



2. Brick House

a centre for young creativity

How to ensure the cultural future of the city is a fundamental question, both for Rijeka as a European Capital of Culture and for the community generally.

The answers can predictably be found in well-planned, active work with new generations: children and youth. However, an appropriate approach, with adequate spatial and human resources, was not easy to imagine. A prolonged re-thinking was needed, merging existing initiatives, connecting artists/institutions, analysing existing programmes.

Our solution was found with the **Brick House**, a municipal initiative in a unique recycled factory, mixing institutions and programmes, providing content radically different to any initiative today in Croatia. The *Brick House* is both a *physical space* and a *node* for cooperation, headed by key cultural institutions. It serves as a focal point of knowledge and inspiration for the entire population, particularly kids.

Three of the City's cultural institutions (**City Library**, **City Puppet Theatre** and **Art-Kino**) join forces as logical partners in this effort. They develop programmes with the support of local organisations working with children and youth. The Brick House model includes research, promotion of reading, informal education and active participation of children.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Lead Project Hosts:

Art-Kino, the City Library, the City Puppet Theatre

Local:

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Youth Council Benčić, Prostor Plus, Krila, 3. Zmaj, Malik, Anima Fest (Zagreb)

European:

Subtopia (Botkyrka), Future Library (Veria), The Green House (Pecs), Trans Europe Halles (European network), Sarajevo Film Festival, Cinema Zero (Pordenone)

Supplementary funding

sources: European Social Fund, Erasmus+: Youth in Action, Creative Europe – Culture and Media (EU), Diverse Foundations with special focus on children, youth and special needs, Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth

IMPULSE

The idea of the *Brick House* is a response to a limited cultural offer adapted to children and youth, to the issue of free time co-opted by global companies for profit, to growing modern illiteracy.

The *Brick House* instills creativity into the free time of the young and, in the long run, builds foundations for a meaningful adulthood. It is a living room rooted in the right of every child to access cultural content, information, learning and entertainment. A place where every child is free to develop potential, to express themselves. The watchword “With them, not just for them” is strongly emphasised. Parents are cast as partners with those that care for children outside the family structure. Within the mixed community, the *Brick House* becomes a space for developing early intercultural competence, as a key to the future development of our city and Europe.

PLACE

Physically, the *Brick House* is part of the revitalisation of the former factory Rikard Benčić, a growing complex of cultural institutions next to the central train station. This complex and the infra-structural significance for Rijeka 2020 are described in more detail in section 4.2.1 The centre for young creativity becomes a shared space of educational programmes for children and youths.

Until *Brick House* takes its final form in 2019, artistic programmes are going on at different locations in Rijeka: public spaces, community centres, schools, theatres, libraries). When the centre is a functional space, it continues to be a platform for outreach, sending out cultural signals and teams to offsite places.

TIMING

[ri:map] 2016–2017

- ▶ partnership; coordination planning by host partners
- ▶ collaboration with educators and art researchers
- ▶ mapping local and international Partners for content input to the House
- ▶ intensive research

[ri:learn] and [ri:invent] 2017–2019

- ▶ exchanges & internships (building capacity of cultural animators)
- ▶ design of the building (in cooperation with the kids/youths – design labs)

[ri:build] 2019

- ▶ re-construction of the building
- ▶ Opening: 2020 – early spring

ACTION

The programme of the *Brick House* will integrate several forms of art and contemporary forms of creative expression – literary, film, performance, visual, music and multimedia culture and literacy in all its contemporary forms: reading literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, media literacy, ecological literacy... The fundamental aim and wish is to create content that corresponds with the needs of children in 2020 and the needs of generations to come, while also playing an educational role with the aim of creating active and self-aware citizens, developing creative skills, stimulating an exploratory spirit and educating future creators and active participants in Croatian cultural life.

FLEET

RI Cultural Passport

Aimed at strengthening the capacities of cultural and educational organisations that work with and for children: researching habits, needs, interests; creating a cultural passport, offering access and rights; developing educational materials and implementing training programmes for partners.

MultiMedia Camp

MultiMedia Camp is envisioned as a week long summer social event where children and young people acquire or perfect their technical competencies for creating multimedia content. They learn to think critically (media awareness), both from mentors and by exchanging with peers (“peer to peer learning”). The first camp is planned for 2017, thereafter annually. The camp becomes a unique platform for networking and training of future professionals in Rijeka’s audiovisual industry, connecting theory and practice.

Brick House on Wheels

The *Brick House* is not just a building, but a style, content and energy. It needs to be mobile: *Creativity on the Go* – cultural caravan and book clubs created together with the County Bookmobile; *Happy House* – A fusion of literature, film and puppet theatre, based on an award-winning picture book. It travels to children in remote villages and, together with books, brings them a

noble story of the smallest library in Croatia, and perhaps even in Europe – that is in the village of Kuti in Gorski Kotar, run by volunteers.

Month of Children's Literature

This month-long event welcomes popular European children's literature writers, with creative literary, visual and comic workshops, special activities by book clubs, initiatives to stimulate reading through cooperation with writers, illustrators, translators, editors and publishers of children's books.

Sweet Theatre

The project *Sweet Theatre* is "theatre in nappies". It offers shows for babies and toddlers (0-3). Babies and parents, together with the performers, are on a stage covered with soft foam. Parents learn simple games and object animations to play at home. An integral part of the show is physical interaction between the children and the actors, props, set and puppets.

Sensory Theatre

A form of art born from the synergy between art and therapy. The project is multi-purpose: a sensory room as a theatre event, a workshop space for creating instruments and tactile objects, all of this essential especially for children with special needs and disabilities.

Stories from the Roof

A fusion of narration and performance. Stories/fairy tales read out loud and animated offer immediate contact with the storytellers. A series of encounters at the Children's Library, where children select what they want to hear/read at the next meeting. Held on the roof of the *Brick House*, where an "open-air theatre" is planned. **International:** L'Antic teatre Barcelona.

Brickzine

An online journal covering topics such as culture, creativity, education and books.

Activities: Journalism school, Multimedia school, Workshop on digital picture books.



Ivan Rendić,
Brick House, 2015,
courtesy of the author

Klik! Lab – Klik! Instal – Klik! Fest

Kliker is the first Croatian platform established with the purpose of developing contemporary dance, that is aimed at younger dancers and audience. Project activities take place in public spaces, primary schools and the **Brick House**. Partnerships and collaborations will result in an innovative and different activities: education programs, residencies, site-specific actions, guest performances and festival productions. **Lead Partner:** Prostor Plus. **National:** Kliker network. **International:** Kopergieterij (Gent), Mercat de les Flors (Barcelona), PTL (Ljubljana), Kino Šiška (Ljubljana), FABULEUS (Belgium).

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

It is the cross-referencing between children, parents and educators that guarantees success for **Brick House**. The design and governance of the space is guided by the **Benčić Youth Council**, starting already with the design of the interior spaces based in laboratories with kids, as part of the re-construction process.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

The profound collaboration between three municipal institutions **Art-Kino**, the **City Puppet Theatre** and the **City Library**, merges expertise in literacy, creativity, new media and performance. The inter-institutional engagement is transferred to other initiatives in the City, not only cultural ones.

Brick House becomes a natural point of encounter for kids from all over Rijeka, a laboratory and platform for ongoing cooperation with children's cultural centres throughout Europe.

Brick House defines a model for creative interventions in other educational institutions: schools, social centres, community centres.