

# FRITZE IN NIEDERORSCHEL

21 young people from Niederorschel:  
"I knew about the artwork before the project."

Yes: 0% / No: 100%

"I knew that the artwork was from East  
Germany."

Yes: 24 % / No: 76 %

## Podcast

Karl Heinz Fritze's glass windows were the  
starting point for finding out more about the  
everyday life of young people in East Germany  
and today.

Anna-Marie and Fenja (6:52 min)

## ARTWORK

1966



untitled, 1966

Karl Heinz Fritze (1937–2012)

Leaded glass, each approx. 3.20 m x 2.00 m

State regular school Niederorschel

Photo: Norman Hera, 2022

Behind the glass entrance door of the European  
School Niederorschel is a colourful glass image  
by the art teacher Karl Heinz Fritze (1937–2012).  
The artwork, completed in 1966, is damaged in  
places. The glass is cracked and deformed.

The image shows 14 scenes from everyday  
school life in East Germany: lessons, work  
groups, pioneer afternoons, numerous socialist  
symbols and a quote from Goethe. Ingrid Fritze  
also provided ideas for some of the motifs.

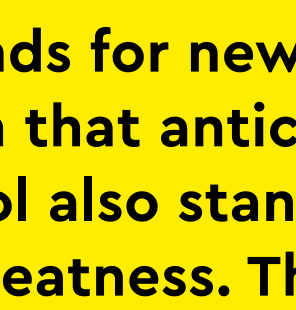
## Quote

"The image should remain in its original state.  
Like it is now, with the damage.

They are part of the history of the image."

- Hannes -

## Symbol



The sun symbolizes the East German idea of  
progress and stands for new beginnings. It is  
an optimistic sign that anticipates a positive  
future. The symbol also stands for fortitude,  
endurance and greatness. The imagery in  
Fritze's glass painting is thus also a symbol for  
the new school building in Niederorschel.

untitled, 2022, Zainab

painted glass

"Here is a picture of a dove, released from its cage. It  
means freedom, and the sun means hope. [...] My wish  
is that all people, wherever they are in the world,  
especially women, have a right to learn and right to  
freedom."

## Focus

The foundation stone for the new school build-  
ing was laid in Niederorschel in 1964. The state  
wanted to use state investment in the region to  
win over the Catholic population in Eichsfeld  
for socialism. The old school buildings had been  
severely damaged by the war. Classrooms were  
distributed all over the village and lessons had  
to be held in shifts. The new building became  
the heart of the entire village community. The  
school is described as the "most modern" in  
the region and opened in 1966.

Photo album about the Polytechnic Secondary School

"Dr. Theodor-Neubauer" 1966–1990

State regular school Niederorschel

Karl Heinz Fritze showed a special commitment to the  
school's new building: With a fundraising campaign,  
he contributed significantly to financing the school's  
interior and its furnishings. Parents donated 5 marks a  
month for a year. As a comparison, teachers earned a  
salary of 500 marks at that time. As a thank you, Fritze  
produced linocuts with motifs from Niederorschel.

## nice to know

When building the school, the people of  
Niederorschel set a high standard for quality.  
They decided on a high-quality floor made of  
travertine, which the parents had to help fi-  
nance. They sent their children to school wear-  
ing felt slippers. The school was given the nick-  
name "the slipper school". The strong commit-  
ment of the teachers and parents continued  
into the 1990s. Together, they fought for the  
controversial artwork to remain in the school.

2022

## ART PROJECT



untitled, 2022

Benedikt, Laura, Pascal

Glass, approx. 0.85 x 0.65 m

Photo: Tobias Hartmann, 2023

State regular school Niederorschel, grade 9/10

Z., Mohsen, Zainab, Benedikt, I., Laureen, Paula,  
Sarah, Laura, Hannes, Marie, Fenja, Max, S.,  
Valentino, C., Anna-Marie, Pascal, Charlotte, N.

Artist: Tobias Hartmann from Leinefelde-Worbis

Contemporary Witnesses: Heide Grubert,  
Siegfried Grubert, Heinz Hoffmeyer, Bruno Wald-  
helm, Bernhard Wolf

Teachers: Mr. Gerling, Mrs. Heck, Mrs. Steinmetz

School days are different today than in East  
Germany. Nevertheless, the glass picture creat-  
ed by the students has certain unifying ele-  
ments: three young people on their Simson  
mopeds in front of the school; the colour blue  
dominates. With the glass cutter, they prac-  
ticed straight cuts and the separation of the  
glass at the cut edges. Then they coloured the  
individual parts. The artist Tobias Hartmann put  
the picture together with lead rods.

## Quote

"We had a lot of fun with this project  
and learned a lot of new things. We are proud  
that we created a connection between  
the GDR era and the present with our Simson  
mopeds 'as a motif.'"

- Benedikt, Laura and Pascal -