



Creative Think Tank

By Sandra Espenhain

New York in the late 70s and early 80s: a special place at a special time. Andy Warhol's Silver Factory was a refuge for artists - a place to meet, to argue, to party. This very community was the source of inspiration Warhol and his fellow artists needed to create some of their best work.

Berlin in 2010: a city juxtaposed, twisted and vibrant, filled with creative energy. A multitude of painters, designers and photographers call the city home and co-exist in this habitat. This environment fostered the establishment of MADE, which set out to channel the creative energy of the art scene into a symbiotic community, much like Warhol's Silver Factory did back in the day.

Here, on the 9th floor of a skyscraper in the former East Berlin, a group of people has come together to bring back this sense of community. All members of the MADE team have different and complementary backgrounds. The founders of MADE are tadiROCK, a contemporary artist and free spirit, Nico Zeh, a curator of inspiration and their team; Alexis Dornier & Ilija Bentscheff, two architectural designers; Nadav Mor, a strategic marketing manager and Philip Gaedicke is the founder of Berlin's fashion concept store SOTO. Louise Biesalski and two of her friends run the fashion label LookyLooky, as well as the urban culture blog lookylookyposse.de.

To assume that this art space in Berlin Mitte is but another gallery like all those that have popped up in the German capital over the past couple of years, would be a grave misinterpretation. Yes, MADE is about art and yes, there are exhibits. But that's where the similarities end.

The overall directive for everyone who enters this transformed office space is to check their expectations at the door. Artists and visitors alike are asked to think outside the box and stray from the beaten path. "We try to get everyone who enters MADE, from the artists who we work with, to our guests, and even ourselves, to step out of their daily routines, to open up and be inspired by the magic that happens outside of the comfort zone," says Nico Zeh. To achieve this, artists are partnered up to inspire and challenge each other, while creating an artistic discourse. While that is the beauty of the concept, it not without risk. Nobody knows where the journey will go. MADE spends around three months of preparation on each collaboration to ensure that every artist gets the freedom to dig deep into their imaginations. The space usually takes on two to three projects a year, in which the evolution of the idea is the main objective. A big aspect of this evolution is failure. Failure at single components as well as failure of the concept. This happens for a reason and is perceived not as



the destruction of a project. But rather as an adjustment. It goes hand in hand with blood, sweat and tears, all building up to the moment when the current status of the work is shown to the public. MADE makes a point at not showing a final result, but rather the state of a piece of work at this time. With no definitive result, each spectator has the opportunity to develop the concept further in his own mind, as well as to deconstruct the project and imagine its origin.

In the crossfires of creativity, MADE is a junction, a platform if you will, where art and thought are nurtured, yet not influenced. Many famous artists have come to appreciate this concept since MADE's opening in 2010. All of them have experienced the dynamics of the space, the transformation of an idea into a concept.

Creativity alone doesn't make for an exhibit yet. But MADE also brings the necessary techniques to the table. At the start, architect Alexis Dornier gave himself one year to refurbish this stripped bare space at Alexanderstr. 7. The entire space is like a Lego set, where every piece is movable and interchangeable. The walls at MADE are set on wheels, and every piece of furniture is conceptualized in a modular fashion. The 225 specially created lights are operated separately, allowing them to be used as a lightshow. The room consequently never looks the same, making each visit a unique experience.

As wonderful and inspiring as this art space sounds, it also seems impossibly Utopian. But MADE makes it happen. There is complete artistic freedom, state-of-the-art technology and a prime location to boot. MADE's curators partnered with ABSOLUT Vodka to help them realize their vision. It is a diplomatic collaboration based on mutual respect and understanding as well as engagement. In this instance, the corporate and artistic partnership works out perfectly. The collaboration gives MADE the unique opportunity to work on a non-profit basis and focus on the creative process.

Its most recent project, 'Future Self', took seven months to create. A collaboration between media artist collective Andom International, choreographer Wayne McGregor and composer Max Richter, 'Future Self' is a clash of dance, light and music. It too tries to break up traditional patterns of thought with its interdisciplinary study of human movement.

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