

**ART SHOP-WINDOW INSTEAD OF VACANCY**

**ZU VERMIETEN**

**More and more retail stores are empty - even in good business locations like Pfeilstraße, one of the top modern fashion lines of Cologne.**

**Glued blades are not a solution for real estate owner Helga Festi. She put on interim usage until the appropriate tenant is found. With success: the Popup-studio of the artist Barbara Ruf brought a win-win situation for all.**

The displacement competition and the struggle between in-house trade and the growing power of the online platforms become visible to all: there are the vacancies in the business streets, which look unattractive. Not only small towns and affiliates are affected, but also the shopping streets in the big cities. In Pfeilstraße, one of the top addresses in Cologne for upscale needs, currently there are four business locations empty or are being renovated.

For Helga Festi no nice view. The full-blooded fashion retailer passionately led her fashion shop Lips in her own property and retired in 2014. The successful Lips concept was leased. But the continuation with another handwriting did not work. The shop floor was empty in spring 2016, the search for a suitable tenant takes time. Reason enough for Helga Festi to look for another intermediate use. There a coincident happened and brought a chance: the Cologne artist Barbara Ruf walked by her shop with a painting under her arm. From a conversation a plan developed: Already two weeks later the painter came with an easel and 100 paintings



and moved for two months in the rooms of the Pfeilstraßen 41. Just in time for the autumn street festival, Barbara Ruf presented herself in her pop-up studio with a retrospective of her art. Instead of an ugly vacancy a win-win situation happened for all.

The popup studio represents a whole new dimension for Barbara Ruf. "It is inspiration and a new territory at the same time," the artist rejoices. "I paint daily and I am inspired by the wonderful ambience and the passing spectators. It's like a shop window." The time in the temporarily rented studio the painter knew how to use, she presented herself daily as a gallery, arranged in October a vernissage with the coherent title Intermezzo and celebrated

a live art performance. For two hours the guests watched the picturesque history of the painting 'Deutzer Hafen'. It is the fifth from the new picture cycle with photos of the recently deceased Cologne photographer Hans-Peter Fuhrmann, all of which were created in the pop-studio.



### **Real estate owners should be mobile**

Also after the artistic in between use Helga Festi is still adventurous. "I always had a good partnership with my neighbors of Pfeilstraße and would like to keep a certain standard. The intermediate use is a good tool for testing for both sides – smart property owners should be more flexible. "At the beginning of November the streetwear label DZZD celebrated as a pop-up store opening and tested the location in Cologne. If the start is good, the long-term rental agreement will be signed. An appointment for next year is already envisaged.

*Further information about Barbara Ruf at [www.barbara-ruf.de](http://www.barbara-ruf.de)*

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