



CALEB A.

Kunststadt Leipzig

My project during the InterDaF Sommerkurs Online, was "Art-City Leipzig". I investigated graffiti in Leipzig and, in some cases, the graffiti's political significance.

1. Top: "Peaceful Revolution" by Michael Fischer-Art
2. Middle: Sybille - the Madonna by Blek le Rat
3. Bottom: Graffiti on the way to the Leipzig "Baumwollspinnerei"

My project centered on looking at graffiti within Leipzig and understanding the significance of artwork within the city. I particularly focused on trying to understand political graffiti and how that relates to the history of the city.

Out of the project choices with InterDaf I decided to focus on the art of Leipzig, and because I am interested in the politics of art and expression, so I figured graffiti would be an interesting and revealing vector to inspect. Graffiti is a form of expression that has been universally used to call attention to sociopolitical issues and to mock/call out systems of power; I wanted to see what it looks like like for people to express political claims with graffiti in Leipzig.

This theme is shown in my poster by portraying some of the most famous cases of political graffiti in Leipzig in reference to the Freiheitsrevolution - the "peaceful revolution" in East Germany that brought down the Berlin wall and led to the integration of East Germany into West Germany.

Unfortunately because I was not actually in Leipzig and did not get the chance to speak with German peoples in a substantial capacity, and because I was not able to investigate political graffiti on the ground, I am limited to the extent with which I can refer to cross-cultural encounters as well as examples of graffiti generally throughout the city and its history. While I was in Leipzig on a previous summer program, however, I encountered a city that seemed to have normalized graffiti as a means of public expression in contrast to a more conservative view within the US that denigrates graffiti as an artform. Furthermore, throughout the city there were political fliers and a sort of public contest throughout the city that differed from my experiences here in the states - not to say politics is not contested openly here. Relating to the peaceful revolution, my instructors emphasized that transitional period as well as the magnitude and uniqueness of the moment in Leipzig and German history.