

DM: TANGENCY 2015 has started. In terms of content, we are seeking to highlight direct engagement with public space. Methodologically, our concern lies in convergences and new contacts between the materiality of the city and the ways of life of local people. As one of our three invited artists, you have proceeded with the idea of turning the Hasestraße and thus an urban environment into a sensorial experience. What was your motivation to support TANGENCY?

KG: I identify working with “what’s there” as a constant in my artistic practice. I have been involved with Hasestraße for approximately one year, in parallel with many other projects. Different ideas and approaches have been developed and tested.

My **aha** project aims at taking up both aspects, that of materiality and that of people acting on the street and in the street. Initially, I wanted to work on the house facades of Hasestraße. But it proved to be too permission-intensive. On top of that, we are working with a small budget only. So, my drawing finally landed on the ground, more precisely the sidewalk, and referenced the river Hase, which crosses Hasestraße. The river in the city fascinated me. It is currently being reclaimed and is thus coming back to the city. Since I like working with official maps, I put in a request to the authorities for a plan of the course of the Hase, which I finally obtained from the Niedersächsischer Landesbetrieb für Wasserwirtschaft, Küsten- und Naturschutz. The next step was to relate the course of the river to the Hasestraße, which is an old trading road named after the river. The relationship between the two is now reflected in a cartographic blue line, which I have transferred onto the street. The line depicts the course of the river Hase on a scale of 1:471. While I was in the process of transposing the line onto the sidewalk, an endless number of conversations came about: clarifying and explanatory, open-minded and curious, and occasionally also vindictive.

DM: This is also part of TANGENCY. Artistic work in public space repeatedly brings all mental and social poles together. Everyone has their own way of dealing with changes, interventions, or disruptions, in relation to their own situation and to the circumstances of the artistic project. Sometimes people unload. Sometimes they laugh. Sometimes they approve immediately. Reactions remain unpredictable. How do you deal with this?

KG: My approach is that of a mediator. Public space is a space of direct attention. Since we share it with everyone, I can capture many opinions, definitely an entire spectrum of points of view. It can be extremely exhausting, but also exciting. In my work, I’m constantly learning anew how diverse perception can be. While working on the street, conversations

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ultimately help verbalise statements that ultimately work well as door openers to the artwork, bring it closer, and make it comprehensible.

DM: In addition to the cartographic course of the Hase and, of course, to its connection with Hasestraße, we think of water as an element. Yet, in Hasestraße, you have not implemented water as a concrete material?

KG: The river crosses the road at its northern extremity. Water, however, still played a major inspiring role. It stands for the pulsating, the living. Water is a direct giver of life. My intervention can also draw attention to this aspect. By laying the blue line along the street, I stimulate communication in a totally different way. The water and the street congregate with people on a sensorial level. The blue line becomes a metaphor for this relationship. All of a sudden, people are talking to each other about the river and the street. All of a sudden, conversations that would otherwise never have happened are now taking place in this area of passage. People are experiencing something new and unforeseen.

It's interesting to note that in early medieval times, when the city was founded, water was not only a source of life but also a safeguard for the city. This aspect is often forgotten. It became clear to me during my historical research and in talks with Bodo Zehm from the city office for archaeology, who substantially supported me in terms of content.

DM: Your accurate cartographic translation and your statement concerning the relationship between the river and the road have required you to consult official institutions of the Land. This brings another feature to the project?

KG: Yes, I like working with the official side, and also with records from other, e.g. scientific contexts. This is how I get easy access to all the maps and documents I need. These are then incorporated into the work and come together there. I also take the non-aesthetic as a basis for minimizing my own aesthetic setting. It's for this reason that I set myself clear working instructions in my projects, which I then consistently follow. That's where the aesthetics come from. The senses are awakened through my transformation. The official course of the river meets the official course of the street. Set in relation to one another on a scale of 1:471, the result visualises a previously unpredicted cross-reference.

DM: Hasefluss and Hasestraße are now interlocked, as if projected into one another. You were able to realise the translation of your draft design from the studio with the help of a seemingly infinitely long stencil. It was exciting to observe the work process. The movements on the street were interrupted, transformed, and in part disturbed. Was it not hard to coordinate the application of the

paint with the necessary communication of the project to the passers-by?

KG: Initially yes. In a playful way, I take the name Hasestraße very seriously. In doing so, I'm using a central component of the street's identity: its name. The fact that the course of Hasestraße now also affects the Hase is an interesting aspect. The materiality of both meets on a sensorial level. Mutual references of river and street repeatedly come up in conversations. They have common connected pasts. But the historical courses of both have changed. Here, movement is at play. I therefore had to develop an abstraction in order to make the general thought comprehensible. Fortunately, the stencil I had made for the transfer of the line in original scale was well suited for this. It enabled me to be unwavering in my approach on the street and gave me control over the implementation. Measurements, scale, and trueness of scale are all found in the stencil. It is a tool that supports the process of translation. When it was laid out on the street, it was a signal, a symptom, and a clue, all at the same time.

DM: Asked from a different angle. You work between map, drawing, and stencil and bring everything together in an exact scale. The sensorial aspect doesn't come from your cartographic work but far more in the materiality of a graphic work. Can a sensorial perception of the reference emerge only along these lines?

KG: I scaled down the course of the river to the length of the road and made a stencil of it which I used for the drawing of the line on the sidewalk. In the preparatory drawings in the studio, I worked in the same way on a small scale. I transferred the line of the course of the river onto tracing paper, cut it out and folded it into a street plan of Hasestraße to test how the line would fit into the street. This led to the drawings gaining in volume. The paper stencil I worked with on the street also helps to establish a bodily relationship and to understand the scale on a sensorial level. So, it's not about mapping – that's only a means to an end. It's the sensorial and physical relationship that is crucial, and in the realisation, also the range of my own body.

The drawing in this project is twofold. One aspect, obviously, is about dimensions, about understanding space, the length of the river and of the street, for example. My reflection takes place in the preparatory work for the drawing and it is also there that I find my access, in this particular case to the themes you have developed for TANGENCY. Thus, drawing is also a medium for the appropriation of the world. On the other hand, there's a blue line on the asphalt. This line has a form and a materiality. Nothing more. Even without any given narration, the line tells a story, it is a trace in time and space. In the end, that's also sufficient to me. The

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history of the city, the river, and the street led me to the line and now it's in place, the most exciting thing for me is to see what happens to it in this environment.

DM: Keyword communication. We have already spoken about it. The transfer process on the street was really exciting. And now, when after two or three days you walk down the street, you are simply part of the street. What others don't achieve in years, you have done in a very short time: People greet you, know you, talk, joke about art. This is also the way TANGENCY wants to function, as far as possible. Waking people up, changing everyday habits with the means of art. Here, this has become a temporary reality.

KG: For some people there is a magic term in public space: the public order office. This administrative instance can often disperse complaints because it stands for a not negligible and clarifying authority. But I still have to approach the people. I have to endlessly talk to them. It can be very tiring, but it works. You just have to want things to happen. It's a distinct part of such a process-oriented work in public space. And since I always had the TANGENCY flyer on me, I could demonstrate my earnest, I could give people something. That's important to me and it works well. After all, the people have experienced something new on the public space of the street and they are given something that they can take away with them, show to others, and tell them about it. This is how the experience can work.

DM: Yes. This is how you change perception. And somehow the street as well. The artwork suddenly vibrates in every area. All this is not calculable and you also have to be able to deal with hostilities. By and large, your experience is a form of artistic implementation of the intentions of TANGENCY.

KG: People want to know what's going on. You can usually win them over with references to content. At least for a moment, because after all, everyone is going their own way. Sometimes I would like to talk about the blue line, about what is there, about the sensorial experience, and not just about what it's meaning could be. In some conversations this works. The "blue line on the pavement" is what people get to see. It's now part of the street, in a very concrete form. Independently from my artistic intentions, the line meanders in the exchanges with people. They have different images and bring them into the conversation. The blue line suddenly associates with a pulse-beat, rhythm, movement, or choreography. That's enriching for me too. Or the blue line triggers a joke: Who had a hole in their paint bucket? I find that refreshing.

DM: We have talked about space. This also includes the notion of time. The project is consistently limited in time. TANGENCY admits to its transience. It's a project that elapses with time and is committed to doing so. It wants to be close to life by highlighting patina and transience in an increasingly sterile world of smooth surfaces. But time has also become the limited time of a way of life and is yet simultaneously infinite. Where do you see connections to your practice?

KG: The reference can be derived from the line. How did the line come about? It's visibly fabricated by a human hand. Likewise, the river in its present course. After all, the river has long since been artificially straightened, diverted, and is in part still embedded in concrete. It has become more and more subordinated to agriculture and to the interests of the city. In recent years, people have been trying to liberate it again, but this is a long process. I also think of this project as a part of the liberation of the Hase. The flowing water has been able either to maintain or rediscover a life of its own, despite the pressures from us humans. This is how the line embraces the recent past. At the same time, there is the time it takes to walk the line, to perceive it, to follow its actual history: in the form of materiality on the sidewalk. And then there's the lapse of time for which the line will exist. When will it disappear? Parts of it have already been washed away by the heavy rainfalls. You can watch the line vanish. I like that a lot, I like dissolution processes that at the same time are always processes of creation. In my work, changes of form in correlation to time are an important basic theme.

DM: This raises the question of a new relationship between renaturation and urbanisation. I plead for soft city strategies. These are feasible pragmatic urban development strategies that clearly argue against a continuous exclusion of nature. We humans should embed our lives more softly into natural conditions. The city can be a wonderful environment for this potential. Does the blue line in the impulse of TANGENCY suddenly reinforce new thinking? Does the point reach us human beings through the medium of the street and communication? After all, the Hase is slowly returning from its own sealing off and exclusion to the still far too hermetic city.

KG: I would say that with the line, the micro world around the blue line also becomes apparent. You look down to the ground and see the line. And suddenly the perspective widens. You see the paving stones. But you also see grass, a few flowers, ants. Paper. Cigarette butts. Chips of glass. You look down at your feet. Here lies reality. Our everyday life. What we leave behind. Even in this way, the line unfolds a life of its own. This is movement, in perception, and in thought.

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DM: And this attention to upcoming changes in the city and in society is delivered to the street through art. For some, we may well have achieved a further step towards coming out of the present-day rigidity into a softer and more sensitive future. With you, TANGENCY all of a sudden becomes a strategy of attention that respects the medium of art in its autonomy and yet directly intervenes into life.

Kati, many thanks for this inspiring conversation.