

International conference: “Urban Cultures, Superdiversity and Intangible Heritage”

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Presentation of the Cologne based innovative grass-roots project Humba and its various satellite activities <http://www.humba.de/> :

- Humba-Party – Cologne-International Carneval Music Festival
- Schrebergarten-Touren (Global-local music tours in garden spots in the Cologne suburbs)
- Edelweisspiraten-Festival <http://www.edelweisspiratenfestival.de/>
- Singender Holunder <http://weisser-holunder.de/singender-holunder-jan-karthauser-koeln>
- Rheinisches Zigeunerfestival <http://www.zigeunerfestival.de/web/aktuell.html>
- Brasilonia – Musica Brasileira de Colonia <http://brasilonia.koelnrio.de/>
- Humba-Ehrenpudel – Award for special contribution to Cologne-International customs

Originally the Humba-Project started in 1994 in the biggest multi-ethnic city of the urban region of North Rhine Westphalia (1 million inhabitants and 36,8% population with migrant background in 2015) as an alternative multicultural carnival project complementary to the traditional Cologne Carnival.

20 years later, in 2014 the "Rhineland Carnival" in all its local variants included the Cologne Carnival had been selected for the national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage by German UNESCO

Commission:

<https://www.unesco.de/en/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/german-inventory/inscription/the-rhineland-carnival-in-all-its-local-variants.html>

Through this listing, carnival received high recognition as an important element of the cultural landscape in Germany, which is strongly supported by the city council of Cologne and the local economy and tourism industry. Nevertheless Humba-Project is an interesting special case within the carnival.

Humba is both: a very lively innovative urban culture movement of superdiversity turned into "cult" and became part of people's culture during the most important communal feast.

It is an underground or parallel cultural event and at the same time a proud reference for stakeholders in politics and culture in town. Humba is based on voluntary workers and high professional musicians. The activities need serious social commitment throughout the year and deal with humour about disagreements and controversies in or between socio-cultural communities. The music mobilizes the diverse social memories and highlight political moments of history in Cologne as well as it is bridging through fruitful collaborations with international partners such as Brother Resistance in Trinidad or Adé Bantu in Nigeria ...

These “progressive” folk traditions re-evaluate and exploit the role of traditional and regional festivals.

The dimensions of Humba had not or only little studied during the selection process 2014 for "Rhineland Carnival" as intangible cultural heritage. This presentation focused on the most visible aspects and customs, which had been presented from the point of view of the established carnival associations as part of the majority society in Cologne. These customs and expressions are the Women's Carnival, street carnival, the processions, masked balls, the cry of “Alaaf”, rhyming carnival speeches etc. And the fact had been identified, that carnival constantly provided new impulses and proved itself to be an integrating force for people of all ages, all social classes and origins.

Humba movement is a “best practice” for the integrating force, because of the superdivers character: The activities are organised more by activists of an open platform, than by a traditional defined association with registered members. The activists are creating constantly new dialogues and partnerships between Cologne borne and based people of all generations, cultural and backgrounds and “Immis” – nickname in the local language for Cologne based migrants from all around the world. Professional and amateur musicians, singers, writers, composers and costume designers are researching seriously traditional oral local repertory to be fused creatively with expressions and stories from other cultural background, other instruments, rhythms and vocal styles. The themes of the songs, events and festivals are always part of peoples culture, from freedom and peace songs to funny and crazy "jeck" (nuts) ones mixed with storytelling, performed with global roots and in local language “Kölsch”

This urban culture movement in Cologne expresses the inclusive identity of the melting pot and it's legendary tolerance.

Supplementary inside view into the Humba counterpart in Franconia in the South German cities Erlangen, Nuremberg, Fürth, Bamberg: Anti-Stadl <http://www.antistadl.de/>

Available documentation material (selection):

- Pictures
- Humba CDs : No. 1 – No. 4, Pudelbande - Besuch, The Power of Jeckness
- Audio live recordings
- Edelweisspiraten Buch
- Videos (selection):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c53nBZgQ7IA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmVGHkZqXTs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoawP0Aqt_o

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrE-ObXTa1c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mf118D-oFto>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKGLLqbF5i0>

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