



The “RAINBOW PRELUDE”

“We painted a rainbow on the blind arcades of the Zeppelin Grandstand!”

With these words began the first press release about the RAINBOW PRELUDE. While images of the painted columns quickly spread across social media and in the press, visitors on site searched in vain for traces of color — almost as quickly as the paint had been applied, it was removed again. But the image remains. And it speaks. It raises questions, invites reflection, and hints at continuation — after all, according to its title, it was only a prelude.

From the very beginning, the RAINBOW PRELUDE was conceived as a temporary artistic intervention — a sign, a gesture, not a work meant to last forever. In this way, it stands in striking aesthetic contrast to the idea of the “Thousand-Year Reich” and extends an iconic visual lineage.

Art historian and author Marie-Louise Monrad Møller and Japanologist Prof. Fabian Schäfer point out that the digital afterlife of the project forms a conceptual part of the new, contemporary, and long-overdue image icon created in 2020 with the RAINBOW PRELUDE.

At first glance, the rainbow appears decorative — perhaps even naive. It stands out from the monotony of the façade and cleverly makes use of its architectural form. However, it is a conceptual work that offers viewers open space for interpretation — even now. Monrad Møller and Schäfer observe that a counter-monument derives its legitimacy solely from the existence of an already established monument, but its meaning arises from a contemporary understanding of history.

The true strength of the work lies not in its direct symbolism, but in its ability to revive a discourse whose relevance extends far beyond the city itself: How free is art? What can it achieve? Who is it for? What role does it play in the politics of remembrance — and who gets to decide?

When art succeeds in being both urgent and widely resonant, it can enter educational and cultural memory without detour. For the RAINBOW PRELUDE, this has already happened: the project now appears in school history books, encouraging young people to ask questions — and to seek new answers.

It takes courage to alter a structure like the Zeppelin Grandstand through an artistic gesture. Public interpretations vary widely — and perhaps this diversity is what makes the resulting discourse so vital and fruitful.

Aleida Assmann, recipient of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade and one of the leading international voices on remembrance culture, wrote in a major German newspaper about the Rainbow Prelude that art is the means par excellence for contributing to political and social transformation — by generating new ideas and giving voice to perspectives that speak from beyond dominant discourses. In these discussions, we can read the condition of both society and democracy.

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