

Alte Bibel

BERNBURG



POBA

The popularly coined name, “Alte Bibel“ (eng. “Old Bible”), refers to the many Bible verses found on the gravestones of the former cemetery and present-day city park of Bernburg, a district town in the centre of Saxony-Anhalt.

Once a gift from Prince Wolfgang to the town, the site was used for burials from 1552 to complement the inner-city cemetery located at the castle church. The baroque cemetery chapel erected in 1743 serves as a reminder of the park’s former purpose, as do some remaining graves from the period up to 1886. From then on, the use of the site was gradually changed and it became a park.

The Bernburg City Park is a protected monument because of its historical, cultural and artistic significance. Typologically, it goes back to the archaic basic principle of the “hortus conclusus”, the enclosed garden, an immanent pictorial motif of the fine arts. The original Old High German term “Frithof” signifies an enclosed courtyard, which over time became associated with the term “Frieden”, meaning peace. The city park, enclosed by a wall and a steep embankment and accessible only at certain points, corresponds to the classical, archetypical idea of a garden.

In 2015, the city of Bernburg had announced a competition to redesign the park, in which the POLA design made first place. It was meant to create a monument to the history of the area and the city on different levels. On the one hand, the mysticism that has always flowed through the park as a place of spiritual significance is a conceptual component of the new park design. On the other hand, the illuminated benches that resemble crystals are reminiscent of Bernburg’s potassium mining industry while at the same time enhancing the atmospheric effect of the park in the evening hours.

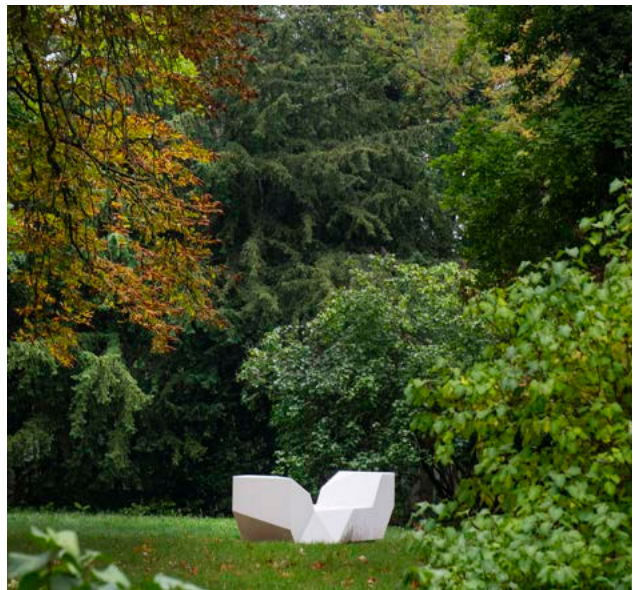
Thanks to the almost poetic, filigree arrangements made in the course of the redesign, the “Alte Bibel” now presents itself as a new Garden of Eden.

*Today a young resident drew near,
not knowing where or whence.
The world hurts as daylight, he
pondered, longing for dark and
chill. For silence and loneliness.
For security and sense of self.
Oh, he thought, simply to exhale,
to let my head hang heavy, to let
my thoughts fly. Simply to relax,
to breathe out and in and fill my
lungs. Whew. No task, no duty,
no ability, no hunting demons, no
wishes for tomorrow. Only to be.*

*Then he discovered a yard, full
of peace. A place, full of quiet.
A space, full of yesterday.
If he was a believer he would think
a God had heard him.
He reads the writing, “Old Bible,”
sits down, breathes freely.*









Project data

Project Alte Bibel

Location City of Bernburg, Saxony-Anhalt, GER

Client Parks and Recreation Office, City of Bernburg/Saale

Planning period 2016–2017

Construction period 2017–2019

Completion 2019

Services Planning and construction management (Phase 1-8)

Size 5.4 ha

Costs 1.4 million € net

Competition 1. Prize, 2015

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