

CCI SHOWCASE - Reinforcing CCI clustering through joint presentation

Regional Test Case Documentation

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0. Abstract

With the name “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen” (“Werkschau: Made in Saxony”) the test case “CCI Showcase” presented products, services and event formats of cultural and creative professionals from the Chemnitz region to visitors as part of a temporary pop-up store, linking Cultural and Creative Industries with local industry. Creative entrepreneurs from twelve sub sectors of Saxony's Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) were represented, displaying a diverse range of products and services as well as the potential of the regional CCI in five weeks.

1. Introduction

The starting point was to show the broad spectrum of CCI and their products and services. In the first place we planned to show the connection of the Saxon CCI with the regional industrial heritage. Later, because of the pandemic circumstances, it became more and more important to make CCI visible again. A long time with canceled trade fairs, no possibility to sell the products in their shops as well as less opportunities to expose in galleries and the discussion of the creatives itself of not being seen enough these days, underlined the urgency of bringing CCI and their potential back into the spotlight. Furthermore, creatives are often not able to afford the rent for spaces/offices/shops/garages. In addition, they mostly display their work as solo exhibitors within a low visibility for a small circle of people. Lots of them neither have the network or knowledge nor the financial strength to promote their work on digital channels, too.

2. Objective

With the showcase we wanted to increase the visibility of CCI in Chemnitz. Also, we wanted to support CCI in connection to industry, local handcraft and R&D for cooperation and vice versa. We also wanted to show that CCI business models adapt better and more flexibly to the structural change of industry or society than traditional business models.

Therefore, we wanted to introduce public visitors to the multifaceted range of products and services of the CCI sector in Chemnitz and Saxony. Moreover, we intended to connect local and regional CCI entrepreneurs with each other and with traditional industrial companies over a month-long exhibition time.

Our target groups were the creatives who took part in the exhibition “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen”. Also, we wanted to address the public and visitors who are not so familiar with smaller and middle-sized CCI enterprises in Chemnitz and Saxony. With formats like a digital podium and digital music events we planned to aim to support exchange between the different audiences and expertise of creatives. Furthermore, we had the idea to address representatives of the traditional industry or research sector who took part in the digital podium discussions (e.g., “3hoch3 - industry, economy and CCI in conversation”).

The novelty about this action was that never before all submarkets of Cultural and Creative Industries have been shown in one room together. Normally, painters expose in one gallery alone or with other painters. The idea of bundling all different facets of creative work in Saxony, to put them in touch with each other and show the broad public some examples of the whole potential of Cultural and Creative Industries was never realised before in Chemnitz.

3. Applied approach

First, we called for tenders to select one professional supporting us in the concept phase as well as during realisation of the test case. Finding one, we started the planning phase together with the expert. In the beginning of the implementation, we launched a call for CCI to apply for exhibition. In the second phase of the implementation, we set up the showroom as an exhibition. Therefore, we bundled different CCI entrepreneurs in Chemnitz and the region of Chemnitz together in one room and supported offering a temporary space without the need for CCI to pay for their participation. In a third phase we had the opening of the exhibition over one month with an accompanying programme. Here we organised together with our expert the programme (opening, talks, musical events). Also, we planned short-term adjustments to the opening hours due to the current Corona protection ordinance. The last phase was the closing and administrative organisation as well as feedback phase.

Considering the circumstances of the Covid-19 restrictions we planned three different scenarios for the “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen”: 1. physical 2. hybrid 3. completely virtual. In the end we implemented a physical exhibition which on some days were allowed to open for a restricted number of visitors. A regularly changing window presentation and hybrid talks complemented the exhibition.

We build on different experiences of implementing equal formats in the past. Our sister project “Creative Saxony” regularly implements state-of-the-art-formats for bringing industry, economy and CCI together. Also, we could gain from our year-long network of creative entrepreneurs in our organisation when it came to communicating the call. So, we could reach a large audience Saxony-wide who could apply for the exhibition. Also, our year-long contact to different Saxon State Ministries helped in communicating the showcase to the public. Our public relations network helped spread the call in the media and newspaper, so that a large group of CCI and artists could apply Saxony-wide.

Furthermore, as this test case is part of the European project “InduCCI” in general meetings we shared our progress with the international partners. To present the idea and having the need to respond to upcoming questions from the partnership we were able to sharpen the idea as well as benefit from the partner’s learnings by listening to the presentations of their test cases.

4. Results

The key result of the test case is an increasing awareness of the local CCI scene and their overall services and products. Displayed ideas, professionalism and the high-quality level of the 5 weeks of exhibition supposed to be found in cities like Berlin but have not been expected in Chemnitz. As a result, the 87 visitors that were able to enter the exposition in pandemic times as well as the not countable inhabitants passing by the windows of the showroom have been even more impressed about the creative power of their region. From the over 300 applications we selected 151 Saxon creatives to show overall 500 exhibits. Therefore, various criteria were required, e.g. the applicant had to come from Saxony, to make a living with its creative work and be innovative. While observing either the changing window exhibition or digital product presentations on social media, people became proud of their local makers as their feedback more than once told us. The city center became

“alive” again and curiosity about “what’s next to be shown” came up as members of the public told us.

Another outcome was the inclusive approach in gender, age and inclusive topics: From the 82-year-old painter to the 25-year-old sustainable design entrepreneur - we were proud to show a wide spectrum of participants. Through QR codes next to each of the 500 shown product visitors were directed to a digital catalog filled with company overviews, contact information and current portfolios. Due to the pandemic, interested people were invited to take part in more than 20 accompanying events only via live stream (e.g., European Days of Arts and Crafts, Classic Weeks, Industrial Culture for everyone or movie nights). All the videos are still available online and have been watched between nearly 100 and 500 times.

For the first time it was possible to get an overall impression of punchy services and products. With emphasis on the implementation of an “Every Piece A Story Concept”, a concrete and at the same time multifaceted showcase of the sector was created. For the first time this format bundled all twelve submarkets of the Saxon Cultural and Creative Industry, making them tangible and allowing them to be experienced as the sum of its individual sectors. The representatives had the opportunity to show their portfolio while informing about business activities and structures (e.g., art, design, music). In addition, the implementation of the showcase encouraged new target groups to engage in cross-disciplinary projects and cooperation in the future, such as Schauweberei Braunsdorf (museum), Saxon publishers, filmmakers (ibug, Distillery), the city of Chemnitz (mayor).

With the “CCI Showcase” it was possible to connect old and new economies so far that many of the invited artists are already working together with traditional industries/handcraft and we conveyed it to the public via guided tours through the exhibition and an accompanying digital presentation of all artists and products on Facebook. With the accompanying podium programme full of discussion rounds we also showed new ways of cooperation between traditional industries like automobile industry, research and new economy, like design entrepreneurs.

5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

We reached our goal in pandemic times even more than we could have expected: The exhibition design and the intense match making with all exhibitors created more than just an exhibition for us. It has been an experience in how to organise such a large event in times of a pandemic. The “CCI Showcase” became a very much needed symbol of collaboration and solidarity within the creative industries in these times and at the same time was able to stick to the goal of mapping CCI in conjunction with industrial heritage.

Due to the lockdown the supporting lineup of events has been shifted to digital stages so we still successfully could reach out to our audience and cross-connect the stakeholders within each other.

Due to overall pandemic circumstances, we got great feedback via eMail, Facebook, Instagram and through local press calling even a small fan base our own. Looking back the showcase seemed to be at the right place at the right pandemic time to spread lots of positive energy and thoughts from solo artists up to companies, from Chemnitz up to Saxony (and even further as we have got compliments from Austria, too).

There has been lots of interest in further events and additional possibilities to display products cross-sectoral. We even broke old habits as painters for example usually are “not allowed” to exhibit with craftsmanship and the other way around. Generating a fitting stage for all of them showed the facets that are possible and made the habitants of Chemnitz see some of the so far unseen.

We see options for improvement: More money would be needed for such a large test case as well as less bureaucracy appreciated from administrations in Chemnitz. Also, we would have wished for more action and support from the administrations. Using the within the project gained visibility, energy, motivation and reputation could be used to kick off further events. Additional possibilities of contact and networking possibilities for exhibited CCI professionals in times of Corona would have been great. And of course, a strengthening feeling of togetherness among CCI professionals is always the aim.

The public can benefit from an extra cultural offer in Chemnitz. The artists represented can benefit from new customers acquired with help of the exhibition. Industry and artists can benefit from each other's approaches represented in the panel formats. Other regions can benefit from a traveling/touring exhibition plan.

6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

All the websites created by the project team with exhibitor catalogs and respective information are still available online. We already had contact with another organisation out of our network sharing our lessons learned to support them organising a similar format in Dresden, another Saxon city. Furthermore, it is possible for us to think of repeating the approach, but maybe in another part of the Free State of Saxony. As a moving offer we are able to present the potential to more Saxon inhabitants, e.g. expose the potential of CCI in more rural areas than cities like Chemnitz or Dresden.

We will reactivate and connect the generated network of artists, companies and think tanks now in additional events or projects, for example within the scope of Chemnitz as “Kulturhauptstadt 2025” (Capital of Culture 2025).

The test case did not leverage additional funds and we think it could be used by any other territory and/or organisation. By forming a group, including a board of curators, and with the help of the public call for CCI, a broad spectrum of exhibitors can be attracted to the project. We would always recommend looking for a highly visible location that can attract walk-through public and not just the already interested exhibition goers.

7. Annexes

1. Programme and list of artists of “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen” (explanations in German):
Please see attached .pdf document.
2. Opening video of “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen” (welcoming words in German):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gazf9mqDEoA&feature=youtu.be>
3. Photographical insights of the “Werkschau: Made in Sachsen”:



Inside the “CCI Showcase”, photo: ©SACCI



Visitors at the few days open, photo: ©SACCI



Interview on “CCI Showcase” for the Saxon TV format “Sachspiegel”, photo: ©SACCI



Mayor of Chemnitz Sven Schulze visiting “CCI Showcase”, photo: ©SACCI



Closing the exhibition with a finissage with the Saxon Minister of Economy, Martin Duhlig on the right side and the Mayor of Chemnitz, Sven Schulze on the left side. Moderation: Josephine Hage from Creative Saxony, photo: ©SACCI



Broadcasting of various events with the help of external providers, photo: ©SACCI