

# SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA'S EXISTENCE IS SEVERELY THREATENED!



SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA has in the past year established itself as a future-oriented cinema and discursive cultural venue. In doing so, it has become an important presentation space and a home for many of Berlin's artists and cultural workers. However, the project is now facing acute danger: With the change of government in Berlin, the *Konzeptförderung* financing that was promised for the next four years has been canceled without replacement.

Since 2014, bi'bak has run a project space in Wedding and has twice been awarded the prize for project spaces and initiatives.

In 2020, bi'bak initiated the cinema experiment SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA at Haus der Statistik. The goal of this project is to rethink cinema and to create a testbed for future forms of film culture and film art practices. The idea behind it: Cinemas are also and above all social meeting places that enable knowledge transfer, democracy building and community experiences that lie beyond commercial constraints. SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA is the place where this conviction is transformed into cultural and social practice.

In January 2023, SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA moved into a new space in Berlin-Wedding which was converted and equipped with financial support from the public sector. This move made it possible to professionalize and consolidate a vision of cinema as a place of solidarity, exchange and cultural encounter. In the meantime, SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA has become firmly established in the neighborhood and has attracted attention from far beyond Berlin. Through programming in collaboration with international curators and a strong connection to the neighborhood, for example through cooperation with schools, SİNEMA has brought local and transnational communities together. It has also become an important presentation space for the Berlin scene: a space of identification and a home for the transnational communities of Berlin, a safe space for artistic and political experiments, and a laboratory for film education and archival practices with international outreach. Since opening, a variety of film series, events, seminars, symposia, festivals, parties and workshops have taken place, attended by approximately 10,000 visitors. Sustainable cooperations from across Berlin and with international partners have been established. Further collaborations have already been planned for the coming years.

Now, however, the future of SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA is uncertain. The prospect of four-year *Konzeptförderung* from the Berlin Senate was the prerequisite for renting this new space in Wedding. Only through the continuation of this support will it be possible to steadily expand the programme, further professionalize the infrastructure and make the venue available to the numerous

actors and projects of the independent scene. Rental, maintenance, and personnel costs over the next years cannot be covered exclusively through project funds. This funding has now been canceled without replacement. Budgeted funds have been lost and our existence is in serious jeopardy.

## This cannot be allowed to happen!

In its coalition agreement, the new Berlin government committed itself, among other things, to working towards "creating, securing, renovating and modernizing spaces for artistic production and presentation". By canceling the envisaged funds, it is in fact achieving the opposite and sending a fatal signal: A presentation space that was built, modernized and secured with public funds will be dismantled!

With SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA gone, Berlin's independent cultural scene and cinema landscape would lose a key venue: a place with international appeal that embodies urban and transnational society, that creates access, stimulates discussion, educates, moves, provokes and encourages; a place where diversity is genuinely lived, from the team to the programme to the audience; and finally, a place that is committed to both a local and an international community and to the diversity of film culture and film art.

## We want the government to keep its word!

We want the few existing presentation spaces that serve the independent scene to be preserved!

## We want SİNEMA!