

BILKER BUNKER

PRESS INFORMATION

Experience history and continue to write it

The »Bilker Bunker« in the course of time

As “air-raid shelter No. 25” – the construction of the »Bilker Hochbunker« started in 1942 at the corner of Aachener Strasse and Karolingerstrasse. Responsible for its planning was the architect Carl Krieger (1875-1957). With the conversion into an art and cultural space by Bilker Bunker gGmbH and in the context of the opening year, the history of the building can be experienced in a special way: digitally and emotionally.

Reports by contemporary witnesses, historical documents and video installations invite visitors to follow the eventful history and learn more about what being in the bunker meant and what the situation was like for those seeking protection. During this process, values such as freedom, democracy, pluralism, and tolerance are to be consolidated in the consciousness of the visitors.

The history of the bunker is integrated into the exhibition area and can be viewed by visitors free of charge.

Opening: August 26, 2023

Duration: August 27, 2023 until January 7, 2024

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General manager: Christina von Plate

The history of the bunker

The construction of the bunker was not completed during the war; however, starting in September 1944, it was available to the population of the district Bilk as a place of protection until the end of the war.

At the end of 1951, the German government initiated the development of a so-called civil defense system. The core of

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the guidelines was a bunker construction program and the renovation of old air-raid shelters. A total of 650 bunkers were provisionally refurbished. One of these was the bunker on Aachener Straße. From 1964 to 1969, it was also converted into a “nuclear-safe” shelter for 2,000 people.

After the financial resources for civil defense were cut at the end of the Cold War, the civil defense commitment for the approximately 2,000 shelters in Germany fell away in 2007. From then on, all the bunkers were up for sale.

New ideas

In the meantime, on demand of the local population, the bunker in Bilk got a colorful makeover. In 1995, it was painted within six weeks by an international group of artists under the direction of Klaus Klinger (Farbfieber). The mural “Time Travelers” symbolizes the fragile coexistence of different cultures in a shared world.

In 2013, the bunker was sold to an investor. The investor intended to demolish the building and replace it with apartments. Aware of the significance of the bunker as a historical legacy and memorial, the citizens' initiative “Bilk pro Bunker” was founded. This initiative set the goal of preserving the bunker and opening it for cultural use. In a short period of time, over 1,000 signatures were collected in favor of preserving the bunker and then handed over to the district council. The citizens' initiative also filed a motion to place the bunker under monument protection. After an examination by the monument protection authorities, the bunker was added to the city of Düsseldorf's list of monuments in October 2014. The investor withdrew his demolition application.

From Shelter to free space

The project developer KÜSSDENFROSCH took over the bunker in 2016 and developed a multi-layered art and culture concept for its future use. The redesign of the bunker was conceived and implemented by Bilker Bunker gGmbH with the creativity, courage, and ideas of committed neighbors and the citizens' initiative.

The City of Düsseldorf as well as the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community supported the project as part of the “National Urban Development Projects”.

For the first time in over 75 years, the »Bilker Bunker« opens its doors to the general public after an extensive renovation phase. What was once intended as a shelter becomes a protected space for experimental art and cultural formats. The historical site will be preserved; its story retold and

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rewritten.

Special thanks for the support of our opening exhibition go to our supporters and sponsors: Kunststiftung NRW, Kulturamt Düsseldorf, Sigma, Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf Bezirksvertretung 3, Städtebauförderung von Bund, Ländern und Gemeinden.

Further information: bilkerbunker.de

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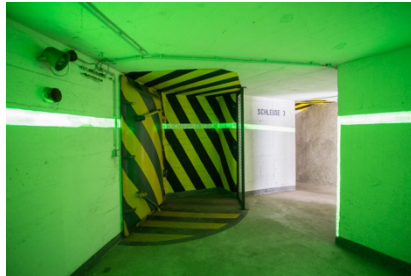
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Footage:

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Bilker Bunker Logo
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Picture heading:
Original lock door at the Bilker Bunker
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