



Educational Programme for age groups 10 – 14 and 14 – 18

a_show. Austrian Architecture in the 20th and 21st Centuries

from 13.10.2005

The Exhibition

With the opening of the 3rd stage of 'a_show' the Architekturzentrum Wien is bringing its comprehensive documentation of 20th century Austrian architecture up to the present day. While the first stage of the exhibition (opened in March 2004) was dedicated to the PROPONENTS OF EARLY MODERNISM, and the second stage (opened in September 2004) addressed the topics RED VIENNA, POWER, LANDSCAPE and POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION, i.e. the period from 1918 – 1955, the third and final stage of the exhibition spotlights key urban development and architectural issues of the latter half of the century.

Under the headings INTERNATIONAL, SYSTEM, UTOPIA, COLLAGE and THE PRESENT, the key themes and buildings of the post-war Modernist period are introduced along with 'interdisciplinary' visionary designs from the 1960s that reinterpreted the socio-political and artistic relevance of architecture. This era of manifestos and architectural change, also a period in which functionalism was criticised and of the revision of Modernism, forms the basis for the most varied of developments in the 1970s and '80s, including the increasing prevalence of circles of architects in the provinces. This provides the background before which 'a_show' continues to cover the historical palette up to the present day, and to show that the diversity of contemporary architectural production also rests on equally varied foundations.

Educational Programme for the age group 14 – 18

1. From the Flea Trap to the Whirlpool. Changes in Hygienic Conditions in the City over the Years

A spotlight is thrown on the various notions of hygiene and the hygienic conditions in bygone epochs in the context of the relevant urban setting. Differences as well as similarities with contemporary conditions and approaches are filtered out. Examples are given ranging from Roman baths, the flea trap, medieval streets with central guttering, mobile hygiene facilities, lavatories from different periods and contemporary themed swimming baths. This is followed by a group discussion of the establishment of a public water supply and the creation of a network of canals in Vienna over the period from 1860 to 1910. The aim is to introduce the participants to progress made in the area of public hygiene and to show the inequalities between different strata of society. A playful approach to analysing town planning and the layout of apartments in housing projects provides added depth to the participants' understanding of the topic. In the practical exercise the participants are challenged to use their imagination and bring the Vienna Gänsehäufel bathing facility up to date



2. Traces in the Urban Fabric: Power and Post-War Reconstruction

The history of a country, its social, political and cultural development is also always reflected in its buildings. During the Austro-Fascist period, and especially following the annexation of Austria by Hitler in 1938, the policy of persecution and expulsion achieved a new totalitarian dimension. The architecture of the time provided a gesture of power that enforced the regime's claim to political dominance. In a group discussion of the exhibition the built manifestations are found that used architecture as a means of representing power, as are the applications of recurring elements employed to support different power structures. A comparison of sequences taken from various films such as 'Matrix', 'Spider-Man' or 'The Truman Show' is aimed at providing a feeling for space in the architectural ensembles represented and showing the possibilities for recognising architecture as a language in its own right.

The post-war period of reconstruction has also left its traces on the urban fabric. We explore these traces with the aid of the exhibition and using additional film footage. Directly following the end of the war there was an enormous shortage of housing to be compensated for. The main culture buildings that provided such a significant contribution to the reestablishment of an Austrian national identity were reconstructed while a new faith in progress was spreading. With the first high-rises and new concepts to gear the city for motor vehicles as well as new housing estate projects ties in Vienna were strengthened to what was occurring in an international architectural context.

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1. A Cross-Section, 'a_show'

Austrian architecture in the past 100 years – what has changed? How are traditional approaches and modern developments combined for the future? And how does architecture influence our everyday lives? A cross-section of major Austrian buildings is provided based on selected examples: the Loos Haus on Michaelerplatz is compared with the Haas Haus, Karl Marx Hof as providing the ancestral roots for the Sargfabrik, and how the cheeky nineteen-sixties provided the inspiration for a new contemporary formal language. The pros and cons of extreme buildings are discussed, floor plans are looked at and analysed in the group and new formal solutions are discovered. The ensuing practical exercise provides an opportunity for participants to make their own scale models and experiment with new possibilities as they design a building to fill an empty site in the centre of Vienna.

2. Otto Wagner – The Precursor of Viennese Modernism

in cooperation with the Postsparkasse / only at the following times: Mon. – Fri. 8am – 3pm, Thur. 8am – 5.30pm



Following an introduction in 'a_show' to Otto Wagner (the regulation of the Donaukanal, 1864 – 1903; the Wiener Stadtbahn, 1894 – 1901; the General Regulating Plan of 1892) and his time, we embark on a pilgrimage to what must be his most modern building, the Austrian Postsparkasse (1903 – 1912), where a permanent exhibition is on show in the small banking hall. Plans, models, historical photographs and newspaper articles from the period illustrate Otto Wagner's life and work.

3. Measured. From the Golden Section to Standardised Buildings

$a:b = b:(a+b)$ – the Golden Section still governs the way we see things. What proportions are considered attractive and what are the standardised measurements in architecture that have been in use since Ancient times? A range of housing estate projects illustrates the development from the proportions of the Golden Section to the introduction of modular construction: the high-density low-level housing of Roland Rainer aimed to provide a private sphere on ground-floor level while the Alt Erlaa housing development can be seen as consisting of stacked single-family houses. Using existing housing modules we develop our own master plans and discuss their pros and cons. Economy and efficiency led to the introduction of new techniques and a new formal language. In the practical exercise we create a framework structure using serial production methods. Is everything a question of scale?

Information / Reservations

Architekturzentrum Wien: +43 (0)1-522 31 15, office@azw.at

School groups are restricted in size to no more than 15 participants per workshop. Duration: 2 hours

Admission: for school groups, includes educational programme, Euro 3.50 per head