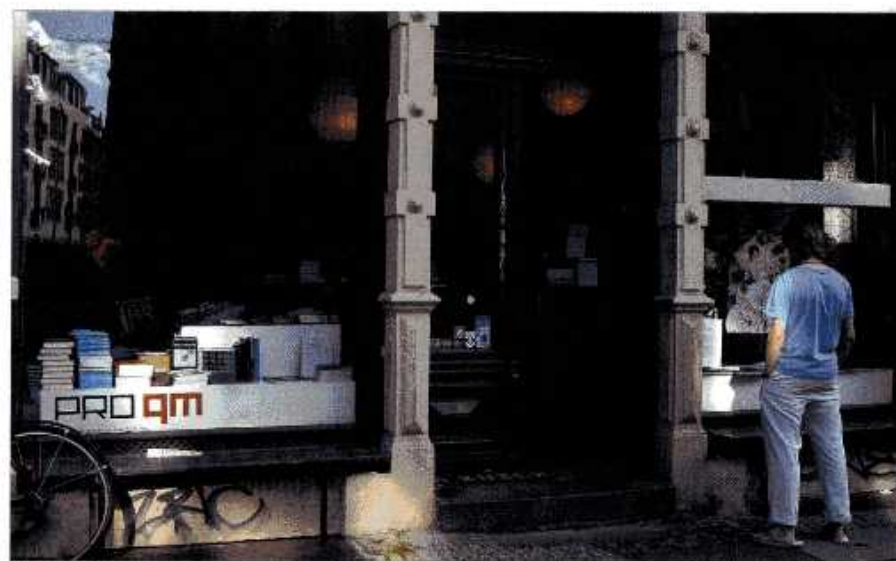




3D graffiti near Alexanderplatz



PROqm

Brett Bloom and Ava Bromberg work together as *In the Field (ItF)*. Their recent book *Belltown Paradise/Making Their Own Plans* chronicles the efforts of five groups working in five different cities to preserve open spaces in their neighborhoods through art and creative organizing. *ItF* uses the “Field Guide” format to introduce experimental and interesting projects that give a unique sense of practice in a single city. This Field Guide focuses on spaces and activities in Berlin.

TEMPORARY USE

The city government of Berlin cracked down and removed the illegal bars and squats that flourished during the post-Berlin Wall 90s, but a very important idea came out of the success of the establishments. City planners, building owners, galleries, artists, and others now invest in the concept of “temporary use,” letting artists utilize an empty storefront for a set period of time rent-free, with the idea that cultural activities bring a certain cachet to a location and this kind of recognition will interest people in moving to the area.

There are positive and negative aspects of seeing “temporary use” implemented through private/public partnerships. Not having to pay rent makes low-cost experimentation possible, and building owners begin to recognize that it is better to have their spaces used rather than sitting empty—although rising property values as a result of

a neighborhood becoming active is perhaps the bigger draw for some investors. A negative aspect of temporary use is that this support has an expiration date and projects are treated, for the most part, as disposable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ILLEGAL BARS THAT SPRANG UP IN 1990S BERLIN, SEEK OUT MARTIN EBERLE'S EXCELLENT BOOK *TEMPORARY SPACES*, 2002.

BOOKSTORE PROJECTS

PROqm (Alte Schoenhuuser Strasse 48) is a bookstore-cum-art-project in the Mitte section of central Berlin that opened in 1999. Founders Jesko Fezer, Katja Reichard, and Axel John Wieder were involved with the illegal bar scene, but insist the bookstore did not directly evolve from that sphere, but was instead a way to have a steady presence in their neighborhood. Despite growing gentrification, evidenced by the trendy cafes and boutiques popping up along the block, PROqm continues to operate as a source for good books, lectures, and a range of events.

B_books opened in 1996 as an accessible meeting place with a great selection of books and no outspoken or explicit political or artistic agendas. It hosts “montagPRAXIS,” an ongoing series that includes meetings, film screenings, book presentations, discussions, and parties. In 1998, **b**_books started to make their own publications and in 2000 began producing films.

WWW.PRO-QM.DE AND WWW.BBOOKS.DE

MAKING ROOM FOR A BERLIN FIELD GUIDE

A PRIMER TO THE SIGHTS, SITES, AND SCENES OF BERLIN

BY BRETT BLOOM & AVA BROMBERG

PLEASURE DOME

The mobile assembly hall Pleasure Dome (various locations) was started in 1998 by Tara Herbst, Jochen Heilek, Benjamin Foerster Baldenius, Regula Engeler, Ines Schaber, and Mathias Heyden. In German, it is called a "fahrbare Raumerweiterungshalle," or "moving extendable space hall," and can expand and contract based upon location and use. It was built in the late 60s or early 70s by an East German space container manufacturing company. The company collapsed in 1989, and the Pleasure Dome founders were able to acquire the structure and use it to host video screenings, lectures, discussions, concerts, performances, and many kinds of exhibitions. They also lived in it for a period of time. Herbst told us that it takes a crane and many people to move the building, which has been planted in several different locations since 1998. The Pleasure Dome ended in 2004 and the building was handed over to a new group of young architecture students in Berlin who plan to use it for experimenting with solar power and hydroelectricity.

ANARCHITEKTUR

This past summer, the magazine *AnArchitektur* (Alexander Platz 5), which started in 2002, organized "Camp for Oppositional Architecture," an event intended to address issues of how our built environment has been structured by capitalism. The camp posed the questions, "What is left to do when globalized markets and cultures ask for commodified spaces; when nation states and corporations require spectacular architectures for representative purposes; and what are the possible ways of resistance within the scope of architecture and planning." The "Camp" featured presentations by architects, planners, and artists from several countries representing multiple approaches.

A DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENT THAT CONTAINS MANY OF THE APPROACHES IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THEIR WEBSITE, WWW.ANARCHITEKTUR.COM, WHERE YOU'LL ALSO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT AND BACK ISSUES.

STREET ART

Berlin has a vibrant street-art culture. The city doesn't have enough money to eradicate unofficial expression in public spaces, so art can stay up for long periods of time, accumulating and becoming a living repository of ideas piling up on top of each other. The diversity and experimentation in public is often more inspiring and engaging than many of the exhibitions in galleries, such as the amazing 3D graffiti we saw (see photo on previous page) that looks like a cross between constructivism and wild style. ■



ROOM