Introduction

Leipzig University as a Curated (Post-)socialist Environment

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In which ways are environments (post-)socialist and how do they come about? How is the relationship between the built environment, memory and debates on identity enacted? What are the spatial, material, visual and aesthetic dimensions of these (post-)socialist enactments or interventions? And how do such (post-)socialist interventions in environments become (re)curated? These key questions are addressed in *Curating (Post-)socialist Environments*.

This volume locates the German Democratic Republic (GDR), or East Germany, in (post-)socialist Eastern Europe. 'East' or 'Eastern' have often been (ab)used and continue to be (ab)used as stereotypical labels to demarcate and hermetically seal the former 'Socialist Bloc' and its (post-)socialist heirs from 'the West' in Europe and beyond. While being cautious of such homogenising markers and their alleged territorial confinements, it is reasonable to claim that 'Eastern Europe' serves as a valid regional point of reference with a common political and economic past manifested, for example, in socialist aesthetics, architecture and material culture (Wolff 1994; Schmale 2008: 23–35). This shared experience has led to similar tactics and practices of dealing and coping with the socialist past since the transformational events of 1989/1990. At the same time, however, there are significant regional and national differences, for instance, due to the incorporation of the former GDR as the *neue Bundesländer* (new states) into the Federal Republic of Germany. In addressing these histories and contemporary legacies, this book follows others who have approached post-socialist, post-communist or post-Soviet settings and transformations by including examples from East Germany (Sillince 1990; Ihle 2002; Czepczynski 2008; Kovács 2010; Bartetzky 2012; Haase et al. 2019: 105–124). The collection also follows others who have zoomed in on the specific case of the GDR and its predominant historisation and memorialisation through West German frames of reference after 1989/90, in contrast to other Eastern European contexts in which post-socialist renegotiations have emerged and are contested through persisting yet evolving national systems (Offe 1997; Lindenberger 2014: 29–42).

Curating (Post-)socialist Environments opts for a fresh view on these concerns by exploring the multifaceted relationships between the built environment, identity is-

sues and strategies of curating the socialist past through a (post-)socialist lens. It qualifies the 'post' in (post-)socialist, as the material and spatial focus presented here illuminates the ongoing efficacy of socialist traces and presences in post-socialist times, thus, undermining the epochal hubris enshrined in clear-cut pre-/post-comparisons. Moreover, by pursuing ethnographically informed and interdisciplinary lines of enquiry, the book unsettles homogenising renditions of an idea such as 'socialism', which is often seen as a self-evident point of departure and self-enclosed totality, thereby revealing its heterogeneous qualities for particular individuals in specific localities. The volume has grown out of a research project under the same title, which has brought together curators from the State Ethnographic Collections Saxony and the State Art Collections Dresden, East Germany, as well as academics and students in anthropology, art history and history from universities and research institutes in Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and the USA to collectively investigate (post-)socialist environments in East Germany and Eastern Europe through a curatorial lens.

The 'environment', as defined here, encompasses material things, exhibitionary configurations, collections, households, architectural monuments and urban landscapes; and 'curation' is understood in a broadened yet specific sense of attending to or taking care of material environments. Further specifying the overarching questions listed above, the project has asked how curatorial interventions and the associated processes of selection, configuration and orchestration render a concept such as 'socialism' – usually understood as an ideology and in discursive terms – palpable in three-dimensional environments. In what ways do environments become re-curated through a different ideological lens, such as 'neoliberalism', the seemingly monolithic force of the current era? How can the associated rewriting be studied not as an exclusively discursive affair but as a process that is materially and spatially embedded and articulated, i.e. inscribed in and expressed through material-spatial settings, such as urban landscapes, architectural monuments and museums? When/how do (formerly) socialist environments become heritage sites and travel destinations?

In asking these questions, this volume releases 'curation' from its usual museological framing and carries it into urban environments and private lifeworlds, from largely state-sponsored institutional settings with often normative orientations into spheres of subjectification, social creativity and material commemorative culture (Crowley/Reid 2002; Todorova/Gille 2010; Göschl 2019; Troebst et al. 2020). In order to gradually offer answers to these questions, the Introduction to this collection takes the Leipzig University in Saxony, East Germany, and its (post-)socialist transformation as an empirical point of reference and approaches it as a curated environment, or memorial site, to introduce the three pillars of the book's conceptual framework – curating, (post-)socialist, environments – and its three thematic sections: *Urbanities/ Museologies/Materials, Visuals, Performance.*

COMMEMORATING THE PAULINERKIRCHE

On 30 May 2018, Leipzig University convened a colloquium to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the demolition of the Paulinerkirche, the University Church consecrated by Martin Luther in 1545 and still largely intact after the Second World War, on 30 May 1968 to make room for an urban tabula rasa on which a socialist campus in the heart of a socialist city was to be built. As the organisers stressed, the campus of Leipzig University has recurrently been at the heart of ideological contestations, which have often been accompanied by architectural transformations. None, however, was as drastic as the one initiated in 1968 and lingering on to this date in the transformed form of the Paulinum where the event took place. The colloquium, open to academics and the wider public, was devoted to *Von St. Pauli zum Paulinum: Leipzigs Universitätskirche und andere Baudenkmäler in Ostdeutschland* (From St. Pauli to Paulinum: Leipzig's University Church and other Historic Monuments in East Germany), locating these *"zwischen Zerstörung, Rekonstruktion und Reinterpretation"* (between destruction, reconstruction and reinterpretation).[1] Various speakers took up those conceptual lenses to shed light on their respective cases under scrutiny.

While listening to the individual contributions, I was struck by the sensitivity and intensity of the topic being addressed. The notion of the 'wounds of the past' and the impossibility of their complete healing or curing repeatedly emerged in several presentations. Giving empirical testament to the papers presented, at one point, a member of the audience stood up in protest and intervened in the discussion. It was quite clear to me, and anyone else, that this man was neither satisfied with the way that the (post-)socialist history of the Paulinerkirche unfolded nor with the arguments made in the context of this commemorative event. I was interested in both the raw material of the debate, such as a citizen's pain erupting in situ, and its academic rendering, as through the conceptual frames of 'destruction', 'reconstruction' and 'reinterpretation'. The latter did not seem to do justice to the former. In the spirit of the volume introduced here, I would suggest that 'curation' offers a sharper, more multifaceted lens through which the transformation of (post-)socialist environments – in this case, the Paulinerkirche morphing into Paulinum – becomes enacted and its effects on human affairs become (incompletely) cured; consequently, a lens through which these observable processes can be approached and analysed.

In order to successively unpack this conceptual proposition, it is, to begin with, worth noting that the University Church's 'destruction' was, despite being largely seen as an act of "cultural barbarism" (Demshuk 2017) by its opponents over the last

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1 | The colloquium was part of the programme accompanying the exhibition *Transformationen: Von der Universitätskirche zum Paulinum* held in the Galerie im Neuen Augusteum (https://kustodie.uni-leipzig. de/ausstellungen-und-veranstaltungen/ausstellungsarchiv/2018-transformationen-von-der-univer sitaetskirche-zum-paulinum/). Another exhibition, *Die Sprengung der Universitätskirche in Leipzig 1968*, was staged by the Archiv Bürgerbewegung Leipzig e. V. (https://www.archiv-buergerbewegung.de/aus stellungen/4-ausstellungen) in the same building and around the same time.

50 years, a constitutive intervention brimming with future potentialities in the eyes of its supporters at the time. This ethos can be detected, for example, in a scale replica of the future socialist ensemble of the Karl-Marx-University (as the university was renamed between 1953 and 1991) edging the reconfigured socialist-modernist Karl-Marx Square (as Augustus Square was called between 1945 and 1990), which featured in an exhibition titled *We Are Shaping Our Socialist Environment* in Halle on 14 June 1968, shortly after the demolition. As Walter Kresse, mayor of Leipzig and president of the German City and Community Council of the GDR, stressed, also in 1968, socialist urban planning embodied "the most beautiful and challenging of all the arts, the most socialist of all, the strongest expression of communal life" (Demshuk 2017: 175). The University Church's 'destruction' was, following this line of reasoning, not seen as an end in itself but as a 'reinterpretation' of past and present that was mobilised towards the urban-artistic 'reconstruction' of a different, markedly socialist future.[2]

The interrelationship between 'destruction', 'reinterpretation' and 'reconstruction', which framed the commemorative symposium in 2018, was, thus, evidently at play in 1968 too – although being obviously driven by another ideological agenda. At that time, however, I would suggest that something else was *also* going on. The rewriting of East Germany's past, present and future required the removal of the material remnants of former ideologies – bourgeois, capitalist, fascist, religious – from which the nascent state of the GDR distanced itself in order to create, or rather curate, urban environments, such as downtown Leipzig, which would reflect nothing less than a new *"sozialistische(n) Menschengemeinschaft"* (socialist human community) (Topfstedt 2006: 61). The (post-)socialist traces of such interventions, such as the 'destruction' of the Paulinerkirche geared towards the 'reconstruction' of a socialist urban utopia, can be discerned to this date, as in other comparable cases across Eastern Europe (Stanilov 2007; Koch 2009; Bohn/Calic 2010; Vitti 2015). Apart from this *generative* impulse originating in the erasure, it is equally important to recognise the latter's *curative* efficacy. Following Karl Marx's famously paraphrased statement: "religion is the opium of the people", it does not seem far-fetched to claim that the socialist reconfiguration of urban communal settings, such as Leipzig's central square with the university (both renamed after the giant philosopher during the time of the GDR), did not only aim at overwriting former ideologically founded organisations of city life but also at healing or curing the underlying poisoning of the 'human community', caused by religious opiates or other addictive substances, through the administration of socialist medication. The notion of 'curation', etymologically deriving from *curare* or "to take care of",[3] makes good sense for our purposes here, as becomes even clearer

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2 | I was able to access in the archival material used for the exhibition *Transformationen: Von der Universitätskirche zum Paulinum* a speech by Walter Kresse, mayor of Leipzig, titled *Leipzig wird schöner, als es je war!* and delivered on the *15. Tagung der Stadtverordnetenversammlung* on 23 May 1968, as well as a letter by *Bezirksrat* Erich Grützner addressed to the *Minister für Kultur*, Klaus Gysi, and dated 20 May 1968. Both point clearly to the future-oriented reasoning underpinning the upcoming demolition.

3 | "Online Etymology Dictionary" (https://www.etymonline.com/word/curate, accessed 22 July 2019)

once we zoom in on the further transformation of Leipzig University into a curated (post-)socialist memorial site.

Leipzig University as Curated (Post-)socialist Memorial Site

The demolition of the Paulinerkirche was met with arguably the most extensive civic dissent between the *Volksaufstand* (national uprising) in 1953 and the *Friedliche Revolution* (peaceful revolution) in 1989 throughout the GDR's history. On 20 June 1968, widespread resistance culminated in a spectacular protest when a banner picturing the University Church and stating "1968: *Wir fordern Wiederaufbau*" (1968: We demand reconstruction) unfurled over the stage during the International Bach Competition to resounding applause and in front of an international audience (Demshuk 2017: 166). The authorities were embarrassed and the security apparatus responded accordingly, turning the 'culprits' into enemies of the state who faced the dire consequences brought about by a totalitarian regime. In the following years, the Paulinerkirche was never mentioned directly in its entirety but reduced to *Altbausubstanz* (antiquated building matter) in any official publication (Poumet 2009: 538). The subsequent public "taboo […] weighed as a trauma" (Demshuk 2017: 174), paired with a state-orchestrated *Erinnerungsverlust* (loss of memory) that was still discernible in 2002 (Zwahr 2003). Yet, the transformation of the University Church into a memorial site did proceed. Far from being a discursive affair, however, it required its curated (partial) resurrection in situ.

After the peaceful revolution culminating in *Die Wende* (turning point), memories of the Paulinerkirche began to resurface publicly. Henceforth, the anniversary of the demolition, 30 May, was turned into an occasion to commemorate, not only through discursive events such as the colloquium mentioned but through material-spatial rewritings into the urban environment (Schorch 2018). On the 25th anniversary in 1993, a commemorative plaque (see Fig. 1), designed by Matthias Klemm, was attached to the university's former main building (see Fig. 2, now on the north side of the Paulinum) with the warning inscription:

The Universitätskirche St. Pauli stood at this location. Erected as church of the Dominican monastery, it was property of the university since 1543. It survived all wars unharmed. On 30 May 1968, the University Church was demolished. This act of despotism was prevented neither by the city councillors nor by the university. They did not resist the pressure of a dictatorial regime.[4]

Five years later, on the 30th anniversary in 1998, both the city and university staged several memorial services, the most spectacular part of which was the *Installation Paulinerkirche* by the Leipzig artist Axel Guhlmann (see Fig. 2). This art intervention consisted of a red steel frame, which retraced the former church gable, superimposed

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4 | Translations from German into English throughout the text are mine.

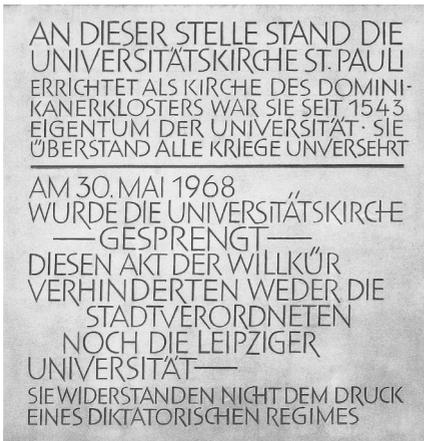Fig. 1: Commemorative plaque in tribute to Paulinum.

Fig. 2: Installation Erinnerung an die Sprengung der Paulinerkirche by Axel Guhlmann, and Karl-Marx-Relief.

AN DIESER STELLE STAND DIE
UNIVERSITÄTSKIRCHE ST. PAULI
ERRICHTET ALS KIRCHE DES DOMINI-
KANERKLOSTERS WAR SIE SEIT 1543
EIGENTUM DER UNIVERSITÄT · SIE
ÜBERSTAND ALLE KRIEGE UNVERSEHRT

AM 30. MAI 1968
WURDE DIE UNIVERSITÄTSKIRCHE
——GESPRENGT——
DIESEN AKT DER WILLKÜR
VERHINDERTEN WEDER DIE
STADTVERORDNETEN
NOCH DIE LEIPZIGER
UNIVERSITÄT——
SIE WIDERSTANDEN NICHT DEM DRUCK
EINES DIKTATORISCHEN REGIMES

on the façade of the main socialist-modernist university building. It, thus, became visible that the church rosette was placed directly above the monumental bronze relief *Karl Marx und das revolutionäre, weltverändernde Wesen seiner Lehre* (Karl Marx and the revolutionary, world-changing nature of his teachings), also known as *Marx Relief*, which, in turn, was positioned precisely at the place of the former altar. The installation was inaugurated exactly on the hour thirty years after the demolition, while the church bells of Leipzig were ringing in commemoration. Initially planned for 100 days, it remained until 2006, evolving into an urban icon that pointed to an "unhealed wound" in the cityscape (Schrödl et al. 1998; Poumet 2009; Demshuk 2017)[5] – a curatorial intervention that reinscribed memory work into the urban environment.

On 30 May 2015, the 47th anniversary, the university, the city of Leipzig and the lobby group *Paulinerverein* held a joint commemoration, in which a scale model (1:100) of the historical church building (see Fig. 3) was unveiled to the public in front of the Paulinum, at that time still being under construction. As can be seen in the photograph, the prior socialist ensemble of Leipzig's Karl-Marx Square was recast as Augustusplatz once again. From this angle, only the *Universitätsturm* (university tower) is reminiscent of the socialist urban utopia being implemented in the 1960s and 70s. The main building (Fig. 2), which replaced the demolished Paulinerkirche,

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5 | Cf. these websites: "Installation Paulinerkirche" (https://www.hgb-leipzig.de/kunstorte/ap_einfueh rung_pauliner.html, and http://www.schroedl-projektentwicklung.de/projekte-paulinerkirche.html, accessed 22 July 2019).

Fig. 3: Neues Augusteum (Paulinum), bronze model.

was equally demolished in 2007 and subsequently replaced by the Paulinum and Augusteum in 2017. It is important to note that the medium of the display, usually understood in museological terms and here replicating the historic University Church, was appropriated to create, or rather curate, a *Erinnerungsort* (memorial site) (Universität Leipzig 2017: 79). Intriguingly, in contrast to the preceding socialist reconfiguration that erased the traces of the past to build a utopian future, the post-socialist response longs back to historical roots in order to stabilise the present. Both urban interventions might differ in their temporal orientation but, given the argument built up in this Introduction and developed throughout the volume, both can be understood as different manifestations of the same underlying mechanism of reinscribing, displaying and exhibiting memories in material-spatial environments.[6] Curating a museum exhibition, then, is just part of curating a city.

So far, we have zoomed in on the externally visible traces indicating the transformation of Leipzig University's main campus into a (post-)socialist memorial site. The associated curatorial interventions, however, can also be tracked inside university buildings as well as across different campuses and the wider city: in the foyers of the auditorium building, for example, one can detect two large murals (Fig. 4 and 5) which, due to their sheer proportions, cannot be overlooked.

Figure 4 shows *Arbeiterklasse und Intelligenz* (working class and intelligentsia), one of the most significant murals produced during the GDR era by the renowned artist Werner Tübke in 1973. This archetypical piece of socialist art depicted the "unity

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6 | On the moral and ethical qualities and implications of such interventions, see Dürr et al. (2019).

Fig. 4: Mural Arbeiterklasse und Intelligenz *(1970–1973).*

of politics and science" (Kubitschek 2010) propagated at the time, and was originally placed in the president's area in the main building (where the Paulinerkirche once stood) on the interior verso of the *Marx Relief* (see Fig. 2). Both *Arbeiterklasse und Intelligenz* and *Marx Relief*, thus represented two tightly curated sides of the same socialist-artistic coin (Hiller von Gaertringen 2006). The decision to re-curate this piece of anachronistic art on the revamped main campus was, as anything else associated with Leipzig University as a memorial site, a heavily contested affair. The author Erich Loest first attempted to prevent such a re-erection, given the mural's ideological agenda, and then, after failing with his injunction, commissioned the counter-mural *Aufrecht Stehen* (standing upright) by the artist Reinhard Minkewitz in 2006 (Fig. 5). Instead of celebrating the "unity of politics and science", this piece of art depicts academics who, due to their opposition to the political regime, suffered most serious consequences (Universität Leipzig 2017). Once again, memory work requires that the 'unhealed wounds' of history become (partially) cured, or at least attended to – here through the curated juxtaposition of artworks, not in a typical art gallery but in the foyer of an auditorium building as a different yet similarly museologised institutional setting.

The trenches marking the Leipzig University as a "battleground of memories" (Sabrow 2009) also strike the eye when observing the (post-)socialist trajectory of the *Marx Relief* (see Fig. 2). This giant relief, measuring 7 × 14 metres and weighing 33 tons, was created between 1970 and 1973 by an artist collective consisting of Frank Ruddigkeit, Klaus Schwabe and Rolf Kuhrt to create, or curate, the aspired synthesis of architecture and art as a "signature of a new society".[7] After it was dismounted in 2006, it provoked the most intense conflict about the adequate way to deal with the GDR heritage since 1989, putting city officials, university representatives, major public figures and the citizenry at loggerheads (Bartetzky 2012). In the end, a compromise was found and the relief was relocated and re-erected (see Fig. 6).

Since 2008, the *Marx Relief* has carved out a little recognised existence on the area of the faculty of sports sciences, a few kilometres away from the city centre and the prominent location it once occupied, and, ironically, in front of the HHL – Leipzig Graduate School of Management. As one can see in the photograph (see Fig. 6), the relief has morphed from a (curated) artistic-architectural "signature of a new society"

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7 | On the synthesis of public art and architecture as "signature of a new society", see Silke Wagler in this volume.

Fig. 5: *Mural* Aufrecht stehen – Für Herbert Belter, Ernst Bloch, Werner Ihmels, Hans Mayer, Wolfgang Natonek, Georg-Siegfried Schmutzler.

into a (curated) display commemorating a past society. One of the labels of the tightly manicured museological arrangement states that the spatial distance between the former and current location is meant to reflect the critical distance assumed by the university regarding this part of its history. As Anna Saunders argues convincingly:

[…] the intended function of the new ensemble is very similar to that of the original relief: to strengthen the present-day political status quo, by linking past and present in a clear forward-looking trajectory, this time tracing democratic rather than socialist progress. (Saunders 2018: 95)

Fully agreeing with this sentiment, I hasten to add that the underlying *practice* through which both ensembles – socialist and post-socialist – have become not just (re)constructed and (re)interpreted but *(re)enacted* as materialised and spatialised memory devices and visions of the future, is distinctively *curatorial*.

Before I flesh out the curatorial framework of this volume more explicitly and then pass the word to its authors to put meat on the bones, let us complete our journey through Leipzig University as a curated (post-)socialist memorial site. In 2011, the location where the rubble of the demolished Paulinerkirche was secretly dumped in 1968 to avoid any public attention – nowadays the rejuvenated public park of the

Fig. 6: Marx Relief *in front of the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management.*

Etzoldsche Sandgrube in the suburb of Probstheida[8] – became memorialised through a sound installation lined with museological labels and attracting commemorative interactions, as can be seen in Fig. 7.

While the museologisation of the afterlives of the Paulinerkirche spread across the city, as we have seen in the case of the *Marx Relief* and the rubble-turned-sound installation, the new Paulinum came into being. After years of fierce political and public debate and contestation (Mayer 2016), amounting to a *Kulturkampf* (culture war) in Leipzig (Koch/Koch 2006), the new Paulinum, designed by the Dutch architect Eric van Egeraat, was opened in 2017 (see Fig. 3). Once again a compromise, between reconstruction and new construction, was reached, which made the "ruptures of history readable" (Pahl 2018) and which, according to the architect, did not return the building of the demolished University Church but its memory (Mayer 2016: 650). Throughout the years of arguing across a seemingly unbridgeable divide, the demand for 'reconstruction' was often branded by its opponents as "museological reconstruction" unsuitable to convey real memory (Poumet 2009: 540). Given this discussion on Leipzig University as a curated (post-)socialist memorial site, however, I suggest that we move from critiquing the museologisation of environments to approaching them

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8 | "Etzoldsche Sandgrube: Klanginstallation lädt zum Erinnern ein", Leipzig, 27 March 2014 (https://www.leipzig.de/news/news/etzoldsche-sandgrube-klanginstallation-laedt-zum-erinnern-ein/, accessed 22 July 2019).

Fig. 7: Commemorating the Paulinerkirche in the Etzoldsche Sandgrube.

as having been museologised or curated already. Exhibitions and city environments are built through practices informed by similar logics and mechanisms, which might be subsumed – tentatively at this stage – under the *curated condition of built environments*.

Curating (post-)socialist environments

In order to find answers to the questions first raised at the beginning of this Introduction and then emerging in the transformation of the Paulinerkirche into a curated (post-)socialist environment, a group of authors has worked on case studies centred on (post-)socialist situations and locations in East Germany, such as Leipzig and Dresden in Saxony (Stefanie Bach, April Eisman, Simone Jansen, Anna-Lisa Reith, Martin Roggenbuck, Carsten Saeger, Frank Usbeck and Silke Wagler) and Berlin (Glenn Penny), while others have added international examples of (post-)socialist Bulgaria (Nikolai Vukov), the Czech Republic (Marketa Spiritova), Romania (Daniel Habit), Poland (Agnieszka Balcerzak) and wider Eastern Europe and the Socialist International (Beáta Hock). Together, the volume's authors are making productive use of the urban as an empirical focus through which to decentre and pluralise the 'Eastern Bloc', while integrating individual cases into broader transregional comparisons. In doing so, the authors present a cacophony of voices with different and, at times, con-

tradicting perspectives on a common point of reference. The overall composition does not intend to resolve such contradictions. Instead, the book sets out to simultaneously provincialise and internationalise '(post-)socialism'. It fills this abstract signifier with concrete substance by delineating its various interrelated dimensions – ethical, ideological, institutional, practical and temporal – and by embedding it in and investigating it through material-spatial environments – museum exhibitions, art galleries, urban ecologies, architectural and public art interventions and private collections – as well as their multifaceted visual manifestations. Both empirical foci, material-spatial environments and visual manifestations, enable the authors to place an idea such as '(post-)socialism' in tangible life-worlds; and both can, as the volume shows, be enlightened through a curatorial lens.

The curatorial lens allows us to zoom in on the material-spatial and visual (re)arrangements through which an abstract idea such as 'socialism' becomes an environmental reality with argumentative effects upon audiences. Shedding light onto these dialogical, curatorial practices facilitates, on the one hand, an understanding of the ways in which the complex, multilayered and often unpredictable relationship between the built environment, temporalities – histories, memories, futures and utopias – and identities is enacted. On the other hand, and apart from these epistemological and ontological efficacies of curatorial interventions, their underpinning methodological acts and moments – captioning, juxtaposing and (re)arranging – enact the relationship between content and form and create or (re)curate the visual layer needed so that the story told can make a multisensory, visceral, and affective impact upon audiences.

The volume argues for the notion of curating (post-)socialist environments to address the enduring afterlives of socialist material-spatial and visual remains in post-socialist times, and to analyse the associated practices through which these continue to be mobilised for particular ends: ethical, political, ideological, economic and so on. Curation, as developed and understood here, operates as both a practice/method and an analytical/conceptual lens. As a practice and method, it simultaneously entails material-spatial (re)constructions and visual (re)organisations, as well as the associated ideological (re)interpretations and the underpinning *curare* or caring for memories, pains, losses and the wounds of history. As an analytical and conceptual lens, it enables us to move from critiquing the museologisation of environments, often branded as Disneyfication or open-air museum, as in the case of the Dresden Frauenkirche (Saxony, East Germany), to approaching environments as having been museologised or curated already, which might be called the curated condition of built environments. In a sort of double-move, then, the volume liberates curation, as a method and practice, out of its predominant confinement to museum institutions, while deploying it, as a conceptual and analytical lens, to consider and study the processes through and the environments in which an idea such as socialism becomes spatialised, materialised and visualised.

There is an increasing literature on the relationship between facets of socialism, notions of identity and memory, and aspects of materiality, addressing topics such as "landscapes of communism" (Hatherley 2015; see also Andrusz et al. 1996;

Tsenkova/Nedović-Budić 2006; Czepczyński 2008; Dmitrieva/Kliems 2010; Diener/ Hagen 2015), socialist material "remains" (Bach 2017; see also Todorova/Gille 2010; Todorova et al. 2014), "style and socialism" (Reid/Crowley 2000), "socialist aesthetics" (Köhring/Rüthers 2018; see also Sarkisova/Apor 2008), "memorializing the GDR" (Saunders 2018, see also Kaminsky/Gleinig 2016; Göschl 2019) and "urban landscapes in the East since German reunification" (Cliver/Smith-Prei 2015). The present volume distinguishes itself by focusing on the curatorial as a particular practice/method and analytical/conceptual lens through which the relationship between the built environment, (post-)socialist ideologies and the formations and contestations of identity and memory is enacted and can be studied. In doing so, the book draws on work on curatorship (Schorch/McCarthy 2019; Saxer/Schorch 2020; Schorch et al. 2020) to develop it further beyond its museological manifestations – encapsulated in alleged broad trends such as "the era of the curator" (Brenson 2001), "curationism" (Balzar 2015) and the "curatorial turn" (O'Neill 2007) – towards its deployment for the interrogation of (post-)socialist urbanities, materials and visuals.[9] Last but not least, the book is genuinely interdisciplinary by pulling together disciplinary perspectives from anthropology, art history and history by university and museum scholars as well as students with shorter chapters, written in either English or German, through the common lens of curating (post-)socialist environments. The book, thus, offers insights into particular curatorial processes of environmental spatialisation under the (post-)socialist condition and is structured into three thematic sections – *Urbanities/ Museologies/Materials, Visuals, Performance*, which have emerged out of the research process mapped out in this Introduction and given substance throughout the following chapters.

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9 | For further discussions on the curatorial coming from urban anthropology and the arts see Daniel Habit and Carsten Saeger, respectively, in this volume.

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