

TITLE: Gelsenkirchen Healing Complex
COUNTRY: Germany (Ruhr Valley)
SPONSORING COLLEGE: Barnard College, New York, NY
PROJECT LEADER: Eli Duncan
DATE OF EXECUTION: May 20th - July 20th

BRIEF SUMMARY

This project will develop plans for a mixed-use community center within the economically and culturally depressed region of Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr Valley of Germany. During the summer of 2022 with the support of Davis Projects for Peace, Eli Duncan BC 22' and Kassia Karras BC 22' plan to execute a research initiative that will span from a focus on sustainable construction materials and methods to the cultural and economic context of the project. Our research and planning throughout the summer will culminate in an on-site, exploratory exhibition on June 4th open to the community and media, as well as a final report of all research and events that will aid in the subsequent design process.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The region of Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr Valley of Germany was economically thriving throughout the first half of the 20th century due to its successful coal mining industries. Beginning in the 1960s, coal mining was outlawed, and the economy began to deteriorate due to this loss of industry. Throughout this period, the area became a destination for refugees with guest work visas from various regions of Europe. Gelsenkirchen's refugee population has continued to grow, but the area remains a region stripped of cultural and economic liveliness.

However, there is great potential for cultural development and peacemaking within this area. The German government has made efforts to establish the Ruhr Valley as a site of cultural vibrancy and the arts. An example of this is the government-funded organization Urbane Kunst Ruhr (Urban Arts Ruhr) which participates in programming and arts development throughout this region. Urbane Kunst Ruhr has partnered with artist and professor Irena Haiduk to develop plans for a community center in this region that is economically and ecologically sustainable. This design and construction of this center will be paid for by this government initiative and will involve the remodeling of a modernist church, originally constructed in the 1950s.

Our student-led research initiative will take on critical questions to be addressed at the start of this project: how do we ensure that this space will be valuable to the community, that it will be able to reach across cultural boundaries to accommodate everyone who has access to it and operate as a site of peacemaking? How can this space serve as a point of community, healing, and peace within this region? In what ways does it need to be adaptable? It is essential that we address these initial questions so that the project fulfills this purpose.

OUTCOMES/IMPACTS

The overall objective is to prepare a final report through communication, research, exhibition, and collaboration that will ensure that the project functions as a center of connection and community in this region. As a center of community activity, the complex will be focused on baking and cooking as activities and economies that have the potential to connect individuals across varying backgrounds. Many of the refugee communities represented in the Ruhr Valley have culinary traditions that emphasize the use of public space for baking and cooking. Therefore, we will begin with this program as our model. In addition to this, part of our research this summer will explore the possibility of incorporating a public sauna into the building's program.

It is imperative that the community has access and interest in the development of this project. Therefore, we intend to involve as many people as possible from the start. We are working with Irena Haiduk who has been involved on-site for the past several years. Through this collaboration, we will have access to a network of local bakers, community members, and academic professionals. Accessing this network is our first step in our spring planning process. Before the exhibition, we will bring together students, teachers, and community members throughout a series of presentations and events. These events will include baking and wellness workshops with local bakers as well as guest speakers. We will also utilize the existing structure as a venue for baking contests, lessons, and even a small studio for filmmaking. All of these efforts are intended to set a precedent for community involvement, even before the design is completed. Additionally, we will conduct several surveys throughout this programming to collect feedback. We intend to approach this stage with flexibility and allow for this involvement to affect our design decisions in the fall.

In our exhibition, we will present diagrams, plans, and research that communicate how this complex will incorporate baking, bathing, and community events. More specifically, we will thoroughly map out how exchange and services will take place within the complex. There will be sliding scale income-based pricing for all services and products within the center including sauna memberships, baking subscriptions, wellness workshops, and baking workshops. The healing complex will be not-for-profit. We will diagram how these funds will circulate back to pay for work exchange on-site so that community members can be paid to help maintain and operate the building. Ultimately, this will serve as an adaptable model to help plan the design process in the fall. After the exhibition on June 4th, we will develop an extensive report of the project that will continue to be a collaboration and brainstorming process. This final report will inform our design efforts in the next stage of this project.

With the help of Davis Projects for Peace, we will be able to successfully complete this first, and arguably most important stage of the larger project which will span over the next 2 years. Eli and Kassia anticipate being involved with this project until its completion in the winter of 2023. The construction of this center, funded by Urbane Kunst Ruhr, is one of the first of its kind. It has the potential to inspire further initiatives for community development and sustainability both in this region and worldwide. The Gelsenkirchen Healing Complex will be a case study candidate to be presented at the global art and sustainability summit Manifesta in 2025.

TIMELINE

<p>Project Development Feb 2022 - May 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize dates and logistics (travel, accommodation, etc.) - Collaborate with Irena Haiduk to make contacts with local participants and begin event planning process - Create detailed plan and calendar for all events
<p>Project Implementation May 2022 - August 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan, oversee, and manage community events and conferences - Organize and host an exhibition, facilitate documentation. - Execute surveys and interviews each month to address community input - Create official report of programming plans, exhibition content and planning process.
<p>Sustained Impact August 2022 - December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create finalized designs, plans, and renderings of the complex - Continue to facilitate programming and hire staff to oversee progress - Oversee construction of the project

QUALIFICATIONS

Eli Duncan is a senior at Barnard College completing a combined major in architecture and art history with a concentration in visual arts. His studies at Barnard have been largely interdisciplinary; he has also completed significant coursework in biological and environmental sciences as well as urban studies. Eli is interested in taking on issues that require similar interdisciplinary modes of thinking and is passionate about the ways in which design and art can be used together to solve social, economic, and political issues. Eli will use his knowledge of environmental systems to conduct research on sustainable materials and practices this summer. His coursework relating to design and art as well as his internship experience in arts administration will help in the development and execution of the exhibition and related events. Additionally, Eli speaks B1 level German and is fluent in Spanish which will be essential for communication and community building throughout the process.

Kassia Karras is a senior at Barnard College completing her Bachelor of Arts in architecture and history. Kassia is interested in the intersection of art, design, architecture, and sustainable urban planning, and how these fields have shaped and can help reshape public and private spaces in the urban and rural. She grew up in Beijing, China, and has studied modern Russian and Chinese history, as well as the development of the utopian ideological struggles of the 20th century and how they have impacted present-day geopolitics and trends in architectural and material design. Her experience in exhibition planning through her work at the Brooklyn Museum exhibition design department, assisting local artist Han Feng with exhibition planning of her gallery, and planning student-run art exhibits at Barnard and Columbia will help in the development of planning exhibitions and events in Gelsenkirchen. Kassia speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese and basic Greek and can help translate when needed.

Name: Eli Duncan, Kassia Karras					Note: all funds in US dollars.				
Project Name:									
School: Barnard College, Columbia University					TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:				
					\$ -				
Projects for Peace grant: \$ 10,000.00									
Additional Funding, if any:					TOTAL EXPENDITURES:				
Total funding available: \$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00				
Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
1300	2000		300			300	300		
1300	2000		300						
400			300						
2 round trip flights, local transportation cost	2 months, 2 students		300						
			300						
			300						
			300						
			300			Exhibition supplies			
			600 total per month, each student				Exhibition marketing/event promotion		
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 3,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ -
Total Student Expenses: \$ 9,400.00					Total Project Expenses: \$ 600.00				