

*We had been rebels and we liked to chop heads.*

Statement of Klaus Weber about the formation of Freie Klasse Berlin

I will tell you the real story now, are you ready? In this time I was always saying he [Professor Hrdlicka] is a jerk but maybe we were just in a certain mood of change and we said so to legitimize better what we were reaching out for. It is hard to judge from now.

Q: Was it Hrdlicka you guys were pissed at because he had the gigantic studio? The studio was good. No, the class was angry because he was rarely there. Most of the time he sent a young assistant but when he came himself people felt that his behaviour was very macho, very dominant. From there came the idea to break with the concept of the master-pupil-relationship.

So one day we changed the lock from the large studio and we changed the sign with the name of the professor. And we put the sign and the lock into an envelope and sent it to the president of the art university and wrote him,

“Dear Mr. President, From now on, Hrdlicka Klasse doesn’t exist any more. We are now the free class. Please wire in the future the money for this Hrdlicka class into the free account and we will organize our own education now.”

And there was of course no response, and Hrdlicka the professor was really upset, he was unable to get into the studio, and he felt rejected, and ridiculously treated. And nothing happened. And so he didn’t come. And so we had the whole space to ourselves which is good. And so we started to invite artists that we liked and we started to make workshops there. Group Material for example, was there in this time. And we made parties, and we opened the whole thing up after awhile, and the studio was always crowded with all the other students. Because it was just a more exciting way to study art so they came to our place, all the people. And after awhile it was just so crowded, it worked so good that we wrote a new letter:

“Dear Mr. President, We did not receive any response from you. That’s all right, because we changed our mind in the meantime. We don’t want to be a free class anymore. We want to have the whole academy. So get rid of all these names from the list of the academy and just wire all the money into our account.”

Q: What was the deal with the school also being on strike?

The strike was earlier, but was helpful for us. The HDK was afraid that after our second letter: " we want the whole academy" that the Freie Klasse development could lead again to a strike. I think therefore they gave us money to run our program and the right to keep the space. Freie Klasse was post-strike. I participated from 1990 till I finished art school.

In the Freie Klasse we started to work collaboratively and continued with it after the art school as the Klasse Zwei.

*(note: Freie Klasse still exists today as a student run course, but in a less political mood than the years Weber participated.)*