

january –
let’s light up the night

Celebration is joining forces, standing strong, starting again.

The year starts with this moment caught between the pounding of the bass and the flickering strobe lights. In the bitterly cold streets, celebrations warm our bodies. We dance to bring warmth to winter, to ward off the silence; we celebrate because we are alive. But our celebration is not just drunken revelry: it is an act of resistance, a modern pagan ritual, a political statement. We take back the day; we take back the night; we take back the space. Joyfully. We invent ways of bringing people together. January is the start of the adventure. The fire that smoulders beneath the snow.

december –
closing the loop

Baby one more time

The city falls gently back to sleep. It is the end, we say. But we know that ends are always beginnings in disguise. So, we sort through. We keep things that spark joy, discard any burdens. And when the snow covers our footsteps, we light a new light. In this in-between time, we dream of other possibilities. We imagine the cycle restarting: not exactly the same, not entirely different. Ready to start again. And again.

november –
walking with ghosts

What haunts us

When the fog rises, the spirits invite themselves in. We hear absent voices, silences, loss. The city becomes memory made tangible. November is a crossroads. We speak of death, but also of what lives on. The spirits haunt the forgotten spaces, worn-out objects, and broken clocks. We call the ghosts, and we listen to them. Spirituality, memory, ancient or invented rites become ways of deeply experiencing the present. November is a gentle yet insistent memory (and also the occasion to scare yourself a little!).

february – mechanisms
for forgetting

Heritage – from myth to reality

When the snow covers the rooftops, the city seems to disappear. Like a blank page. Yet underneath this fragile mantle, there are still tales to be told: history can be deciphered on the fronts of buildings, and in the movements of the watchmakers. Here, the urban planning can be read like a musical score, through the living memory of this watchmaking and architectural heritage. But what does it tell us? Between knowledge passed on and landscapes destroyed, works of art and environmental disasters, it highlights conflicting heritages. The people forgotten, the tales written out of history: they also inhabit the city. So, we must ask ourselves: what is the role of heritage in our modern times? Does it anchor us or weigh us down? After the celebrations of January, February hits the memory cold and hard. Not to wallow in it, but to draw new stories from it. February sits at the crossroads between memory and the desire for transformation. What remains, what resists, what could change.

october –
the homestead

Shared spaces, crossing thresholds

October cools the air, but some places continue to open their doors. Here, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, hospitality is not merely a comforting word – it is a way of being, of thinking together. No need for a fireplace to feel welcome. In a city built on cooperation and sharing, living is not simply occupying a space: it is about existing alongside one another, symbolically, collectively, sometimes temporarily, often intensely. This month, art comes to the inhabitants. In a guest house, a discovered cabin, an open worksite. We are asked to cross the threshold. We think about how to live, what makes a home. Walls and roofs, of course, but also all the gestures and stories that fill them.

march –
the fire of collaboration

Struggles for independence – from Neuchâtel to the world

Underneath the ice, the embers glow. Revolutions do not wait for the spring to gain momentum. We celebrate the independence of the canton of Neuchâtel as we reclaim our bodies, our thoughts, our belongings. Social campaigns, citizen demonstrations, local and international solidarity: we take over the streets, create slogans, make marginalised voices heard. It is the spark to start the fight. March takes January’s new start and February’s memory, and transforms them into action. It is the melting pot of belonging, a battleground for insurrection, both gentle and passionate. We take our stand. We fight on.

september –
the city in chorus

Tous ensemble, tous ensemble, hey!

Summer lingers on, and with it the desire to be outside, together. Sharing a song, we become a chorus; enjoying a drink, we become a group. We get caught up in the desire to create shared spaces. We want to reinvent communal life, shared living. It is the time of year for huge urban get-togethers. The rules are broken, we re-envision space, we free the imagination. We find each other again, without ever having really left. The city throbs with myriad voices and rhythms. And from the unexpected, we improvise shared experiences.

april –
the spirit of the joker

After anger comes laughter.

After anger comes laughter. Not to forget, but to disarm. Humour brings doubt to certainty. Unsettling our dogmas, it gets in everywhere: in sidelong glances, the margins, the spaces in between. It breaks out in the most unexpected places, derails the obvious, grates against overly smooth speeches. The coyote spirit prowls, mischievous, between the lines and fuels our struggles. This spring, art takes on the mantle of farce, jokes or clever winks. April starts with a laugh which both connects and questions.

august –
fronts and frontiers

Questioning our allegiances and our identities

August opens with official tales, hymns and fireworks. But behind the symbols, tensions are rife: what does it mean to be Swiss? What roles do languages, cultures and differences play? Art takes to the streets, invades the squares, blurs the boundaries. Alternative tales have their turn, redrawing the map. All the arts are showcased. We celebrate movement and breath. Voices mingle, and bodies tell stories. The city becomes ritual, in a collective trance. And in the middle of it all, the echoes of past revolts feeding our imaginations. We play, but for real.

may – the histories under-
neath our paving stones

The worker’s city of Le Chaux-de-Fonds

Voices are raised. Past struggles find their echo in modern ones. We pay tribute to the workers and anarchists; we remember the flames of the 1794 fire. The city of May is not one of nostalgia. It is full of insurgency. The city, marked by its industrial history, becomes once more the site of action. We celebrate fruitful disruption. The paving stones speak once more, illicit projects take form. The spaces are shared differently. May questions the social order, and brings other forms of engagement to the fore. It is another way to love your city: through debate.

june –
a different way of building

DIY and experimentation

The season of possibilities has arrived. The city becomes a workshop. Do a lot with very little. Do it with everyone. Do it together. We invent, we reappropriate, we tinker. We repaint, we repair, we imagine. In La Chaux-de-Fonds, we celebrate this spirit of the wasteland — the fertile field where experimentation takes root. DIY becomes a tool for reappropriation: of the city, of art, of the everyday. Children redraw the city; adults build their cabins. The invisible becomes visible. And, sometimes, it is in the margins that we find our perspective. After the unrest comes action. And in doing, we can invent new ways of living. Here, new shoots grow.

july – when nature
infiltrates the city

Straying from the beaten track

In the summer heat, the city breathes differently. The streets empty, their inhabitants off on their annual holidays. In La Chaux-de-Fonds, we gravitate towards the mountain ridges, the meadows, the pine forests. We follow the tracks, and discover forgotten clearings. But, here too, something is changing. The water trickles, the earth blooms, the plants find their way into gaps between concrete. Nature infiltrates the cracks, gently reasserting its rights. Crazy ideas spring to life in deserted spaces; we take aesthetic risks. The city becomes a playground, where architecture meets the absurd. Rules are relaxed, and imagination takes the reins. Time feels suspended, everyone relaxes and the space becomes more porous. The city becomes living matter. It dreams of the woods, the wind and the tall grass.