

10th Architecture Biennale Venice 2006

Austrian Pavilion

Press release

Austria's contribution to the architecture biennale

The exhibition **City = Shape Space Net** opens at the Austrian pavilion of the Giardini della Biennale Venice on 8 September at 5:30 p.m. State Secretary for the Arts and Media Franz Morak will be present at the opening.

The exhibition, conceived by Commissioner Wolf D. Prix, depicts Austria's architecture using three examples that can be regarded as paradigmatic attempts at a new understanding of the city based on contemporary demands.

The subject areas, shape, space, and net serve as concise concepts and images for depicting a city's specific effects. Each of these three areas is allocated the work of an architect. Hans Hollein's project *Aircraft-Carrier* represents the theme **shape**, the drafts for Friedrich Kiesler's *City in Space* are shown for the theme **space**, and Gregor Eichinger was invited to develop a new **net project** specifically for the Biennale. The section of the exhibition entitled **Vienna.Intensities** supplements these three areas by grasping Vienna's latent potential and lending it a three dimensional form and comprehensible presence. Finally, the satellite exhibition **Rock over Barock** in the Magazzini del Sale incorporates the spatial diversity of young Austrian architecture into this year's contribution.

Concept

The city is shape, is space, and net

The subject areas of this year's exhibition in the Austrian pavilion—shape, space, and net—open discussion of the city as a living space, urbanity as a shape for life, and the net as an operative connection. This thereby pursues the theory that space and shape characterize the body of the city in a complementary way, whereas the net enables the urban dweller to act in this city-body.

Friedrich Kiesler's **City in Space** represents the modern metropolis' extensive experiential space as understood by the dramaturgy of the stage; Hans Hollein's **Aircraft Carrier in the Landscape** grasps the city as a functional shape. These radical manifestos by Kiesler and Hollein, whose impact extends beyond their importance in the twentieth century—think only of Yona Friedman's urban utopias or the concepts of the English group Archigram—far into the twenty-first century, are set in context with Gregor Eichinger's **net project** created especially for this exhibition.

The development of world metropolises makes it impossible for us to continue seeing the city as a whole. The city has become an interactive process—similar to the complex development of the human brain. Its network ranges from a personal weave of relations through to a steadily changing infrastructure. This network connects space and form into what is experienced through the retina as "city system." Mobile connections dissolve permanent locations and new forms of urban life can be recognized in these systems' simultaneity.

The contribution **Vienna.Intensities** by Bärbel Müller and Andrea Börner is an ironic, future-oriented critique of the technical and legal parameters of conventional land-use management. It offers an optically and acoustically alienated depiction of factors typical for Vienna, which can be read as the atmospheric parameters for a new use of space.

As radical positions on shape, space, and net, in their mutual relations to a newly developing context, the displayed projects refer to the discourses of the future: of setting limits to the city, of the vertical city, the mobile city, as well as the spatial-physical and virtual networking of the city. This also means including emotional parameters, which questions common paradigms of urban planning.

The Austrian contribution **City = Shape Space Net** should not be seen as simply depicting the developmental lines of radical ways of thinking; instead, it will also serve as the starting point for considerations, which in a broad further development of the theme will become a manifesto for the city (Vienna) in the twenty-first century.

Exhibition

For the first time in this particular shape and arrangement, the works of Kiesler and Hollein will be lent form as seminal manifestos of urban planning.

Friedrich Kiesler's *City in Space* was part of the official Austrian contribution to the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs 1925 in Paris. **City in Space**, the architecture for an exhibition of new theater techniques, amazed audiences with its free walls attached to neither floors nor ceiling. As common on the stage, Kiesler worked in a black space to lift the border between inside and out. Kiesler had already caused a stir the year before at the "Internationalen Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik" in Vienna with his space stage. In a spiral shape space—which he called the *Theater der Geschwindigkeit*—he drew to the stage the gaze of the urban viewer, which had been accelerated by mechanization. **City in Space** was the first demonstration of time-space architecture by Kiesler, a member of De Stijl. Personally, he thought of it as an unconscious three-dimensional realization of a neo-plastic picture by Piet Mondrian.

Kiesler's *City in Space* has been specially reconstructed for the Austrian pavilion based on his descriptions and preserved pictures. The 6m x 11m x 6m large cross section of the project shown in Venice was built as a full scale model. The representation of a stage, the *City in Space* model, a filigree white wood construction floating in a darkened room, is illuminated with different lighting situations.

Hans Hollein's master's thesis from the University of California, Berkeley is entitled *Plastic Space*. In a poetically succinct treatise including numerous ink drawings and clay models, he develops space from the plastic properties of physical forms. The collage *Überbauung Wiens* (Superstructure above Vienna) from 1960 tests the results on an urban scale in an effort to overcome the constraints of the present day by detaching from the existing city.

The Aircraft-Carrier (1964) from the "Transformations" series is another example of the examination of urban forms. His thesis: with the densely compacted city we gain tracts of open land. Already while at university in the United States, Hollein studied pueblos. The aircraft carrier reflected mainly a fascination with the pueblo's compact sculptural shapes which directly express society's structure.

The use of a ship as a model for the spatial complexity and economy of the city recalls Le Corbusier. In 1923 he celebrated liberation from outdated images in architecture in the aesthetics of the ocean liner. It also brings to mind Buckminster Fuller who in 1932 with an aircraft carrier further extended the city's space and mobilized the coordinate system with the help of the most recent means of transportation.

Although Hans Hollein's planting of an aircraft carrier on a green field may start with technical progress, in the sense of Pop Art it also represents an ironic commentary on the relationship between city and nature. Through concentration on a mobile object, Hollein also finds expression for the city's energy. The economical way of handling the landscape that this enables appears as a surprising balancing of the opposing pair nature and technology with a view toward a technically feasible future.

The displayed “Aircraft Carrier” is likewise the first reconstruction of the project in this form. Hans Hollein’s urban manifesto in the dimensions 7.5m x 2m x 1.2m is set in a landscape that he specially designed. Complementing the object are enlarged originals of his thematically related projects *Monte Laa PORR Towers* and *Superstructure above Vienna*.

Gregor Eichinger’s installation is directly concerned with the inhabitants of the city in terms of their socialization, especially with regard to the development of personal networks. These networks form the base for work as well as leisure and thus allow our cities to emerge in their complexity.

Gregor Eichinger stages one of the pavilion’s rooms with a simple wood construction. It is based on a concrete model, the bar in the 1938 film by Marcel Carné, *Le Quais des Brumes*. At the center of the room in Venice, like the one in the film, is a large table that seats six. Projected onto the surface of the table is a film lasting approximately twenty minutes that illustrates relationships: from material nets to thoughts about personal networks, from events in Vienna to the networking of the region Vienna-Bratislava. The projection on the table differentiates between physical and immaterial networks—mainly in their consequences for urban dwellers. Whereas physical networks, such as the electricity and gas supply or the telephone network, address our homes as terminals, advanced media render us addresses and thereby lend our personal networks an entirely different status.

Gregor Eichinger calls his room URBAR (Primal bar). It is the first place of communication. Here, people meet one another in an encounter that they know will be brief, experiencing the freedom of the modern city. But the space also signifies the construction shack where architecture is made but which doesn’t itself claim to be architecture. It deals with a site that is only a means, in the way that the network presents simply the prerequisite for realizing complex plans.

In this context, the numerous localities that Gregor Eichinger has designed appear as his personal network, which can be experienced at the “XXX Parties” that he organized in the city. Whereas these events were a kind of moveable feast that made the city’s forgotten spaces visible once again, the locations are their long-lasting manifestations. Bar and table are the invitation to a network among the visitors to the Austrian pavilion. The opening party at Palazzo Zenobio hosted by Gregor Eichinger offers further opportunity...

Vienna.Intensities (Andrea Börner and Bärbel Müller)

The installation **Vienna.Intensities** comprehends the city beyond technocratic data transfer. The intensities in Vienna provide information on the atmosphere specific to the city and also on its potential, thereby paving the way for new paradigms for urban planning.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, for the first time more than fifty percent of the world’s population is living in cities. Throughout the world, Vienna is considered one of the cities with the highest standards of living. Measured in terms of the population, Vienna is comparable with the capital city Algiers, measured in terms of the circumference of the city’s borders, the Catalan metropolis Barcelona.

The city is a constantly changing field of dynamic forces. The complexity of urban reality is portrayed in the dynamic forces of its information according to parameters of space and time.

Every city has its own specific characteristics. These characteristics can be apprehended through the emotional intensity of the inhabitants’ activities; they draw on cultural imprints and those elements of the city that shape its identity.

Vienna.Intensities illuminates Vienna from extreme perspectives. Data that has been selected for characteristic and qualitative criteria (Vienna Activities), as well as individual statements (Vienna Voices) about the city are captured, intensified, and set in relation to one another.

Vienna Activities

Prominent facts and quotidian events from the areas of everyday/culture, work, construction, population, education, health, consumption, public space, security, tourism, environment, traffic, business, and housing are mediated in such a way that an impressive picture arises.

Data that has already been statistically gathered and also newly acquired data will be mediated as a sum total of events. The frequency of light impulses represents the number of events within a certain period of time and allow for a comparison of urban activities and conditions, associations and conclusions about Vienna's characteristic traits.

For example, museums are visited much more frequently than are soccer stadiums. The city invests a much greater portion of its budget in public housing projects than in preservation of historic sites: every 25.35 minutes, 100 euros is invested in historic preservation, and every 5.81 seconds in subsidies for public housing.

Vienna Voices

Vienna-based artists and cultural workers in the areas of urban studies and architecture, fine arts, film, music, gastronomy, politics, and cultural work are asked to make statements about Vienna's intensities, atmospheres, and potentials. The interviewees were carefully selected on the basis of their specific confrontation with the city and as inhabitants of Vienna. The sum of their statements and prognoses represents a subjective description of the state of Vienna in 2006+.

Formulated are statements on the high quality of living, the intensity of Vienna's emptiness and slowness, the city's special geographic location, the way of dealing with and acting in public space, residential building policies, the concentration of available cultural activities, the historical and present way of dealing with integration and with foreigners, as well as prognoses for Vienna's future.

The city's diversity is mirrored in the range of statements about Vienna. The series that emerges is both an inventory of the dynamic relations of experienced/lived space and physical city, of private and public—hidden and obvious—city.

Rock over Barock: The satellite exhibition Rock over Barock incorporates young Austrian architecture into this year's contribution and was realized in collaboration with AEDES Berlin. Presented in the Magazzini del Sale are seven architects and architectural studios from Austria as well as two student projects from the University of Applied Arts Vienna. If one begins with the Baroque buildings' desire for spatial design, it becomes obvious that a particular accomplishment of Austrian architects is the design of complex space and not the simplified box. Their strength lies in the desire to re-define space.

SpringerWienNewYork will publish a magazine for the exhibition. It will be available for purchase at numerous bookshops and also at the Austrian pavilion in Venice:

Prix, W. D. (ed.)

Stadt = Form Raum Netz / City = Shape Space Net

The Exhibition Magazine

2006. 122 pages. Brochure with numerous illustrations

Forewords by Wolf D. Prix and Franz Morak as well as contributions by Dieter Bogner, Hans Hollein, Reiner Zettl, and others.

Text: German/English

ISBN 3-211-39498-2

Verlag SpringerWienNewYork

Prix, W. D., Kramer, T. (eds.)

Prinz Eisenbeton 6: Rock over Barock

Young and Beautiful: 7+2 at the Biennale

2006. 140 pages. Numerous color illustrations.

Text: German/English

EUR 19.00

ISBN 3-211-31028-2

Austrian pavilion

The **Austrian pavilion** by Josef Hoffmann is an example of the type of conservative classicism that brought an end to the period of radical experimentation in Europe in the 1930s as a consequence of the *Rappel à l'ordre* (call to order). A genre of architecture and a concept of the city striving through symmetry and axuality to radiate a calmness and orderliness missing from social and political reality, or, if present, then only as the monumentality and melancholy of walls and arcades. Sabaudia emerged at the same time.

Yet Josef Hoffmann is also the Austrian commissioner who, nine years previously, had officially invited Frederick Kiesler to participate in the International Exhibition in Paris in 1925.

Short biography: commissioner

Wolf D. Prix

Wolf D. Prix, born in 1942 in Vienna, studied at the Vienna University of Technology, the Architectural Association in London, and the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) in Los Angeles. In 1968, together with Helmut Swiczinsky, he founded COOP HIMMELB(L)AU in Vienna.

Since 1993, Wolf D. Prix has been an architectural design professor at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Since 2003 he has been vice rector and on the board of directors at the Institute of Architecture.

Short biography: curator

Reiner Zettl

Art historian, teaches at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Co-curator of the exhibition "Design Now: Austria."

Team:

Commissioner	Wolf D. Prix
Curator	Reiner Zettl
Markus Pillhofer	Exhibition Production
Hannes Stiefel	Project Management Rock over Barock
Katharina Müller	Project Coordination
Eva Diem	Assistant Project Coordination and Exhibition Production
Cynthia Kallmeyer	Public Relations
Paulus M Dreibholz	Graphic Design
Roswitha Janowski-Fritsch	Assistance Shop

ROCK OVER BAROCK, IKONA Galerie, Magazzini del Sale, Nr. 2

Exhibited architects:

ARTEC Architekten

Urs Bette

DELUGAN MEISSL ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

the next ENTERprise architects

Klaus Stattmann

stiefel kramer, vienna/zurich

Wolfgang Tschapeller

Sophie Grell

Tercer Piso Arquitectos