



»VIENNA. THE PEARL OF THE REICH« PLANNING FOR HITLER 19.03. – 17.08.2015

OPENING: Wed, 18.03.2015, 7pm | PRESS CONFERENCE: Wed, 18.03.2015, 11am

"... in my eyes this city is a pearl! I will give this pearl a setting worthy of it and entrust it to the care of the entire German Reich, the whole German nation. This city, too, will experience a new flowering."

Adolf Hitler, on being welcomed by the Mayor of Vienna, Hermann Neubacher, on 9.4.1938.

For the first time ever the broad spectrum of building projects in Vienna during the Nazi era is being shown in a comprehensive exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien. The Viennese examples of the building and planning activity of the Third Reich illustrate the wide-ranging contexts and interdependencies of Nazi objectives — architecture was instrumentalised to serve the aggressive expansion policies of the Nazi regime, and urban and spatial planning became powerful tools in the implementation of Nazi population policy. In the exhibition the paradoxical myth that Vienna only played a minor role in the planning activity of the Third Reich is examined. With the creation of Greater Vienna the metropolis on the Danube became the second largest city in the Reich; the infrastructure, industrial and development concepts for Vienna bear witness to the city's key function as a hub and a transit area from and to Southeast Europe.

Whereas in the fields of history and the social sciences comparatively much has been researched and published about the Nazis in Austria over the past 70 years, this has not been the case so far in the field of the History of Architecture. The transfer to the Az W in 2011 of the Klaus Steiner archives, which contain a wealth of original material (plans, photos, written documents, files etc.), laid the foundation for research into the area, enabling an intense engagement with this theme possible. Following the thorough examination of the material carried out in the course of the preparations for this exhibition, much that had previously been obscured could be used to contribute to the further processing of this piece of history. The activity of many architects and the continuity of their work starting in the interwar period, extending through the time of Third Reich and the post-war era, up to the present day is particularly informative and revealing.

Architecture, urban and spatial planning were appropriated as instruments of power for new designs and the regime's monumental public image, and the protagonists became the "allies" of a totalitarian system. During the Nazi era the profession of architect experienced an unexpected heyday, which continued to have an impact in the areas of planning and building long after the end of the war. Many architects as well as civil servants in the urban planning department survived the de-Nazification process "in good standing" and continued in their jobs after the end of the war.

Vienna was to have played a special role in the Third Reich and the city was to become the capital of a Gau (Nazi province). Hitler, who had an ambivalent relationship to Vienna throughout his life, wanted to give the



city a leading position in the area of the arts — Vienna as an art, theatre and music capital and the mediator of “German” culture between east and west. However, Vienna was not to be just an art metropolis but also a hub for and pivotal to the southeast. Hitler’s admiration for the Ringstrasse and its imperial buildings is legible in the plans for the redesign of Heldenplatz and Rathausplatz, which were to be remodelled as defined, paved parade grounds to serve as a stage for self-presentation. But most of these monumental plans, including the grand axis running at right angles to the Danube and the redesign of the 2nd and 20th districts that it would have involved, were never carried out. After the end of the war much material disappeared into the drawers of those who had produced it and was, to some extent, forgotten.

THE EXHIBITION

The aim of the two curators, Ingrid Holzschuh and Monika Platzer, is to clearly show the changing, reshaping, presentation and modernisation of the city in nine chapters. In the first two sections of the exhibition the role of *Vienna's New Place in Europe* is examined. On 9 April 1938, during an address given at the Rathaus (City Hall), Hitler used the phrase *Vienna. The Pearl of the Reich*. In Viennese urban planning Hitler’s words sparked off a veritable planning euphoria, marking the start of one of the most extensive building programmes of the 20th century. The section *Rasse (race) and Raum (territory)* presents the disciplines of land-use planning and spatial research which form the scientific basis for expanding the area of Greater Vienna. The chapters *Power and the Politics of Symbolism* and *Monumentalization* deal with the appropriation of architecture for propaganda purposes. The city was to be monumentalised and bestowed with representative buildings for the Party. The entire building programme served a single purpose: the transformation of Vienna into a Gau capital in-line with the Nazi ethos. These monumental designs are directly related to the development of the Reichsbahn (railway), the construction of the new Reichsautobahn (motorway) and the expansion of the port facilities, as is clearly shown in *Reactionary Modernism*, the chapter about infrastructure plans. The reduction of the density of the core city and the creation of new living space for the “German peoples” is examined in the section *The New City*. A considerable number of architects were involved in planning the Nazi housing construction programme. In the post-war development programmes they were able to make use of designs they had produced during the Nazi era. In the chapter *Total War* the focus is on mobilisation for the war of conquest in the east and also on the start of aerial warfare. The focus of planning lay on ensuring civilian safety from air raids and the development of the city as a stronghold of aerial defence. In *Generalplan Ost* (Master Plan East), the exhibition’s final section, the focus is on plans for Bratislava, Prague and Cracow, cities that offered Viennese architects extensive opportunities to work, whereby here, too, the question of the role of the profession in the reorganisation of the eastern regions is raised. Greater Vienna was a central stage on which the goals of a political order that was structured along racist and anti-Semitic lines were to be achieved using the powerful instruments of architecture, spatial research and spatial planning. This exhibition is the visualisation of the history of the perpetrators, in the context of which the issue of the function and responsibility of architecture and its protagonists is raised.



A look back at the architectural and urban history of Vienna shows how the Nazi era was omitted, a sign of its suppression and the way in which complicity has been externalised. The inclusion of National Socialism in the overall picture and the presentation of the historic events associated with it are, however, indispensable for an understanding of the present. Today the contexts, the outline conditions and the consequences are different, but the Nazi plans nevertheless there are continuities in and parallels to the present day.

Almost all the objects in the exhibition are from the Az W Collection, Klaus Steiner Archives. They have been augmented in places with documents from other collections of architects' papers that are kept by the Az W. The exhibition also includes material from amateur and propaganda films.

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

In the Spotlight: Vienna in National Socialism

Symposium

Sat, 11.04.2015, 10am – 6pm, Az W Podium

On the occasion of the exhibition a day-long symposium will be held that aims at directing attention to recent research. On the basis of an interdisciplinary approach, the intention is to present for discussion questions about the architectural and cultural-historical themes relevant during the National Socialist era.

The Symposium will be held in German.

Current information and tickets:

www.azw.at/symposium

Tickets: regular € 28.-; reduced € 22.-

Programme

9am Registration

10am Dietmar Steiner, Welcome address

10:10am Ingrid Holzschuh and Monika Platzer, Introduction

10:20am Matthias Marschik (Historian and Cultural Theoretician): The "other" of our history? A poetry album of National Socialism

11am Petra Svatek (Historian): The city as a research object: spatial research at the University of Vienna 1938 – 1945

11:40am Birgit Johler (Cultural Theoretician): "The Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, Vienna. A house of German 'Volkstum' in the South-East."

12:20am Discussion with Birgit Johler, Matthias Marschik and Petra Svatek

1pm Lunch break



2pm Rosemarie Burgstaller (Historian): Strategies for presenting visual stereotypes of enemies: NS hate exhibitions in Vienna
2:40pm Constanze Klaps (Architect): The staged illusion. Temporary architecture of National Socialism in Vienna
3:20pm Break
3:50pm Timo Nüßlein (Architecture Historian): "... like a marvel from Arabian Nights" – on the influence of Vienna's Ringstraße buildings on Hitler's ideas about architecture
4:30pm Bernd Kreuzer (Historian and Spatial Planner): The Reichsautobahn in the "Ostmark": Spatial planning, transportation planning and the promise of individual motorised mobility
5:10pm Discussion with Rosemarie Burgstaller, Constanze Klaps, Bernd Kreuzer and Timo Nüßlein
6pm End of the symposium
Moderated by: Ingrid Holzschuh and Monika Platzer

How 'political' is architecture?

Wed, 06.05.2015, 7pm, Az W Podium
Impulse lecture and discussion

A look back at the planning activity of National Socialism raises the question about how 'political' architecture and its actors are. Are there continuities in planning that extend across political divides and how does one deal with them?

Welcome address: Monika Platzer

Impulse lecture: Ingrid Holzschuh

Discussion with: Werner Durth, Professor of History and Theory of Architecture, TU Darmstadt

Gabu Heindl, Architect

Thomas Madreiter, Planning Director of the City of Vienna

Gottfried Pirhofer, Urban Planner, Urban Researcher and Writer

Rudolf Scheuven, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, TU Vienna

Klaus Steiner, Urban Planner

Moderated by: Dietmar Steiner, Director Az W



Awe, shock, indifference – the appearance of Vienna in the years 1938/45 in amateur and instructional films

Wed, 27.05.2015, 7pm, Az W Podium
Movie Night

A cooperation between the Az W and the Österreichisches Filmmuseum
This event will present for the most part unofficial film documents from the collection of the Österreichisches Filmmuseum and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which have been processed in the framework of the research project 'Ephemere Filme: Nationalsozialismus in Österreich' (funded by the Zukunftsfonds of the Republic of Austria).
Concept and moderated by: Siegfried Mattl, Historian and Ingo Zechner, Historian and Philosoph

Regular Guided Tours:

Wed, 25.03., 22.04., 27.05., 24.06., 15.07., 12.08.2015, 5:30pm

Tours given by the curators:

Sat, 28.03., 09.05.*, 13.06., 04.07.*, 15.08.2015, 5:30pm

* the designers are also present (Gabu Heindl or Toledo i Dertschei)

Tickets: Guided Tour € 2 + Exhibition

Guided Tours for all groups of all ages may be booked anytime.

Registration required: office@azw.at, T +43 1 522 31 15

Az W on site: Symbols of Power: Nazi Plans on Vienna's Ringstraße

Sun 14.06. & 09.08.2015

After an introduction to the exhibition contents the tour brings us to places in the surrounding urban area for which the Nazi regime made plans. The projects for the MuseumsQuartier, Heldenplatz and Ballhausplatz illustrate the transformation of historic urban space, in terms of both content and buildings, for the Nazi regime's political presentation of itself. The air-raid shelter at the City Hall is a reference to the built reality from 1942 onwards and recalls the traces of National Socialist rule that today have often been forgotten.

Tour: Ingrid Holzschuh and Monika Platzer, Curators

Meeting place: 4:30pm Az W Shop

Duration: 2,5 hours

Price: € 16 (including admission)

Tickets in the Az W Shop, max. 25 persons



Az W on site: 'Schieß-Dome' for Vienna. The flak tower in Esterhazypark

Sun 12.04.2015

After a brief search for traces in the immediate surroundings this tour brings us inside the former fire control tower. In the exhibition 'Erinnern im Innern' the command rooms present the procedures involved in aerial surveillance and air defence on the 'home front' during the Second World War. The use of foreign and forced workers for the construction of the bunkers and the role of the air force helpers in the war effort are explained. Various found objects, such as an aircraft bomb and a bazooka, are witnesses to daily life during the air attacks.

Tour: Marcello La Speranza, Historian

Meeting place: 10:30am in front of the entrance to the Haus des Meeres

Duration: 2,5 hours

Price: € 16

Tickets in the Az W Shop or at the location, max. 20 persons

Az W on site: Traces of the Bombing War. The motherchild bunker in Arne Carlsson Park

Sun 05.07.2015

In the course of what was called the 'Führer's immediate action programme' (1940) a number of 'model' air-raid shelters were also erected in the 'Gau' capital, Vienna. In the middle of Arne Carlsson Park one such bunker with first-aid station, gas protection, sanitary facilities has survived. A tour of the surroundings of this bunker looks for remnants of the war that still survive in the city's appearance today.

Tour: Marcello La Speranza, Historian

Meeting place: 4:30pm Würstelstand Ecke Währinger Straße/Spitalgasse

Duration: 2,5 hours

Price: € 16

Tickets in the Az W Shop or at the location, max. 20 persons

Registration for all tours required: office@azw.at, T +43 1 522 31 15



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Ingrid Holzschuh, Monika Platzer

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Curators of the exhibition:

Ingrid Holzschuh, architecture historian

Monika Platzer, curator of the Az W Collection

Exhibition design: GABU Heindl Architektur

Graphics: Toledo i Dertschei

The press release on the exhibition as well as high resolution press photos that are free of charge can be downloaded at www.azw.at/press_pearl.

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