

Introduction into the Film Project of the
Nelson Mandela School, Berlin

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How do we want to live in future?

That is the question that we addressed in our advanced art course at the Nelson Mandela School, drawing on Thomas Elsaesser's documentary film *Die Sonneninsel* [*The Sun Island*]. Engaging with Bauhaus photography awakened our interest in the Bauhaus and the fascinating 1920s and 1930s. The film *Die Sonneninsel* was not only well-suited to our interest in focusing intensively on events during that period and gaining a particularly creative and sensitive impression of life at that time, but in addition also depicted various possible options for engaging with visions of life in our world. We decided to answer the question of our ideas about life in the future in our own short films—and in the process to examine our current lifestyles with a critical eye too.

Working in groups of three, we created three roughly five-minute films, which we conceived, shot and edited independently, mostly in our free time. During this process, we were guided by specific jointly defined criteria that formed the basic framework:

- × Thematization of a complex of issues from *Die Sonneninsel*
- × Clear engagement with the question raised
- × Integration of a film sequence from the original film
- × Uniform film length
- × English subtitles

The link to the documentary film was particularly important to us, because we found the Sun Island's founders—Leberecht Migge, who wanted to experiment with a self-sufficient circular economy on the island, and Lieselotte Elsaesser, the wife of architect Martin Elsaesser, who supported him in this endeavour—admirable for

their courage in constructing an alternative and autarchic life for themselves in such difficult times, far from the city. The original footage compiled in the documentary film conveyed a sense of everyday life on the island, along with the very particular approach to life pursued there. In our films we would like to present our ideas, opportunities, but also fears about life in the future. To that end, we shot scenes that deal with our everyday life and combined these with statements that describe our ideas.

Our films formed the prelude to the «Taking a Stand?» symposium. Scholars from all over the world entered into discussions with us about our ideas about life and housing today and in the future and, against this backdrop, considered the past and present significance of the Bauhaus and *Neues Bauen* for housing design and thus for how we live. We believe that housing initiatives from the 1920s and 1930s have an enormous influence on our lives today and also on our ideas about functional, economic and indeed environmentally friendly ways of living.



Sive Chambers, Maya Dejean,
Julius Führ, Finn Killing,
Victoria Kruse, Maya Levine,
Mina-Giselle Rüffer, Luisa Shahin



Visions For The Future

A fairytale castle forms the point of departure for considering future prospects for living independently in Berlin. On the cusp of adult life, confronted with reality, the future is envisaged primarily ex negativo, as a rejection of what is clearly not desirable.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5rZ37q1bFI&list=PL0dx1-02TAZVKngyoFqMWTr3yQEzldN2&index=3>



Utopia

Having fun, enjoying yourself and wanting to live sustainably. Living in a small space in harmony with nature is the answer for a generation that has grown up surrounded by excess. The motto: cause as little harm as possible. For having too much does not make anyone happy and destroys the planet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8WOOLNuEPg&list=PL0dx1-02TAZVKnqyoFqMWTr3yQEzIdN-2&index=3>



Urban Jungle

The film depicts the urban jungle of Berlin, turning the spotlight on attractive lifestyle options that the big city offers. Particularly in the light of rising rents, the film's proposition that we understand and discover the city of Berlin as an extension of our own homes inspires viewers to reconsider the need for individual and shared living space.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR_-xq3gq30&list=PL0dx1-02TAZVKnqyoFqMWTr3yQEzldN-2&index=8