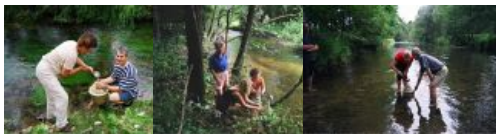


# Joint water-drawing





## **Social sculpture**

**Water-drawing along the river “Große Mühl”, on 60 kilometres from the source/Bohemian Forest to the mouth/Danube.**

**A project by Joachim Eckl and WASSER.ZEICHEN® in cooperation with the office Plansinn Wien: Bettina Wanschura, Hannes Posch, Wolfgang Gerlich, Mathilde Urban and Bernard & Partner: Wolfgang Schütz (consulting engineer)**

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**Austria/The Czech Republic**

The artist Joachim Eckl is the initiator of the project WASSER.ZEICHEN®. Water is the basis of human interaction and works as fuel for this social sculpture. But water is also a storage medium that carries information about organic processes like an “evolutionary disk”. The idea for the project “Joint water-drawing” is based on the fact that one single human being is not able to grasp the river in its totality. Joachim Eckl started his “water-drawing-campaign” at the river “Große Mühl” already in summer 2002 being inspired by the cooperation with the artist friend Klaus Rinke.

At each of the 60 kilometres of the river around 200 people were drawing water from the river “Große Mühl” - at 60 places at the same time - from the source at the foot of the “Dreisesselberg” down to the Danube. In this joint action a unique snapshot of the river has been created.

After that the waters of the river „Große Mühl“ were taken to „Die Station“ by their „drawers“ and stored in the “Mühl-water-room”. The event came to an end in a collective dinner and was rung in by the bells of the twelve churches along the river “Große Mühl”: All church bells of the Mühlthal were ringing at 3pm simultaneously for 3 minutes.

The “Joint-water-drawing” is the core and generator of the project WASSER.ZEICHEN®. The goal for WASSER.ZEICHEN® is to increase the appreciation of the people for their river and the surrounding countryside. WASSER.ZEICHEN® wants to provide the region with positive impulses by social campaigns for a sustainable development of the river „Große Mühl“.

The energy of the river “Große Mühl” has been used all times by people, first as a means of transportation of wood and motor of mills and sawmills. Up to the 20th century about 30 small mills were run by hydropower along the river “Große Mühl”. Joachim Eckl’s great-grandfather built one of the first hydraulic power stations in the region in 1907, to “bring light into town”. Since then many small power plants have been erected along the “Große Mühl”.

The water quality of the river „Große Mühl“ is labelled almost throughout Class I-II or II, in one section near Neufelden unfortunately water quality III (BMLF 1995). In this section of the river the water continuum is interrupted by the dam of the power station Partenstein. (erected 1919-1924).

Main goal of the project WASSER.ZEICHEN® was to revive the river “Große Mühl” in its lowermost section, about 12 km before the mouth into the Danube. The river should get more water and become the visible expression of a responsible use of land and river by the people just like in its upper sections.

## [Wasserzeichen](#)

### **Background information to the project „Joint water-drawing“**

#### **Water for the river „Große Mühl“**

After the initiative of HEIM.ART® and provincial governor Rudi Anschober, the Energie AG raised the amount of residual water at the power station Partenstein voluntarily up to 300 litres per second – the “Große Mühl” became a true river below Neufelden.

#### **Technology**

Since 1924 electricity is being produced in the power station Partenstein. The erection of the plant shall be deemed to be a technical masterpiece, it was the biggest power station in Austria at the time of its erection. The reservoir Langalsen served as week-reservoir and has a volume of 700.000 cubic metres today. Approx. 100 gigawatt hours of electricity are being produced with this plant per year. The permission of the issues concerning water peters out in 2012.

#### **People**

The people of the region were closely linked to the erection of the power station. On the one hand the construction was an important impulse for the region, for this continued the tradition of water use at the river. On the other hand parts of the population were immediately affected by the changes. The small town Langhalsen had to give way to the reservoir and was flooded completely. The regional people were aware of the situation below the dam from the beginning of the 1990’s. People started to deal increasingly with the waters and habitat of the river “Große Mühl”. Initially the fishermen called attention to the lacking amount of residual water in the residual flow stretch. The campaigns and efforts of HEIM.ART® under the auspices of the artist Joachim Eckl showed a new way of including the people. The identification with the waters was awakened and raised, proposals for an improvement of the habitat were presented. The communes of Kleinzell and Neufelden adopted resolutions for a sustainable development

of the habitat of the river “Große Mühl”.