

02: UdK – Rundgang and access

Karin Deckner:

Anne-Marie Franz, since August 2022 you have been in charge of the staff unit on faculty events, which also includes the Rundgang. We are absolutely delighted that you have time for us at the moment, because of course we are when we think of a tour. As UdK students, you always have the same questions, namely: How do you get in and who comes in? Can we maybe start there for a moment? What is the concept? So, what is the point of a tour at all? Who comes in and how?

Anne-Marie Franz:

Okay. Yes, with pleasure. I am also happy that the seminar and the project exist. And about the topic itself, because it has accompanied me since I took up my post here last August. So questions of access, especially related to the Rundgang, have been a topic since then and especially related to the follow-up work of the last Rundgang. And why exactly is there a tour? Of course, all students at the art university want to show their work at some point and present it to the outside world. And basically, I think a Rundgang is more something that distinguishes the fine arts or what the fine arts do above all. But in our case, all four faculties and also the departments beyond, including the JIB and the HZT, take part.

Karin Deckner:

I'll interrupt for a moment. What are the JIB and the HZT?

Anne-Marie Franz:

These are the Jazz Institute and the Hochschule Zentrum für Tanz. Exactly. And these are also the centres that are affiliated to the UdK and that also take part in the tour, of course. And the UNI.T, for example, is also part of the university theatre through the Faculty of Performing Arts. They all show something on the tour. And that's why it's not just called a tour, but: Rundgang - Open Days, so that the other disciplines or arts also feel included.

Karin Deckner:

But that was the first one. What's the point of the Rundgang at all? And who is there? I find that quite interesting, the students want to and should show their work. And now the question: Who is supposed to see it and how do you get to see it?

Anne-Marie Franz:

Basically, I think it has always been the case at the UdK that everyone should have access. That is, the public who are interested. And then over the last few years there have been various focal points as far as access is concerned. And then last year, for example, an attempt was made to implement a preview format, which on one day of the three days of the Rundgang - last year there were already three days - gives priority to the specialist public and UDK interns in terms of admission, and which was then also carried through as a relatively exclusive format. And that's where you can basically start with the question of where we're putting the emphasis this year, because we've also been talking a lot about the Rundgang AG, which we'll certainly talk about later. Is this a format that is desired by the student body and those who want to show their things? Or doesn't the focus then have to be somewhere else? And that's why this year we're trying to open up the Rundgang to everyone again on all three days. That's the first thing at the top of the agenda, and the second step is to implement priority admission for UDK members, participants and also, for example, a group such as the press, who don't have to stand in the long queues on Hardenbergstraße or Grundwaldstraße. And precisely in order to implement this priority admission, we have a registration system, which I can explain even more.

Karin Deckner:

Great, thank you very much, then I think I would ask chronologically. You just mentioned the Rundgang-AG. What is that all about?

Anne-Marie Franz:

Yes, exactly. I came to the UdK last year in August, as I said, and there was talk that there should still be talks or feedback talks, exchanges about the incidents at the 2022 tour. When I arrived here, there was already a catalogue of demands from the AStA and a statement from the university administration about what happened at the Rundgang. What happened? Well, there were some problems, to put it in general terms, I don't want to go into too much detail because I think it would go too far. But there were problems with the security and the security company that was contracted at the time. It was WISAG, which also looks after the gates here and provides building security throughout the year. And yes, there were various incidents involving discrimination and, in part, racism. And that's why there were also various demands, demands from the AStA and also the incidents and the people involved who wanted to have a discussion. And this discussion was still pending, so we initiated it or invited them to a discussion and got external advice.

Karin Deckner:

Okay, wow, thank you. That is also interesting information, I think, which is somehow not always so clear, that the Rundgang is also followed up and prepared for a very long time. Because, as a Berliner, you know that it is obviously a very big event or not or that this format always raises the question: Why is there a queue at all? So what is piling up there? What expectations are there in front of the door as to how this admission can or should work?

Anne-Marie Franz:

Exactly. So that is, I think, also, or that was a question that was also quite present in the first meetings. Exactly this question: Why are we not allowed, that is, out of the student body: Why aren't we allowed to move freely, in and out, like on all other days of the year? Why does there have to be an entry situation for the Rundgang at all? And that was or is answered relatively quickly with the role that the buildings play in the Rundgang. This changes with the fact that, especially in Hardenbergstraße and Grundewaldstraße, an event begins with the Rundgang. A public event in which a large audience is interested. And this interest is just greater than the capacity of the buildings. So an event concept specifies a number of people who are allowed into the building, and at Hardenbergstraße, for example, that is 2,800 people, and then there has to be a check at the entrance: How many people are already in the building, how many are leaving? In other words, how many can we let in so that we can maintain the security of the event? And it is precisely this admission situation that naturally leads to those who ask: Who is allowed in and who is not? And how are they actually sorted? And you can answer that quite quickly with: We are not sorting in the sense of a door, which you might know from the club context and the security staff don't have that instruction either, but they really only look at how many people are already in the building and how many we can still let in - and of course look a bit at it: Are these people who are already showing aggression at the door or maybe just really don't fit into the event? Then maybe one or two people can be turned away. But basically there is no selection. And then of course the question arises, if there is this big queue, public queue, how is it guaranteed that those who are also involved in the programme and who otherwise can certainly move freely in and out of the building during the rest of the year, how is it guaranteed that they also have this access during the days.

Karin Deckner:

I now understand that there is a solution for relatives with preferential admission, which is regulated by a temporary pass, an access pass, in the form of a wristband. Can you briefly describe the concept and why you decided on this solution?

Anne-Marie Franz:

Exactly. So we thought about how you can tell if someone is taking part in the tour or is a UdK member. And we realised that there are things like staff ID cards and student ID cards. But especially as far as the staff IDs are concerned, not everyone carries them with them. And you can't use them to work hard at the entrance, because you have to look for a badge every time or many people don't carry their badge with them, which would lead to backlogs and discussions at the entrance, and that's why it has to be a relatively simple system for the entrance team. And that's why we decided to offer UdK members a registration that works via their UdK address, i.e. their email address. In principle, this also clarifies: Is this person really entitled to this priority admission? And that's what we're doing now. At the beginning, the idea was to keep it really simple and to only provide this large group of UdK members with a wristband. And now there is a categorisation for the wristbands because the wish arose that those who are involved in Hardenbergstraße must have priority over those who are not involved in Hardenbergstraße. So within this prioritised queue, there is again a prioritisation of those who actually work in this building or have a performance, show something, have an exhibition, or so. But you have to keep in mind that this privileged access only becomes important when the buildings are almost full. Before that, everyone can get in and out without any problems. There are no problems, not even for the public. But we always reserve a small or relatively large contingent of seats for UdK members, even if the building is running slowly. So in the example of Hardenbergstraße, when 2600 of the 2800 admitted people are in the building, there would be an admission stop for the public, so that those who are still members and are still coming in can get in without queuing.