

Observatory Case update

ExRotaprint, Berlin, Germany

September 2022

Author(s): Samah Ibrahim, Levente Polyak (Eutropian)

Contributor(s): Maryam Schah, Daniela Patti, Bahanur Nasya (Eutropian)



This document has been prepared in the framework of the European project OpenHeritage – Organizing, Promoting and Enabling Heritage Re-use through Inclusion, Technology, Access, Governance and Empowerment. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 776766.

The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily represent the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EASME nor the European Commission is responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



ExRotaprint

Founded in 2007, **ExRotaprint** is an industrial complex in the Wedding district of Berlin, a traditional working-class neighbourhood. Exrotaprint is located on the former production site of the Rotaprint printing machine factory. The building was privatized by the Berlin Real Estate Fund and which allowed the local tenants to buy the premise. The location was developed for the diverse uses which hosts "work, art, social issues" and provides as ExRotaprint affordable rents for everyone.

After November 2019 and over a year and a half, ExRotaprint has not hosted any in-person events because of the Covid-19 pandemic. For a short period, ExRotaprint shifted to a full-time home office; however, the space was always open to support people and to create a safe atmosphere where the community felt supported. Although working from home was the prevailing situation, specific tasks needed to be done from the office. So, ExRotaprint assigned tasks to groups to work together from the office, and what helped was the immense space of the site made it easier to comply with the Covid regulations. Covid-19 not only affected the workflow in the office but also postponed the renovations of parts of ExRotaprint's building. ExRotaprint's canteen managed to stay open most of the time; although it was only takeaway, it still helped keep contact with the community as it is usually the place of gatherings in the whole area. Despite the state support, Covid-19 was a challenging time for many NGOs, artists, creatives, and local businesses, as some lost their spaces. However, ExRotaprint considers itself lucky as they were not severely affected by Covid due to having a long-term partnership. Most of the projects are for at least five years, not short-term funding, which many people end up losing.

ExRotaprint decided to redesign its methodologies to be able to adopt all its projects and events online. This was a significant workload for them, but their fund was not impacted. They managed to carry out plenty of work like capacity building and many hands-on pieces of training. ExRotaprint is working on a more extensive five-year program in which it is looking forward to shifting the public narrative on Islam and Muslims in Germany. They have been doing extended capacity-building programs on new narratives' labs which later continued in person. Additionally, shorter online workshops introducing and reforming approaches, strategic communication, awareness-raising, and mobilizing the network they are working with have been successful. With these workshops, more senior-level people became interested in their work, and they could reach people who could not travel to Berlin to attend.

Overall, the pandemic is developing as an opportunity for ExRotaprint to have a new sense of the importance of the community. They wish there would be a bridging of work between the art galleries and the different

headquarters in the neighbourhood so that they could co-create and build a relationship with the local communities.