

What is a city?

The reason for my participation in the project „Soundscapes“ was the interest in some questions about cities and especially about Rostock.

I grew up near Rostock and always perceived the city visually. I know a lot of places and areas and I can describe what they look like. The project was a possibility to explore the city in a new way and publish my experiences in an exhibition and on a website. This has made it possible for me to share my experiences with other people and encourage them to explore the environment in a new way and to sharpen the senses they don't normally use. In order to understand the dimensions and the possibilities of „Soundscapes“ I had to ask myself a few questions before I started the research and the fieldwork. What was especially important to me was the understanding of the term „City“ and the character of a city

1. What is a city?

For me it was not enough to categorise a city as a place where many people live and work. It is more...

A city for me is an accumulation of the cultural achievements of humankind. Cultural achievements can be architecture, structure and town planning, arts, infrastructure, economy, and other things. So a city combines or unifies all these factors and centralises them.

2. What characterises a city?

If we think about the character of cities, we normally think of visual highlights like interesting and historical architecture or some natural occurrence like their situations on the coast or close to a mountain. But neither the achievements nor the natural occurrences characterise cities. The people and their perceptions characterise them. What effect would the greatest architecture have if nobody saw it? What impact would the loudest bell cause if nobody heard it? It's like the old riddle **"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"**

3. What characterises Rostock?

As I answered in the questions before, Rostock is a place on the Baltic Sea in which cultural achievements are centralised, combined, and unified. Some special and interesting achievements of the history are the Hanse architecture, red bricks, industrial structures, and disk's buildings.

But concerning the character I had to ask myself how do people in Rostock perceive their city? Of course I cannot give an answer but, concerning the Soundscapes-Project, I can try to find sounds that many people are surrounded by.

After answering these questions it was clear for me to make recordings in the suburbs of Rostock, like Lütten Klein or Lichtenhagen, where many disk's buildings are. Disk's buildings are a dominating architectural feature of Rostock and used to provide more than 50% of housing for Rostock's inhabitants. They were an important part of culture in the lives of the people in Rostock.

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