



Rostfest

Keywords: re-design, event, culture, industrial space, participation, vacancy, co-creation

The aim of the project: Holding a post-industrial festival for regional impulses

Partners: 22, regional and federal ones related to culture, tourism, regional development and private sponsors

Project implementation time: Since 2012 (implementation in various phases), annually

Budget: n.n.

Granted by: Various funding sources, among them LEADER

Priority line/Specific objective: Cultural work and regional development

Context:

The town Eisenerz has lost more than half of its population over the last 50 years, leading to massive vacancies and triggering a negative structural downward spiral. In order to tackle this problem, the initiative „re-design Eisenerz“ started, whereby a cultural development concept followed, further resulting in the programme „eisenerZ*ART“. As the framework was set, „ROSTFEST“ in cooperation with „eisenerZ*ART“ became a popular format on its own.

Description:

ROSTFEST is based on the assumption that vacant buildings represent a (growing) resource and that Eisenerz can be a pioneer in the negotiation of a post-growth society. The festival is characterized by a mixture of art, music, sports and action, targeting all generations as well as discourses on various topics. Thereby, art and culture have always been at the heart of the format, addressing and connecting various genres. Heavy metal meets folk culture, visual art meets performative arts, street artists work with established cultural experts and local crafts are integrated into different methods of artistic creation. In this way, new content is created, appealing to different people and population groups, motivating them to reflect. Artists work in and around vacant buildings, enlivening squares, pointing out, provoking, thinking about the past, dealing with the future, changing perspectives and asking questions about strategies for action.

Results:

Today, the ROSTFEST is a well known festival with an supra-regional outreach, attracting alternative audiences, artists, musicians and cultural enthusiasts. In 2013 the festival was awarded the LEADER Innovation Award for Austria. In 2016, the festival counted 10.000 visitors, making use of over 8.500m² vacant space.

Success factors:

As contributing factors the close community and stakeholder network can be named, as well as the general sense of social cohesion in the area, which may be attributed also to the special industrial culture at place. Furthermore, volunteering, as well as the approval and participation of locals are key.



Limiting factors:

The growing organizational structure and programmatic orientation, the utilization of vacant spaces for events, the will to integrate the most diverse genres and art forms into the festival and last but not least the financing led the festival to the limits of its feasibility. Therefore, the format paused in 2017, yet still continues.

Applicability and upscaling:

A festival for regional impulses, making use of culture and art as a motor for social change processes, is always a regional developer's good advice. Yet, how this format and its outcomes will work in a non-industrial setting needs still to be explored. Vacant spaces, volunteering and a close community do seem to be decisive factors. Due to the way of financing, the possibility of upscaling is limited. Implementing smaller, still connected formats could constitute an option.

Others:

<https://rostfest.at/>



Horizon 2020

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