

MAYER PAVILION

Andrea Mineo, June 2023



Triumph in Kreuzberg

In the vibrant neighborhood of Kreuzberg, I secured a two-room apartment spanning 60 square meters. It was a triumph that came swiftly after I decided to adopt a new identity, Andreas Mayer, and created a fresh profile on the apartment search platforms in Berlin. My real Italian name, Andrea Mineo, seemed to lack the allure I desired. The experiment was audacious, entailing around a hundred applications every day, endless paperwork, bureaucratic hurdles, and unwavering patience. It all began with a fateful encounter, a meeting with a lawyer from the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Antidiskriminierungsstelle) in Berlin.

Intrigued by my screenshots exposing discriminatory ads on platforms like eBay Kleinanzeigen, the lawyer extended an invitation to discuss the matter further. Those ads ranged from preferential treatment for applicants of German origin to explicit demands for German ID. Expressing regret for my experiences, I shared only a fraction of the discriminatory encounters I had witnessed. The lawyer enlightened me on a fascinating approach to unveil discriminatory behavior—a random test conducted by actors by phone calls, both native and foreign, to assess the selection processes for jobs or apartments. The objective was clear: to uncover, document, and penalize discriminatory practices by agencies and employers that had previously demonstrated bias against applicants and employees.

Assisted by the lawyer who enlightened me about their agency's techniques, I took legal action to identify those responsible for the discriminatory ads posted on eBay Kleinanzeigen in 2020. Unfortunately, none of the culprits behind the ads were ever located. However, posing as Andreas Mayer, a fictional character, I managed to secure numerous appointments to view apartments, ultimately leading to the successful signing of a rental contract for an apartment in Kreuzberg. During some of these visits, I discreetly documented the proceedings using a secret camera concealed behind a button on my shirt. These captured images will play a pivotal role in an ongoing documentary project I am currently working on.

Creating Everyday Spaces at Mayer Pavilion

Inspired by this triumph, I felt compelled to do more than silently enjoy my hard-won space, which had been wrested from a corrupt system. As a result, I organized an exhibition and extended invitations to twelve foreign artists residing in Berlin whose works explored themes of adaptation, suffering, and exclusion.

To showcase this thought-provoking artistic dialogue, I launched Mayer Pavilion, an online platform infused with a touch of French elegance—a space that melded innovative expression and a homey feeling. Entitled “Incomers at Mayer Pavilion,” the first exhibition surpassed my expectations in both duration and popularity. Overwhelmed by a deluge of visitation requests, my mailbox overflowed.

Mayer Pavilion aims to bridge various artistic practices with personal transformation and prioritize community empowerment over centralized power

The exhibition warmly welcomed the participation of the twelve artists, unlike my challenging quest for an apartment in Berlin. Their reception was so inviting that I extended an open invitation for them to create permanent installations in the bathroom, kitchen, and bedroom of my apartment. Despite the challenge, I remained dutiful to the responsibilities of everyday life—tending to laundry, preparing meals, and washing dishes. The exhibition's exceptional appeal was undoubtedly amplified by the pandemic's height, as word quickly spread that Mayer Pavilion stood as the sole open exhibition space in town. This prompted a surge of interest, drawing numerous individuals eager to witness this exclusive cultural offering.



Photos:
 Human Pulse Festival – Andrea Mineo /
 WHAT WILL REMAIN ONCE WE HAVE FOUND THE ANSWER? – Exhibition, Photo By Gino Kwon /
 The Other Side of zero's & one's Festival, Photo By Gino Kwon

The Solidarity Dance: A Three-Year Move for Mayer Pavilion

Today, Mayer Pavilion has undergone an extensive three-year development journey with the aim of creating a project that holds deep meaning and has an impact on the artistic community. The initial phase involved meticulous research and networking to identify artists, musicians, and performers who were genuinely committed to social issues and solidarity, prioritizing community impact over self-promotion.

Moving forward, the project focused on establishing partnerships with Berlin's project spaces and venues that were willing to support the initiative through reasonable arrangements. This step was crucial in expanding Mayer Pavilion's influence and forming a network of like-minded individuals who shared the project's vision. As the space in my Kreuzberg apartment grew increasingly cramped with the influx of donated artwork from fellow artists and my own sculptures, I made the decision to reserve the apartment solely for internal group meetings and smaller gatherings. To accommodate our growing festival, I rented out larger venues such as theaters and exhibition spaces. These festivals gained popularity as I sought to bridge language barriers and unite diverse practices, including healing rituals, workshops, live concerts, performances, exhibitions, and sharing practices. With the Mayer Pavilion initiative and my personal presence as an artist and individual during the challenging years of the pandemic, my aim was to find avenues for healing society's collective trauma stemming from separation and the general suppression of freedom of expression, which has caused immense suffering. At its current critical stage, Mayer Pavilion strives to connect the identified artists and spaces to create a truly profound and influential experience. My goal is not simply to showcase exhibitions but to generate work that authentically engages with societal contexts and challenges. Undoubtedly, this endeavor faces significant hurdles within Berlin's artistic community. Rapid gentrification drives up living costs and pushes many artists out of the city, while a sense of disillusionment looms among those who feel unsupported by institutions and networks that were once their pillars. Despite these obstacles, Mayer Pavilion remains unwavering in its mission to foster a vibrant and engaged cultural scene. I actively seek new partnerships and collaborations, dedicated to supporting artists and performers who share their vision of social change and solidarity.

The Never-ending Forging of Networks

The ultimate success of Mayer Pavilion relies on its capacity to continue to forge connections and networks that extend beyond the art world and the confines of Berlin. By actively listening to the social needs, Mayer Pavilion aims to bridge various artistic practices with personal transformation and prioritize community empowerment over centralized power. The project aspires to create a meaningful and captivating experience that profoundly resonates with audiences. Through this commitment, Mayer Pavilion endeavors to confront and tackle pressing social issues that affect society as a whole.