


# A MATTER OF MATERIAL

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**ON URBAN RUINS  
AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES**

With  
**LARA ALMARCEGUI  
ROBERT SMITHSON  
STEFAN SHANKLAND**  
in cooperation with  
**ANNA SAINT PIERRE and  
RAUMLABORBERLIN**  
Curated by  
**KATJA ABMANN**



ON URBAN RUINS  
AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

I created a protocol called  
Marbre d'ici, which transforms  
rubble and mineral waste into  
a new resource: a building  
material that can be reused  
in the very place of extraction.  
Yesterday's waste and ruin  
become a recycled material for  
the production of tomorrow's  
structures and functions.

STEFAN SHANKLAND

Construction tries to  
design and control a space.  
I'm interested in the  
uncontrolled wasteland,  
undeveloped vacant lots,  
spaces that defy design.  
As an artist I want to reflect  
on that space, rather than  
producing objects.

LARA ALMARCEGUI

I am interested in having the  
work of art lasting; the site itself  
will pass away, eventually erode  
and enter into passing time,  
but the work of art more or less  
has to exclude any kind of time,  
any kind of participation.

ROBERT SMITHSON

# A MATTER OF MATER —IAL

ON URBAN RUINS  
AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

8 JUNE – 4 AUGUST 2024

**SPREE  
PARK  
ART  
SPACE**

**SPREEPARK ART SPACE** presents contemporary art around the themes of art, landscape, nature, architecture and public space. Throughout its development, the art created here continuously accompanies the transformation of the Spreepark and is naturally inscribed into the park's DNA. Art is closely intertwined with planning, research and interpretation, comments on urban and open space design and provides space for experimental strategies and interdisciplinary networking. With **RE.USE.UM** and the **FLAMINGOS**, a new venue has been created within the Spreepark that deals with the sustainable design of the park and the use of its resources through the arts. The site opens its doors at certain times throughout the summer season for picnic performances, construction workshops and social get-togethers.



Photo this and following spread: Frank Sperling



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The group exhibition **A MATTER OF MATERIAL** uses the Spreepark as a starting point for a multifaceted exploration of the built and natural environment that surrounds us.

**STRATAPARK** by Stefan Shankland is one of seven permanent works being created in the Spreepark between now and 2026 as part of the interplay between art and planning. **STRATAPARK** consists of two landscape sculptures, which invite you to sit and linger, alongside 40 smaller artificial boulders. Nearly 100 tons of demolition material will be collected from the Spreepark, recycled and repurposed in the production of the artwork.

**A MATTER OF MATERIAL** is dedicated to the underlying process of Shankland's artistic work, revealing references in art history and provides space for works by other contemporary artists and collaborators. The exhibition features works by Stefan Shankland as well as Lara Almarcegui, who shares Shankland's great interest in materials while pursuing very different approaches in her own practice. Robert Smithson, a pioneer of Land Art, is the unifying link in art history, his view of the world is now more current than ever. Stefan Shankland, Anna Saint Pierre and raumlaborberlin have been exchanging ideas for many years, resulting in the projects shown at **A MATTER OF MATERIAL**, among others. The exhibited positions all share a call, ranging from subtle to striking, to redefine humanity's attitude towards nature and the universe in order to responsibly manage the limited natural resources of our planet Earth.







**ANNA SAINT PIERRE**  
**IN COLLABORATION WITH STEFAN SHANKLAND**

Anna Saint Pierre deals with the memory of places through the collection and repurposing of demolition materials. As part of her doctoral thesis, she has developed a process for the in-situ recycling of building materials. She has produced fabric designs printed with pigments made from construction waste and terrazzo tiles using recycled demolition material.

For the exhibition, Anna Saint Pierre has created a site-specific textile work in collaboration with Stefan Shankland and with the support of Étienne Vinet. **SPREEPARTITION** forms a light, flowing wall that captures the viewer's gaze upon entering the exhibition space. It consists of multi-coloured demolition materials from the Spreepark, which have been applied as fine pigments to the semi-transparent surface of the fabric using a screen-printing process. The elements of the park's buildings that have already disappeared reappear in the exhibition as fleeting traces of memory, creating a new spatial situation and a place to encounter the (material-) history of the site.

**ANNA SAINT PIERRE**  
(lives and works in Paris)  
is a designer and scientist. She explores aspects of architectural heritage through the transformation and reintegration of building rubble using experimental methods directly on site. With a background in textile design, she completed her PhD in architectural waste recycling at the laboratory of the École des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. As an extension of her PhD, she is now exploring the idea of »textilization« as a means to devise new modes of transposition and exploring how debris can be appropriated through textile processes to create new architectural surfaces.

**Fine rubble**  
**Memory**  
**In situ recycling**  
**Textilization**



**Fig 1** SPREEPARTITION,  
Spreepark (2024)

**Fig 2** SPREEPARTITION  
screen print,  
Spreepark, (2024)



**Fig 3** SPREEPARTITION  
samples, Spreepark (2023)

**Fig 4** Anna Saint Pierre,  
research (2018)

© Anna Saint Pierre





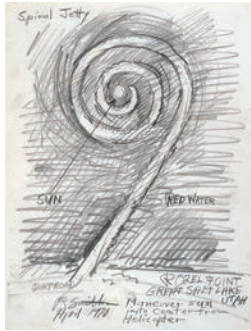


# ROBERT SMITHSON

Robert Smithson produced the 35-minute film *Spiral Jetty* after constructing his masterpiece – the land art sculpture of the same name – on the shore of the Great Salt Lake in Utah in 1970. **SPIRAL JETTY** is an expansive stone spiral constructed from a total of 6,000 tons of basalt rock and earth gathered on site. The film is divided into three sections of roughly equal length that merge into one another, describing the journey to the Great Salt Lake and the construction of the land art sculpture and ultimately reflecting on the aesthetic of the built result. In off-screen commentaries, Smithson provides information on the creation of the work. He recounts stories and references while the film shows historical and then-current map material, theatrical footage from the dinosaur section of the New York Museum of Natural History or publications such as »The Lost World« that inspired him throughout the process. In the voiceover, he compares industrial construction with the formation of the earth and the dinosaurs with excavators and dump trucks. **SPIRAL JETTY** is a disjointed narrative, part science fiction, part document, part travelogue.

# Sites Nonsites Rock Fiction

**ROBERT SMITHSON** (1938–1973) is one of the best-known representatives of the Land Art movement. His site-specific landscape sculptures have received international acclaim and his works influenced entire generations of contemporary artists. Following his death in a tragic plane crash at the age of 35, the artist himself became a legend. In his short but productive life, he produced paintings, drawings, sculptures, earthworks/landscape sculptures, films and texts. In 1963, Smithson married the artist Nancy Holt (1938–2014), who completed, with Richard Serra and Tony Shafrazi, his final work *Amarillo Ramp* (1973). Smithson was especially interested in exploring the conceptual and physical boundaries of knowledge, raising in his writings and artworks essential questions about our place in the world.



**Fig 1** Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty with Sun* (1970), Graphite on paper, 30.5 x 22.9 cm © Holt/Smithson Foundation / Licensed by Artists Society, New York

**Fig 2** Robert Smithson at the site of *Spiral Jetty* during construction in 1970 Photo: Gianfranco Gorgoni



**Fig 3+4** Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty* [stills] (1970), 16 mm film, Color, sound. Duration: 35 minutes © Holt/Smithson Foundation / Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

»If one assumes that a style label defines an artistic direction exhaustively, then it is clear what is meant by Land Art. It is an artistic direction that flourished in the USA for a short time between the late 1960s and early 1970s.«

»The main works included Robert Smithson's *The Spiral Jetty*, Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* and Walter De Maria's *The Lightning Field*. The common denominator of Land Art works lay in their huge dimensions and setting in the countryside, far from the city centers and outside of museums and galleries.«

»From a contemporary perspective, the claim to absoluteness and exclusivity appears to be documents of a bygone era. In complete contrast, the works and texts of Robert Smithson are still relevant and applicable today. For Smithson, nature is not a fact and seemingly inexhaustible, but a fiction.«

»Smithson takes an interest in building sites and ruins, industrial wasteland and architectural fragments. In his art, the human and the non-human are not categorically separated, but mutually permeated.«

ROBERT SMITHSON  
MICHAEL HEIZER  
NANCY HOLT

LARA ALMARCEGUI

»Under the influence of the climate crisis and the Anthropocene discourse that has been going on for over a decade, perspectives on art history are shifting. The history of land art can therefore also be revised under these considerations. [...] An anthropocentric view is being replaced by the idea that animals, plants, even the non-living, minerals and elements all have a voice.«

»Lara Almarcegui is one of the artists active today who expressly draw on the legacy of Land Art and Robert Smithson. She is interested in the terrain of industrial wasteland and the minerals extracted from the earth from which buildings are constructed, or what will become of architecture after demolition.«

SITE  
NONSITE

»So what is the relationship between Almarcegui's work and classical Land Art? Without this, Almarcegui's approach is hardly conceivable. Site selection, i.e. finding specific locations for artistic exploration, the relationship between site and nonsite, i.e. the real place and its representation, as well as the combination of sculpture, photography and text, all tie in with Smithson's methods. And yet her attitude and her artistic role differ from those of the generation around 1970. Almarcegui does not intervene in the material earth. She does not want to leave any lasting traces. [...] Seen in this light, earth is not a material that is shaped. Rather, it is a counterpart with its own rights. Art gives it a voice.«

From: **THE WEIGHT OF LAND ART** by Philip Ursprung, published in KUNSTFORUM International, Volume 284, October 2022, *Arcadia in Crisis – On the Relevance of the Landscape Image*, pages 132–141





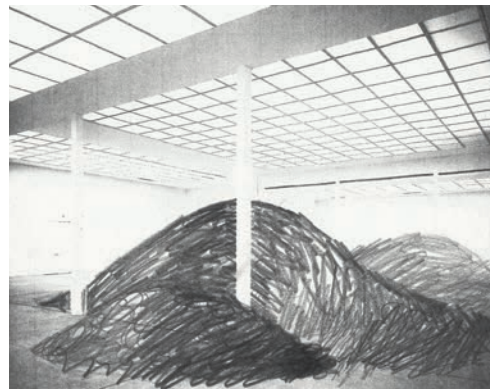
## LARA ALMARCEGUI

Lara Almarcegui's work straddles the boundary between urban renewal and decay and reveals what often escapes the public eye. Almarcegui examines the raw and processed materials that shape space and uses her projects to address urban transformation as a result of political, social and economic change. Her film **BURIED HOUSE, DALLAS** (2013), for example, shows the demolition and burial of a house in one of Dallas' longest-standing neighborhoods, creating space to reflect on the neighborhood's past, present and future.

It is this interest in transformation in the urban environment that connects Lara Almarcegui and Stefan Shankland. But the origin and history of (building) materials and the shift in the value of materials are common themes. With the help of experts, the artist has calculated the quantity and variety of building materials used in the metropolis of Sao Paulo and the elements and dimensions of the Pyrenees. How do these unimaginable numbers influence our perception of the city and its landscape?

**LARA ALMARCEGUI**  
(lives and works in Rotterdam) completed her studies in Fine Arts at the University of Cuenca and at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. With her large-scale works, the artist raises questions about the current state of construction, the development, use and decay of urban and peripheral spaces. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig (2024), the Graphische Sammlung, Zurich (2019), the IVAM, Valencia (2019), Casino Luxembourg (2016) and the Kunsthau Baselland (2015), among others. In 2013, she represented Spain at the 55th Venice Biennale. She also took part in the 14th Biennale de Lyon (2017), Manifesta 9 (2012) and the Taipei Biennale (2010), among others.

MATERIAIS DE CONSTRUÇÃO CIDADE DE SÃO PAULO	
Concreto	446 818 460 toneladas
Argamassa	291 076 763 toneladas
Tijolo	208 277 018 toneladas
Pedra	146 341 396 toneladas
Madeira	36 228 180 toneladas
Brita	34 346 592 toneladas
Aço	32 397 457 toneladas
Asfalto	28 622 160 toneladas
Telha	120 250 toneladas
Vidro	115 475 toneladas
Cobre	90 080 toneladas
Plástico	74 110 toneladas
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 224 497 941 toneladas</b>



**Fig 1** *Buried House, Dallas* (2013), HD Video, produced by Nasher Sculpture Center Dallas. Courtesy of Galerie Mor Charpentier  
**Fig 2** *Construction Materials, City of São Paulo* (2006), Courtesy of Galerie Mor Charpentier  
**Fig 3** *Sketch Construction Rubble Main Hall* (2010), Secession, Vienna  
**Fig 4** *Construction Rubble Main Hall* (2010), Installation view Secession, Vienna Photo: Wolfgang Thaler  
 © Lara Almarcegui

# Wasteland Rubble Demolition Mineral Rights





## RE.USE.UM – A COLLABORATION BETWEEN STEFAN SHANKLAND AND RAUMLABORBERLIN

Since its inception in 1999, raumlaborberlin has been working at the interface of architecture, urban planning, art and intervention. Time and time again, their work has examined sustainable strategies and the potential of reusing materials once rendered obsolete.

**RAUMLABORBERLIN** is a collective of nine individuals who share a background in architecture. They have developed different spheres of action as architects, artists, performers, inventors and curators. The group began in 1999 and evolved from a shared interest in expanding our understanding of architecture, something that has since become known as urban practice. raumlabor's approach is situational and action-oriented, with a focus on collaborative spatial production as an open-ended process.

When a building is demolished, its architecture suddenly becomes waste material. So how do we turn this supposed garbage into something of purpose and value? How can we manage to use fewer resources, preserve the value of existing materials and create cycles – physical as well as social? And how does this material ultimately become art? In collaboration with Stefan Shankland, raumlaborberlin has created **RE.USE.UM** in Spreepark, a space for discussing and testing out these issues in practice. Here, a central element of Stefan Shankland's artistic production becomes visible: the transformation of material as a process in which nothing is lost, but rather each element is charged with new meaning in another form or put to new use. Accompanying the exhibition, visitors can observe the process of (re)utilization of mineral waste and the transformation of the material into art on site or take action themselves.



# Collect Transform Process Potential

Fig 1 RE.USE.UM © Stefan Shankland Fig 2+3 Construction workshop with Stefan Shankland, Photo: Frank Sperling



## KATJA ABMANN: ART AND PLANNING IN THE SPREEPARK

Art and planning go hand in hand in the Spreepark. An integral and inherent element of the park structure, landscape architects, engineers and artists plan and develop their works collaboratively and on an equal footing. This is not a matter of course, for art in public spaces is generally introduced only after planning has been completed as a kind of add-on approach. Based on many years of experience and extensive dialogue with Stefan Shankland and other artists, specific operating principles emerged that I believe are of fundamental importance for a successful liaison between the two disciplines.

**1 Define the ground rules**  
Determine who will be involved in the process and what roles they will assume. Agree on responsibilities and points of intersection and set the rules for collaboration.

**Partnership over competition**  
Rather than seeing the two professions as competitors, see them as accomplices with different areas of expertise. Have confidence in the abilities of the other discipline.

**3 Common language**  
Find a common language. Be patient with one another, listen and learn. Question your own views and bring them up again when appropriate.

**Ideas and Ownership**  
Be generous in sharing ideas, pass along insights to other artists and planners, but be mindful of your sense of ownership.

### KATJA ABMANN

is curator and Artistic Director of Spreepark Art Space. After completing her studies in architecture and art history, she devoted her curatorial interest primarily to the link between art and planning. After holding various positions in art and architectural institutions, she became Artistic Director of Urbane Künste Ruhr (2012–2017), where she was responsible for large-scale projects combining art and planning, such as Emscherkunst. To mark the near-natural conversion of the River Emscher, an art trail was created with permanent and temporary works such as the pedestrian bridge *Slinky Springs to Fame* by Tobias Rehberger and the constructed wetland with community garden *Between the Waters* by Marjetica Potrc. Building on this experience, she has been implementing projects between art and planning in the Spreepark since 2020.

**5 Art and function**  
Artistic works can and should assume functional roles as integral elements of planning. However, there is a broad definition of practical function. Ensure that art is not instrumentalized in the process.

**Leave room for the unexpected**  
Allow room for the unexpected and take a relaxed approach to dealing with change. Be willing to compromise on the common path but insist on the respective artistic and planning quality.

**7 Artistic process and outcome**  
The process itself is as important as the outcome. Thus, reveal the artistic and planning process to partners and, wherever possible, to a wider audience.

**It doesn't need to look like art**  
Don't always expect the artwork to look like art at first glance. When art is integrated into planning, its form can take on many shapes: from seating landscapes to bridges, Ferris wheels and pavilions.

**9 Hang in there and be understanding**  
Persevere and understand the working methods and constraints of each other's disciplines. Art and planning often have different timelines, planning and approval processes.

# SPREE PARK ART SPACE

The projects and exhibitions that emerge here engage fundamentally with the site itself, its unique history and conceivable future.

5 Artistic Positions  
3 Authors  
20 Pages  
0,3 Gram pigment CMYK  
48 Gram  
100% Percentage of recycled fibres  
(Circleoffset Premium White 120 g/m<sup>2</sup>)  
40–50% Percentage of recycled fibres  
(Igepa Spezial 250 g/m<sup>2</sup>)

Please handle this booklet with care and return it after your visit so that it can be used by the next guests.

## SPREEPARK ART SPACE

Eierhäuschen im Spreepark  
Kiehnwerder Allee 2  
12437 Berlin  
spreepark-artspace.berlin

**Artistic Director** Katja Aßmann

### Program & Production

Julia Badaljan, Nina Sperling

**Education & Mediation** Jenny Sréter

**Residencies** Temitayo Oni

**Communication** Anja Klaus

**Volunteering** Nicolle Banús

**Welcome team** Sonja Schmidt,

Ceren Hic Toletti

**Graphics & Design** Julia Neller

### Text & Editing

Katja Aßmann, Anja Klaus,

Nina Sperling

### Production collaboration

Florian Schneider

**Exhibition construction** EMArt,

Ruben Erber

Supported by

GRÜN BERLIN GMBH

Ullsteinhaus,

Mariendorfer Damm 1

12099 Berlin

The fabric of a building tells the story of the long chain of its creation, of the consecutive stages in its transformation since its geological origin.

ANNA SAINT PIERRE

We transform urban spaces into something completely different, far removed from all expectations and visions. We shift programmatic narratives into empty urban spaces, install new atmospheres and create a sense of potential and open spaces.

RAUMLABORBERLIN

A  
MATTER  
OF  
MATERIAL



## THE SPREEPARK ART SPACE

views itself as an interdisciplinary platform. Between Plänterwald and the Spree, artists, specialists, the general public, the neighborhood and stakeholders from various fields come together to engage with the public space and explore and shape the role of art within it.

[spreepark-artspace.berlin](http://spreepark-artspace.berlin)

# SPREE PARK ART SPACE

