



Press Release
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“25 Years of Twin Cities Windhoek – Berlin”: Anniversary Week Ends to Great Response

The anniversary week celebrating 25 years of city partnership between Windhoek and Berlin organised by Kulturprojekte Berlin came to a successful close with a large number of visitors, a high level of visibility throughout the whole city and intense, forward-looking dialogue between partners and participants from both cities.

Throughout the entire anniversary week from the 17th to the 23rd of November, well over 30 events were open to the public in various locations in the city mostly free of charge. The Namibian-German music theatre production “People of Song” at the Humboldt Forum, the video projection “Memory Scripts” by Windhoek artist Vitjitua Ndjiharine at the House of Representatives, the film night “AFRIKAMERA – SPOTLIGHT ON WINDHOEK” at the SiNEMA TRANSTOPIA, daily guided tours of the city by Berlin Postkolonial and deSta – Decolonial City Tours and the “Traces of Memory” event at the Gropius Bau curated by Kulturprojekte Berlin, which explored how we deal with archives, were met with great interest and were all very well attended.

Along with projects that had a big presence in the city’s wider society, the programme featured participatory and discursive formats like workshops, round table discussions and talks, which dealt with the past and future of German-Namibian relations in depth: “The anniversary celebrations between Windhoek and Berlin were orientated around an active culture of remembrance and future-orientated collaboration. It was therefore particularly important to us to specifically address Germany’s colonial history and its consequent responsibility towards Namibia in order to develop perspectives for a shared future. Thanks to the many civil society organisations and participants, who are deeply anchored in these discourses, in activism, in politics, in local initiatives, but also in the arts, we managed to facilitate a dialogue with many voices, which highlighted where there are needs and potential and how important a constant dialogue is in this city partnership,” says Simone Leimbach, Head of the Exhibitions and Events Department at Kulturprojekte Berlin.

For example, at the event on the theme of archives in the Gropius Bau, participants presented current projects that seek to release archives from colonial practices of museum collecting, to redefine and open these up, such as “C& Cyclopedia” by Contemporary And, a new digital knowledge platform that places the main focus on contemporary art by the global majority. At the “Reframe Relations” talk by Decolonize Berlin in cooperation with the Africa Council, scholar Katharina Hacke, activist Israel Kaunatjike, film-maker Joel Haikali and Chief Kasuto, elected representative of the Ovaherero people, discussed what is needed to shape decolonial relations between Windhoek and Berlin and what a serious reappraisal of the German genocide against the Ovaherero and Nama might look like. A round table discussion purposefully brought together individuals from the creative industries in Berlin and Windhoek to discuss possibilities of working together in future. “This coming together of different communities and experts, and especially perspectives that are otherwise systematically left out, was a centrally important aspect of the programme for

us,” say the curators Noah Anderson and Anne Schumann. “At all these events it was tangible how urgently we need spaces where these voices are not only heard, but taken seriously and strengthened to be more effective. The talks, alliances and processes that have been initiated or deepened here contain important impulses for a city partnership that makes a difference to people’s lives, honours its responsibility and creates a strong foundation for our future together.”

The anniversary week in Berlin thus ends the official activities celebrating 25 years of the city partnership, which began with an anniversary week in Windhoek from the 14th to the 19th of October, leaving behind lasting impressions and new as well as strengthened relationships. Both anniversary weeks were accompanied by official delegation visits – Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin, visited Windhoek with other representatives from business, politics and culture, followed up by a visit from the Mayor of Windhoek, Ndesihafela Larandja, and a delegation to Berlin last week.

All the information on the programme that took place can found at www.windhoek-berlin.com.

The Berlin anniversary programme celebrating “25 Years of Twin Cities Windhoek – Berlin” was curated and organised by Kulturprojekte Berlin, on the initiative of the Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery, and in cooperation with a large number of partners. The programme in Windhoek took place in cooperation with the City of Windhoek, the Namibia Institute for Democracy and the Creative Industry Institute Africa. Made possible by funds from the Lotto Foundation Berlin.

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