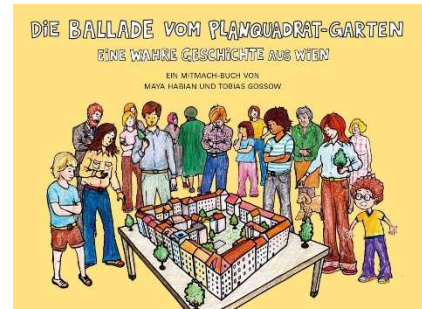


THE BALLAD OF PLANQUADRAT GARDEN. A TRUE STORY FROM VIENNA A DIY-BOOK BY MAYA HABIAN AND TOBIAS GOSSOW

The Ballad of Planquadrat-Garden. A true Story from Vienna **A DIY-book by Maya Habian and Tobias Gossow**

The story



How do we want to live together?

What is my responsibility towards the urban environment I live in?

Who shapes the city if I just consume it?

Who makes decisions if I retreat into a cocoon of apathy?

What can I do to make a difference?

What can I do to make my dreams come true?

The book is the perfect starting point for children and adults alike to start exploring all of these questions. It is about the interesting story behind the well-known Viennese community garden project "Planquadrat". In the 1970s, this block of buildings in the heart of Vienna was fairly dilapidated: the Buildings themselves were run down; 34 (!) concrete backyards were ugly and filled with barbed wire, broken glass, old tyres and rubble... an urban wasteland.

The then mayor of Vienna wanted to try out a new approach to city development and create a "Gartenhof", a "backyard garden". Realising that this might be an opportunity to advertise the benevolence of Vienna's Socialist city government, he wanted the public broadcasting company, the ORF, to report about the process and cast the city government in a positive light. The young journalists who were commissioned with the project, however, were inspired by the student protests of 1968 and wanted to actually ask the people who lived in that block and neighbourhood for their opinions - something that is of course now well known as a bottom-up rather than top-down approach, but which was unheard of in Austria in the 1970s!

Originally, most inhabitants were rather negative and cynical - many of them had heard a rumour that their "Biedermeier" houses from the early 1800s were to be torn down to make room for a big road, so why would they care about a garden when it was their very homes that were under attack? The journalists realised that this was a much bigger story than previously thought. They installed an office in the block and devised strategies (together with architects and students from Technische Universität Wien) to convince the city government that renovating these old buildings from the early 1800s would be better than tearing them down and erecting new flats in the style of the 1970s. That's a given now, but it was completely unheard of back then. A small architectural revolution was under way in Vienna in that little block in the fourth district.

It took a long time - and a lot of perseverance! - to turn the dingy backyards into the beautiful garden it is today: more than 9000 square metres of trees, shrubs, rose bushes, lawns, a table tennis table, slides, swings, little hills for tobogganing in the winter and running around in the summer, two huge sand boxes, people doing yoga and tai chi in the morning when it's quiet, families having picnicks in the afternoons. For those who go frequently, it's a perfect place to meet people from around here - it's like a village square, a really unusual and very special place in a capital city.

Of course, the bigger story my book tells is this: if you have a dream - go for it! Don't give up just because people tell you it can't be done. Most things can be done if you have courage, a plan, friends who help you, lots of stamina, hope, and a lot of energy. At the end of the book, we ask the question "What is it that YOU want to do?" - and our (young) readers are free to write or draw their ideas on that last blank page...

The book

Two language levels in one book

The book works on two different language levels:

You can either read all the left pages consecutively - that's the ballad proper, with challenging syntax and vocabulary, including some language items which are typical of Vienna.

Alternatively, you can also read the little boxes on the top of the right pages. They use capital letters and easy language so that smaller children or older readers who are just learning German can also get the gist of the story.

*Due to popular demand, I have now made an **ENGLISH** version of the little boxes guiding through the story – please find them below.*

Drawings and original photos

If you are a regular visitor to the Planquadrat, you will immediately recognise the garden in Tobias Gossow's beautiful drawings. The Vienna-based artist and illustrator has recreated some of Planquadrat's iconic spots: the big sand box with its pergola where children play in the shade, the play car, and the cherry laurel trees where toddlers hang from branches, howling like happy little monkeys...

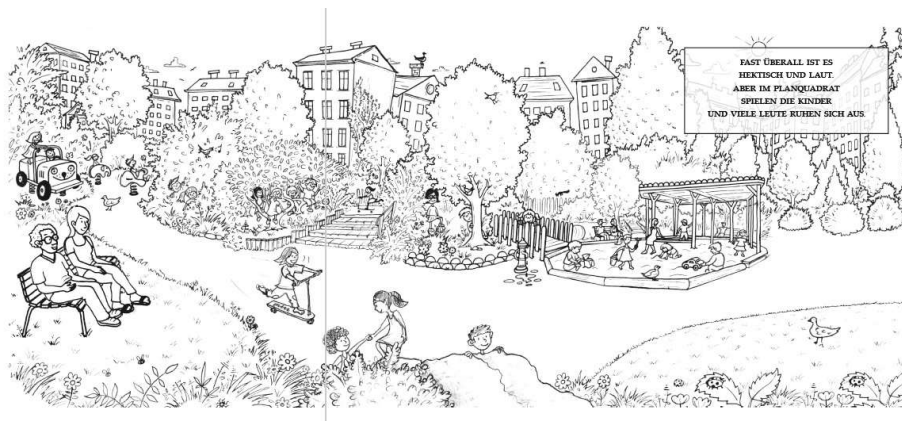
In der Stadt lupen Autos, beuumen U-Bahn, Bin, Bus,
man betet, weil man etwas erledigen muss.
Doch kennst du auch Orte, wo du Kraft holst und Schwung?
Wo sich alle vertragen, ob alt oder jung?

Wo man Vögel zwitschern hört?
Wo dich Flädeschuff betört?
Ich sag' dir was!

Auf der Wieden, im Viertel, liegt ein Garten versteckt,
den man nur durch Bekannte oder Zufall entdeckt.
Umgeben von Häusern, geschützt durch ein Tor,
drin strecken sich Bäume zum Himmel empor.

Am Morgen ist es still,
doch dann tut sich recht viel
im Planquadrat.

Kleine spielen, hutschen, rutschen, rennen, klettern überall.
Krauts, hasein, balancieren, spielen Sand und Federball.
Geoffe plaudern, lachen, essen, feiern, sitzen hier im Gras,
lesen, dösen, ruhen, malen, machen Tai Chi, haben Spaß.



FAST ÜBERALL IST ES
HEKTISCH UND LAUT.
ABER IM PLANQUADRAT
SPIELEN DIE KINDER
UND VIELE LEUTE RUHEN SICH AUS.

Tobias Gossow's collages include original photos from the 1970s and illustrate the desolation of the area before its slow transformation into the "green oasis" that it is today.

Als ich noch ein Kind war, sah's hier anders aus...

desolat, ungerflegt, abgelebt jedes Haus.
Die Wohnungen wüstig, Bad und Klo auf dem Gang,
vor den koppelnden Nachbarn ist mir auch angst und bang.

Eine Tür knarrt im Wind.
Irgendwo schlachtet ein Kind.
Es ist trostlos und trist.

Blicke ich aus dem Fenster, seh' ich nur Müll und Schutt:
viele Scheiben zerbrochen, alles ist hier kaputt.
Es gibt dutzende Höfe, Mauern und Stacheldraht,
und im Hauseingang riecht man, dass wer hingemacht hat.

Boahet, Missgunst, Neid und Streit
gibt's im Hof jederzeit.
Ich bin müde, geläut.

„Gündel! O'frater! Tachinierer!“ werden Kinder hier genannt.
Die schrei'n wieder: „Alle, schleich dich, sonst wirst mit mir umgerannt!“
Moder, Schimmel, Vandalismus, Stach, Gerimpal und Gestank,
Alle Leute sind hier einsam, junge Menschen werden krank.



FRÜHER WAR ES HIER GANZ ANDERS.
ES GIBT VIELE KLEINE
SCHMUTZIGE HINTERHÖFE
DIE HÄUSER SIND KAPUTT
DIE LEUTE STREITEN SICH OFF.

A participatory book about participation

Our book is a book which is incomplete without active participation by its readers: here you can draw, colour, add photos and captions, add text to speech bubbles, make plans and dream!



Commitment pays off!

We hope that today as well as in the future, many people will take an interest in actively shaping their environment. Our story of Planquadrat Garden can serve as a motivating role model - it's been around for over forty years! Find out more at www.gartenhofverein-planquadrat.at

TRANSLATIONS

TIP: Cut out the boxes and stick them into the book to create your own lift-the-flap book! This way, you and other readers can read the English version and still retain the German original. The boxes are the same size as the boxes on all the right pages in the book.

TRANSLATION Back cover:

In order to reach a goal you need courage... a good idea... perseverance... people who help you... persuasiveness... hope... and a lot of energy. Learn all of this and more in this thrilling story of a wonderful garden hidden in the heart of Vienna...

A “participatory book about participation” – a book for colouring or sticking photos in, for making plans, and dreaming!

TEXT:

Page 3

VIENNA IS A BIG CITY.
WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE?

Page 5

IT IS NOISY AND HECTIC
ALMOST EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY.
BUT AT PLANQUADRAT GARDEN
CHILDREN PLAY
AND MANY PEOPLE COME TO RELAX.

Page 7

IT USED TO BE VERY DIFFERENT
WHEN I WAS A CHILD...

THERE ARE LOTS OF SMALL, DINGY
COURTYARDS. THE BUILDINGS ARE RUN DOWN.
OUR NEIGHBOURS FIGHT ALL THE TIME.

Page 9

THEN A LADY FROM THE CITY'S
HOUSING DEPARTMENT PAYS US A VISIT.
SHE SAYS, "YOU WILL HAVE TO MOVE!"
THE TENANTS ARE AFRAID
OF LOSING THEIR FLATS.
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

Page 11

ONE DAY A COUPLE OF
YOUNG REPORTERS SHOW UP.
THEY LISTEN AND ASK QUESTIONS.
MOST PEOPLE, HOWEVER,
PREFER NOT TO SAY ANYTHING.

Page 13

ONLY THE CHILDREN ARE BRAVE.
THEY ASK EVERYONE ABOUT
THEIR DREAMS AND WISHES
FOR A BIG GARDEN.
THEY DRAW A WHITE LINE THROUGH THE
COURTYARDS. SUDDENLY THE PEOPLE START
TALKING TO EACH OTHER!

Page 15

THERE ARE ALSO PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT A
GARDEN. THEY ARE ENVIOUS AND ARGUE ON
TV. BUT SUDDENLY THE FIRST FENCE IS
REMOVED!

Page 17

WHAT ARE THE PEOPLE SAYING?

Page 19

IT TAKES A LONG TIME
AND WE NEED A LOT OF PATIENCE
BUT SLOWLY A GARDEN GROWS.
THE BUILDINGS ARE NOT TORN DOWN BUT
RENOVATED.

Page 21

TODAY, PLANQUADRAT IS
A WONDERFUL PLACE FOR MEETING PEOPLE -
A BIT LIKE A VILLAGE SQUARE.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP IT LIKE THAT?

Page 23

IT'S YOUR TURN NOW:
WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?

Page 24

SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?