kirchhübel




Gabriele Kirchhübel

Gabriele Kirchhübel







Gabriele Kirchhübel

# 31 May 2025 Chemnitz, capital of the bandoneon at the Argentine Tango Festival

On 31 May 2025, the Argentine Tango Festival kicked off in Chemnitz. The city was transformed into a little Buenos Aires.

The Chemnitz Tango Festival 2025 celebrates the inventor of the accordion, Carl Friedrich Uhlig, who invented this instrument in Chemnitz in 1834. It is a different type of accordion, also known as the “bandoneon” or “Uhlig's German concertina instrument” or “Chemnitz accordion”.

But what does this type of accordion have to do with tango? A German emigrant popularised this instrument in Argentina. His music was created together with the famous dance, which attracted musicians and dancers from all over the world to Chemnitz on the occasion of the European Capital of Culture.

In keeping with the motto “C the unseen”, Chemnitz discovers and celebrates its musical history with this festival in a festival of colours, elegant glittering evening dresses and dancing shoes.

This leap into the past and into Argentinian music took me back to my childhood, when my grandfather played the accordion while we danced the tango.

So immersed in music and beauty, a five-hour shift until one o'clock in the morning flew by. While I made sure that the buffet was always well-stocked, I had the opportunity to talk to many dancers from different parts of Germany. I had the honour and privilege of meeting Andrea Sautel, choreographer and dancer of “Maria de Buenos Aires” at the theatre in Lübeck. Together with their partner Maude Andrey, they enchanted and delighted the large audience.

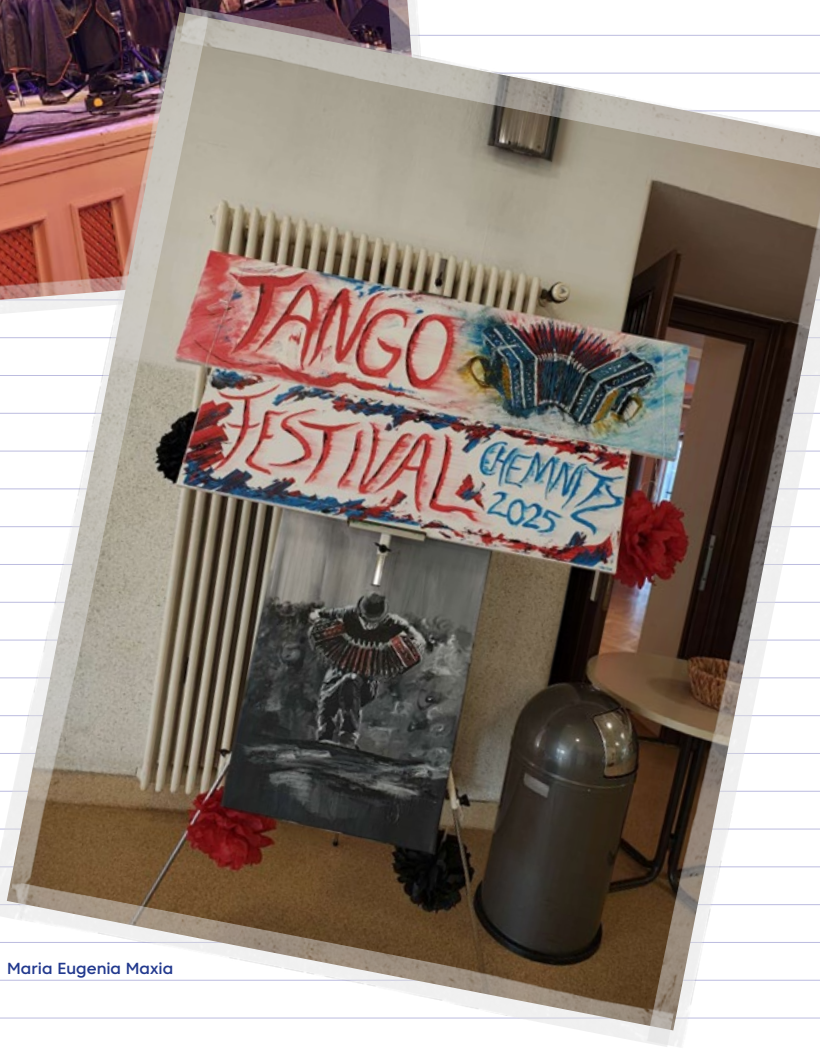
Author: Maria Eugenia Maxia



Maria Eugenia Maxia



Maria Eugenia Maxia




Maria Eugenia Maxia

## 01 Jun 2025 Photo campaign at the Hutfestival

As the rain got heavier around 11 a.m., I looked out of the window with a frown. My plan was actually to cycle into the city. But in the heavy rain, I took the car, drove into the multi-storey car park and headed to the town hall to register. I'm there! A friendly lady at the Hutfestival counter instructed me in all eventualities: Where am I assigned, where do I have to pick something up, when is the catering. With all the information in my luggage and in only a light drizzle, I went to the Hutfestival info point. I got the photo point box with all the props that were needed. Professional photographer Jan was working with me on the planet Mercury, a station in the “Trip around the World”. Shortly after 12 o'clock the sky opened up, bright sunshine, perfect timing! Our job as volunteers was to explain to the festival visitors what the photo campaign was all about and also to have the guests fill out the data protection declaration. The ticket numbers were assigned to the photo numbers on a list so that there could be no confusion. Afterwards, the guests were allowed to choose props, e.g. cones, feather boas, ukuleles etc. and then they were photographed with a smile. The mission was over at 4pm.




Christian Hallmann /Jan Stimpel

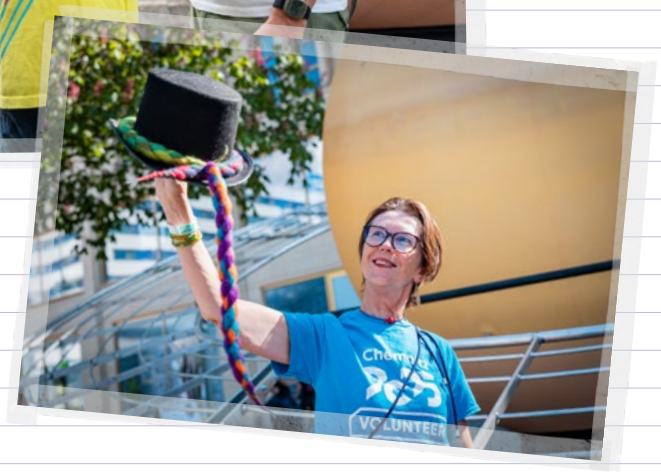
It was my second time as a volunteer at the Hat Festival. I always have the feeling that the volunteers are very much appreciated by the organisers. I told Dr Ralph Schulze (Managing Director of C3), who made a surprise visit to thank me personally for my commitment.

Shortly after 4 p.m., I checked in at the Stadthalle and when I left the car park by car, it started raining cats and dogs right on time. Perfect :)

Author: Danny Kollwitz



Christian Hallmann /Jan Stimpel



Christian Hallmann /Jan Stimpel



Christian Hallmann /Jan Stimpel

# 01 Jun 2025 A year as a volunteer

You can hardly imagine all the things you experience, both positive and negative. I would like to write about a moving year: What has it done to me personally, what have I experienced, learnt or even changed. I myself am rather introverted, but I am interested in art, both musical and visual. Today, a year after I wore the light blue volunteer shirt for the first time, I am more open and can deal with people better. This is partly due to the large number of workshops I was able to attend, but also to the many assignments where you meet guests of the Capital of Culture who are predominantly positive. In the main, you become like the people you surround yourself with, and I have to say that whether you are a volunteer or a permanent employee, there is always a smile and rarely any negative vibes. Enough of the preamble, I now invite you on an imaginary journey to one of these assignments.

First, we will go on a special mission together to the company party at the Chemnitz job centre, a kind of speed dating event where the job centre employees can get to know lots of companies/clubs. We look after an information stand with all the materials relating to the Capital of Culture and its projects. Our job is to talk to everyone present and provide information about us and our work. In the Job Centre courtyard there will be special activities such as archery and an ADAC rollover simulator. We are in a team with Dirk Zinner, the head of the volunteer programme, and get talking to lots of people. Dirk says to us: “The three of us absolutely have to take part in the rollover simulator.” We briefly doubt whether he's serious... Dirk really is! And a short time later, we find ourselves upside down in the simulator, ready to free ourselves from it under expert guidance. In this situation, we are supposed to learn how to deal with this unfortunate situation. We manage to free ourselves with tips from the simulator crew and climb out of the upside-down vehicle with a smile on our faces. I say to Dirk: “This morning at breakfast, I would never have thought that I would have to free myself from a vehicle that has overturned.” This sentence should actually be the headline... an unforgettable experience.

Now you were part of the special assignment for the job centre's information day.

You can find out what else happened to us volunteers in the other volunteer reports. Each of us is not a professional and has our own style. A year ago, even I didn't think/suspect that I would be able to paint pictures with words. Whether this works well or badly is up to the reader, but the fact is that I tried as hard as I could and if you've made it this far, my word painting doesn't seem to have been that bad.

Author: Danny Kollwitz



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# 04 Jun 2025 Dung turns to gold in Chemnitz — thoughts on the “Fischelant” project

Fabrizio de Andrè, a famous Italian singer-songwriter, wrote in one of his songs: “Nothing comes from diamonds, flowers grow from dung”. But in Chemnitz, even dung turns to gold.

**The motto “C the unseen” has never been more appropriate than for this project.**

But what does “Fischelant” mean? It is a Saxon word that comes from the French and literally means 'guardian', but also 'clever'.

The “Fischelant” project is a work by Cosima Terrasse that offers visitors a unique experience. The art installation was realised in a group of five garages on the banks of the Chemnitz at Theaterstraße 70. The visit lasts 50 minutes and is a mix of impressions: see, discover, hear, smell, sip, marvel, have fun. There is also a bar where visitors can enjoy a drink while admiring the marvellous view of the river.

Admission is free and open to all, but booking is advisable for a visit.

But how can dung turn to gold? And what is the Fischelant? Is it an animal? Is it a machine? I don't want to spoil the surprise and the fun and invite you to discover it for yourself.

Author: Maria Eugenia Maxia




Maria Eugenia Maxia



Maria Eugenia Maxia

# 06 Jun 2025 Chemnitz celebrates its garages

**Summer 2024:** “So this is where a garage festival is to take place next year?” I asked myself during an assignment at the Harthweg 7 garage yard in Chemnitz. The large, wildly overgrown meadow was barely accessible. A parasol provided a little shade. Chairs were placed for the audience of the announced reading by author Leonore Cebulla. Artist Martin Maleschka took centre stage at the comparatively modest event. Many garage owners responded to his appeal to lend him spare parts from old vehicles that were no longer needed.

**Whitsun 2025:** Some of the many visitors had grabbed their bikes and rain gear. Together with families and friends, they had made their way to the garage festival at Harthweg 7. Visitors could only guess at the impressive diversity and proximity to citizens of the #3000Garagen project, one of the flagships of Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH. For those who wanted to know more, we volunteers provided information about the entire #3000Garagen project. We were happy to explain what the garage campus and the vehicle museum are all about. Our recommendation to explore various garage yards in the city as new, specific cultural sites was met with great interest by the visitors.

The stage was also all about garages. Tanja Krone and her band were my personal highlight. The programme was called “SONGS OF (IN)SECURITY — FIRST SECURITY CONFERENCE OF THE FORMER EAST.” The background and starting point of this project is the idea that garages were and are places of security. The band had collected personal stories and opinions from garage owners. The material formed the basis for songs, music and spoken word contributions. The big question of this project was: “How safe do the people of Chemnitz feel in their city?” Not denying the Saxon dialect, the artists have created a piece of musical theatre that will hopefully be performed many more times.

In addition to Tanja Krone, the “Gruppa Karl-Marx-Stadt” also delighted the audience. Show host Lukas Ritzschel invited Martin Maleschka, among others, to a talk show. You know — the man with the spare parts.

The row of garages behind the big stage had become a small adventure mile. Visitors young and old took their seats in front of the “literary garage” to listen to garage stories by author Leonore Cebulla. Marcus Lehmann read his award-winning Chemnitz fairy tale. The location of the story? A garage, of course! “Kikaninchen” from television did the honours, MDR Kultur was represented and employees of Sparda-Bank, one of the many sponsors of the Capital of Culture, were available to talk to guests.

Before entering the festival site or on the way home, visitors were able to look into three open garages. The respective owners gave an insight into their hobbies. Occasionally, people still meet up for a beer, a barbecue and a chat.

At the “Vogelperspektiven” stand, the “Wollbine” invited Mrs Sabine Hochmuth to join in. Since 2024, a large tapestry has been created in various workshops and on other occasions — such as at the festival on Harthweg. Many silhouettes of well-known buildings in the city of Chemnitz have already been made from felt. These are placed on a textile “city map” by Mrs Hochmuth. (See attached photo) The carpet will be on display in the garage campus from 18 October 2025.

By the way — the art installation “Ersatz-teillager” by artist Martin Maleschka can be seen at the Museum für sächsische Fahrzeuge Chemnitz, Zwickauer Straße 77, until 29 November 2025.

Author: Kristina Köhler



Kristina Köhler



Kristina Köhler




private

## 07 Jun 2025 #3000 Garages Festival

The #3000 Garages project combines several small events in the various garage complexes in Chemnitz. These garage complexes have existed for a very long time and contain many personal stories of the garage owners.

The festival ran from 6 to 8 June 2025 and took place in the garage courtyard on Harthweg. A rather dull place was transformed into a place where people met, communicated and got active.

It was pouring with rain when the event started. However, the visitors were not deterred by the showers and enjoyed the day.

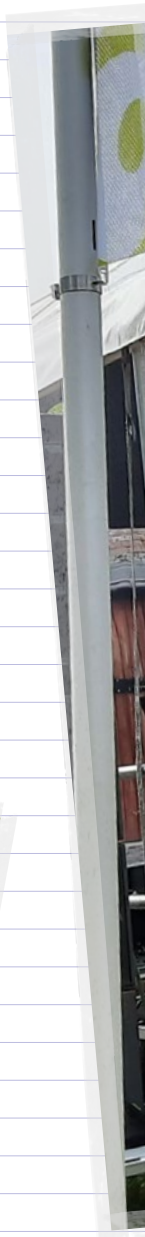
My assignment was on 7 June from 2-6 pm. I was supposed to supervise the children making small wooden garages. The place filled up and my stand was always busy. Most of the children managed well on their own or there were the hard-working parents at the start who finished the handicrafts at the end. Every now and then I tidied up and helped the children without parents to put the garage together. This was sometimes very difficult because it took a lot of strength. It was admirable how much patience the children had, especially when it came to designing the garages. One boy spent what felt like 3 hours at my stand. You can still inspire children and lure them away from social media with the right offers.

There was also a small stage on the site with various garage talk shows and music. I found the music by the group “Gruppa Karl-Marx-Stadt” particularly captivating.

Every Capital of Culture project I took part in, whether as a visitor or a volunteer, showed me that you can get people involved and that they are happy to take part, even if the cultural events are sometimes unusual. Every visitor went home with a positive feeling of having experienced something wonderful. That is the best thing that the Capital of Culture can achieve and I am sure that Chemnitz, the visitors and of course myself will benefit from this for a long time to come.

I am very excited to see what happens next.

Author: Gabriele Kirchhübel






Gabriele Kirchhübel



Gabriele Kirchhübel

# 14 Jun 2025 Kosmos Festival at the Schlossteich

**What is the KOSMOS?**

KOSMOS Chemnitz is a festival for democracy, a network and a platform for debate and discussion. It enables an exchange between creative artists and committed citizens on relevant topics of our society and the future of Chemnitz and Europe. KOSMOS is a meeting place for thousands of people (115,000 this year) who want to experience music, culture, discussions, art and new perspectives together. At Kosmos Chemnitz, we celebrate diversity, openness and togetherness — in the centre of the city, with free admission.

- 300 programme items
- 70 locations
- 2,500 participants (one of whom was me)
- 115,000 guests

**My assignment was at the “foam art “stand**

I had read in advance in the programme flyer that the artist Stephanie Lüning was delving deep into the fascinating world of foam and unveiling a series of works that redefine and dissolve the boundaries of painting and space. I couldn't imagine much about this and with this little prior knowledge, I approached the people in charge at the stand. Unfortunately, the artist was not there for family reasons, but two of her assistants and a photographer who had travelled all the way from Vienna were. At the side of the road were five large barrels that had just been filled with tap water, buckets of paint, water sprayers, a folding ladder and an old white caravan in the middle of the cordoned-off road.



Kerstin Ritscher

The programme was briefly explained to us volunteers and then we were divided into different areas, e.g. cordoning off the action area, observing the foam and, if necessary, containing it with water from the water sprayer. I was assigned to the photographer. The photographer, Robert, walked around the action area with me and determined various points from where he hoped to take nice photos of the action. I was to place the ladder at these points during the foam performance. It sounded easy and I was excited to see what kind of action was about to begin. Many spectators had gathered behind the barrier tape. Now it started and lots of yellow foam poured out of the windows, the door and the roof window of the caravan. Lots of little soap bubbles were created, which the wind blew upwards like clouds and towards the spectators. My legs and shoes were suddenly completely yellow. Now I heard Robert shout: “Position 1 please”, and I got the ladder ready for him so that he could climb up and take better photos of the foam on the caravan and on the road from all positions.

In the meantime, red and dark purple-coloured foam was also being pushed out of the caravan. The children could no longer be held back and bathed in the foam. The colour was food colouring and therefore not harmful to health and could also be washed out. The children had a lot of fun. (The parents not so much, because the children were coloured yellow-red-purple from head to toe) Robert took lots of photos from all positions. There were around 400 in total. Selected photos will be presented to the art-loving public in a gallery and on the Internet. Conclusion: Great effort, I was very close to the (colour) action! And take a look at the photos, because they speak for themselves! Artistically beautiful and filled with (real) life.

Author: Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher

# 21 Jun 2025 The Fire Cup 2025 at the CFC Stadium

The Fire Cup is an event that brings together young, dedicated talents from all over Europe — an international competition in speed, skill and teamwork, which took place in Chemnitz this year. We volunteers had the task of providing information about current events taking place in the Capital of Culture and answering questions about them. A large information pavilion, which offered plenty of space for various activities, was our workplace for the day. Children and adults alike were able to build a dream castle with wooden blocks or a giant tower, most of which collapsed noisily. New today was LimoPong. Imagine an undersized table tennis table with paper cups draped on both sides, in the position of bowling pins. Originally designed as a drinking game, we played the cultural capital variant. This meant that as soon as a participant hit one of the numbered cups with their ping-pong ball, they were asked a randomised question about the Capital of Culture or general questions about Chemnitz.

If the participant answered the question correctly, the cup hit by the opponent was removed; if the answer was wrong, the cup was left standing and the game continued unchanged.

It was brilliant that as a volunteer I was able to help with the correct answer to a wrongly answered question about the Capital of Culture, the Purple Path, the project Dancing Neighbours or how many Capitals of Culture there currently are.

Simply brilliant! And it was great fun. The guests were rewarded with a drink, a fruit bar or a small bottle of sun cream.

At 4 pm the mission was over. The pavilion was quickly dismantled, the beach flags taken down and the sunloungers folded up.

Author: Danny Kollwitz




Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz




Danny Kollwitz

# 22 Jun 2025 makers united — The hands-on festival in Chemnitz

On 21 and 22 June 2025, Chemnitz City Hall was transformed into a place full of creativity, technology and inventiveness. At the “makers united”, crafts, science, art and technology come together — a real festival to join in, try things out and be amazed. Whether young or old — there is something for everyone: programming robots, trying out 3D printing, sewing, weaving baskets or experimenting with artificial intelligence and virtual reality — makers united promises a wide range of activities. The event brings together makers who are curious and want to try things out.

I was based at the Chemnitz Industrial Museum stand. It was already lovingly set up by the two museum employees and stocked with plenty of coloured pencils, drawing paper, wooden frames for weaving and the corresponding yarn when I arrived. The women had also brought along the “Balan City” game, which can usually be played in the industrial museum. The “Balan City” game is a game that can be roughly compared to the “Monopoly” game, but is about industry and its history. I explained to the children (and adults) how to weave small scarves and bracelets with the wooden frames, as there was a real, old and large loom right next to our stand. I gave tips on what you can experience in the industrial museum and encouraged the children and adults to visit the museum.

It was my first time at this hands-on festival and I was pleasantly surprised at the variety of things on offer, from “programming a robot yourself” to “making Erzgebirge folk art”.

Conclusion: “makers united” will take place again in 2026 — come along and don't forget to go to the industrial museum and play the “Balan City” game!

Author: Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher

# 26 Jun 2025 Chemnitz blossoms — with its own song

We volunteers received an email: Invitation to the exclusive preview on 26 June 2025 with a live concert for the MDR programme “Unterwegs in Sachsen: Klangvolles Chemnitz – Eine Stadt gibt den Ton an.” Places were limited to 200, so we had to be quick! We were lucky and were invited. Bodo, who was on volunteer duty that day, was able to observe the exciting preparations of the MDR team in advance — together with the musicians Felix Räuber (Polarkreis 18) and Justin Lehmann-Friese.

**So what does Chemnitz sound like?**

Just how much anticipation there was for this premiere was demonstrated by the presence of numerous representatives of public life — including the former Lord Mayor Barbara Ludwig and the current Lord Mayor Sven Schulze, who were warmly welcomed. At 7 p.m., the time had come: Mr Schmidtke from the Capital of Culture welcomed the audience and presenter Beate Werner from MDR got the audience in the mood for the new film “Unterwegs in Sachsen” entitled “Klangvolles Chemnitz — Eine Stadt gibt den Ton an”. The MDR team accompanied Felix Räuber on an acoustic journey of discovery through Chemnitz — full of attention to detail and diverse perspectives on the city. He preserved the sounds of the city — be it on the Sonnenberg at Aquaponik, in the Wirkbau at the Pochen exhibition or in the Industrial Museum with the brittle, metallic sounds of the machines.

The highlight of the evening was the song composed especially for our city from the captured sounds, entitled “GRAU WIRD BUNT”, which lovingly and uniquely captures the spirit of the Capital of Culture year — Chemnitz as a city full of joie de vivre, lightness, creativity and hospitality. A special goosebump moment was created when a choir of Chemnitz residents performed the new song live together with Felix Räuber. Professionals were deliberately omitted in order to create a real Chemnitz feeling. The success of this was impressively confirmed by the audience spontaneously singing along to the chorus. To round off the evening, the artist sang his well-known hit “ALLEIN ALLEIN”, before the evening ended with discussions and meetings with the artists and members of the MDR team.

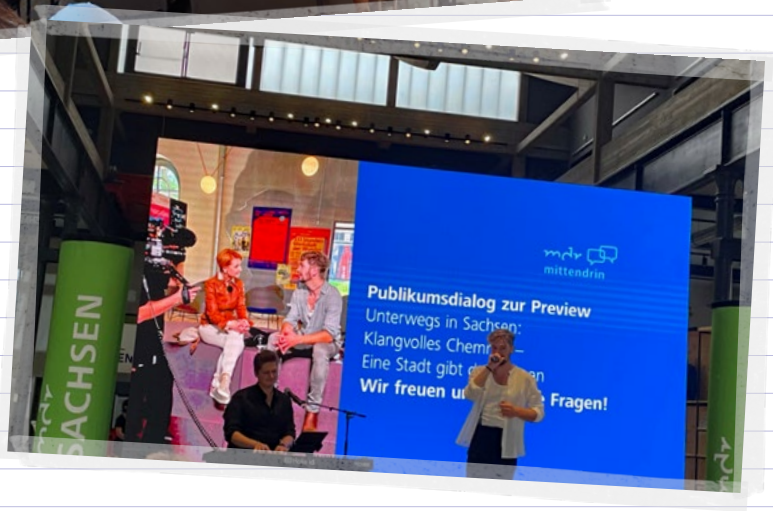
The film is now available in the MDR media library — a must for anyone who wants to experience the new, colourful Chemnitz.

We, Bettina and Bodo, were delighted to have been part of this special premiere and to have experienced a great evening with many emotional moments.

Authors:
Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern



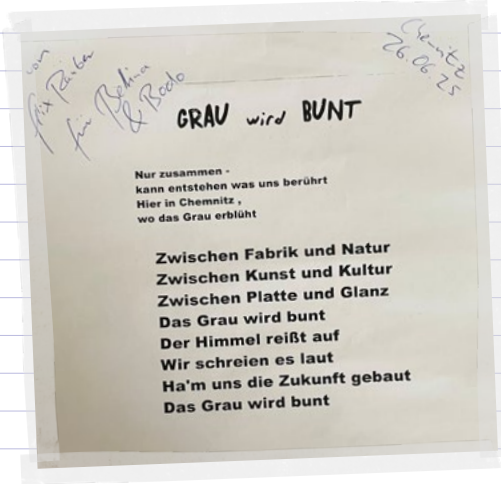

Peggy Ender




Bodo von Wenckstern




Peggy Ender




Bodo von Wenckstern

# 28 Jun 2025 On an adventure tour along the “Purple Path”

“After work, pleasure” was the motto at the end of June, because there are always activities for us volunteers where we are allowed to be “guests” — as a thank you from the Chemnitz2025 team for the tireless commitment in the many assignments for the Capital of Culture. And this time, an exciting day tour really was waiting for us.

**9.30 a.m. Meeting point at the bus station**

The bus quickly filled up with around 40 volunteers and the team, the driver was in a great mood and our tour guide gave us a warm welcome, as she called us “the heroes of the Capital of Culture”. After a few introductory words about the route and planning for the day, we reached our first destination.

**10:10 Floating house and a giant woven carpet**

We have arrived in the Capital of Culture region. In addition to Chemnitz, 38 neighbouring municipalities and cities also hold this title. These contribute to the programme with their own programme items, local highlights and events. The “Purple Trail” also runs through the entire region. In Braunsdorf, we take a direct look at 2 works of art located at the Historic Show Weaving Mill: “My floating home” & “Mapping Pattern”.

**11:00 a.m. The colourful tower of Lichtenau**

After a few minutes' drive, directly on the main road, it immediately catches the eye: the colourful installation by Frank Maibier. Our tour guide Julianne, who is a project manager in the Purple Path team, tells us all about the work of art's connection to the region and what the artist wants to depict here. On this beautiful summer morning with a bright blue sky, the artwork is a particularly beautiful photo motif. After a short coffee break, the journey continues.

**11:55 a.m. The town hall: an eye-catcher**

It's lunchtime. The thermometer already reads 28 degrees. We arrive in Hainichen. Previously unknown to me. The sign at the town hall reads: “Welcome to Hainichen. We greet the countries of all European Capitals of Culture from 1985-2025!” Lots of country flags. A statue of the poet Gellert on the square in front. Behind the town hall: a large statue all in white, surrounded by shady trees: “Endless Column”. Here I learn from Julianne that F.G. Keller invented groundwood pulp paper in 1843, on which newspapers are still printed today, and the importance of paper for the region.

**13:00 “Glück auf” in the UNESCO World Heritage Site**

A long history and tradition can be found in Freiberg. In St Mary's Cathedral, we marvel at the “Petrified Wood Circle” artwork. Here, the artist has simply placed pieces of petrified wood, some from American sequoia trees, on the floor of the church, arranged in a circle —

it almost looks like a large jigsaw puzzle, as all the pieces somehow fit together. Our next destination takes us to “Trashstone 689”, a huge, misshapen “rubbish stone” that glistens in the midday sun. Depending on how far away I am from the artwork and where I am, my reflection changes — sometimes wide, sometimes thin, then small. We still have 30 minutes before returning to the bus to catch a glimpse of the Bergstadtfest and enjoy a Weges ice cream.

**14:45 When the “Ö” looks at you in horror**

Our last stop is the Flöha (culture) railway station. In addition to the textile exhibition “Verstrickungen” in the former station concourse, we take a look at the art installation “Glance”, which gives the walls of the station subway a new shine: very colourful and with large letters that form the city name FLÖHA.

We return to Chemnitz in the afternoon with many new impressions and realise that there is also a lot to discover in the Capital of Culture region, true to the motto “C THE UNSEEN”.

Author: Cathleen Nobach




private



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# 03 Jul 2025 Mobile bathtubs & rolling beds in the garage campus

During my stay at the Garagencampus, I met the Viennese artists Rainer Prohaska (innovator and founder of Futurama Lab), Kilian Jörg (philosopher) and Hanna Priemetzhofer, who are members of the **FUTURAMA Lab** collective. The project **“THE CARS WE LIKE CHEMNITZ 2025”** was created in the first week of July as part of the Capital of Culture year.

Rainer Prohaska is known for his unconventional, creative concepts that consistently involve the audience. In Chemnitz, he also pursued an interactive approach that not only invites participation, but also makes artistic processes tangible for everyone.

An experimental art project was created together with trainees from the VW engine plant in Chemnitz. The aim was to design humorous and sustainable chassis — using only existing materials such as ladders, tension belts, scaffolding parts and wooden beams. The focus on reuse not only made ecological thinking tangible, but also opened up new aesthetic scope.

Practical experimentation and joint tinkering led to the creation of imaginative, unexpected vehicles: a moving bathtub attached to a ladder and powered by two bicycles; rolling chairs on wooden planks; or a particularly comfortable “car” in the shape of a bed — embedded between scaffolding parts and ladders.

The trainees were able to contribute, test and develop their own ideas — with joy, creativity and a remarkable degree of design freedom.

In the end, all participants and visitors were able to marvel at the result of this unusual collaboration and experience for themselves how art can be a means of connecting communities and at the same time drawing attention to social issues, all in a humorous, joyful and light-hearted way.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Hanna Priemetzhofer



Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern

# 05 Jul 2025 Walk to GDR artworks: “Bronze and concrete”

Today I'm not reporting on a volunteer assignment, but as a normal Chemnitz resident. I had read the announcement of a walk through Chemnitz city centre in the Capital of Culture and Free Press newsletter under the headline “Fetzt.- Die Kuha zieht nach draußen” and that made me curious. “The Institut für Ostmoderne invites you to an interactive artistic walk through Chemnitz city centre.” With a performance, audio contributions, a workshop for modelling your own sculptures and a playful sculpture rally with a quiz, you can get to know some of the works of art that were created between 1960 and 1989. The meeting point was at the small fountain in the Street of Nations. There were around 50 of us — Chemnitz, Berlin, Austria, Saarland, Leipzig and .... — a colourful mix of participants.

Our three city guides, dressed in black uniform outfits reminiscent of old GDR patterns, briefly introduced themselves and greeted all the participants with a handshake. The three are originally from Berlin and are in Chemnitz until October 2025 as part of a programme supported by the Capital of Culture. They had a loudspeaker with them, from which GDR music was playing loudly. My God, how long it's been since I've heard these sounds, but I recognised them straight away! Our group now strolled through Chemnitz city centre, across the Brühl to the Schlossteich and stopped at various bronze and concrete sculptures and buildings. Voices came from the box. To be more precise, letters were read out that labourers, party comrades and functionaries had written to their friends or family members between 1960 and 1989. For example, as we stood at the Karl-Marx-Kopf and looked over to the town hall and the “Kongress” hotel, we heard a contribution from 1973: a young woman, an apprentice at the state-owned company “VEB Strickmaschinenbau Karl-Marx-Stadt”, wrote to her sister, who she “hopes will visit Karl-Marx-Stadt soon”, about how beautiful the town is. She wrote that many new buildings with flats and shops had been erected along the Street of Nations and that there were new, wide six-lane roads that had been built so that many cars would be able to drive on them in the future. She also wrote that Walter Ulbricht, the Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, was in the city and



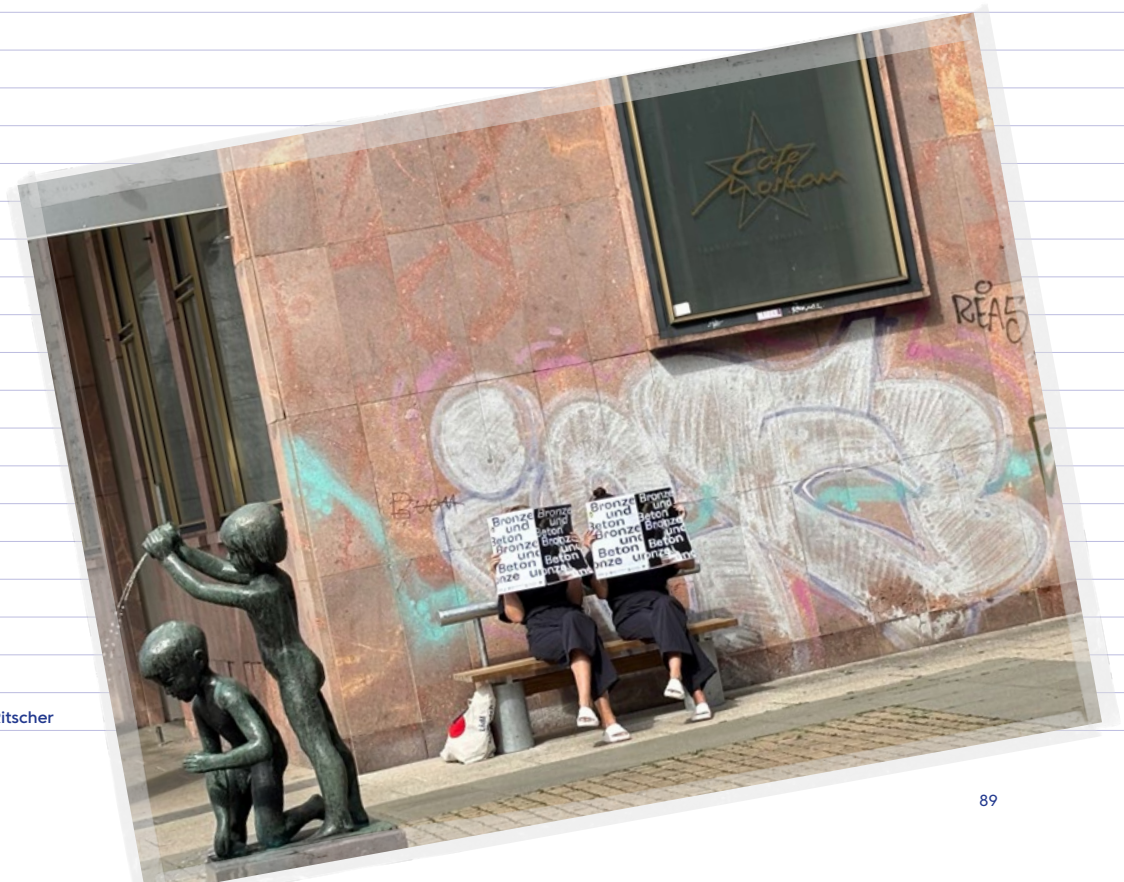
Kerstin Ritscher

inaugurated the new building complex on Karl-Marx-Allee himself at a rally and subsequent celebration. She was very proud to have been there. The author was generally very proud to work and live in Karl-Marx-Stadt and to be involved in the reconstruction of her city. Through these texts, I was able to empathise with the world of that time and feel what seemed important to the people.

On the way, the city guides provided us with delicious ice cream and unfortunately our tour ended at the castle pond. We were offered the chance to round off the early evening together with a typical GDR meal. We didn't say no to this and went together to Falkeplatz to the “Cafè Bistro Smart”. There, time had stood still for a while and we had a successful end to our walk with “Karlsbader Schnitte”, “noodles with sausage goulash” and “beefsteak with potato salad”.

I think the joint modelling of our own sculptures was declared “heat-free” and turned out to be a real treat. To sum up: a wonderful Saturday with nice people who had interesting stories to tell and a new perspective on GDR artworks. If you would like to know more about the “Institut für Ostmoderne”, please visit: **Institute for Eastern Modernism Institute for Eastern Modernism**.

Author: Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher

# 08 Jul 2025 A special kind of concert: TANGO PUR! in Chemnitz on the theatre square

At the beginning of July, I received exciting news from the Sächsische Mozartgesellschaft: they were still looking for volunteers for the final concert “TANGO PUR!” on 8 July 2025 on Theaterplatz. As this was a special concert by the European Summer Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir 2025, which was taking place as part of the German-Czech cooperation project “Shaping the future with diverse roots”, my curiosity was immediately piqued.

Unfortunately, the weather didn't play along as we would have liked. So when we arrived at the theatre square, we first had to wipe the seats dry... and send hopeful glances and wishes to the heavens.

But soon we were able to welcome the first visitors and the theatre square filled up visibly. The concert was able to start on time and without rain.

This evening was special in many ways: 150 musicians from eight nations formed the Summer Philharmonic Orchestra. The ensemble consisted of children, young people and professionals from countries including Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Ukraine, who had first got to know each other and made friends during rehearsals and joint leisure activities — all in the spirit of a united Europe. All the more remarkable were the impressive performances of the ensemble, the vocal soloists and the young soloists — especially the 15-year-old violinist Mariian Chornenkyi from Ukraine — who inspired me deeply and were honoured by the audience with long-lasting applause.

The musical director was David Timm, music director at Leipzig University, composer and arranger. He put together a programme especially for this concert that reflected the whole palette of the tango and included both well-known and lesser-known pieces.

The fact that the audience was invited to dance along and enthusiastically accepted this invitation also showed that it was a lovely, relaxed evening. Many tango dancers came especially for the concert and took advantage of this opportunity until shortly before midnight.

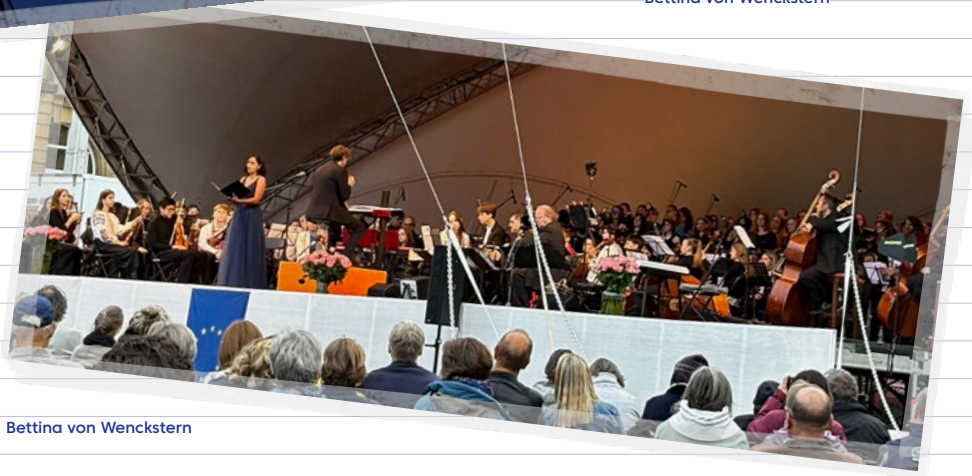
Afterwards, there was a short get-together with the artists, during which souvenir photos were taken and experiences exchanged. You could tell that everyone was happy that this concert had been such a fantastic success after intensive rehearsals and had captivated the audience.

All that remained was to keep my fingers crossed for the final concert the next day in Chomutov and hope that it would be just as successful as the one in Chemnitz.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern

# 09 Jul 2025 100 days of Apfel-Stadtpark

My husband was actually supposed to write this article, as he is the one who was on site both when the trees were planted and after 100 days. But as it is with men, they never do what they are supposed to. So I'm going to report on this wonderful idea in his place. Actually, I am also the part of our partnership that is interested in gardens and plants.

Apples — perhaps the Germans' favourite fruit and, with more than 2000 varieties, also one of the most widespread in the world! And 174 trees with 174 different apple varieties have been standing in Chemnitz City Park for exactly 100 days thanks to the Living Neighbourhood project. In the summer heat, they were watered by hard-working helpers and even had time to form fruit, which was removed so that they could grow big and strong.

Only two trees were probably overlooked. And all 174 are still there!

Even if one or two of them look a little damaged thanks to boisterous youngsters who had to indulge in their destructive behaviour. A pity really, because they will be the ones to benefit. A tree like this takes a very long time to reach its full size.

When they were planted, the weather was not at its best, with constant drizzle causing problems for the many volunteer planters. Those who had wellies were well advised to wear them. I didn't envy my husband and expected him to return home very soon due to a lack of partici-pants. But I was completely wrong:




Andrea Oelsner

People from Chemnitz are not made of sugar and are not easily impressed by the weather. So many people turned up that the trees were planted very quickly!

On 9 July, exactly 100 days later, I looked out of the window and had déjà vu: it was raining, the sky was grey and I didn't really want to get out of bed.

But the closer it got to the start, the better it got. In the end, it didn't rain the entire time. But there was a lot going on: Radio T provided the music, the people from the project had provided refreshments (apple crisps, apple pie, hot and cold apple juice, apple pieces to nibble on), but also some comfort (sun loungers, beer table sets) — you immediately felt at ease. The interesting information and conversations also contributed to this.

My very special thanks go to Mr Amme, an apple expert, who very patiently answered all my questions about apples and apple trees and organised a very interesting tour of the grounds for everyone.

The highlight was a planting certificate for those who had planted in the spring. And this is where my husband comes into play again — he also got to take one home with him as a volunteer who helped with the planting!

Author: Andrea Oelsner



Andrea Oelsner

# 11 Jul 2025 The penguins are loose in Chemnitz...

They have become the undisputed favourites on a street known as the Innere Klosterstraße — and not just with children. There are now 16 large bronze penguins there ... and then came my chance!

I read in the volunteering database that there was a thank-you workshop “Beaded animals” for volunteers on 11 July 2025, where you could make a penguin. So I quickly signed up to get one of the 6 places.

The time had finally come and I was really looking forward to having my own penguin soon.

The course instructor Camilla was already waiting for us in the Schmidt-Bank-Passage and prepared everything in detail: lots of colourful beads and nylon thread were provided and there was a penguin model on the table — a large penguin, as it turned out later.

Once all the participants had arrived, we got started quickly — after all, we had two hours and our task was ambitious. Camilla told us that we could make large and small penguins. I decided in favour of a small one. Oh dear, good thing I didn't realise what a fiddly job it would be to make my beaded penguin, which was only about 2 cm tall!

So, off we went. Camilla had us thread on the first 5 beads and then knot them. Further beads were threaded on, knotted and connected to other beads by threading them through to form a ring. Yes, that's the theory, but which bead should be knotted and threaded through in which direction? But Camilla was very calm and patiently explained to us step by step what to do, checking if something looked strange or if a wing seemed to have disappeared due to twisting. Sometimes I thought I was making a rabbit or a little monster. But Camilla always knew a solution and saved our little works of art.

The time went by very quickly, two hours eventually turned into three — but all the participants had a lot of fun and were very proud of their little or big penguins at the end. I added a small chain and a key ring to my mini penguin. He now dangles from my bag and reminds me every day with his blue back, white belly and funny red beak, little feet and tail of a special afternoon of crafting with Camilla, who I thank from the bottom of my heart!

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern



private



Bettina von Wenckstern

# 14 Jul 2025 Hooray, over 60 volunteer reports online that inspire and move!

We are a small, dedicated team of volunteers for the Capital of Culture. Our core team, the “volunteer editorial team”, was set up at the beginning of 2024 on the initiative of Kristina Köhler. During our volunteer assignments, we are easily recognisable by our sapphire blue T-shirts.

All volunteers have the opportunity to record their experiences in volunteer reports. These are later published in two languages — German and English — on the Capital of Culture website.

In them, the volunteers describe their assignments, experiences, tasks and exciting moments of the Capital of Culture — from a very personal point of view.

Today we are celebrating a very special anniversary at Diebels Fasskeller in Chemnitz: the 60th Volunteer Report! Who would have thought it at the beginning?

In our cheerful group, we are joined by other volunteers who are chatting away, our Head of Volunteering Dirk Zinner and two friendly colleagues — Mareike Holfeld and Emma Volkova — from the Capital of Culture press team. Thanks to their support, our contributions are published directly on the Capital of Culture website as volunteer feedback — a great success and a reason to celebrate. With the volunteer reports, we not only want to preserve memories and promote dialogue within the volunteer community, but also inspire others to get involved and volunteer.

What have we not experienced so far: conversations with artists, sponsors and politicians, encounters with people from near and far — a mixture of impressions and experiences that we would never have dreamed of before, for example the summer festival, meetings with sponsor Maximo and Federal Chancellor Scholz.

Writing down stories is great fun, but it's even better when they are read — whether by Chemnitz residents, visitors, other volunteers or simply by people who are curious about the Capital of Culture. It was a wonderful evening full of enthusiasm — accompanied by the anticipation of everything that this special year still has in store.

Author: Bodo von Wenckstern




Bodo von Wenckstern




Hannes Ludwig




Pia Wagenknecht

# 14 Jul 2025 “Edith Stein — a brilliant jewel hidden in Chemnitz”

The very title of this exhibition caught my attention and I learnt the following:

After graduating from high school, Edith and her sister Erna were invited to the home of their uncle, their mother's brother and pharmacist at the Adler-apotheke am Markt, Davit Courant, where they were spoilt. “It was a wonderful holiday in the large chemist's house in Chemnitz,” Edith is said to have written.

**Who knows this?**

The exhibition in the Protestant St John's Church was well attended on both days and met with a generally positive response.

Among the visitors were people familiar with Edith Stein's life story who came specifically to the exhibition, such as a lady from near Speyer and two ladies from Belgium and Luxembourg, who also noted with interest our references to the work of Henry van de Velde (a fellow countryman, so to speak) in Chemnitz.

There was one group each from Berlin and Munich, plus others from southern Germany and Bremen.

People from Chemnitz and the surrounding area also visited the exhibition. Most of them were not familiar with Edith Stein, so they were curious to find out about Edith's connections to Chemnitz and were delighted that such a remarkable person had also been to Chemnitz. For these visitors, the motto of the Capital of Culture “C the unseen” came alive and tangible when they visited the exhibition, and a previously unknown fact became known to them.

Others paid tribute to the Polish Edith Stein Society from Wroclaw for bringing this exhibition to Chemnitz in the Capital of Culture year. Some left a donation in the donation basket provided or signed the guest book.

One so-called backpacker, who only wanted to take a quick look inside the church, said as she said goodbye: “Thank you for luring me in, this exhibition is really worth seeing, thank you. “

This volunteer assignment was very enriching for me. I also discovered something that was previously unknown to me in Chemnitz and this has also inspired me to follow Edith's footsteps further.

Author: Irmgard Teschner




Irmgard Teschner



Irmgard Teschner



Irmgard Teschner

# 20 Jul 2025 Begehungen art festival — art in the Chemnitz-Nord cogeneration plant

The “Begehungen” art festival is not new to Chemnitz, but is already in its 22nd edition. This year, however, in the Capital of Culture year, it is particularly large and can be found at a very well-known and interesting location in the city, the Heizkraftwerk Nord. At the foot of the colourful Esse, one of Chemnitz's landmarks. The CHP plant only ceased operation a year ago after the end of lignite mining. I was not only excited to see the exhibits, but also to be allowed to enter this site with its huge cooling towers, which had been closed off to the outside world in the past.



Kerstin Ritscher

On the Wednesday before the opening weekend, the festival's project manager had invited us to a briefing on the site. During a short tour of the two huge halls and the cooling towers, we were given the most important information and were able to ask our questions.

My assignment, on the opening Sunday, started at 2 pm. I could barely find a parking space for my car and there were a lot of people on the street (which is very remote) and around the site. That was a good sign and I was all the more looking forward to the afternoon at the northern CHP plant. My job was to make sure that the artworks were not touched or stepped on, and that not too many people entered the cooling towers at once, for example.

The visitors had lots of questions about the exhibits, the artists, the site we were on and Chemnitz in general.

The festival had over 2500 visitors on that Sunday and 6500 over the entire opening weekend — what a response!

My impression is that the art festival is something special. The exhibition brings together 32 international artistic perspectives on the social, ecological and economic consequences of environmental destruction, on questions of justice and power as well as related social discourses. These themes are presented through installations, photographs, drawings, sculptures as well as video and sound artworks.

Author: Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher

# 24 Jul 2025 Relaxed and delicious: The volunteer picnic at the Park Summer

My wife Bettina and I were browsing through the volunteer database when a particularly charming invitation caught our eye: a picnic with the Capital of Culture volunteer team! The registration was done quickly and after a look at the information it was clear — everyone was bringing something to snack on, eat and feel good.

The idea came from the always cheerful Delfina. Anton, our culinary wizard, had already picked out lots of delicious recipes for vegan snacks and treats in advance. The staff from the Capital of Culture volunteer team had their hands full: providing drinks, slicing fruit, making sandwiches and providing cushions and sun cream. As our picnic was taking place in the Stadthallenpark and the weather had been very changeable so far, we didn't know what we needed for a long time: umbrella or sun cream? But Peter was on our side and everything was perfect.

Many volunteers brought other delicacies with them, resulting in a varied, colourful and delicious buffet. As expected, it was a relaxed, cheerful get-together where we met many familiar faces and made new friends.

In conversations, funny episodes or particularly interesting facts from various missions were exchanged and tips were given for events and exhibitions currently taking place.

We spent an enjoyable, entertaining time together, which flew by.

Author: Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Dirk Zinner



Anton Schneider

# 31 Jul 2025 Begehungen und Begegnungen — Volunteer at the “Begehungen” art festival at the former Chemnitz-Nord cogeneration plant

Working on the site of the former Chemnitz-Nord cogeneration plant on 31 July 2025 was an impressive experience for me. The contrast between the urban lost-place environment and the installations and artworks that shed light on the environmental problems of our time could not have been greater. The huge cooling towers, now unused, concrete, the steel scaffolding and empty factory buildings hit you unprepared. Climate-damaging history meets the subject — everything interacts. What now? This is the question. It took courage and ingenuity to use this space as a place to reflect on the wounds of our time. The organisers of the event succeeded.

The festival is not new to Chemnitz. In the year of the European Capital of Culture, it is already inviting people to an unused square for the 22nd time. However, there is one special feature this year. The artists who are transforming the former thermal power station into a huge art object come from all over the world. It is impossible to go into detail about each of the 32 works. They deal with species loss, waste of resources, climate change, visual and acoustic food for thought on these problems.

Nevertheless, I would like to mention two objects. One is the work of Colombian artist Daniel Otero Tores, whose work focuses on the social and ecological consequences of illegal gold mining in the Colombian Amazon region. The unspeakable pollution of the water and the destruction of natural resources and habitats is the result.

The giant white tetrapods by artists Abie Franklin and Daniel Hölzl entitled “Bycatch”, which can be seen everywhere in the rooms, attract attention. In real life, they are concrete breakwaters that protect stretches of coastline. Here, they are balloons filled with air, which have somehow weightlessly come apart at the seams. Humans want to keep nature under control, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to tame the spirits that have been conjured up.

An astonishing number of people from near and far visited these halls. There were interesting conversations and exchanges of opinions about the installations on display. I also spoke to children and young people who were on their summer holidays with their parents or grandparents. They surprised me with clever thoughts and reflections on the works on display. It concerns their future.

Author: Heidi Guderian



Heidi Guderian



Heidi Guderian

# 02 Aug 2025 The Free Walking Tour is a firmly established format — More than 2000 guests have already taken part

At first, it was just a crazy idea: locals guiding guests of the European Capital of Culture through Chemnitz. And after many months of preparation, we can proudly say that the Free Walking Tour is now an integral part of the city.

Since April 2025, our Free Walking Tours have been guiding **visitors from all over the world** through Chemnitz. During the walks through the city centre, guests experience the diverse history, architecture and culture up close. The tours are open, entertaining and authentic — led by our volunteer guides who share their enthusiasm for Chemnitz with others.

And the response has been enormous: in less than four months, we have already welcomed over **2,000 visitors**! I was able to support the project from the very beginning, develop the route, set up our website, design flyers and train our guides. It is all the more rewarding to see how all the hard work during the Capital of Culture year is paying off.

I am particularly impressed by the **international diversity**: in addition to numerous guests from all over Germany — including Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Nuremberg, Essen and Munich — travellers from Ireland, Iceland, the USA, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, Romania, France, Austria, Poland, Sweden and Turkey also took part in our English-language tours.

The special thing: None of this would be possible without the commitment of us volunteers. Our guides invest time, energy and passion to bring Chemnitz to life — for curious visitors, travellers and locals alike.

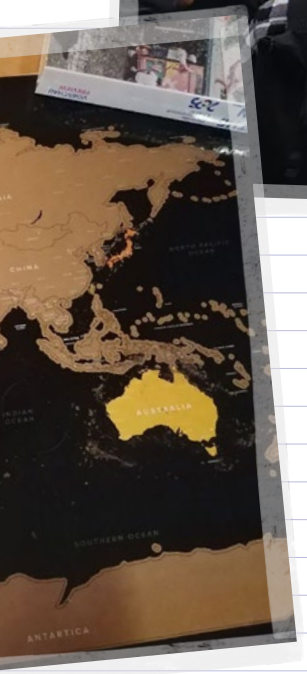
We are delighted with this success and say thank you to everyone who took part — and to those who are still to come!

Author: Christina Fischer-Ullrich






Danny Kollwitz




Christina Fischer-Ullrich

03 Aug 2025 **Eurobean —**

# The sweetest chocolate festival for those with a sweet tooth

As volunteers, we had the pleasure of taking part in the Chocolate Festival at the Industrial Museum from 1 August to 3 August 2025 and experiencing the fantastic atmosphere up close.

A special highlight was the Grand Opening on Friday evening with singer Jesse de Angelo, who rhythmically brought the festival's motto “love, peace and chocolate” to life on stage.

Around 50 exhibitors from 22 countries presented their culinary delicacies — in the spirit of the Capital of Culture: getting to know the unknown. There were great offers such as discussions, meetings with the chocolate makers and of course many, many tastings. The focus was on the ecological production of chocolate, the social conditions in the countries where it is grown and the appreciation of the work of the cocoa farmers.

It is well known that chocolate is healthy, makes you happy and creative. But it was a new experience for us to be able to talk directly to the producers, to feel their enthusiasm and pride in really successful chocolate compositions.

We made many new acquaintances and our shared passion for chocolate instantly bonded us, regardless of whether the makers came from Africa, America, Asia or Europe.

It was a cheerful festival with a huge variety and the rare opportunity to taste and compare chocolate from so many different countries. The fact that this was used so actively was evident from the happy children with chocolate-smeared faces, queues at the stands and happy people in the outdoor area, who took a short break with music and a cocoa drink before continuing on their exploration tour.

What couldn't you discover there!
There was chocolate in various flavours with nuts or fruit, chocolate spreads, roasted and chocolate-coated cocoa beans, drinking chocolate and, for children, chocolate in all kinds of lolly shapes.

In a tent, visitors could take part in a cocoa ceremony performed by two lovely women from Costa Rica, who exuded a great flair in their traditional clothing. In general, there was a lot to experience in the outdoor area, be it on the big stage or at the many stalls of the traders, who offered chocolate in every form and thus rounded off the festival perfectly.

We left the Chocolate Festival on Sunday after hours, quite exhausted but happy from the many (chocolate) impressions.

What we remember: great exhibitors, delicious chocolate, smiling children, a good atmosphere, rousing music, hard-working volunteers from the Capital of Culture and the organisers and the hope for fair trade and a reunion in 2026.

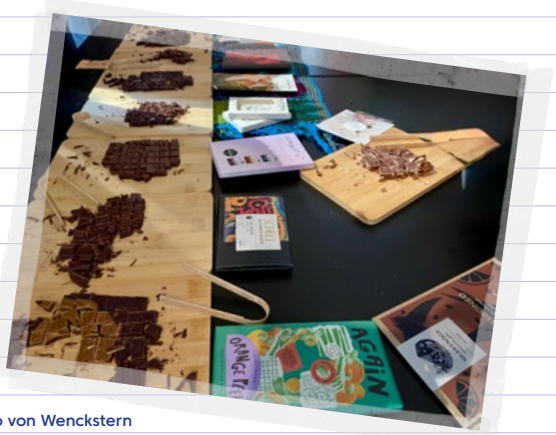
Authors:
Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern

# 03 Aug 2025 EuroBean Chocolate Festival

This assignment was probably my “sweetest”, because the theme was “chocolate”.

I'm a chocolate fan, so I absolutely had to take part in this event as a volunteer. It's a European chocolate festival that focuses on artisanal bean-to-bar chocolate and promotes awareness of fair trade and sustainability in cocoa farming. In 2025, it was organised in the Chemnitz Industrial Museum as part of the Capital of Culture Chemnitz. This is my favourite museum in Chemnitz, even without chocolate. The combination of the beautiful industrial building, the exhibits on display and the smell of chocolate was unbeatable.

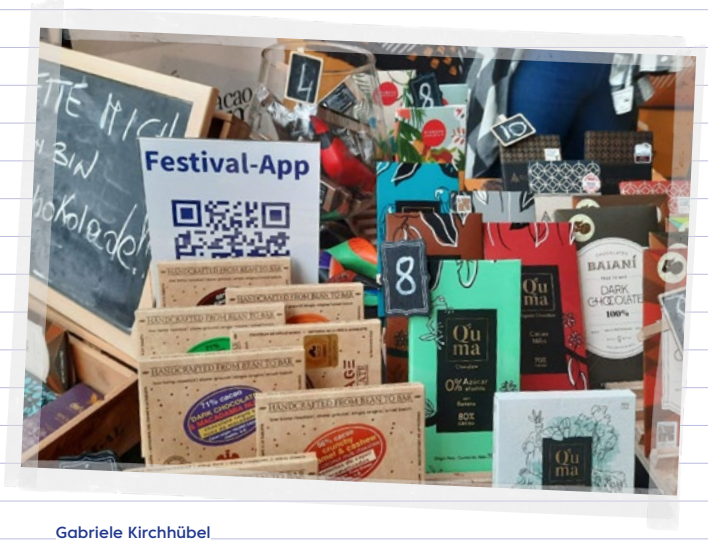
It was my turn on 3 August from 2pm to 6pm. My job was to direct the queuing visitors in front of the museum so that the waiting time at the ticket office wasn't unnecessarily long: Visitors with an online ticket to the left, visitors without an online ticket to the right, to the end of the queue. There was a lot of interest and the visitors thought it was very nice to be greeted in a friendly manner before entering the museum. During my break, I was able to visit the many chocolate stands myself, taste some delicious chocolate and learn a lot about how it is made and about cocoa in general. The organisers of the festival were very generous. We were given two free tickets (for us and one visitor) and 4 vouchers. In return, there was delicious food, cool drinks, ice cream and coffee specialities in the outdoor area of the museum.

There were also a lot of people there and they enjoyed the offers just as much as we did.

Visitors could also register for tastings or lectures. The chocolate of the year was then chosen in the evening as part of the tastings. There were various programme items on the stage in the outdoor area throughout the day, which the visitors gladly accepted.

After our service, we volunteers sat together for a while, had a drink and shared our experiences. I also have very fond memories of this assignment.

Author: Gabriele Kirchhübel




Gabriele Kirchhübel




private

# 04 Aug 2025 Insights and experiences at the exhibition “Verstrickungen: On the role of textiles in art and society” at Kunstbahnhof Flöha

We have been involved since the beginning of the “Verstrickungen” exhibition. Our assignments last four to six hours and always start with fixed procedures: After calling Holger (Holger is the dedicated, friendly employee of Flöha town council), the doors open. We switch on the video installations and prepare the catering for the visitors.

While the beginning and end are clearly defined, the course of the event always remains open and lively. Direct contact with the visitors is particularly important — the centrepiece of our voluntary work. Our active approach creates a lively exchange in which the visitors share their stories and memories. The stories of long-standing residents of Flöha are particularly moving. In moments like these, it becomes clear how much the exhibition functions as a place of encounter. The joy of the visitors shows that our work also creates emotional connections.

The personal exchange enables us to pass on knowledge and information. We talk about the Capital of Culture, explain the background to the works of art and thus convey cultural and historical contexts. This makes the exhibition more tangible for visitors. At the same time, the contact itself enriches us: We receive recognition and experience a lot of gratitude.

The exhibition has evolved over time. A new meeting room with seating, free coffee, a book exchange shelf and films about the old cotton mill invites visitors to linger and makes the exhibition even more attractive.

At the end of our assignment, we shut down the technology, prepare everything for the next shift and switch off the lights. One last call to Holger. The doors close. We are satisfied and full of the many wonderful encounters that this job has given us.

Authors:
Solveig Richter, Dörte Kopke
and Simone Sippel



SV Flöha




SV Flöha




SV Flöha

# 09 Aug 2025 Edvard Munch's “Angst”: Exhibition opening in Chemnitz — A cultural highlight

On 9 August at 12 noon, I started volunteering at the opening ceremony for the Munch exhibition at the Chemnitz Opera House. I was really looking forward to it, because when do you get the opportunity to be so close to the action?

We met up with 5 other volunteers in the art collections and were briefed by Christiane. Our main task was to welcome all the guests, accompany them to their seats and ensure that everything ran smoothly. The first visitors arrived at 1 pm, but they still had to wait, as the doors to the auditorium did not open until 1.30 pm. The excitement was palpable, everyone wanted to get a good seat at this unique opening.

The guests of honour included Mr and Mrs Esche, descendants of the Chemnitz manufacturing family where Edvard Munch spent a few weeks, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in Germany, Mrs Laila Strenseng, Lord Mayor Sven Schulze, Saxony's Prime Minister Michael Kretschmer and many other sponsors and supporters.

The opening ceremony began at 2 p.m. with various speeches, including those by the General Director of the Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Florence Thurmes, and the curator Diana Kopka. In their speeches, the themes of fear and loneliness were addressed again and again and a connection was made to the present day with our own fears such as war, illness or loss. The ceremony was accompanied by appropriate piano music.

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Germany, Ms Laila Strenseng, Lord Mayor Sven Schulze and Saxony's Minister President Michael Kretschmer praised the high-calibre exhibition as one of the highlights of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025. After the ceremony, we accompanied the visitors to the exhibition in the art collections, where everyone was cordially invited to view the works of Munch and many other artists such as Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Georg Baselitz, Neo Rauch and Andy Warhol.

Edvard Munch was a pioneer of modernism and created important works of expressionism. The exhibition features 140 exhibits, 96 of which are by Munch, including the lithograph “The Scream” and the painting “Two People. The Lonely Ones”. These works are being shown in Germany for the first time in almost 90 years. With the portrait “Herbert Esche” and the “View of the Chemnitz Valley”, two paintings are also on display that were created in the Villa Esche in Chemnitz and are on loan.

For me, it was remarkable and surprising how many artists were and still are inspired by Edvard Munch — then as now. In keeping with the theme of the exhibition, the Pavilion of Fear was also located in front of the Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz and invited visitors to discuss the topic of

fear and share their own experiences in various formats such as talks or readings.

I can't say what I liked best. As we all know, art is a matter of taste — so everyone should make up their own mind. There is still time to do so until 2 November 2025.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern



Bodo von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern

## 10 Aug 2025 Yard festival

# “Vom Wimmeln und Wuseln” — Stadtwirtschaft Chemnitz

I signed up for the programme because it was to take place in Chemnitz. I imagined taking the tram to Sonnenberg and back on a sunny Sunday and enjoying a charming street festival. That would be a perfect end to the week! As is so often the case, I had only skimmed the description of the operation and was therefore surprised when I arrived at Jakobstraße 46 at around 11am. A colourful spectacle stretched out before me: colourful pavilions, a stage with a choir, a champagne reception, stalls with drinks and food, a children's race track, a visit from the Lord Mayor and the FabLab with its impressive rooms and equipment that encourage creativity.




Luise Müller



Julia Albert

Balloons and bunting adorned the grounds and I knew this event was bigger than I expected. The event team greeted the volunteers warmly and handed out the tasks during a quick tour. Many of the volunteers already knew each other from previous assignments, but the warm atmosphere made everyone feel welcome and engaged in conversation. Without hesitation, volunteers jumped in to support each other during breaks, and drinks and meals were provided for everyone. This positive vibe was infectious and was reflected in the event team, exhibitors, musicians, FabLab supervisors, security staff and the many visitors. My shift flew by and I was supposed to leave at 4pm. But I met lots of other volunteers in civilian clothes and got chatting to them. I ended up staying until the end, when everyone was helping to pack up. “Are you still there?” many of them asked with amusement and a twinkle in their eyes as they passed me. I mention this because many of you know of missions where you counted the minutes until the end and swore never to come back for various reasons. I wish this place all the best for the future and many creative projects.

Author: Julia Albert



Luise Müller



# 14 Aug 2025 At the invitation of the Prime Minister to the summer party

Since the beginning of the year, all of Europe has been looking to Chemnitz. The city has shone in a new light in recent months — with countless events, major festivals and many hands-on activities for residents and visitors.

Reason enough for our Minister President Michael Kretschmer to organise this year's summer festival of the Free State of Saxony in Chemnitz and celebrate with the creators of the Capital of Culture. In addition to invited guests from the worlds of politics, business, art and culture, a large number of volunteers also mingled with the crowd. So that we could enjoy the summer festival as visitors, “our” head of the volunteer programme, Dirk Zinner, and his team were on duty for us in their blue T-shirts. What a lovely gesture!

The event in the Wirkbau area, an industrial complex of what used to be the largest textile machinery factory in Germany, was opened by a Bandoneon club with the Eurovision anthem, among other things. Not only musically fitting for the Capital of Culture year, but also the history of the Bandoneon is closely linked to Chemnitz, where Carl Friedrich Uhlig began building the first concertina around 1840. The programme was led by a duo of two young employees of Chemnitz2025 gGmbH, who announced the other contributions with great charm and humour.

Michael Kretschmer opened the summer festival with personal and emotional words — especially about the importance of Chemnitz for him and our federal state. This was followed by performances by the “Dancing Neighbours” (a Capital of Culture project that brings together people of different generations from Chemnitz to dance together) and the inclusive choir “Kaleidoskop” from the SFZ Förderzentrum. The song “Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen (...mein Michael)” in particular — with a wink at the Minister President — put the guests in a good mood.

After the official part, the event moved outside to the hall, where cool drinks and a wide range of food awaited us. The seats filled up quickly, as did the fantastic roof terrace, perfect for a hot summer's day. The programme also included an auction of gifts from the Saxon State Chancellery's evidence room and the opportunity to climb the 63 m high tower of the Wirkbau.

The evening offered plenty of room for discussions, reunions with volunteers and ended well after 9 pm with music and a good atmosphere. A big thank you to our Prime Minister for recognising and appreciating our commitment and for allowing us to be guests at the summer party.

Author: Cathleen Nobach



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# 20 Aug 2025 Hiking day with the “Dancing Neighbours”

This is not a report about a volunteer assignment, but about a hiking day that I organised for the “Dancing Neighbours” soul group. It has already become a wonderful tradition for us to lace up our hiking boots and recharge our batteries together in the great outdoors. The city railway took us to Braunsdorf/Lichtenwalde and we hiked through the forest to the beautiful “Drillichblick” and the Waldkirche, where we took a short break. Then we continued along the Zschopau river, across the “Wolfsschlucht” gorge, along the signposted circular hiking trail and back to Braunsdorf. The day ended with delicious food, cool drinks and long conversations in the pub, popularly known as “Emil”, at Braunsdorf railway station.

**We are already looking forward to our next hike together.**

Author: Adelheid Theeg




Adelheid Theeg



Ria Benz

# 22 Aug 2025 Together for ibug — A look behind the scenes

The opening of the ibug art festival was planned for Friday, 22 August 2025, at 3 pm sharp in the empty former Scheffel Hospital in Chemnitz. The chosen location was already very interesting and steeped in history: built in 1910 as the administrative building of the Presto-Werke, from 1935 the headquarters of Auto-Union AG and after the war a hospital with around 800 beds!

Many volunteers were really looking forward to it and had already been briefed by those responsible at ibug on the previous Tuesday and given an explanation of this special place. We quickly toured the premises to gain an initial insight and be well prepared for the visitors. See you at the opening!

We met punctually at the entrance before the start on Friday to go to our supervisory positions. However, the bad news slowly filtered through: The ibug could not be opened because the building permit was missing. What a shock! It was obvious to those responsible, the artists and ibug volunteers, who had been working on the preparations for weeks and had sometimes taken unpaid leave to do so. Everyone was stunned and had to digest the situation and regroup.

Now we volunteers were standing here and also looked a bit perplexed — what now? Since we were there, many of us decided to stay and simply lend a hand so that ibug could at least open on Saturday.

After a brief “crisis meeting”, the tasks were distributed: Clearing rubble, sweeping corridors, cordoning off forbidden zones, putting up emergency exit signs etc. My husband and I helped Alisa from the ibug team to put up the emergency exit signs. We walked through all the corridors and stairwells and looked at where it was important to place them. As the building was old, damp in places and very dusty, it wasn't always easy! So imagination, creativity and improvisation were required, but with adhesive tape and mounting glue, everything was solvable.

The great thing about our assignment was that we met so many familiar volunteers who tackled the tasks with huge enthusiasm and commitment. A brief smile, a friendly nod and the feeling that we could really help here united us all and also made us a little proud.

We volunteers were always fully accepted and recognised. This was also evident, for example, in the fact that we were provided with free food — cooked by ibug volunteers, of course — and drinks. The thank-you email from the ibug Perso team to all the volunteers was particularly great. Thank you for your appreciation!

The next day, ibug opened its doors at 10 a.m. as we had hoped. It filled us with joy to have made our small contribution to the success of the event as volunteers.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern

Alisa





Bettina von Wenckstern



private

# 23 Aug 2025 Climbing on the roof of Chemnitz

On the Tuesday before the event, there was a briefing with the three ladies from the festival team, where everything was explained and the roofs/sites were allocated to the volunteers. I was given the castle church. The briefing beforehand was very pleasant and many questions were answered. Who, when, where, what.... Perfect. The location briefing was available on paper and also digitally, which I naturally prefer. On the day of the event, I picked up my packed lunch from the Chemnitz2025 office and took a few words of advice from Dirk Zinner, the head of the volunteer programme. When I arrived at the Schlosskirche, I met volunteer Claudia, who organised admission and handed me my shift and explained other tasks.

I was working with 3 other volunteers, Katrin, Claudia and Christian. We did the right thing and exchanged telephone numbers, which made communication within the tower much easier. To be honest, I don't want to have to walk up and down the seemingly endless spiral staircase 30-40 times. I used WhatsApp to ask Christian, who was organising admission and counting people, to send me the next 10-12 people. The whole thing worked according to the “floor principle”: at the beginning, the group went up to the first floor of the tower to the roof truss of the nave for a guided tour. When this group had finished, they continued one floor higher to the tower keeper's flat. At that moment, the next group arrived from the entrance.

From the tower keeper's flat, they were “guided” to the clockwork of the tower clock and then into the belfry, where the large bells are located. The group then began the descent to the exit. The principle worked so well that we hardly had any traffic jams or dicey situations. However, there were also people who had to struggle with a spinning worm due to the climb up the spiral staircase or simply had to take a break on the level. No problem for us. As always, I was “lucky” to get into “special” situations as a volunteer. The roof truss you see in the photos above is the roof of the church and from there you can see the vaults of the nave. The guide of this section, Mr Fensch (himself a volunteer), asked me to save his name badge, which had fallen in there shortly before. Sure, no problem! I asked if this area was even accessible, which was answered in the affirmative. So I climbed down the small ladder onto the nave, under a few beams and rescued it. As a reward, Mrs Fensch invited me for coffee and cake in the roof truss. What can I say.... A once in a lifetime experience. After this short break, I signalled for the next group to start their ascent to the roof truss.

We closed the entrance at 17:30 on the instructions of the members of the parish, so that no one was near the belfry at 18:00, as the carillon started at this time. I'm sure you can imagine the volume level involved! Our visitors that day were 99% positive and understood the carillon.

However, I also had one person who confronted me with the fact that in other churches it had not been a problem to be present during the carillon. I recalled the de-escalation training I had attended and explained that the church congregation makes the rules of the house and that it is not possible to be present during the carillon. After this brief de-escalating conversation, the person said a friendly goodbye and began the descent to the exit. When the last group had left the tower, all the volunteers had a short chat with the people in charge of the parish. I took a few more photos of the mission, we said our goodbyes and left.

I went on to Puschen on the Kaßberg to round off the evening with friends and some relaxed musical entertainment.

Author: Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz

# 23 Aug 2025 “Rooftops Festival” — Sonnenberg Primary School

The colourful rooftop festival in Chemnitz got off to a somewhat bumpy and difficult start with its preparations, just like some other assignments. Uncertainties were clarified in the group chat five minutes before the start. The rest was discussed on site on the soundtrack. But after three quarters of a year, you say to yourself: “It'll work out somehow.”

It was a crisp 9 degrees when I picked up my packed lunch and equipment from the former Schmidtbank at 8.30am and made my way to the primary school on the Sonnenberg. Unfortunately, the name “Sonnenberg” was no guarantee of good weather on this Saturday. While we decorated the entrance with colourful balloons and signs in the last few minutes before opening, a cool wind blew across the grounds. The whole thing took place under the watchful eyes of the police stationed there. Hopefully there won't be another reprimand. Despite the heavy rain showers, many visitors, young and old, came to the school garden. Of course, everyone knew that there was no great view of Chemnitz here. But the extensive school garden with its various beds still managed to inspire the guests.

Everyone was pleasantly surprised at how much is done for the pupils and how much they would have liked to have had such a great school garden in their youth. In the end, the final number of 159 visitors also surprised me. Thank you very much for the nice conversations.

Author: Julia Albert



Julia Albert



private

# 24 Aug 2025 Deployment at the IBUG

My involvement with IBUG began on 19 July, when I met up with some of the volunteers and the IBUG team began to prepare the exhibition space and outdoor area for visitors

I was excited to see what the artists had created from the once dreary former hospital building.

The very long queue in front of the entrance boded well. It also meant that it took me five minutes to find a place to park my bike somewhere at the back of the Stadtparkbrücke bridge. Oh man! So many people! After a brief greeting with “Hello, here are your things and we'll come round with refreshments from time to time”, we were taken to our stations. And that was it for five hours in the cold.

That's when I realised that the job of steward didn't really suit me. Sitting in the cold wasn't an option, so I had to do something to pass the time. So I talked to the visitors: What they thought of the graffiti and the themes shown there and what their relationship was to the old hospital, whether they were going to watch Capital of Culture programmes.

I was also able to use my knowledge from the workshop “Dealing with people with I was responsible for barrier-free access between the buildings. The feedback was consistently positive and the visitors in wheelchairs were thrilled that they could explore every corner of IBUG.

And somehow the time flew by for me and you know what?

I will be helping out again at the second IBUG weekend. But this time with a thick jumper.

Author: Julia Albert





Julia Albert




Julia Albert

## 30 Aug 2025 Chemnitz paints and dances

On Saturday 30 August, the motto “See the unseen” of the European Capital of Culture was confirmed once again. On this beautiful sunny day, we once again saw something that had previously been invisible, even though a number of projects had already painted the stairs and walls of the city in recent years.

Today, however, the children of Chemnitz even painted a street next to the Hartmannfabrik in bright colours. Within a few hours, the grey colour of the asphalt has changed and become something magical.

But that was not all. The “Kamenica Musica” association organised a musical trail that included modern and traditional music and dance styles. On this day, the dance schools from Chemnitz, street dance groups from the Czech Republic, a group from the Johannes Kepler Grammar School in Chemnitz and a group from Liechtenstein took centre stage. The senior citizens taking part in the “Dancing Neighbours” project, one of the main projects of the European Capital of Culture, which aims to involve Chemnitz residents over the age of 60, also performed.






Maria Eugenia Maxia

Never before have so many people been involved. In fact, people of all ages and around 100 dancers took part.

It was my job, together with my colleagues Christine, Jana, Julia, Jasmine, Konstanze, Diana and Madeleine, to set up the stands and provide advice and support to the participants and artists. It was very pleasant to work to beautiful music and watch the children create little masterpieces.

Author: Maria Eugenia Maxia



Maria Eugenia Maxia



Maria Eugenia Maxia

# 30 Aug 2025 Encounters on the Purple Path — travelling along the Purple Path in the Capital of Culture Chemnitz and its region

Ever since we took part in bus trips along the Purple Path, the topic has stayed with me. Chemnitz and its region are together the European Capital of Culture 2025 and the purple ribbon connects everything. It is impossible to rate all the sculptures or discuss them here. These are personal impressions that moved me during my visit. I would like to talk about a selection of them.

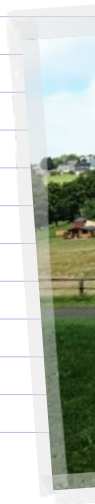
In Chemnitz, there is the work “The good spirits of my homeland” by Otmar Osten in Schillerpark. The sculpture skilfully builds a bridge from Chemnitz to the surrounding area. The gleaming silvery figures enthroned on Saxon stone pillars give a nod to the Ore Mountains.

For me, the marvellous vases by Young Yee Lee in the chancel of the Jacobi Church also stand for the impressive commitment of the Kulturkirche Chemnitz on the Purple Path. In their imperfect beauty, they also reveal to the viewer their own cracks and the fractures of the Capital of Culture. Imperfect and in many ways unseen, that is our life.

The commitment of the parishes on the Purple Path is also evident in the Lößnitz Hospital Church in a special way. Volunteers from the town ensure that many visitors find an open church and can admire the wonderful mirror installation by Rebecca Horn. Terms such as “magical” and “inexplicable phenomenon” spring to mind. We had a lively discussion with members of the parish about this impressive work of art. We also talked about an opportunity for Lößnitz to become more attractive to tourists. The town has been experiencing the positive effects of the connection to the Purple Path in recent weeks.

We were able to experience an impressive event on the grounds of the Lauta/Marienberg horse farm on 24 August. The artist Corina Gertz opened her exhibition “The Averted Portrait”. Many celebrities from Chemnitz, Marienberg and further afield travelled to the event. Members of the Bergbrüderschaft Marienberg in their festive habits emphasised these beautiful views of a wide variety of people in traditional costumes, which can also be seen “outdoors” here. My favourite motif can be seen in the gallery above. It shows a mountain brother standing with dignity in front of his back portrait. This shows the strong connection to the mountain from which everything comes.

Finally, I would like to report on the sculpture “Twister Again” by Alice Aycock in the Seiffen Open-Air Museum. A twister like this is created during traditional tyre turning, where skilled craftsmen make toy animals out of wood. I became aware of this on 29 August.



On that day, I was working as a volunteer at the toy-making festival in Seiffen and I looked at these painted animal miniatures. They have a simple naturalness and will stimulate the imagination of the children who play with them. The twister on the Purple Path creates a connection to this.

Author: Heidi Guderian



Heidi Guderian




Heidi Guderian



Heidi Guderian

# 31 Aug 2025 Deployment to the European Toymaking Festival in Seiffen

One assignment took us to Seiffen at the end of August for the European Toymaking Festival. The theme was not only very interesting in itself, but also had a very special location, the former leisure pool in Seiffen, which has been closed for 23 years.

The festival was organised by the Makers, Business and Arts project team together with the Denkwerkstatt Seiffen and project manager Cheyenne Worotnik. We found the variety — from the exhibitions of the toy makers' products to workshops and concerts — so interesting that we joined the core team. We started on Thursday with the set-up — e.g. dressing up the Mannheimer, setting up beer table sets and the information stand, etc. The next day, the exhibitors arrived and the former baths were not only filled with life, but also with wonderful toys from different countries. Friday was also the day of the workshops — some of the participants sat in the former swimming pool. Labelled “From here barefoot area”, they found their way to the venue (wearing shoes, of course).

Over the following days, we supported the organisation team wherever we could, whether it was with car park management, admission, guest counting or the Capital of Culture postcard stand, to name but a few.

A special highlight for the younger guests was certainly the car race in the former slide, which was organised with home-made wooden cars.

It was great fun to be there and the whole organisation team made us feel like we belonged. We were well catered for and our questions were always answered calmly and with a smile. A big thank you from us for that.

Our personal highlights were Emma Brix's UFO oracle, the rope spinning top, the mandalas made by children with Sina bricks and, of course, the evening with the Asphalt Raketen.

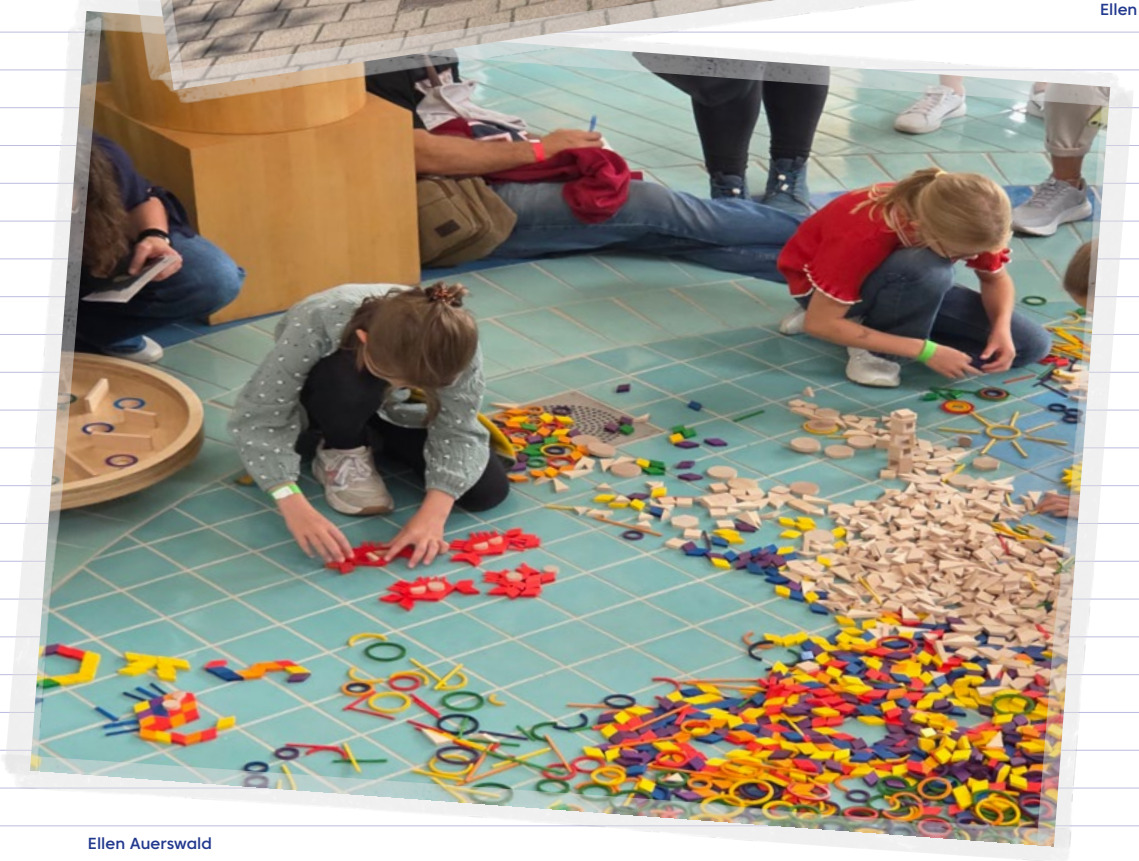
Authors:
Katrin, Jens Grasselt and Ellen Auerswald



Ellen Auerswald




Ellen Auerswald



Ellen Auerswald

# 13 Sep 2025 Absaufen_in_Chemnitz

I've done a lot of crazy things in my life. One of them was bringing 5kg of pasta salad to the volunteers of the water rescue service in a blue light vehicle during the Kosmos Festival. Once that was done, I was asked if I could provide media support for a micro-project in September. I didn't know much about it until then, but anyway, I agreed. What could possibly happen? Shortly afterwards, I met with the initiators, who had won the micro-project as part of the Capital of Culture and now had to “deliver”.

The idea was to build a raft out of lots of PET deposit bottles and spend 24 hours on it on the castle pond. I admit that I always get caught up in this kind of cultural madness. The organiser told me that a channel on Instagram should be fed with video footage of the event. No problem, I'll do it blindfolded! My idea was to take a support boat with me. The city of Chemnitz actually authorised this for 24 hours. I was flabbergasted. Many years ago, my wife had the idea of exploring the castle pond in our travelling kayak. Unfortunately, this was not possible at the time due to the ownership of the castle pond. And now it is, at least for 24 hours. No sooner said than done. Friday was the first day of building the raft, the first plastic caps were attached to 2 large wooden boards with screws. Then the PET bottles were added — a very special puzzle if you have different bottles with different sized caps. The colours were the solution to the puzzle. Saturday was the big day.

The last bottles were attached to the raft and the raft was fitted with side rails so that neither of them would fall into the water at night. At 2 p.m. we set off for the shore of the castle pond almost on time. I already had my kayak ready to go at the edge of the bank. The raft, which was very heavy, was lowered into the water by 4 people. It actually floated! The initiators Danny and Julia fetched their inflatable mattress and the 24-hour adventure started straight away. Another volunteer had heard about the event and launched her SUP board straight into the water. And I seized the opportunity, launched my bright red kayak into the water of the castle pond and was beaming from ear to ear. A once in a lifetime experience! I filmed the two of them from the kayak and diligently posted videos of this crazy action.



I have to say, some funny things came out of it. The two of them were bought a coffee by random people. An ice cream on top... what more could you want? In the evening, friendly volunteers came round with pizza. Later in the evening, someone brought cocktails... it's on!

On Sunday, the weather forecast predicted heavy rain, which forced them to give up after 10pm.

I arrived shortly before 12 noon and had hot tea and freshly picked apples with me. After the warming refreshment, the dismantling of the raft began. All 282 PET bottles went into bags and were later taken to the deposit machine, the wooden boards were already taken after the operation, so there was hardly anything left of the raft itself. I took the screws and metal brackets with me into the garden, where there is always something to tinker with. This was exactly the aim of the campaign — a more sustainable way of life. You can find the Instagram channel under the name “absaufen_in_chemnitz”.

Perhaps the two have laid the foundations for something big to come in Chemnitz next year, who knows?

Author: Danny Kollwitz



Danny Kollwitz /Julia Michel



Danny Kollwitz / Julia Michel

# 13 Sep 2025 two towns — A city tour with voices from Chemnitz and Coventry

This exciting project “two towns — a performative audio walk” gives the old format of a city walk a new twist. What can you imagine?

The topic “What do people experience and feel today in public spaces in the cities of Coventry and Chemnitz” was explored in advance. With great empathy, texts were written in German and English in Chemnitz and Coventry. These stories, presented as if in a theatre play, were recorded in roles. Many actors from both cities took part. The participants listened to the texts via headphones during the walk.

However, the scenario was even more impressive. Caro from Chemnitz and Sinéad from Coventry were in costume and appeared from a distance again and again during the walk along the Chemnitz, over bridges, in the city park and back. This gave us the feeling of immersing ourselves in another time. And that's exactly what it was all about. The listener was transported back to the time of the industrial revolution, during which both cities developed strongly. They became very important in the production of all kinds of goods. This was also demonstrated to us in a performance in the former puppet theatre by the two actors with great acting commitment. Due to a mix-up in the venue, Caro and Sinéad met at a town meeting. They began to extol the virtues of their cities. It became clear that Coventry and Chemnitz were not much different. Both cities produced weaving and sewing machines, steam engines, buses, locomotives, motorbikes, bicycles, cars and textiles of all kinds.

A City Life song concluded the spectacle on the stage area of the lost place 'Puppet Stage'.

**Celebrating city history in this way is great fun.**

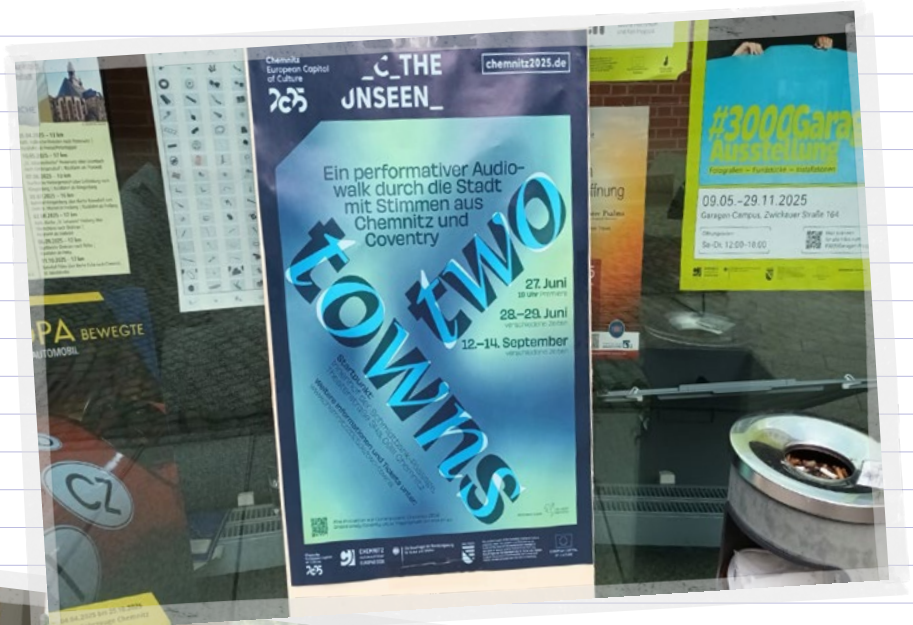
On the way back to Schmidtbank-Passage, the participants were confronted with the question: “What should an ideal public space be like?” There are no universal answers to this question. One suggestion was: “The best solutions are found by walking”.

Finally, I would like to say why this urban project moves me. In the nineties of the last century, I visited our twin city of Manchester with the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Chemnitz e.V. (Chemnitz German-British Society). On this trip, we had many encounters and conversations with friends from England. The destruction of Coventry Cathedral in the Second World War was also an event that we talked about intensively.

Since then, I have been following the associated history of the Cross of Nails as a symbol of reconciliation and peace.

Chemnitz is also part of this community. A Cross of Nails has stood in the Jacobi Church since 5 March 2025. This is a moving connection between the two cities of Coventry and Chemnitz.

Author: Heidi Guderian




Heidi Guderian




Heidi Guderian

# 18 Sep 2025 Volunteer work at the Association of German Cities — experiencing culture, communicating the city

On 18 September 2025, our support was needed as volunteers at the German Association of Cities in Chemnitz. The participants, who had travelled from all over Germany, met in the morning for a training session at Chemnitz City Hall. After the official programme, they were able to choose between several cultural activities in the afternoon.

There were four tours to choose from:

- Hartmannfabrik
- Industrial museum
- Art collections
- Gunzenhauser Museum

Our task was to take the groups to the respective museums or to the Hartmannfabrik. I accompanied the guests to the Gunzenhauser Museum. As we walked together, we exchanged ideas and told stories about Chemnitz — almost like a little guided tour of the city.

We were already expected at the museum and were given a brief introduction to the history of the building and the collection of the Munich gallery owner Dr Alfred Gunzenhauser, which comprises over 3,000 works and found its way to Chemnitz.

Afterwards, we were lucky enough to experience a guided tour of the current exhibition “WIN/WIN — Art Acquisitions by the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony”. Every year, the Cultural Foundation acquires works of contemporary visual art in order to provide financial support to artists at important points in their careers and to make their work accessible to the public. The focus is on works that were created in the Free State of Saxony.

Unfortunately, we were unable to visit the upper floors as two new exhibitions were being prepared there. Nevertheless, the visit was a great experience and the participants were impressed by the modern architecture of the building and the exhibition. After the tour, I took “my” group back to the town hall, where a delicious dinner awaited them in the brewery.

I also met the other volunteers again at the market. They all reported positive experiences and great interest in the Capital of Culture. Every volunteer was also a city guide — and we were delighted with our guests' enthusiasm for Chemnitz and the positive feedback from the places they visited.

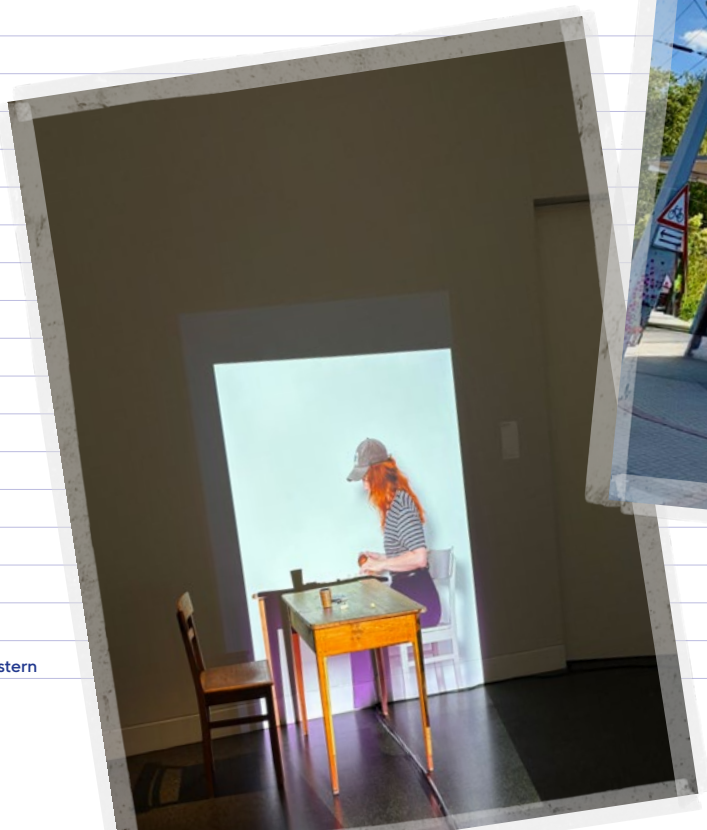
Author: Bettina von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern

# 25 Sep 2025 Light our Vision (LOV) — scientific survey

This event was not only big and impressive, but also full of energy. Precisely because there were so many exciting art installations centred around the theme of “time”, it might have benefited from more preparation time and additional volunteers. But that would be the only thing that could be criticised.

The first event on Tuesday started with a smaller team. Nevertheless, many questions were answered in the online briefing and the most important content was conveyed so that everyone was well prepared.

As my assignment in the evening had been spontaneously postponed by an hour, I stood in for another post to bridge the time. That was a good thing, as there was a shortage of staff there.

My companion for the scientific survey was very nice. Equipped with microphones and umbrellas, we started at the Karl Marx Monument, walked across Marienplatz and finally arrived at Theaterplatz. I described my impressions of the art installations and answered questions in my — I hope — witty way.




Julia Albert



Julia Albert

I was able to enjoy the many colourful facades with background music. The hour of the interview flew by. As a small gift, I was given a delicious Printe from Aachen.

Afterwards, I heard from other volunteers and friends that the project was very well received by the visitors. The many photos and enthusiastic comments speak for themselves. It was really worth coming along.

Author: Julia Albert



Julia Albert

# 29 Sep 2025 Dancing Neighbours — Project of the European Capital of Culture 2025 Chemnitz

I found out about the Capital of Culture project “Dancing Neighbours” through a newspaper advertisement and two friends. At first I was sceptical — because I had no previous experience of dancing — and then such a strange name! However, acquaintances who took part assured me after their first visits that no previous experience was necessary. This was also stated in the adverts. The project is organised by the EU Japan Festival Committee every year in a cultural capital by Japanese artists. The organisers in Chemnitz succeeded in attracting the director of the Silver Dancers, Yoko Ando Matsumoto, from Yokohama. In the country with the oldest population, the practice of dance has proved very successful for this generation. That convinced me!

You can take part in the dance project at 3 locations in Chemnitz. I decided in favour of the Soulstudio in the Ermafa-Passage. I was allowed to take part in the trial training. I was impressed by the pleasant atmosphere, the detailed explanations from the dance teacher and the intense full-body movement. But nope — I wasn't allowed to join the dance class straight away and was put on the waiting list. The person responsible for the older generation was incorruptible! Fortunately, I was soon accepted and am now one of the 100 dance enthusiasts. At first I felt awkward as I couldn't internalise the choreography so quickly. But the community helped and comforted me.

The weekly training lasts around two hours. In addition to the physical exercise, it challenges the mind. Step sequences have to be memorised. Mutual support is a matter of course. Our dance teacher, a former prima ballerina, gives precise and encouraging explanations. The artistic director organises the performances with us — in the botanical garden, in residential areas or at the summer party of the Saxon Prime Minister. There will be 20 in total. Dancing is good for body, mind and soul — especially important in old age! Our oldest participant, 89 years old (or young), is the best example of this. His doctor confirms that he is completely healthy for his age.



Monika Bulla-Müller

Due to the great interest, the project leader has set up an additional summer group for the older generation in the Schiller Garden, i.e. outdoors. This increases the number of dancers once again.

Five intensive courses with Japanese dance teachers are the highlights of the project. Choreographies are rehearsed with us with great patience and perseverance. The Japanese approach is particularly exciting: the anatomical focus is on the “collarbone”. While the word is difficult for the Japanese to pronounce, the challenge for us is to move correctly along this bone.

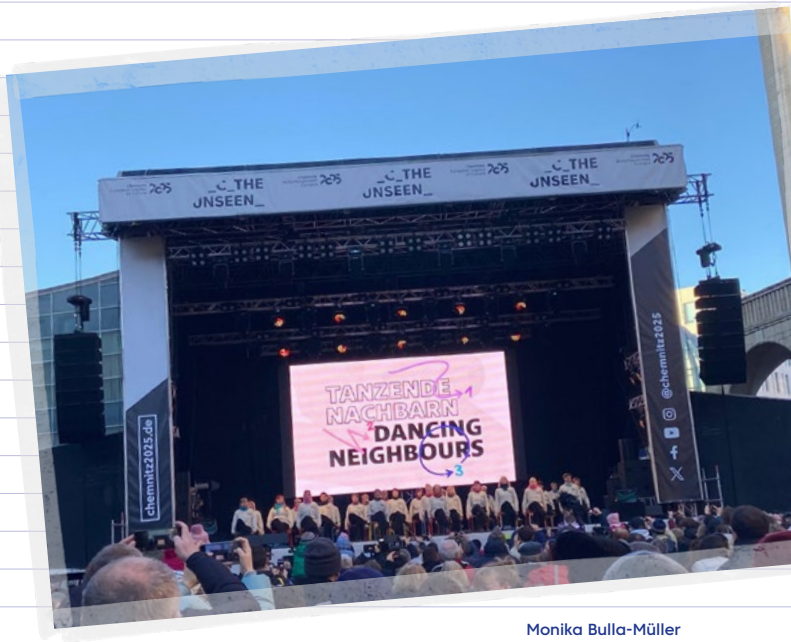
I now also like the name “Dancing Neighbours”. In addition to our shared passion for dancing, we also meet up for walks, dance parties and meals together, just like good neighbours.

I have a dream: I wish we could continue to work and dance with our Japanese friends as an art project and spread their great idea for the older generation to the world for the physical, mental and spiritual health of us all. You can have dreams!

Author: Ria Benz



Monika Bulla-Müller




Monika Bulla-Müller

# 01 Oct 2025 Volunteer programme — Made in Chemnitz

This story tells of a unique, unforgettable experience that other volunteers have also had. It reflects a mix of colourful impressions and background information.

When it was announced on the radio and TV in 2020 that Chemnitz would be the Capital of Culture 2025, it was immediately clear to me that I would be there. So I browsed through the offers on the Caritas volunteer website from time to time. In September 2022, the #3000 Garage team was looking for reinforcements and I stumbled across Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka's advert. The idea of the garages is unique and so I became **Volunteer 1** from October 2022.

I created a data-based Excel list for the project with information on most of the garage yards in Chemnitz. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack — or rather untangling a huge ball of wool. So many photos, so many details. It felt like a puzzle maze that catapulted me back to my childhood and youth in the garage yards.

From mid-2023, I was fully active in the **volunteer team**. We started a new chapter — full of unknown paths, but with really good vibes. The initial period was spontaneous, but not a blind flight: our “conductor” Dirk Zinner, the head of volunteering, calmly guided us — the first volunteers — through the initial steps.

There were lots of new things: a deployment database for all volunteers, our shirts and outfits for all weathers, training courses, safety training, voice training, tandem language courses, craft evenings, first aid refresher courses and much more. A real highlight was the visit to the maximo factory — there I was able to experience the production of our cool winter hats live and watch how enthusiastic women from Chemnitz made them with great joy.

Step by step, we slowly got into the routine. At the beginning of 2024, a few volunteers and I founded the **volunteer editorial team** — we wanted to share the feeling of our missions with the world.

The **opening of the Hartmannfabrik** and the distribution of the official flyers really got the positive mood in the city buzzing. The 18.01.25 was a goosebump moment for us volunteers — the **Opening Day** — the energy was palpable everywhere. Our volunteer team from the Capital of Culture (Kuha) supported us. April saw the start of the **Free Walking Tour** — organised by volunteers. There were also lots of event briefings for volunteers, sun cream and everything else you need.

We have gone from strangers to a close-knit community with a common goal and a lot of passion for our city. Many of us meet up at various events and are happy that we have been able to play our part in making it a success.

In the hot final phase, the Kuha volunteer team consists of Michelle, Delfina, Dirk, Anton and Carsten, who pull the strings and look after **1,192 volunteers** .

In a few years' time, we will look back and say: “How cool was that?” We were part of the Capital of Culture and collected memories that will stay with us.

Author: Bodo von Wenckstern




Bodo von Wenckstern




Bodo von Wenckstern




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# 08 Oct 2025 Opening of the Betonblühen Festival — Focus on young culture

On 8 October 2025, the starting signal was given for five days full of music, art, discussions and action — organised by young people for young people between the ages of 14 and 26. I was there for the opening, together with other volunteers.

For five days, everything revolved around music, art, discussions, sport and creative design. Each day had its own theme, so there really was something for everyone.

The energy was palpable as soon as we arrived — everyone was motivated, but there was still a lot to do: setting up stands, preparing craft materials, checking the technology, laying out information material and much more.

Our task as volunteers was to greet the guests at the entrance, take their details and hand them visitor passes and food vouchers. With around 80 young people registered, one thing was clear: it was going to be lively! The event started at 12 noon sharp, and thanks to good organisation, there were hardly any queues. Whenever a tram arrived, things got a little turbulent, but everyone was relaxed and helpful.

A special highlight: in addition to the registered participants, there were also many spontaneous visitors. They were easily registered and were able to join in straight away. Some were significantly younger or older than the target group — they simply wanted to take a look at what moves young people and what visions they have for the future in the East.

The motto of the opening day was **ROOTS — OstVISION**. The kick-off started at 1 p.m. with the OstVISION crew and musical accompaniment from LennArt.

The focus was on dialogue with the younger generation: what are their wishes, ideas and visions for the future in the East? There were various working groups, panel discussions with political decision-makers — including Minister Petra Köpping — and fish bowl discussions on the survey results.

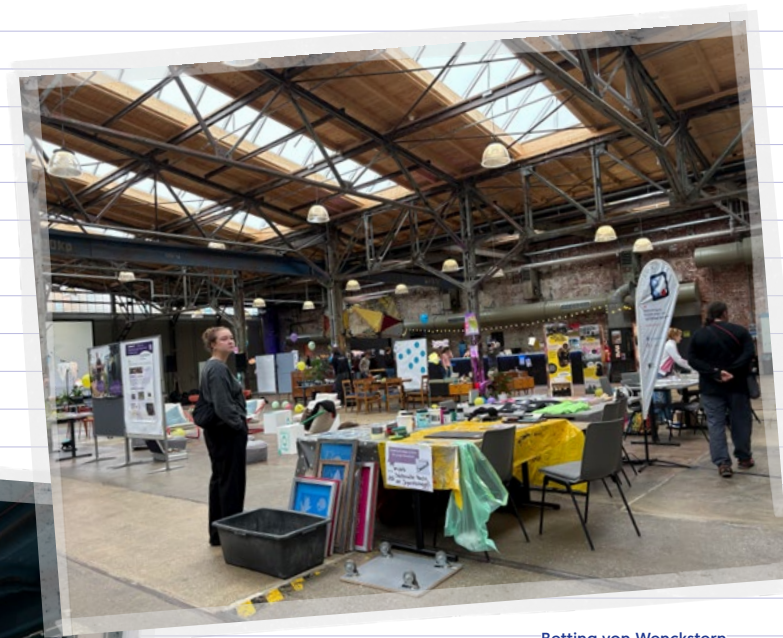
Everything took place in a relaxed, respectful atmosphere. While making mobile phone chains, screen printing or playing basketball, it was easy to exchange ideas, gather new ideas and meet like-minded people. Outside, there was the opportunity to try your hand at graffiti with Markus and Tim and create your own colourful visions — and maybe even discover a new hobby.

Real highlights: Admission was free and all participants received free food and drinks. A dance show by Passion Life and a party with DJs in the evening created a great atmosphere.

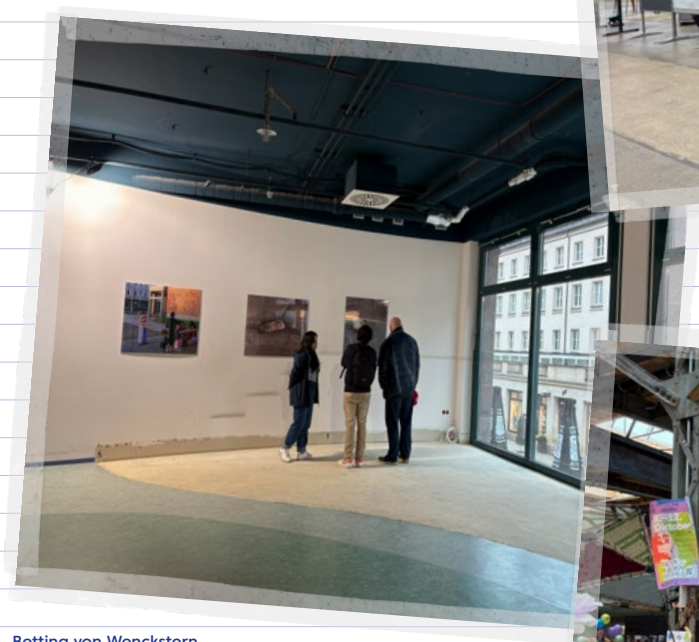
After my shift, I visited the **“Asphalt Poetry”** exhibition as part of the Betonblühen festival. Pictures, short stories and poems about concrete and asphalt were on display here — created by teenagers, young adults and volunteers from the Capital of Culture.

For me, it was a day full of energy, dialogue and creativity — the Betonblühen Festival showed how lively young culture is in the East.

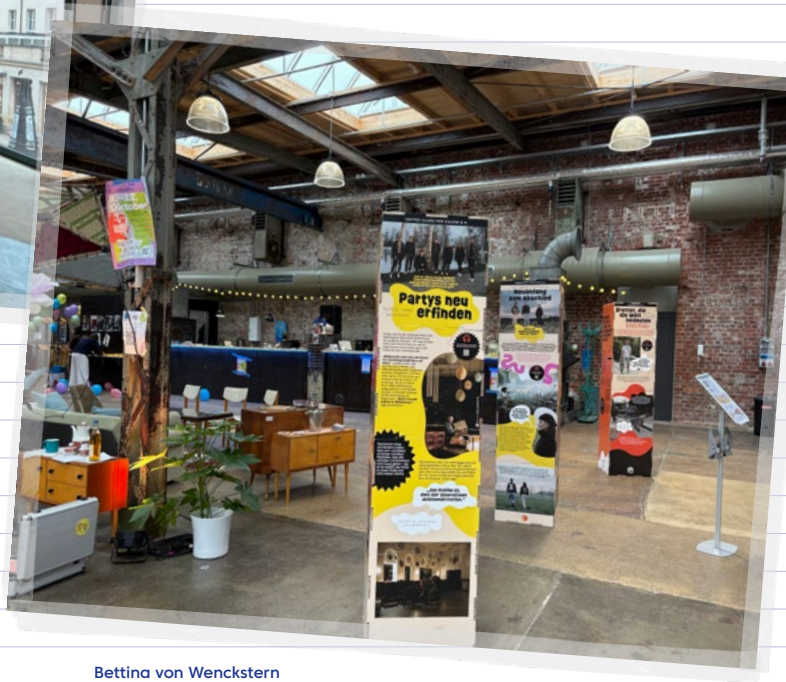
Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern



Bettina von Wenckstern




Bettina von Wenckstern




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# 09 Oct 2025 Unbeatable together — the thank-you event for the volunteers

On 9 October 2025, the motto at the Chemnitz Garage Campus was: “Unbeatable together!” — under this motto, the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 team invited all volunteers to the big thank-you event.

The joy and warmth of the reunion was palpable as soon as you arrived. Many familiar faces, many shared memories — we volunteers have long since become one big community. Everywhere we went, we laughed, talked and reminisced about numerous assignments.

The organisers showed us their appreciation in many different ways. The speech by Lord Mayor Sven Schulze was particularly impressive as he thanked us for the countless hours of voluntary work that we contributed to the Capital of Culture year. His words were warm and sincere — and when he later poured the wine in person, it was a wonderful moment of closeness and togetherness.

A highlight of the evening was the rousing performance by the “Dancing Neighbours”. Their energetic choreography got the room moving — and many of us were immediately inspired to join in. Culinary delights also left nothing to be desired: delicious food, refreshing drinks and plenty of opportunities to socialise.

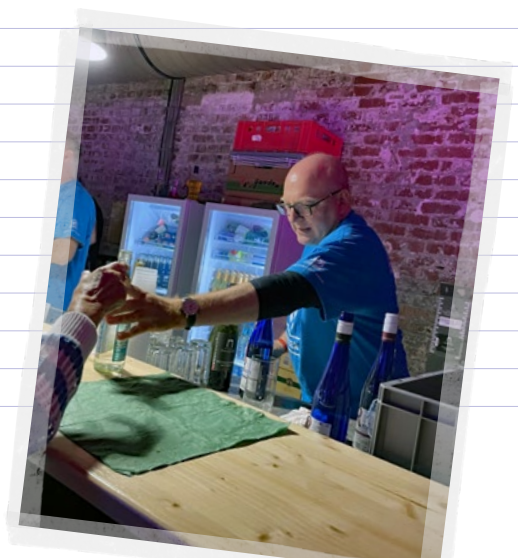
The atmosphere was exuberant, but also characterised by thoughtfulness. In many conversations, we looked back on the past months — on joint activities, challenges and moving encounters.

And the question came up again and again: What will happen in 2026?

We are full of hope and curiosity about what lies ahead. Because one thing is certain: the Capital of Culture will not end in 2025 — it will live on in our hearts and in our commitment to Chemnitz.

An evening full of appreciation, community and gratitude — and a wonderful end to a year that has shaped us all.

Author: Simone Stolle



Simone Stolle



Ernesto Uhlmann



Simone Stolle

# 18 Oct 2025 Vernissage: “Vogelperspektiven” at the Garage Campus

Today I'm not reporting on one of my volunteer assignments, but I was at a private vernissage of the #3000 Garages project in the Garage Campus. I was able to see under: “Vogelperspektiven — a work of art made of felt” and I went there very curiously. When I entered the exhibition space, many guests were already present and had gathered around a huge table. Suddenly I saw what people found so interesting, a large, colourful carpet! On closer inspection, I realised that it was a picture of Chemnitz made from felted fabric. There were lots of lovingly felted landmarks, houses, vehicles, people, water, plants, animals — everything you associate with a city. On closer inspection, I discovered so many small details that the artists, volunteers and other volunteers had spent hundreds of hours creating that I kept looking and marvelling ... and there was something else, and it belonged to Chemnitz, and that street there ... simply magnificent.

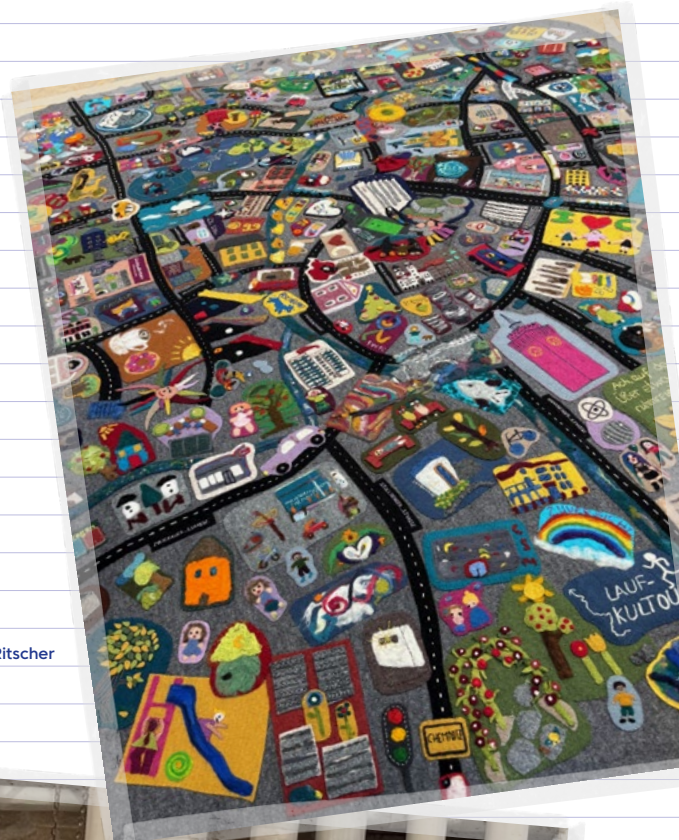
Then the exhibition was opened and one of the many contributors to the project, the volunteer Petra Leonhardt, gave this speech, which I think says everything about this wonderful work of art:

“Hello, I'm Petra and I've been a volunteer since March 2024.

What a wonderful project! Over a year ago — in September 2024 — the Capital of Culture volunteer programme was looking for people interested in the “Vogelperspektiven” project. It said that anyone who enjoyed knitting, crocheting or embroidering — in other words, working with wool — and could imagine working on the project over a longer period of time was welcome to come to the Wollgarage on Bornaer Straße for an introductory meeting. Due to the bad weather, the first meeting did not take place in the Wollgarage, but in Sabine's workshop rooms, also known as the Wollbiene. The idea was to create a wool carpet with favourite Chemnitz motifs. The idea was to create a city map as a hidden object. The working method was dry felting. I had never done it before, but it soon turned out to be easy to learn and wonderfully meditative. The results were very beautiful — as you will see here. It's great that so many people took part — people of almost all ages. The resulting variety of motifs is simply marvellous. I discovered new motifs of Chemnitz myself. For example, I had never heard of a donkey bridge in Chemnitz — but it exists. And it wasn't just Chemnitz residents who came.

Some people from other parts of Germany also came to Chemnitz specifically because of this project — which was presented in the ZDF magazine programme “Aspekte” (even Swiss television reported on it). It was a great experience. So thank you dear Sabine for converting your garage into a wool garage, for your idea of the wool carpet and your commitment over this long period of time and in so many different places and thank you dear Kati Hyypiä for your artistic support, advice and personal commitment here in Chemnitz. Dear Heike Schlegel-Hielscher, nice to have met you. It was great fun. “

Author: Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher

# 19 Oct 2025 “See the unseen” — a sweet record in the centre of Chemnitz

On Sunday 19 October, the “see the unseen” motto of the European Capital of Culture once again showed just how surprising it can be — with a very special record: **the longest apple pie in the city!**

What a sight to behold! **69 volunteers** worked together to make this sweet dream a reality. **83 recipes** came together — and in the end there were over **100 apple pies** in a long, fragrant line.

Each cake was unique: round, square, large, small, classic or creative — baked with love, with recipes from grandma or with new ideas from all over the world. The variety was simply marvellous and reflected the warmth and openness of our city.

The cakes were distributed free of charge and everything was eaten within 60 minutes.

We were stationed together with Ronny and Svetlana in front of the main entrance to Tietz — our cakes were completely sold out after just 30 minutes!



Ronny Körner



The recipes included contributions from **Belarus, France, Italy, Japan, Ukraine, Belgium and Sweden** — there were even **vegan and gluten-free versions**.

A total of **45 volunteers** helped out on the day, receiving cakes, looking after the stand and making sure everything ran smoothly. From 12 noon to 6 pm, we celebrated the start of the last big plant festival **"Harvest"** in the beautiful surroundings of the Tietz, around the petrified forest — lively, colourful and full of the scent of apples.

At the same time, the Chemnitz Adult Education Centre presented a watercolour exhibition of apple recipes, which will be on display until the end of the year. There was also music, small stage programmes, an apple rally, reading aloud for children and lots of little moments that made this day so special.

It was a feast for the senses — and a day that showed what is possible when people come together to make the invisible visible.

Authors:
Maria Eugenia Maxia and Ronny Körner



Natalie Bleyl




Natalie Bleyl

# 20 Oct 2025 Planting campaign on the Schenkenberg

“Rotgestreifte Schafsnase, Schnabelsapfel, Siebenkant, Schweizer Renette, Süße Große Schafsnase, Glanzrenette, Grüner Englischer Pepping, Scharlachrote Parmäne, Gelber Sommerkalvill, Kalterer Böhmer, Roter Wintertraubenapfel, Süßer Kurzstiel, Gelber Winterstettiner, Ostfriesischer Kalvill, Wohlschmecker aus Vierlanden.” Who still knows these melodious names of old apple varieties today? Probably only pomologists.

But in keeping with the motto of the Capital of Culture “C the unseen”, they are now being brought back to the fore. On 20 October 2025, 30 young apple trees were planted in the existing orchard on Schenkenberg in Chemnitz-Reichenhain.

Numerous volunteers and members of NABU Regionalverband Erzgebirge e.V. gathered at Schenkenberg for the occasion. After a friendly welcome from the commercial director of Kuha, Mrs Pier, and an expert introduction to the correct planting technique by a representative of NABU, all the volunteers set to work — despite the very cool wind that swept over the Schenkenberg — and grabbed their spades.

In small groups, they began to dig planting holes — carefully and deep enough to give the young trees a firm foothold later on. The protective vole net was then laid out at the bottom of the hole before the tree was carefully placed in the ground. Together they filled in the planting hole again, making sure that the grafting point remained above the ground.

The vole net was then closed, the soil carefully compacted and finally a watering ring formed.

The planting campaign was rounded off by the NABU experts placing the trefoil to stabilise the young trees and attaching the netting to prevent deer bites, who will also keep an eye on how the young apple trees grow and thrive next year. Planting was expressly encouraged. A young family also responded to this call and did not miss the opportunity to lend a hand and learn something in the process.

This planting event was a lot of fun for everyone involved.

Author: Irmgard Teschner



Irmgard Teschner




Irmgard Teschner

# 24 Oct 2025 Reading and discussion with Kathryn Scanlan

How have Chemnitz and the people of Chemnitz changed during the Capital of Culture year? How has the view of our city changed? How do non-Chemnitz residents feel about our city?

Now that the Capital of Culture year is coming to an end, these questions are exciting for me to mirror my own feelings with the feedback from visitors.

The reading with US-American Kathryn Scanlan, who lived in Chemnitz for two months and worked on her book "Boxenstart" during this time, but also experienced the city, took place on 24 October. The agenda included a reading from the current book and a discussion about her experiences in Chemnitz.

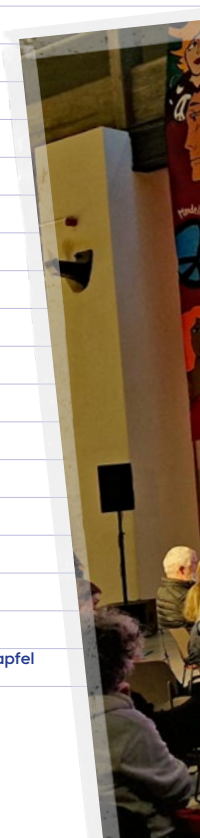
We were there as volunteers for admission and visitor support. Overall, it was very relaxed, so there was an opportunity for a quick photo with the author at the beginning. Of course, we were able to attend the reading, which was hosted by Kathryn, publisher Jan Karsten and Zoe Beck.

The book itself is the story of the life of a horse trainer — Sonia — from the Midwest of the USA. The book is largely based on the biography of a real person in the tough world of horse racing. The ensuing discussion quickly led to questions about the author's experiences in our city, her living and working in Brühl, her daily walks along the castle pond and her experience of a colourful autumn.

She summarised her very positive impressions as follows: "I enjoyed the peace and quiet of working on the Brühl just as much as the cheerfulness of the children in front of the school next door." In her words, a stark contrast to her home city of Los Angeles. She was also impressed by the "openness and commitment of the citizens to their city" as well as the fact that "there are always people who get involved and make a difference".

For me, this is another great piece of feedback, which shows that a lot of good things that were already there have become more visible thanks to the Capital of Culture, have become more firmly established and that we in Chemnitz can be proud of what we have achieved.

Author: Jan Holzapfel



Jan Holzapfel







private

# 01 Nov 2025 Word art meets Capital of Culture — SLAM25 in Chemnitz

The Capital of Culture makes it possible! Finally — after more than 10 years — the time had come again: the 29th International German Language Poetry Slam Championships returned to East Germany. From 29 October to 1 November 2025, around 80 slam poets from seven countries — Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Italy (South Tyrol) — came to Chemnitz to crown their champion as part of the European Capital of Culture Year 2025.

In addition to the individual competition, there was also a team competition in which the poets presented their best texts. In the end, the audience decided who was the most convincing and moving — and chose the winners.

But more on that later: I have to take a leap back to September 2025 first: Bodo was asked if we would like to be part of a video that explains the rules of the competition and is shown before each round of the competition. Of course we were curious and excited! It was a great experience to film together with Linux and Xenia from Spektakel Kollektiv.

Time passed — and the biggest German-language cultural festival began. The finalists were determined in 15 events. In the team final, the duo Wortwin & Slamson from Berlin prevailed against seven other finalists.

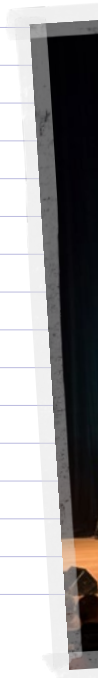
I was able to experience the individual final live on 1 November 2025 in the Chemnitz Stadthalle together with my husband and around 1,800 slam fans. It was an impressive — in the truest sense of the word — eloquent experience! The atmosphere was great and relaxed right from the start. You could feel that a large fan community had gathered here to finally choose the winner.

Inke Sommerlang & Birdy hosted the evening with a lot of humour and energy. As the rules video was shown before each competition, we were asked about it as soon as we entered the town hall. And yes — it was strange to see ourselves so huge on the screen ..

Nine slammers performed their texts in the final. The variety of topics was huge: the contributions, which were presented in a time limit of just under six minutes, were political, critical, funny and very personal. Aids are taboo at the poetry slam — only the artists themselves are on stage, possibly with a text sheet.

The performances were characterised by passion, expressive language and gestures. It was not easy for the eleven-member jury to select the three best entries. Ayse Irem, who had competed for I,Slam — a network of Muslim poetry slammers — came out on top in the final round.

In her texts, she thematises everyday racism in Germany. Second and third place went to Julius Althoetmar from Bavaria and Lia Hartl from Austria.



It was an absolutely positive experience for me to witness this competition. I was also very impressed by Julius and Lia. Julius was my favourite and I would have liked him to win as well.

But that's the way it is: only one vote can win.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern

Jonas Samson/ Petra Weixelbraun







Xenia

Bettina von Wenckstern



# 02 Nov 2025 Last garage concert in 2025 — farewell with rich sounds

On 2 November, Peter was kind to us and spared the #3000 Garage team's last planned concert of the year. A week earlier, an open-air concert would have been impossible. It was pouring with rain and the wind did the rest.

On this Sunday evening, we volunteers and numerous guests from the neighbourhood met at the Ahornstraße garage courtyard for the event. A small garage concert has been held there every year since 2023 — each time with a different band, which always creates a special atmosphere.

To quench hunger and thirst, friendly garage users and volunteer Ellen offered drinks, roasts and grilled cheese for a small fee.

**Asphalt Raketen**, an acoustic live band, immediately played a great set.

From the very first track, the super-rock music of the 80s and 90s swept over the stage. The audience listened to songs like “Purple Rain” and swayed to the rhythm. For around 90 minutes, the musicians played popular oldies that many people remember from their youth. An emotional highlight was singing the well-known song “Der Mond ist aufgegangen” together — a moment that created a unique atmosphere and emphasised the special nature of this last joint concert in 2025.

An open nostalgia garage with GDR artefacts and a photo box invited guests to take souvenir photos.

Thanks to the Asphalt Raketen, the garage users and the #3000 garage team of Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH for the successful farewell concert in the Capital of Culture year 2025.

An evening that will linger on for a long time — entertaining, warm and with great sound.

I very much hope that it will continue next year!

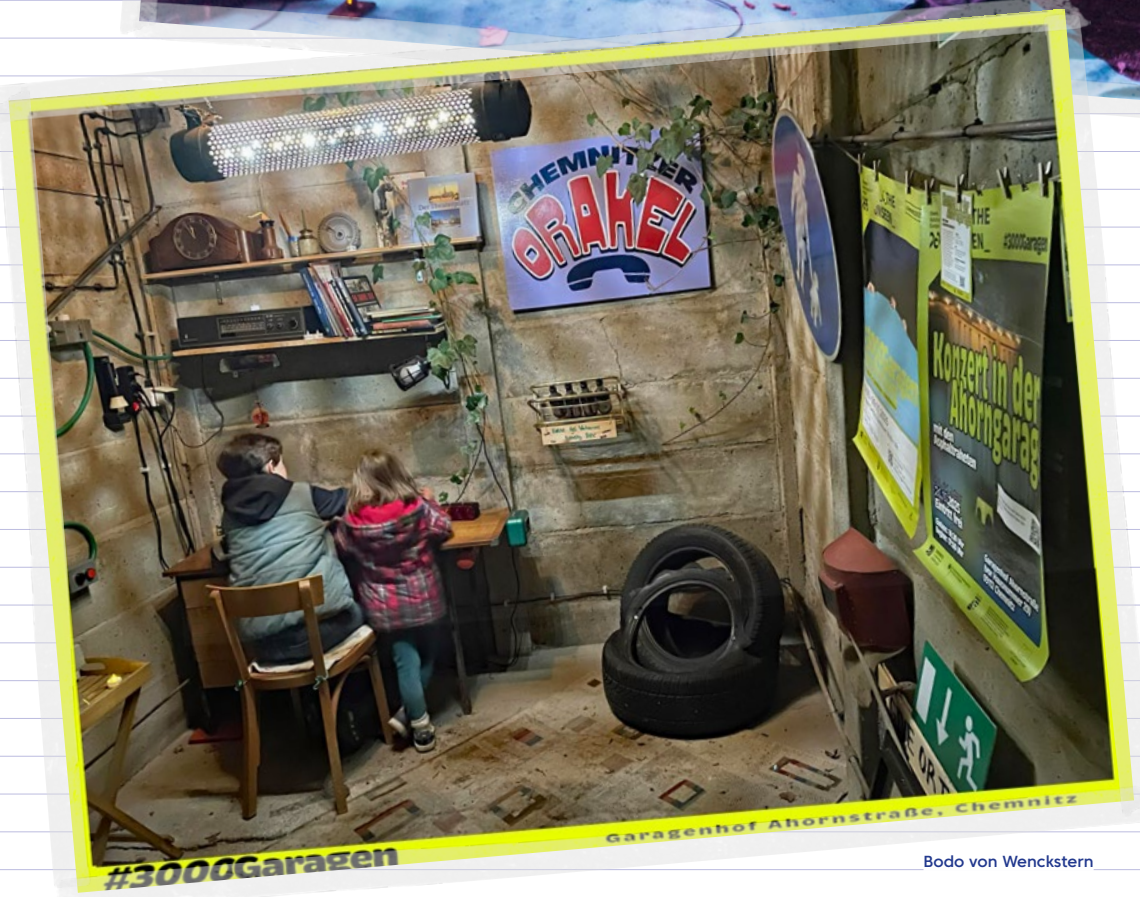
Author: Bodo von Wenckstern



Ernesto Uhlmann



Ernesto Uhlmann




Bodo von Wenckstern

# 02 Nov 2025 “Ode to craftsmanship and other works”

At the end of the Capital of Culture year, there will be another highlight on the Purple Path in Flöha. The entrance area of the Kulturbahnhof Flöha has been transformed into a cinema — all the windows are darkened, numerous rows of cosy sofas offer space for the audience and the wall surface above the passageway to the platforms serves as a projection screen for the main film.

The film comprises ten short sequences in which old traditional crafts and their Saxon producers are portrayed: the nutcracker maker, the shoemaker, the Bandoneon maker, the blue printer, the glove maker, the potter, the blacksmith, the paper maker, the writing utensil maker and the artificial flower maker. The filmmaker Donata Wenders spent a few days looking over their shoulders as they worked. In the film, she focuses primarily on the materials used and the skilful and precise hands of the craftspeople. Donata Wenders sees this film as an “audiovisual poem” that “sings the beauty of craftsmanship” — hence the film's title “Ode”.

And indeed, the film succeeds in making the passion and lifeblood that every craftswoman and craftsman puts into their work tangible for the audience. And in my opinion, the film is also a passionate appeal to show craftsmanship in general the respect it deserves. All of us who have a nutcracker at home will now look at it with different eyes — now that we know that it takes around a week to complete such a good piece.

On the Sunday afternoon of 2 November 2025, the cinema is well attended and the rows are full. Many guests watch all ten sequences with interest — for around 1 ¼ hours after all.

Some only linger for a short time, as there is a noticeable draught through the open doors of the entrance hall and it is quite chilly. There is an opportunity to warm up in the neighbouring bistro, even for us volunteers. Departing and arriving visitors pause in surprise, as they are not expecting a film screening in the entrance hall. The flyers about the Purple Path and the November programme did not go unnoticed either.

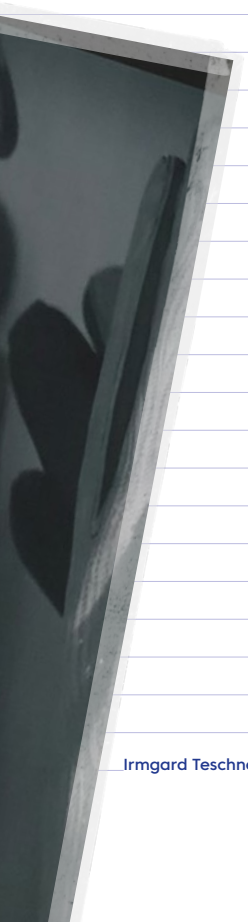


On my second visit on 5 November 2025, a weekday mind you, there were 13 curious cinema-goers during the lunchtime shift.

Other works by Donata Wenders — black-and-white shadow plays projected onto the walls next to the entrance door and a film about the handwritten biographies of members of the Moravian Church — also deserve and receive attention.

The cinema for these films, which are well worth seeing, is open until 2 December 2025; you are strongly advised to wear warm clothing.

Author: Irmgard Teschner



Irmgard Teschner



Irmgard Teschner

# 06 Nov 2025 Capital of Culture Year 2025 — Honouring the sponsors and supporters

A very special event took place at the Hartmannfabrik on 6 November 2025: **THE SPONSOR THANK YOU EVENT**.

We volunteers supported this event, be it by welcoming around 100 guests from 45 companies with welcoming words, at the cloakroom or by creatively designing a "sponsor puzzle".

It was a special event for me, as I wanted to see how many and which sponsors and supporters had contributed to the success of the Capital of Culture Year 2025 in Chemnitz.

It was a very nice celebration in which the great gratitude for the successful Capital of Culture year was expressed, for example in a short video broadcast by the Saxon Prime Minister Mr Michael Kretschmer or the speech by the Mayor of Chemnitz Mr Sven Schulze. This was followed by further speeches thanking the public authorities, sponsors and supporters for their support. The special thing about the Capital of Culture year was that the people themselves helped to shape the programme and that the response to the various offers — such as culture, sport, art, etc. — was so enormous.

As an example of this, three of more than 260 micro-projects were presented on stage, which were made possible thanks to the support of the sponsors and which proved the initial sceptics wrong.

Throughout the evening, images and impressions of the Capital of Culture 2025 were shown, which were met with much applause and also showed how successfully the surrounding area of Chemnitz was involved! The PURPLE PATH art and sculpture trail, which connects Chemnitz and 38 towns and municipalities in the surrounding region, is a particularly good example of how successfully this has been achieved.

The Managing Directors of the European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 gGmbH, Ms Andrea Pier and Mr Stefan Schmidtke, also gave a brief preview of how things will continue next year: Proven formats will remain — for example the Free Walking Tour, the "Dancing Neighbours" project, the Makerhubs in and around Chemnitz, the Maker Advent, the Park Summer, the Kosmos Festival and others.

At the same time, they combined this with a huge thank you and also the request and wish for further support.

The evening ended with a contribution from the "Dancing Neighbours" and a get-together with delicious food, where there was another opportunity to make new contacts and talk about shared experiences.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern

Ernesto Uhlmann






Bettina von Wenckstern



Ernesto Uhlmann

# 21 Nov 2025 Christmas decorations with Julia

A workshop with Julia? An article by Julia too? Yes, exactly! After taking part in such inspiring volunteers-for-volunteers workshops over the course of the year, I really wanted to lead one. In consultation with the volunteer team, we decided to make Christmas decorations using old flyers and brochures from the Capital of Culture year.

I arrived a little late as it had started snowing that day — the perfect mood for Christmas decorations. To my astonishment, the room was well filled with visitors. I hadn't expected so much interest.

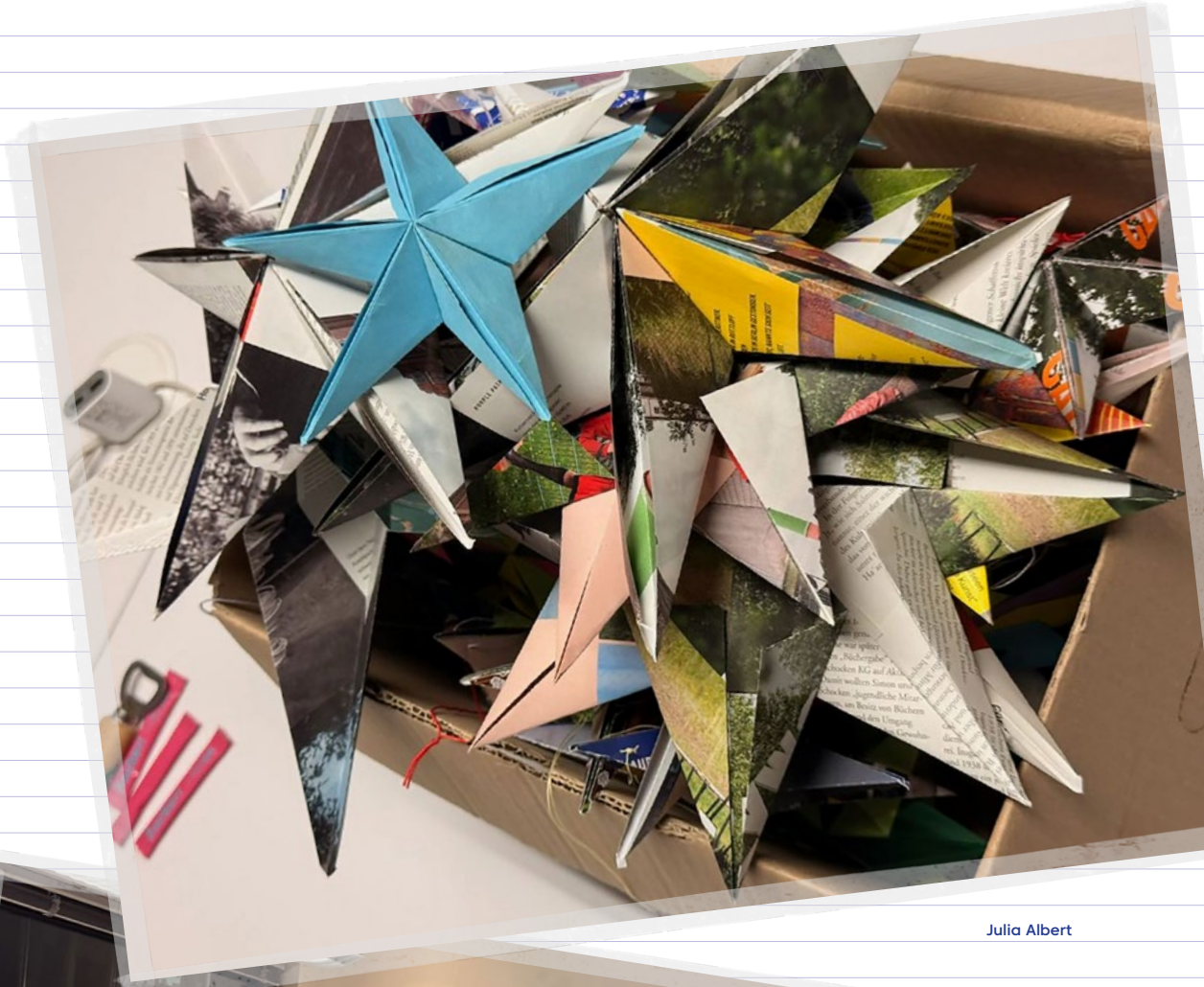
With Christmas music and snacks, we all got to work. And as always, when the mood is right, time flew by. From time to time, curious people peeked into the room, which was full of cheer. And hey, we managed to fill a whole box with poinsettias, which were then donated to Open Space.

Many thanks to everyone involved. I hope you had as good a time crafting as I did.

Author: Julia Albert



Julia Albert



Julia Albert



Julia Albert

# 28 Nov 2025 KuHa Christmas market

## MDR um 4, on 28 November 2025 — live from the Capital of Culture Christmas market

It all started with a phone call from Mareike Holfeld, KuHa's press officer, on Friday, a week before the planned programme on MDR. Mareike asked me if I had the time and inclination to report on our volunteer editorial team in the programme and if she could pass on my contact details. Of course I said yes, because it's an honour to do marketing for our volunteer reports and I'm sure there won't be another opportunity like this. On Tuesday, Stefan Ganß, the presenter of the MDR programme, called me and asked me a few questions that he thought were relevant for the programme. We arranged to meet on Friday at 4 pm at the pyramid at the Chemnitz Christmas market. I was to be joined by two other volunteers, Cathleen Nobach and Danny Weigelt, to report on the programme.

The three of us were at the pyramid at the former Kaufhof building at 4 p.m. on the day in question, but there was no MDR team in sight. Then we remembered that our Christmas market had two more pyramids, so we went looking for the MDR staff there. Then we spotted people with big cameras. We introduced ourselves, said we were the volunteers and were told: “We're waiting for you.” Now we had found each other. MDR had had a container set up between the many Christmas market stalls, where the technology, control room and make-up were located. The make-up artist gave us a quick hand and then we were supposed to arrive at the filming location, opposite the Bimmelbahn. There we met Stefan Ganß, the presenter of the programme, for the first time. He discussed the details with us again and when we would be on the programme, but he didn't tell us in advance exactly what questions he would ask us. There was a half-hour live report from the Capital of Culture Christmas Market. The presenter spoke to citizens who happened to be passing by, to mulled wine vendors, live images of Chemnitz were shown from above with a drone and small contributions from the KuHa were repeatedly played in. Then the director signalled that it was our turn. The presenter first congratulated Danny on the “Tourism Heroes” award, which the Free Walking project had received. Danny talked about how the idea came about and how great people have responded to the Saturday tours. Then it was my turn and I was allowed to briefly report on our editorial work. Unfortunately, the time was far too short. I would have liked to tell a lot more. After the programme, Stefan Ganß told us that the voice in his ear had always caused him stress and that, if it had been up to him, he would have liked to take more time for us. Cathleen moved back to Chemnitz four years ago and told us how she sees her city and how proud she is that we are the Capital of Culture. After a few minutes, our big performance was already over and it was great! We then listened to the words of our mayor, Mr Sven Schulze, and the initiator of the “Ostgaragen”, who read from his guest book. Suddenly the presenter came up to us again and asked if we could make a closing statement in the programme. If we wanted to, we could stay a little longer.

Then the camera panned over to us and I was asked why the people who were watching this programme out there should come to Chemnitz. Of course, I recommended the big KuHa closing event the next day and the wonderful Chemnitz Christmas market. Then the half-hour live broadcast was over and the programme was “in the bag”, as the MDR team said. We contributors were invited by the presenter for a mulled wine and we all spent the early evening together at the beautifully illuminated Christmas market, enjoying pleasant conversations.

Author: Kerstin Ritscher



private



Kerstin Ritscher

# 28 Nov 2025 Chemnitz MAKER-ADVENT: A festival of creativity and community

A giant candle arch was carried through the city centre of Chemnitz? Colourful chairs were driven to the Stadthalle?

Yes — it's time for the Maker Advent in Chemnitz and the Capital of Culture Region! It takes place from 24 November to 30 December and is more diverse than ever before. In 42 cities and at over 330 events, you can tinker and try out new things or simply watch and be inspired.

The big hands-on festival in the Chemnitz Stadthalle took place on 29 November 2025 from 12 noon to 6 pm — on the final weekend of the Capital of Culture. As it was part of the official festival programme, we were hoping for lots of guests.

That's why I helped my husband and many other helpers prepare for the hands-on festival the afternoon before. When we entered the foyer of the town hall, we were pleasantly surprised: countless Advent stars in a wide variety of colours and sizes were hanging from the ceiling, immediately creating a festive atmosphere.

Once the colourful chairs had arrived, we had to unload them, distribute them to the right places, arrange the tables accordingly and much more. To spread more Christmas cheer, we volunteers took on various tasks, such as decorating the foyer with more poinsettias and preparing craft materials. My task was to cover the tables with paper and attach it with colourful adhesive tape together with other volunteers. Sounds simple — but it wasn't: stubborn paper, sticky tape that wouldn't hold, wobbly tables... Nevertheless, by the end of the day a lot had been done and the anticipation of the opening was growing.

On 29 November, my husband and I visited the Maker Advent in the Stadthalle, but first we had to queue! There was a huge queue of people outside the entrance, all wanting to try out the wide range of Christmas activities on offer, such as making gifts from wood, beads or ceramics, trying out 3D printing or moulding their own chocolate.

We were delighted that the hands-on activities were so well received by so many guests, who also took the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Erzgebirge traditions.

The large candle arch (see picture) was a popular photo motif, as the visitors themselves became the centre of attention. With various Christmas or Chemnitz templates provided, you could create a shadow image. What was particularly nice was that everyone had their photo taken and received a souvenir by e-mail.

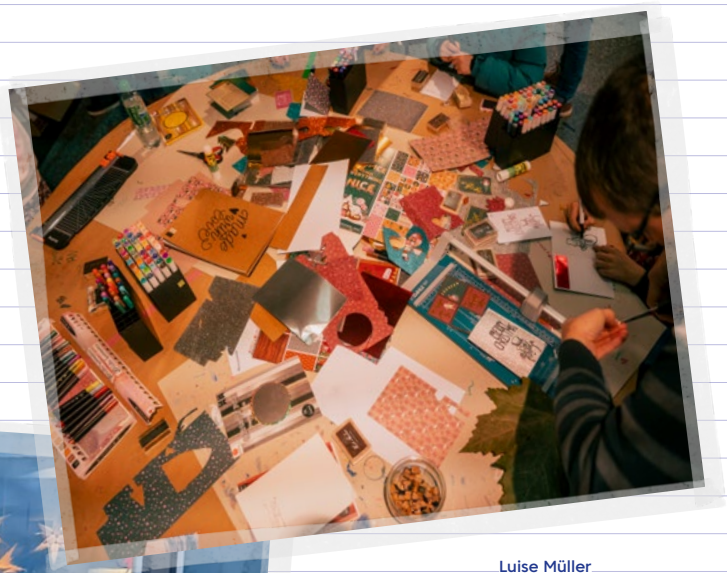
After a while, we happily left the Stadthalle to experience more highlights of the day and saw a never-ending queue of spectators outside the gates.

It was a great day for me and I was particularly pleased with the huge success of the Maker Event, which meant that the work of the Makers, Business & Art team from Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH and the many helpers and volunteers had paid off. The Maker Advent showed just how creative Chemnitz is — and I'm already looking forward to the next edition.

Author: Bettina von Wenckstern



Luise Müller



Luise Müller



Josephine Hage

# 29 Nov 2025 S' is Feierabend — '29 November 2025 — End of the 'Capital of Culture year

"Today is the day ... the last day of the KuHA," I thought when I woke up early on Saturday morning, but somehow I was still looking forward to the day that would hopefully bring so many experiences.

My first assignment of the day was at the Industrial Museum, where the official closing event of the European Capital of Culture 2025 was taking place with the invited guests. My job was to stand at the entrance door and greet and welcome the guests in a friendly manner. Once all the guests had taken their seats, we volunteers also took our places in the event room. It was a beautiful, festive and very moving event. The mayor of Chemnitz, Mr Sven Schulze, reviewed the KuHa year by taking typical KuHa things out of a yellow suitcase together with a little girl and telling little stories about them. I was most moved when our former mayor, Mrs Barbara Ludwig, was thanked. It was thanks to her and her team that Chemnitz was awarded the title of "Capital of Culture", as it was she who made the bid a success. All the guests stood up from their seats and the applause for Mrs Ludwig was unending. She really deserved it! Finally, the singer Felix Räuber and the choir of Chemnitz citizens performed the "Hymn for Chemnitz".

The European Mining Parade started punctually at 2 pm at the theatre square. I met up with my family and we watched the passing mining bands and miners together on the Street of Nations, after which we watched the big closing concert on the theatre square. There were over 6000 visitors on the square and many of them stayed, because the Christmas carol singing began at 5 pm, together with the choirs of the Chemnitz Theatre and the brass players of the Robert Schumann Philharmonic Orchestra. With mulled wine and Christmas carols, the Christmas spirit was already starting to set in.

Now it was time for my last volunteer assignment in the Capital of Culture year.

We were around 130 volunteers who were involved in the last act of the stage programme. We were given glow sticks about 50 cm long, which we hid under our jackets before we spread out in the audience in front of the stage. at 8 pm, the stage programme began next to the Karl Marx head with music from a brass band standing high up on a balcony. Then the two KuHa directors came on stage and talked about the highlights of the KuHa year and thanked the people of Chemnitz and the staff. Our mayor brought all 38 mayors of the Capital of Culture region on stage and thanked them for their great support and solidarity. Now came our cue, because the dancers from "Ballroom Bliss" were on stage and the command "Hold your glow sticks in the sky of Chemnitz" rang out. Music played and we spun around our own axis and encouraged the people standing around us to dance with us.

The result was a cool togetherness. People were dancing all over the street. It felt like everyone was dancing with everyone else and we volunteers lay in each other's arms and were happy that it was such a nice ending. But we were also sad that it was all over now.

**My conclusion:**

I had a wonderful and eventful year. Nobody can take this great time away from me. I got to know so many wonderful people that I wouldn't have met otherwise. THANK YOU BEAUTIFUL, dear European Capital of Culture 2025!

Author: Kerstin Ritscher




Kerstin Ritscher




Silko Ritscher



Kerstin Ritscher

# 15 Dec 2025 In the rear-view mirror of the Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 — 115 reports from volunteers

Dear Capital of Culture enthusiasts, we are now writing the very last volunteer report: the curtain has fallen on the Capital of Culture 2025. Everything comes to an end — and we are glad to have experienced this exciting and overwhelming time. On the last day, even the weather played along and rounded off the experience perfectly.

There were countless events, so there really was something for everyone. On some days we would have had to split up in order to fully enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. This meant that everyone could choose exactly what they wanted to do.

As volunteers, we took the opportunity to experience this special highlight first-hand and are a little proud to have actively helped. Most of the events ran like clockwork. Of course, the Capital of Culture year was not without its mishaps — such as the drone ballet on Opening Day, for which the performers had rehearsed for days and which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to force majeure. We thought that was a shame!

One particularly positive fact for us: there were no nasty surprises or dangerous situations during the Capital of Culture year! Everything went peacefully and was characterised by cheerfulness and mutual respect. That gives us hope for the future.

The numerous highlights from 2024 and 2025 can be found in the volunteer reports on the Internet. The result is a chronicle full of eventful moments. Of course, we cannot fully describe the more than 45,000 volunteer hours worked, but the texts written by the 31 volunteers provide a lively overview of the varied events that took place during the Capital of Culture 2025 in Chemnitz. The variety of events, experiences and very personal impressions are reflected in the articles.

But the best thing for us cannot be summarised in numbers: new friendships, shared experiences, unforgettable hours — and the good feeling of having helped here and there.

We, Bettina and Bodo, would like to thank all the members of the volunteer editorial team for their dedication and commitment. A big THANK YOU also goes to the other authors for their enthusiasm in writing reports.

## Conclusion of our volunteer editorial team

We produced a total of 115 volunteer reports (in German and English), 31 of which were about the anticipation and beginnings in 2024. We would never have thought it possible that we would be able to look back on so many reports in the end! Our texts are authentic voices of volunteers, expressing emotional closeness and personal impressions.

This unique collection of experiences will last forever!

Authors:
Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern



Katja Knetschke




private




Bodo von Wenckstern

**from left to right**

**1st row:** Simone, Sophie, Sylvia, Bodo, Andrea, Cathleen, Adelheid, Ellen
**2nd row:** Christina, Jan, Bettina, Julia, Irmgard, Kerstin, Gabriele
**3rd row:** Heidi, Kristina, Reimund, Ria, Danny, Maria

# Brief profiles of the authors

### Julia Albert

Julia has lived in Chemnitz since 2012 and joined the Volunteer Program in February 2025 to meet new people. Through this experience, she has gotten to know a diverse group of people — and her interest in art and culture has been reignited.

### Ellen Auerswald, Katrin and Jens Grasselt

We are Ellen, Katrin, and Jens. The Capital of Culture has given us the opportunity to volunteer, and through our assignments, we've gotten to know not only our hometown but also our surrounding area even better.

### Sophie Behrendt

Sophie is 32 years old, works full-time in the legal sector and lives in the Chemnitz area. She has been working for the Capital of Culture since May 2024 and has since gained a wealth of experience in various areas. As a volunteer guide for Chemnitz2025, she is therefore present at numerous events.

### Ria Benz

Ria is a volunteer and participates in the cultural project "Dancing Neighbours". Before retiring, she worked for the city administration.

### Christina Fischer-Ullrich

Christina is originally from Upper Franconia but has been living in Chemnitz for several years. In her free time, she volunteered for the European Capital of Culture, including in the volunteer editorial team and for the Free Walking Tour. When she's not volunteering, you can find her on the tennis court or in a café on Kaßberg.

### Sylvia and Reimund Gottschall

We are Reimund and Sylvia Gottschall. We've been living in Chemnitz for almost three years; we moved here from Lusatia. Two of our children studied at Chemnitz University of Technology. Through our visits here, we came to see Chemnitz as a place worth living in, so we chose the city as our home after retiring from professional life.

## Heidi Guderian

Heidi is 72 years old. She lived in Chemnitz for a long time, started a family, and worked in the city. Today she lives with her husband in the Ore Mountains. Her connection to the city of Chemnitz has never been severed; the offerings of the theatres, galleries, the Clubkino, and many restaurants are simply too tempting. The opening event for the European Capital of Culture 2025 sparked her desire to be actively involved in this event. Heidi has been a volunteer in Chemnitz since April.

## Jan Holzapfel

Jan lives in Chemnitz and works as an IT project manager. His motivation is to make an active contribution to the success of the Capital of Culture year, thereby giving Chemnitz a positive boost for development. He enjoys bringing his intercultural experiences and language skills to his volunteer work.

## Gabriele Kirchhübel

Gabriele is 62 years old and works as a customer service representative. She lives in Schloßchemnitz and enjoys supporting her hometown. As a result, she can be found volunteering at various events, about which she subsequently writes articles for the volunteer editorial team.

## Kristina Köhler

Kristina lives in Neukirchen in the Ore Mountains. The former archivist and case manager volunteers for Chemnitz 2025 at numerous events. She also loves to write: That's why she came up with the idea of collecting the volunteers' experiences — the starting point for the volunteer editorial team.

## Danny Kollwitz

Danny is 45 years young and was born and raised in Karl-Marx-Stadt. He trained in a trade and "briefly" emigrated to the east of Mallorca from 2006 to 2007. But he was eventually drawn back home to Chemnitz. He has been active as a volunteer since April 2024, including at the Hat Festival, the Tietz Fair, and the Kosmos Festival.

## Ronny Körner

Ronny joined the team in February 2025; he is enthusiastic and fascinated by what lies behind the motto "see the unseen".

# Brief profiles of the authors

## Maria Eugenia Maxia

Maria ist Italienerin und lebt seit etwa 6 Maria is Italian and has been living in Chemnitz for about six years. Since her daughter worked at the Natural History Museum, she got to know and love the city. In 2019, the family moved to Chemnitz because they had already “seen the unseen” back then. Since 2023, Maria has been volunteering for the Capital of Culture and, with her native language as well as her charm and cheerful disposition, is able to give guests a warm welcome.

## Cathleen Nobach

After graduating from high school, Cathleen left her home state of Saxony to pursue an apprenticeship in the beautiful Rhineland. After more than 20 years, she returned to Chemnitz during the pandemic — where she had to start over but now feels very much at home. She has been enthusiastically involved with the Capital of Culture since the summer of 2024.

## Andrea Oelsner

Andrea lives in Chemnitz. Before retiring, she worked as a teacher. As a result, she has a keen sense of language and an eye for detail — all qualities she brings to her role as an editor in the volunteer editorial team for Chemnitz 2025.

## Ilona Helena Richter

Ilona Helena Richter signed up on the 2025 Capital of Culture website in the fall of 2024, specifically for the areas of guest services and city history. She was born in Leipzig and has been living in Chemnitz for several years.

## Solveig Richter, Dörte Kopke, Simone Sippel

Solveig lives in Chemnitz, Dörte in Dresden, and Simone in Augustusburg. Although we have been ambassadors for the Capital of Culture for quite some time, we met for the first time at the Kunstbahnhof Flöha. Our involvement officially began with an orientation session and the festive opening reception in April. Since then, we have been supporting the exhibition “Verstrickungen” through to the closing event and the final dismantling of the artworks in August.

## Kerstin Ritscher

Kerstin is 61 years old and works as an office communications specialist. A native of Burgstädt, she volunteers at various Chemnitz 2025 events; amongst other things, she kicked off the countdown to the Capital of Culture year alongside Lord Mayor Sven Schulze and other guests.

## Simone Stolle

Simone has been volunteering with great enthusiasm since August 2024. For her, the Capital of Culture year is far more than just a series of events. It is a labor of love that brings people together and inspires Chemnitz.

## Irmgard Teschner

Irmgard, who is retired, has been dancing with the “Dancing Neighbours” since May 2024, has been involved in the volunteer program since fall 2024, and, as a member of a network group, is organizing a gathering of senior citizens from Chemnitz’s European partner cities here in the Capital of Culture in September 2025. She finds great joy in all these activities.

## Adelheid Theeg

Adelheid worked as an accountant and lives in the Yorck area of Chemnitz. She volunteers for Chemnitz 2025 and enjoys sharing her experiences with others.

## Maxi Uhlig

Maxi, 41, is a teacher at a vocational school in Chemnitz and has lived on the Kaßberg with her husband and son since 2020. For her, Chemnitz is a city where you can feel at home. That is why she wants to get involved with the Capital of Culture.

## Bettina von Wenckstern

Bettina lives in Neukirchen in the Ore Mountains and is involved in the volunteer response team. Bettina has been volunteering since 2024 and brings her valuable volunteer experience to Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH. A former bank clerk, she previously worked as a hardware and software developer.

## Bodo von Wenckstern

Bodo is 67 years old and lives in Neukirchen in the Ore Mountains. The former group and project manager has been a “volunteer from the very beginning” and has been involved with Chemnitz 2025 for several years. In the volunteer editorial team, he applies his organizational expertise, handles the archiving of texts and photos, and serves as the contact person for the press office.

# Afterword

Dear Readers,

Thank you very much for your interest in our volunteer reports — whether you've already had a look or have just become curious. For us, the Capital of Culture year was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that we supported with all our hearts.

Special thanks go to the staff of Kulturhauptstadt gGmbH — especially Andrea Pier and Stefan Schmidtke — as well as the entire volunteer team during the Capital of Culture year under the leadership of Dirk Zinner and the press team with the support of Mareike Holfeld. Without you, this publication would not have been possible.

Our special thanks go to Ms. Maike Hänsel, Mr. Ralf Wolfermann, and Mr. Fabian Weißpflog for their support in designing the brochure.

And, of course, we thank all those who brought this project to life: the authors, the volunteer editorial team — of which we were a part — and all the volunteers who made the Capital of Culture year something special.

Bettina & Bodo

Bettina and Bodo von Wenckstern

# Legal Notice

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of Culture 2025

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As at September 2026

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2025
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Chemnitz
European Capital
of Culture
2025

Stadt
CHEMNITZ

Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
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SACHSEN

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