



Take a seat, make a stand!

In the dense urban space, controversial debates constantly arise over who may use the city and how. It is noticeable that a politics of exclusion and restrictive partitioning is accepted to a large extent amongst the general public. At the local level, examples of this are the exclusion zones where alcohol cannot be consumed in public, where begging is forbidden, where refugees may be accommodated and where minarets may be built. Displacement also takes place if people have to move out of the city centre, where rents are high, to live on the periphery of the city.

Such societal processes are issues for all of us. They derive from the cultural, social and above all economic ties between many parts of the world and also between different social classes.

Power and responsibility cannot be separated. Playing off marginalised people or groups against each other - as often happens in public discussions - is contradictory as responsibility for this situation is being shuffled off. In reality, the consolidation of power through the amassing of income and wealth, partly detached from democratic control mechanisms, must be bound to responsibility.

The politics of exclusion and ostracising builds structural and infrastructural obstacles for those people and groups affected and increases inequality of opportunity. Thus, exclusion contributes to the stabilisation of a hierarchy, in which the rich nations ensure their well-being and prosperity through the exploitation of poorer countries.

The art installation 'Take a seat, make a stand!' by Thomas Medicus establishes a connection between local phenomena and a globally interconnected world. It depicts the massive inequality of power and resources as the primary societal challenge. The intervention makes invisible boundaries recognisable, points up problematic contexts and aims to encourage the adoption of critical, responsible and evaluative standpoints in discussions. It presents the freely accessible public space as a valuable commodity and thereby reveals a dystopia, in which a park bench as place and symbol of participation in urban space now only exists as an inaccessible museum piece in a glass case.