

HERMANN & DOROTHEA

Some residents of the Enclave dismantled parts of the Völklinger Hütte—those submerged or difficult to access—to make tools or engage in smuggling with the complicity of some city residents. At times, they would break into the old Globus to raid it in search of lithium batteries and other electronic components, which were in short supply.

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To foster a sense of community, residents distributed small multilingual illustrated booklets within the Enclave. These booklets included a calendar of celebrations from the various cultures present, supplemented by significant dates in the life of the Enclave. On festive days, the structure of the old factory was used to collectively compose industrial music with gamelan-like tones.

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Die Gesellschaft der Stadtwanderer

SAZ L-S

SPECULATIVE AUTONOMOUS ZONE
LIFE-SIZE

Map of the Situated Lore
Völklinger Hütte

Urban Art Biennale
2046

The map of the situated lore of the Völklinger Hütte SAZ L-S (Speculative Autonomous Zone Life-Size) is printed in 500 copies and distributed for free as part of the Urban Art Biennale. Surveying and narrative by Roland Jørgen, Jeremy Allan Hawkins, Alice Jeannot, Valentin Ockler, Sophie Prinszen, Léo Saliez, and Mathieu Tremblin. Texts by Sophie Prinszen and Mathieu Tremblin. Graphic design by Léo Saliez. Base map by Léo Saliez.

Paradise had been converted into an area for farming and livestock, with beehives for honey and willow trees for basketry. Mushroom cultivation was used to decontaminate soil contaminated with heavy metals. Dams served both to filter the water and to supply the algae and fish farming ponds set up on the riverbanks, near the clandestine port.

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With climate change, the heritage classification of UNESCO sites had lost its appeal, since the very idea of conservation seemed to belong to the old world. The depletion of fossil fuel reserves had brought mass tourism to a halt, while periodic flooding of the river had gradually reduced access to the Völklinger Hütte.

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An elevated access ramp had been constructed with the support of Saargrün, ensuring that the Völklinger Hütte's mission would continue. Visitors were guided through the Water Tower and the Mineral Hall by custodians and researchers dedicated to the site's uniqueness and the memory of the place. The rest of the site, nicknamed the Enclave, was left to its own devices because it threatened to collapse.

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The existing infrastructure now housed control systems to ensure the secure production of this new resource. While Völklingen had established itself as a model city for the energy transition, the radical urban regeneration it had undergone was not universally welcomed by its residents. By 2046, the automation of the factory and the city offered only maintenance jobs with deteriorating working conditions.

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The urban area near the factory housed the new employees. It was managed according to a model of fully automated public-private services, without human intermediaries. Paying in shops and restaurants, opening apartment doors, using public transportation and other free-floating electric vehicles: citizenship was contingent on possession of an RFID smart card, without which it was impossible to move about.

3

The supermarket had become a logistics hub for online shopping. It was accessed via highway ramps, and goods were picked up from designated lockers. The archway on the ground floor of the building served as the entrance to the city center. A security checkpoint had been installed to prevent any intrusions and guard against industrial espionage.

4

Rudimentary wind turbines had been installed atop the old blast furnaces. They generated intermittent electricity that powered analog systems and machine tools. On the lower levels, a dovecote had been built to facilitate communication via homing pigeons with the Outside Communities, beyond the Enclave.

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The Enclave was beginning to be known as the site of a political experiment emerging from the ruins of the fossil world. Nearly a hundred people lived there in relative harmony, though the convictions of some did not always align with the pragmatism of others. It was also the hub of an informal economy—once confined to the parking lots of the nearby Globus supermarket—and based on an ecological vision opposed to that of Saargrün.

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With the foundations of the Völklinger Hütte now submerged, the above-water section—off-limits to the public—had become a refuge village. The metal structures were crumbling, giving the Enclave the appearance of a ruin on stilts. The residents—artists and refugees who had already been occupying the site for several years—had been joined by former Völklingen inhabitants who had fled the social control of the model city.

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Renamed Saargrün, the industrial complex across from the Völklinger Hütte focused on the production of "green" steel, utilizing various renewable energy sources instead of carbon-based fuels. Völklingen had become a showcase for techno-solutionist ecology. The nationalization of the factory in the mid-2030s had sparked a wave of urban renewal.

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