

Mapping *Forms of Brutality* in Berlin

Karen E. Till

***Forms of Brutality* (2019) holds in tension the multiple and contradictory spatial stories of Berlin's chronic urban trauma with inhabitants' calls for a right to the city.¹ The companion canvases constitute a richly textured palimpsest that materializes densely layered zones of urban activity in molding paste, undercoats of paint, wet and dry graphite, carefully rendered building footprints and traced boundaries, nearly erased pencil marks and oozing paint.**

Documenting both the mundane and extraordinary stories of the city, small white bubbles listing office space rental rates appear next to smudged drawings of news headlines; protest banners are sketched adjacent to corporate logos; multilingual ads can be read alongside handwritten notes. These aesthetic presences may elicit the viewer's own embodied memories of Berlin—snatches of overheard conversations at a café, recalled bursts of panic while sprinting down U-Bahn station stairs to catch a train, feelings of belonging while walking with others in a protest, or delight when finding a remnant of the city in the archive. Such sensory responses become yet another layer in the artwork that depicts the "aesthetic consciousness" and the "momentary and simultaneous repleteness" of the many places that constitute Berlin.²

This essay offers a journey into the canvas/city by focusing on two mappings juxtaposed in *Forms of Brutality*—the city as a space of control and the city as lived. The paired wall-sized gray, white, and dripping red-orange canvases embody the city's past "wounds" and unfolding legacies of violence in the present day.³ Permeating these colors are the artist's depictions of Berlin's inhabitants, some of whom contest those inheritances and demand the right to create a home in the city. Offering a democratic "agonistic intervention" in debates about what constitutes urban public space,

the critical cartographies of *Forms of Brutality* reveal how difficult pasts are connected to desired urban futures, and how residents' disruptions of further rounds of spatial injustice make the city a more just place in which to live.⁴

Berlin's Chronic Urban Trauma

We are presented with Moritzplatz in the residential district of Kreuzberg. When first encountering the artwork, *Forms of Brutality* entices the viewer with its dominant oblique perspective. A single view can never make the city legible, but an invitation to see the city from above is seductive. Familiar to the present-day viewer through Google Maps, this vision of the city was offered to an elite public by early nineteenth-century balloon surveyors.⁵ In its masculinist fantasy of omniscience, we participate as disembodied gods looking down upon the city from above.⁶ Yet this familiar distanced view imagines the past and present-day city as empty space that can be controlled for power and profit. Upon recognizing the violent legacies of these urban fantasies, the viewer becomes like Icarus falling.

Once located in historic southern Friedrichstadt and Luisenstadt, the area depicted was south of the city's medieval tax wall and would later be divided by the Berlin Wall. As the city grew in the late nineteenth and early

¹ Rachel Pain, "Chronic Urban Trauma: The slow violence of housing dispossession," *Urban Studies* 56, no. 2 (2019): 385–400; Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Anthropos, 1968).

² Martin Seel, "The aesthetics of appearing," *Radical Philosophy*, 118, March/April (2003): 19.

³ Karen E. Till, "Wounded Cities," *Political Geography* 31, no. 1 (2012): 3–14.

⁴ Chantal Mouffe, "Art and Democracy," *Open* 14 (2008): 6–13; Edward Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

⁵ Matthew H. Edney, *Cartography: The Ideal and Its History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

⁶ J. Brian Harley, "Maps, knowledge, and power," in *Geographic Thought: A Praxis Perspective*, eds. George Henderson and Marvin Waterstone (London: Routledge, 2009), 129–148.

twentieth centuries, the elite villas became intermixed with rapidly built, densely settled courtyard dwellings housing laborers working for nearby industries. Those workers would be replaced by forced laborers during Hitler's regime; after the war, migrant "guest workers" from Italy and Turkey were located in this part of former West Berlin.

Foundationally submerged in and structuring the spaces of the canvases are white and gray versions of Berlin's so-called black plans or building footprints of the historic city. Post-reunification planners created the black plans to document the historical traces of what they felt to be the "spiritual foundation" of the city.⁷ They sought to recover a semblance of a lost Berlin destroyed by war and postwar modernist clearances through new development and building restrictions. Yet to suggest that the city can be recovered through late-nineteenth-century forms and densities denies the structural legacies of National Socialist and Cold War Berlins. This planning vision actually extends that inheritance through speculative real estate development in areas once in the shadow of the Wall and may result in the displacement of the city's historic ethnic and working-class communities.

Larissa Fassler inverted the color-coding of post-unification planners by painting the historic building footprints in white.⁸ She then covered these with a wash of orange-reds, colors inspired by earlier West German planning maps that documented the loss of the historic city from the war. The administrative center of the National Socialist genocidal regime was located in the north-central part of southern Friedrichstadt which became a target for allied bombing: the deeper the red in the canvas, the more intense the destruction. A V-shaped dark gray shadow depicting the former Berlin Wall cuts atop both canvases "like a scar," another legacy of National Socialism. Centrally located in the left canvas and spilling onto the right one are

the outlines of today's Moritzplatz metro station and a never built but imagined underground railway station. On top of these historic, damaged, and desired Berlins is the gentrifying Berlin, depicted by a cream-white layer to denote the city's existing urban fabric in 2017 and another layer of white-white depicting construction sites and proposed buildings. These most recent acrylic coats cover a third or more of the canvases. The presence of the other Berlins lurks just below the surface. Thinly dashed black lines designate the new borders of land use, property value, and housing rights.

These layered building footprints, colors, scars, and boundaries indicate Berlin's built environment. As skeletal presences in the work, they also depict the residues of fascism, war, and division, including the legacies of racist biopolitical fantasies tied to imagined urban futures that continue to haunt the city and nation. Indeed, the dripping red-orange hues, the erased lines and surfaces, the (re) painted outlines of buildings, and the gray scars on the canvas refuse to be contained in time or space. Confronting these textures and forms on the canvas, the viewer begins to sense the "subvisible temporalities and spatialities" of the city's "states of injury."⁹

"Welcome to Berlin: City of Freedom." This hopeful claim in muted gray at the bottom of the left canvas comes from the city's 2019 official business portal webpage yet is reminiscent of West German Cold War hospitality.¹⁰

It sits uneasily in the reddish wash of paints even though it is depicted using the largest font in the artwork. A thinly painted black dashed line divides

⁷. Quoted in Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 31–57.

⁸. Information about the artwork in this paragraph from Larissa Fassler in conversation with the author, October 12, 2020.

⁹. Pain, "Chronic Urban Trauma" (2019): 386; Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁰. Fassler in conversation with the author, May 9, 2021. Text excerpts from Fassler's paintings are reproduced here verbatim including punctuation, capitalization, and any errors.

the greeting. This is a new boundary in the city that follows real estate speculation in the Berlin of 2016–2019, when Fassler began her research for what became a series of artworks focusing on Moritzplatz, including *Licht, Luft, Sonne / Light, Air and Sun* (2017) and *Emotional Blackmail* (2018). On one side of the new boundary, an emergent zone of luxury real estate became possible due to the lack of rent controls, while on the other, densely settled historic neighborhoods once planned for “guest workers” remain impoverished by Cold War planning. Socioeconomic data printed on the canvas and washed in red-orange notes this legacy: “*Im Quartier leben 10.108 Einwohner*innen (Stand 31.12.2015) aus 66 Nationen.*” (The neighborhood is home to 10,108 residents (as of December 31, 2015) from 66 nations.) Swimming in drips of paint printed in a larger font, the viewer also reads data about social deprivation printed on the canvas, that 12% of the population are unemployed and an 80% rate of child poverty exists. Despite government regulations historically protecting residents’ housing rights, most tenants have experienced dramatic rises in their rents in Berlin in recent years.

Berlin’s postwar property markets were never normal, as both states (East and West) heavily subsidized and staged modernist structures in the city as part of a Cold War geopolitical standoff. Large swathes of land were also taken to secure the Berlin Wall and its borderlands. Just before and following reunification, newly redundant East German state properties, institutions, and spaces, including agricultural lands, forests, transportation networks, military lands, housing estates, and borderlands, were privatized by a controversial extra-governmental body known as the Treuhandanstalt, literally translated as Trust Agency. Conversely, some properties stolen during National Socialism were repatriated to former owners.¹¹ Subsequent agencies such as TLG Immobilien and BVVG, were later tasked with portfolio management to secure profits for the German government.¹²

Close to the city’s “Welcome” are white property bubble icons recalling Airbnb clickable prices that call attention to the corporate desires to create another global city. This is the developer’s distanced view of the city: empty spaces where publicly held lands and unclear ownership resulted in artificially low property values and are now permitting large profits for corporate entities. The white bubbles that frame the canvases offer office space (*Gewerbe*) with unit prices ranging from 22.50–25 €/m². The bubbles are especially dense and prices the most dear within the gray scarred areas of the former Wall where residential space rentals range from 665 € for 54 m² to 1921 € for 146 m², expensive for the time by Berlin standards.¹³ Following reunification the brutality of fascism and war appears to have been replaced by the callousness of the “speculative production of the city,” in which city planning agencies supported the international monetization of Berlin’s real estate markets.¹⁴

Forms of Brutality depicts the transformation of the area’s former state and security zones through the painted presence of corporate real estate investment firm logos. PATRIZIA AG and Deutsche Wohnen are among the largest German companies managing residential portfolios and operate in partnership with financial investors; PANDION uses joint-venture models to develop centrally located areas in Berlin’s former death strip.¹⁵ In addition to these, Fassler drew the emblems for GSG, CPI Property Group, Butzke-Werke AG, PGGM, Rockspring Property Investment Managers, and Berggruen Holdings on the canvases. Related logos of property services (Ernst Augustin Pumpen, The Shelf) and new developments are also present, some alluding to the romanticized form of the late-nineteenth-century “courtyard” (*Hof*) building: GSG, AQUA-Höfe | GSG, GSG-Hof, Ritterhof, MYKITA HAUS, and Pelikan-Haus. Nearby English-language city marketing ads carefully transcribed onto the painting’s surface declare the new regime, “A valuable future for everyone;” “Ideas for a Changing World,” and written in German, “Berlin booms: A startup is founded here every 20 hours.”

¹¹ Elizabeth A. Strom, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany’s Capital City* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001).

¹² Mark Cassell, *How Governments Privatize: The Politics of Divestment in the United States and Germany* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002); Vladimiro Giacchè, *Anschluss*, trans. from the Italian by Hermann Kopp (Hamburg: Laika, 2014).

¹³ According to Fassler, the prices came from real estate platforms such as www.immobilienscout24.de and individual developer’s websites, May 9, 2021.

¹⁴ Laura Calbet i Elias, “The Speculative Production of the City: Financialization, Housing and Berlin’s Inner City Transformation,” (PhD diss., Technische Universität Berlin, 2017).

¹⁵ Ibid.

Other signs on the canvas, however, directly challenge the city marketing ads in both German and English—

"AUCH PANDION IST KEIN GUTER NACHBAR" and "PANDION: WORST NEW NEIGHBOUR IN KREUZBERG!". Others call for a "STADT FÜR ALLE" (A City For Everyone) and argue that "DIE WELT BRAUCHT KEIN WEITERES LONDON" (The world does not need another London). Still other signs demand basic housing rights, declaring that "Wohnen ist Menschenrecht—Keinen Boden der Spekulation!" (Housing is a human right—no ground for speculation!).

Depicted on parts of the canvas that have been painted with the deepest hues of red, the signs call attention to current contestations over who has the right to live in the city. In 2017 for example, PANDION acquired large areas near Moritzplatz to build high-end projects, investments that "would arguably redefine the neighborhood's identity. Large-scale displacement, in this case, would be a matter of time."¹⁶

By depicting housing activists' banners on *Forms of Brutality*, Fassler acknowledged her own complex positionality in these debates about gentrifying the city, including the recent rise of local offices for international art galleries. As one sign on the canvas notes, "*Wir brauchen eine Bäckerei und keine Galerie!!!!*" (We need a bakery and not a gallery!!!). Earlier, in 2018, Fassler participated in the REALTY symposium hosted by Berlin's KW Institute for Contemporary Art (KW) that explored

the contradictory and even conflictual relationships between gentrification and the arts. The program included talks, walks, and projects with Berlin-based scholars and artists such as Fassler, art collectives such as KUNSTrePUBLIK, and local community projects such as the Commons Night School at Prinzessinnengärten.¹⁷ The presence of many creative and community groups in the area resulted from Berlin's historical tradition of (re)using and strategically occupying redundant and underutilized spaces and infrastructures in parts of the city located in the shadow of the Wall. After 1990 those activities increased and the city became known for *Zwischennutzungen*, or "interim spaces," including art and music venues, co-housing projects, community gardens, beaches, flea markets, and other alternative public spaces, especially in areas with unclear property rights.¹⁸ While these "urban pioneers" have productively contributed to Berlin's distinctive social scene,¹⁹ some argue that such "temporary" or "meanwhile" uses created the possibilities for corporate real estate firms to privatize these lands, resulting in the displacement of existing residents and communities through increased rents.

Fassler was invited to create a new project for the KW REALTY event, *Emotional Blackmail* (2018)—a series of posters and two multilingual billboards that documented the changing land uses and new property owners in the area and were posted on the very streets depicted in the artwork. As Fassler's art is shown primarily in galleries, this was a new type of intervention for the artist that included direct community engagement and working with a research team. Discussions with local experts during this project revealed that residents considered the places in which they lived as networked and village-like; they challenged the description of their homes as undesirable "non-places" that should be razed and reused by planners and developers.²⁰ *Forms of Brutality* draws upon these conversations by depicting

¹⁶ Tirdad Zolghadr, "Larissa Fassler, *Emotional Blackmail*," REALTY (Berlin: KW Institute for Contemporary Art, November 2–12, 2018), <https://www.kw-berlin.de/en/larissa-fassler-emotional-blackmail/>.

¹⁷ Tirdad Zolghadr, "REALTY STATECRAFT" Symposium Programme (Berlin: KW Institute for Contemporary Art, November 14–18, 2018), <https://www.kw-berlin.de/en/realty-statecraft/>.

¹⁸ Karen E. Till, "Interim Use at a Former Death Strip? Art, Politics, and Urbanism at Skulpturenpark Berlin-Zentrum," in *The German Wall: Fallout in Europe*, ed. Marc Silberman (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 99–122.

¹⁹ Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Berlin, ed., *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin* (Berlin: Jovis, 2007).

²⁰ Fassler in conversations with the author during 2020.

the views of local residents. Some signs in the work pointedly call out the contradiction between privatizing public resources and Germany's social welfare values, such as the blocked-out speech bubble in the middle of the left canvas that asks "*WEM GEHÖRT BERLIN?*" (To whom does Berlin belong?). Numerous redrawn protest banners call for "*FAIRE MIETE STATT RENDITE*" (Fair rent instead of yield) and reject the neoliberal approach to defining Berlin, calling instead for local authorities to set "*KLARE KANTEN GEGEN SPEKULANTEN*" (Clear limits against speculators), to "*BAUEN STATT KLAUEN*" (Build instead of steal), and to "*MIETEN-WAHNSINN STOPPEN! Bezahlbare gute Wohnungen für alle!*" (Rents—Stop the madness! Affordable good housing for all!).

Reading these signs the viewer is reminded how changes in property ownership become physically experienced, ignored, and challenged on the ground. Luxury dwelling and clean office space may promise the removal of tainted remnants of fascism and division, yet visions of the city defined by corporate profit ignore what Kreuzberg's inhabitants have created over decades—the promise of a *multiethnic* cosmopolitan city. Berlin's unique and "global sense of place" is the result of the presence and labor of migrants, students, activists, the elderly, working-class residents, artists, and historically marginalized social groups.²¹ This too is their city.

The Right to the City

Understanding Berlin as a lived city means paying attention to how inhabitants weave meaning and value into the fabric of space through their ordinary routines, shared experiences, psychic attachments, memories, interactions with fragile ecologies, and material exchanges.²² Such quotidian spatial stories appear across the surface of *Forms of Brutality* in Fassler's handwritten notes inscribed in black as a top layer over the deeper painted and sketched structural

levels of the canvas. These descriptions result from her daily observations made in particular locales over two to six months during 2018–19, and detail the city's inhabitants by age, gender, ethnicity, and how people dressed; the numbers of people and what they are doing are also noted, often using little x's and arrows.²³ The artist's comments also include the sounds, smells, temperatures, and colors she experienced on the day. These observations are written over and next to the corporate ads and layered structures, and the dripping paint and protest banners inscribing the quotidian and yet indelible presence of residents onto the canvas/city. The presence of the city's people push back against the distanced planning imaginaries that would otherwise render them as disembodied, unimportant, invisible.

Centrally located in *Forms of Brutality* is the Moritzplatz U-Bahn station. Planners have recently described the area as lacking in urbanity and business with (presumably unwanted) people lingering in the area.²⁴ Yet the unusual histories of Moritzplatz as a modern transportation hub include the ways that Berliners have materially transformed this space into a place filled with meaning and activity and these appear in the canvas. This unusual subway station, with its many entrances and exits, was built in 1928 by the modernist industrial designer Peter Behrens who is known for his AEG Turbine masterpiece in Berlin's Moabit district. The businessman Georg Wertheim paid five million Reichsmark to the city to change the location of the metro stop so prospective customers could directly enter his modern department store from the U-Bahn, giving him a locational advantage over the other modern stores being built in the area (including Berlin's then flagship department store Karstadt). The BVG (Berlin public transport services, or Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe) used the funds and this construction opportunity in turn to excavate tunnels under this centrally located station for later extensions to other lines. These connections were never finished, even though planner Albert Speer later envisioned

²¹ Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," *Marxism Today*, June 1991.

²² Edward S. Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 13–52; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1976; reis., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

²³ Fassler in conversation with the author during 2020.

²⁴ Sven Felix Kellerhoff, "Brache mit Anschluss" ("Fallow land with a connection"), *Berliner Morgenpost* (Berlin, DE), October 15, 2006, <https://www.morgenpost.de/printarchiv/wwbm/article104422250/Brache-mit-Anschluss.html>.

connecting the Anhalter and Görlitzer train stations here as part of his plans for Hitler's National Socialist capital city Germania. After the city was divided so too was the U8 metro line, running over eleven miles long, north to south with twenty-four stops. Moritzplatz was the last station in West Berlin, after which the train would pass through East Berlin until it reached Gesundbrunnen. These stories captured the artist's imagination and are depicted in Fassler's earlier painting of the metro in the cooler-toned canvas *Licht, Luft, Sonne / Light, Air and Sun*.

Many songs have been written about the Cold War and reunified city that include mention of the U8, and live concerts have been performed in the metro in addition to regular busking. The most popular ballad was written by the Berlin duo AB Syndrom, who assert "the U8, that's Berlin" because one can experience a cross-section of the city's history and diverse people while taking the subway.²⁵ Lingered above ground, Fassler's sketches of and recorded notes at the metro capture the city's layered histories as well as residents' emotional geographies of joy and pain. In *Forms of Brutality* the viewer reads the artist's observations of lovers hugging, sounds of hammering, twenty-two bikes (marked with x's), and descriptions of an older woman wearing a headscarf lugging her very full shopping trolley down the steps of one of the station's entrances, while, at a different entrance and day/season, another woman sits huddled on the cold stairs. The lyrics of a man busking—"Why do birds suddenly appear . . ."—waft across the top of the right canvas. The artist's observations suggest that the effects of the racist segregation of housing for ethnic guest workers and more recent gentrification have not only resulted in impoverishment but in a pronounced homeless population and steady drug market for the U8 metro stops of Kotti (Kottbusser Tor) and Moritzplatz. Arrows and x's indicate a rough-looking tall man lighting the stub of a joint, another man on a U-Bahn platform bench lighting an aluminium foil pipe, and a construction worker approaching a man on another platform who hands him a small package.

The artist notes that outside a homeless man sleeps on the ground and describes the presence (including the smell) of human feces at the bottom of stairs leading down into one side of the U-Bahn station. On the canvas drawn newspaper headlines cite 10,000 people sleep rough in Berlin, mention the death of a homeless man at the Moritzplatz U-Bahn, and quote a defensive BVG spokesperson: "*Wir haben immer gesagt, dass ein Bahnhof kein geeigneter Platz zum Schlafen ist, auch nicht für Obdachlose*" (We have always said that a train station is not a suitable place to sleep, not even for the homeless).

The artist has also captured a sense of concentrated vibrant public spaces that make Berlin distinctive. The viewer will see evidence in the painting of Prinzessinnengärten (Princess Gardens), a beloved urban community garden space that was established in 2009 and grew to include not only raised vegetable plots but also markets, workshops, and learning spaces. The postwar modernist concrete plaza atop the Moritzplatz U-Bahn metro stop was transformed by local residents into a green urban commons, a type of space associated with Berlin's lively urbanity.²⁶ As one sign on the artwork proclaims, urban "*Gärten sind auch Zukunftslabore*" (Gardens are also laboratories of the future). Fassler's handwritten observations from a summer afternoon here are denoted in proximity to the site on the canvas: seventy to eighty people sitting under trees in groups of two, three, four, or five, with twenty to thirty more people sitting scattered throughout the gardens in pairs or alone. It was a comfortable twenty-eight degrees Celsius and the garden is described as calm with a slight breeze, dappled light, and the sound of chatter. From newspaper headlines captured on the canvas, the viewer reads that homeless people are sleeping in containers in the gardens.

Despite the popularity of these urban gardens, it too was threatened by proposals to privatize this public space. Fassler notes that "*2019 könnte das Ende des*

²⁵ Berlin is the third most mentioned European city in songs. Julia Kopatzki, "Song zur U-Bahnlinie 8," *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin, DE), May 2, 2018, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/song-zur-u-bahnlinie-8-ode-an-den-untergrund/21227242.html>.

²⁶ Nomadic Green is cited as establishing the urban gardens, although two initiatives now exist. See "Nomadic Green and Princess Gardens," <https://prinzessinnengarten.net/about/> and Prinzessinnengärten am Moritzplatz / Nachbarschafts-und Inklusionsgarten, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://wechange.de/project/prinzessinnengarten-am-moritzplatz-nac/microsite/>.

one of the world's most vibrant startup cities

"Berlin Startup Agenda" optimizes
startup environment

GRUEN
NGS

a Changing World
Haus

Gewerbe:
25 € / m²

x Man sneezes into
his hand. Looks at it.
wipes it onto his pants

Wir brauchen eine
Bäckerei und keine
Galerie!!!

Sun beating
down

Turkish music
Coming from

Prinzessinnengärten am Moritzplatz bedeuten (2019 could be the end of Prinzessinnengärten at Moritzplatz), but also that 30,147 supporters have mobilized to keep the gardens open with the hashtag movement *"#Gewachsen, um zu bleiben"* (#Grown to stay). By 2020 two independent groups were formed: Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv Berlin, which runs community urban gardens in a nearby cemetery, the garden café, flea market, and hosts other events; and Prinzessinnengärten Moritzplatz, a more radical, self-organized neighbor-supported community and inclusion garden "based on solidarity with no commercial use" that describes itself as more critical of greening agendas contributing to the gentrification of the city.²⁷

Other modernist projects depicted on the canvas also call attention to the ways residents have transformed planners' visions of the disembodied city into places of diversity and use value for inhabitants. To the left of Moritzplatz on the northwest corner of the canvas, in a darker red area where the gray scar from the Wall looms above, a sign in German, English, and Turkish proclaims the work of a tenant's initiative: *"Gemeinsam gegen hohe Mieten und Verdrängung / We ♥ Otto Suhr Siedlung / Birlikte yüksek kira ve yer değiştirmeye karşı"* (Together against high rents and displacement). The Otto Suhr social housing complex of high-density buildings surrounded by green spaces was one of the first West Berlin urban renewal projects modelled after the modernist Garden City movement. Built in three phases during the 1950s and 1960s, its location on the border symbolically gestured to the intentions of the West Berlin Senate to build toward the people on the other side of the Wall in East Berlin.²⁸ Later the city planned for these and similar projects in Kreuzberg to be surrounded by autobahns (A16, A12), land use plans that remained on the books until 1990. Although the freeways were not built, the proposed plans negatively affected the community through rounds of "evictions, demolitions, and vacancies," "neglect and obscurity," and the construction of

at least one "social housing block with barely any back-facing windows." These planning and subsequent material conditions, however, "made the neighborhood affordable for migrant workers," young people, working-class people, and pensioners.²⁹

A diverse community grew here despite these challenges, and the artist depicts it through a series of her own observations. On a summer day two outdoor cafés were full of men and women wearing headscarves and long coats smoking shishas and playing backgammon, one group playing "Trouble." In a park a woman sat under a tree reading a book, two men sat on a little hill, three men slept on cardboard, while another sat "beside them on a little box, reading the newspaper," nearby a "homeless person lying on [a] blanket in the sun, covered completely, head-to-toe by an orange fuzzy blanket" rested. We read that "2 women stand on the corner in the sun chatting," and "lots of teens [are] waiting at [a] bus stop," while "2 police cars drive by." Still others down the way sat on benches or in chairs in front of a hair salon, while a bald tanned man wearing a white undershirt waved on his balcony, exchanging greetings with another man on the street below.

Yet the sense of the community's attachment to their neighborhood is most strongly communicated through activist signs. The Bündnis Otto-Suhr-Siedlung & Umgebung tenants organization formed in 2016 in response to the proposed "energy efficiency" renovations by Deutsche Wohnen & Co, the largest private landlord in the city with 110,000 units.³⁰ In 2013 Deutsche Wohnen purchased three thousand apartments in the housing complex and residents challenged the proposed dramatic rental increases of 40–50%, which the company claimed was needed to offset the costs of renovation.³¹ The tenants organization stated that up to 5000 residents would be displaced by the higher rents and protested through a series of actions. As the protest banners depicted on the canvas proclaim,

²⁷ Ibid. The Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv moved from Kreuzberg to Neukölln, on the site of the the former Neuer St. Jacobi cemetery, in 2020.

²⁸ "Otto-Suhr-Siedlung," Wikipedia, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto-Suhr-Siedlung>.

²⁹ For quotations immediately preceding this, also see Sally Below, "A106. Utopia & Planning," sbca and CLB Berlin, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://sally-below.de/en/projects/a106-utopia-planning/>.

³⁰ Bündnis Otto-Suhr-Siedlung & Umgebung, "About Us," Facebook and Webpages, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/OttoSuhrSiedlung/> and <https://buenndisderottosuhrsiedlungundumgebung.wordpress.com/info/>.

³¹ "Wohnungskonzern verteidigt sich: 'Unsere Wohnungen sind bezahlbar'" ("Housing group defends itself: 'Our apartments are affordable'"), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt am Main, DE), FAZ.NET, June 18, 2019, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/mietendeckel-konzern-deutsche-wohnen-verteidigt-sich-16242512.html>.

"*Wohnen ist Menschenrecht – Keinen Boden der Spekulation!*" (Housing is a human right—not ground for speculation!) and "*MIETERHÖHUNG ABGELEHNT*" (RENT INCREASE REJECTED). Other signs with similar slogans to the tenants group include those of *Die Linke* or The Left Party. Still other banners are more critical of the state, "*DIESE REGIERUNG MACHT UNS ARM*" (THIS GOVERNMENT MAKES US POOR) or "*Sozialverträgliche Mietpolitik ist möglich*" (Socially responsible rental policy is possible). The tenants demanded that the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district office support residents who have lived in their apartments for more than fifty years, many of whom established local infrastructures, opened businesses, and provided local services, and in 2018 they successfully claimed their right to remain.³²

The struggle for tenants' rights continues. Other signs copied onto the canvas include "*GANZ BERLIN HASST DIE DEUTSCHE WOHNEN*" (ALL OF BERLIN HATES DEUTSCHE WOHNEN) and "*Deutsche Wohnen & Co enteignen!*" (Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co!), the latter of which refers to a recent citizen initiative that successfully supported a new Berlin law providing rent caps for five years which was passed in February 2020. In April 2021 Germany's constitutional court ruled the new law null and void.³³ Deutsche Wohnen & Co then successfully placed a public referendum on the September 2021 general election ballot that gained 56% of Berliners support. At the time of writing, it was unclear how the Berlin Senate will respond to this non-legally binding vote to socialize private housing associations with more than three thousand units.³⁴

Not all communities were as successful in preventing evictions resulting from real estate speculation. At one of the densest overlapping zones of gray-black images and texts marked by exclamatory notes, Fassler has reproduced protest banners in Turkish and in German: "*Defetmek*" (meaning to be ousted) and "*HIER wird verdrängt*" (Evictions HERE).

HERE was home to two Kreuzberg migrant rights organizations: Allmende e.V. (Allmende Berlin: The House of Alternative Migration Policy and Culture), established in 2006 as a place of encounter for diverse people and their activities; and Kontakt-und Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Migrant_innen e.V. (KuB), a refugee and migrant contact point established in 1983 offering free advice on asylum rights and rights of residence.³⁵ Between business office space bubbles (25 €/m²) and intersected by the real estate boundary line, two octagonal traffic stop signs announce in Arabic and German "برهتال ففو" and "STOP ZWANGSRÄUMUNGEN" (STOP EVICTIONS). These activist banners depicted on the canvas refer to the 2015 protests of the eviction of Allmende and local demands for the center to remain. In 2013, when Allmende's rental agreement came to an end and much higher rents were demanded, they attempted to extend their original rental agreement though the local district office. Following an October 2014 court order ruling in favor of the new owners, the Anti-Racism Initiative protested the "racism in the rental market" and organized a public education and media campaign about the effects of privatization, including the displacement of tenants, initiatives, organizations, and youth centers, and the destruction of social infrastructure and alternative places.³⁶ At 6 p.m. on March 26, 2015, the night before they were told to depart the premises, the Berlin police arrived unannounced and prevented anyone from entering the building. Spontaneous protests erupted throughout Kreuzberg. Within hours 250 people were at Kottbusser Tor and met by armed police; many people were injured and arrested, including one Allmende activist who was beaten unconscious. The next morning hundreds of people again appeared to protest the eviction and coordinated a demonstration walk in the district.³⁷ Allmende's work continues to call attention to structural racism in the housing market as indicated by their webpage: "No to impoverishment, to displacement, to racism" (*Nein zu Verarmung, zu Verdrängung, zu Rassismus*).

³² Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Berlin District Office, "District Office Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and Deutsche Wohnen agree measures for socially acceptable renovation in the Otto-Suhr-Siedlung," Press Release 69, May 4, 2018, <https://www.berlin.de/ba-friedrichshain-kreuzberg/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2018/pressemitteilung.698557.php>.

³³ Joshua Posaner, "German constitutional court strikes down Berlin rent cap," *Politico* (EU Edition), April 15, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/court-strikes-down-berlin-rent-cap/>.

³⁴ Arthur Sullivan, "Berliners vote 'yes' on property expropriation, but what happens now?", *Deutsche Welle* online, September 27, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/berliners-vote-yes-on-property-expropriation-but-what-happens-now/a-59070328>; Joanna Kusiak, "Socialization: A Democratic, Affordable, and Lawful Solution to Berlin's Housing Crisis," *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung*, Policy Papers, January 2021.

³⁵ Allmende e.V.: Haus alternativer Migrationspolitik und Kultur, May 9, 2021, <http://www.allmendeberlin.de/> and KuB: Kontakt-und Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Migrant_innen e.V., <https://www.kub-berlin.org/en/>.

³⁶ "Allmende Bleibt—Cikmiyor!" (Allmende Remains—Cikmiyor!), Antirassistische Initiative, October 2014, <http://www.ari-berlin.org/aktuelles/allmende-cikmiyor.htm>.

³⁷ Allmende Berlin, "Pressemitteilung von Allmende e.V. zur illegalen Zwangsräumung aus ihren Vereinsräumen" (Press release of Allmende e.V. on the illegal eviction from their association premises), March 30, 2015, <http://www.allmendeberlin.de/index2d.htm> (fourth flyer).

The Allmende eviction has become more typical in Berlin, where over the past ten years the police have been deployed to enforce court-ordered eviction notices, including for diverse forms of community and housing commons that have enriched the history of the city through communes, squats, and anarchist and autonomous collectives.³⁸ By promoting tourism and privatization as a means of avoiding bankruptcy, the Berlin government has subsidized renovations that benefit landlords and developers rather than support local communities as was the case historically.³⁹ About 100,000 flats were empty in Berlin in the 1990s, so that when central parts of the city in the former East such as Berlin-Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg gentrified, people and groups could still find a different place to live. People continued to move to nearby and centrally located Kreuzberg for the social mix and diversity. As more publicly held properties became privatized, not only were new rents unaffordable locally, fewer empty spaces were available to move into, a problem exacerbated by the numerous tourists visiting Berlin who stayed in gentrified Airbnb units not owned by locals. Many individuals and collectives have protested the privatization of their rents which were formerly paid to local housing authorities; when these dramatically rose, they stayed in their homes and protested by continuing to pay their old rents.

In response anti-gentrification and anti-tourism movements have become more radical while still garnering local support. The result has been a more militarized city. For example, another police-enforced eviction in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg was of the 1990s anarchist-queer-feminist squat Liebig 14, which included an autonomously run cultural center and bar that funded their rent. Twenty-five hundred officers tried to evict residents who protested with

local support in 2011: during the COVID-19 pandemic, just hours after a court order, 1500 officers wearing riot gear removed the remaining fifty residents in October 2020.⁴⁰ Police also set up barricades, searched groups, and prevented protestors from interfering with the eviction, while police elsewhere in the city tried to stop fires that had been started in protest. Similar to the eviction of Allmende, hundreds of Berliners took to the streets in support of what was known to be a refuge for women, trans, and intersex people in the city.

Berlin's alternative and autonomous centers, historically and in the present day, remain a critical part of the city's unconventional identity. Groups and individuals have forged more inclusive forms of urban living by connecting diverse people and practices through innovative community economies, experimental arts and architecture, anti-patriarchal structures, and radical politics.⁴¹ This includes the support offered by centers like Allmende and KuB to recently arrived individuals asking for international protection. After fleeing civil wars or genocidal violence, migrants surviving a deadly journey arrive in Germany with hopes of finding a safe haven but end up facing a "humanitarian industrial complex."⁴² Similar to Berlin's postwar "guest" workers, these new migrants are depicted by the state and in the media as in Germany for short-term stays only, as if that can legitimate treating people as "parasites," "liable to expulsion or arrest" if they appear or speak out of place.⁴³ Indeed Germany, like other Fortress Europe states, enforces "hostipitality" to its guests through systemic forms of racism including incarceration, substandard housing, minimal economic support, and threats of forced deportation for undetermined periods of time while asylum applications are processed.⁴⁴

38. Alexander Vasudevan, *Metropolitan Preoccupations: The Spatial Politics of Squatting in Berlin* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

39. Information for the rest of this paragraph comes largely from Claire Colomb, *Staging the New Berlin: Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention Post-1989* (London: Routledge, 2012); Peter Beaumont, "East Berlin fights back against the yuppie invaders," *The Observer Germany*, *The Guardian*, January 16, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/16/berlin-gentrification-yuppification-squat>; Johannes Novy and Claire Colomb, "Urban Tourism and its Discontents: An Introduction," in *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City*, eds. Colomb and Novy (London: Routledge, 2016), 1–30.

40. Helen Pidd, "Berlin police mount huge operation to evict tenants of former squat," *Guardian Weekly* 2010 in review, *The Guardian*, February 2, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/02/berlin-liebig-14-squat-eviction-police>.

41. azozomox, "Squatting and Diversity—Gender and Patriarchy in Berlin, Madrid and Barcelona," in *The Squatters' Movement in Europe: Commons and Autonomy as Alternatives to Capitalism*, eds. Squatting Europe Kollektive, Claudio Cattaneo, Miguel A. Martinez (London: Pluto Press, 2014); azozomox and Duygu Gürsel, "The Untold Struggles of Migrant Women Squatters and the Occupations of Kottbusser Strasse 8 and Forster Strasse 16/17, Berlin-Kreuzberg," in *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy*, eds. Pierpaolo Mudu and Sutapa Chattopadhyay (London: Routledge, 2018), 104–118; Alexander Vasudevan, *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting* (London: Verso, 2017).

42. Itohan Osayimwese, "Architecture, Migration, and Spaces of Exception in Europe," *Abe Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe*, 11 (2017), <https://journals.openedition.org/abe/11033>.

43. Jacques Derrida, Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 61.

44. Aleksandra Bida, "Derrida and 'Hostipitality,'" in *Mapping Home in Contemporary Narratives* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 119–131; Zoë O'Reilly, *The In-Between Spaces of Asylum and Migration: A Participatory Visual Approach* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

The strong showing of police for the eviction of migrants is depicted in *Forms of Brutality* by a series of fifteen dark rectangles with "POLIZEI" followed by letters and numbers as would be seen on the backs of the uniformed police bodies. Underneath is the headline, "Räumung Refugee Camp Oranienplatz 08.04.2014" (Eviction of Oranienplatz Refugee Camp 8 April 2014), next to which are many overlapping, rippling protest banners depicted in German and English declaring "REFUGEE ARE WELCOME HERE," "Kein mensch ist illegal" (No person is illegal), and demanding the right to remain, "BLEIBERECHT FÜR ALLE!" On the canvas the viewer can read signs about the numerous days a hunger strike went on at the "Oplatz" camp and also about the existence of the "LAMPEDUSA VILLage in BerLin." These protest actions by people seeking international protection in Berlin and their allies call attention to the restrictive and inhumane German laws and practices of asylum.

Following the suicide of Iranian refugee Muhammed Rahsapar in a refugee camp in Würzburg in 2012, two hundred people left the camp and walked in protest to Berlin—a six hundred kilometer trek intended to raise awareness of the inadequate condition of refugee camps and the legal requirement prohibiting people to move once arriving in Germany.⁴⁵ This was followed by a nation-wide "Refugee's Revolution" on March 28, 2013, and in October that year, the protesters occupied a public square and set up a "tent city" at Oranienplatz, just east of Moritzplatz, that had communal kitchens and common spaces of learning. The tent was considered a symbol that could "show society what the problems are" and "make our political demands visible." After snow collapsed on one of their tents, they occupied the old Gerhart Hauptmann School building on nearby Ohlauer Street, where some people also established

the International Women* Space (IWS). Using different forms of civil disobedience, including hunger strikes, they demanded the right to movement, to live and to work freely in Germany; they opposed the EU third Dublin agreement and connected with other struggles, including "anti-gentrification and antifa groups, workers, students and artists."

The sign for "LAMPEDUSA VILLage in BerLin" recalls the "networked geography of migration and memory that traverses current and previous routes, transit points, and places of residence," including colonial histories and stories of slavery.⁴⁶ Lampedusa is a small, twenty-square-kilometer island off of the Tunisian coast controlled by Italy, and has become a European gateway for Tunisian, Libyan, Eritrean, Syrian, and other West African people fleeing violence.⁴⁷ Five years after a secret 2004 agreement by the Italian and Libyan governments, the lack of housing and basic services for refugees was considered by the UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, a crisis exacerbated by the Libyan civil war in 2011. Due to the appalling conditions on Lampedusa, and because they could not return to their homes in Libya and elsewhere, many left in unsafe overcrowded boats to search for asylum in Europe. Many unnecessary deaths occurred. The most well-publicized case resulted in seventy-two African migrants who drowned in 2011, even though local authorities, NATO, and the European coastguard knew this vessel was in distress. Following a lengthy investigation highlighting how these migrant deaths resulted from geopolitical conflicts and immoral practices within European institutions, EU states responded by increasing border controls, leading to still further deaths. While the numbers of refugees entering Germany at this time were less than those arriving in the 1990s, people seeking asylum in the first half of 2013 were cited between 65,000 to 100,000,

⁴⁵ Information for this paragraph comes largely from Refugee Movement: News From Inside, "About," <https://oplatz.net/about/>; Menschen aus der Protestbewegung rund um den Oranienplatz, "1½ Jahre Oranienplatz: Eine Protestbewegung lässt sich nicht räumen," Borderline Europe, https://www.borderline-europe.de/sites/default/files/background/1%2C5%20Jahre%20Oranienplatz_0.pdf, accessed May 9, 2021; Azomox and IWS refugee women activists, "Narrating the challenges of women-refugee activists of Ohlauer Strasse 12, International Women's Space (IWS refugee women activists), Berlin," in *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy*, eds. Pierpaolo Mudu and Sutapa Chattopadhyay (London: Routledge, 2017), 207–221.

⁴⁶ Women in Exile and Friends, "Frauen in brandenburgischen Flüchtlingslagern" (October 2015), cited in Osayimwese, "Architecture, Migration, and Spaces of Exception in Europe," *Abe Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe*, 11 (2017), <https://journals.openedition.org/abe/11033>.

⁴⁷ Information for the rest of this paragraph comes from Naomi Conrad, "From Lampedusa to Berlin," *Deutsche Welle*, October 10, 2013, <https://www.dw.com/en/from-lampedusa-to-berlin/a-17150360>; Claire Dorrity, "'Disposable people': borderlands and state securitization in the EU," in *Haven: The Mediterranean Crisis and Human Security*, ed. John Morrissey, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), 66–92; Charles Hawley and Charly Wilder, "German Asylum System Hits Breaking Point," *Spiegel International*, August 30, 2013, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/refugee-influx-reveals-german-asylum-policy-shortcomings-a-919488.html>; Patrick Jackson, "My Germany: Lampedusa refugee," *BBC News Berlin*, September 13, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24035258>; Joseph Pugliese, "Crisis heterotopias and border zones of the dead," *Continuum* 23, no. 5 (2009): 663–679.

an increase of 90% within a year, more than the past twelve years combined, which overwhelmed the shelters. In addition to the Libyan and West African refugees, people came from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Chechnya.

The embodied presence of the "OPlatz Berlin Refugee Movement" in the central city for eighteen months became an international symbol of resistance, empowering many of the migrants and locals working in solidarity with them. They called for the abolishment of mandatory residency, isolated refugee camps, and all deportations, and demanded the rights of movement, work, and study.⁴⁸ But as the police presence recorded on the canvas indicates, they were also a threat to the gentrifying city. After their early offers to relocate the camp were rejected, officials of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and the Berlin Senate conducted further negotiations claiming that 80% of the OPlatz residents consented to a voluntary evacuation; this despite another source claiming that none of the residents agreed to the camp's dissolution but considered Oranienplatz to be a "political symbol" for all refugees in Germany.⁴⁹ The camp was dismantled on April 8, 2014, even as some residents fought off police officers at the Ohlauer Street location, finally leaving in June 2014. As part of the discussions to close the village, the OPlatz residents were promised access to an information container, which opened in June and was subsequently burned to the ground.

In July a joint initiative by the Berlin-Dresden artist group Bewegung Nurr, activists, and refugees, including the group "Borderline Europe: Human Rights Without Borders," created an open pavilion *Haus der 28 Türen* (The House of the 28 Doors) with video installations to remember all those who lost their lives seeking to enter Europe.⁵⁰ Their title and mandate offered heightened awareness and responsiveness to refugees as an alternative to the

closed doors of the EU's then twenty-eight states. It opened initially in Berlin-Templehof and was moved in August to OPlatz to provide an alternative space for people seeking international protection in the city. The modified tent structure had planning permission to be open for at least six months as a cultural and information venue, but it too was entirely burned to the ground in March 2015 through a planned attack. Shortly thereafter, a year following the closure of Lampedusa Village, national marches, including one starting at Oranienplatz, protested German proposals to further tighten immigrant and asylum rights; with the new Syrian refugee crisis, they were unsuccessful. In September 2020, OPlatz launched the hashtag movement *#WolstUnserDenkmal* (Where is our Memorial) and erected a memorial stela with a performance at Oranienplatz to commemorate the victims of racism and police violence.

An Ethical, Place-Based Cosmopolitanism

Fassler's *Forms of Brutality* takes less than a single square mile surrounding Moritzplatz to record the tensions between official spatial imaginaries, financial desires, and the lived geographies of the city. Navigating the city of Berlin at a distance, the canvases can be read like a map or online screen, a backdrop for future profitability mediated through advertisements and fenced off by property lines. Yet the layering of building and boundary marks, emotive color washes, and texts interrupt any possible initial comfort we might have when viewing the artwork from afar. The artwork brings the viewer's awareness to the lived spatial legacies of historical violence from National Socialism, geopolitical division, and spatial segregation. Here, privatization, real estate speculation, and government support has "hard-wired" chronic urban trauma "in place, enabling retraumatization."⁵¹ Police-enforced evictions protect property, rather than human rights, creating new

⁴⁸ Refugee Movement: News From Inside, "About."

⁴⁹ The information for the rest of this paragraph comes from: Andrej Hunko, "Pressemitteilungen: Die Geschichte der Räumung des 'Refugee Camps' am Berliner Oranienplatz muss neu erzählt werden" ("Press Release: The story of the eviction of the 'Refugee Camp' at Berlin's Oranienplatz must be retold"), *Die Linke*, April 11, 2014, <https://www.andrej-hunko.de/presse/1968-die-geschichte-der-raeumung-des-refugee-camps-am-berliner-oranienplatz-muss-neu-erzaehlt-werden>; "Last refugees hang on in Berlin school," *The Local.de*, June 26, 2014, <https://www.thelocal.de/20140626/last-refugees-left-in-berlin-school-gerhart-hauptmann/>.

⁵⁰ Information for this paragraph from: borderline-europe, May 9, 2021, <https://www.borderline-europe.de/>; Thomas Loy, "Künstlerischer Protest am Oranienplatz" ("Artists Protest at Oranienplatz"), *Der Tagesspiegel*, August 23, 2014, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/berlin-kreuzberg-kuenstlerischer-protest-am-oranienplatz/10371246.html>; Ingo Salmen et al., "Das war ein gezielter Anschlag" ("This was a targeted attack"), *Der Tagesspiegel*, March 31, 2015, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/polizei-justiz/brandstiftung-am-oranienplatz-in-kreuzberg-das-war-ein-gezielter-anschlag/11579360.html>; Nele Jensch, "Aktivist*innen errichten Mahnmahl für Opfer von Rassismus und Polizeigewalt" ("Activists erect memorial for victims of racism and police violence"), *Tagesspiegel Leute*, October 1, 2020, <https://leute.tagesspiegel.de/friedrichshain-kreuzberg/macher/2020/10/01/141798/aktivistinnen-errichten-mahnmal-fuer-opfer-von-rassismus-und-polizeigewalt/>.

⁵¹ Pain, "Chronic Urban Trauma," 385.

wounds in the city. The artist materially inscribes this trauma in the work through the erasure of precisely drawn structures, the dripping paints in red-stained zones, the white strips and bubbles covering those historical layers, and the protest banners seeking to stop the cycles of violence.

***Forms of Brutality* depicts not only the lethal consequences of historic and present-day modernist racist approaches to imagining the city as an abstract slate to control populations and property, but it also shows viewers possible forms of inclusive urbanity.**

Where historic communities have been most negatively affected by speculation and financialization, we learn how residents assert their rights to remain, together, as one sign on the canvas describes, "*HOTSPOTS DER SOLIDARITÄT*." People create gardens from concrete wastelands, write songs about their city, prevent evictions, protest racism and injustice, create new villages, and commemorate new memorials. The densely inhabited parts of the canvas offer a sensation of being together with others—with the little boys eating ice cream, the people soaking up the sun in the park, the man waving to his friend, the girls waiting at a bus stop, or the unfortunate person walking into dog shit. The urban commons, alternative community centers, and public spaces made by activists, gardeners, migrants, squatters, anarchists, feminists, tenants organisations, and others have made Berlin a unique European city. They embody a Berlin of "multi-rooted, ethical, and glocal cosmopolitanism," offering residents and guests a place-based ethics of care that challenges the violent legacies of the past in order to nurture a shared home in the present.⁵² ■■■■

⁵². Aleksandra Bida, *Mapping Home in Contemporary Narratives*, 165; Till, "Wounded Cities."