

## **WWTF International Summer School 2014 Designing Places of Emancipation?**

Learning field D

*Cultural practices creating alternative values*

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< rotor > center for contemporary art

Abstract:

### **ANNENVIERTEL! The Art of Urban Intervention**

< rotor > is an association for contemporary art founded in 1999 and based in Graz, Austria. Their programmes, which revolve around art production in the field of contemporary visual art, deal with social, political, economical and ecological issues of our time.

The project "ANNENVIERTEL! The Art of Urban Intervention" has since autumn 2009 introduced numerous contemporary forms of action to public and social space of Annenviertel, a neighbourhood in Graz, highlighting the importance of participation in urban development and artistic production for the areas undergoing transformation. Annenviertel is a relatively newly coined name for the part of the downtown Graz surrounding Annenstraße, which does not represent an entity with demarcated borders, but rather an open field for the negotiation of urban questions and ideas. This area was historically a workers' neighbourhood, and is nowadays characterized by difference of its residents of various cultural and national backgrounds, as well as a large share of the socially deprived population. At several corners a visitor can still follow the traces of the former red light district.

What can living together in a multifaceted quarter look like in a future without xenophobia and fear?

Within the framework of the project "ANNENVIERTEL! The Art of Urban Intervention" < rotor > employed a numerous artistic and cultural practices to stimulate a dialogue with the local players: the residents, the tradespeople, the numerous social and cultural institutions, the policymakers. How can existing qualities of the neighbourhood be enhanced, as they are often unseen in light of contrary expectations of what the neighbourhood should become? How do local communities and the socially innovative creatives foster a less fragmented and more stable approach to the production of public spaces as places of emancipation? What are the potentials and means of the collective production of public spaces?