



## 'IBUG' URBAN CULTURE EVENT

Meerane, Germany  
August 2008

Documenting the evolution of this year's IBUG event meant long days and late nights spent with the artists, living the experience with them and learning more about their reasons and motivations for becoming involved. One of the main protagonists is TA550, a resident of Meerane. IBUG was originally his idea and here he takes up the story: "In the spring of 2006 I had just returned to my hometown Meerane from a trip with the Ma'Claim crew. There was an article in the local newspaper about the impending demolition of an old manufacturing facility located next to my studio. I was pretty shocked to read it because for two years I'd had the permission to use this location for my own private work. I'd used one of these really cool walls to paint the cover image of the Ma'Claim book. Moreover I had come up with some other great ideas as to what to do with all these interesting spaces that were just waiting to be painted."

This was the final opportunity to utilise this industrial ground, so I began taking photos of the most interesting rooms and sent them to all the painters I knew. They could come over to Meerane for two months leading up to the ultimate destruction in case they wanted to let off steam (in a creative way). There was no money or paint provided, it was all just for the fun of making art.

Since it was not meant to be a jam as I could not pay for travel expenses or accommodation, most of the famous writers turned down the invitation. A lot of young and unknown painters however welcomed the opportunity to become part of the project. Graffiti legends LOOMIT and ROK2 made a detour to Meerane to eternalise themselves on the walls before the giant machines levelled the buildings.



1. Visitors inside the main gallery area.
2. Artists at work prior to the event.
3. Loomit at work.
4. Piece by Help.
5. Creepy critters by HiFi.
6. Character by Ugly.
7. Mix media wall by UGR.
8. More visitors and installations.
9. Outside the main IFA manufacturing facility building.

Within a short space of time in a very relaxed and creative atmosphere, productions began to arise that would not have been possible in any other conventional space. The venue was not without danger, so we had almost no visitors during the creative period. Eventually the doors were opened to the public. They had the chance to meet the artists, interact with the environment, learn about graffiti and party with us. Even the Arts Association, who up until that point had been very sceptical towards graffiti, were enthusiastic about the project I now called IBUG. The idea is now to make an annual event in the small city of the former GDR a reality. Art does not need big city life."

The opening went well, the weather was kind and the sun shone all day. Some of the artists came to work on the day itself, so that the viewing public could see more works in progress and engage with the artists. Bearing in mind that this old Trabant factory is in a very small town with a population of only 16,000 people, 70% of whom are over the age of 50 it was a surprise to see just how many made the effort and attended IBUG 2008. People of all ages, children, parents and grandparents, all came to enjoy the art on show. Given the enormous size of the location it did not appear too busy though. With many rooms and passageways to explore there was enough space for everyone.

IBUG is a unique event and it is thoroughly recommended that you get out to one of them as you really need to be there to get the full impact from the installations and the buildings housing them.

For more information go to [www.ibug-art.de](http://www.ibug-art.de)

