

Cherry picking in the Black Forest

Tina Lenz



DutchCulture aims to encourage artists to immerse themselves more in local cultural scenes. Moving around and settling down in smaller, off-the-beaten-path towns and lesser-known cultural venues, artists can develop deeper relationships within new sites, instead of relying on existing connections in large cities. This anthropological approach of the Ornamenta curatorial team in doing extensive fieldwork proved to be an inspiring and fruitful working method. Over three years, they explored meaningful narratives within local communities in southern Germany.

Curators Jules van den Langenberg, Willem Schenk, and Katharina Wahl embarked on a journey during which they stayed in 36 locations in the region between Baden-Baden, Karlsruhe, and Stuttgart. Sometimes the curatorial team even slept privately on someone's couch. Their mission was to engage in conversations and organize gatherings to uncover the *genius loci*, the spirit of space. This open-ended exploration allowed them to intertwine layered themes from their informants across Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. They identified five distinct new communities, so called *Gemeinden*, intimately connected to the Black Forest: *Solartal*, *Schmutzige Ecke* (*Dirty Corner*), *Zum Eros*, *Inhalatorium*, and *Bad Databrunn*. Each community represents a unique platform for social coexistence at Ornamenta 2024.

By transcending geographical boundaries, the team offered a fresh perspective on the region, integrating historical, cultural, and ecological narratives of both people and nature. Artists were invited to delve into these five themes, co-creating fictional layers that fostered radical, unconventional collaborations. Ornamenta 2024 demonstrates how design, architecture, and craftsmanship, free from the confines of traditional galleries, can draw contemporary inspiration from German heritage. Through the exchange of knowledge and imagination between (inter)national artists and local communities, the Black Forest becomes a vibrant canvas for innovative cultural expression.

For summer 2024, consider taking a train to the south of Germany and beginning your journey with a visit to *Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim*. Alongside specially mapped out routes for hikers, families,

and entrepreneurs, you can explore at your own pace and enjoy picking *Schwarzwald* cherries out of the branched program on the website to stroll deeper into the Northern part of the forest. Looking ahead, I hope the guardian spirit of Ornamenta 2024 will return every five years.