

PAPIERNETZ



LISA MARIA BAIER

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dialog city

DIALOG CITY

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS A DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Digital transformation is more of a mindset than a purely technical innovation. Hence the overall goal of this project proposal is to create a socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable urban digital environment.

By developing new practices on how to connect digital innovation directly to citizens' physical participation, DIALOG CITY aims at contributing to increase access to culture through a dialogical approach. Co-creation is at the core of our project idea encompassing a CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM for the cultural heritage sector and an innovative design thinking toolkit on FUTURE LITERACY. Three HYBRID FESTIVALS serve as physical and digital cultural platforms to reach diverse audiences.

An ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY PROGRAMME invites artists to develop ideas for urban interventions dealing with local or global topics that are of great significance for the respective urban society based on participatory approach.

The CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM is a web tool to archive all kinds of data-based objects of various citizen groups, direct engagement and mediation with the audience in the interpretation, communication and presentation of cultural heritage will be widened.

The creation of a FUTURE LITERACY toolkit and the subsequent implementation of workshops by trained artists, the methodology has outstanding potential to give citizens and stakeholders a compass in the face of the increasing complexity of our globally interconnected world.

DIALOG CITY builds partnerships between small and medium-size cities in five European countries – Austria, France, Germany, Greece and Italy - based on collaboration comprising city museums, city archives, cultural organisations, urban activists, social architects as well as training facilities.

This way, it includes different viewpoints and creates the basis of humane digitization and ongoing 'user engagement'. And it enables a sustainable network where creative solutions are continuously developed in the most diverse areas of society.



FUTURE FESTIVAL

AND ARTIST RESIDENCY IN ASCHAFFENBURG

Early July 2025, Aschaffenburg hosted the FUTURE FESTIVAL which featured workshops, performances, a three-month artist residency, and participatory processes focusing on digital participation and sustainable urban development. Events took place at various city venues with local artists, municipal staff, and interested residents participating. Highlights included a Game Jam that playfully explored the city of the future, practical workshops on private digital archiving (Citizen Archive Platform), so-called “Future Workshops” drawing on Futures Literacy methodologies, an AI theatre piece, and a relaxed “Coffee Lecture.”

The FUTURE FESTIVAL opened on July 3, near the Aschaffenburg Castle. A temporary pavilion had been set up in May 2025 as the central location of the artist residency; highly visible and publicly present, it served as an analogue meeting place and creative experimental space for the artist in residence, Lisa Maria Baier, who tackled the topic “Women Workers in the Paper Industry.” With the pavilion, the digital culture project DIALOG CITY found its place in the heart of Aschaffenburg and its citizens. In the FUTURE PAVILION and elsewhere, Baier provided a forum for citizen participation, discussed ideas, and contributed to the living dialogue space.

The results of the artist residency could be explored until mid-September 2025 in the exhibition “DIALOG CITY – Shape Your City!” at the City and Abbey Archives. The exhibition also showcased, for the first time, all of DIALOG CITY’s activity areas in a concise and interactive form. The pavilion—together with the artist residency—embodied what DIALOG CITY aims to be: a connecting space between digital innovation and analogue togetherness.

The entire FUTURE FESTIVAL was the highlight of this year’s Aschaffenburg Culture Days, themed “Transformation.” The festival concluded with Museums Night on July 5, when Schönborner Hof opened its doors to welcome the numerous guests. During the musical performances by local and internationally renowned bands, visitors could also view the exhibition “DIALOG CITY – Shape Your City” and take away ideas for the future. More than 1200 visitors had the opportunity to learn about the project structure, admire the striking “Wall of Mondovì,” and gain inspiration for what lies ahead.



@ Lisa Maria Baier / VG Bild-Kunst

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Aschaffenburg has a rich tradition in paper manufacturing and processing—an important part of the city's cultural and economic identity. During her art residency there, Baier explored the historical, industrial, and social contexts of paper history—and discovered a notable absence in the city archives: records about women's work in the paper industry are scarce.

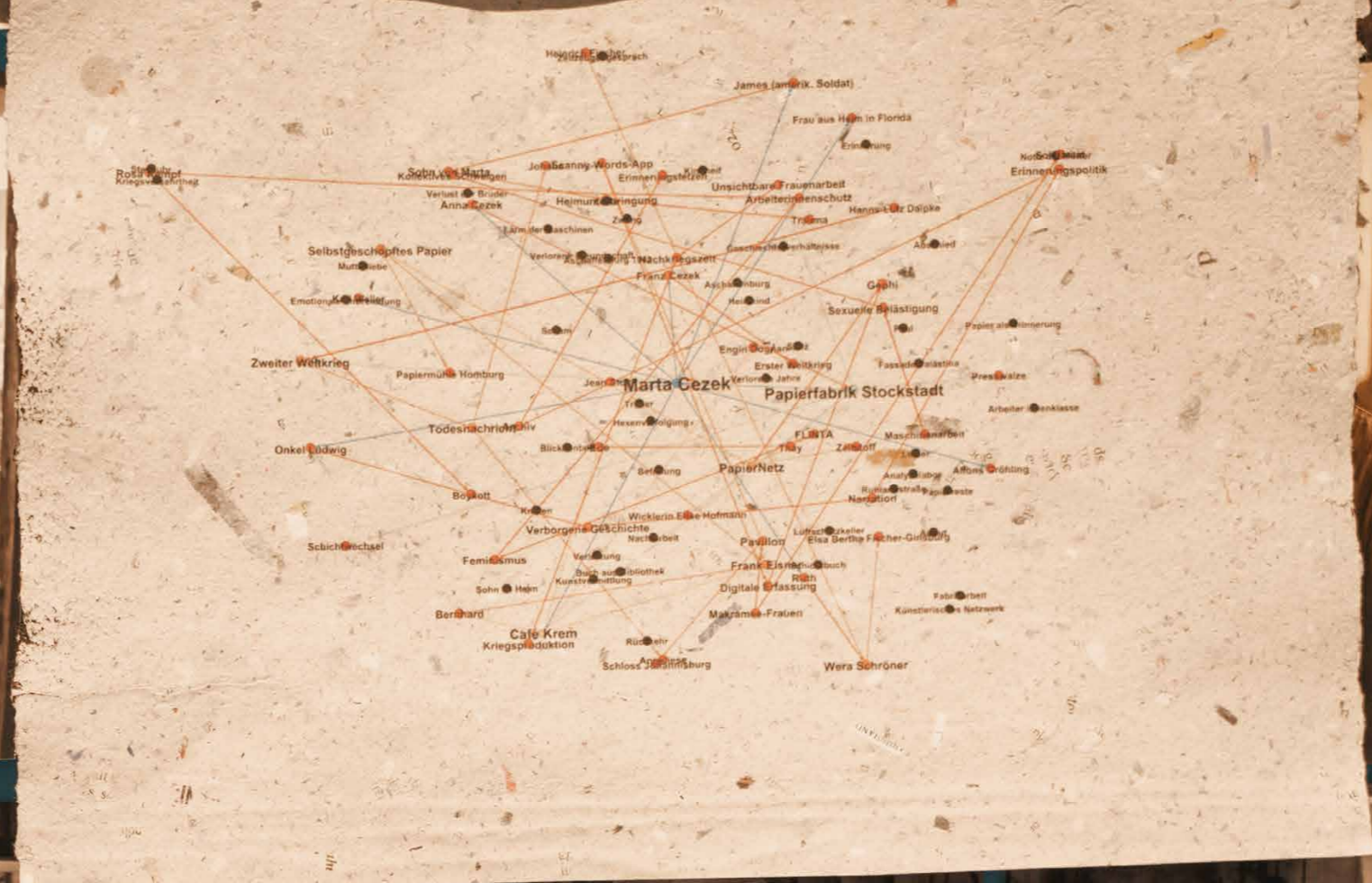
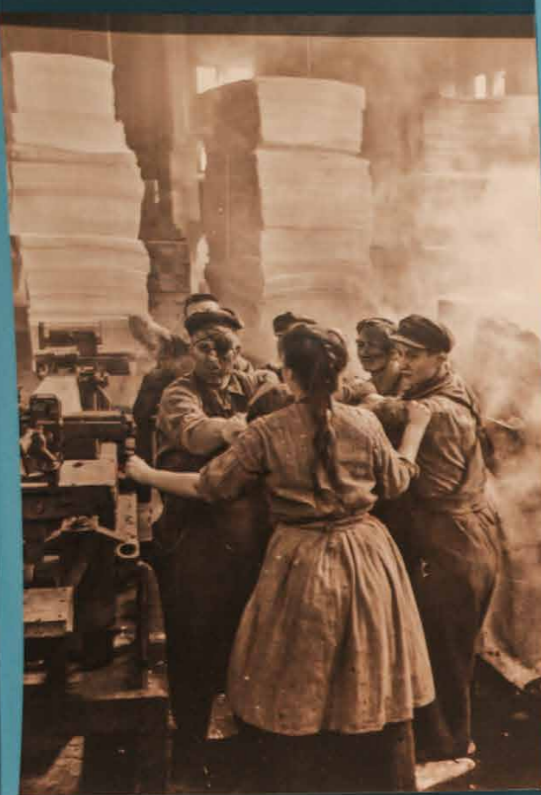
This lack of documentation inspired Baier to intervene creatively. She responded by producing photographic artifacts that depict women at work in the factories, using both specially trained AI models and her own image stock to reconstruct what was missing from historical records.

At first glance, these images resemble authentic photographs from the past, capturing women's roles in the paper industry. The faces evoke August Sander's early 1920s portraits and his archive representing a cross-section of German society. Yet upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that Baier intentionally creates a point of reflection - bridging analogue history with digital innovation.

Why were women in industry so rarely recorded? What mechanisms contributed to their stories being overlooked? By what standards was historical relevance determined at the time?

It is especially against the backdrop of the new image of working women in 1920s German metropolises, marked by independence, modernity, and emancipation, that this archival silence is particularly striking. After World War I, many women entered professional life as office employees, secretaries, saleswomen, or factory workers. They dressed fashionably, wore short hair and comfortable clothing, participated actively in public life, and sought independence both financially and personally. This new ideal was promoted by numerous fashion magazines and symbolized both progress and resistance.

Through her work, Baier draws attention to what is often absent from archives, raising fundamental questions about how women's lives are represented in our collective memory.





BETWEEN PAPER AND PIXELS

LISA MARIA BAIER'S LIVING ARCHIVES

BY JOHANNES HONECK

DIRECTOR KUNSTHALLE JESUITENKIRCHE / CHRISTIAN SCHAD MUSEUM ASCHAFFENBURG

Lisa Maria Baier's starting point is the idea of the archive, understood as an open system that must constantly be re-questioned. "Archives store knowledge, but also exclusions. I re-order existing documents, contextualize them from my point of view. It's about transparency, openness, and charging reality with new meanings." In this way she produces works that are simultaneously research, artistic transformation, and social practice.

Her biography is shaped by social upheavals. As a student she was active in activist scenes that saw art as a tool for making injustices visible. "Art became for me a means to expose grievances and to open up new spaces for thought and action." Experiences such as the protests in Budapest in 2014 or the demonstrations in Dresden against extreme right-wing marches have decisively shaped her artistic thinking.

Alongside her individual practice, she is a co-founder of the off-space BIAS PROJECTS in Dresden, a platform for FLINTA artists that promotes collective modes of production and new discourses. Baier works predominantly with photography, video, and installation formats.

Characteristic of her practice is that Baier does not treat digital technologies as an end in themselves. Whether visualizations, AI, or AR elements, they always serve to question the conditions of memory and visibility. Analog materiality and digital structures enter a dialogue in her work that remeasures the relationship between documentation and fiction, between collective memory and individual experience.

For her project “PapierNetz,” developed during the Dialog City Residency 2025 in Aschaffenburg, she devised an exemplary working method. Aschaffenburg, known as the “city of coloured papers,” is deeply connected to the history of paper production. Baier drew on this tradition and linked it with questions of sustainability and digitization.

The project rested on three pillars: first, digital data visualization with Gephi, through which historical networks became visible; second, participatory paper-making workshops in which citizens brought their own wastepaper; third, the connection of analogue material and digital structures by printing the network diagrams onto the hand-made paper. The results brought past and future, materiality and digitality together into an installation that was both sensual and reflective.

“I am particularly fascinated by participatory projects because they are open and unpredictable. They force flexibility, encourage creative solutions, and understand art as a space for dialogue.” Throughout her practice Baier remains consistently research oriented. Her works demonstrate that history is not a closed legacy, but a process carried by many voices. For her, participation is more than a buzzword. “It means questioning one’s own perspective. When people with different backgrounds are involved, new perspectives emerge that make art lively and dynamic.”

In this way Lisa Maria Baier combines artistic practice with social participation, understanding art as an open laboratory that re-examines cultural heritage and experiments with images of the future.





Lisa Maria Baier

THE ARTIST

The starting point of participatory practices can be the intention to make contact.

Lisa Maria Baier is a contemporary German artist specializing in visual art. Born in 1988 in Görlitz, she studied at the Dresden University of Fine Arts (HfBK) and the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest (MKE). Baier primarily uses video and photography to create collections that are documented in various forms.

A particular focus of her work lies in participatory practices, in which third parties provide material for the creation of artistic archives through open calls, requests, and commissions. The artist uses these archives for her filmic-documentary works. Her pieces have been exhibited at renowned institutions including the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, the German Hygiene Museum, and the Kunsthaus Dresden.

Baier succeeds in expressing the ambivalences, discomfort, and doubts of today's younger generation in their engagement with cultural heritage. This becomes visible in her video works and spatial installations, which reveal the ongoing process of negotiating the significance of motifs and images from a personal archive.

Lisa Maria Baier lives and works in Dresden.

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IMPRINT

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