



1994 kosteten Wohnungen in St. Pauli bei Neuvermietungen **7,70 €/m²**
2008 sind es **11,40 €/m²**
Der Hamburger Durchschnitt liegt 2008 mit **9,75 €/m²** deutlich darunter.

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EMPIRE ST. PAULI ON STRINGS OF PEARLS AND SENDING-OFFS

A documentary by Irene Bude and Olaf Sobczak
Producer Steffen Jörg, GWA St. Pauli
Mini DV, 2009, 85 minutes

'Main milking place St. Pauli'
Hamburg is positioning itself in the global competition with other metropolises. Urban development should guarantee favourable location factors for businesses, investors and tourism; the last gaps are filled with image-forming projects in the so-called 'string of pearls' along the Elbe waterfront. 'Why are St. Pauli and the port so important for the marketing of tourism?', asks a member of staff at the Hamburg Tourist office. 'They attract the most tourists: 20 – 25 million tourists a year.' Tourists come to St. Pauli to join the fun at numerous large events, such as the 'Hafengeburtstag (harbour anniversary), Harley Davidson Days, Schlagermove (the popular German music parade), Cruise Days or Welt-Astra-Tag (event organised by a local brewery). For the district's citizens this means

more noise and more rubbish on top of limitations and privatisation of the public realm.

'Evict the people – put up the rent – bang – perfectly normal capitalism – or what do you call it?'

St. Pauli is Hamburg's most famous district; for many years it was the poorest too. But now the numbers of high and highest income citizens are steadily growing. Social contrast is increasing. The film is about St. Pauli not only being an entertainment and nightlife district but is also an attractive residential and business area. Old building stock is demolished or expensively refurbished, rents are going up, rented accommodation is turned into private property. People who put up resistance or don't fit in any longer are dismissed – directly or indirectly. That is gentrification.

'They are here, and we are not leaving!'

Taking the large-scale development project 'Brauquartier' as an example, the film illustrates the transformation process from industry to gentrification. On the former site of the brewery 350 million euros were invested, the Astra Tower demolished and rebuilt. The office building 'Atlantik Haus' is now occupied by BBDO, Germany's largest advertising agency, high-end housing association homes and the 'Empire Riverside Hotel' were put up. High income households are moving into the flats. Local pubs are replaced by exclusive bars and restaurants or trendy cafés. What about the people who used to live in the inexpensive flats and had a beer in the corner pub for 1.50 euro?

'St. Pauli has turned into something I never wanted.'

The next large project, the Dancing Towers, is already under way, with 'St. Pauli-specific uses': next to the office spaces it will have a bar and restaurant on the top floor 'where maybe not all citizens of St. Pauli can afford a full meal, but certainly enjoy a beer'. More than 50 people were interviewed for the film; outside experts not consulted. Different people from the neighbourhood have their say: residents, employees, artists, publicans, brewers, investors, social workers, hotel owners, lawyers, the leader of the district authority and many more. And so the film shows a broad range of opinions, beyond the clichés of the red-light district, petty criminals and the poor.