



Linz09's Programme

of Event Relates Stories about Linz, Europe and the World

No other Austrian city has changed as dramatically as Linz has in recent years. Once a nice, quiet commercial town on the banks of the Danube, then the place that Adolf Hitler adopted as his hometown, and later a capital of heavy industry with all the side-effects and risks that entails, Linz today is a modern urban centre with a flourishing economy and exceptional quality of life. A city where interesting things are happening, where change is in the air and the future is taking shape right now. The mission of Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture is to be a part of this process: an initiative implementing sustainable urban development and a driving force for progress in promising directions. Many of the projects being produced for Linz09 are efforts to give a narrative account of the City of Linz; they're subsumed under the following 10 headings: Linz Welcome, Linz Capital, Linz Power, Linz Journey, Linz World, Linz Memory, Linz Knowledge, Linz Passion, Linz Holiday and Linz Dreaming. In each of these chapters, the city's past and future are tied into the present in a variety of ways. Europe and the world are the poles of another spectrum that's being covered by Linz09's overall programming concept, and, after all, the city's past is the precondition for positioning Linz in a European context.

Capital of Culture programme offerings have been in the works since 2007. On New Year's Eve from December 31, 2008 to January 1, 2009, we'll finally be ringing in the big year. The highlight will be the "Raketensinfonie," the world premiere of a work for a chorus consisting of 800 singers and 16 soloists performing in a dialogue with a fireworks display. The site of this colourful spectacle will be the banks of the Danube between the Ars Electronica Center, the Nibelungenbrücke, the Lentos Kunstmuseum and the Brucknerhaus. Two superlative cultural events are scheduled for New Year's Day: the Linz09 opening concert in the Brucknerhaus featuring the Bruckner Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, and "Best of Austria," a huge exhibition of this country's most superb works of art in the Lentos (running until May 10, 2009). The highlight of Day 2 of the Capital of Culture year will be the opening of the architecturally spectacular 4,000-m² addition to the Ars Electronica Center. The turn-of-the-year is also the time to observe some unique Austrian traditions: the ringing of the Pummerin in the steeple of St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Blue Danube Waltz, handing out good-luck charms, and Aperschnalzen (the ancient peasant custom of "whip-cracking" to awaken the fertility of the fields) in front of Linz's Landhaus. Linz09's opening festivities and projects will be in full swing—in the Old City downtown and in the surrounding neighbourhoods as well.

Linz09's programme focuses intensely on the recent history of this city. The Capital of Culture's confrontation with the Nazi past, with National Socialist cultural policymaking and regional cultural life during the Nazi era will already be getting underway in Autumn 2008 with "The Cultural Capital of the Führer," an exhibition that will be running in the Schlossmuseum Linz from September 17, 2008 to March 22, 2009. "Political Sculpture" at the Landesgalerie Linz (September 18 to November 16, 2008) will display works by Barlach, Kaspar, Thorak and Wotruba. An analysis of the biographies of these four very dissimilar sculptors will shed light on the multifaceted public perceptions of their works from the Nazi era to the present day.

A craving to learn more about Linz's dark side is what motivated Flemish theatre and film director Luk Perceval to shoot his documentary entitled "The Concealed City." The film's location and subject is Linz's old and extensive system of underground tunnels that served as air-raid shelters for the civilian population during World War II. Actor Felix Römer plays the role of a

“stranger,” the first to actively listen to what’s being said, watch what’s happening, and curiously inquire. The film proceeds in his company, following a variety of different traces, taking up narrative threads, and investigating interesting issues. It will be shown in conjunction with the “Theatre Mania 2: Sunburn” festival (July 27 to August 30, 2009)—projected onto the limestone wall behind the Limonistollen caves, a location that actually was used for film screenings and other events in postwar Linz.

Internationally successful Turkish artist Kutlug Ataman works with film, video and photography in his “Mesopotamian Dramaturgies” that focus on the upheavals Turkey has experienced in recent decades—the political, cultural and economic changes that have occurred there and the struggles between religious and secular worldviews. In this exhibition that will run in the Lentos Kunstmuseum from February 13 to April 19, 2009, he also scrutinizes the tensions between East and West, and the idea of Europe.

Turkey, along with Switzerland and Norway—two other European countries that are not members of the European Union—will occupy the centre of attention at “Extra Europa” (March 20 to April 30, 2009), a project that will include an international cultural festival. This conclave will go into the reasons why these nations remain EU non-member states, and also examine the question of Europe’s cultural identity. In their contributions to the festival, Norway will deal with ‘equal treatment’, Switzerland with the nature of a multilingual and multicultural society, and Turkey with the processes of exchange between the Ottoman Empire, Turkey and Europe.

“Culture for All” has long been the declared aim of this city, but in 2009 we’ll be taking this ideal literally as an invitation as well as an assertion to demand quality for all. In this spirit, Linz09 will be staging numerous projects in public spaces. As a follow-up to “Schaurausch” (2007: viewing spree) and “Tiefenrausch” (2008: rapture of the deep), we’ll be carrying on our collaboration with the OK Offenes Kulturhaus Oberösterreich in 2009 with “Höhenrausch” (high-altitude euphoria). This exhibition (running from May 29 to September 13) will take visitors to the rooftops of Linz for spectacular vistas and epiphanies of contemporary art. The aim of this “Art in the City!!” trilogy is to open up new spaces as well as new approaches in line with the philosophy that art has to assert itself in everyday life and thus make its presence felt among members of the general public, most of whom do not regularly visit museums. People should experience art directly, get into up-close-and-personal contact with it—and without curators dumbing down the content or patronizing their audiences. Particularly in this regard, there is so very much that a Capital of Culture year can accomplish!

As the world’s first counter culture and resistance technology fair, the “Subversive Fair” (May 14 – 17, 2009) is designed to transgress boundaries. The exhibitors—approximately 25 artists from all over the world—will present their current projects and works that take a productive approach to undermining power relations and forms of authority, and to asserting control over the design of the public sphere. Workshops, product presentations and film screenings will impart background information and knowledge about how to fight back against the powers that be. Attendees will be able to get hands-on experience with new technologies and practices of cultural and political resistance, and exchange ideas with their cohorts.

“Hide” will offer a great deal of food for critical thought about surveillance in public places. Participants in these offbeat tours through the Linz inner city in Spring 2009 will learn simple movements to enable them to evade the numerous surveillance cameras they’ll come across during their sightseeing jaunt. Prerequisites: camouflage clothing and a sense of humour.

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“See this Sound” is an intense encounter with the present and past of the link-up between image and sound in art, media and perception. Our experiential world is substantially characterized by the omnipresence of audiovisual products and structures. Beginning August 29, 2009, this exhibition in the Lentos Kunstmuseum will showcase and elaborate on various forms and phenomena of image and sound production, as well as their impact on our contemporary culture. Collaboration with the cultural institutions of the city and province, with extant regional festivals as well as educational institutions, associations and the local indie scene is making it possible to produce more than 150 exhibitions, projects and concepts for Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture. In November 2008, we'll be releasing Programme Book 3/3 containing the final list of projects along with details, dates and times. Additional information about Linz09 and the Capital of Culture year programme is available online at www.linz09.at.

