

Kultur Büro Elisabeth

The church as an open, diverse and multipurpose public space; the integration and coexistence of faith and culture, of the sacred and the profane; church spaces, whose unique historical architecture come alive for the public as it is activated by cultural projects: these thoughts and ideas are the inspiration for our work. Ever a balancing act between the opening of the church and the preservation of her character, the work of the Kultur Büro Elisabeth hopes to find a balance of its high standards for content and its need to sustain its economic and institutional livelihood.

From the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN to the Kultur Büro Elisabeth – A Short History

2003 Founding of the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN

Assumption of responsibility for the church's buildings, which were no longer being actively used or maintained by the Parish and were in need of repair. Goal: To preserve the buildings and create a profile for the spaces based on appropriate cultural programming.

2004 Establishment as a Corporation (GmbH)

In order to establish the conditions for stable legal and financial standing, the Parish, while remaining the full owners of the buildings in their entirety, is, through the establishment of the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN, relieved of responsibility for the operating and maintenance costs incurred by the buildings' public use.

2007 Finalization of the First Rental Contract

Regarding the (near-) exclusive use of the St. Elisabeth Church, the Villa Elisabeth and the St. Johannes-Evangelist Church through the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN, a rental contract has been established between the Parish and the Corporation in effect until 2017 (with the possibility for extension until 2027). An addendum allows for the Kulturbüro's programming to extend to rentals of the Golgatha, Sophien and Zion churches.

2013: 10-Year Anniversary of the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN

With an extensive cultural events program, as well as an artistic and festive church service, the Kulturbüro SOPHIEN celebrated its tenth birthday in the company of friends, colleagues and supporters, in the best of summer weather. A short film documents this celebration.

Change of Name

In September 2014, following an 8-month renovation of the Villa Elisabeth, the Kultur Büro reemerged for the new season with a new image and a new name: Kultur Büro Elisabeth.

Non-Profit Status

As of January 2015, the Kultur Büro Elisabeth is officially recognized as a non-profit organization (gGmbH).

Guidelines for our Work

Making Room for New Ideas

Inviting experimentation within the unusual, architecturally distinctive and culturally valuable venues in the development of innovative and inspired new formats in arts and culture; allowing artists to draw inspiration from the spaces, and to integrate the unique qualities of the site into their work.

Making connections

Working thematically in order to connect different disciplines as well as breaking down the borders between artistic genres; making encounters across disciplines and between cultural communities possible.

Towards a Culture of Critical Reflection

Supporting artists' critical reflection and active engagement of difficult, uncomfortable themes, as well as being the conduit for these positions and expressions to reach and touch the public. In particular, a "cultural church" allows for reflection upon religious and spiritual themes.

Supporting the Development of Emerging Artists

Diminishing the financial burden for up and coming artists, such as dramaturges, theatrical concept developers, as well as curators, through greatly reduced rental fees (so-called rental subsidies); supporting them as well in the fields of Event Management, PR and Marketing, technical realization, acquisition of project funding, etc.

Making Diversity Possible, Encouraging High Artistic Quality

In the selection of our programming, which the Kultur Büro Elisabeth determines jointly with the congregation's cultural committee, high artistic quality (despite all the risks of experimentation) is of central importance. Although our program is in no way bound to a particular artistic discipline, genre or repertoire, emphasis falls on contemporary productions as well as those in the realm of music and particularly that of so-called Early Music.

Careful Selection of Projects as a Guarantee of Quality and Diversity

The projects that take place within our facilities are not, barring rare exception, conceived of or financially developed by the Kultur Büro Elisabeth. However, they are carefully selected and closely supported, with, in the case of many projects, the Kultur Büro Elisabeth acting as a collaborative partner through advising on content and easing financial strains. We initiate new projects and bring diverse creative people together.

The Church's Profile

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Selection of Cultural Projects

The venues and spaces organized and rented by the Kultur Büro Elisabeth are ideal for the realization of the most diverse cultural projects, making the interest in them great. The Kultur Büro receives ever larger numbers of project proposals. The spectrum of genres (Exhibitions, Concerts, Dance and Theater Pieces, Readings), is as broad as the producers, who range from renowned partners and cultural institutions to self-represented artists.

The Kultur Büro Elisabeth is not a producer with financial support. It supports itself solely through income from rentals and events. In addition, all building maintenance, administrative and personnel costs must also be drawn from these sources. Through a flexible pricing policy (i.e. possibility of rent subsidies), the Kultur Büro Elisabeth makes an effort to welcome projects with funding deficits or those worthy of support.

Decisions regarding the selection of projects are met at monthly meetings of the Cultural Committee, which is constituted by culturally engaged members of the Congregation.

To be considered by the Cultural Committee, a concept must contain the following:

- Idea/Description of the project, preferably accompanied by visual material (for example: catalogs and CDs)
- Context/Connection to the site (for example: connection to architecture, history or use)
- Finance plan
- List of planned partners (for example: integration in a festival)
- Details for press and publicity

The selection of cultural events is based upon the following criteria:

1. Can a high level of quality and originality be expected from the artist conceiving of and carrying out this project?
2. Is this project appropriate for the site? Does it take the architecture, history or use of the buildings into consideration with regard to the project's content and aesthetic?
3. Is the producer or renter capable of a professional level of event organization (including press and publicity)?
4. Will an effort be made to fill the space not only with art, but also with an audience?
5. Is the event's mediation or educational programming worthy of funding? (for example: projects involving cultural education for children and youth?)
6. Is the producer capable of raising the funds to cover not only the rental of the space (with the exception of projects receiving rent subsidies), but also the costs incurred by the event on the buildings and Kulturbüro?

Upon acceptance of the project proposal, the Kultur Büro Elisabeth advises for further planning, suggests contacts when needed (for example, to technicians) and supports in the realization of the project, including work with the press and marketing (newsletter, homepage, presslists). In addition, the Kultur Büro provides support in the form of helpers and services on-site (sale of beverages, evening reception, cashier, exhibition guard, etc.).

The Kultur Büro takes care of its connections and relations with artists and cultural producers, and out of this network new interesting project ideas emerge, again and again.