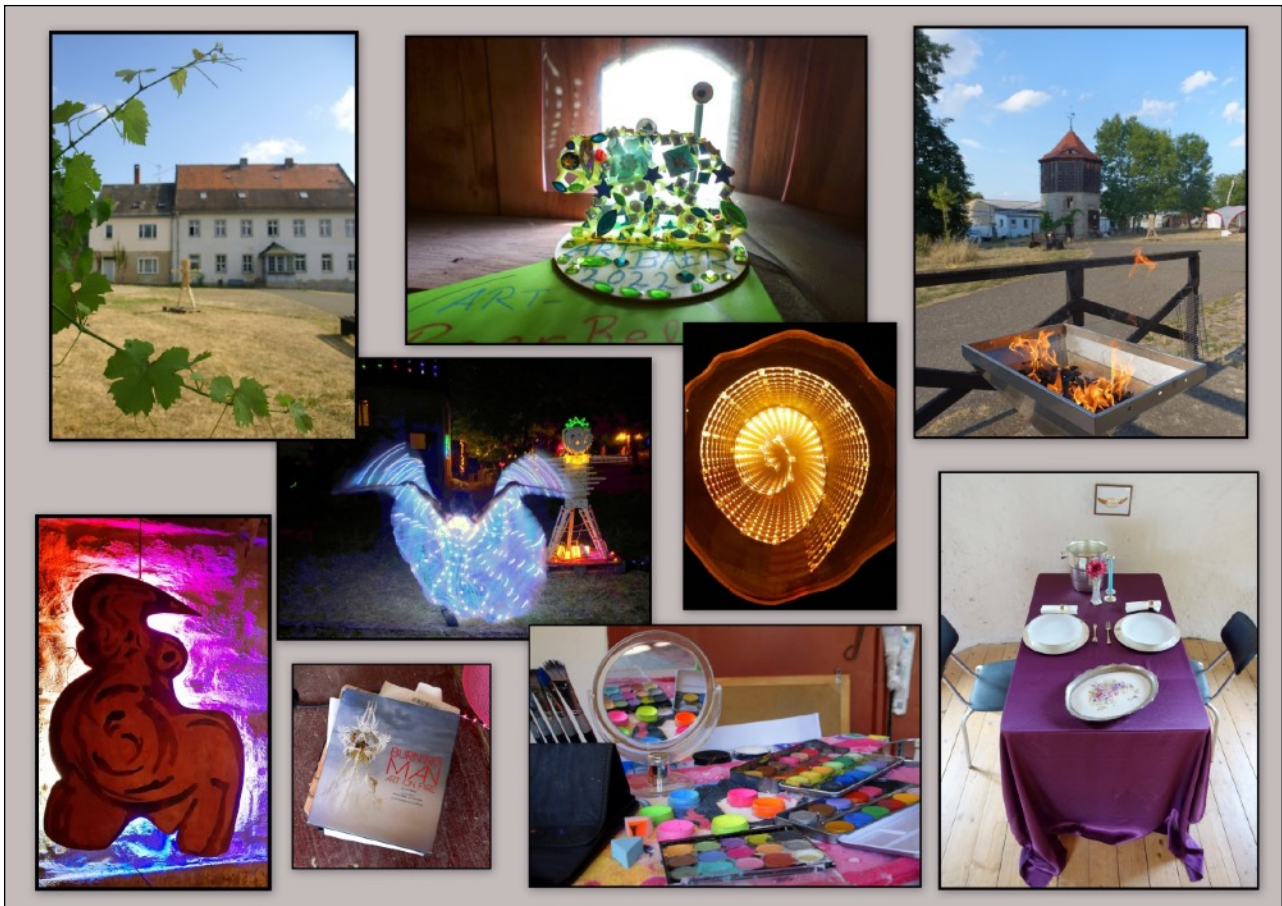

ART BÆR 2022

AfterBurn report

Owl - 9. Mai 2023



After the Burn is before the Burn



Where was Art Bær?

We started Art Bær in 2022. It was held at Posa monastery on the outskirts of Zeitz, a small (and shrinking) city close to Leipzig in the south east of Germany, Europe. The location itself isn't used as a monastery since centuries, but there are still old stone walls from that time. It is run by the non-profit „Kultur- und Bildungsstätte Kloster Posa e.V.“, and a number of people of that non-profit are living there year round. The area consists of a big free area with a former pigeon tower in the middle, and additional buildings: a long former sheep barn, a big culture barn, an place suitable for loud music in the night, a shared kitchen, some remote green areas (mostly for camping) and the monastery garden.

The whole monastery is located on a hill top, neighboured by a vine yard and overlooking the city. It was not too far from the local train station, so a number of people arrived that way. Gate was easy because we had only a single point of access through a gate. We estimated potential space for maximum 200 people, but that would have been a very dense event, and being in a summer of still active pandemic we were glad that we didn't sell out.



I'll do you one better: Who was Art Bær?

Art Bær was the beginning of the second series of Burn by our non-profit Berlin Burner e.V., the first Burner association in Germany (now there are at least four, and more are forming). We wanted to create a low key, effort less and easy going Burn. With all these pandemic years in our bones, we were looking for smooth experiences, nurturing contacts and art in different forms (not only EDM). Nevertheless even in our small size we covered everything a proper Burn needs:

- ★ Location, insurance, permits
- ★ Communication
- ★ Finance
- ★ Build&Strike
- ★ Ticketing
- ★ Shit ninjas
- ★ Art projects & Art grants
- ★ Burn & Fire safety
- ★ Placement (Camps)
- ★ Effigy build
- ★ Leave No Trace
- ★ Medical
- ★ Rangers
- ★ Volunteers
- ★ Welfare
- ★ Workshops & Workshop grants
- ★ Bar
- ★ Decoration
- ★ Stage
- ★ Transportation
- ★ Greeters

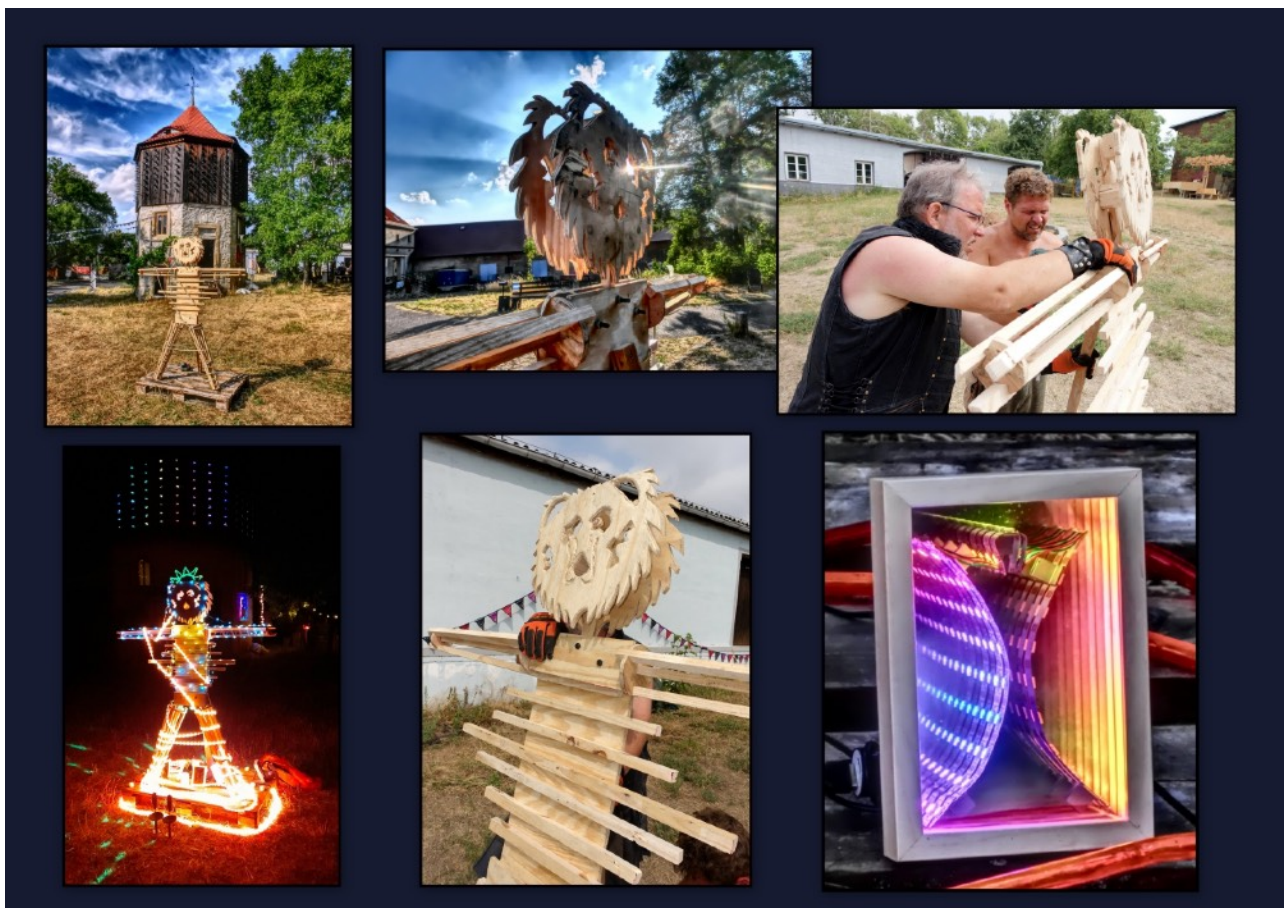
Our art theme was „Gold unterm Pelz“ (gold under the fur). It is referring to a Brothers Grimm fairy tale „Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot“ (snow white and rose red). In this tale Snow White and Rose Red, two kind-hearted sisters, encounter an enchanted bear who is, in fact, a prince transformed into a bear. The bear spends the winter with the sisters, who aid him in reversing his transformation. At one point of time the bear got hurt, and the golden prince clothing is shining through the fur.



I'll do *you* one better: Why was Art Bær?

We started nearly a decade ago with „Burning Bär“ (Burning Bear, but with loosing the umlaut dots people often thought of it as Burning Bar). The event had taken place 2014 to 2018 in various locations in Germany. Since even in 2014 the Burn season in Europe felt already very full, Burning Bär was meant to be a winter burn and started with the ELS 2014 in Berlin for one night. After a while it settled in the Beesenstedt castle two hours southwest of Berlin, where we could accommodate hundreds of participants even at freezing temperatures for several days. It was a great series of events, but there was always a discussion if the situation there took away too much self reliance, since there were prepared sleeping rooms, catering, and the prepared open bar. All supported by volunteering participants, with art, workshops and other experiences, but nevertheless sometimes too comfortable, and too much of a party (and only a few kids, if all).

Planning and location scouting for Art Bær already started before the pandemic, and we felt that the summer is wide enough to have another smallish Burn in Europe, which actively tries to emphasise more art and less music. A little bit like our year round community project „Burner Embassy Berlin“: bringing people together in a easy way and support experiences through art and workshops, including people with kids and all other Burners.



Numbers to crunch

Ticket sales: €3120 (\$3371)

Ticket Cost:

Participant: €80 (\$90)

Low Income: €40 (\$45)

Kids (under 13 years, free) - 1

Event Expenses:

Art + Workshop Grants planned: €1250 (\$1350), refunded: €441 (\$475)

Ticketing Fees €0 (we used our general association administration system)

Insurance €0 (we could use our general association insurance package)

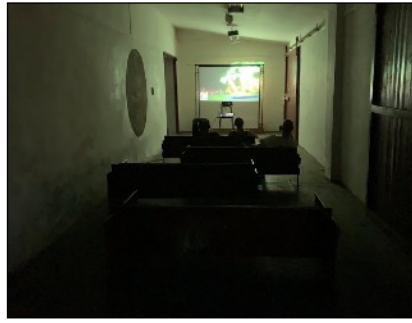
Land rental €1600 (\$1730)

Event Permit €0 (already covered by the land rental)

Event Supplies: €200 (\$216)

Wristbands €230 (\$250)

Surplus (to be used with Art Baer 2023): €648,30 (\$700)



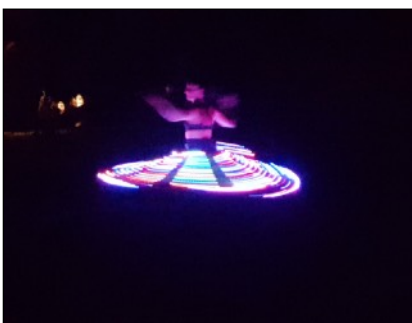
What Worked Well

The Kloster Posa (Posa monastery) was a nice place with a number of rooms we could use. The event was very relaxed, but full of activities. We had nice summer days. Since we had a small number of people, some task could be distributed and taken over on an ad-hoc base, and some departments shared resources, like tickets and gate, or welfare and medics. With the closed area gate was very easy. We also included a number of residents there to be a temporary part of our community. Though our focus for this event was on art, one of the art works was combined with a bar and served as our outdoor meeting point.

- We had a direct contact to the monastery association, which was very helpful also as a source for some useful things we didn't need to bring, like tables and benches for our communal meals.
- We were very happy to be accepted as an official regional Burn
- We had sound protocols for outside music at the outdoor bar until midnight, and for our indoor space until 4 am. The indoor space had very thick medieval walls. We checked decibel levels in the direction to the neighbours of the place, and they were way below the limits.
- Our rangers had nice (LED-) glowing vests which made it very easy to spot them in the night.
- Welfare and medics had two rooms in a building which were quiet. We didn't had any emergencies.
- Our COVID policies required a fresh test, either with an official certificate, or they were done under observation outside of the gate. We didn't had to turn away people, and there were also no reports of related COVID cases afterwards.
- We had a beautiful website and logo, also a survival guide with all the necessary information. And wristbands.
- The integrated ticket system of our associations administration system was able to fulfil all of our needs without extra costs. Since we had a single gate and good cell

phone reception on site, we were able to deal with last-minute changes and all the other questions.

- We could use a very light placement since we didn't need to cram the proposed maximum of people into the area.
- We decided to 100% funding of art work material, and the receipts were handed in afterwards. We also had a temple, and a wooden effigy with a bear head.
- We had a self service volunteer sheet with the obligation for each participant to choose two shifts. The gate checked and helped participants without pre-selected shifts to find some with them.
- Strike was very smooth, and nearly everything was done in the late evening of the last day.
- We had a printed workshop plan with pre-entered workshops with enough space that people could add ad-hoc workshops, which was used a lot.
- The place was nicely decorated with gold as the dominating „color“. We also managed to activate the existing vast LED lighting of the pigeon tower, which added to the atmosphere in the night.
- Our community place Burner Embassy Berlin provided a lot of stuff for the event, also our Costume camp was present.
- LNT was taken very seriously, even existing trash bins were sealed and participants educated / reminded that they are responsible for their own stuff. That led to thoughtful discussions
- We had a very nice burn ceremony around our effigy.
- We had a participants survey and also a leads survey afterwards. The vast majority liked the event and their role within it, and wants to come back.



What were our challenges?

It seems that our choice of emphasising art over sound makes our event less attractive to some parts of the community. Also the event was influenced by the pandemic on many levels:

- Due to personal exhaustions within our lead structure the organisation started pretty late and slow, and communication was also delayed
- We placed ourselves in the middle of the summer, between the major big European events „Nowhere“ (Spain, beginning of July) and „The Borderlands“ (Sweden, end of July). That proved as a bad choice: some people caught COVID in Nowhere, while others were too exhausted after Nowhere or already decided that they couldn't fit another burn in their plans.
- Germany saw in 2022 13 other (unofficial) regional burns, since a number of groups started small events during the pandemic. Though there was a big need to catch up the missing experience from the last years, the attention of the community was divided.

We also had some challenges with the location. Some people were in favour with a place with less structures, since those structures sometimes predefine and promote some usages, and a blank slate might be better. There were also some discussions with some people living there. We suspected that the association renting the place to us is two fold, and the people living there are less supportive of people taking over the whole place. Also their only access path for their cars led through our gate, so we had some discussions there. Other challenges were:

- Internal communication structure: files were difficult to find in slack, and also not every department needed their own channel. We probably need a online communication moderator who organises these things. Also response times of leads were sometimes way longer than expected.
- Some leads had to sign off for work reasons shortly before the events, and we had not enough co-leads for a direct takeover, so other leads had to jump in
 - The onboarding process for new leads (especially for virgins) needs improvement.
 - Noisy and quiet times weren't always clear to all participants.
 - Online meetings usually followed a order per department. That was considered boring, and sometimes less important things got way more discussion time than the important ones.
- Departments need more responsibility given (or should take it). They should discuss things internally first rather than in the main meeting.
- There were a lot of delays until we finally had the final contract. That insecurity slowed down the preparation. Communication about details with the association running the place was difficult and slow.
- We couldn't burn the bear due to a regional fire ban.

- We wanted to show a Burning Man documentary movie. It turned out that it costed in this case €160 (\$180) to buy the rights to show a Burning Man movie to the Burning Man community ...



This is the way

We decided to move the event to a different date, more to the beginning of the season when everyone is still fresh ... We are planning a review meeting with the Posa association. We are also collecting other location options in case the outcome of the reviews suggest to overcome some of the challenges on a different site. Parts of organising things will be easier since we can reuse them from this year. We are hoping for some growth, but we can also keep it small and beautiful, like Burning Burg is staying under 100 people since over a decade.

We are trying to gather more attention within the community. Other Burn like Kiez Burn are interested to follow our example and might want to become official Burns, too. We might need some multipliers within the community which bring in existing groups/ camps. The mixture of virgins and experienced burners were good, and we are looking forward to Art Baer 2023.



(All pictures by Holger Weißels, Jörg Pfützner or Winnie Wedner, collages By Winnie Wedner, Art Baer Logo by Kathleen Aldinger & Juno Zeike based on the Berlin Burner logo designed by Darcie Frederick, feedback collage by Holger Weißels)