REPORTS AND STORIES FROM:

Biennale Architettura 2016

Austrian Pavilion

Eds. Curators of the Austrian Pavilion
Elke Delugan-Meissl, Sabine Dreher, Christian Muhr

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Partecipazioni Nazionali

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

German version available at
www.placesforpeople.at/qr1

Alle Inhalte auf Deutsch abrufbar unter
www.ortefuermenschen.at/qr1

www.placesforpeople.at

EDITORIAL

This newspaper is an integral part of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion of the project "Places for People" which was initiated on the occasion of the 15th Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2016.

One special feature of this year's Biennale contribution is that its principal location is Vienna and not Venice. Given the urgent needs and real challenges associated with the current movement of refugees towards Europe it was decided to use not only the high prestige and strong public presence of the Architecture Biennale but also the budgetary resources associated with participation to improve the living conditions of people who have fled to Austria. In line with the objective of achieving this using the resources of architecture – in the widest sense of the word – three Austrian architectural and design teams were commissioned to work with Caritas Österreich and other NGOs to develop and implement concepts for the accommodation and integration of refugees in three concrete locations in Vienna.

Hence, "Places for People" refers, primarily, to the three real building projects in Vienna which were launched as part of this initiative as well as to a fourth location – the Austrian Pavilion in Venice and its presentation of the ideas, concepts and results of the six-month working process.

The challenge of transporting both the complex contents and the emotional dimensions of these interventions from Vienna to Venice is met by the architecture of the exhibition in the form of a three-part, hands-on display in and around the pavilion, a photographic essay and this newspaper, which can be read by visitors in situ but can also be taken away free of charge.

In three sections with a total of 72 pages, the newspaper offers additional, in-depth information about the three interventions and other issues relating to the future of the European city which are addressed by the project "Places for People". Under the title "More Places for People" it presents a further 14 inspiring projects in Austria, many of which have already been realised. The publication is rounded off by a supplement in the form of a magazine that contains the entire photographic essay on "Places for People", from which a concentrated selection of poster-size images can be seen in the main space of the pavilion.

In this sense, the publication provides a link between the three locations in Vienna and the presentation in Venice, between the exhibition space and the media space opened up by this newspaper.

The contents of the exhibition and newspaper complement and reinforce each other with the aim of offering visitors and readers both a quick introduction to and in-depth information about all aspects of the Austrian contribution.

DEUTSCHE TEXTFASSUNGEN
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PART 1 Context

Although concreteness, in terms of not only the starting points and problems tackled but also the solutions proposed, is a central, conceptual criterion for the project "Places for People", it is clearly impossible to imagine meaningful concrete answers which do not address the complex matrix of current social and urban developments which, in turn, is so strongly affected by such factors as globalisation and digitalisation, the transformation of the nation state and movements of refugees. This is why the essays and reportages address some of these issues while simultaneously attempting to identify plausible connections with the concrete interventions which were launched in the context of "Places for People."

The focus of the essay by the cultural scientist Lutz Musner is the emancipatory potential of the European city in the light of resurgent nationalism and populism and the special "habitus of Vienna" which, today, is still shaped by, amongst other things, xenophobia and integration. The role of the mobile telephone as a place of retreat in societies characterised by high levels of mobility – especially in the context of the movement of refugees – and the effects of this technology on such traditional topoi as the city are addressed by the contribution from the researchers Katja Schechtner and Katharina Müller. The investigation of the exclusive or integrative functions of architecture which the architectural researchers Nina Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl developed out of their precise analyses of shelters for people seeking protection in Austria was similarly based on original research.

The method of participatory observation and the area of investigation connect the two reportages which are devoted to the various focuses of the development processes of the three interventions and which, thereby, apply the general Biennale motto "Reporting from the Front" to the Austrian contribution. The Viennese cultural journalists Martina Frühwirth and Anna Soucek accompanied the three teams over a number of weeks as they worked at the various locations in Vienna, documenting the concrete complex challenges facing the various players. The focus of the report by the Vienna and Berlin-based cultural journalist Kimberly Bradley is the individual stories and destinies of the people who have fled to Vienna. A special aspect of this report is the architectural experiences which these people have so far had both in their homelands and in the locations in Vienna where they are accommodated and, as a result of which, where they have come into contact with the architectural teams.

This first, general part of the newspaper is introduced by a text from the curatorial team presenting the most important ideas and intentions of "Places for People".

PART 2 Interventions

The three initiatives launched as part of "Places for People" form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The eight pages, which were conceived and composed by the teams themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind these three interventions but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term "intervention" was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contributions are from Gabriele Kaiser, Elke Rauth and Elke Krasny, three well-known Austrian architecture experts, who are particularly familiar with the work and the approaches of the three teams and with the issues which they are addressing.

At the end of these three presentations of the individual concepts and projects the most important facts and figures from the three interventions are summarised on the back page in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

PART 3 More Places for People

The three initiatives launched at three locations in Vienna in the context of "Places for People" primarily represent attempts to develop concrete measures aimed at improving the living conditions of people who have fled to the city.

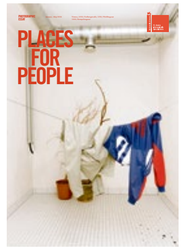
The examination of the varying needs and parameters in these different locations formed the starting point for the development of correspondingly specific ideas, strategies and realisations. While these three projects seek to formulate solutions to concrete problems they also, naturally, address the urban surroundings and the overall social context.

Even if this means that the interventions can be understood as pilot projects, they are also being developed in the knowledge that there is already a multitude of approaches, in Austria and further afield, that the curatorial team of "Places for People" regards as exemplary, inspiring and, at all events, worthy of discussion.

The following 14 interviews present a selection of such projects which have already been developed in Austria to an international audience. The very conscious starting point is projects which have already been completed because it is the experience gained in realising these that is of particular interest, not only for the ongoing activities of "Places for People" but also for future initiatives. The subject matter of these interviews includes the social role and self-image of architecture, the methodology and morality of the discipline and the future of the European city in view of the movement of migrants, technological transformations and social and economic crises.

The protagonists, who were interviewed by either Sabine Dreher or Christian Muhr, include architects, designers, artists, teachers and students who are active in Austria and can be considered as part of a civil society which has been the source of the most dynamic and innovative impulses in this area to date.

PART 4 Supplement



This publication is rounded off by a supplement in the form of a magazine that contains a photographic essay by Paul Kranzler. The photographer has accompanied the three teams of architects with his camera during several months, documenting their development and implementation work at the three different locations. In contrast with classical architectural photography, this visual essay also focuses on people who were involved in the process. The 40-page magazine presents 52 images selected from the total of around 5,000 photos which were taken between January and May 2016.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An undertaking like "Places for People" in which social interaction plays such a central role can only be realised through cooperation and teamwork. For this reason we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people whose commitment, cooperation and support made the project possible. This applies equally to those people who live in this city and those who have fled here.

While it is unfortunately impossible to mention everyone by name, we would like to offer special thanks to the following people who have made a particular contribution to the creation of this publication. Firstly, we would like to thank the three participating teams, each of which have presented their interventions on eight sides in text and image, all authors of the essays and reportages and all interview partners. Further thanks are due to the photographer Paul Kranzler who not only produced the visual essay in the magazine but also took most of the photographs in this newspaper. We must also acknowledge the tireless work of Linus Baumschlager, Roman Breier, Günter Eder and Marcel Neundörfer of grafisches Büro who were responsible for the graphic conception and design of the newspaper and supplement as well as for the signage system and the web design. The same applies to Rupert Hebblethwaite, who translated all the German texts into English, and to Katharina Sacken and Thomas Raab, who were responsible for proofreading and for the translation into German.

And in addition to this we would like to offer our special thanks to Kilian Kleinschmidt, who supported us with his valuable advice during the earlier stages of the project.

We are particularly grateful to Katharina Boesch of section.a for her experienced support in the areas of finance and production and to Susanne Haider and Sarah Hellwagner of art:phalanx for their media work as well as to Barbora Chen and Tom Hindelang of DMAA who performed very important background roles and the partners of DMAA, Roman Delugan, Dietmar Feistel and Martin Josst.

Last but not least our thanks are due to our partners Caritas and the Samariterbund Wien, whose participation was absolutely essential, and to the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the sponsors, whose budgetary support and help-in-kind made "Places for People" possible in the first place.

Elke Delugan-Meissl, Commissioner
Sabine Dreher and Christian Muhr, Co-Curators

Photo: Christian Redtenbacher

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Some introductory remarks about Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale in Venice by Christian Muhr

"Aesthetics and ethics are one and the same."

Ludwig Wittgenstein in: Tractatus logico-philosophicus (1921)

Occasion and intention

The project "Places for People" was launched in the summer of 2015, a summer marked in Austria not only by extreme heat but also, most memorably, by two tragic events which shocked large swathes of public opinion due to their extreme, unprecedented scale.

On 28th August 2015 a refrigerated lorry left abandoned on the Eastern Motorway close to the town of Parndorf in Burgenland was found to contain the corpses of 71 people who had been crammed together in searing heat and, apparently, died a harrowing death from asphyxiation. These victims of people traffickers were largely men but, also, women and children from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Around two weeks earlier, Amnesty International had published a report about the situation of refugees in the Initial Reception Centre at Traiskirchen to the south of Vienna which criticised the centre's massive overcrowding and inadequate medical, social and sanitary provision. As the centre's capacity was exhausted and the authorities had been unable to organise enough additional accommodation, around 1,500 people were having to sleep in the open air while others camped in fields outside the town.

A few weeks earlier, the core team had begun a series of regular working meetings at the office of Delugan Meissl Associated Architects in order to develop ideas for Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale. The news about the movement of refugees and the precarious situation of these fleeing people had always been present in these discussions but it was these two events, both of which had taken place less than 50 kilometres from this meeting room, that led to the decision at the beginning of September to put aside all other potential approaches and focus on this issue.

The conviction of the Biennale team that, in the light of these events, it was no longer possible to simply watch from the sidelines, was shared by a large and growing group of citizens, whose many-sided and energetic engagement led to the mobilisation of Austrian civil society on a virtually unprecedented scale.

In view of the conditions in Traiskirchen and in other emergency shelters, the members of the team felt called upon to do something, not only as private individuals but also in their professional roles as architects and curators of an architecture biennale. Hence, a project was immediately set in motion which sought to make constructive use of the know-how of selected Austrian architects, the prestige and production budget of the Biennale and the support of sponsors in order to adapt vacant or partly vacant buildings in Vienna with the help of architectural resources and with the aim of offering people dignified temporary accommodation and care.

Objectives and methods

The chosen approach was deliberately "hands-on", practical, pragmatic and very decidedly not socio-romantic, given that the declared objective of the project from the very beginning was the concrete improvement of the living conditions of people who had fled to Austria. This decision led firstly to a very welcome shift of focus from Venice to Vienna, from the context of an international cultural event and the artificiality of the exhibition situation to real locations in Vienna, from the meta-level to the everyday, from the position of someone commissioned to produce a Biennale contribution to that of a client with concrete building projects and, finally, from the presentation of exhibits and end results to the working and production processes which precede them.

Photo: Architekt Peternell, Visualisation grafisches Büro

"Places for People" is primarily inspired by the simple, classical or, even, traditional notion that the elementary roles and constituent characteristics of architecture include the protection of people and the creation of humane living spaces and the basic conditions for a functioning communal life. However familiar, obvious or even outdated this assertion may appear, current developments lend it a new potency: how can one still speak legitimately of "Places for People" in an age of mass mobility and mass migration in which increasing numbers of people are switching locations – voluntarily or otherwise – or even abandoning their homes completely? Is the compact relationship between these two terms still valid or has it been replaced by a looser, more temporary arrangement? Given the scale of globalisation and digitalisation can one still legitimately regard people as place-centred beings? How can architecture create "Places for People" when these people spend more and more time moving in virtual worlds?

This background also leads to the inevitable question of whether the self-imposed objective of employing architectural resources to improve the living conditions of refugees is justified or, indeed, achievable. For this reason alone, the project has been driven from the very start by a spirit of experimentation – a spirit which also, quite consciously, accepts the risk of failure.

From the point of view of the curators, the basic question of what architecture can meaningfully contribute in times of crisis and emergency was best answered not generally but specifically, in the form of concrete projects, measures and interventions. This scepticism regarding universal solutions in such highly complex and conflict-ridden contexts was another reason for the selection and commissioning of two architectural teams and a design studio, all Vienna-based, to develop specific concepts for three intentionally contrasting contexts.

Fully conscious of the limitations of such a Biennale contribution, the intention was not only to help as many people as possible but also to encourage a certain pluralism of methods and ideas including, naturally, thoughts about scalability and the wider applicability of each approach.

Selection and approaches

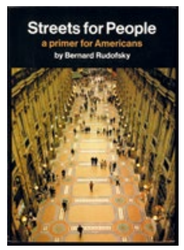
The selection of the three teams was guided both by this intention and by such practical and pragmatic criteria as experience, commitment and resilience.

The first discussions with Caramel Architekten, EOOS and the next ENTERprise all took place within 24 hours of an initial contact and all three teams unhesitatingly confirmed their readiness to get involved, despite the then very sketchy outlines of the project. In order to be able to dedicate as much of the available budget as possible to the project it was also agreed that all the independent architecture, design, media and cultural offices directly involved in "Places for People" would provide their services not at their usual rates but on a cost-only basis. All participants were prepared to accept this considerable extra expenditure as the price of their social commitment.

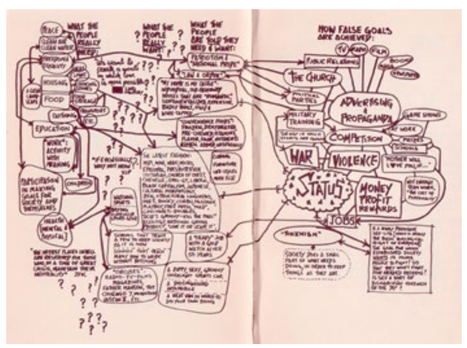
However, while these three offices could be convinced very quickly to participate in the project, finding the right buildings and the other important cooperation partners took much longer. There were weeks of discussions with statutory authorities, government agencies and private investors. Potential locations were visited, cost estimates and needs analyses drawn up and initial concepts developed for buildings which eventually turned out to be unavailable for bureaucratic, economic, contractual or other reasons. This lengthy process was very similar to that being experienced at the same time by many other representatives of civil society. But there was also progress: in particular, the crucial agreement of a process of cooperation with Caritas Österreich which ensured the long-term support of the three pilot projects.

Finally, not only the choice of the three buildings but also such complex issues as the financing, form and duration of the interventions and the type of care that they would provide were confirmed. From this moment, the three offices consulted intensively with each other and with the curatorial team and worked closely with Caritas' various experts to develop the specific concepts which are being exhibited in Venice and presented in detail in this newspaper.

PLACES FOR PEOPLE IS PRIMARILY INSPIRED BY THE SIMPLE, CLASSICAL OR, EVEN, TRADITIONAL NOTION THAT THE ELEMENTARY ROLES AND CONSTITUENT CHARACTERISTICS OF ARCHITECTURE INCLUDE THE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AND THE CREATION OF HUMANE LIVING SPACES AND THE BASIC CONDITIONS FOR A FUNCTIONING COMMUNAL LIFE.



Bernard Rudofsky, Streets for People. A primer for Americans, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y. 1969, 26.5 x 19 cm



Part of the flowchart illustration at the end of: Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, Victor Papanek, Bantam Books, Toronto/New York/London 1973

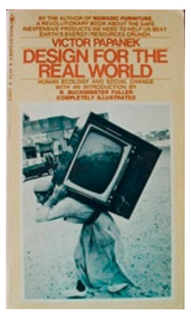
Originally published by Albert Bonniers Förlag AB, Stockholm 1970

The city and the public realm

The strategies, focuses and measures selected for the three interventions - and the results achieved – vary markedly in a number of ways but also exhibit important similarities. The principal common feature is that each of the interventions was developed in cooperation with the people affected - the residents - although the nature and scale of this participation was different in each case.

A further similarity is represented the fact that, for all their specificity, the individual measures are also part of a broader context provided by the building and, beyond this, the city. From their shared starting point of creating humane temporary living places for refugees and for others in a precarious situation, all three interventions developed proposals for alternative, innovative and dynamic ways of using and shaping cities. While the three projects create, as required, real places for real, individual people, they also provide a concrete contribution to the wider discussion of such issues as new and intermediate use, the activation of vacant property, densification, the opening up

Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, Bantam Books, Toronto/New York/London 1973



Originally published by Albert Bonniers Förlag AB, Stockholm 1970

of public space, new forms of living and working and, not least, the reinvention of social housing, a field in which Vienna can point to both an impressive legacy and a wealth of high-quality examples.

The extent to which the city is central to "Places for People" is also demonstrated by the title itself which was inspired by Bernard Rudofsky's book "Streets for People" and by its passionate plea for a more humane urbanity and for the cultivation of the public realm. The Austrian-American architect, designer, author and exhibition curator (1905-1988) devoted his life and work to travel as a result of which he also experienced involuntary exile. After focussing on an examination of such elementary aspects of life as eating, sleeping, sitting, lying and washing, his writings, buildings and exhibitions ask how these needs can be met in a humane way and what role architecture can play in this process. Rudofsky based his observations on his analysis of anonymous architecture and everyday practices, also in the Arab World. His famous dictum, that what we need is less a new way of building than a new way of living, is a call for a shift of emphasis from the design of materials to the design of relationships – a call which, given today's many crises, has now gained a particular meaning in architecture and, hence, increased political significance, under the rallying cry "social turn". The same goals drive the work of the Austrian-American designer Victor Papanek (1923 -1998) who demanded and, indeed, set in motion a similar paradigm change in the field of design. Given the inspiration which the life and work of these two cosmopolitan emigrants from Austria provided for the project "Places for People", it seems appropriate that Josef Hoffmann's Austrian pavilion provides the setting in which we can celebrate the continuing influence of two visionary representatives of a socially-oriented and less object-centred Viennese modernist tradition.

Aesthetics and ethics

The results of "Places for People" are being unveiled to a broad international audience on the occasion of the opening of the 2016 Architecture Biennale, around eight months after the launch of the initiative. Basic information about the projects as well as the ideas behind them are being very deliberately presented in the form of an experiment in order to allow the public to arrive at its own conclusions about the extent to which they have met their objectives so far. At the same time, it is important to understand that this is no more than an intermediate report due to the fact that, far from being complete, all three projects are still ongoing.

In keeping with the installation retained from the 2015 Art Biennale a simple, three-part display ensemble has been developed which offers places for both the presentation of content and social interaction: A concrete platform in front of the pavilion can be used by visitors in a multitude of ways in the spirit of the programmatic title of Austria's contribution. The second display presents a selection of 20 photographs, in the form of takeaway posters, which feature the places and the people as well as the multiple interactions between architects and users, designers and residents. These are part of a comprehensive visual essay by the Austrian photographer Paul Kranzler who has accompanied the working process in Vienna over the course of the past five months. A third display to the rear of the pavilion presents the three interventions in more detail. Here, visitors can also help themselves to a copy of this free newspaper containing extensive information about the entire project.

THE ESSENCE AND STRUCTURE OF ETHICS AND AESTHETICS ENSURE THAT THESE ARE INDIVIDUAL, CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC ACTS WHICH DEMAND FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN EQUAL MEASURE.

The importance of architecture for a functioning, cohesive society – as claimed by "Places for People" - has been tested by harsh reality more than once during the implementation of the project. Quite in keeping with the overall initiative, a number of very different conclusions can be drawn.

In contrast with this, however, the current popular tendency to reduce this issue to a polarisation between the social and the aesthetic, the autonomous and the auxiliary dimensions of architecture, represents an over-simplification.

Aesthetics and ethics cannot be separated: these two spheres interact in such a way that neither aesthetic nor ethical decisions can be arrived at through the simple application of external rules. The essence and structure of ethics and aesthetics ensure that these are individual, creative and artistic acts which demand freedom and responsibility in equal measure.

These relationships and this room for manoeuvre are also central to these three interventions and, indeed, to the "Places for People" initiative as a whole.

Photo: Paul Kranzler

Ernst J. Fuchs on top of Kempelengasse 1

Humane dwellings in the urban fabric

Report

Martina Frühwirth / Anna Soucek

The staircase of the large shelter is full of life. People come and go and fire-doors slam shut while the omnipresent flip-flops provide the soundtrack of the building, accompanied by the cacophonous rattle of innumerable conversations on mobile phones. Young men lean against the walls of the corridor and crouch on the floor due to the lack of places to sit, the lack of alternatives. The windowless escape stair offers the best WLAN reception for the smartphones. A typical afternoon in a large shelter for asylum seekers in Vienna in the spring of 2016.

The responsible Austrian authorities were caught completely off their guard by the refugee crisis in summer 2015. Thousands of refugees – predominantly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan – had to sleep on station concourses and camp under the stars. Volunteers spent weeks providing emergency care. In the meantime, the majority of the refugees, estimated at around 600,000 people, have left Austria. For them, this was just one station on their journey. The minority has officially applied for asylum in Austria. Around 87,000 asylum seekers are currently living in the country. Unlike in African countries, refugees cannot be settled in the EU with a UN mandate, and this is the real challenge in Europe: The refugee crisis is happening in a highly-developed, highly-structured society. The tented cities which spring up in crisis situations around the world are unthinkable in Austria.

The windowless escape stair offers the best WLAN reception for the smartphones.

In the acute emergency situation, refugee accommodation was created in many different sorts of locations: in container settlements, hotels which had seen better days and empty student dormitories as well as private apartments and vacant office buildings – across Austria, there is a range of approaches to finding a solution but all share one objective: to ensure that no asylum seeker must sleep on the street while their application is being processed. The length of this asylum process is unknown. Asylum seekers don't know how long it will last, how long they will have to wait for the interview with the authorities in Austria and whether they will end up being granted asylum at all. It is not uncommon to have to wait for months or even years. During this period of waiting for this single, all-important interview, they live in so-called primary care. When speaking of refugee shelters which offer primary care (e.g. for as long as asylum claims are being processed), politicians speak very consciously about "accommodation", rather than "living space" because "living space" must be capable of providing more than just a roof over one's head and three meals a day. Primary care for refugees means, on the one hand, that the state is responsible for accommodating and feeding them but, on the other hand, that the asylum seekers are condemned to doing nothing because, for the duration of their application, asylum seekers have virtually no opportunity to seek work.

It is important to know this background to Austria's contribution to the Biennale because it enables one to understand the starting point of "Places for People": "Places for People" are exactly what three offices – two architectural and one design offices – have been developing in this exceptional situation which has been with us since the summer of 2015. In their designs they are attempting to get as near as possible to the idea of a basic right to living space, despite all the limitations of the context in which they are working.

The length of this asylum process is unknown.

Since April 2016, 400 asylum seekers have been living in the large shelter in Erdberg. Outside, in the urban realm, they are more or less invisible. The area is virtually devoid of pedestrians. Over the years, the district of Erdberg in the South-east of Vienna has experienced numerous transformations. From a poverty-stricken area – Erdberg was home to Vienna's last slum – to its connection to the City Centre. Erdberg underground station opened in 1991. Integration into the underground network promises an upgrade: the periphery is brought a little closer to the centre with St. Stephen's Cathedral now just seven minutes away. The motorway is within earshot, thousands of office-bound commuters sit in traffic jams while the cloverleaf junction draws taxis onto the airport motorway. The location embodies transit, representing the condition which the German architect and urban planner Thomas Sieverts described as a "non-place of overcoming space" in his book *Zwischenstadt* in 1997[1]. A dense row of office towers lines the underground tracks. In recent years more new office buildings have been completed. The latest office complex is called *Town Town* but, rather than revealing that these are office buildings, the façade design, with its French windows, has more to do with residential architecture. The huge office complex a few metres further away in which the refugees are accommodated today sends quite a different message. This is a huge administrative fortress, a monument to a bureaucracy which was remote from the people and belongs to another age.

Outside, in the urban realm, they are more or less invisible.

Part of the fortress still has an administrative use: The Federal Administrative Court works here, checking, amongst other things, asylum applications. For many years, customs officers were trained in the rest of the building. They used the basement for shooting and their classrooms were located a couple of floors higher up. Earlier, the trainees lived in the two-bed rooms which now accommodate refugees. Upon entering the building the challenge of accommodating several hundred people becomes clear straight away. Such a level of occupation was stretching everyone and everything to the limit – the carers, the residents and also the infrastructure.

1 Thomas Sieverts: Zwischenstadt. Zwischen Ort und Welt, Raum und Zeit, Stadt und Land. Vieweg, Braunschweig, 1997

Lotte Kristoferitsch, Hannes Stepic, Harald Gründl in EOOS's workshop

On our first visit Lotte Kristoferitsch collects us at the entrance. We are immediately struck by a penetrating, sweetish smell. A mixture of stuffy air, urine and disinfectant. The impressions rain down upon us. Too many, too different and, above all, too shameful for us to deal with so quickly. We finally arrive at EOOS' office. Lotte Kristoferitsch unlocks the door. At the centre of the room a large writing desk and a number of chairs. The yellow desktop is used as formwork for concrete walls on building sites. A printer sits on the floor and a coffee machine on the window sill. The atmosphere reminds us of site accommodation in a container. More wooden panels lean against the wall. In the next few weeks a lot will change in the building with the help of precisely these panels.

Such a level of occupation was stretching everyone and everything to the limit – the carers, the residents and also the infrastructure.

EOOS are product designers with many years of experience. Their designs can be found in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. Their re-interpretation of the "kitchen" as working space which is a return to the origins of the notion of the kitchen – as a workshop – has won them an international reputation. In Erdberg they are also focussing on the kitchen, not for reasons of design but because they see the proposed communal kitchens as a means of empowering the residents. The aid organisations are currently serving brought-in meals to all residents three times a day. The food from the caterers is decent and sufficient but, over time, this 'full-service' becomes a burden for the residents. According to Harald Gründl of EOOS: "They are somewhere they didn't choose to be and are getting something to eat that they also didn't choose. Their room for manoeuvre is reduced to zero. The simplest means of re-establishing this room for manoeuvre and, eventually, some sense of self-esteem, is enabling people to look after themselves." In the communal kitchen proposed by EOOS the residents should be able to cook for themselves and for others and establish contacts, form a community.

Three months before the opening of the Biennale the project has hit a snag. The building's infrastructure and the project's technical and organisational parameters have conspired to ensure that the only furniture that we find in the former IT room which is supposed to be being transformed into the communal kitchen is a prototype kitchen workbench. Black plastic mats occupy the place reserved for the hob. The fire alarms in the building have to be adapted so that they don't go off every time the pots in the kitchen give off steam. The kitchens need a high-voltage power supply, an extractor, a number of connections to the water supply and even an electronic door system that controls access to the communal kitchen – all this and more must somehow still be executed. Yet the designers are completely convinced that they will meet their goals and that the communal kitchen will eventually go into service[2].

2 Just before going to print the first of the three planned kitchens successfully started operating.

At the same time, hands-on work is going on all over the building: the residents are assembling small items of furniture in a workshop supervised by EOOS: small trolleys with room for a fridge and cooking pots, counters which will act as anchors and meeting points in the corridors and seating for the newly created WLAN zone. These are small interventions whose effect can be felt straight away: three weeks after the first visit the situation in the building is noticeably less stressful. The dark corridor which we visited last time when it was still the busy WLAN hotspot is empty. This hotspot is now located in a circulation area between two fire compartments which is much more pleasant for the people who spend time here. Daylight floods in through the windows while seats – simply built wooden boxes – line the walls. The residents have taken to the space. It is both amazing and upsetting how little is required to improve an unbearable situation.

Despite glaring deficiencies, the standard of the accommodation in Erdberg is comparatively good for a large shelter. Two residents share a room with an entrance space and a private bathroom with a shower and a WC. A large table stands in front of the window in the centre of the room. Wooden chairs, pinboards and storerooms are standard. The window can be opened – which isn't always the case due to the current safety standards. The Vienna Social Fund has rented the building for 15 years in the name of Vienna City Council. This long lease is surprising when one thinks how the prognosis of the number of refugees that we will have to support in the future change on a monthly basis. Peter Hacker, the Managing Director of the Vienna Social Fund, paints the big picture: "It is not as if we must use the facility to house refugees. That is why we accepted the deal. It is a building which is in a good condition and encourages one to develop exciting ideas about how it can be changed. It could become a residential building – for assisted living, first of all for refugee families, but maybe also for people who have nothing whatsoever to do with refugees such as formerly homeless Viennese whom we could also accommodate here."

The fortress-like character of the architecture also has its positive side: the noise of the surroundings is perfectly screened off.

The orientation of some rooms towards the internal courtyard frees up the view from others. The monotone façade is not exactly edifying but at least it is calm. The fortress-like character of the architecture also has its positive side: the noise of the surroundings is perfectly screened off. The courtyard is quiet and its floor surface undeveloped. But this will soon change because this unused space is simply too valuable, especially given that the building has so little communal space. The courtyard will house something which is becoming increasingly popular in urban residential complexes: community gardening with raised beds as a community-building measure. In late March, Lotte Kristoferitsch is – again – fighting against time: She is stuck to the telephone, looking for sponsors for the necessary substrate because the first shoots must be planted soon if they are to bear fruit.

The main building is another fortress. A corporate HQ and certainly not a residential complex.

The area around the second "Places for People" accommodation is very different from the office district in Erdberg. Reumannplatz in Vienna's 10th district, close to Vienna's Central Station, buzzes with urban life. The background noise is intense. If you leave Reumannplatz and travel east this bustle dies down. There are small shops, greengrocers and hairdressers, betting shops and takeaways which give off the aroma of old cooking oil. The street is edged by late nineteenth century tenement blocks and a series of large housing estates from the 1980s. A few metres further on Quellenstrasse peters out as a stunted dead-end below the supports of a motorway junction, only prevented from joining the adjacent railway tracks by some huge concrete blocks.

Here, a huge, fenced-off plot of land is occupied by a partially vacant office complex from the 1980s. The building, which is being addressing by the architectural office the next ENTERprise in the context of the Biennale, was the headquarters of the technology company Siemens for many years. A high fence made of wide metal bars signals that the site is private and not to be entered. The main building is another fortress. A corporate HQ and certainly not a residential complex.

The tabloids report almost daily about the fears and misgivings of the people of the city.

The future refugee accommodation – in April 2016 the project is still being planned – is on the edge of a district with a high immigrant population. Favoriten, the 10th district in the South of Vienna, was traditionally a "red" district – a stronghold of the workers' party the SPÖ, not least because of the many municipal housing estates which can be found here. The district's political power structure has changed in recent years. At the last election for district representatives in October 2015, the right-wing populist FPÖ was the second strongest party. In the spring of 2016, while the project by the next ENTERprise was taking form, the FPÖ was protesting loudly against another project for refugee accommodation in Vienna. The tabloids report almost daily about the fears and misgivings of the people of the city. This makes the operators of refugee accommodation cautious about future projects. The position in March 2016 was that no information was to be made public until the support of the district authorities had been officially confirmed. At this point those involved had already been working on the project for months.

The architects of the next ENTERprise understand that the task could set an example for future forms of living which create spaces for action and communication for their users: what could urban living look like in cities in which space is short and yet offices are standing empty? "We want to use the current situation to address the vision of the city", declares Marie-Therese Harnoncourt of the next ENTERprise, "and we see this location as a hybrid urban building block, as a prototype for a special residential form at the interface between office, event and temporary living which also works in external spaces. The city must offer such possibilities because society is constantly under pressure to become more mobile and more flexible." The architects' objective is to create an urban building block for a dynamic city and the room-in-room approach chosen in this project for achieving this end is to accommodate not just refugees but also students – an experimental residential community involving two segments of the population that could just work. This shouldn't be one large unit but a number of residential communities with a total of 80 to 140 residents, of whom half are asylum seekers and half students.

Team meeting with the next ENTERprise

Around a dozen people involved in the project meet at the end of February in a former office on the fourth floor in order to review the design work carried out so far. Craftsmen have assembled the prefabricated booths – the prototypes of experimental living modules – in just two hours. While the guests inspect these, trying sitting in them and opening and closing the screens, the last screws are tightened. The presentation of the prototypes focuses on completely practical questions: the size of the wardrobe, the width of the seating bench, the cost of the hinges and angles which, as this is a prototype, are still custom-made, the need for a pinboard and, finally, the material – no detail is so insignificant that it is not critically questioned. Thomas Levenitschnig, the owner of the building, raises the issue of cost. At what point does the investment cost of over 5,000 euros per module become economical? Couldn't one just buy bunks and throw up plasterboard walls to create separate sleeping places? Clemens Foschi of Caritas argues that as the modules are reusable they are more cost-effective than temporary dividers could ever be. Given the tight timetable there is also discussion of what will be available for display at the Biennale. The modules will have to be photographed in good time – and *in use* insists the Biennale Commissioner Elke Delugan-Meissl.

This shouldn't be one large unit but a number of residential communities with a total of 80 to 140 residents.

The fact that the property developer Thomas Levenitschnig plays such a part in the discussion and in the whole development process – and not just in the questions of cost which interest him as the co-financier of the the next ENTERprise project – is not self-evident. His interest is not focused on the commercial exploitation of the object. He wants a solution which upgrades the residential environment. And a solution which facilitates integration – the integration of the refugees into their social context but also the integration of the building and its residents into their urban context – with the aim of creating added value for the neighbouring population.

The presentation of the prototypes focuses on completely practical questions.

At the end of March work starts on the external areas: rampantly growing bushes and undergrowth are removed from the slopes. *Cotoneaster dammeri* – the modest ground-covering plant was a standard component of planting schemes in the 1980s. Two gardeners remove the "rat's nests" from the sloping banks of the site to create space for a promenade. The wooden promenade with broad steps for sitting and viewing platforms should offer an attractive pedestrian link with Kempelengasse.

The opening up of the site is a liability issue. Children have far too little space for playing in the vicinity. They play football on the parking deck on the railway tracks. This means that children from the neighbourhood will be the first to take possession of the newly opened garden. The thought of the potentially dangerous corners of the large site where children can move unsupervised makes the investor's employees very uncomfortable. And yet, the benefits offered by this opening up process to the new urban district are so great that the investor is going to push it through.

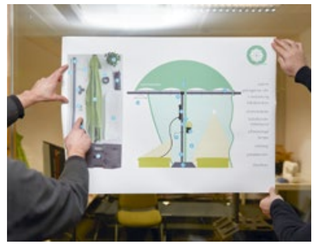
This means that children from the neighbourhood will be the first to take possession of the newly opened garden.

The plan for the design of the external areas is presented at the next regular meeting in the neighbouring guesthouse. It has suffered slightly in a hailstorm. It disappears below a timetable unfurled by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt of the next ENTERprise. The investor is pushing for a final plan which will allow him to obtain offers from craftspeople and suppliers. People begin to haggle over deadlines. Together, they count backwards, two weeks, three weeks. No one questions the fact that the design must be fixed so that the project can be implemented by the end of May. There is no time for intellectual games and excessive debate and every meeting must be used efficiently. Things have to advance. The lunchtime meeting highlights the "simultaneity" with which these different issues are being - must be – driven forwards. At the end of March the prototypes for the residential communities with the students have developed further but the client demands concrete calculations with which he can work: How much timber will be required for the promenade? The regular meeting raises more questions than can be answered ad hoc. After one and a half hours everyone around the table has the same amount of information.

The requirements for the third refugee accommodation developed in the context of the Biennale are completely different: The rental agreement for the shelter in Pfeiffergasse is extremely short – initially just until April 2016. Pfeiffergasse is located centrally, surrounded by well-kept residential buildings from various historical periods. Several underground stations and bus and tram stops are just a few minutes away and the area also has a number of parks. As we turn into Pfeiffergasse the neighbourhood seems pleasant. A couple of young people stand smoking in front of the entrance and children are playing on the car-free road. Some girls are climbing on an orange rubbish skip and calling other children whose smiling faces emerge from windows in the building. A young man lifts the children friendly but firmly from the skip. He presents himself as Fayad Mulla-Khalil, the head of the Pfeiffergasse emergency shelter. He guides us through the building. We take the stairs to the upper levels. The lift isn't working today. The day before there was an incident with a washing machine and the basement was briefly flooded.

"When we get the call that the building has to be cleared we take everything down, throw it in a lorry and put it up again in the next building. And that's it!"

In the first floor we meet Günter Katherl of the Vienna architectural office Caramel Architekten. "The objective here was to create cheap and quick structures in the building which can be erected as rapidly as they can be dismantled. When we get the call that the building has to be cleared we take everything down, throw it in a lorry and put it up again in the next building. And that's it!" is how he describes the starting point. Everything must be done very quickly, because people want to see results before the former office has to be cleared and used in another way. Or be vacant again. The building in Pfeiffergasse dates from the 1990s. It was the headquarters of an IT company but then the company moved to a new location and the office has been empty ever since. Caritas has now been renting the manage-



Draft tool-set by Caramel, Haus Pfeiffergasse

ably sized five storey office building as an emergency shelter for refugees since November 2015. Around 300 people live in the whole building, mostly families and single men. All the residents have applied for asylum in Austria. Some have already had their first interview and others will do so in the next days, weeks.

Most residents here are living in former open-plan offices. Adults – many of whom are neither related to nor even know each other – share rooms with six, ten, twelve people. "The only question here was how to adapt the spaces to make them more habitable as quickly as possible," says Günter Katherl, "personalise them and create some privacy. How can we separate the individual sleeping spaces so that each person has their own cell that they can shape a little, build, move into and soon afterwards, when they move out, take with them?"

Caramel Architekten found a solution that is as simple as it is satisfying. Parasols – everyday models from the garden centre – provide the structure. Red, yellow and green non-flammable fabrics are then hung from the parasols, dividing the room into small units and creating privacy. The individual parasols are connected by plastic pipes from which further panels of fabric are hung to create ancillary spaces. All the provisional walls and doors in the open-plan offices are made out of these strips of fabric. Small objects can be hung from the struts of the parasol and the basic equipment provided by Caramel includes a plant in a plastic pot and a small light. Because the rule in the open-plan office dormitory is lights off at 22:00 and lights on again at 5:00. For everyone. The parasols are erected quickly without constructional expertise – a couple of poles must be fixed together, the parasol opened out and the fabric hung using cable ties. A set of instructions explains the few manual steps.

Günter Katherl leads us into a former open-plan office. The family which had made this so homely has recently moved to another shelter. Animal pictures hang on the wall alongside a plastic bottle bearing a name and full of left-over cable ties: an improvised doorbell which meant that visitors didn't have to burst in without knocking. Because there is no door here on which one could knock. The way in which this family arranged its space and accepted and developed the architect's ideas is described by Günter Katherl as ideal: "Even though it was very cramped, with two beds here and three more over here, it was like a smart hotel room. The family had very quickly created its own small residence. We couldn't have done it better ourselves! And it showed us that our idea was a good one."

Their parasol-module for delimited sleeping areas in dormitories should also be used elsewhere, says Günter Katherl: "Yes, after Caritas had seen that this worked so well they very quickly asked us if we could do the same in several other buildings and we answered, "Yes, we'll do them all!" Yet, if the architect had his way, the idea which was only created for this one location should actually develop its own momentum. "Because we saw that it is really very stressful and said to ourselves, "let's just get this building ready and then see what happens."

The family had very quickly created its own small residence. We couldn't have done it better ourselves!

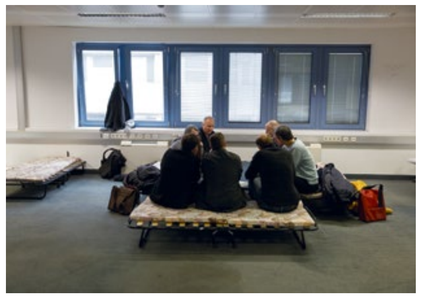
Giving the residents of the Pfeiffergasse shelter a task of their own to perform was a major priority of Caramel Architekten. Hence, they included the residents in the production of the parasol stations and spatial dividers – without payment but with such small privileges as access to the sewing room and, hence, the opportunity to retreat to the bright room with its three sewing machines and tools and to be productive. Because only the seamstresses were given the key to the sewing room. "The women really enjoyed being needed," explained the architect. "There was one woman who, previously, only lay morosely in bed. Now you can see her racing around with a smile – she has found meaning in her life again simply because we gave her a sewing machine and loads of fabric and asked for her help – that really had quite an effect!"

German, English and Farsi are spoken. There are occasional small misunderstandings but work progresses.

On a Monday at the end of February 2016 the last room should finally be equipped with parasols, naturally, just for those who want them. "Are the 15 people now ready?" asks Günter Katherl. Fayad Mulla-Khalil goes back into the room and speaks with the men. Then work can start. A young woman and a young man, employees of Caramel Architekten, ask the residents who are standing around what they are called, give them parasol stands, pipes and cable ties and energetically organise them for the next phase of work. German, English and Farsi are spoken. There are occasional small misunderstandings but work progresses. Some men withdraw from the process and watch but others throw themselves into the task. It could be that the sudden blossoming commitment has something to do with the many observers. Besides us there is another journalist and a camera team. Word must have got out that this is the last working session. The refugee accommodation is under observation, even when no camera team is present.

The three teams are developing different approaches to finding a solution in the three locations but the conclusion is that all three projects imply the same questions.

Team members of Caramel Architekten and Caritas at Haus Pfeiffergasse



There have neither been complaints from neighbours nor police activity, says Fayad Mulla-Khalil, head of the emergency shelter. They are clearly careful not to attract negative attention in the locality: "and we are also careful to ensure that the people look after the b uilding and that there is no rubbish in front of it. The residents clean outside every day."

On a further visit a couple of weeks later the lawn in front of the house and next to the busy road is also clean. Caritas employees and residents are busy building benches out of pallets. Circular areas of soil are set to become plant beds. This is also an initiative of Caramel Architekten, as is the planned forecourt with seating which is still awaiting approval. The optimism of the architects is intact, without doubt also as a result of the progress of the past few weeks.

The three teams are developing different approaches to finding a solution in the three locations but the conclusion is that all three projects imply the same questions: How can temporary accommodation be equipped with an identity? How can people be empowered to act on their own initiative? How can privacy be created?

Lenka Reinerová, the last of the great German-speaking Prague writers, who herself spent many years as a refugee, wrote in her book *At home in Prague – and sometimes somewhere else* [1]: "Can we even speak of living in accommodation which is forced upon someone? Does the bird in the brightly polished cage in the brightly polished kitchen live? Does the lion in the perfectly equipped and dimensioned enclosure in the zoo live? Can you live if your natural freedom has been taken away? Sometimes you have to whether you want to or not. A canary isn't in a position to think about this and it must be difficult for lions too. But people are apparently destined to address such questions. And in certain circumstances this can be a really difficult task." A task that the architects and designers of EOOS, Caramel Architekten and the next ENTERprise have set themselves.

1 Lenka Reinerová: *Zu Hause in Prag – manchmal auch anderswo. Erzählungen.* Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin 2000

Cities on the move

Essay

Lutz Musner

Vienna owes its astonishing career as a leading European destination for city and congress tourism[1] to the fact that its economic, political and cultural players have succeeded in defining Vienna's urban culture not as a side-effect of the urban way of life or as one factor of many but as the city's own, characterological trademark. Not, however, that this momentous transformation, which has largely taken place during the past four decades, has come from nowhere.

Rather, it has much more to do with layers of historical sediment which built up during the course of the 20th century. Throughout this period, self-images of Vienna as a city of music and theatre, of architecture and literature, as a Baroque city and, not least, as a city with a harmonious and humane everyday culture were produced in a range of contemporary and political contexts, perpetuated by the media and constantly re-combined into new collages.

Extract from a plan of Venice, 1500
Jacopo de' Barbari – as used as an illustration by Bernard Rudofsky in "Streets for People"

City politics was largely about identity; a symbolically highly-charged project of defining a distinct self-image as an alternative to the alien, to the other or, more specifically, to Vienna's challengers in the competition between cities. Around 1900, under Mayor Karl Lueger, the image of a historically significant, German and patriarchal 'father-city' was established as a contrast to the ethnic plurality of the monarchy and expressed via the topos of a Germanically-coded "city of music". During the Corporative State (1934–38) this was replaced by the image of a romantically transfigured Vienna with its own Austrian and, distinctly, non-German identity which traced its exclusivity back to the traditions of Catholicism and the Baroque. Then, in the 1980s, there followed what has so far proved to be the most consequential iconisation of fin-de-siècle Vienna as the artistic, literary and intellectual birthplace of Modernism per se.

These images were and still are selective representations of urban life. In the picturesque contexts of Biedermeier clichés about the cosy Vienna of waltzes and wine-gardens, of the bourgeois historicist representational culture of the late nineteenth-century, of baroque architectural settings and of a colourful panorama of illustrious Viennese personalities – from demure young girls and dubious courtiers to the hallowed Emperor Franz-Joseph himself – the less attractive aspects of the city's history have been consistently removed. And, as can be seen in the current exhibition about the Emperor, such clichés remain the stuff of urban marketing today.[2]

Neither the misery of working-class life in late-nineteenth century Vienna nor the expulsion and murder of the Jews under the Nazis nor even the repeated marginalisation of precisely that enlightened intelligentsia whose contributions to modernism and the avant-garde are so enthusiastically claimed as its own achievement are central to Vienna's urban narrative.

City politics was largely about identity; a symbolically highly-charged project of defining a distinct self-image as an alternative to the alien, to the other or, more specifically, to Vienna's challengers in the competition between cities.

The latest urban research also does nothing to overturn this. Upheavals and contradictions in the city's development are sacrificed in the name of a harmonious representational logic which has much the same effect as a daguerreotype. The history of the city is presented as a cosily sentimental mixture of loss, decadence and nostalgia, rid of its traumatic, unsettling and resistant elements.

Cultural scientists describe the genesis of such an effective and symbolic image of a city as the city's 'habitus'. The Berlin urban ethnographer Rolf Lindner has pointed out that, rather than reacting indiscriminately to exogenous influences and economic competition, cities tend to do so in their own characteristic way, adopting what could be called a partisan position regarding these external challenges and triggering what for them is a typical dialectic of continuity and transformation, persistence and change. This partisan position is rooted in cultural tendencies which, derived from the history of the city and the formative sectors of its economy, are quasi-symbolic translations of the social conditions which define an urban ensemble and constitute the city's habitus. This habitus manifests itself in distinct local practices: in the priorities of the municipal budget and the sums given out for welfare, health, culture and infrastructure. It manifests itself in urban planning, in the use of land, in attitudes to the protection of historic buildings and the historic centre, in the building regulations and in the architectural approach to cityscape. And it also manifests itself in the investment policy of the municipal authorities – in the question of which innovative projects are financed and, consequently, which signals are sent out regarding the city's economic future. The habitus of a city is neither abstract nor purely discursive. Rather, it is an organising logic which repeatedly surfaces in debates, legal regulations, media reactions and the decisions of citizens and politicians. It functions like a tribunal mediating between tradition and current challenges, between the past and the present. It expresses the manifold interdependencies between the parameters of a city – geography, climate, demography, economy and politics – and its wider political, economic and cultural context (the state, the economy and globalisation).

1 According to the Mercer Study 2015 Vienna is the city with the highest quality of life worldwide. With Zurich (2nd) and Munich (4th) there are just two more European cities in the top five.

2 Franz-Joseph: Zum 100. Todestag des Kaisers. An exhibition in four locations 16.3. - 27.11.2016

Jacopo de' Barbari, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Photo: Rudolf Berger

Plan of Venice from above, 1500, large engraving (1.37 x 2.84 m)

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The habitus of a city works like an underlying structure which is conveyed by history and historical memory, corresponds with an economics anchored in collective mentalities, skills, preferences and predispositions, represents the cultural stereotype of a city via a specific imaginaire and influences the emergence of landscapes of taste which articulate the city's symbolic capital in cultural-geographic terms. The habitus of a city is neither closed nor holistic, but an open constellation of characteristics which can evolve, within limits, as a result of ecological, economic, technical and social transformations or, even, be lost completely. Unlike the Bourdieuesque interpretation, the notion of habitus used here refers not to characteristics which have been incorporated or quasi-merged into the "body" of the city but, rather, to its initially abstract, singular nature which is primarily conveyed by its lifestyles, images, culturally transformed geographies and the idiosyncrasies of its representation and material culture and which is, therefore, "biographical" and formative. The habitus of the city - its singular constellation of representations, narratives and images – is constantly contested; highlighted and challenged by a range of social, cultural and political groups and players. Its depth, its historical long-term effect and its ability to resist external impositions and manipulations can be seen in the largely unsuccessful attempts to arbitrarily alter the self-image of a city which has grown over time and gained visual form. In this way, we can also speak about the "habitus of Vienna" – an urban "biography" which influences the development of the city and steers this in certain directions.

But equally integral to the habitus of Vienna is the city's long and largely successful history of immigration. First came the poor rural workers from Bohemia and Moravia and the Jewish grandfathers of Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler and Joseph Roth from Brody in Eastern Galicia and later, around the end of the First World War, many Jews from Eastern Europe, forced to flee persecution and pogroms. If today's "refugee crisis" is politically instrumentalized and xenophobia is in the air, the city is forgetting this long, successful history of immigration. Instead of recalling what immigrants have done for the city in terms of innovation, economic growth and scientific and artistic excellence, talk is again turning to isolation.

Most statements by politicians about the refugee issue have been, to put it mildly, miserable. As usual, H. C. Strache is playing a leading role. One only has to recall the *Daham statt Islam* ('At home instead of Islam') campaign poster for the 2006 General Election and the FPÖ's current rhetoric about 'down-to-earthness', 'homeland' and exclusive social rights for local people. But Austria and Europe cannot isolate themselves. Unfortunately, also integral to the habitus of Vienna is its history of xenophobia, the fear of strangers, which is being updated right now. The players, mostly men, are known around the city. Naming them here would unnecessarily boost not only their kudos but also their sinister interests.

But what does this mean today, not just in Austria but also across the European Union? What we are experiencing today is not just the same old xenophobia but something new. Slogans heard not just in Eastern European member states such as Poland and Hungary, but also in older ones: talk of a Europe of the nations, a Europe of the regions, a Europe of the cities and, in Austria, of a Europe of the mountain pastures and natural beauties. The fact that such slogans are economic and cultural nonsense plays no role in the political debate. In truth, this debate is about something completely different because it is being dictated by many people's fears. So what is the debate? It is the usual story: the rumour mill in the pub is working again full time. And its message? Close the borders – ideally using soldiers and the police.

The habitus of a city is neither abstract nor purely discursive. Rather, it is an organising logic which repeatedly surfaces in debates, legal regulations, media reactions and the decisions of citizens and politicians.

In such unspeakable times the debate always ends up producing "Valium" for a general population riven with fear. Aid organisations can put out as many warnings as they wish but, as long as the population doesn't understand the opportunities represented by immigration, these will have no effect. But we shouldn't be malicious about or gloat at the politicians who are responsible for this situation. History will be their judge and one day some may even understand that it was their opportunistic political reaction to the "refugee crisis" that sounded the death knell for the European Union.

What is a European city?

In the urban debate one often hears the notion that nothing is currently happening in cities apart from the permanent repetition of one and the same thing. And this repetition – this monotone formation of an artificial landscape of sameness lacking in any "hermeneutical depth" – is understood, not least, as a symptom of the fact that societies have outlived the utopian dream and are now creating (universal) global cities which are strangely flat, monotonous and homogenous without, in truth, being able to claim any sort of new universality. Boris Groys sees this permanent repetition of uniformity and monotony as the main characteristic of current urbanity:

"On the other hand, today's art and architecture is spreading globally without any such reduction to the essential or universal (as in the case of Classical Modernism, author's note). The opportunities of global distribution have rendered obsolete the traditional demand for universal form or content. Universality of thought is replaced by the universal media-led distribution of every local form. As a result, today's observer is constantly confronted with the same urban context without, at the same time, being able to say whether the formal nature of this context is, in any sense, 'universal'."[3]

Although the quotation from Boris Groys dates from the early 2000s it is still valid. The city that he describes as having become abstract and banal – and which many intellectuals continue to describe today – is that generalised form of dense socialisation in a tight space which results from the process of globalisation. The sensory realisation that, firstly, airports, railway stations, city centres, shopping centres, hotels and restaurants increasingly resemble each other and that, secondly, post-romantic (e.g. mass-) tourism produces homogeneous consumer and perceptual spaces in every corner of the globe, is leading to the declaration of the death of both the historical and the modern city. The city that is described by intellectuals in this way is not the real city, which would indeed be banal enough, but that imagined city, in which cultural Disneyfication, economic Post-Fordism and architectural Postmodernism merge into a concrete generality which can release a scarily-indifferent fear of an entropic, post-utopian and post-political afterlife.

The argument is that the difference between the global and the local is disappearing and compelling the immobile to adopt the characteristics and sensitivities of the mobile or, more precisely, compelling natives to anticipate the expectations of welcome outsiders by aligning their external appearance with the consumption needs of tourists. The result, it is claimed, is that geographies will become fluid and the boundaries between the self and the other will disappear as both are transformed into different "aggregate states" of one and the same cycle of consumption. As a result, we are all sometimes tourists and all sometimes natives – each of us as much a subject as an object of a thoroughly thought-through machine which eradicates contingency in the interests of uniformity as it creates the generalised city.

Thus, if one believes this diagnosis, major cities have no more inherent creative energy. Their utopian, democratic and revolutionary potential and collective political memories are exhausted.

Given that everything is thus in motion and that globalisation appears to equate to some sort of "global ether" which sweeps people, things, symbols and images along in its wake with no regard for differences, the implied result is the disappearance of those demarcations which have defined the historical European city. Neither otherness nor the exotic remain and the secretive aura that poets and writers have always lent to historical cities disintegrates under the attack of globally active corporations which replace historically evolved symbols with indifferent corporate logos. But this is not just about what we conventionally understand as the historical city. Rather, globalisation is conceived as such a radical instrument of urban transformation that it seems to render even the modern city historical or, in other words, obsolete.

Thus, if one believes this diagnosis, major cities have no more inherent creative energy. Their utopian, democratic and revolutionary potential and collective political memories are exhausted. There is criticism not only of processes of gentrification but also of the lack of intellectual input which should be coming from the universities and of the so-called "star-architects", who do more for the image of a city than for its inhabitants. This criticism may well exist, but it changes little.

The assertion of the totality of consumption brings with it the declaration of the end of diversity. The large city is neither a distinct entity in itself nor one which can be differentiated from its suburban or rural hinterland. In this way it is simply no longer a specific place capable of evoking new ways of living but merely a "global village". This vast space which, hence, is no longer a city is devised and propagated as a zone with diffuse boundaries in which residing and travelling, remaining and moving have become one and the difference between residents and visitors has been removed.

But equally integral to the habitus of Vienna is the city's long and largely successful history of immigration.

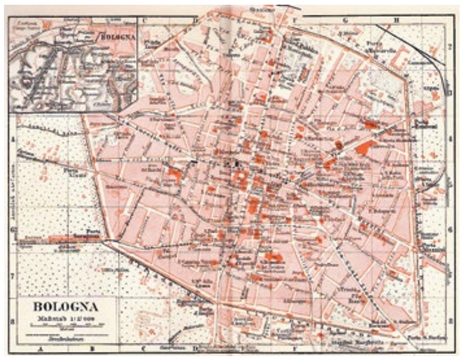
The arguments that seek to support this hypothesis of an urban paradigm change are strikingly one-sided. On the one hand we have, naturally, globalisation in all its many forms, although this argument is mostly reduced to the common denominator that radical changes such as the electronic circulation of capital, information, goods and services, the ultra-fast mobility of people and a new perception of both time and space are resulting in a compression of time-space which is neutralising differences between the international and the regional and between places and distances. On the other hand, the standardisation of consumer goods, consumer landscapes and consumer habits are cited as an indicator of the homogenisation of space, behaviour and culture. But Vienna itself can also offer such phenomena, as demonstrated by a glimpse of such recently completed major projects near to the city centre as the "Wien Mitte" station, office and shopping complex or the transformation of the Western Station into the "BahnhofCity Wien West".

Addressing the notion of the "European City", the prominent urban researcher Walter Siebel has written succinctly: "presence of history."

The homogenised, abstract "city" which emerges from such an analysis lacks all the attributes once ascribed to it by modernist discourse: it is neither a place of the ephemeral, fragmentary and contingent, nor is it able to represent density, heterogeneity and scale or evoke those unsettling memories which bear the potential for insight. Rather, it is a space which is cleansed of such attributes and can be freely stretched, manipulated and used. Yet, in this sense, the post-modern city of such all-pervading consumerism and tourism is nothing other than the negation of space and, as such, not only the radicalisation of the economy via the mechanisation and colonisation of space but, at the same time, the negation of the historical European city.

Addressing the notion of the "European City", the prominent urban researcher Walter Siebel has written succinctly of the presence of history. The fact that this very factor has led to European cities becoming memories cast in stone has nothing to do with their age – there are much older cities elsewhere. The continuous reference to previous ages in the everyday life of city dwellers has much more to do with social factors: The European city is the cradle of modern society. In strolling through a European city, today's citizen can assure himself of his own history. The pre-modern cities of antiquity or in other parts of the world were places of visible authority and religious cults. This is why, unlike in today's Europe, there is no economically or politically influential class in such cities seeking to preserve its own historical identity by retaining the city's historical substance – just look at Beijing and Shanghai. Hope of emancipation: All urban life starts as an attempt to escape the whims of nature, the effects of changing climate and weather. The first city dwell-

3 Boris Groys, Unsere Welt auf Reisen, Die Zeit, No. 29, 11th July 2002, p.35.



Example for the concept of the ideal European city

Plan of Bologna. Theodor Oppel-Falk, "Städtebilder". Meyers Reisebücher, Leipzig 1907

ers were the first people who no longer had to confront uncultivated nature in order to guarantee their own survival. This is why European urban life since the Enlightenment is intrinsically linked with the oldest human utopia, the belief in a realm of freedom far from the dictates of brutal necessity – as Karl Marx defined the release from the tyranny of wage labour. Modern service cities signify a further step in this direction, because these also represent a new economy, even if the inhuman wage levels are conveniently forgotten. European urban history is often the history of low wages, and those in power today are happy for this to remain so because the new economy dominated by the financial markets also envisages simple exploitation based on the Manchester model. Yet, despite this (although perhaps not for much longer), the history of the European city still represents a place of emancipation and, perhaps, even more. Just think of the many citizens' movements, of the countless minor examples of civil disobedience, of what is already pilloried as our "culture of welcome". Despite every setback, European cities have a long tradition of resistance and "outsiders" were always involved: exiles from Germany such as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx and Leon Blum, Mikhail Bakunin from Russia and many, many more. In the shadow of today's dominant ideology, which calls itself neo-liberalism but has absolutely nothing to do with John Stuart Mill or, even, Adam Smith, things are heating up. Ever since the Paris Commune of 1871 there has been a tradition of resistance – passed on from one generation to the next – which has fought for social rights and many of whose adherents have paid with their lives. And yes, so-called outsiders have always played a central role. Not just exiles but providers of ideas or, as we say so euphemistically today, "innovators".

Vienna as an example of a classic, monocentric European city

Plan of Vienna. Freytag & Berndt, Vienna 1911

Yet, despite this (although perhaps not for much longer), the history of the European city still represents a place of emancipation and, perhaps, even more. Just think of the many citizens' movements, of the countless minor examples of civil disobedience, of what is already pilloried as our "culture of welcome".

And this is the decisive point: European cities are still places of liberation and creativity, even if the police try to tell us something else. They are places where immigration is not only necessary but also the generator of a new society – economic, cultural, human. And this merging of cultures – of the local culture and those of the so-called "outsiders" – is our biggest opportunity. Given that Europe is aging, most discussion focuses on the new (naturally precariously employed) workforce and demography. This is one, important, side of the coin but the other is much more decisive. Hopefully, we will learn a way of living together that will liberate us from the looming violence. We are living in a time of multiple crises but we mustn't give up. Crises wherever you look: wars from Afghanistan to Syria, an Islamic fundamentalism that misuses the Koran and radically imposes Sharia law, out-of-control financial markets and the expulsion and flight of ethnic and religious minorities. Only the diversity of dialogue can help us to overcome cultural boundaries because, otherwise, we will find ourselves in a Europe which is socially, culturally and intellectually moribund.

The city and what it is

Ever since the Chicago School of Urban Sociology we know that cities define themselves in terms of the following: population density, ethnic diversity and segregation, which means that one lives well or otherwise in milieus defined by income ranging from the rich to the demimonde or from the middle class to the poor. Of course much has happened since the 1920s. The middle class has experienced social decline as both fact and emotional condition and now projects all its fears onto refugees, with fatal political consequences. The slogans of not just European politicians but also of sinister Austrian politicians amount to a politics of fear, whipped up by the tabloid press. Every day one well-known newspaper whips up our fear of outsiders and the political class plays along blithely. I don't have to name names because everyone knows who they are. Politicians use the fear of the population like a laboratory, failing to treat the symptoms but confident of being able to win elections as a result. And of course we all know what happens next. With its extreme right wing party the AfD, Germany has already witnessed the first blow against basic rights and in Austria the next elections will probably leave us with our own unsightly 'blue' bruises. Are we responsible for this? Yes, because civil society has largely failed. But it is never too late – let us again recall our basic democratic rights and take to the streets to demand equal rights for all!

No politics of fear!

Let us not be seduced or scared. Let us scorn the demagogues, go to parliament and express our critique. Our city doesn't only belong to us; it is our city with all its history, all the suffering which people had to endure and all the hope that they lost. But it is our city. We are called upon to prepare Vienna for something new, for immigration which is progressively freed from all this fear. It should not be repeated but it is important: Vienna is not just a city of democracy – one just recalls the magnificent experiment of Red Vienna of the 1920s – it is, despite everything, a city of the Enlightenment. And this means: a way for man to emerge from his self-imposed immaturity.

The city and the outsider

Vienna will be, was and already is a city of outsiders – whether migrants from the provinces or the guest-workers who made it possible for the country to become so wealthy. Whether wartime refugees from the former Yugoslavia, from today's Syria or from other warzones. They require our solidarity, not because we are such great human-beings but out of humanity, solidarity and, if you will allow me, self-interest. As everyone knows from the history of the USA, so-called outsiders were a huge asset. They laboured in horrendous conditions in New York's docks, made the steel industry profitable and, in the second and third generations, became "good Americans". But that is a history which Europeans find it difficult to understand.

Vienna should recall what once made it into a Central European metropolis. The city should not only be open to the new – which also means being multicultural and international, but should also initiate projects, which are able to offer young people – locals and outsiders – good opportunities in terms of both jobs and education.

And what does it mean to be an outsider? For now, being an outsider only means, coming from far away, not mastering the language, being confronted with completely new gender ratios, not receiving asylum and being treated like filth. What does it mean to be an outsider? Should we always just look outwards and say: "There they are, the outsiders!" But what if we turn the question on its head, almost as a thought experiment. Aren't we all outsiders within ourselves? We don't need psychoanalysis or anything else because, in nightmares, we all encounter ourselves as outsiders, outsiders in body and spirit. This insight could be a way of better understanding what "others" feel, what pains them, what torments them. If we accept the outsider within ourselves, perhaps we can understand real "outsiders" better, get closer to them, offer them our hand.

What does being an outsider mean today? This starts on those terrible borders in Macedonia and elsewhere. This is the lot of all those that didn't make the crossing to Greece. It means being beaten up by the police. It simply means bottomless despair. It means being confronted by a Europe which has turned itself into a fortress. It means being driven out of Calais and dying wretchedly in the Eurotunnel on the way to Great Britain. It means feeling like a pariah. And mostly it means finding no friends, no offers of help. Yes, of course there are such compassionate people in Austria, but far too few. Being an outsider usually means rejection, criminalisation and exclusion.

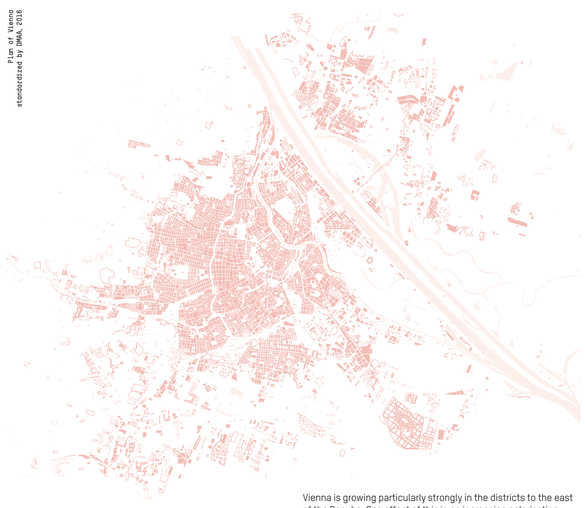
Vienna as a global city, again?

In the 1950s Vienna's city government proclaimed that "Vienna will once again be a global city!" In my opinion the city remains far from this goal. There is a little more to being a 21st century metropolis: more than turning the city centre into a museum, becoming a World Heritage Site, having start-up companies, progressive architecture or even a city government which presents itself as the best and most socially progressive. Being a metropolis today means much more – both positively and negatively. First the positive: it means attracting the best minds in science, art, craft and services and offering them the right infrastructure. But now the negative: brain gain, this unbelievably ironic neologism which, above all, means "brain-downing", a mass, poverty-stricken neo-proletariat forced to live and work in precarious conditions. Vienna's mixture of nostalgia and limited modernism is both its charm and its Achilles' heel. Of course one tries. But times have speeded up and Vienna would have a great opportunity. A couple of thoughts in this direction:

Vienna should recall what once made it into a Central European metropolis. The city should not only be open to the new – which also means being multicultural and international, but should also initiate projects, which are able to offer young people – locals and outsiders – good opportunities in terms of both jobs and education.

If Vienna wants to be more than just a city with a high quality of life then the city government must do more. Regurgitating Viennese Schmäh – the city's unique ironic charm – is not enough (especially considering that the word is derived from Schmähung or 'abuse'). Much more important would be to draw up a well-thought-out plan for distributing refugees across the city. The current policy of largely leaving immigrants at the mercy of the free market with its horrendous rents is a major problem.

In the city we have a so-called local support system but these bodies are often inactive or pay inadequate attention to the problems in their area. The city government would do well to rethink and reform this basically good idea.



Plan of Vienna
stadtentwicklung.wien.gv.at, 2016

Vienna is growing particularly strongly in the districts to the east of the Danube. One effect of this is an increasing polarisation between the centre and the periphery.

Résumé: Places for People

This is why Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale in Venice takes a different path this year, using the framework of this major event to implement real, in the broader sense of the word, architectural measures in three locations in Vienna with the objective of concretely improving the living conditions of refugees. These three projects are also presented in the Giardini and illustrate a major challenge because they highlight that our "refugee crisis" is not just a crisis for Vienna and other European cities but also a decisive problem for the European Union. And one should conclude by once again recalling the habitus of Vienna because this makes it very clear that there is not only a Vienna of exclusion but also a Vienna which embodies the successful history of migration.

Gimme shelter

Report

Kimberly Bradley

Habibe Ibrahimi at Haus Pfeiffergasse

The first time I visit the Caritas refugee[1] shelter on Pfeiffergasse – a short street in a forgotten corner of Vienna's 15th district – one of the last umbrellas unfurls.

In an open-plan office space, Amin, a tall, muscular 22-year-old from Iran, is helping Günter Katherl from Caramel Architekten install a large umbrella, the kind coffee drinkers sit under in outdoor cafes. Like small Mongolian yurts, green umbrellas swathed in popping preschool colours dot the rooms throughout the building, offering privacy and structure.

Until today in this room, single male asylum-seekers from many countries slept on mattresses in rows on a flat grey carpet. Until November 2015, the shelter was an empty office building, before that it housed an IT firm, whose leftover accoutrements are obvious everywhere.

I imagine this room filled with desks and crisp-shirted managers. Amin strings curved rods through hoops set along the umbrella's perimeter, then hangs curtains from the circle. A curtain with pockets will bisect the inside of the tent; two private sleeping areas are the result.

Not all the refugees today want an umbrella. Two guys grumble from their floorbound mattresses. "Some are against the umbrellas," says Katherl, smiling. "At first." Others eagerly await theirs. A film crew is here. The atmosphere is lively, too busy to talk.

But the shelter, with around 250 people, is mixed, mostly families originally placed in what is still considered emergency care. Who are they? What are their stories, how did they live before? How do they feel about the architectural interventions in their temporary living space?

A group of Syrian men emerges from another room. This floor is for men, but the shelter, with around 200 people, is mixed, mostly families originally placed in what is still considered emergency care.[2] Who are they? What are their stories, how did they live before? How do they feel about the architectural interventions in their temporary living space? I ask Amin – who, I'm told, studied architecture in Iran – for his phone number. I'd soon find out.

(Dis)placement

The broader notion of displacement has been curiously missing in discussions of the refugee crisis in most European media. In late 2015, most buzzwords in the German-language press – Flut (flood), Welle (wave), Krise (crisis) – addressed the sheer numbers coming from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, and other war-torn, broken places.

This year's buzzwords include Grenze (a multipurpose word meaning both borders and upper limits), Werte (values, as in western, non-Islamic ones, but try getting anyone to agree on what exactly they are), or Integration (often implying the impossibility thereof).

Displacement is not a newspaper word. It's a word used after the displaced have had a chance to realise where they are … that they are, in fact, displaced. The word reverberated for decades after the last large-scale war-driven migrations in Europe not quite a century ago – resounding through the writing of thinkers like Hannah Arendt, who ultimately grew tenuous roots in their new environments.

Arendt knew that the displaced lose their sense of community, their identity, their grounding. Can identity or community be reconstructed … or are they merely recast, translated, patched together? "The recovering of a new personality is as difficult – as hopeless – as the creation of a new world," wrote Arendt, in her seminal essay "We Refugees."[3] If new worlds are so difficult to create, how can new places – nations, cities, but also shelters – become homes?

Amin

Amin doesn't answer my text messages. I soon realise why: he has no credit on his smartphone. Most refugees on Pfeiffergasse, as they are not yet recognised recipients of Austrian asylum, are still in green-card limbo[4]. Until they have asylum in Austria (after the white card and a successful second interview, a "travel document" is issued that looks suspiciously like an Austrian passport, but isn't), they receive a monthly allowance of 40 euros. This is enough to send a text or two, and maybe get a membership at a fitness centre.[5] Phone credit disappears fast when you're checking in with family in war zones. Seeing how they are, or whether they're alive.

Amin is pretty sure the umbrellas are not architecture. I try to convince him that they might be. He admires Viennese architecture – the beautiful façades, how history is visible from the outside, interiors are modern and perfect.

When I arrive at the shelter at 10:30am, passing through the stairwell (just starting to teem with small children, mothers running after them), Amin is on the stairwell on the fourth floor in grey and black striped pyjamas. They're cute, and later I tell him so. He asks me to wait for him to shower. For our first "interview" we go to the conference room where German classes take place twice a week – and I learn that he's indeed a studied architect, that he's Christian, that he grew up in the southern city of Ahvaz.

"As a Christian, this is what would happen to me if I'd stayed," says Amin in choppy English, making a slashing gesture across his neck. Amin's father, a baker, died nine years ago of a diabetes-related cause. Although Amin completed a degree, working as an architect would have been difficult if not impossible in Iran. "If you have money and connections in Iran, you'll live well, but if you don't, you never will."

In Ahvaz, Amin lived in a one-family house. He arrived in Austria in November 2015, and has lived in this shelter for three months. He's open, smiles a lot, and is just as friendly to Muhammad, my Syrian translator and cultural conduit, when he arrives. Muhammad realizes that Amin speaks not only Farsi but also Arabic, so our talks continue mostly in their common language, which flows much faster than English6. We discuss the intervention, and again and again I hear the word "umbrella" dropped untranslated into the Arabic, and I have to laugh.

The contrast between his general assessment of Caramel's umbrellas and his personal one is also oddly humorous. "The umbrella – it's good! It's good for people who have families wanting privacy. Some people were upset with windows that had no curtains – the umbrellas made things better. You put it up in 20 minutes, and people are happy, the kids loved it. It's easy," he says.

"But I don't love the umbrella. I don't live in one. It's good for learning deutsch, sleeping, watching movies. But not for 24 hours. I live with five guys in one room. I want to see them. In umbrella, just see green and red."

Amin is pretty sure the umbrellas are not architecture. I try to convince him that they might be. He admires Viennese architecture – the beautiful façades, how history is visible from the outside, interiors are modern and perfect. Caritas has told him his final interview might be in June or July.

Then hopefully he'll learn German, get a master's degree in architecture, intern, work. "The education in architecture is higher quality here," he says. In the meantime he tries to fill the endless, ultimately oppressive expanses of time that at first were about eating, sleeping, and not much else.

Vienna

The human flood into and through Austria began in earnest in early September 2015, when Germany threw open its doors with a cry of *wir schaffen das* and Hungary began slamming its gates closed behind them.

In autumn 2015, 788,000 refugees passed through Austria; 300,000 through the city of Vienna. Ultimately, in 2015, 90,000 would apply for asylum in Austria.

Interestingly, per capita asylum registration numbers for 2015 are higher in Austria than in Germany: 441,800 asylum applications in Germany, or one to every 185 citizens versus 88,900 in Austria, or one to every 98 citizens.[7] As of April 2015, 21,600 refugees live in Vienna, with about 4,600 still in "emergency" shelters of more than 200 people.[8]

Community

Ahmad[9] lives on the fourth floor in what could only be described as an umbrella village. Here, around a dozen men of mixed nationality live together. Their umbrellas form a row along the back of the room; the front has become a kind of commons, with chairs and tea tables. Ahmad is from Aleppo. Muhammad is with me to translate, and recognizes Ahmad as a shopkeeper from his Aleppo neighbourhood. Laughter, back-patting, fast chatting I don't understand. No matter the circumstances, meeting someone from home so far away is a comfort.

Ahmad invites us to sit, as if we're on his front porch[10]. Age 30, he has hypnotic sea-green eyes that peer from oval specs. His voice is quiet. In Vienna he could have lived with his brother, who fled Syria to avoid serving in Bashar al-Assad's army and landed in Austria in 2014. But Ahmad chose to live in the shelter … for the company and community. The men unanimously voted to have umbrellas installed in this room, and have settled in nicely.

In Syria, Ahmad was diagnosed with depression. His therapist recommended establishing an independent life beyond his family, all of whom were buckling under the pressures of war. His depression and isolation are slowly lifting. The people here have noticed.

Today Ahmad got his white card, which he'd been worried about. His passport had been copied in Croatia.

"Now, I might be the happiest person in this whole place," he says, smiling slowly, then laughing out loud.

Habibe and Elmira

Habibe can't remember the European countries she passed through to get to Austria.

She does remember the 25 hours she and her family of five covered on foot from Tehran to Turkey. She remembers the month spent in Izmir waiting for storms in the Aegean to subside. She remembers the first rubber boat from Turkey to Greece, which had a leak; her husband jumped into the sea and obtained help to return to the coast – sadly the Turkish side. She remembers the second boat, which made it to Greece. The first smuggler disappeared; the family paid twice.[11]

She, too, comes from Iran, the city of Mashhad, where she was born as an Afghani refugee. This double displacement is surprisingly prevalent in Vienna's refugee shelters. In Iran, she says, Afghan children are not allowed citizenship and are denied proper schooling. Habibe says she came to Europe to give her children – two boys, ages 10 and 14, and a girl, Elmira, 16, a chance at a better life.

We're back on Pfeiffergasse's fourth floor after meeting Habibe's younger son in the busy foyer; he's returning from school and already speaks German. Habibe is wearing a hijab and has a kind but world-weary face. She speaks only Farsi, so she shows me her white card when I ask about her name. I see she was born in

Asimi Elmira at Haus Pfeiffergasse

1 I've chosen to use the terms "asylum-seeker" and "refugee" in this essay.

2 The building was usable – a "for rent" sign still on its roof – via Austrian Durchgriffsrecht, a law that went into effect on October 1st, 2015. It stipulates that the Austrian federal government can override regional or neighbourhood protests against refugee housing.

3 Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," in: Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile, edited by Mark Robinson (New York 1994), p. 117.

4 "Green card" sounds good to westerners who know the United States work permit. In the Austrian asylum procedure, however, the green card is the first document an asylum-seeker receives. It means he/she is registered; the process pending. It grants the fewest rights.

5 In my acquaintances with refugees spanning ages and nationalities, one constant amongst young men is the hours spent at Vienna fitness centres. I initially thought it was about chasing the elusive six-pack, but one young man explained that it was far more about mental health – an outlet for fear and anxiety – and filling time.

6 Muhammad, who is from Aleppo, mentions that Amin's Arabic sounds Iraqi to him. Later we'll joke that the difference between the Levantine dialect and Amin's Arabic is like the difference between American and Scottish English – or Tyrolean and Plattdeutsch.

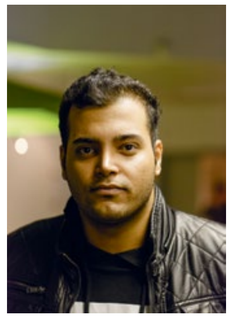
7 Data courtesy of Vienna City Hall.

8 Jon Henley, "After the Flood, Vienna's struggle to make its refugee residents feel at home," in: The Guardian, 5th April 2016, ghttp://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/04/vienna-migration-crisis-refugees-refuge-cities-residents (accessed on 11th April 2016).

9 By request, not his real name.

10 In a way, we are.

11 In autumn 2015, the going rate for the Turkey-Greece rubber-boat journey was 1,200 euros per person.



Mahafi Amin at Haus Erdberg

1977.[12] In Iran she worked as a tailor in a company. In the Pfeiffergasse shelter, she became the unofficial Head Umbrella-Curtain Seamstress.

For two and a half months, she and other women – all Afghani and including daughter Elmira – hemmed and worked on nearly 2,000 square metres of fabric to be hung around and between the umbrellas. "There were six women working; three sewing, three helping," says Elmira, who is taller than her mother. "We worked hard; we were happy. It was fun," she adds. She was the only young sewer. Her family lives in a room with two other families, their umbrella is surrounded by additional curtains, creating a delineated zone.

Mohammad says how thankful he is to the Austrian people and government, but remembers the current European situation and suddenly begins to gently weep. He pauses. We all pause. "We Syrians took in the refugees from Iraq and never asked questions," he says, through tears.

Habibe was given the key to the sewing room; often she'd start at 8:30am. Caramel's architects were "decent, nice, cooperative. The work helped the time pass. It helped us help ourselves."

The family lived in the center of Mashad in a rented house. Habibe's husband had heard that Austrians treated refugees well, that Vienna was beautiful. Still, the idea of what it would be like here has not corresponded to reality. She doesn't mind the umbrella (she later shows us a "meeting" room on the fifth floor – with the family umbrella, Habibe says, they talk less to their neighbours; the need for common space was accommodated here and in the cafeteria). But it's very slow. "Nothing has happened," she says. "We've been here for four months. No transfer, no progress."

She looks resigned, not angry. Elmira, on the other hand, looks determined, unstoppable. She wants to be a doctor. I imagine her in a white coat 20 years from now. The young woman looks at her watch, her German class begins soon. She seems bored with us. She's 16. Some things cross cultural boundaries.

Erdberg

Near its eponymous subway station, Erdberg is an unattractive area; one outsiders might know only if they are unlucky enough to first arrive in Vienna by bus. Not far from the bus terminal, a complex of seven or eight-storey buildings sits sturdy and scary along the nondescript Erdbergstrasse. A concrete courtyard is decorated with a vaguely Brutalist sculpture in a dry fountain. Being here feels like hanging out under a highway overpass.

On one side of the courtyard, a group of obviously non-Austrian men stand smoking. Many others enter and exit a door nearby. This is the entrance to Erdberg's refugee shelter, which at its peak housed 600 people. In March 2015 the number was 441, with plans to ultimately increase again with the addition of families to the current demographic of single men.[13]

Above are tiered storeys with rows of windows. This was once a boarding school for customs officers; infrastructural features like well-equipped rooms and a cafeteria already existed. "Who knows," says Lotte Kristoferitsch from the design firm EOOS, whom I'm meeting for the first time. "Maybe we'll need border patrols again." She's joking, but considering the tenuous state of the European Union's Schengen policies, we only half-heartedly chuckle.

"Everybody needs a place to be. Especially people who don't have a place to be," says Gründl.

In the same building are two high schools. Across the courtyard is the Bundesverwaltungsgericht für Asyl und Fremdenrecht, the court where asylum cases are decided. Three stories under the refugee shelter is a subterranean soundproof shooting range for Vienna's police force. The irony that teenage pupils, cops in uniform, asylum seekers and the civil servants who decide their cases all use this courtyard every day, sometimes simultaneously, is not lost on me.

Manssour Mohammed Subhi and Hanouf Tammah at Haus Erdberg

EOOS

Kristoferitsch takes me to the EOOS field office on the shelter's third floor. Hallways and stairwells are institutional – not unfriendly, but rundown, scuffed, past their prime.

Each floor is a large oval around an inner courtyard; each has about 80 rooms, most of which house two men. The EOOS office is steps away from the Caritas offices, a hub of activity placed into a couple of rooms turned into offices and what was once a "tea room" repurposed into a meeting space.[14]

"Beyond seeing the disadvantages of a shelter with 600 people, what could its advantages be?" says Harald Gründl, one of the firm's three founders. "Part of what we are exploring is creating models that could be used elsewhere."[15]

EOOS has taken on the longest-term project; the Fonds Soziales Wien (Vienna Social Funds) has a 15-year lease on the building. Facilitating a situation in which refugees care for themselves is the top consideration. Currently there's a top-floor catered cafeteria; allowing refugees to cook would be a first step.

"We've developed two kitchen typologies – one meant for ten rooms to share, one larger," says Gründl. The idea is that refugees are not only more independent, but also have places to meet and form communities. Beyond kitchens, each room gets a refrigerator cabinet with space for personal utensils.[16]

EOOS has larger plans, like an outdoor garden in the now desolate inner courtyard. The empty tea rooms and landings could be made into meeting spaces in dialogue with the refugees. There's even talk of a hallway "bazaar" – where barbers, bakers, and other professionals could sell their services or goods for a kind of alternative currency.

Time expands; it drags. It ceases being an asset and becomes a liability. When temporal structures do not or cannot exist, even the strongest human character can falter.

Place

The Erdberg shelter looks eerily empty in comparison to Pfeiffergasse. The men mostly stay in their rooms. The long hallways are interrupted by doors and turn sharp corners, making a walk through them seem labyrinthine. A few young guys gather on benches around Wi-Fi points. Instead of children's drawings on the walls, a bulletin board lists who received post that day – many residents obsessively check it – post might mean an asylum appointment. No other common space exists here.

"Everybody needs a place to be. Especially people who don't have a place to be," says Gründl. "The kitchens are a first step to independence. My goal is that the situation in the building is improved. That the people have work, not only free time. You don't want to force anyone to work. But it's the waiting that kills them." On the ground floor, a workshop for building the cabinets and the first two prototype kitchens will be ready to go the following week.

Time

If Caramel's umbrellas are a quick-response solution, EOOS's work is a multiyear experiment. A State of Emergency versus a State of Exception.

No matter how good the physical conditions in a refugee shelter might be, time, normally invisible, becomes an increasingly palpable factor. Time expands; it drags. It ceases being an asset and becomes a liability. When temporal structures do not or cannot exist, even the strongest human character can falter.

In my other life, which deals with the discourses of art and architecture, I read of things like Accelerationism and The Extreme Present (speed, Internet, more more more, faster faster faster); I race alongside the western world's late-capitalist masses. But here, I join the refugees in their zones of deceleration, decompression, decoupling from participation in life's fabric, the rhythms of the everyday. How can shelter residents learn the rhythms of the Austrian everyday when they are isolated from them, or forbidden to take part?

The workshop

The day the carpentry team is slated to begin, there's an inexplicable delay. Bundles of pre-cut wood – in bright yellow, donated by the Austrian firm Umdasch – are brought into the shelter, but for some reason, construction cannot begin.

Kristoferitsch breaks the news to the four Syrians whose age range spans generations. Her engineer says the work "would happen in the next weeks." The next weeks? Four faces fall. The men had been told they'd be working weeks ago. Kristoferitsch backtracks fast. "No, tomorrow. We start tomorrow! We unload today." Visible relief. The next time I come, the workshop – a smallish tiled room, now filled with stacks of wood – is running.

The carpenters: Tammam

"It's been too hard to just eat and sleep. This is not a life," says Tammam. "I can't concentrate without my kids, I'm worried. It's hard to learn German. I'm 50, I don't have so much time left."

What Tammam does have is 35 years' experience in carpentry. In the western Syrian city of Homs, he had his own workshop, as well as a house, a car, and family. When the attacks on Homs – a rebel stronghold, now largely destroyed – began, he fled to Jordan with his wife and three children. He'd been dodging snipers for too long, the workshop and home were completely flattened, gone. Even leaving was an ordeal. After a harrowing time in a Jordanian refugee camp, Tammam left for Europe with his nephew on February 28th, 2015.

At the time, the Macedonian borders were closed and brutally patrolled. Parts of the journey involved clandestine hours-long overnight walks through forests. The goal was Berlin, where Tammam has relatives, but he was caught in the Czech Republic, whose officials returned him to Austria, where he was surprised. "The Austrian police were so nice, they kept telling me, 'You're in a safe place,' so I am here."

Tammam has been in Erdberg for ten months. All he wants to do is work. Every time I visit the workshop, he's there, making cabinets. He built kitchens in Homs, too. "I'm so happy to work in my profession again. They gave me the design. I understood it right away, I made it. I think they were impressed."[17]

The carpenters: Mohammad

In Damascus, Mohammad, 41, was a perfumer. Now he is a fixture in the woodshop. Sitting in a room alongside EOOS' worktable prototype, he jokes that he can do anything, and is so bored that he will do anything. He has fixed windows and doors, and painted a kindergarten wall. He came with his older son, who was about to be conscripted into Bashar al-Assad's army (he's now being trained as a barber and learning German). Mohammad's wife and two other children are still in Damascus, living 300 metres from the front lines.

"I come from a wealthy family. We had many properties, houses, but lost most of them. I was able to sell one apartment and a small shop, and borrowed some money, which is how I could pay to come here," he says.

He's intelligent, fast-talking, straightforward, and satisfied with how Erdberg is run. Since Caritas and the Samariterbund came, there are more interviews, people moving out and on, more activity and work within the shelter. The people at Caritas and EOOS listen to suggestions.

Tammam is sceptical that the kitchens will foster community, but Mohammad thinks they are a good idea. But who will keep them clean? What happens when summer brings flies and bugs? What about children, who are notoriously messy? Or different nationalities not getting along?

Mohammad says how thankful he is to the Austrian people and government, but remembers the current European situation and suddenly begins to gently weep. He pauses. We all pause. "We Syrians took in the refugees from Iraq and never asked questions," he says, through tears. "Don't forget the people stuck in Syria. The people stuck on the borders. I don't know them, but they have families, too."

Amer has seen a therapist, but he says therapy won't solve his problems. "In the end, it's not about therapy. In the end, it's the war. I've lost my future, I can't continue studying. Nothing kills more than waiting."

Transit

Between 1919 and 1937, 80,000 Austrians left the country for overseas destinations.

At the end of World War II, more than 500,000 displaced persons settled permanently in Austria.

In 1956, more than 180,000 refugees from Hungary came to Austria; 20,000 were permanently resettled.

In the early 1990s, approximately 95,000 refugees of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina came to Austria, receiving temporary protection. By 1999, about 70,000 of them had been granted long-term residence. About 20,000 of these returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina or went elsewhere; the rest have remained.[18]

The carpenters: Amer

Amer's smile could light up a room, and I expect him to be a sunny boy. But his story makes me saddest.

Amer is 20. He is Palestinian-Syrian, and stayed in Syria for a year and half after his family fled a Damascus suburb to Lebanon – they lost two flats in a row in buildings that were destroyed. He stayed as a homeless teenager, couch-surfing with friends for a few nights here, a few nights there, and studying in buses or outdoors so he could finish high school and then embark on a computer science and telecommunications programme.

"I didn't want to kill, or be killed," he says in a soft voice. It's difficult to imagine him in any violent situation, but he witnessed many. He borrowed money to finally leave – alone – when the war became too much to bear. He paid a smuggler to take him to Berlin, where his brother is waiting for an asylum decision, but near Salzburg, the smuggler abandoned the truck, filled with 20 refugees. The police came two hours later. Amer had 50 euros left, and no other options.

Mohammad Amer at Haus Erdberg

12 The Farsi translator I'd lined up had disappeared, so for these interviews we set up a Habibe/Elmira-Amin-Muhammad-Kimberly (and back again) translation chain, which made for laughs despite the conversations' gravity.

13 Until late 2015, Erdberg's shelter housed a large number of unaccompanied minors. One is still here: Fadi, age 17, from a mountainous region in Syria near the Israeli border. Fadi is also on the carpentry team and came to Austria alone; a flat his family had rented in Damascus was destroyed. He hopes to become an electrician and bring his family to safety in Europe.

14 The local branches of the NGOs Caritas and Samariterbund have administered these refugees since December 2015, replacing the Swiss private security firm ORS.

15 According to Gründl, The Next ENTERprise-architects, this Biennale's third participant but not included in this essay as no refugees yet live in the shelter it is outfitting, will likely use the kitchens as well.

16 Many of these objects are present in the EOOS field office; on the wall is a large yellow board on which kitchen utensils would hang. Also here is a yellow table adapted from one EOOS developed for luxury kitchen outfitter Bulthaup, as well as the efficient refrigerator cabinet.

17 He later proudly says he has an appointment with the asylum authorities in late April, and asks whether I needed any carpentry work done.

18 See http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/austria-country-immigration (accessed 11th April 2016).

Mohamed Umar at Haus Erdberg

After several stints in camps throughout Austria, Amer was transferred to Erdberg, but his case file remains in Upper Austria, perhaps lost. No one, not even lawyers at Diakonie and Caritas, has answers. Despondent and fragile, Amer has seen a therapist, but he says therapy won't solve his problems. "In the end, it's not about therapy. In the end, it's the war. I've lost my future, I can't continue studying. Nothing kills more than waiting."

When the Erdberg projects were announced, the residents wrote a list of their names and professions. There were painters, electricians, carpenters. Amer immediately volunteered to work in the shop. "These kitchens and projects are a move in the right direction," he says.

Only when asked about future plans – if asylum is indeed granted – does Amer smile again. He's already Erdberg's mobile phone and computer hardware fix-it man. What would he do? University, working in IT, but also visiting his mother, who is ill, someday. "I have billions of plans. Just give me a chance," he says.

As Hannah Arendt wrote in 1943, as a German-Jewish refugee in the United States: "Since everyone plans and wishes and hopes, so do we."[19]

19 Arendt, op. cit., p. 111.

Twice displaced

Number of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan: 1.5 million (registered, UNCHR).

Number of Afghanis living in Iran: 950,000 (registered, UNHCR).

Number of Iraqis living in Syria in the late 2000s: Two million; those registered as refugees in 2013: 63,500.[20]

Since March 2012, Pakistan has banned the extension of visas to all foreigners, including Afghanis born there.

In March 2016, an estimated 450,000 of the 560,000 Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief Works Agency in Syria remained inside Syria.[21]

Of the several young Afghanis I meet, none arrived from Afghanistan. Two of them, Ishaq and Hameed (both 18, the latter speaks German, English, and many other languages) attend Austrian vocational school, learning to be electricians. They seem more stable than residents without temporal structure.

"First, I'd like to thank the Austrian people. They behave like our family. They are kind people. I love it here. I like this camp," says Ishaq, in English. His roommate Miagan agrees, speaking Pashto, with Ishaq interpreting.

Ishaq is 18, attended a military school, and married his 16-year-old girlfriend before leaving the Taliban-ridden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan to Austria in 2014. His trip took two months and cost 10,500 euros. Soldiers killed his father four months ago. Ishaq knew this would happen. He has copies of the warrants for the family's arrest and murder; hoping these will be key in granting asylum.

Miagan's family was also embroiled in tribal land disputes that forced a move from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Miagan's brother was murdered; he, too, was next on the list. He was fingerprinted in Croatia, and he is terrified of deportation. He wants to stay in Vienna, even if he's never seen St. Stephen's Cathedral. On 40 euros pocket money a month, 4.40 for a round-trip subway ride is too high a price.[22]

Ishaq lived in a modest house in Pakistan, his father was a village elder. But with the father dead and house "smashed," his remaining family now lives with an uncle. Ishaq sends them what little money he has. On Miagan's side of the room, a spray-painted poster proclaims NEIN WIR WOLLEN BLEIBEN. On Ishaq's bulletin board, a handmade Austrian flag bears one sentence: "Austria, my best contri." Of all the countries he's known, this is perhaps the only one where he has known peace.

Integration

The human flood may be abating[23] but the metaphorical waters in Central Europe are still choppy, the undercurrents overwhelming, just like in the Aegean.

Vienna's integration policies are exemplary. German classes, uniformly referred to as mein Deutschkurs by the residents I speak to, are offered immediately to every refugee. The multilingual notes in Erdberg's entrance announce dance courses, football-game visits, and movie nights run by an army of volunteers. These architecture projects cleverly use existing skills to fill time with useful activity and promote solutions and maybe even contacts that may reverberate into the future.[24]

Ishaq Afridi at Haus Erdberg

And yet … is integration possible with an unfathomably heterogeneous group of people, most traumatised, some illiterate? In April, the Viennese local government considered requiring courses of refugees, not only in the German language but also in Austrian values, western mores, everyday social graces. A good investment, but effective? I realise that even I, a German-speaking American, am often perplexed by often contradictory Austrian values and behavioural norms, and occasionally make major social faux pas. What is successful integration?

Write about that

Omar, 50, has been in the Erdberg shelter for seven months. Although he told this publication's photographer that he was an actor, he is not, and never was, although he says he can act and sing. "I was playing with him," he says.

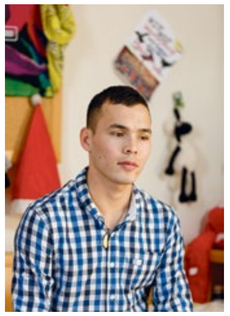
We go to his room – a single corner accommodation; his former roommate was 18 and "messy" and he was moved. The door stays open. There are no locks anyway, which Omar says leads to rampant theft amongst refugees.

"Look through the window. It's a prison here. A prison," he says in German he learned 30 years ago at Damascus University and practiced by leading German and Austrian tourists on holiday tours in Syria. It was a summer gig; Omar worked for the government. He bought a plot of land and built a house. "In my country, I was a rich man," he says.

Like Amer, Omar is a Palestinian from Syria; his parents fled Palestine in 1948. "For 68 years my parents were homeless," he says. "I was born in Syria in 1965, and now I've lost my second home." Omar speaks of his older son, age 20, who is studying in Brazil, and shows me a film of his eight-year-old son, who is still in Syria with his mother, Omar's wife.

On Miagan's side of the room, a spray-painted poster proclaims NEIN WIR WOLLEN BLEIBEN. On Ishaq's bulletin board, a handmade Austrian flag bears one sentence: "Austria, my best contri."

Omar can't bear being without his family. He's not doing well at Erdberg, and shows me his psychological reports. He drinks alcohol to forget, but he cannot forget. "It will be better when the kitchens are here, when families are here. We'll have more freedom, we can cook what we want. We're all waiting for this. But I think it might just be a promise," he says.



Masoomi Hameed at Haus Erdberg

He accuses "my government" of forgetting about them, "throwing them away," and I realise he thinks I'm Austrian. I tell him I'm American, that my government, while absolutely deserving a multitude of accusations, isn't the one he's thinking of. He continues more passionately, now addressing me as a writer.

"You can't write just about these kitchens. You have to write about our psychological diseases, what hurts us, what we feel. What happens with the kitchens? Is it about food? We don't need just food, we need freedom! The government has to tell us from the very first month: you can stay, you can't stay. Just tell us. Then we won't be so destroyed. Then I won't be sick. I lived in war, but didn't have psychological problems in my country. You can't live without hope. If they tell us, we can be happy from the inside. That's the main thing, the interesting thing. Write about that."

Thanks to: All the asylum-seekers for their trust and honesty. Günter at Caramel; Harald and Lotte from EOOS. Fayad, the director of the Pfeiffergasse shelter. Philipp from Samariterbund at Erdberg's front desk. Veli, Sarah, and Dr. Ahmad at Caritas at Erdberg. Irmgard, the building director at Erdberg, for easing access. And Muhammad Al Najjar for his linguistic and cultural interpretation, and invaluable moral support.

20 Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Iraqi Refugees in Syrian feel new strains of war," in: The Washington Post, 10th April 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraqi-refugees-in-syria-feel-new-strains-of-war/2013/04/09/4f5cd784-9ee8-11e2-a941-a19bce7af755_story.html (accessed 11th April 2016).

21 See http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis (accessed 11th April 2106).

22 The young Afghanis do organise rogue cricket games in a parking lot near Erdberg. They ask me if I know any Austrians who play cricket.

23 The reasons for this are current, controversial, and complex: Austria's upper limit for asylum applications was announced in February 2016 and, as I write, ferries have begun transporting refugees in Greece back to Turkey.

24 Amin hopes to intern in a Vienna architecture office.

Home is, where your phone is

Essay

Katja Schechtner, Katharina Müller, Anton Falkeis

Reflections on places for people with phones.

"We live in confusing times, as is often the case in periods of historical transition between different forms of society. I contend that around the end of the second millennium of the common era a number of major social, technological, economic and cultural transformations came together to give rise to a new form of society, the network society." Manuel Castells, "The Rise of the Network Society"

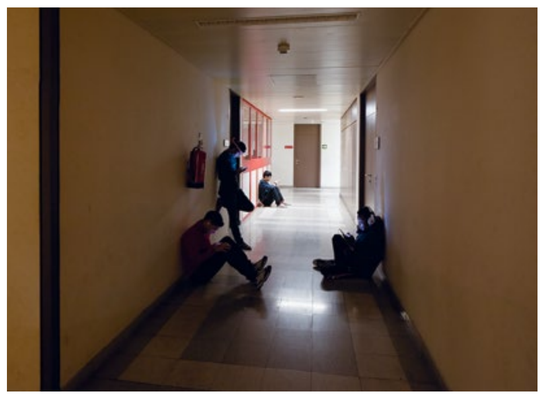
Architecture and urban design go far beyond the tangible, physical space: they create emotional landmarks and landscapes in people's minds.

Today we are witness to the convergence of the digital and physical worlds: Our mental maps of cities are becoming augmented by multiple layers of data that - metaphorically - float above the built cityscape.

Even before the refugee attached to his mobile phone prominently entered our image canon, the rising availability of location-based digital data and mobile devices had globally changed not only our perception of technology, humanity and its built environment, but also our behaviour when navigating public and private spaces. Since the advent of GoogleMaps, Twitter and Foursquare and other geo-locative social media sites, the mental image of our cities has become more complex. Mobile technologies are changing our daily experience by enabling us to access some of the intangible informational infrastructures, such as digital maps, shops, banks, housing, transport, restaurant recommendation sites and e-government from the comfort of our beds and the busyness of our streets.

As William J. Mitchell already argued in his 1995 book "The City of Bits", we have entered an era of electronically extended bodies, which need to navigate both the digitally mediated environments and the tangible world in parallel.

Architects and urbanists across the globe tap into the information generated by the new technologies to better understand and design human habitats. By contrast, a majority of work done so far concerning the actual design of spaces for global migrants, such as "Arrival City" by Doug Saunders and, more recently, Joerg Friedrichs' "Refugees Welcome", makes little reference to the migrant's journey through the physical and digital worlds.



Corridor with WLAN at Haus Erdberg

Crashed smartphone at Haus Erdberg

This might be related to the public discussion about refugees and their use of technology, which negated the inseparability of the material and digital space and was largely characterised by a socio-technical dissonance that denied today's realities of global living. Its dominant narratives reiterated images of a pre-digital era:

Refugees are poor.

What does a refugee look like? Receiving little first-hand information from border crossings and emergency shelters we also hardly ever set eyes on them in the midst of our cities and refugees themselves rarely tell their own stories in the media.

So we invent "our" refugee: the "ideal" or, namely, "poor" and "grateful", hence, the "good" refugee. The media's presentation of the "refugee crisis" – on screen and in the papers – supports this image creation: the winning photo in the general news category of the World Press Photo 2016 shows refugees arriving by boat on the Greek island of Lesbos. A dozen people, squeezed onto an unstable nutshell-like boat, clinging together and surrounded by the endless sea. Sergey Ponomarev's photograph of the act of arrival represents the everyday, historic reality of humanitarian journalism: images of ragged, torn, tired, dirty and hungry people thankful for safety. These images resonate with us; they bring to mind TV documentaries about the expulsion of millions of Germans after the Second World War, when the European borders were redrawn after the defeat of the Nazi regime. Yesterday and today merge into a ritualised tale of escape: people reduced to the bare essentials struggling towards an apparent goal ("towards us"), alongside railway tracks and motorways, across open fields and the open sea. Masses of people. The refugee rarely appears alone. He is part of a flood, fighting for survival against the natural forces of heat, waves, rain and snow. In close-up, he clambers over barbed-wire fences. He keeps on going. Our ideal refugee is perpetually moving. Mobile. And poor.

Mobile phones are a luxury.

Technology used to be all about function. Big, grey and clunky machines that helped us build our world and leave gruesome physical labour behind. But then Moore's Law and design intervened. Machines became small, sleek and shiny, providing expensive, even frivolous comfort and entertainment. First at home and then personalised and miniaturised for people on the move. Mobile phones, once a magic tool of connection and disembodied transfer for the "chosen few" in movies like "The Matrix" quickly became a powerful symbol of the technologically advanced, rich societies, transferring the notion of affluence to its individual users. Mobile. And rich.

Refugees with mobile phones are phony.

"A scandal!" In the wake of the refugee crisis images soon emerge that don't seem to portray people in a crisis: The dust and dirt and the ceaseless movement have been left behind and they lounge on public benches in parks and on shopping streets – their need for support is obviously in question: they do have mobile phones!

"An iPhone in a refugee camp. How did such technology get there?" In the midst of the "refugee tragedy" it suddenly seems as if there is nothing as scandalous as seeing people who were forced into mobility using mobile telephones and laptops. These can't possibly be "real" refugees. Watchful citizens report on social media sites that they have seen refugees in mobile phone shops being given expensive smartphones for free. There are rumours that the Austrian government has instructed a large mobile telephone operator to equip refugees with new telephones upon their arrival. The aid organisation Caritas is forced to defend itself against accusations of having given asylum-seekers mobile telephones and data vouchers. "Luxury or emergency?" is the question asked by the German news agency reporter24 at the Austrian border: A black African, his face an anonymised blur of pixels, turns a corner, the criminalising image focused on the circle-marked telephone in his hand. Mobile. And phony?

The mobile phone – a symbol of differentiation and association?

This simplified narrative of the supposed dichotomy of technology and migration aimed at defining the debate on core socio-cultural concepts such as space, identity, economy, order and the creation of home. In this discourse the mobile phone became a near magical symbol for the perceived difference between the resident and the migrant population. A notion that was swiftly challenged by media scientists and the tech community:

The mobile phone. And space.

The debate about migration and spatial distribution constantly refers to "immigration" versus "integration". This makes clear the extent to which the public discourse is caught up in the notion of the separation of spaces of origin and destination. While most architects have a very physical understanding of space, for sociologists the idea is more abstract, a result of social norms and conditions, imbued with cultural meaning and mediated through objects and structures.

The mobile phone as a global design object counteracts the notion of separation and thus fails to transfer characteristics of belonging to a specific place.

Itulah Sunday at Haus Erdberg

The mobile phone. And identity. The ownership of a particular object doesn't allow for distinguishing between members of the "arrival society" versus "immigrants". This functional logic denies the contemporary social shift towards transitory, globally linked living and working patterns and defends seemingly "evolved", conservative structures.

Beyond physical manifestations such as museums, housing, plazas or parks the identity of a place is first of all characterised by its social setting. It is a product of diverse and ever changing cultural practices, social conventions and the dynamics of capital and political representation. The concept of migration is presented – especially in German-speaking countries – as a new and abstract phenomenon, a fact that relates to the difficulty of speaking about race and racism in Germany and Austria.

The use of a specific piece of technology fails as a token of differentiation or association.

The mobile phone. And economy. Poverty is by definition a social phenomenon, which principally refers to a condition of serious social disadvantage across the whole spectrum of human life: It mostly concerns the failure to meet basic needs in such areas as clothing, food, accommodation and health. A single tool, however, no matter its singular monetary value, fails to transform a person from rags to riches.

The mobile phone. And order.

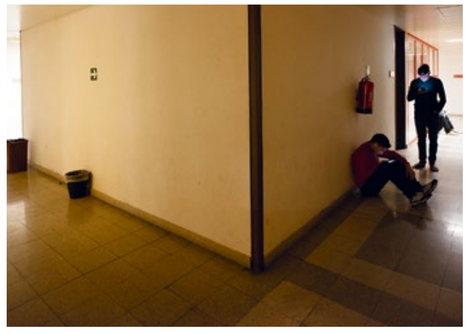
The notion of a refugee can only exist in terms of the situation that has made him a refugee. Within this construction, "stabilising" him plays a decisive role. In 1952 in *Black Skin, White Masks*, his famous study of the psychology of racism, Frantz Fanon noted that he was trapped in an image that "fixed" him as an object of observation and description. To create order from chaos, refugees aren't only physically held by the police and security agencies: Constant monitoring transforms illegal migration into a visible, countable and controllable movement. The mobile phone as a tool both for authorities and migrants breaks the understanding of one-directional creation of order and structure.

Apps for your strive, places of your life?

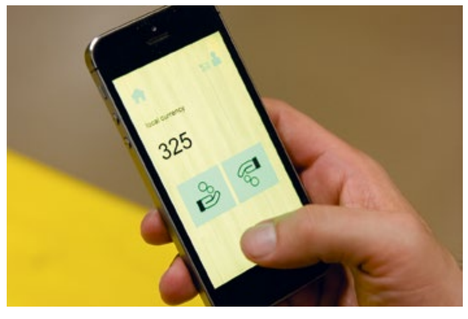
2011 was the watershed year for those interested in the relationship between technology and the formation of (urban) society: while, on one hand, technology companies such as IBM, Cisco and Siemens started the implementation of large scale top-down Smart City projects in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Songdo, South Korea and Masdar, UAE to better monitor, manage and streamline the constant migration of people to cities, on the other hand, civic protest and bottom-up initiatives such as the Arab Spring, Wikileaks, the Spanish May 15th and the American Occupy movement relied on the very same technologies to coordinate their agenda of societal and urban change, echoing William J. Mitchell's prediction that *"…the emerging civic structures and spatial arrangements of the digital era will profoundly affect our access to economic opportunities and public services, the character and content of public discourse"*.

2011 was also the year the Syrian Civil War began.

Thus both the tech and the humanitarian communities were well aware of the potential of mobile phone-based social networks. In daily practice the mobile phone as a platform for apps became the focal point for reaching refugees directly. For both governUse of WLAN at Haus Erdberg



Smartphone with test app at Haus Erdberg



ment agencies & NGO's and the (shadow) migration industry apps presented themselves as a convenient entry point for the delivery of physical support through digital information in the very corporal world of human flight.

The validity of this approach was backed up by small scale studies of mobile phone distribution among Syrian refugees in several Greek cities by Nicos Trimikliniotis, Dimitris Parsanoglou and Vassilis Tsianos, who summarised the results as: "…we have practically never encountered a migrant in the area without a cell phone, regardless of what his/her economic condition seemed to have been." This was supported by the analysis of pre-war mobile phone penetration in Syria where, according to the CIA World Factbook, 87 out of every 100 people had a mobile phone in 2014. (In comparison: according to World Bank statistics in 2014, 73% of Pakistani and 57% of Afghans had a mobile phone, while there were 152 mobile phone subscriptions for every 100 people in Austria in 2014).

Moreover, the international humanitarian community has had experience of working with the tech community for crisis relief ever since the 2010 earthquake disaster in Haiti, when, according to Patrick Meier from the volunteer organisation Standby Task Force by building up to date maps, based on different kinds of ad hoc reported datasets: "… a bunch of volunteers in snowy Boston, who were not humanitarians, had never done humanitarian response and who had never left Boston, but were still able to provide the kind of situational awareness faster in ways that were more usable." While the governmental institutions proved to be reluctant to work with technologists at first, by 2013 the digitally linked, globally distributed 900 volunteers of the Standby Task Force had provided support in more than 26 humanitarian deployments and, according to Patrick Meier: "… had repeatedly proven themselves as worthy partners over a certain period of time, and publicly demonstrated the results, both good and bad."

Consequently, apps targeted at refugees were developed by the tech community at hackathons, i.e. the Refugee Hacks in Vienna, Berlin and Amsterdam, where apps to charter a route; find transportation; a place to sleep; food; medical support; etc. quickly evolved in a rush to provide support and to demonstrate the tech community's ability to tackle real world problems quickly. The apps that emerged were designed for the perceived needs of the travelling refugee versus the settling migrant and are placeless versus hyper-local.

However, similar to the public discourse in the media, the development teams rarely included refugees themselves.

A notable exception is the app "Gherbtna", which was developed by a Syrian refugee, Mojahed Akil, for his fellow compatriots who wanted to make Turkey their temporal home and which features information about residency regulations, but focuses on accessing the formal and informal job and housing markets.

Germany chose a more top down approach for a national level app: several government agencies co-developed a country – level information app called "Ankommen" ("Arriving"). Consequently the app guides refugees through the asylum application process and other registration and complaint procedures of the German bureaucracy.

On a hyper-local level, apps providing information on the city level or even housing project level have been developed. E.g. Dresden's apps are called "Afeefa" and "Welcome to Dresden", in Berlin "InfoCompassBerlin" and its Airbnb for Refugees "Refugees Welcome" are among the most publicised, while Vienna offers its own "Refugee Connect" app.

Bujalan Aswa, Alnaji Karar, Abdule Mohamed at Haus Pfeiffergasse

Refugee apps proliferated with such pace and variety that it became necessary to compile information about them outside the App Stores, e.g. at the metasite: http://appsforrefugees.com/, which lists 31 different custom-made apps, clustered into six different categories. In the race to help through spot-on information the humanitarian app developers were quickly faced with the challenges of regular app coding: accuracy and actuality of information and reaching the clients in significant numbers. On a refugee's mobile phone all those customised apps vie for space with regular global apps for information and communication, such as facebook, WhatsApp and Google Maps. When analysing the download numbers of apps, those featuring nation state level information seem to have reached their target audiences in somewhat significant numbers, e.g. Gherbtna had been downloaded to almost 20,000 phones by the end of 2015, Ankommen had showed about 100,000 installations via the Google Play store by the end of March 2016 although it remains unclear what number of installations came from the resident population vs. the migrant population.

Digital natives, not digital naïves are designing their future.

Thus refuting the dichotomy of migration and technology and demonstrating that migrants are digital natives, rather than digital naïves, the mobile phone has firmly proven its value to refugees, governmental authorities and civic support communities alike as a reliable tool along the refugee routes and for distributing initial arrival information - but will it be of the same significance for urban planning and homemaking in the arrival cities?

According to the urban sociologist Richard Sennett, learning to live with people who differ ethnically, religiously and economically is the most urgent challenge facing civil society today: "…, a healthy city can embrace and make productive use of the differences of class, ethnicity and lifestyles it contains, while a sick city cannot; the sick city isolates and segregates difference, drawing no collective strength from its mixture of different people".

In the context of planning for a diversifying and digitally linked urban population, the difference between the physical and informational space becomes less important. The mobile phone and the information it contains can be leveraged to question traditional design assumptions and inform new spatial patterns.

In the past two decades architects quickly adopted the broad collection of digital tools and computational packages that allowed them to interactively design and build spaces that were previously unimaginable.

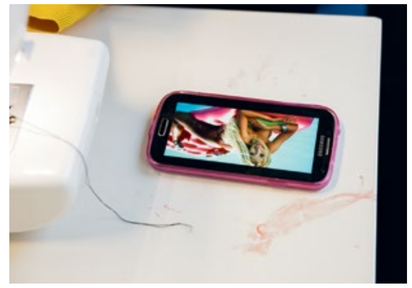
Similarly, urban planners will be able to benefit from the tools for analysing anonymised population level mobile phone and social network data that are currently becoming available. Those tools can be employed to understand the use of urban infrastructures and public spaces by different groups – covering the whole spectrum of long-term residents, recent arrivals or short time visitors like tourists. For example: Today the mobile phone model, generation and software platform says a lot about the socio-economic status of its user and the country code – or the location of the IP address – that he/she calls frequently abroad can be a tell-tale sign of pockets of ethnic communities in a city. By analysing the combined data of all citizens and their mobile phones' geo-located access of the mobile network, urban data scientists like Eric Fischer were able to accurately pinpoint urban areas that were inhabited by poorer or richer and ethnically diverse or similar groups in society and to monitor changes in the social fabric over time. Consequently urban planners can use this information to plan either in favour of generating ethnically similar or diverse neighbourhoods across the city e.g. creating a "Little Syria", similar to the "Chinatown" or "Little Italy" we find today in the centre of many North American Cities, while still avoiding the negative effects of ethnically segregated communities, like the banlieus on the fringes of Paris. Moreover, urban infrastructure services such as transport, waste management and energy supply can be efficiently and swiftly adapted to those changes.

The emotional landscape of a city and how citizens perceive its different neighbourhoods matters dramatically for the urban quality of life. Via different apps and their metadata people reveal their emotions, often creating a psychological map of their city, as Sarah Williams demonstrated in New York City. Based on Foursquare and Facebook data she visualised the emotions that New York's inhabitants associated with different spaces in the city, attributing some with very distinct emotions, e.g.: Heatapocalyse, HeavenonHudson or "Where Dreams Die" (apparently just north of Grand Central Station). Regarding the notion that only certain groups of people would contribute to these emotional maps, Sarah Williams stressed that: What we found was that all socio-economic classes in New York City use social media to broadcast information about the places they visit, and, when they do so, they tell us about the economy and the emotions of the city itself."

On a smaller scale, such as the refurbishment of buildings to initially house refugees or the design of new housing for diverse migrant-resident communities, architects don't need to partner with data scientists. Photo apps encapsulate the form, meaning and values of different places: Just taking the time to collect the pictures that most refugees carry on their phones and to analyse and discuss the qualities of the rooms and streets depicted in the background can inform new, welcoming designs.

Taking a good look at the images on refugees' phones can be a powerful tool for understanding the architectural and urban qualities of their lost home. Concealed in these pictures are testimonies about the physical qualities of the migrants' former homes: the function and use of private and public spaces; the spatial allocation programmes that constitute a cultural identity, e.g. the private courtyards and gardens of previous homes; materials and colour schemes; the form and proportion of the artefacts of daily life; and what emotional qualities of safety, community and "heimat" are associated with specific designs.

In their daily work with refugees to create "Places for People", the architects quickly realised the importance of mobile phones as tools for finding refuge and making home. Therefore, they integrated mobile phones in various ways into their designs, depending on the nature of the project. Caramel made use of the physical domain and created tangible rooms of privacy by including headphones and electric plugs into their flexible kits for each refugee, thus ensuring that their connection to the digital space linking their past and future lives was always available. EOOS, on the other hand, leveraged the community building capacity of the mobile phone and created an app that allows refugees to make use of their expertise and talents to support other refugees or people in the neighbourhood and thus earn "credits" for help in other areas.



Smartphone with screensaver at Haus Pfeiffergasse

The response of the Austrian architecture and design community to the rush of government authorities, tech communities and humanitarian organisations to employ mobile technologies as means of creating order, structure and socio-cultural context – and ultimately - new places of shelter and home was innovative but, as one of the architects put it, also self-evident: Building places for people with phones.

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The Rise of the Network Society, Manuel Castells, Wiley Blackwell, 1996
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Fluchtraum Österreich

On the hospitality of Austrian tourism establishments towards asylum seekers

Analysis

Nina Valerie Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl

At first sight, accommodating refugees in tourism establishments seems an obvious idea. In Austria this approach to housing asylum seekers is not a new phenomenon, but has a history going back 60 years, and stands for a national asylum policy that handles the provision of space for people who have been forced to flee as a short-term issue. Yet, the apparently seamless transition of former tourism facilities into places of refuge is met by the overlapping of two radically different concepts – the voluntary escape from everyday life of the tourist and the search for an everyday life of a migrant who has been forced to flee.

To what extent does Austria, as a nation of tourism, apply the basic rule of hospitality - "the guest is the guest" – in the area of asylum policy and why is it urgently necessary to regard these two groups of guests separately and to understand and recognise their different (living) needs while still offering both the same hospitality?

Since the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and the resulting flight of around 170,000 Hungarians to Austria there have been periods when up to 95 per cent of asylum seekers in Austria have been accommodated in tourist establishments of different sizes and types. According to the political scientist Raimund Pehm,[1] the persistence in using tourist accommodation as a place of refuge is a consequence of the oversupply of low-standard or unclassified tourist facilities in Austria as well as of the strategic advantages that the small-scale structure of the tourism industry provides for the asylum system.

As a result of the current challenges of refugees fleeing from crisis-ridden areas, together with around 90,000 asylum applications in 2015[2], asylum seekers have replaced tourists, in particular in infrastructurally weak parts of Austria. This geographically determined small-scale structure of the Austrian tourist industry ensures that asylum seekers are spread across the country and largely accommodated in units of between 20 and 80 people. Although the use of establishments with fewer beds should be seen positively, the often remote locations of private guest rooms, rural guesthouses, motels and holiday villages is leading to an increasing isolation of asylum seekers – limiting their opportunities to establish social networks, act politically and participate actively in society. In her book "Die Totale Institution Asyl"[3] the social pedagogue Vicki Täubig writes about an organised dis-integration within asylum policy, where establishments protect their residents or even, sometimes (voluntarily or otherwise), screen them from their surroundings and, hence, exclude them from society.

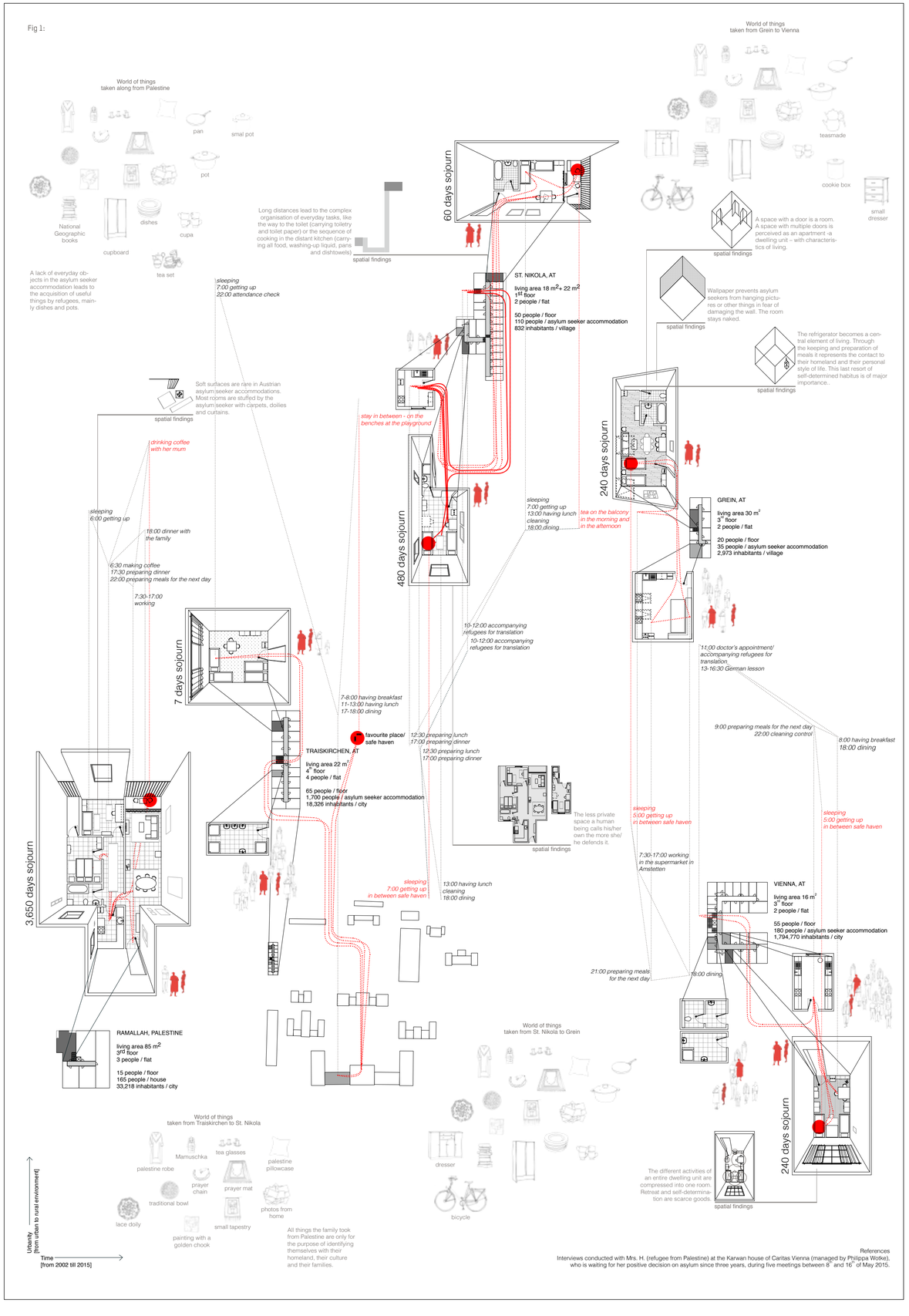
Among the total of around 700 establishments for asylum seekers in Austria's nine provinces there are several examples of the temporary repurposing of premises, which can offer "hospitality" to either refugees or tourists, depending upon

1 Raimund Pehm, "Die Flüchtlingspension: Eine österreichische Besonderheit im Wandel", Lecture during the symposium "Ist Gast gleich Gast? Asylsuchende in österreichischen Tourismusarchitekturen" 7th April 2016, Architektur Haus Kärnten, Klagenfurt.

2 Interim asylum statistics, December 2015, Austrian Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, Section III-Legal Issues, http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Asylwesen/statistik/files/Asylstatistik_Dezember_2015.pdf

3 See Vicki Täubig, *Die Totale Institution Asyl: Empirische Befunde zu alltäglichen Lebensführung in der organisierten Desintegration* (Weinheim - Munich: Juventa Verlag, 2009).

Fig 1:



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Interviews conducted with Mrs. H. (refugee from Palestine) at the Karwan house of Caritas Vienna (managed by Philippa Wotke), who is waiting for her positive decision on asylum since three years, during five meetings between 8th and 16th of May 2015.

left : Fig 1
A biography of living – Living situations experienced during the escape from Ramallah to Vienna; Mapping by Lea Soltau, developed as part of the course Fluchtraum Österreich at the Vienna University of Technology, taught by Nina Valerie Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl in 2015.

capacity. This flexibility in the provision of accommodation is possible because the infrastructure required by provincial governments for accommodating asylum seekers is often already in place, the establishments are ready for use without major rebuilding or renovating work and the provincial governments – like large travel companies – offer contracts for 100% occupancy. The involvement of the proprietors on the other hand means that the control of foreigners can be delegated to a sector that is already accustomed to the formalities of Austrian visitor registration.

Although the use of establishments with fewer beds should be seen positively, the often remote locations of private guest rooms, rural guesthouses, motels and holiday villages is leading to an increasing isolation of asylum seekers – limiting their opportunities to establish social networks, act politically and participate actively in society.

Hospitality is defined as the sympathy of a host towards his guest, regardless of where the guest comes from or his reason for making use of that hospitality, and to the related provision of accommodation, food and service.

The question of the extent to which the activities of proprietors have changed with the taking in of asylum seekers is initially and decidedly answered by all those interviewed[4] with the words "I treat all guests the same. I make no difference between asylum seekers and tourists." However, in the course of these conversations, proprietors such as Elisabeth Steiner who runs the Gasthof Bärenwirt which accommodates asylum seekers in Weitensfeld in Kärnten add that they have surely been given a new role: "We are simply thrown into this situation. None of us has the remotest notion of what we should actually expect. And we really have to be everything. We are not only landlord, provider of accommodation and proprietor, we are also mother, psychologist, social worker and nurse."

Legally, they are merely required to provide appropriate accommodation which respects human dignity.

In order to transform a tourism establishment into accommodation for asylum seekers, proprietors in Austria must neither show evidence of any special training in the provision for asylum seekers and the care of their needs nor employ specially trained staff. The support of asylum seekers within the basic care system is the responsibility of either the refugee department of the provincial government or one of the religious, private or aid organisations commissioned by that same government to do this. However, as this task is limited to visiting each establishment once or twice a week and as, in some provinces, one carer can be responsible for up to 200 asylum seekers, the reality is that the operator of the establishment both remains the day-to-day contact person for the refugees and has to organise the coliving of diverse individuals and cultural groups.

Hence, most proprietors who take in asylum seekers find themselves having to play a double role. As the provider of the accommodation they are responsible for its operation and, at the same time, they are expected to care for persons in need of protection with special (housing) needs, most of whom arrive having experienced traumas in the countries they are fleeing from as well as during their flight and now have to adjust to a radically new environment.

In addition to having to play these multiple roles, providers of accommodation also have to deal with the fact that there are no legally determined minimum standards for the accommodation of asylum seekers and that both provincial governments and proprietors can only orient themselves using extremely vaguely defined guidelines. Legally, they are merely required – not only by EU guidelines[5] but also by the Austrian law on basic care[6] and the laws of the individual provinces – to "provide appropriate accommodation which respects human dignity." The "minimum standards related to basic care accommodation in Austria"[7] developed by the refugee departments of the provincial governments are not legally binding and, besides defining a maximum occupancy (five people per room) and minimum area per person (8 m² plus 4 m² for every additional person in a room) only list the numbers of sanitary facilities (a maximum of 10 people per WC, washbasin and shower) and the minimum equipment for a residential unit (a wardrobe and table plus – per person – a bed with a pillow, blanket, sheets, a chair and a one-piece cupboard). On top of this, very few concrete requirements in these (non-binding) guidelines go beyond the elementary information regarding the usability of the space.

The systematic shifting of responsibility from national to provincial government and then on to private individuals becomes evident in the inadequate control of the minimum requirements for asylum seeker accommodation. Given that the clear majority of such accommodation is realised in existing buildings, most of which were previously used for tourism, it is permitted to deviate from the minimum standards in individual cases with regard to the local and financial situation. A further reason for not implementing all of these requirements represents the event of refugee mass movements. In this context, Anny Knapp of *Asylkoordination Österreich* criticises the current "undermining of minimum standards"[8], which officials seek to justify with the present high number of asylum applications. As a result, it is generally up to proprietors to decide the extent to which they should respond to the needs of their residents and implement the requirements set out by their contractual partners, the provincial governments.

However, what these requirements completely fail to mention are the special needs of people who are fleeing or to properly address the notion of *living*. This latter omission is particularly startling given the fact that asylum processes in Austria currently last several months and, in extreme cases, several years.

Neither the basic elements of *living* nor the special living requirements of refugees with different cultural backgrounds are covered in the minimum standards. Although the need for protection at the moment of flight and immediately after arriving in the country of asylum naturally takes precedence, the need for an everyday routine, to rediscover the notion of *living* and to feel a sense of belonging in a space become paramount again, shortly after asylum seekers have moved into their accommodation.[9]

Among the minimum requirements which make *living* possible again are the possibility to make decisions about one's own life and living space – in particular if and for how long one remains in a particular place – as well as the opportunity to decide how one appropriates this living space and expresses oneself individually and culturally. As basic care rules determine that provincial governments allocate asylum seekers to particular establishments and define their radius of movement, asylum seekers in Austria cannot influence where they will be located during their asylum process. The duration of their stay is also not foreseeable due to the variable length of the process, leaving asylum seekers in a state of continuous standby and waiting. Within the accommodation itself, the proprietor decides which rooms can be used at what times and for what purposes. Asylum seekers often have to share a room with up to five people and the "individual design of the room must be agreed between the residents and the proprietor."[10]

Living also means having private space into which one can retreat. As rooms have several occupants, personal space in asylum seeker accommodation is mostly heavily limited. In many cases, residents have no opportunity to create their own private space and the last remaining retreat is – rather than to themselves– available to their private objects only, under the bed or inside the cupboard. Unannounced controls of rooms by operators and the fact that keys are often missing means that even the smallest unit allocated to refugees is always visible to outsiders.

As suitable communal spaces are often lacking, or simply because one prefers the maximum possible amount of individual living, many aspects of *living* have to take place in the resident's room. Sleeping, eating, studying, watching television mostly all happen in the same place – on one's own bed – which is both a source of potential conflict with other residents and reduces the already limited radius of movement of asylum seekers even further. In conversations it also became clear that, the smaller this private space becomes, the more important it gets and the more steps the resident will take to differentiate it clearly from the space of fellow residents and others.

Photo: Johannes Puchleitner

Common area in a former tourism establishments in Styria that is currently hosting asylum seekers photographed during the Fluchtraum Österreich research trip, April 2016

Photo: Johannes Puchleitner

A former tourism establishment in Styria that is currently hosting asylum seekers photographed during the Fluchtraum Österreich research trip, April 2016

Far too often it is left to operators of accommodation for asylum seekers to determine whether the space provided allows not only for physical but also psychological refuge and offers an environment with which the refugees can identify and in which they can preserve their identity. For many operators it appears that the only way of dealing with this situation is increased regulation. The concept of unconditional hospitality in which, as the philosopher Jacques Derrida describes,[11] the guest is taken in without having to speak or act in the language of the host, is replaced by a strongly regulated hospitality in asylum seeker accommodation, which prescribes the use of space and freedom of movement and determines clear rules and hierarchies.

Rather than being designed for long-term stays, tourism establishments are mostly intended for guests on shorter visits. For asylum seeker guests this means having to create their new home in a place of permanent mobility. In this context, Raimund Pehm speaks of "built migration policy"[12] in which, firstly, the policy of accommodating asylum seekers in tourism establishments mirrors the short-term approach of the responsible politicians and, secondly, the sense of permanent mobility and insecurity which accompanies fleeing people simply continues after their arrival at their destination due to the lack of the long-term planning which would offer them the needed protection.

Unlike the tourism industry or the public health system, the asylum system in Austria lacks the long-term planning required to provide asylum seekers with the necessary infrastructure. The apparent temporality of flight, which is sustained by the recurrent institutional state of emergency of both European and Austrian asylum policy, makes any strategic approach impossible as a result of which the subject of asylum has yet to become part of the architectural debate at a significant scale. However, the movement of migrants is now a permanent geo-political reality. Host countries must begin to work on long-term spatial solutions instead of resorting to ad-hoc solutions such as tents, containers or the reuse of warehouses under the guise of temporality. Since the summer of 2015 architects in Austria and other European countries have launched a wealth of initiatives which have addressed forced migration. However, the role of architects, in both academia and practice, has so far been largely passive and limited to the mere execution of governmental initiatives. Architectural designs which locally improve the situation of a few asylum seekers are, naturally, to be valued for their positive intentions but they also show how architects, by simply adapting spatial manifestations of current asylum policies, become accomplices of a system which hides behind claims of a national emergency to ignore such fundamental needs as *living*, the right to self-determination and the respect for privacy and identity.

Yet the tools of architects can achieve much more: Thanks to their knowledge of spatial, social and economic relationships, architects are in a position to shape the asylum system in Austria on many levels and on multiple scales. The project Fluchtraum Österreich[13] highlights the effects of spatial action and design – or the lack thereof – and argues for the proactive engagement of architecture in the asylum debate. The cartographies developed during a design course at the Vienna University of Technology in 2015[14] address spaces of enclosure and exclusion with which refugees are confronted upon arrival in Austria and at the alleged end of their journey of escape. The mapping "A biography of living – living situations while escaping from Ramallah to Vienna" by Lea Soltau (Fig. 1) shows the spatial context, the universe of brought objects, the daily routine, the movement patterns and the use of communal spaces experienced by Mrs. H. and her daughter in five establishments for asylum seekers in Austria over a period of three years.

The concept of unconditional hospitality in which, as the philosopher Jacques Derrida describes, the guest is taken in without having to speak or act in the language of the host, is replaced by a strongly regulated hospitality in asylum seeker accommodation, which prescribes the use of space and freedom of movement and determines clear rules and hierarchies.

The focus of this year's *Fluchtraum Österreich* design course is the accommodation of asylum seekers in Austrian tourism infrastructures and the conflictual relationship between guests and hosts in such establishments. The course is investigating how and under which conditions *living* can become possible in accommodation for asylum seekers and how such accommodation can facilitate – rather than impede – social and political action. The design course aims at producing a catalogue, which establishes spatial guidelines that allow for *living* in a condition of forced migration and opens up alternative accommodation scenarios. By providing guidelines for living standards in accommodation for asylum seekers the catalogue should benefit the operators of such accommodation, organisations offering aid to refugees and political decision-makers. The publication should provide a basis for action by as many players in the asylum system as possible and, thereby, encourage new thinking in the system for accommodating refugees in tourism architectures.[15]

4 Research visit to accommodation for asylum seekers in Austria as part of the course *Fluchtraum Österreich*, 7th–12th April 2015 and 8th–13th April 2016.

5 Guidelines: 2001/55/EG and 2003/9/EG of the Council 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and Council

6 Federal Law on Basic Care 2005 (BGBl. Nr. I 100/2005 idF BGBl. I Nr. 122/2009) and Agreement on Basic Care (GVV) between the national and provincial governments in line with. Art. 15a B-VG (BGBl. Nr. I 80/2004).

7 Minimum standards for accommodation in line with basic care in Austria: www.burgenland.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder/Land_und_Politik/Wohnraumspende/Mindeststandards.pdf

8 Anny Knapp, "Richtlinien und Standards in der Versorgung von Asylsuchenden in Österreich" Lecture as part of the symposium "Ist Gast gleich Gast?" *Asylsuchende in österreichischen Tourismusarchitekturen* 7th April 2016, Architektur Haus Kärnten, Klagenfurt.

9 Lea Soltau, "Grenzen des Wohnens", in: Nina Kolowratnik, Johannes Pointl, eds., *Fluchtraum Österreich* (States of Refuge in Austria), asyl aktuell (2015/ 2).

10 "Mindeststandards betreffend die Unterbringung in der Grundversorgung in Österreich", 2nd Conference of the Refugee Departments of the Provincial Governments 2014.

11 See Jacques Derrida, *Von der Gastfreundschaft* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2015).

12 Raimund Pehm, "Die Flüchtlingspension: Eine österreichische Besonderheit im Wandel", Lecture as part of the symposium "Ist Gast gleich Gast?" *Asylsuchende in österreichischen Tourismusarchitekturen* 7th April 2016, Architektur Haus Kärnten, Klagenfurt.

13 The project *Fluchtraum Österreich* was founded in 2014 by Nina Valerie Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl as a long-term research project on forced migration and spaces of waiting. *Fluchtraum Österreich* is part of the Echoing Borders Initiative which was founded by Nora Akawi and Nina Valerie Kolowratnik at Columbia University GSAPP in New York.

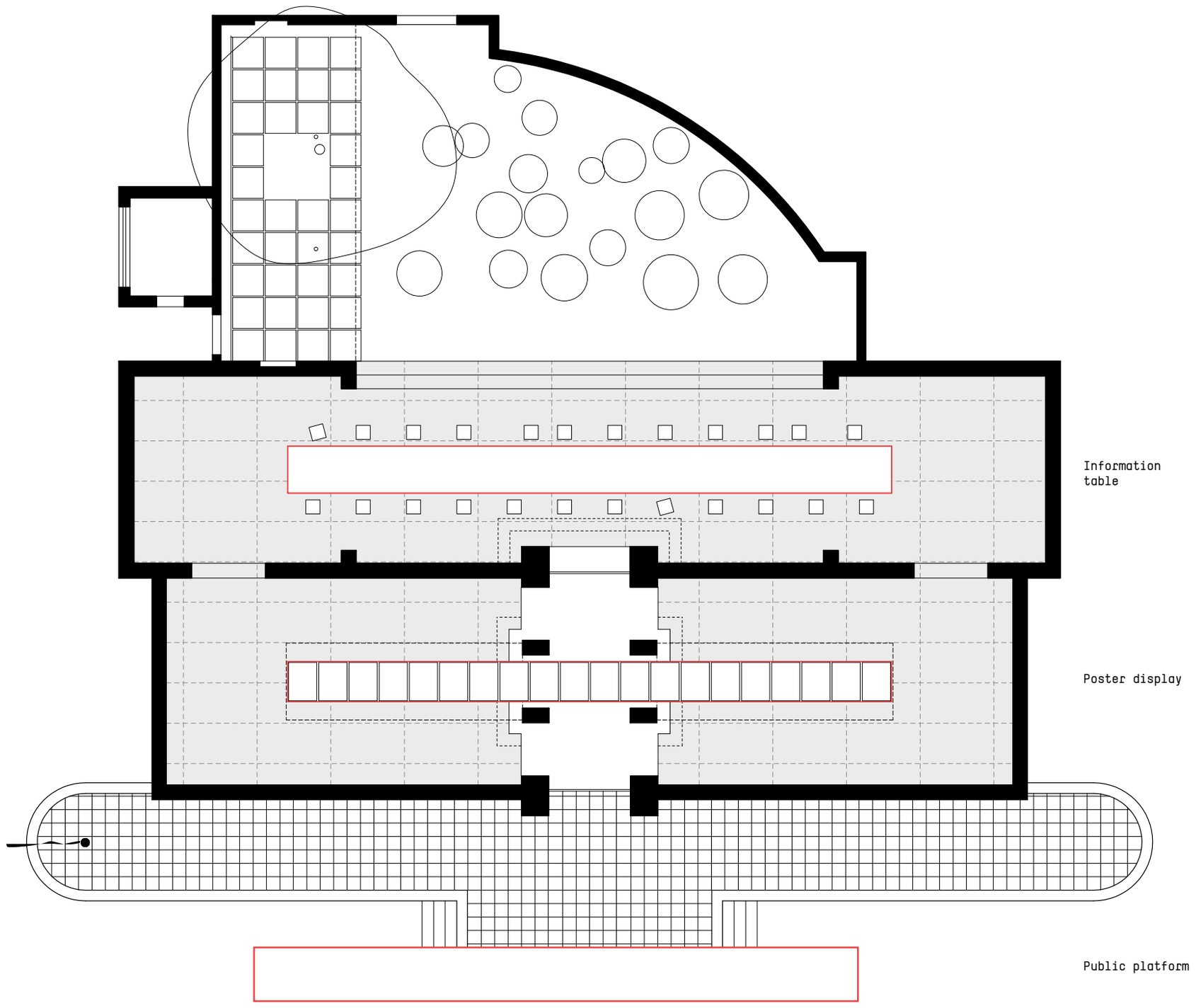
14 The results of the design course 2015 have been published in the guest edition *Fluchtraum Österreich* of the magazine *asyl aktuell* (2/2015) in cooperation with the *Asylkoordination Österreich* and the Department for Building Theory and Design at the Institute of Architecture and Design at the Vienna University of Technology. As a traveling exhibition, *Fluchtraum Österreich* was shown throughout Austria in the autumn and spring of 2015/2016 at, amongst others, the asylum seeker accommodation Gasthof Bärenwirt in Weitensfeld, the UNHCR *Langer Tag der Flucht* at Karlsplatz in Vienna, the architektur forum oberösterreich in Linz and the Architektur Haus Kärnten in Klagenfurt.

15 For further information on the ongoing research project please visit: www.fluchtraum.at

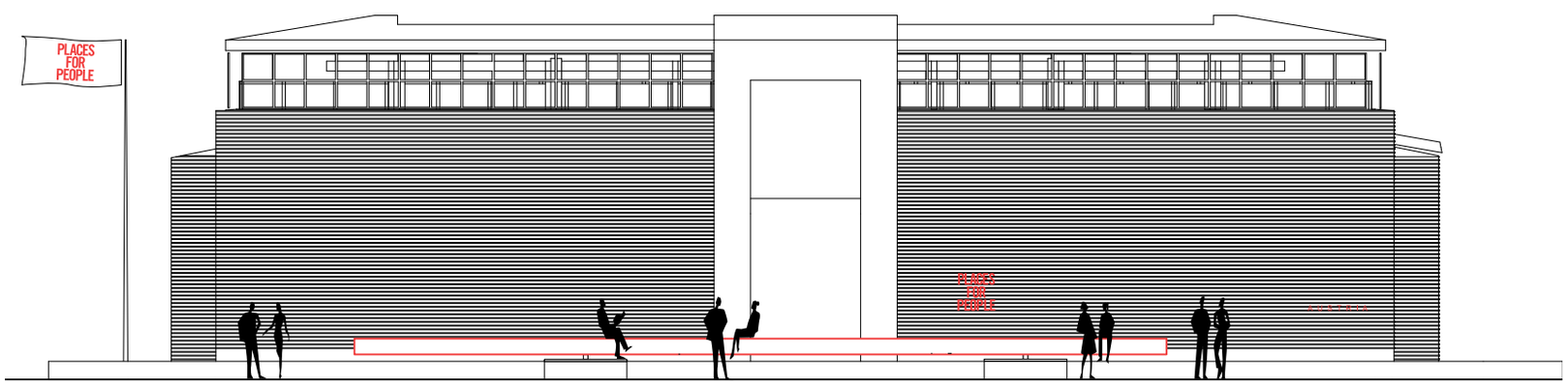
More than a metaphor

Architectural intervention and exhibition architecture by Delugan Meissl Associated Architects

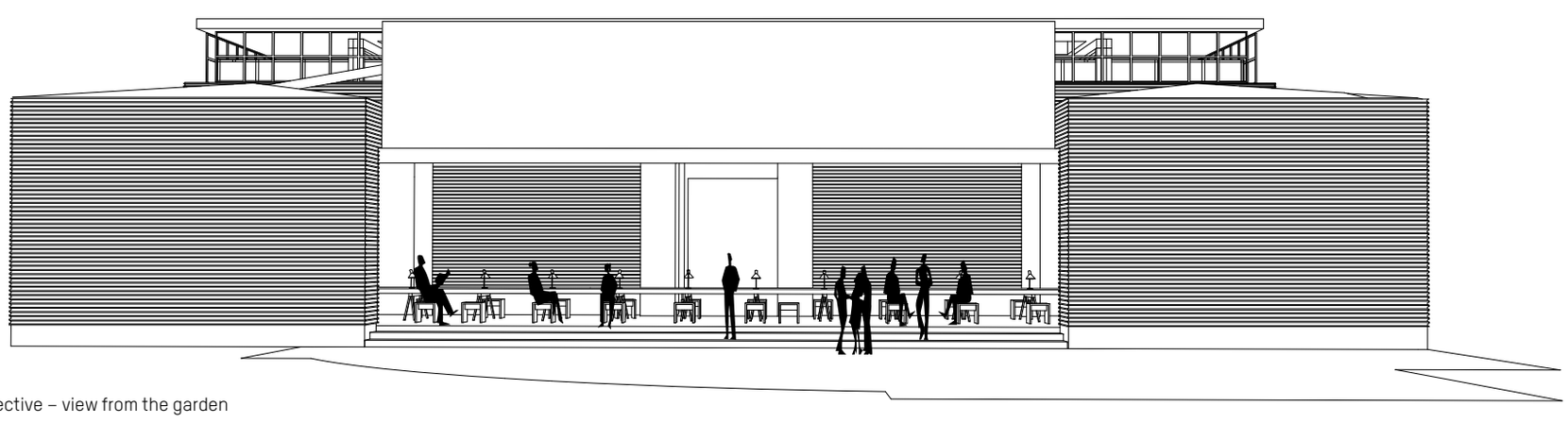
by Christian Muhr



Ground floor plan



Elevation entrance



Perspective – view from the garden

The history of the Austrian Pavilion is well-documented thanks to the research carried out in connection with the currently out-of-print publication "Österreich und die Biennale Venedig 1895–2013"[1]. According to this book, the building is based not just upon the ideas of Josef Hoffmann, the founder of the Wiener Werkstätte and Österreichischer Werkbund and co-founder of the Wiener Secession but also upon the designs of the Vienna architect Robert Kramreiter.

The genesis, architecture and symbolism of the building opened on 12th May 1934 has been repeatedly addressed in the course of comprehensive restoration work and by individual contributions to art and architecture biennales such as, most recently, Heimo Zobernig's work for the 2015 Art Biennale.

A central feature of the building which, with its classicist and modernistic elements acts as both a prime example of Viennese Modernism and a manifesto for the *Ständestaat* (Corporative State), is the symmetry demonstrated by both its longitudinal and transverse axes.

One special feature of the Austrian Contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale is the fact that the eponymous "Places for People" are real places in Vienna. In this sense, the pavilion in Venice is primarily a display space. At the same time, however, this exhibition space is also a further "Place for People" in the sense that it offers an opportunity to experience those same special spatial and social qualities which lie at the heart of the entire project.

The exhibition architecture reacts to this situation with the principal decision to retain, unchanged, the sculptural, artistic intervention of Heimo Zobernig, rather than, as is customary, to replace it with a new design. In the eyes of the architects, the artist created an excellent spatial and atmospheric context with his installation which should be used further.

Apart from this, the exhibition design of DMAA reacts to the architecture of the pavilion and the spatial sculpture with a three-part ensemble of table-like elements with a uniform length of 18 metres and a range of heights and details.

The starting point of this triad is a concrete platform which stretches along the front of the pavilion while, at the same time, being disengaged from the building's monumental central axis. This permits the entrance area with its steps and terrace to open in the direction of the green space of the forecourt. The size and position of this element are an invitation to visitors to make use of it.

Parallel with this, but in strict accordance with the internal symmetry of the pavilion, a second, lower display in the main volume is used for the presentation of poster-size photographs which are piled at different heights on the flat structure.

The third element in the concluding side room consists of a long wooden table equipped with reading lights and stools which will invite visitors to read the publications that are lying around in the room or, simply, to rest awhile. In addition to this, three panels integrated into the table provide key information and illustrative material compiled by the three teams regarding their three interventions.

As the most directly functional element of the exhibition design this table will be divided into its three parts at the end of the Architecture Biennale and reused in the three locations in Vienna. Thus, quite in keeping with the spirit of the overall project, the exhibition architecture not only makes use of such metaphors as the table as symbols of communication and community, but also goes much further.

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1 "Austria and the Venice Biennale 1895-2013"
(ed) Jasper Sharp
Verlag für moderne Kunst Nuremberg (D)
2013

INTERVENTION 1

Caramel Architekten

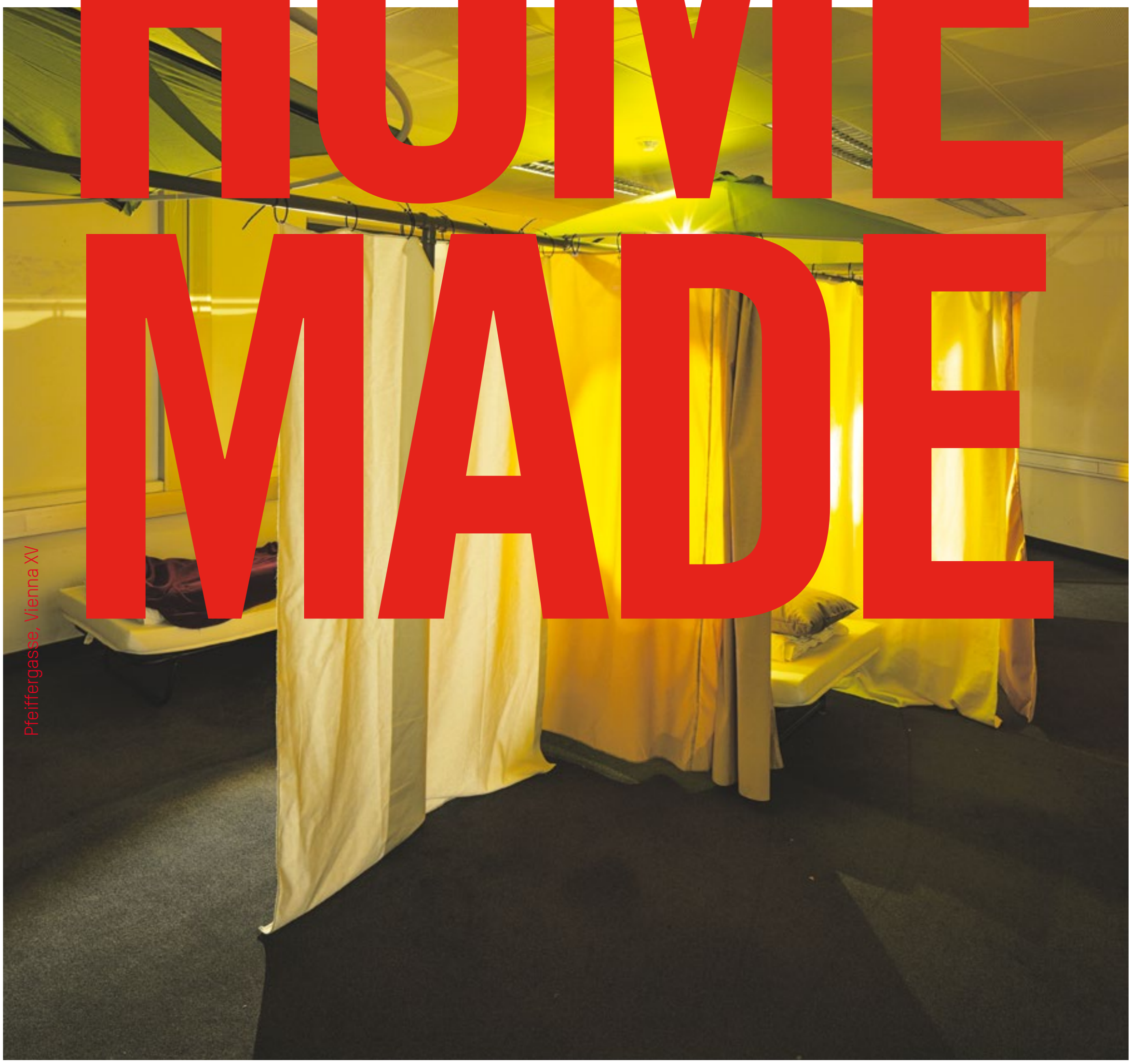
Biennale Architettura 2016

Austrian Pavilion

Eds. Curators of the Austrian Pavilion
Elke Delugan-Meissl, Sabine Dreher, Christian Muhr

la Biennale di Venezia
15. Mostra Internazionale di Architettura
Partecipazioni Nazionali

HOME MADE VIADL



Pfeiffergasse, Vienna XV

5 MIN
50 €

is the average
cost of this project
for each person
needing protection

ACTIVITY
INTIMACY
A VILLAGE WITHIN THE HOUSE
EMOTIONAL SECURITY
PRIVACY
PARTICIPATION
COMMUNITY
IDENTITY
OPENNESS
INTEGRATION
A VILLAGE WITHIN THE CITY
INDIVIDUALITY

In every project, the answer to the question is and remains people. Always. Here we have come full circle because at the end of the day it is always about Places for People. Protecting privacy and opening up to a community can take different forms. The decisive thing is that one has a choice.

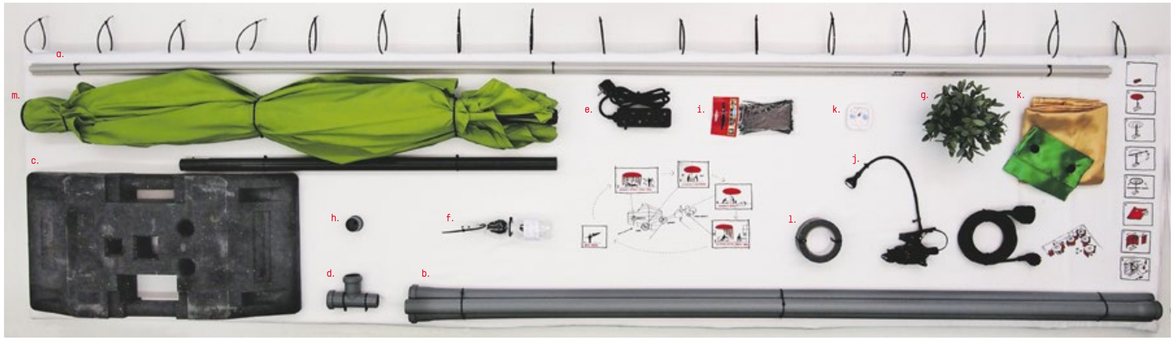
Site - refugee camp in a vacant office building in Vienna - Pfeiffergasse

below: former shared office room functioned as a sleeping area for up to 15 refugees

"Shouldn't every individual have the basic human right to choose the location where they want to be and then to occupy it themselves?"

Concept sketch of a simple but efficient "tool" to meet the most basic needs

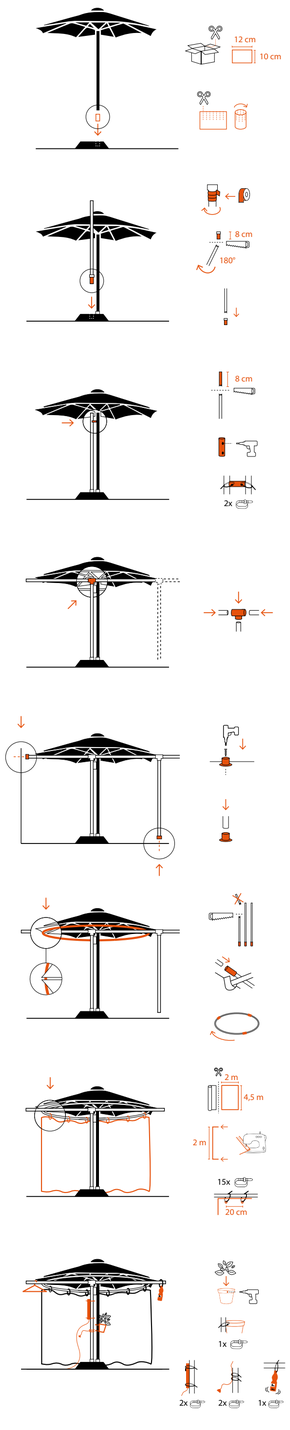
floor plan



a. bent pipe
b. straight pipe
c. base
d. t-connection
e. multiple socket
f. plastic bottle
g. plant pot
h. pipe end
i. cable ties
j. lamp
k. curtain
l. adhesive tape
m. parasol

TRACES OF IMPROVISATION

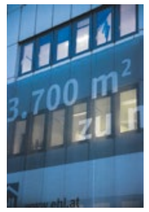
Text: Gabriele Kaiser



Instruction manual, details

A Vacant Office Building in Vienna

A huge advertising banner hanging on the traffic-facing façade of an insignificant 1990s building promotes the property: "3,700 m² of office space to rent". Below this, the logo and telephone number of the agent, the traffic rattles by. Who knows how long this building - which is certainly no object of desire – has stood empty. It looks like one of those many properties in the city which are hard to let, the actual number of which is very hard to determine. The official vacancy rate for office real estate in Vienna is currently around 6.6 per cent. Buildings like this – dated infrastructure, average location – have a difficult time on a saturated real estate market. But is it really empty? Some windows are tilted, some wide open, washing hanging over the parapet and a glimpse of material through the fourth floor pane – a golden curtain?



Stopover residences / Temporary use as an emergency shelter

For days, weeks, months around 280 refugees have been living in the former offices. These are mostly families from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, who are waiting in this Caritas emergency shelter for their asylum decisions and for their allocation to long-term accommodation. Most of the residents are not yet receiving primary care; they have left their previous life behind them and have no idea what lies ahead. This building is yet another stopover for an uncertain period of time, a "camp" as they call it. It was originally envisaged that the spatial configuration of the building made it suitable for accommodating 150 people – "but what should we do when another bus full of people is waiting outside?" – is how Caritas rightly describes the need for action in a situation in which homelessness would have been the alternative. Like a transit camp or initial reception centre, an emergency shelter offers destitute people who are seeking protection a place to sleep and other essentials – food, clothing and medical care. However, all the precautionary measures also took the factor of time into account from the very start.

Because the time limit which makes life uncertain for the residents on their arrival is also holding the space in suspense.

Caritas agreed a temporary use contract with the owner of the building which ran out at the end of April 2016 and was initially only extended for another month. As the office building is remaining on the market throughout this temporary use phase, the existing interior had to be largely untouched, with the exception of the shower units created on the ground floor. One result of this was that the former office spaces were firstly filled with tightly packed rows of beds.

A village within the house

From the point of view of the operator who is keen to avoid problems with neighbours the location of the building close to the urban periphery is a good one for refugee accommodation – "here, nobody feels disturbed." It is an open building, anybody can enter and leave – an informal check-in or check-out is enough, no one turns the light on at night to ensure themselves that everyone is sleeping. None of the doors can be locked, not even the doors to the lockers that used to be in the offices and are now partly being used as partitions. In the entrance with the Caritas "porter's lodge" residents, new arrivals, volunteers and visitors are met by posters in Arabic, English and German as well as articles 1, 3 and 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Everywhere there are traces of a life full of improvisation, topical matters, house rules. A pictogram explaining that alcohol is not permitted anywhere in the building and, below this, a request to eat all meals in the dining room on the ground floor and not in the bedrooms. Children must come down to eat. Next to this, announcements of courses and other events as well as the Cleaning List which shares out kitchen duties on a room-by-room basis. The village-sized residential community of the triangular building is spread across four and a half floors of 70 people per floor. The WC blocks arranged around the circulation core at each level are adequate and the ground-floor showers allow everyone to keep clean if they respect the shift system. The former tea kitchens in the corridors have been disconnected for legal reasons and are occupied by laundry hanging on slatted bed bases. What is most lacking is privacy. Here, no one has a place for themselves.

Basic needs

Safeguarding privacy – marking a place where someone can be alone, undisturbed by external influences – was, for Caramel Architekten, the first and most important subject of their intervention and they saw the time limit as a condition of - rather than a limitation on - their thought process. And while such ideas as mixing groups of residents, which were developed by the Biennale Team during the preparatory work for another building that was available for the medium term, are temporarily overtaken by practical considerations in the case of an emergency shelter, they remain central to future scenarios in which further incentives are required to positively support communal life in the building. In order to improve temporary living together in a residential community of this size as quickly as possible the architects initially concentrated on a clearly defined immediate measure based on two key questions:

1. How can one create privacy at minimum cost and in a very short time without intervening in the substance of the building?

2. How can one increase the permeability of the building to the outside as a way of countering the isolation of the residential community and generating openness? Safeguarding privacy through the creation of suitable separating elements and opening the community through the creation of connections to the outside were seen not as isolated subjects but as two sides of the same question. Caramel Architekten have already met similarly complex requirements with fleet-footed prag-matism in such projects as the visitor platforms at VOEST, the City of Culture office on Linz' main square, the Science Park Linz and several design and art objects as well as a number of residential projects with modest budgets.

"Time pressure and scarce resources can be seen as an opportunity," they say.

"In many cases it is simply not appropriate to develop complicated design details." Caramel Architekten enjoy working with modular structures and ready-made artefacts as they seek to translate a set of requirements into a handy conceptual tool. This was another project in which it was logical to use off-the-shelf elements to develop a system which is cheap, simple and flexible and remains focussed on the key objective.

Ready made

The architects' shopping list is full of everyday things that are normally used in other situations and contexts: *Polo-Kal* pipes with T-junctions and site supports for the basic spatial structure, three-metre-diameter parasols as a "load-bearing structure", thick white fleece as a spatial divider and certified non-flammable material of every colour as a spatial envelope, power distributors, LED lights, cable ties, sticky tape, coat hangers, headphones, plant pots and a doorbell made from a plastic bottle. The basic structure of each unit is easily slotted together or taken apart in a matter of minutes regardless of the spatial conditions. The module made from simple plastic pipes defines the basic spatial limits and the visual and atmospheric enclosure is provided by textile separating walls which combine intimacy with a sense of security. The unit for a family of four consists of a parasol with two sleeping places and two secondary spaces divided by partitions in which there are two extra beds. The vertical elements act as service runs with each having a light and a multiple socket. The basic structure which can be expanded at will only touches the building at its extremities and most work is involved in sewing closable pockets onto the "walls" which can be used for the storage of personal belongings.

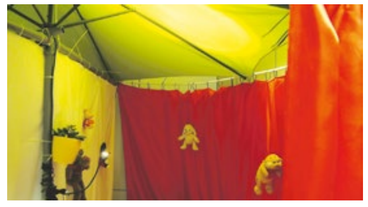
For Caramel it was important from the very start that the self-supporting cell with its parasol and secondary spaces was (and already has been) used not only in the context of an emergency shelter but also as an informal way of limiting spaces in all sorts of situations such as ateliers, open plan offices, children's playrooms and, indeed, anywhere, where a place of retreat is wanted or needed within a larger spatial structure.

The dimensions and functional possibilities of the units were first tried out in the shape of test structures in the architects' office. Which proportions are most pleasant and how well does a textile barrier work as a wall which will be respected as such?

Which additional features are needed if the object is to work as a room within a room? Even if the "parasol" is principally read as a positive symbol on the semantic level, this was, if anything, a happy coincidence. "The parasol is a chance element that just happens to also work symbolically," say the architects. In this concrete case it fulfils, amongst other things, the not insignificant role of shielding the unpleasant neon lighting of the office spaces and transforming the white light into warm light.

Participation

The process is the product and the product is not finished when it has been built. "We don't want to create something which someone is allowed to - or must - use later. Rather, we work in a cooperative process involving all participants as a result of which we have become our own research project."



In this open-ended process of addressing an existing building and its social structure the constructive exchange with the residents and their constant involvement in the process is almost as important as the effect of the spatial intervention itself. Ideally, once the process is started it will trigger a chain reaction and lead to further measures which improve everyday life in the shelter.

Instruction manual / open source to do list
www.placesforpeople.at/qr2

The testing and experimental phase in the office was soon replaced by action in situ: Caramel Architekten put up a prototype in a not-yet occupied room in the building and this sample unit was then shown to the entire community. The model was immediately met with enthusiasm and it was possible to start sharing out voluntary responsibilities tasks in a more-or-less ad hoc manner. Many hands got involved in the "building work". Specialist "piper men" demonstrated their manual expertise in erecting the basic structure while seamstresses threw themselves enthusiastically into cutting the material. "In no time at all the test room had become a sewing room and the sewing room had become a hive of activity."

Music could suddenly be heard in the building, children took over the sewing room as a playroom.

It was up to each family or room-group to design their own sleeping and living area and then modify this as required. The needs-based procedural transformation of the location tool worked across every linguistic barrier and, even in the men's room on the fourth floor, the initial difficulties were soon replaced by a striking level of creative energy; the communal area in this room which is shared by 12 single men from a range of countries of origin is now one of the most comfortable in the entire building.

Activity

People who are waiting for their interviews or asylum decisions are forced to spend most of their time in the shelter. The daily routine is largely dictated by the serving of food in the morning, at midday and in the evening and there is a lack of activities and

leisure options. Unlike in "normal" accommodation, asylum-seekers in emergency shelters are not allowed to cook for themselves and the food is delivered by the army or charitable organisations. This standby mode and this constant coming and going of fellow-residents and *Caritas* staff generate a sense of both restlessness and standstill, everything is constantly changing despite the fact that every day is like the next. However, as shown by the example of the sewing room, meaningful work can trigger a momentum which significantly brightens everyday life in the "camp". "

Our real hope is that the residents take possession of our offer and use it for their own ends" say the architects. "We are just the accompanying hand that is here to make that possible."

Soon afterwards, a small range of unbureaucratic services has also become established in the building. The sewing room is now a tailor's shop which adjusts donated clothes, one can get a haircut, there is a band rehearsal and table tennis room in the basement (and plans for an in-house cinema). On the second floor there is a communal and children's play room, the uses of which are already being defined by a self-regulating test phase.

Privacy

Communal spaces function when people also have areas into which they can retreat and intermediate spaces between the two. And the smaller this space "for oneself" is, the more important these intermediate spaces become. This is demonstrated very clearly in the living areas: a room number is stuck to each former office door. Before *Caramel's* intervention, as soon as one opened the door one found oneself in the sleeping space shared by a number of families. Now, although there are still no walls to provide solid boundaries between the beds, the space is zoned in a completely new way based on layers of intimacy. These degrees of privacy are astonishingly stable and binding and immediately respected by both residents and guests. Upon opening one of the former office doors one now enters a sort of vestibule in which one might not see anybody but one still feels immediately obliged to place one's shoes next to those of the residents. In reality, one has been in a room for a while but only now does one feel as if one is entering an apartment. The same old carpet is found throughout the offices but here in this implied

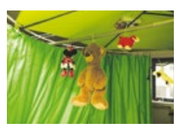
vestibule it is clear that one stands on the threshold between outside (the corridor) and inside (the living space on the other side of the textile partition). This semi-open transition space is even more important because although the doors can be closed they cannot be locked. The private unit for a family of four with two sleeping places under the parasol and two beds in the secondary spaces separated by a partition can be used in various ways. During the day this secondary space is a living space with blankets spread out on the floor as carpets while the bed is easily transformed into a couch. Although the spaces are only separated by strips of fabric the integrity of the sleeping area behind the closed curtains is retained. Disregarding acoustic limitations, these degrees of privacy mean that non-synchronised daily routines can take place alongside each other (sleeping, reading, playing, sitting together). One always has the option of retreating into a sheltered area certain that one is safe from the stare of anyone entering the former office. The provisional doorbell with its nameplate symbolises the inviolability of this private space.

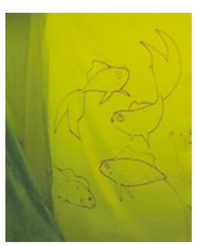
Individuality

This private space also allows people to individually design their daily surroundings.

"Shouldn't each individual have the basic human right to not only choose their location but also to occupy it themself?"

The common form of the basic structure that establishes the boundaries both between individual groups and within families strengthens the need to personalise this newly created space and adapt it in line with individual requirements. An Afghan family of five which moved into the shelter on the first day of construction of the parasols and has since moved into permanent accommodation fitted out and decorated its unit with spontaneity and a lot of love. The soft walls were not only hung with the closable pockets but also personalised with such objects as photographs and toys. A set of instructions may be useful for slotting together the basic structure but the most important things need no such directions. The personal marking of private space - this improvised occupation of a place "with oneself" - is the first symptom of functional success.





Community

The modular structure with the parasol which, in the sleeping areas, protects privacy and offers a sense of security fulfils a completely different function as an element of integration in the communal areas. The ground floor serving area and dining room are separated from each other in a logical way. After the wooden tables and benches in the dining room which had been left behind by previous users had been replaced by uninviting plastic furniture, parasols stuck in the table tops and decorated by plant pots full of herbs swiftly improved the atmosphere. A bar which was newly installed by Caramel - a stable structure covered with stretched fabric and an illuminated parasol (also with plant pots full of herbs) - then transformed the serving area into a meeting space where people are happy to hang out. Shortly after this structural improvement, a cooking initiative started up as a way of complementing the delivered food. Now, a kitchen chef and his crew work every day in an improvised kitchen preparing not only extra rice, salad and side dishes but also, increasingly, entire menus from their homelands using their own truly limited resources.

Openness

While an overfull emergency shelter lacks privacy it also lacks spaces where residents can come into contact with the city and the neighbourhood.

In order to open the building to the outside despite its own lack of free space, Caramel used a further variation on the theme of framework and parasol to create a pavement café as an extension of the entrance area on Pfeiffergasse. This is a place where one can sit in the shade on warm days but is also an element of connection on the edge of the building which is intended to signalise the presence and the visibility of the residential community. Right next to the building on the busy Wienzeile there is also an area of public green space which was previously unused. Following discussions with the district authorities this area was transformed into a neighbourhood garden through the addition of a children's playground, plant beds and seating benches and is now a place where children and adults can linger close to the house and – at least theoretically – come into contact with neighbours and passers-by.

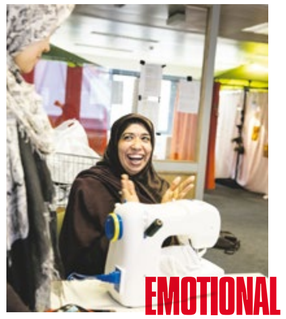
Unscripted Living

The collective appropriation of a building which was actually created for another purpose requires both improvisation and the ability to adapt – qualities which are by no means exclusive to emergency situations. The processes triggered by these temporary interventions show that a building like this which was originally an office building and then stood empty and is currently occupied by 280 people could be a future building block of the *Arrival City* that *Doug Saunders* has described on the basis of twenty busy improvised places. Even if the physical appearance of these places of arrival which are scattered across the globe varies, the way in which the basic functions and networks emerge from human relationships is similar.

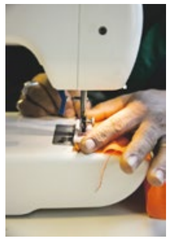
The global movement of migrants underlines the need to pay more attention to such informal places in the future. In view of the swiftly rising demand for living space it also makes sense in the medium and long term to regard vacant office buildings as adaptable spatial reserves and to transform these into permanent living and working places in which different user groups (locals and newcomers) are treated equally and whose architecture emphasises the dynamic character of the physical and social space. Collective improvisation which, at a small scale and with minimum input, can deliver a positive momentum which is capable of transforming a space in an unforeseen way can also be activated at a larger scale and in all social situations, whether a minimal intervention in a refugee shelter or the design of a corporate headquarters. For Caramel Architekten, the aim of every project, regardless of its size, is to concretise a general problem in a tangible use context. "In every project the answer is and remains the answer to the human question. Always. This is where we have come full circle because, at the end of the day, it is always about places for people." The protection of privacy and the opening to a community can take different forms, the decisive thing is that one has a choice.

PRIVACY

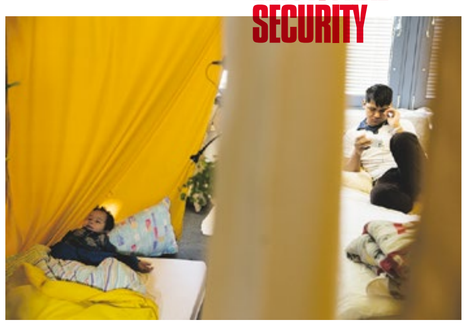
PARTICIPATION



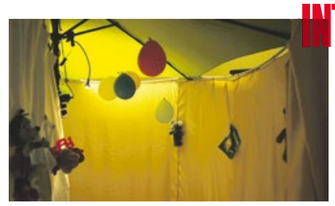
ACTIVITY

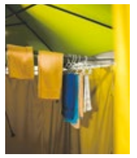


EMOTIONAL SECURITY

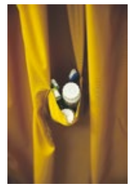


INTIMACY





INDIVIDUALITY

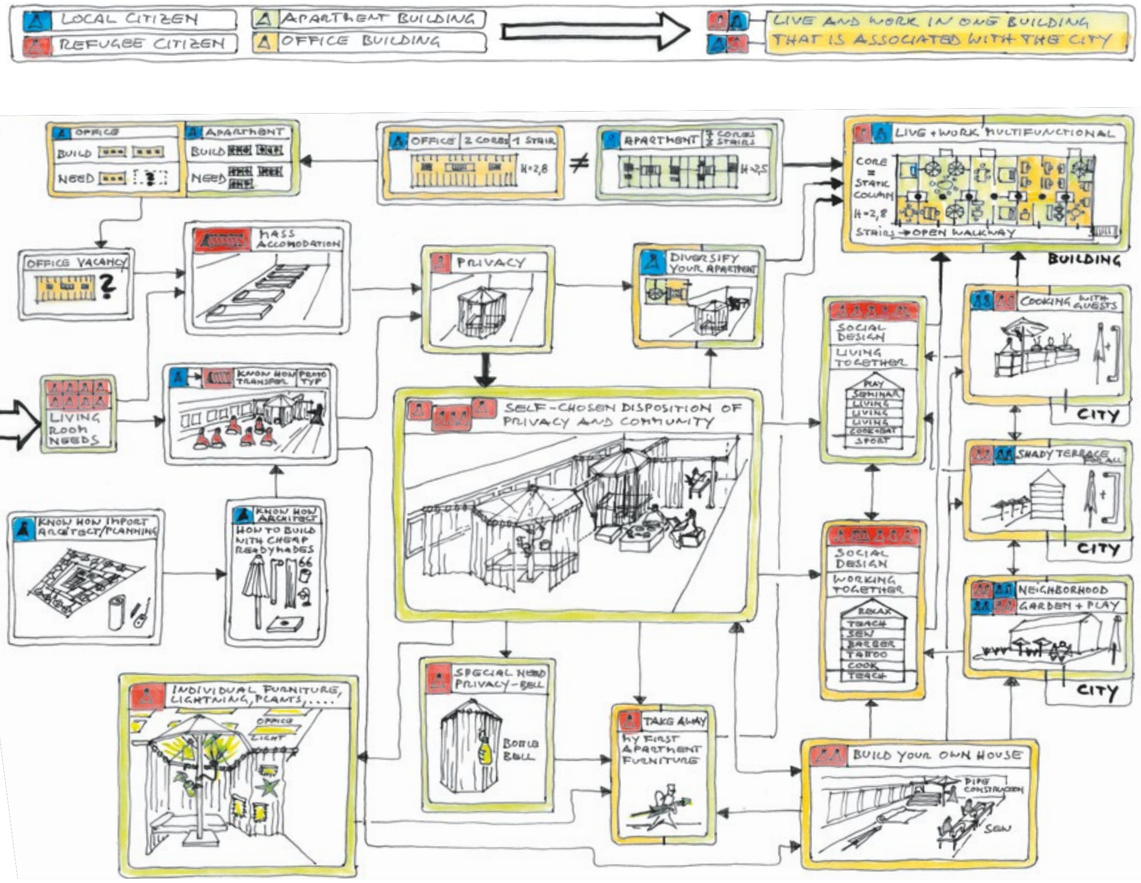


COMMUNITY

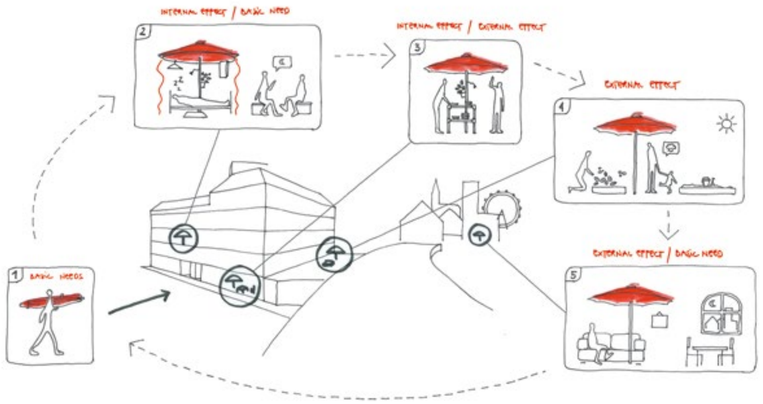
INTEGRATION

EXPORT

FUNCTIONALITY



A CENTRAL CRITERION OF OUR INTERVENTION IS THAT ALL ELEMENTS CAN BE RAPIDLY DISMOUNTED AND EASILY REASSEMBLED IN ANOTHER LOCATION.



Following our first visit to the emergency shelter in Pfeffergasse run by *Caritas* in December 2015 we learnt that the use of the building was limited to the four months between then and the end of April. For this reason, we decided to realise an intervention that should have a positive influence on the living conditions of the 280 residents as quickly and as economically as possible while also animating these residents to get involved in the shaping of their surroundings.

Starting with a minimal design repertoire we first developed elements for dividing up the space and creating some privacy in the former open plan offices and then extended this simple formal language to the communal areas, internally and externally, where it is used to create bar elements, forecourt objects and, given that the use of the building has now been extended indefinitely, garden furniture.

In parallel with the development work in Haus Pfeiffergasse, we have also already used the "Home Made" Tool Set to meet a range of professional and private needs. This closed-loop approach fulfils our original intention as architects of building not just for one special target group but for all.

5 MIN 50 €

Intervention / Factsheet

The three initiatives launched as part of "Places for People" form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The preceding pages, which were conceived and composed by Caramel architects themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind their intervention but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term "intervention" was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contribution is from Gabriele Kaiser, a well-known Austrian architecture expert, who is particularly familiar with the work and the approaches of Caramel architects and with the issues which they are addressing here.

This final page presents a summary of the most important facts and figures from the intervention in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

Type of shelter

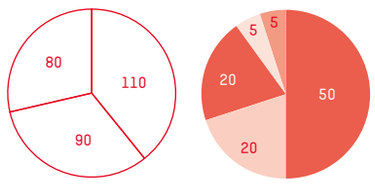
Emergency shelter 2015-2016

Title of Intervention

HOME MADE

Starting point

vacant 1970s office building
Usable space 2,000 m²
Room types family rooms 20-40 m²
open-plan rooms 100 m²
External areas forecourt,
200 m² garden



User groups

04 / 2016 280 people (110 men,
90 women, 80 children)
from 50 % Afghanistan, 20 % Syria,
20% Iraq, 5% Iran and 5% other
nationalities

Short description

Creation of privacy, improvement
of living quality, atmosphere
and functionality in communal
and external areas

Objectives

Privacy for 280 people by implementing
50 parasols set up in 5 minutes
and for 50 euros per person

Central features

Communal realisation,
individual appropriation
by residents

Envisioned result

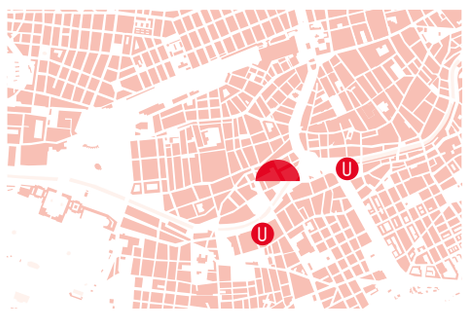
Scalable for expansion in
the urban realm

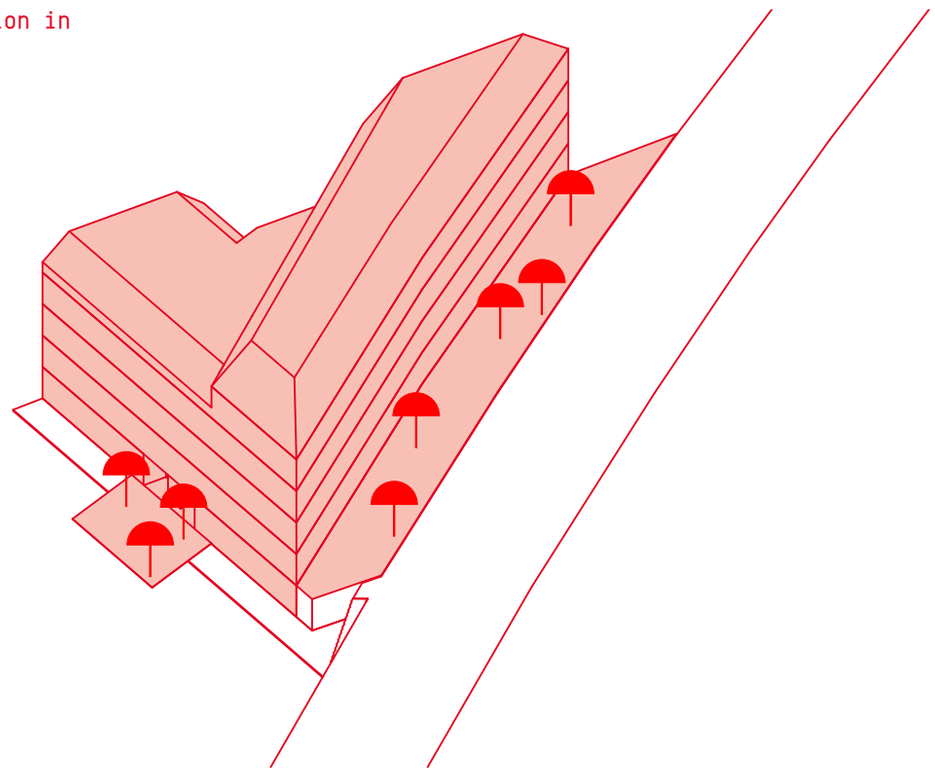
TIMELINE:
PROJECTED USE
2015-2016

Project start: Mid-January 2016
Construction first room prototype:
January 25th 2016
Construction final room: Februray
26th 2016
Fitting out bar/cafè: Feb. 11th-15th 2016
Start of construction work in garden:
April 4th 2016
Construction: 1st set for private use
(atelier & garden): April 6th 2016
Completion of garden including
noise barrier: May 11th
Forecourt design: ---

Investment
Total gross budget on
April 30th 2016: € 14,000!
Cost per person/room:
€ 50
Exemplary cost of one mattress:
€ 30
Cost of care/person and day:
€ 21

ACCESSIBILITY





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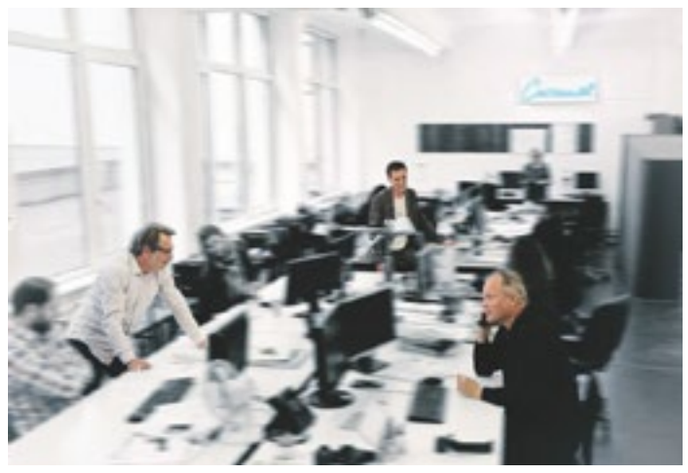


Photo: Andreea Cebuc

Breaking new ground with every project is one of the objectives of the office founded in 2001 by Günter Katherl, Martin Haller and Ulrich Aspetsberger.

In the event, the trio and their currently twelve employees have spent the intervening years realising an impressive number of buildings – from self-built projects to university buildings – and have never ceased to surprise with their unorthodox approaches and clever concepts, powerful forms and unusual materials. A lack of respect for convention coupled with an absolute respect for the needs of users, a distinct eagerness to experiment and deep personal and political commitment are further characteristics of an active and sometimes actionist architectural understanding that the team also convincingly shares in their publications, lectures and teaching.

The latest example of Caramel's cleverness when dealing with limitations is the Cj-5 House in Vienna which was completed in 2014 and in which the ingenious spatial programme and subtle detailing enabled them to obtain five times as much usable space as the surrounding residential buildings despite the minimal area of the site. The team readily uses convincing counter examples as a means of criticising existing relationships. Caramel's energy and clear social agenda together with the consistently innovative character of their work led to the invitation to participate in "Places for People" and the 2016 Architecture Biennale.

www.caramel.at

1
Adidas World Of Sports,
Herzogenaurach 2015

2
Infopoint European Capital of
Culture – Linz 09

3
House CJ-5, Vienna 2014

SOCIAL FURNITURE LIVING, COOKING, WORKING

Erdbergstraße, Vienna III

Kitchen wall panel SF 09

Text: Elke Rauth

Quotations by EOOS

For though they made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us, yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them."

Thomas More, Utopia, 1516

Utopia is located in Erdberg, one of Vienna's oldest settlements. The Romans were at home here and the Celts before them, while archaeological finds stretch back to the Neolithic Age. Here, on Erdbergstraße, which was the terminus of line three of the underground for many years and is just seven underground minutes from downtown, the city unravels into the Zwischenstadt, with its typical jumble of administrative buildings, sports facilities, empty plots, corporate headquarters, residential buildings, logistics centres and traffic arteries. One doesn't come here for a stroll. One comes here to do something.

In one of these buildings, a largely disused administration block, EOOS have had their temporary atelier since February 2016. The designers describe their workspace, which has exactly the same dimensions as the rooms that are available to the regular residents, as their "Field Office". Located in a former school for customs officers that occupies around 21,000 m² of a building complex measuring 68,000 m², *Haus Erdberg* has been accommodating refugees from the world's humanitarian crisis zones almost continuously since September 2014. Most come from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia and Iraq. Around 40 nationalities live here, washed up after fleeing from turmoil and war zones around the world, stranded for an indeterminate period on this secluded island, their Utopia. The lowest common denominator: the desire for a life without misery, a safe, peaceful and free existence.

"Our first task was to explain why we as designers were needed at all in this context. Crisis situations are dominated by emergency thinking and even experienced aid organisations are mostly overwhelmed with urgent needs which are principally pragmatic and scarcely aesthetic. However, the transformation of emergency shelters into accommodation for asylum-seekers creates a new situation: Everyday life requires other structures and opportunities if it is going to be feasible for residents to stay for longer."

Managed by the NGOs *Caritas* and the *Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund*, the complex is now being transformed from an emergency shelter into a primary care facility for families. The language of crisis and emergency should be replaced by an everyday normality which supports the act of arrival in the new homeland. This creates a need to adapt both the social and spatial structures of the building on which EOOS has been working in a number of ways since November 2015.

Similar questions are always arising in newly created care facilities such as Haus Erdberg: Much temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers is located in largely unsuitable office buildings which have been on the market for a long time due to their obsolescence or the sheer oversupply of office real estate – which is one of the many imbalances caused by speculation in cities worldwide. For, while the supply of affordable homes in growing cities continues to be squeezed, the office real estate market is dominated by dramatic vacancy rates. Experts estimate that 700,000 m² of office space stood empty in Vienna in 2015. A gigantic potential – and not just for accommodating refugees. This is why many architects and urban planners see the conversion of office space as offering a real opportunity for tackling the housing crisis. But this is not exactly easy: Constructional method, room depth, spatial programme, norms and legislation all mean that this theoretically logical reuse is full of pitfalls.

Hence, it is no surprise that Biennale Commissioner Elke Delugan-Meissl and the Biennale Curators Sabine Dreher and Christian Muhr from Liquid Frontiers cited "thinking in general about vacancy and temporary reuse" as just as central to their programme *Places for People* as "the development of forms of living together." Because, alongside many other key aspects, the current refugee situation has also placed the spotlight on a number of long-overdue spatial questions: questions of spatial justice, affordability, sustainability and, thereby, urban resilience or, more specifically, the resilience of cities and neighbourhoods in the face of crises – be these social, economic or ecological.

EOOS, one of the flagships of Austrian design with their prizewinning oeuvre stretching back more than 20 years, describe their interventions in *Haus Erdberg* as *Social Furniture*. Sub-titled *Living*, *Cooking*, *Working*, their Biennale contribution engages with central aspects of life in the accommodation while simultaneously testing social alternatives: *Living* includes the creation of spatial quality, orientation, security and the opportunity of self-organisation; *Cooking* understands the act of preparing food as an integrative, communicative and structuring element of daily life and the kitchen as an island of control over one's own existence as much as a place of togetherness; *Working* is dedicated to the key issue of work and occupation, analysing available resources and creating spaces for acting and sharing in the context of a moneyless barter economy.

EOOS' contribution to the Architecture Biennale materialises in a catalogue of simple DIY furniture, which is being built for *Haus Erdberg* with the help of residents in a specially installed workshop. The comprehensive assembly instructions have been published by the designers for non-commercial use as a creative commons in order to make the cheap and flexible furniture available for use in a variety of contexts.

Far beyond the current situation, EOOS' multifaceted contribution to the Architecture Biennale also serves as a laboratory for the investigation of potential solutions to looming social challenges and, thereby, the development of a viable model for sustainable living. The burning questions also open the window of opportunity to innovation, with architecture and design being seen as central disciplines in shaping social transformation. The declared objective: a good life for all.

Office building in Vienna Erdberg, the top four floors with a total of 21,000 m2 are used as a primary care facility

Representation of Utopia. Engraved frontispiece from the first edition, 1516.

Prototype of the signage system SF 17

The only official activity in the building is cleaning.

LIVING

§3. (1) Primary care comprises:
1. Accommodation in suitable facilities with due regard to human dignity and the family unit (…).
2. Supply of suitable food and drink.
3. Provision of a monthly allowance to people in organised accommodation and unaccompanied underage foreigners (…).

Extract from the: Vienna Primary Care Law, 11.4.2016

Vienna's municipal authorities initially took over *Haus Erdberg* from the Federal Administration at the beginning of December 2015 for long-term use as a short-term temporary residence for refugees in order to reduce the burden on the initial reception centre for asylum-seekers in Traiskirchen, around 35 km away. It is almost ironic that a building for customs officers whose original purpose was rendered superfluous by the open borders of a united Europe is being reused as accommodation for asylum-seekers just as new border fences are being built.

The mix of users in the 1980s building complex is heterogeneous and almost appears like a plot from the Theatre of the Absurd: Not only around 600 people in primary care but also the temporary premises of two grammar schools and a police training facility are grouped around the shared, courtyard-like circulation space. Directly opposite the entrance to the primary care facility is the entrance to the Federal Administrative Court which is also located in the complex and which, since January 2014, has been responsible for asylum decisions. Guiding the flows of all these different users in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of this mix is one of the design challenges which EOOS set themselves in the ongoing project.

"Poetical Analysis" is how EOOS describe the highly personal way of working with which they address such complex sets of questions: The beginning of every project is marked by a comprehensive examination which goes far beyond the consideration of the specificities of the situation itself. EOOS concentrate on exposing roots buried in the past and searching for intuitive images, myths and rituals which are inscripted to human behaviour and continue to support the organisation of social processes.

In the *Haus Erdberg* project, this stream of association led EOOS to the island of Utopia, the home of the "ideal" society portrayed in the philosophical novel by the English statesman and humanist Thomas More which was published in 1516. The societal model written in Latin exactly 500 years earlier under the title *De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* is considered the first social utopia and describes the structure of a rationally-based state with democratic traits. The book was so influential that, to this day, socially positive, progressive worlds of ideas are described as utopian. In Utopia itself, the equality of citizens, the fair distribution of work, the aspiration to education and the abolition of private ownership are the pillars of this fictive state. The original wood engravings of the 1516 first edition show a largely isolated island empire, surrounded by the sea and only reachable by ship. The island is self-sufficient in everything of importance because every citizen of Utopia is obliged to work in the city and on the land for the welfare of all. A slight overproduction opens up opportunities for the few, essential trade contacts but money as a medium of exchange has been abolished. Everything that one needs to live – clothing, housing and food – is available, equally to all, reduced to that which is truly necessary.

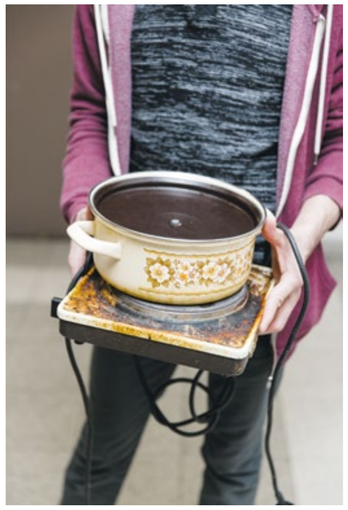
Even if the isolation of Haus Erdberg is more a reflection of the will of the arrival society rather than the choice of the residents themselves, EOOS still see a number of analogies with Utopia: The hope of a life free of existential fear, the absence of money as a medium of transaction, the aspiration to education, the reduction to the absolutely necessary and the idea of self-sufficiency belong to the reality of life in the accommodation for asylum-seekers and provide inspiration for any thinking about potential interventions in – and beyond - the building.

"What we are doing here is researching into social alternatives and experimenting with the possibilities of another society. For us, it is ultimately about working on utopias which lead to a collective transformation."

Seen in this light, there are also links between EOOS' work and the design ideas of Victor Papanek who, in his 1971 work *Design for the Real World. Human Ecology and Social Change*, called for design to be allowed to become an "innovative, creative and interdisciplinary instrument that does justice to the real needs of people". Design as a tool for creating a better world, in particular for socially marginalised people, and as a motor for social change. Despite their high design standards, these ideas – and this is classic Papanek –

Poetical analysis by EOOS:
Utopia, Thomas More (1516) and Nomadic Furniture, Victor Papanek, James Hennessey (1973)

The room of a Pakistani asylum seeker



Self-catering is forbidden in the rooms due to fire alarms and the inadequate electricity supply.

Newly created Caritas reception with the furniture SF16

were fundamentally not about "beautiful form" but about impact . This is an approach to design which has opened up many new fields of activity in recent years.

This is also the spirit in which EOOS have been developing the *Blue Diversion Toilet* since 2011 in partnership with Eawag, the water research institute from the ETH Zurich and in response to the Reinvent the Toilet challenge of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The challenge: to create an innovative toilet for the 2.6 billion people in growing informal settlements around the world who have no access to safe sanitation. The *Blue Diversion Toilet* is a dry separating toilet with a high-tech and yet low maintenance washing and flushing process. It works independently of water pipes, the sewage system and electricity and creates work by recovering raw materials for fertiliser production. At the same time, the *Blue Diversion Toilet* looks so good that it is also suitable for the chic weekend house in the wilderness and was awarded a special prize for outstanding design.

The principle spatial challenge for EOOS in *Haus Erdberg* is the creation of communal space. While the typology of the former school for customs officers, with its two-bed rooms of 27 m² with cupboards, showers and washbasins, provides a comparatively good basis for long-term accommodation, there is a huge lack of both spaces for meeting and cooking and usable outdoor space. Between 130 and 170 people live on each of the floors which, as a result of fire protection areas and escape stairs, cannot be clearly zoned, and around 35 per cent of the building consists of internal, windowless circulation space. In order to create amenity values within the existing space without intervening physically in the structure of the building, EOOS developed a catalogue of strategic furniture: This *Social Furniture* consists of flexibly usable and mobile furniture which enables space for meeting and communication to emerge. By introducing an alternative circulation concept the designers are creating interconnected zones focussed on the new cooking and living spaces. Furthermore EOOS are creating a range of modest interventions such as small steps in the corridors around chessboards set in the ground that offer playful possibilities for the appropriation of space.

In addition to this, measures are being introduced to enhance the sense of security of individual residents in the building. The eventual objective that families with children will move into the accommodation demands a locking system in order to protect private areas and a signage system in order to ease orientation. The basis of this new signage system is the *First Aid Kit – Icon based Communication for Refugees*, a language-independent, icon-based information system for initial accommodation which was developed by Viennese design studio buero bauer in cooperation with the Red Cross and Caritas, and which is available as a creative commons. Adapted for the specific requirements of *Haus Erdberg* by the graphic designers of *grafisches Büro*, the pictograms on luminescent green paper in printer-friendly A4 format are fixed on sunshine yellow formwork panels. This ensures more attention for important information, but also a friendly atmosphere in the otherwise gloomy spaces of the administration building.

"We are 100% convinced that, basically, a building of this size also has very positive aspects. The size permits the creation of a more complex "operating system", more people are involved and more can be offered – and this increases resilience."

Quite in keeping with a design that sees itself as a social process, EOOS' analysis includes all the resources which are available in the building and its neighbourhood and which could be used in the development of alternative approaches: space and time as much as the abilities and knowledge of residents, aid organisations, voluntary helpers and neighbours. At the same time, many resources were also created – external knowledge was imported and donations of materials and goods were organised, in order to ensure that the collaborative project becomes reality.

One of the things on offer is the specially created workshop in Haus Erdberg. Two man/woman teams take it in turns to supervise the furniture workshop and, together with around 60 residents, assemble the DIY furniture designed by EOOS. Inspired by Enzo Mari, one of the pioneers of the do-it-yourself movement, EOOS paid particular attention to the need to be able to realise the furniture with ordinary and inexpensive tools. This so obvious and yet largely unknown idea of the communal workshop in refugee accommodation makes one immediately think of the sociologist Richard Sennett: hand and head, body and spirit, physical and social environment work together. The holistic design approach of EOOS also encourages the workshop to function as a place where alternative practices and perspectives can be developed, as a process of social cooperation and slow arrival in foreign parts. To paraphrase Sennett very loosely: you don't have to know each other in order to create good together.

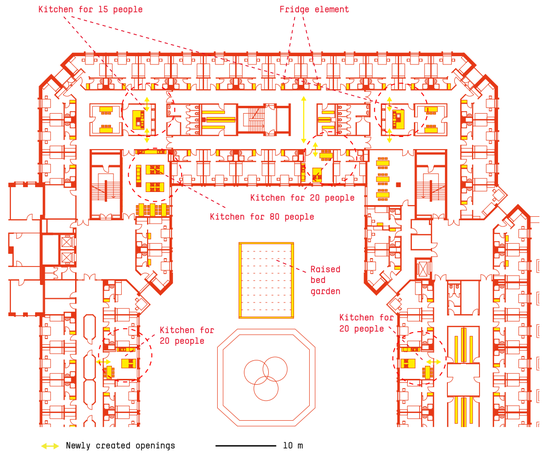
Kitchen wall panel SF09

Breaking through walls to improve communication

High table SF02 and stool SF05 which are used in the kitchen for preparation and eating

Mobile fridge element SF 11 for the rooms. The boxes can be used to transport personal cooking utensils to the communal kitchens

Partial plan of Haus Erdberg with the location of the communal kitchens. Each of the four floors has a useable area of 5,260 m² and space for around 150 clients.



COOKING

"Through eating I celebrate my existence."
Peter Kubelka

One of the key requirements of refugee accommodation is the creation of opportunities for self-sufficiency. Yet while residents are almost always eager to cook for themselves, the appropriate kitchen infrastructure is also almost always lacking and the spatial framework has to be created. Around 50,000 breakfasts, lunches and evening meals are served in *Haus Erdberg* every month and aid organisations and residents are looking forward with equal intensity to the launch of a kitchen infrastructure. At the very latest, the building should be fully adapted to self-sufficiency by the summer of 2016 when the first families arrive. According to the law, 5.60 euros are available per person per day for self-catering.

EOOS describe their modular kitchen programme for the primary care facility as an "island of self-effectiveness" because "cooking" is about much more than the simple preparation of food: food is a piece of internal and external homeland, sitting together at a table creates proximities and relationships. The possibility to cook represents employment and a minor element of control over one's own life amidst the sea of uncertainties that asylum-seekers have to face each day.

EOOS have already intensively addressed the subject of cooking in the shape of their b2 kitchen workshop for bulthaup, which was launched in 2008 and can be seen in the Design Laboratory of the Museum for Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK). The heart of the multi-award winning b2 is a two-door Kitchen Tool Cabinet that, upon opening, looks like a kitchen triptych and includes well organised space for all necessary kitchen tools and other items. The workshop kitchen is a typical example of the work of EOOS which always seeks to reduce things to their essence and lay bare their functionality and use. The research and development of the modular b2 lasted three years and the finished object consists of simple, mobile elements: A kitchen tool cabinet, a kitchen workbench with hob and sink and an appliance cupboard for fridge, dishwasher and oven. Overview, order and functionality are terms which one connects with the workshop kitchen – and tolerance, because, rather than strictly prescribing how they are used, design objects from EOOS seek to invite their users to playfully appropriate them.

Much of the experience gathered during the development of the b2 is flowing into the creation of the kitchen infrastructure for primary care facilities in the context of the Architecture Biennale. The mobility and flexibility of EOOS' design is a reaction to the often short stays of refugees in temporary shelters, which has previously made it difficult to create cooking infrastructure for reasons of both time and money. The widely varying size of the selected buildings is another reason for creating adaptability. In addition to this, the execution of the kitchen as an actual working space signifies not only a reduction to the essential but also a freedom from cultural connotations – a key factor in places in which people from many different countries are generally living together under one roof.

Among EOOS' sources of inspiration for the concrete designs which appear in the *Social Furniture* catalogue which has also been published to mark the Architecture Biennale are the books of James Hennessey and Victor Papanek, who developed demountable DIY furniture for a sustainable and mobile lifestyle in the 1970s in the form of *Nomadic Furniture I+II. In Haus Erdberg*, as in many projects, EOOS are combining their precise in situ analysis with a focus on the reproducibility of the measures and their applicability in a range of contexts.

"We are also concerned with the scalability of the furniture design. We want our "social furniture" to establish a standard – to both inspire and be used in further projects and contexts."

Hence, the kitchen furniture built from sunshine yellow 1 x 3 metre formwork panels is all designed for collective use. The smallest unit of the kitchen workbench with two hobs is equipped for feeding 20 people and fits in the standard 27 m² room in *Haus Erdberg* whereas the largest unit, joined together as a series of modules, will provide two communal kitchens for major events. As a free-standing worktable the kitchen workbench resembles an island unit which people can work on from all sides – which also encourages communication. Cooking as an element of integration – a new model for accommodation for asylum-seekers to which operators are very open.

As in a classic workshop, walls of tools retain order in each cooking unit and permit the storage of collectively used utensils. Large pots and special forms offer the opportunity to create special dishes or cook collectively in addition to the normal individual equipment which is available to each resident for the equivalent of ten euros. Simple constructional measures such as the creation of transparent glass walls create connections between kitchens, in-between areas and corridors. The interconnection of areas on each floor creates common spaces at the heart of which the kitchen is located as a means of promoting social interaction.

A total of twelve such kitchens are being newly built in the in-house workshop in *Haus Erdberg* and a further 18 are being created by adapting the existing tea kitchens. In addition to this, each of the two aid organisations has their own large kitchen in order to be able to organise events and gatherings for all of the building's residents. The kitchen furniture is complemented by tables, benches and stools for eating, all of which are built in the same friendly sunshine yellow raw material. All the elements are easily mobile within the spaces in order to permit a range of uses. The communal kitchen as multifunctional space – a solution for the generally rare resource of communal space in such accommodation.

EOOS work very intensively on the creation of very simple furniture. Because a lot of work is needed to ensure that such furniture, rather than being banal, is of the highest design quality while still working in the spirit of DIY.

All furniture designs are based on a limited number of typologies which can be flexibly used and combined as required. The tables and workbenches consist of the worktop and two forms of feet – a lightweight variant and a heavier, doubled execution depending upon where they will be used. There are also two variants for the height of the table: computer and working tables are designed to be used in either a sitting or standing position whereas dining tables are lower and invite users to take a seat. Even the wall typologies are interchangeable and can be used as tool stores in the case of the mobile workshop and kitchen or as a coloured signage system or information panels to aid orientation. The simple and yet aesthetically highly sophisticated designs reflect in a very accessible way EOOS' area of activity between researching and developing prototypes in their own workshop and the serial production of furniture.

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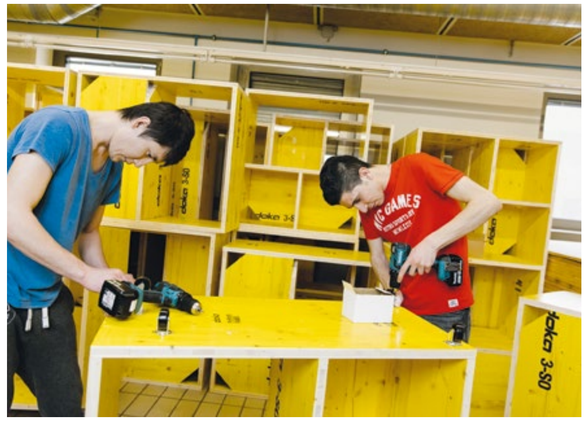
This is also demonstrated by the fridge unit with which each room is individually equipped. Anyone who wants to cook also requires space in which to store food. Instead of the usual solution of simply putting a fridge in every room, EOOS have developed a small storage cabinet on wheels which incorporates both the fridge and a number of simple, removable food boxes. Anyone who wants to cook simply grabs their box and heads for the kitchen. As the fridge unit is mobile it can easily be rolled out of the room and, combined with other units, creates a counter with cooling for communal festivities. 300 of these are being produced in the in-house workshop.

In EOOS' *Social Furniture*, DIY is a metaphor for taking things in one's own hands, empowering oneself – through both the building of furniture in the communal workshop and the range of applications and the openness offered by these designs to their users. For all their simplicity, numerous details hint at the meticulous way in which potential everyday use was addressed and, hence, at the quality of both the design and the functionality of the units. This was achieved by EOOS despite the extremely tight budgets available for equipping refugee accommodation. By meeting a given benchmark which actually refers to the lowest category of a low cost Swedish furnishing house, furniture is created that not only has design quality but is also repairable and reusable. EOOS' *Social Furniture* represents sustainable added value because it can be dismounted, easily transported, repainted and reused. And, in addition to this, the materials come from local companies and boost the local economy. Hardly a recipe for a crisis!

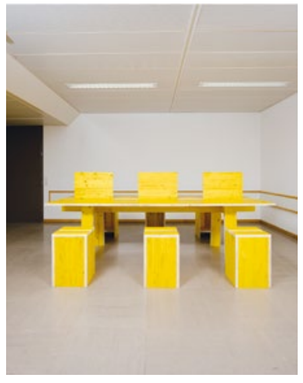
Cooking and eating together in the first model kitchen. A total of 30 kitchens for self-catering should be installed in Haus Erdberg. All furniture comes from EOOS's SF catalogue and was assembled in the in-house workshop. Iraqi, Afghan and Iranian cooks preparing their national dishes.



Internal courtyard of Haus Erdberg (2,300 m2). It is planned to create two raised beds for food production. Detail: raised bed SF18.

Components of the table SF02

Learning centre, computer desk SF12



Partial plan of Haus Erdberg. Standard floor with shops in the central areas. The ground-floor workshop is shown in the detailed excerpt.

WORKING

"So easy a thing would it be to supply all the necessities of life, if that blessed thing called money, which is pretended to be invented for procuring them was not really the only thing that obstructed their being procured. (…) Even poverty itself, for the relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall."

Thomas More, Utopia, 1516

Work is one of the key issues when it comes to the inclusion of refugees. As a determining factor for social security and social recognition it has a high significance in the organisation of a successful life. For people in primary care accommodation who legally shouldn't have to wait more than six months for their asylum notification letter but, in reality, often have to do so for years, work represents, more than anything else, activity and distraction as a means of escaping from the monotony of everyday life. In addition to this, opportunities to work which arise in organised accommodation such as Haus Erdberg can allow residents to earn a little money on top of their meagre allowance of 40 euros a month: A maximum of 100 euros "remuneration" for 25 hours work on behalf of the community in the accommodation may be earned each month. This is why aid organisations such as Caritas offer residents the opportunity to volunteer to perform tasks which would otherwise be contracted out to external suppliers. This is a welcome opportunity to work which, unlike in Germany, is fortunately anchored in Austrian asylum law.

Therefore the creation of work within the accommodation for asylum-seekers is one of the three central areas which EOOS have addressed. The establishment of the furniture workshop in March 2016 in order to enable the residents to produce the necessary infrastructure themselves is part of this strategy: Instead of investing the available budget in cheap particle board furniture which would not have lasted very long, high quality local raw materials are selected and the furniture assembled with the help of the residents themselves. The amount of materials processed is in itself impressive: The yellow formwork panels required as raw material for all the modules in the building would reach an estimated height of 68 metres if piled on top of each other. Ten tonnes of materials were processed just to create the 300 fridge units which are being built for each room, the orientation system and the almost 600 panels for numbering the rooms. The cost difference between buying cheap furniture for *Haus Erdberg* and self-building this furniture is enough to finance two workshop teams - each consisting of a man and a woman – and to pay for the work of 60 residents. However, probably much more important is the resulting relationship building – working together creates social cooperation, mutual respect, low-threshold acquaintance and the possibility of practicing freshly adopted language skills. The do-it-yourself furniture designed by EOOS has thus become a do-it-yourself arrival tool which demonstrates the importance of work in all its many facets.

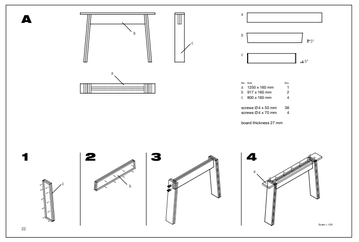
"Identifying resources is an important part of our work: finding out what is available in the building by signalling to the residents: Tell us what you can do and where you want to get involved."

At the same time, the 60 residents who are currently involved are only the first step and the further aim is to offer as many people as possible the opportunity to occupy their time in the temporary accommodation usefully. The entire intervention by EOOS is driven by the notion of trying to do things differently, experimenting with new solutions and suggesting alternatives. Thomas More's Utopia of a moneyless society is also a starting point for thoughts about establishing a communal economy and a barter system for the accommodation.

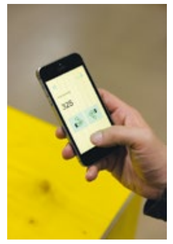
In most primary care accommodation systems soon develop in which residents perform informal work in order to keep busy: Hairdressers offer their services, craftspeople offer help in keeping the accommodation in good shape, interpreters keep communication flowing, musicians provide entertainment. In order to create space for these activities and to make them accessible to everyone EOOS are planning the creation of shop systems through small-scale spatial interventions such as breaking through walls and creating shop windows as well as providing sales counters and shelves. The shop idea follows the creation of an informal, moneyless market system – for services, but also for goods from outside.

Inspiration came from the informal settlement in *Torre David*, a 45-storey office tower designed by the star architect Enrique Gómez in Caracas, which became an empty ruin shortly before its completion in 1994 due to Venezuela's economic crisis. Following this, the building was informally occupied by more than 750 families who, alongside a residential infrastructure and leisure spaces, also created shops to meet daily needs. The interdisciplinary design practice Urban-Think Tank researched the spatial and social

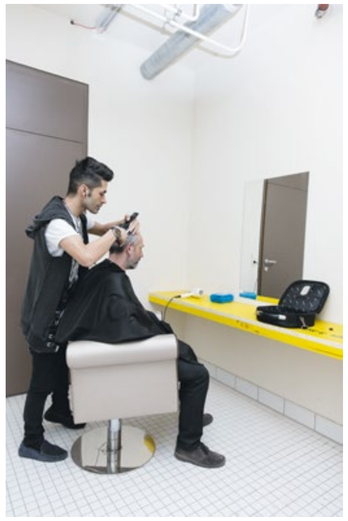
In order to activate the left-over space in the corridors and create work for the residents a number of shops are planned. For example, a cooperative food shop in order to support self-catering.



Social Furniture (SF) catalogue. A self-build catalogue edited by EOOS to mark the Biennale with 18 types of furniture in order to support self-determined, alternative collective living, working and cooking – not just in the refugee context.

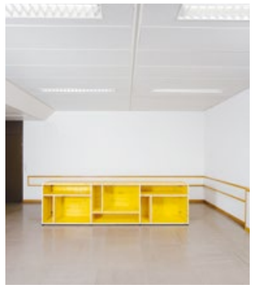


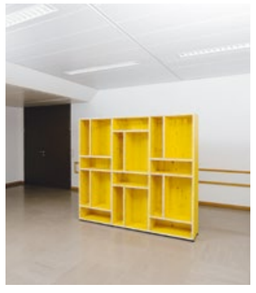
A local currency which can be accessed via mobile telephone. Services and goods will soon be traded cash-free in Haus Erdberg. This establishes an alternative economy in which work is also possible while the asylum application is being processed.



A hairdresser who worked in Baghdad before fleeing in his new salon in a left-over part of the corridor.

High table SF02, shop counter SF14 and shop shelving SF15





The legacy of *Torre David for Haus Erdberg* is the idea of creating spaces for informal communal economies and places of production which enrich life in the building and permit useful activity. For example, a baker's oven could make it possible to homebake bread and workshops with external experts could enrich and share knowledge ressources. The idea of a food cooperative and, thereby, the possibility of communal large-scale purchasing followed by the non-profit distribution of this food as already practiced in many cities could be another contribution to stretching the very tight self-sufficiency budget a little further.

In order to make these forms of self-organisation possible while still staying within the law, EOOS are experimenting with the introduction of a moneyless barter currency for which a digital platform is being developed in partnership with a large technology company. The scalability of the application is again being addressed from the very beginning, putting existing ressources such as smartphones into use. The digital barter currency system should make it possible not only to exchange goods and services but also to do things for free and therefore once more represents an attempt to create a structure for encouraging social interaction.

A project of cooperation with the *Stadtlabor* of Vienna University of Technology, which will spend the next few years in temporary accommodation in the St. Marx development area close to *Haus Erdberg*, will most likely enable the first external location for the barter currency to be established. The *Stadtlabor* should become a home to knowledge and event spaces, a cycle workshop and community gardens in which students, initiatives from civil society and local residents will develop an *Open University*, a field of experimentation in alternative forms of urban production and, hence, a place in which diverse knowledge can be exchanged. Cooking lessons for language lessons, bicycle repairs for home-grown vegetables. The range of possibilities is variegated and will provide the residents in *Haus Erdberg* with an important extension to their area of activity in the neighbourhood.

"Ultimately, a primary care facility must be a place where you have learnt something and which you can leave, better prepared to face the next phase of your life, whatever this may bring: whether you can remain here or not."

The two large raised planting beds in the internal courtyard fully reflect the notion of empowerment as a key ingredient of EOOS' design strategy. Supported by the know-how of the Austrian landscape architect Maria Auböck who, together with her partner János Kárász, was responsible for the design of the courtyard of the Austrian Pavilion at the 2014 Architecture Biennale, subsistence gardens are being planted as a way of both supporting self-sufficiency and creating attractive open space. 45 tonnes of earth, 32 tonnes of gravel and 400 m² of filter fabric are required to fill the two raised beds. The earth comes from MA48, Vienna's municipal refuse department, who collect the city's garden and kitchen waste and recycle this locally into high-quality compost. The use of this as fertile soil for the growing of vegetables in *Haus Erdberg* is a perfect example of an ecologically and socially sustainable organic closed loop economy. The 2,200 vegetable seedlings which are being planted in the first phase will not only transform the courtyard into a green space but also widen the range of food available to the residents as well as providing them with meaningful activity and a space for communication and community. Furthermore the courtyard will be a vital resource for the children who will be living in the building from the summer of 2016, providing a safe external space in which they can run around and play.

EOOS have invested vast amounts of time in developing their simple but highly sophisticated DIY furniture and social innovations. They want their project to be seen as a contribution to the discussion rather than as a 100 per cent solution, as a process with the objective of not only creating alternative ways of living for people in primary care facilities but also of testing more general alternatives for society. *Social Furniture* as a metaphor for researching the path towards a good life for all. Utopia is not a place. Utopia is a direction.

Download Social Furniture Catalogue
www.eoos.com/sf

Intervention / Factsheet

The three initiatives launched as part of "Places for People" form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The preceding pages, which were conceived and composed by EOOS themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind their intervention but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term "intervention" was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contribution is from Elke Rauth, a well-known Austrian architecture expert, who is particularly familiar with the work and the approaches of EOOS and with the issues which they are addressing here.

This final page presents a summary of the most important facts and figures from the intervention in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

Type of shelter

Primary care facility 2015-2030

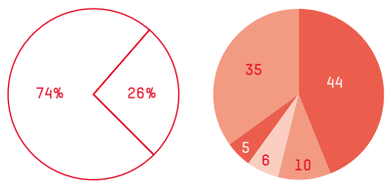
Title of Intervention

SOCIAL FURNITURE

Starting point

vacant 1980s office building
Usable space 21,000 m²
Room types two-bed rooms 27 m² + shower & washbasin
External areas Internal courtyard 2,300 m²
Other no communal areas / no self-catering

User groups



04 / 2016 441 men (74 % < 26 years)
from 44% Afghanistan, 10% Nigeria, 6% Somalia, 5% Iraq, and 35% other nationalities
06/2016 families planned

Short description

Introduction of new functions such as communal kitchens, workshops, high planting beds and shops

Objectives

Catalogue of strategic furniture DiY-manufactured on site.
Social design through the creation of work

Central features

Introduction of a communal economy facilitated by a specially developed app

Envisioned result

Scalable model of alternative living

TIMELINE:
PROJECTED USE
2015 - 2030

2015

November: first visit
1st December: Takeover by the operators Caritas and Arbeitersamariterbund

2016

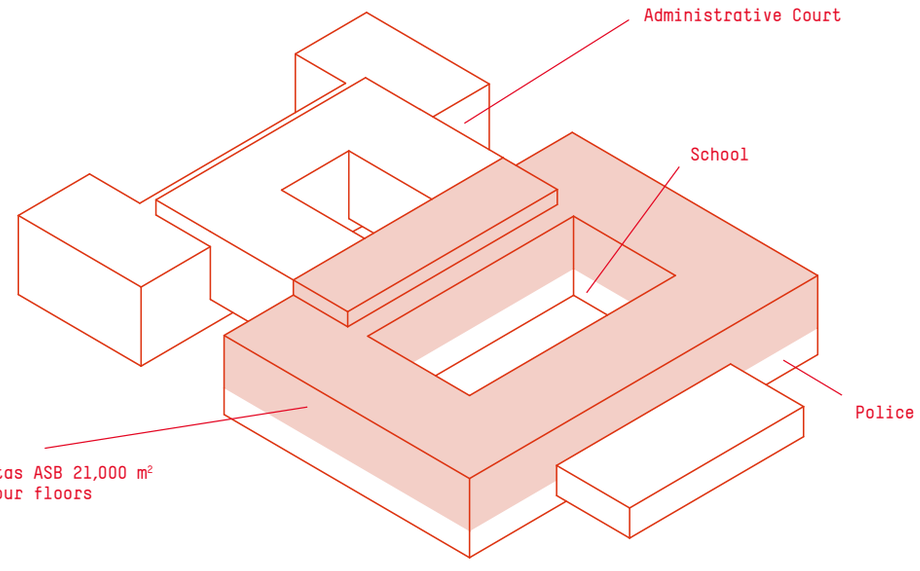
January: Development of furniture, 1:1 prototypes
February: Field office in Erdberg
March: Operation of in-house workshop
Food deliveries March 2016: 48,050 portions (31 days, 3 x daily)
April (start): Sample kitchen - start of construction
April (end): Sample kitchen - start of operations

Timeline for future measures
June: Installation of locking system, rollout of 300 fridge units, kitchens
Switch from external provision to self-sufficiency
2 large communal kitchens
12 small kitchens
18 adapted existing kitchens
Raised beds in courtyard in support of self-sufficiency
Introduction of communal economy

Miscellaneous project information
External areas
34 tonnes of earth for raised beds
32 tonnes of gravel
400 m² filtering fabric
2,200 vegetable seedlings
68 m high tower of panels (1x2 metres)
20 palettes - 10 tonnes of material to produce
300 fridges, 400 nameplates

ACCESSIBILITY

Budget information/resident
Daily payment for accommodation and care per person per day: maximum € 19
Monthly allowance: € 40
Daily allowance for self-sufficient residents: € 5.60
Hourly rate/ additional earnings limit for residents: €4 per hour / maximum € 110 per month



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Haus Erdberg

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Workshop Haus Erdberg:
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ARE-owner representatives:
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BIG-building management
Gerald Kopp, Richard Rupp

Courtyard design concept
Maria Auböck, auböck+karasz Landschaftsarchitekten, Wien

Signage system
Adaption of First Aid Kit, developed by: buero bauer, Gesellschaft für Orientierung und Identität mbH
Adapted in partnership with: grafisches Büro, Günter Eder, Roman Breier, Marcel Neundörfer

Actors' network
connect.erdberg
Mobiles Stadtlabor of the Vienna University of Technology

Sponsors
UMDASCH GROUP, EOTA, INTERNORM, MIBA, RIESS

Photo: Elfie Semotan

The design studio EOOS was established in Vienna in 1995 by the three partners Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl.

With around ten employees and a prestigious, international clientele EOOS is currently one of the most productive and prominent design teams in Europe. Central not only to EOOS' design language but also to its self-image is a research and design approach which the designers themselves describe as *Poetical analysis* and which they apply to the entire spectrum of their activities – from the creation of products, furniture and interiors to social design.
As the name suggests, this is an approach which combines strict analysis with poetic imagination. The results are reduced, highly functional and technologically innovative products which are not only anchored in a long cultural tradition but which also embody this same tradition in their form and purpose.
The latest result of EOOS' intense examination of both the cultural and social dimensions of design and new and sustainable technologies is a mobile toilet which, as it requires connection to neither a water supply nor a drainage network, is especially suitable for use in developing countries. The "Institute of Design Research Vienna" which was initiated by Harald Gründl in 2008 is also particularly devoted to the social and ecological aspects of the discipline.
Projects such as the "Blue Division Toilet", together with the reflexive design approach which is embodied in all their work, formed the basis of the decision to invite the design team EOOS to participate in the 2016 Architecture Biennale and to develop a concrete intervention for "Places for People".

www.eoos.com

1 b2 kitchen tool cabinet for bulthaup

2 Blue Diversion Toilet, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Field Test 2013, Kampala/Uganda together with Eawag.

German version available at
www.placesforpeople.at/qr1
Alle Inhalte auf Deutsch abrufbar unter
www.ortefuermenschen.at/qr1

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

UN/COMMON SPACE UN/DEFINED LIVING

Kempelengasse 1, Vienna X

Text: Elke Krasny

"What can architecture do?" This important question was raised by the architect Marie-Therese Harnoncourt in one of our conversations about the next ENTERprise's work on their Venice Biennale contribution. At their architects' office, which she runs with her partner Ernst J. Fuchs, we sat down together to look at urban mappings, sketches, photographs and floor plans. The urban, architectural, and political complexities of their Biennale work are profound. Harnoncourt spoke of urban strategies and of undefined sites that enable encounter and interaction. The architect placed much emphasis on the concept of temporary living. The use of existing buildings and infrastructures is as important to their approach as the adding of mobile elements that help to create new un/defined spaces.

As much as the next ENTERprise's architectural oeuvre is well known for its aesthetic and formal distinction and the way it strives to eschew both the normative implications of the modernist 'form follows function' legacy and the normative iconicity of the contemporary signature style, Marie-Therese Harnoncourt and Ernst J. Fuchs are, at the same time, devoted to social concerns and to making architecture politically. Harnoncourt and Fuchs seek to avoid the vicious trap of the widely held, yet false opposition between aesthetic achievements and social, needs-based buildings. The next ENTERprise seeks to steer away from the antagonistic relationship that is conventionally identified between more celebratory formal architectural expression and radical leftist politics. Theirs is neither the principle of the engaged community architecture practitioner nor the self-build approach or any other variation of a more formalised architectural participation practice arrived at through consultation with future users. Yet, Harnoncourt and Fuchs have a clear ambition to see architecture as relevant to social and political change. And it is in this context that the un/defined space can be understood as a potential space for subjective intimacy and for negotiating fairness in living together with others.

Continued p. 2

The human need for shelter is lasting.Architecture has never been idle.

Walter Benjamin

On the occasion of the 2016 Architecture Biennale, an event we have to understand first and foremost in the terms and logics of the big event, the next ENTERprise was invited to be part of Austria's participation. Almost ten years ago, in the wake of the 2007/2008 financial and economic crisis – and architecture is not only symptomatically indicative of the state of the economy but also conspicuously dependent upon money – exhibitions, and in particular architecture biennales, began to express a pronounced interest in critical and political architectural practice, in bottom-up urbanism, low-cost solutions and informal building. A whole range of biennales as well as international exhibitions and symposia embraced the trend of promoting politically conscious, socially engaged and critically motivated architecture. These exhibitions and their discursive frameworks discovered and celebrated, as I want to suggest here, the figure of the contemporary architect as activist. This architect is not only able to find ways of merely managing in times of crisis but, in the prevailing crisis, is also seeking to counteract and intervene. The 2016 Venice Biennale is continuing this rather recent legacy of promoting the relevance of architecture under crisis conditions. With regard to the next ENTERprise's Biennale contribution, three things are of interest to us here. First, their work does not easily fall into the category of activist architecture, yet they clearly seek to practice architectural justice in both architectural and political terms. Secondly, their contribution is part of an even more recent trend established by architecture exhibitions of going beyond the exhibitionary imperative to make real architecture instead of exhibitions.[1] Thirdly, the crisis conditions have dramatically changed since the 2007/2008 crisis. Today's crisis is marked most profoundly by austerity and racism. Austerity measures and structural racist violence have taken on dramatic dimensions. As we live through this long moment of crisis, the fundamental human need for places to live remains one of the most pressing concerns. The provision of places for living for low-income populations, refugee populations and immigrant populations is one of the biggest and most complex challenges. People have come to see each other as a threat. People have come to see each other as competitors. And, in particular, the refugee subject, whose precariousness has been maximised, has been ideologically reconfigured as both a threat and a competitor. According to the report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration, quoted in a Bloomberg article in January 2016, "about 6.5 million Syrians have been driven from their homes inside their country and another 4 million have sought shelter in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey."[2] This report also stated that "as many as 1 million people from Africa, the Middle East and Asia will seek refuge in Europe this year."[3] Therefore, the question of architecture and the question of the refugee subject have been joined in a complex way.

And it is in this context that the un/defined space can be understood as a potential space for subjective intimacy and for negotiating fairness in living together with others.

Refuge architecture – architecture that offers protection and shelter, both physically and emotionally, has become central (for refugees, but also for many others who are precariously vulnerable and in need of refuge) and should be clearly distinguished from emergency refugee architecture. Architecture is needed that actively resists the ideology of containment and encampment characteristic of much shelter provision. Containment and encampment spatially produce the refugee as a figure to be isolated because the refugee is ideologically constructed as a subject of

1 I want to give the following example here: Wohnungsfrage (The Housing Question) curated by Jesko Fezer, Nikolaus Hirsch, Wilfried Kuehn, and Hila Peleg at Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, October 23rd -December 14th, 2015.

2 Misha Savic, Europe Faces another Million Refugees this Year, UN Report Says, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-27/miqrant-flow-to-europe-won-t-weaken-in-2016-as-conflicts-persist

3 Misha Savic, Europe Faces another Million Refugees this Year, UN Report Says, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-27/miqrant-flow-to-europe-won-t-weaken-in-2016-as-conflicts-persist

"WORK-LIVING" AND OTHER HYBRID MANOEUVRES

Marie-Therese Harnoncourt and Ernst J. Fuchs of the next ENTERprise architects in conversation with Christian Muhr of Liquid Frontiers, Vienna, November 27th 2015

CM: What I have heard so far is that you are addressing the refugee question not in isolation but explicitly as part of a wider context. Am I correct that the city and the urban environment play an important role here?

MTH: That's right, although we see the city in terms of a society which has been developing in a multicultural dimension for quite some time. At the same time we are - unfortunately - currently witnessing both serious attempts to spread fear and the growth of right-wing populism. If we, as architects, are to address this situation, our main focus must be on public space and infrastructure, because both have huge significance for our ability to live together. Furthermore, however, there is the general issue of communication, because integration is ultimately based on comprehension. The dissemination of hate-filled messages naturally has a huge influence upon how public space is used. That is why the subject "Places for People" is not only about place and the urban realm but also about language.

EF: We are particularly interested in the city's 'blank areas' – these open zones which have yet to be defined offer opportunities for new ways of using the city. If we are to speak of a multicultural society then this firstly needs places where this mixing process can occur. In reality, on the other hand, as we see in residential building, the number of rules and regulations is constantly increasing and this, in turn, is leading back towards further separation. The current urgent question about the accommodation of refugees presents an opportunity – which we would like to use – to also address the future of the city.

CM: You posed similar questions some time ago as part of your teaching work at ESA in Paris.

MTH: Yes, there we addressed the notion of "fear of others" and asked how architecture could tackle this. Under the title "Hybrid Lifestyles" we developed a range of "implants" for *Goutte d'Or*, a hugely heterogeneous and conflict-ridden arrondissement in the north of the city which is home to many Moroccans. These implants are a form of cell which can mutate in line with different situations and requirements. During these two semesters of work we noticed the importance of the subject of "self-confidence" and the close relationship between this and the question of whether one is able to do something for oneself. The possibility of contributing actively to the life of a district is very important – not only politically but also psychologically. As well as refugees, this question affects many other groups in society whose lives are becoming increasingly precarious. In this situation, new forms of participation develop – such as the notion of bartering which is suddenly on the way back.

CM: Your office is in the Struwerviertel, which is both a piece of nineteenth-century Vienna and a suburb and, at the same time, an area of prostitutes which is right next door to a university campus and, hence, an area of change which offers great possibilities in terms of hybrid use.

MTH: We were the first architects to rent space in an industrial building in the 7th district which is now full of creative professionals. In moving again we wanted to deliberately go somewhere which is still open. The Struwerviertel is a sort of 'island' in the 2nd district with a high proportion of foreigners and an interesting mix.

CM: That means that you discovered vacant space here and decided to move?

MTH: Yes, but it was not a strategic decision. We simply had the feeling that this was an interesting area and wanted to give it a try.

EF: There are, for example, some interesting initiatives in the area which seek to offer an alternative to classic economic functionalism. Private actions which make the district particularly lively. One of our neighbours is a software developer who cooks once a week at cost price, e-mails the invitation and everyone can come and bring someone else if they want to.

MTH: That is both economically sensible and inspiring – also as a way of integrating refugees into a social structure.

CM: So you yourselves already practice this hybrid use of the city. It also plays an important role in your thoughts and interventions as you prepare "Places for People". Are there also other themes which characterise your approach?

MTH: Our other starting points are the notion of the multicultural and the factor of self-organisation which we have also intensely addressed in our residential projects.

CM: In this regard you created the term "Work-Living". How should I understand this?

EF: "Work-Living" is a form of living in which home and work are combined. "Work-Living" can assume very different forms, such as the combination of a home with an office, a workshop or a restaurant. At the same time, it also refers to a principle that affects a building at many levels, combines spaces and, as a result, generates life. We also seek to dissolve traditional functional divisions and classical hierarchies within the building. My opinion, for example, is that the ground floor shouldn't always only be used for shops.
Thanks to technology the location of an office can also be much more flexible today –in the roofspace or in the garage, for example. "Work-Living" is in any case a countermove to segregation and monoculture and a concrete example of the mixing of which we spoke earlier.

CM: The title "Places for People" is also seen as a homage to Bernard Rudofsky. I have the impression that Yona Friedman is perhaps more important for you. Rudofsky also referred to this influential architect and urban planner in "Streets for People".

MTH: It's funny that you ask us that because, out of interest, we visited Yona Friedman many years ago in Paris. He welcomed us to his house and was delighted by our attention. He is very important to us in connection with this current subject because he was in the position to develop utopias and take a forward-looking perspective, particularly on the question of living together in the future. Friedman is particularly inspiring with regards the interdisciplinary way of working that we have chosen for "Places for People". Our opinion is that we should involve lots of creative people. Even if NGOs are able to implement perfect functional solutions with incredible speed, it is vital not to forget the informal aspects which are essential for positive integration. One basic concern is to signal to people that they are worth something. Just as I want our children to be taught in high-quality spaces, I feel that it is important that people who come to us can also enjoy appropriately aesthetic and atmospheric experiences. This, in turn, also has a lot to do with Rudofsky who didn't restrict his observations about other cultures to functional questions but also strongly addressed aesthetic issues.

EF: I would like to briefly add to that: Rudofsky is fascinating because he used the term "anonymous architecture" and, thereby, succeeded in showing the extent to which buildings are also expressions of a culture. Yona Friedman is, on the other hand, interesting because he was one of the first to address the structures and, especially, the mega-structures, in which humans settle, in the form of, for example, cities. Starting with these structures, his interest moves onto networks, flexibility and mobility and all those terms which are at the heart of today's debate – which, in turn, shows what a visionary he was. At the same time, Friedman and his manifesto "L'architecture mobile" are to be seen in relationship to the Situationists who were, to a certain extent, the pioneers of the hybrid use of cities. They wanted to get rid of stiff relationships and involve everyone in rethinking cities. Such an approach also holds potential for our current task.

CM: A central aspect of your concept is universal applicability. You develop modules, elements, which offer users ways of living and acting and whose hybrid character means that they can also be used in a wide range of spatial situations.

MTH: The requirement to find accommodation for a lot of people as quickly as possible raises the question of "vacant space" because the use of such space is a way of creating relatively economical accommodation not just for refugees but also for a wider spectrum of people who would also be able to live there relatively cheaply. A lot of office buildings are currently being offered for temporary use periods of two to three years. Our objective is to develop prototype elements for this office building typology which, through addition rather than constructional intervention, will create dignified and affordable space appropriate to the concepts of temporary living and working. The starting point for the needs analysis for the development of these elements is the current refugee situation and the possibility of initiating a positive process of integration.

CM: You use the same principle at the urban scale with elements that you call "urban building blocks."
MTH: We think that such a strategy of temporarily "marching in and out" can also be used on the city in general with the same advantage of providing affordable space for new forms of living and producing. These units can be provided for a certain period to people going through a period of change or experimentation. The concept can also be applied to new buildings if, for example, new residential and office buildings also include units for temporary use. Such "free spaces" could appear across the entire city.

EF: In the context of "Places for People" we are initiating an attempt to develop a completely new approach. Initially, we are having to operate within the strict limitations imposed by efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The same was also true of the concrete blocks which had to offer accommodation to as many people as possible in a very short time. The answer was the development of a typology and a process of industrial prefabrication. We have to orient ourselves with this approach but, at the same time, we must also ask if containers really are the only way of meeting these criteria or if the solution is not simply stupid, because no one can live in a container for three months without suffering at least psychological problems.

MTH: Harry Glück spent his life trying to optimise, but he was optimising with the objective of being able to build a swimming pool on the roof because it was clear to him that this certain extra would be a trigger to communication and to the strengthening of the community. Even if he didn't achieve everything one has to admit that Alt Erlaa works unbelievably well as a small city and, thanks to its form and its vertical gardens, also possesses a spatial urban quality.
In this context I think of Grafenegg, where we built a concert stage - the Wolkenturm. The stage itself is reserved for large orchestras and visitors with expensive tickets but, at the same time, there are also seats on the grass in the park. This bastion of high culture, which is theoretically reserved for a particular clientele, is actually broken down by this secondary use. My sense is that "Places for People" is also about discovering intelligent manoeuvres which circumvent existing relationships and then enhance these relationships with new ideas about forms of living, producing and communicating.

CM: This objective fits in with our thoughts about first of all latching on to existing projects and then providing these with a new "spin".

threat and competition, a subject that is threatening the existing order and competing for access to resources, infrastructures and institutions that, via a biopolitical matrix of governance, are claimed as being reserved for those who are citizens of a nation state. Therefore, architecture that can serve as housing, shelter, refuge and home is considered central. Yet, we must not forget that architecture also provides public space in which one can move freely and have access to public expression and social encounter, to joy and relaxation. This is important for any kind of futurity for societies transformed by mass refugee movements.

"Reporting from the Front" is the overarching theme chosen by the curator Alejandro Aravena for the 15th International Architecture Biennale in Venice. One cannot but immediately take note of the strong war metaphor invoking the eyewitness reporting from frontlines, battles, sieges, atrocities, killings, war-torn civilians and refugees. In historical terms there is of course, as many others have noted before me, a most paradoxical relationship between architecture and war. Wars' destructions make possible, both spatially and economically, architects' works. Yet, this is not the direction this essay will take. Much rather, I will turn to the theme chosen by the curator of the Austrian Pavilion, Elke Delugan-Meissl, as her response to "Reporting from the Front." She decided on "Places for People" in order to specifically address the contribution that architecture can make for refugees, for those who can and, in fact, must report from the front, for those who are displaced, endangered, traumatized and haunted by war. The Austrian Pavilion's theme opens up the urgent question of architecture and refugees or, put differently, of refuge architecture. Let me add two observations here between which there is a complex link, one about current politics in Austria, EU and the Balkan States and the other - an epistemological observation - about the history of exhibitions. In early 2016 Austrian politicians spoke out for closed borders. A February article on the World Socialist Website reports on the Vienna Conference "Managing Migration Together" in which Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Bulgaria participated alongside Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina,

Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. Neither Greece nor Germany was invited. Heavily criticising the EU policy of open borders all these countries effectively worked towards permanently shutting down the Balkan route.[4] The idea of officially representing a nation state inherent in the pavilions of the Venice Biennale means that whoever engages with the Austrian Pavilion is implied in its official politics. Yet, this does not mean that one must abstain from taking on this task. Rather, it means that the Biennale contribution can be used to confront the official party politics of a nation state using the symbolic capital of work realised under the umbrella of representing that nation state. Let me move on to my second observation. The works commissioned for the Austrian Pavilion do not take place in Venice. The works commissioned were given the task of anchoring themselves in the realities of refugees locally on the ground in Vienna. Elke Delugan-Meissl's curatorial intent goes beyond the exhibitionary imperative. The term exhibitionary is owed to Tony Bennett's seminal work on the critical genealogy of the museum institution.[5] The museum as a public institution, like the world fair and the biennale, was implicated in the matrix of colonial industrial capitalism and helped shape its violent structural epistemologies of both exclusive and inclusive processes of othering. So, to a certain extent, the Austrian Pavilion in Venice leaves the show behind and its contributions become part of the realities on the ground in Vienna.[6] The exhibitionary imperative is broken precisely at a time when party politics has become the politics of border regimes and migrant management. And architecture leaves behind the exhibitionary imperative to become part of life itself and, in doing so, is even more implied in and entangled with the very hostile political conditions that govern both political realities and national representational logics. With regard to art and art exhibitions, Angela Dimitrakaki has written about the "biopolitical paradigm, where the artistic "act" unfolds within the *social life* (bios, in Greek) proper."[7] Even though her observation was linked to art and its relationship to the art exhibition and not to architecture and its relationship to the architecture exhibition – and I think that there are huge aesthetic, economic, epistemological, and material differences with regard to art and architecture and their responses to the exhibitionary imperative – her argument is still useful in our context. The architectural act, the Venice Biennale contribution, unfolds within the social life of Vienna and its refugee population. Architects were asked to do architecture – and not to exhibit architecture. So, we have an important interruption here. Interestingly enough, the 'show-must-go-on' paradigm is interrupted precisely at a time when national representation has become a highly fraught task for architects adhering to leftist politics. And, even more importantly, architecture is invited to take agency. The funds and the symbolic capital of the Biennale participation are being used to commission new architectural work useful in the current mass migration and refugee crisis.

Let me sum up the specific situatedness from which Marie-Therese Harnoncourt raised the what-can-architecture-do question to which I dedicated this essay. The question comes from an architect who was chosen to become involved in a nation state's representation at a global architecture event. Therefore, whatever work is produced, it has to operate on a level of global visibility and representativity. The work has to be state-of-the-art in appealing to both a globalised mass audience and an international peer group of architecture experts. At the same time, the work is embedded in and made visible through the nation state's representational logic as I explained earlier. The question was raised by an architect who was commissioned to provide architecture urgently needed in the current refugee crisis. So, we have here the logics of the nation state, of a global mass audience event, of an international expert group and the current catastrophic conditions of a mass refugee movement. Therefore, the urgency of the what-can-architecture-do question is very much owed to the specific political, material and economic conditions of the here-and-now in our present historical moment.

The next ENTERprise engages with the crucial 'living on time' issue and with the equally crucial question of how people can relate to the world in which they live. Urgency infringes on time. Urgency makes time precarious. In short, urgency's relationship to time is destructive. We are always already too late. We are always falling behind. We have run out of time, or so we are told. Architecture, as we are all fully aware, is a spatial practice. Yet, given that architecture deals with living and, at times, with 'living on time', we have to become more alert to the fact that architecture is also very much a temporal practice. Architecture is implicated in the conditions specific to the time of its production. Architecture is part of the power relationships between governing bodies and things. At the same time, architecture offers protection and refuge, at times architecture even succeeds in sheltering from the very power relationships mentioned before. The crisis conditions necessitate urgent action. Yet, it is also crucial not to be reduced to urgency measures or urgency actions. Today's harsh realities harm people's lives and livelihood. Today's realities displace millions of people. Today's realities are relentlessly brutal and unforgiving when it comes to the shortcomings of our actions, be they architectural or otherwise. This seems to be the real and ideological impasse of our time. Seeing the future as a worrisome place to be, caused by the problems of the past, means that we are somewhat paralysed in the present. Therefore, I fully take up Marie-Therese Harnoncourt's question as both a most timely question under the current crisis conditions and a question that undermines the urgency action imperative since it implies a different timeframe, one that transcends the moment and reaches into a futurity.

The provision of places for living for low-income populations, refugee populations and immigrant populations is one of the biggest and most complex challenges.

Let me pause here to go through Marie-Therese Harnoncourt's question in a slow manner. By so doing, I seek to break the urgent action timeframe, not in order to dispute it, but in order to show that different temporalities are also needed in times of crisis. By capitalising a different word in each repetition of the question a sequence will be created that will allow us to have a better grasp of what is at stake here, politically, socially and philosophically.

WHAT can architecture do?
What CAN architecture do?
What can ARCHITECTURE do?
What can architecture DO?

If we imagine the spoken emphasis as corresponding with the visual emphasis I have used here, then we begin to understand what the question asks. Not only do we listen to and look at the question differently but, maybe even more importantly, the question addresses us differently in each of the four repetitions. In shifting the emphasis from the interrogative pronoun to the modal verb to the noun to the verb we begin to get a sense as to how one can make out both a call to architecture and a call to call architecture into question.

What can Architecture do? Crisis, Precariousness and Hope

Let me go through the words one by one. WHAT refers the object of the question. We could argue that architecture could be the object of a possible answer. Architecture can do architecture. And this is highly important. Architecture can in fact produce architecture. Yet, this is not enough. Architecture cannot be the only possible object that can be named as an answer. Architecture, as I would like to suggest here, can do more. CAN means to be able to, to be capable, to be possible, or to have the power. Architecture therefore *enables more* than architecture, is *capable of more* than architecture, *makes possible more* than architecture, has the power to do more than architecture. The next word is ARCHITECTURE. The grammatical subject of this question is architecture. Let me switch from grammar to semantics. Architecture occupies the subject position. Architecture is accorded agency. Architecture is understood to have the capacity to act. This only serves to underline what was already stated before. Architecture can produce architecture – and more. DO is the final word in the question. To do is a verb with a palette of very strong and very rich meanings. To do means to perform, to effect, to fulfil, to produce, to work out, to manage, to make good. Therefore, we can rephrase the original question as follows. What can architecture perform? What can architecture effect? What can architecture fulfil? What can architecture produce? What can architecture work out? What can architecture manage? What can architecture make good? In engaging with this question, I would like to suggest that what we are confronting here is in fact the twenty-first century architecture question. What can architecture do? Here and now?

The architectural act, the Venice Biennale contribution, unfolds within the social life of Vienna and its refugee population.

A question presents itself. An answer is expected. In fact, an answer is most urgently needed. Yet, I want to suggest here that the crisis has profoundly interrupted this question-answer relationship. This extends to the architecture-question and the architecture-answer. It is a relationship broken by the crisis condition. There are no available answers. There are no answers to fall back on. There are no answers to rely on. But attempts have to be made to come up with architecture-answers, as well as other answers, despite knowing that the crisis might exceed any of the answers found. Therefore, the what-can-architecture-do question raised by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt is as much a real and pragmatic question to be answered in architectural terms as it is a political and theoretical question. I said earlier that architecture can do *more*. It is my aim here to make a case for understanding architecture's *more* as political rather than economical. Architecture is part of the systems of support that humans depend upon. In a 2012 text titled "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street" Judith Butler writes that "we must insist on there being material conditions for public assembly and public speech."[8] She goes on to elaborate that: "In the first instance, no one mobilises a claim to move and assemble freely without moving and assembling together with others. In the second instance, the square and the street are not only the material supports for action, but they themselves are part of any account of bodily public action we might propose."[9] And, most importantly for our purpose here, she continues with the following sentence that allows us to understand that what architecture can do is, in fact, political. Architecture is implicated in the politics of support and dependence. Butler writes: "Human action depends upon all sorts of supports – it is always supported action."[10] Let me explain why I think that it is important to extend the politics of the streets to the politics of the corridors, hallways, open-plan offices, small offices, meeting rooms, green spaces and open areas just as much as to tea kitchens, showers and bathrooms. The latter are all spaces that the next ENTERprise engages with in their Biennale work.

The bodies in need of support for their public actions are equally in need of support for all their other actions that sustain and support their lives. On many levels their other actions support their public actions. On many levels these actions run across bodies and spaces, be they public, private, common, or un/common. The concept of the un/common is owed to a lecture given by Athena Athanasiou in Vienna in December 2015. And I quote her here: "I want to reflect the institution as the condition of possibility for the un/common space of the polis. The purpose of this slash, this inaudible or unheard-of typographic sign that implies the not-in-common at the heart of being-in-common, is, within its very limited capacity, to bring out the exigencies that mark the polis' coming-into-presence as a common space of plural agonism."[11] I would like to connect the un/common space of the polis with the nextENTERprise's un/defined spaces, be they located inside or outside, be they produced by mobile elements moved into existing buildings or be they new architecture altogether. I see a connection to be established here between the un/common space of the polis and the un/defined space of living. I see architecture as a potential link running across the un/common and the un/defined in which both the politics of the polis and the politics of living are enacted. In her lecture, Athanasiou went on to say: "To contest and to go beyond the normative horizon of the centralised territorial polis is to engage with its 'constitutive outside', inhabited by those figured as dispensable, either in the form of the economised precarious human of neoliberal rationality or in the form of the racialised illegal human in transit across the increasingly militarised frozen waters of European necropolitics."[12] Therefore, to go beyond the normative territorial politics of urban planning and architecture as provision for those who are considered ideologically indispensable, for those who have a nation-state right to access to housing, institutions, infrastructures and other services, is to take refuge architecture seriously, yet not to reduce it to refugee architecture.

Architecture supports public assembly. Architecture supports eating and sleeping, conversing and relaxing, in short, living. I do not want to separate one from the other. Architecture supports bodies in corridors or open-plan offices or kitchens. Let me connect Judith Butler's support argument with the next ENTERprise's urban and architectural strategy. Marie-Therese Harnoncourt and Ernst J. Fuchs believe that cities should contain un/defined sites that are not normatively regulated in economic, political, social or cultural terms. As architects they have their eyes trained to make out these sites, in whatever physical form, shape or condition they might be. Theirs is a strategy of mapping the city for such sites of potentiality. Equally, they understand the conceptual and professional tools of architecture to be of the highest relevance to the transformation of such existing sites or even to the design of new such sites. These sites, as I would like to suggest, have the potential to become support structures for the un/common polis and un/defined living. Such sites engender urban agency – and potentially – urban citizenship.

And, even more importantly, architecture is invited to take agency.

Too early to conclude – an architecture of beginning

Following Marie-Therese Harnoncourt's invitation, we spent a night together at their Vienna Biennale project. Located in the former Siemens Headquarters, two floors are transformed into temporary living for both students and unaccompanied minor refugees. Mapping the city of Vienna in search of un/defined spaces, the next ENTERprise singled out office buildings lying fallow. They took up the challenge to turn the office spaces into living spaces. The architectural element they use consists of an inhabitable box fully equipped with a fold-up bed, shelves, a fold-out table and doors that close. With the doors open, you create a topography, you engage with your neighbours. With the doors closed, you create an intimate and sheltered room of your own. Their proposition keeps most of the office structure intact and inhabits it by way of using the boxes as mobile units. These allow for different actions and interactions on the part of the future inhabitants. The space surrounding the boxes is central to their architectural proposition and takes the urban strategy of opening up un/defined spaces to the rooms in an office building. The great advantage of the former office is that there is space, space for social interaction, space for leisure activities, space for sports, space for future collaborations with universities or other interested parties. In contesting the idea of providing architecture destined solely for refugees and, instead, moving towards a strategy of using un/defined spaces opened up to 'living on time' in a very specific and architecturally memorable environment, at once intimately sheltered and part of a social life with others, they make architecture politically. Taken together, the intimately sheltered box and the surrounding space asking for a way of living practiced by sharing space collectively invite hope for the possibility of un/defined living and the un/common polis.

WHAT can architecture do?
What CAN architecture do?
What can ARCHITECTURE do?
What can architecture DO?

4 Martin Kreickenbaum, Westbalkankonferenz schließt Grenzen und spaltet Europa, 02-26-2016, https://www.wsws.org/de/topics/site_area/news/

5 See: Tony Bennett, The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics, London: Routledge, 1995.

6 There will still be an exhibition-type presentation at the Austrian pavilion in Venice that shares the projects with the Biennale audience

7 Amelia Jones and Angela Dimitrakaki, "Viable or Merely Possible? A Dialogue on Feminism's Radical Curatorial Project," in: *Women's Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*, eds. Elke Krasny and Frauenmuseum Meran, Vienna: Löcker, 2013, p. 70.

8 Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," in *Sensible Politics. The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, eds. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2012): p.117. Butler's text was written in the wake of the uprisings against regimes in North Africa and the Middle East in 2011. It is in this geopolitical context that Butler draws out the complex relationship between support and dependence.

9 Ibid. p. 118.

10 Ibid. p. 118

11 Athena Athanasiou, "The question of the institutional in the biopolitical economy of disposability," lecture held on the occasion of the symposium *Counter-Acting. Self-Organized Universities*, curated by Lena Rosa Händle, Andrea Hubin, Belinda Kazeem-Kaminski, Elke Krasny, Barbara Mahlknecht, Sunanda Mesquita and Hansel Soto., Vienna, 12-04-2015

12 Ibid.

FINDING THE UNDEFINED

We are particularly interested in urban spaces which are used either temporarily or not at all but which, as a result, offer the potential for new ways of using the city. Our aim is to create infrastructure which invites users to both take possession of such spaces and activate them in their own individual way. Given this background, we see the current, urgent issue of accommodating refugees as a trigger for opening up spaces for communication and exchange between very different groups of people.

In concrete terms, our objective is to develop, on the one hand, simple and economically producible internal objects which provide a hybrid living and working tool for residents and, on the other hand, targeted external interventions which encourage interaction and communication between residents and locals. We understand these elements as "urban building blocks", because they can be introduced not only in existing buildings but also in new-build projects and, beyond these, in a wealth of urban situations.

As part of the "Places for People" initiative, the engagement of the owner of a former industrial site is providing an opportunity to use such urban building blocks as a way of making the previously fenced-off site more accessible to the neighbourhood. At the same time, a project of cooperation with the operators of refugee accommodation in some vacant office floors on the same site is allowing us to test - over a period of three years - the prototype of a private module developed to facilitate new forms of communal living.

On a sociocultural level, our architectural interventions combine with the work of numerous others actors who, through promoting and accompanying various forms of participation in the area over the course of the past two years, have already set in motion the social and cultural momentum essential to the successful adoption of the "urban building blocks".

1 – APA Tower
1190 Vienna

2 – Former District Office
Alsergrund, 1090 Vienna

3 – Former University Building,
1090 Vienna

4 – Former American Medical
Society of Vienna, 1090 Vienna

5 – Wien Energie Haus
1090 Vienna

6 – Das Hamerling
1080 Vienna

7 – Office Building Josefstädter
Straße 15 / Lange Gasse 33, 1080
Vienna

8 – Haus der Bilder
1070 Vienna

9 – Former OMV Offices
1210 Vienna

10 – Former Post Office
Nordwestbahnstraße 6, 1200 Vienna

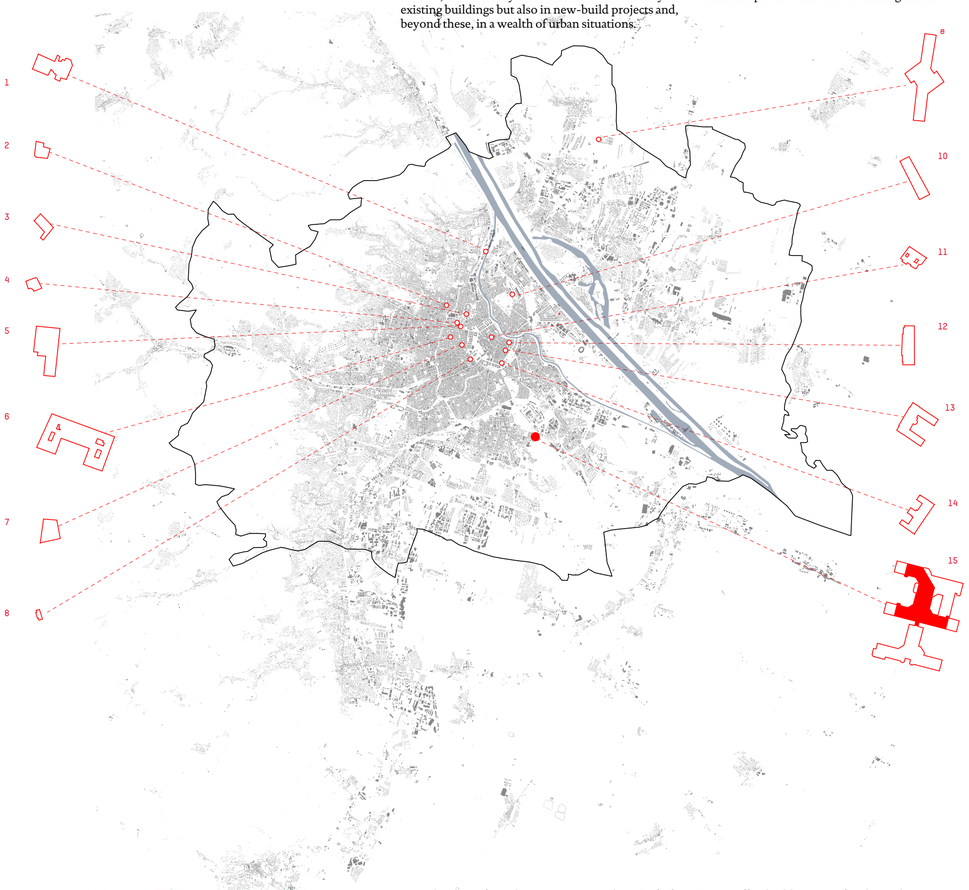
11 – Herold Haus
1010 Vienna

12 – Former Main Post Office
1010 Vienna

13 – Former commercial court
Vienna, 1010 Vienna

14 – Former offices of Veitscher
Magnesit AG, 1010 Vienna

15– Former Siemens HQ, Building 1
Gudrunstraße 13, 1010 Vienna



Examples of vacant properties in Vienna as researched by the next ENTERprise, April 2016

OFFICE AS SPACE

According to informal estimates, around 10% of office space in Vienna is vacant. The City Council reacted to the refugee crisis with the § 71c law, which established exceptions to permitting procedures (for 15 years) designed to encourage the creation of "temporary facilities for the accommodation of people" and, hence, opened the way for experiments with new forms of temporary living.

Vacant office buildings are often located in mature urban settings with good public transport connections, both of which are basic requirements for integration. At the same time, a shift in the mix of uses from working to living alters the effect of a building on its surroundings. The extension of an operating period from 'nine to five' to 24 hours a day contributes to not only a visible but also a tangible stimulation of the urban realm.

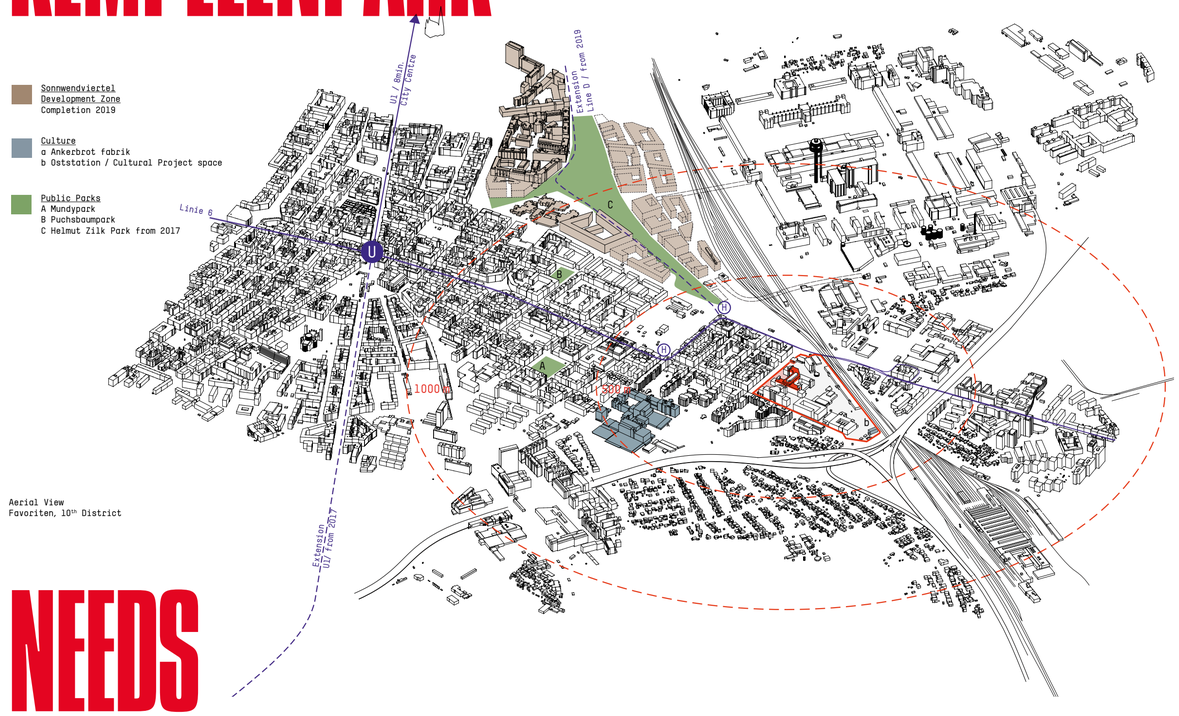
Am Kempelenpark, views in and out, 2016

PILOT PROJECT KEMPELENPARK

The former industrial complex is located in the south of Vienna in the city's most heavily populated district and just 20 minutes from the centre by public transport. Despite its high residential density, the district has a heterogeneous structure: the adjacent urban development area around the new Central Station, the dense, late-nineteenth century perimeter blocks of the Kreta district, the public housing estates of the 1980s and the peripheral areas of allotments combine to create a certain dynamism which is further boosted by the nearby Ankerbrot factory, a cultural zone created in a former bakery.

To the southeast, the district is abruptly divided in two by the Ostbahn and the A23 motorway.

The immediate neighbourhood of Am Kempelenpark is dominated by the so-called Kreta district, a largely low-income residential area with a high proportion of immigrants. Urban structural factors have played a significant role in the slow development of this socially problematic district with its urgent need for both refurbishment and development.



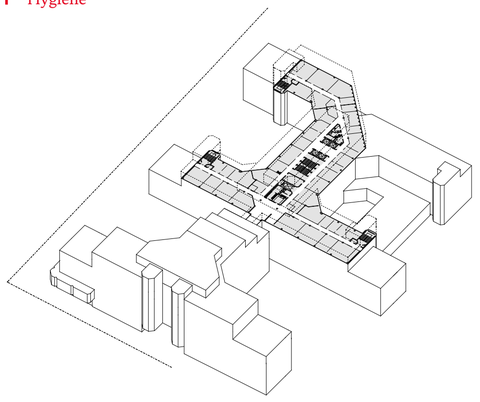
Aerial View
Favoriten, 10th District

NEEDS

To inhabit

OFFICE SPACE

Kitchens
Privacy
Hygiene

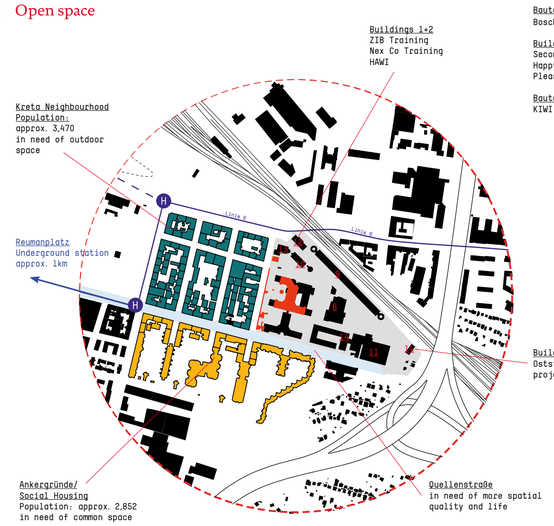


Office complex from the 1980s
Circulation cores with toilets and tea kitchens
Central corridors
5m–7m deep offices
Movable partitions
Raised floor system and suspended ceilings

Existing structure at 4th floor

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Local services
Social and leisure facilities
Open space



Building 6
Restaurant

Building 9
Parking deck

Building 10
Phönix private school
and kindergarten

Bauteil 11
Bosch BSH

Building 12
Second-hand clothes
Happy. Thank. You. Me.
Please

Bauteil 13
KIWI Kindergarten

Location plan: Am Kempelenpark and its surroundings

TRANSFORMING THE SITE

Siemens office building, view of the fenced-off site from Kempelengasse

Through architectural measures

The combination of a new topographical circulation in the external areas and the autarchic room-in-room modules in the internal areas establish the infrastructural basis for dynamic processes of appropriation. This integration of inside and outside creates new *rooms for manoeuvre* which, at best, will benefit both individuals and the entire social context.

Through participative urbanism

A constantly changing cast of participating actors is "invigorating" and driving the communication and development of the urban realm around the former Siemens complex in Vienna's Favoriten district.
Mutual visits and communal meals, discussions and walks are promoting the self-confidence of this very special part of Vienna.

The arrival of a broad range of users, the unprecedented opening up of the Kempelenpark and the establishment of the highly versatile *CopyShop Community Space* are creating new opportunities for communication and communal living.
Residents and users are becoming both active participants in and drivers of the present and future development of the city.

UN/COMMON SPACE

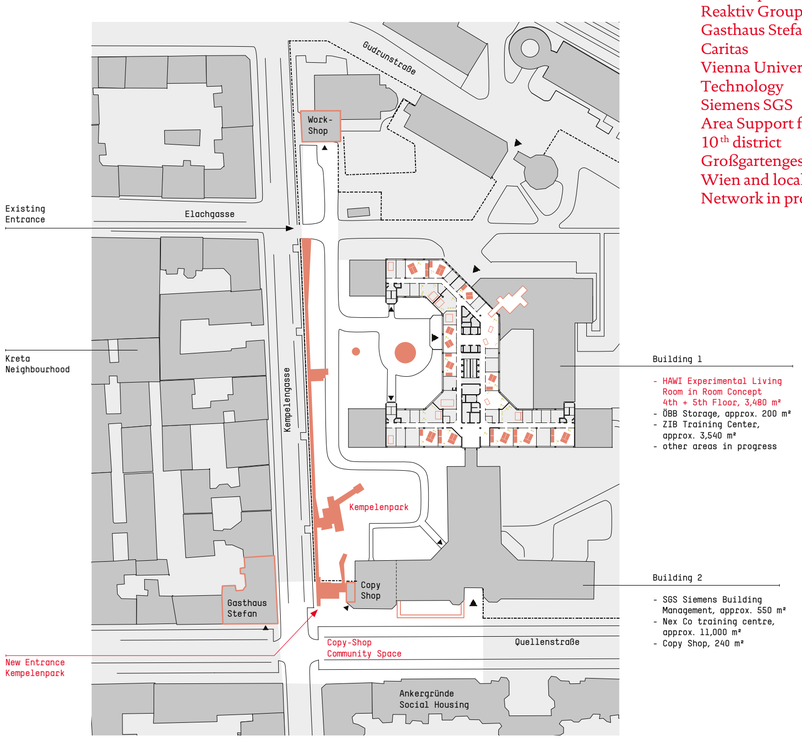
Opening up the site

By creating an opening in the fence and a new connection at the CopyShop corner the Kempelenpark is integrated into the urban realm and becomes accessible to the public and the neighbourhood. This creates interactive and communication zones which, without predetermined functional uses, offer a range of possibilities for individual and shared activities.

UN/DEFINED LIVING

Room-in-room concept

The multiple use of a specially developed room-in-room module is creating a new typology of residential community. The compact private module is complemented by a generous range of free areas which the residents can use in line with their own requirements. The exemplary living module is designed in such a way that it can be used more widely as a complement to the existing residential market in the context of temporary living.



Interventions and new room for manoeuvre

Actors' network

Boden Bildung Wien
Wiener Räume
PFI Immobilien Gruppe
the next ENTERprise architects
the companies of the Reaktiv Group
Gasthaus Stefan
Caritas
Vienna University of Technology
Siemens SGS
Area Support for the 10th district
Großgartengesellschaft
Wien and local residents
Network in progress.

KEMPELENPARK

Topographical circulation with external spaces

The new topographical circulation consists of a 140-metre-long timber walkway, which runs parallel to the fence and slopes gently down to the Kempelengasse entrance. A series of elements such as steps, tribunes and sloped surfaces bridge the height difference of up to three metres from the walkway down to the grass. This new topographical circulation invites passers-by to use the new pedestrian route through the site while preserving the residents' direct access to – and enhancing the user experience in – the park.

Opening Kempelenpark June, 18th 2016

Opening of first views

View of building 2 from the bank

View from the square to the street

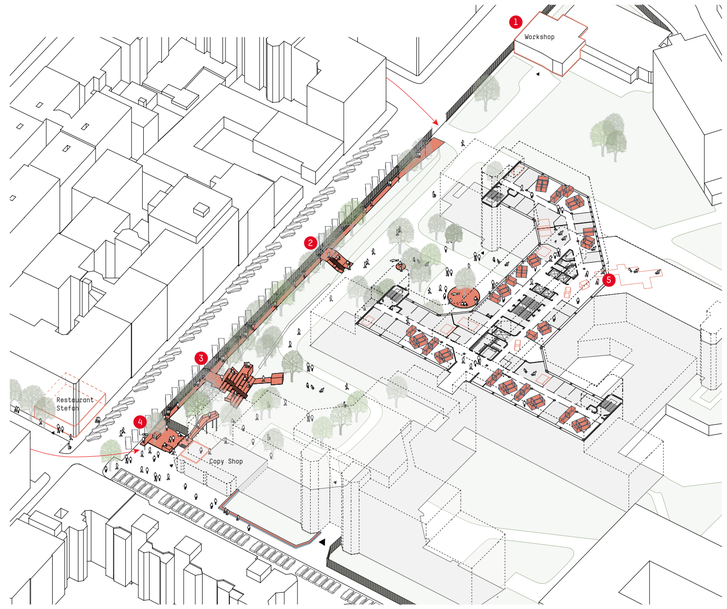
1 - Workshop
External space

2 - Walkway and waterfall
Area of connection and relaxation with nest / retreat and island / 50m² for sitting / performing next to the entrance BT1

3 - Walkway and tribune
Area of connection and relaxation with external space / private cabin for HAWI residents

4 - Walkway and small square
New entrance to CopyShop community space in Kempelenpark with urban balcony / and CopyShop community space for locals and residents with Gasthaus Stefan

5 - HAWI-Experimental temporary living



Spatial relationships between indoor & outdoor interventions

HAWI

Experimental temporary living

"HAWI – Experimental living" is a socio-cultural model developed in association with Caritas which enables young refugees aged between 18 and 24 to live together with students.

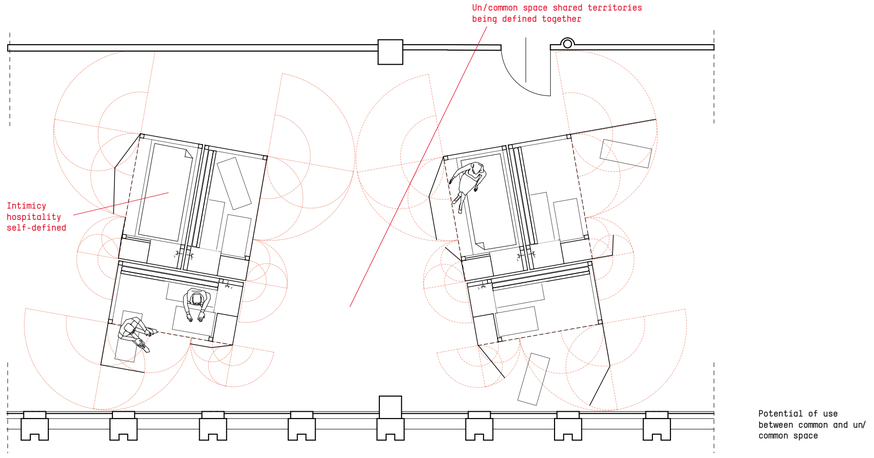
In order to adapt these special residential forms to the needs of young people, architecture students from Vienna University of Technology participating in the "Home not Shelter" project led by Alexander Hagner are beginning, as the first residents, to work with the young refugees to define and to occupy the free spaces in line with their own needs.

The owner is providing a specially equipped site workshop for the assembly of the units. The joint decision and coordination processes, which are essential for the creation of the units in line with individual requirements, are fundamental to this unconventional and self-determining form of living together.

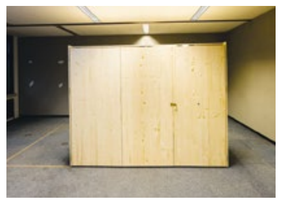
A total of twelve prototypes of the private room-in-room module are arranged in each open plan office in order to offer privacy and the opportunity for retreat while still preserving the generosity of the well-lit spaces. Each "private module" has its own electricity and lighting supply and can cut itself off from its surroundings by the closing of the screens or, inversely, open these in order to expand the private realm.

The first residents are moving in in mid-June

Imaginary HAWI inhabitant



Potential of use between common and un/common space



Work your Home

February 16th 2016, Start of testing the prototype on site

UN/COMMON SPACE UN/DEFINED LIVING

THE NEXT ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTS

Intervention / Factsheet

The three initiatives launched as part of "Places for People" form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The preceding pages, which were conceived and composed by the next ENTERprise architects themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind their intervention but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term "intervention" was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contribution is from Elke Krasny, a well-known Austrian architecture expert, who is particularly familiar with the work and the approaches of the next ENTERprise architects and with the issues which they are addressing here.

This final page presents a summary of the most important facts and figures from the intervention in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

Type of shelter

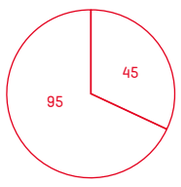
Primary care facility & Student residence 2016-2018

Title of Intervention

UN/COMMON SPACE UN/DEFINED LIVING

Starting point

1980s office building
Usable space 3,480 m² on 4th & 5th floors
Room types offices 19-72 m²
with mobile partitions
External areas 5,200 m2
Other no showers, no kitchens



User groups

07 / 2016 140 young people
(45 unaccompanied underage refugees + 95 refugees / students
Countries of origin
not yet known

Objectives

Low cost infrastructure with extensive scope for action for users internally and externally, alternative forms of living and communicating

Short description

Residential community typology, prototype private module, opening of site via new topography of connections with external spaces

Central features

Transferable room-in-room concept with appropriable intermediate spaces

Envisioned result

Scalable for hybrid and urban buildings

TIMELINE:
PROJECTED USE
2015-2016

December 17th 2015:
First visit to site

January 7th 2016:
First meeting with owner

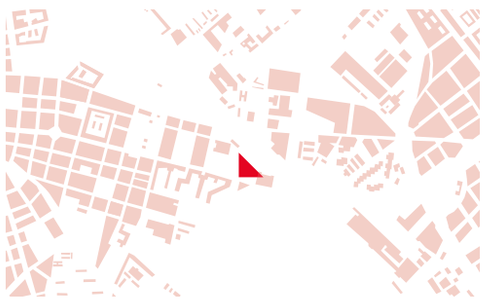
February 15th 2016:
Set up of the first two prototypes

Since February 2016:
Collaboration of actors' network, jour fix-lunch at Gasthaus Stefan every Thursday at 1pm for everyone

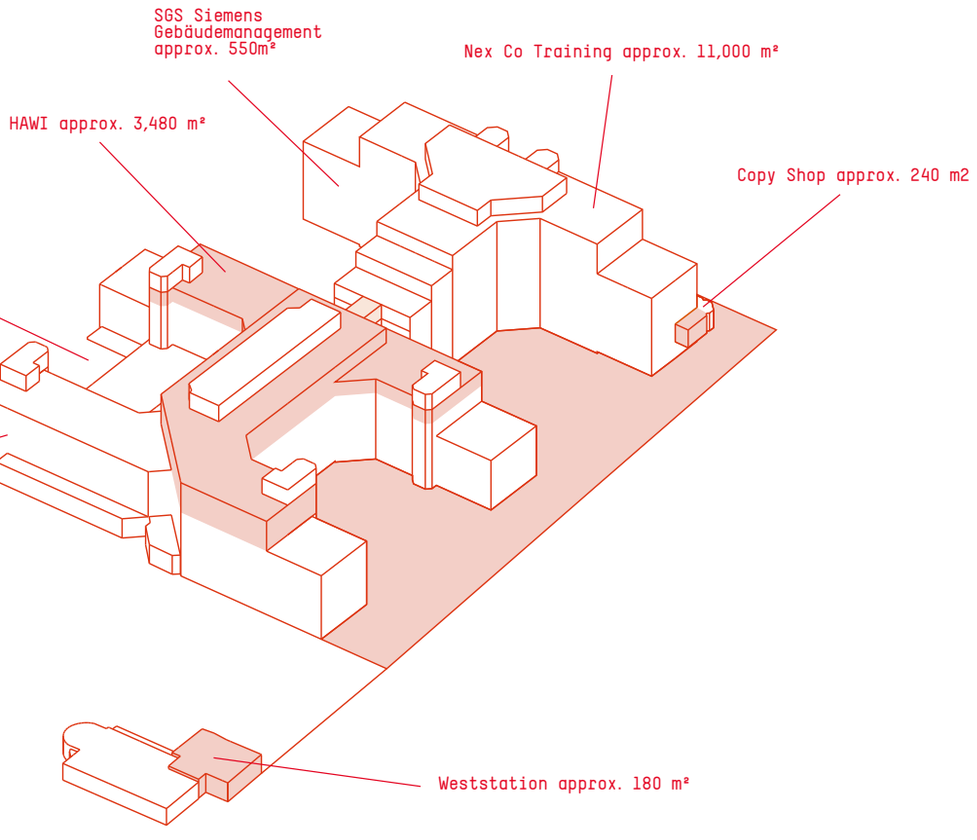
HAWI:
April 26th 2016: Kick off of the collaboration with "Home not Shelter"
June-July 2016: Prospective phase 1
Winter term 2016/17: optional extension
11th July-29th August 2016: phased start of use

Opening of the site:
March 2nd 2016: Informal opening
May 23rd 2016: Presentation of Project Kempelenpark to local residents by actors and designers
June 18th 2016: Opening event at Kempelenpark

ACCESSIBILITY



Un/Common Space - Un/Defined Living: video available at www.placesforpeople.at/qr3



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CopyShop: Internal and external actors, neighbours

Operator of external space workshop:
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Operator of external space
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Artemide, EGGER, OSRAM (still open)

Photo: Christian Redtenbacher

An explicitly experimental and exploratory approach and the close relationship between theory and practice, architecture and art are trademarks of the Vienna architectural office which has been run by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt and Ernst J. Fuchs since 2000. The body and the city are key areas for research and sources of inspiration for the continuous development of an approach that understands architecture to be, above all, the adventure of the conquering of space. In keeping with this, the buildings, exhibition design and installations produced by the, currently, six members of the team reject any predictable and clear functional logic. With their complex spatial dramaturgies, dramatic correspondence between interior and exterior, volume and void and a wealth of surprising details, the works of the next ENTERprise are also invariably a self-confident expression of architecture as an autonomous cultural force.

In the "Wolkenturm" (Cloud Tower), a sculpturally-shaped outdoor pavilion in the grounds of Schloss Grafenegg in Lower Austria, the next ENTERprise was able to apply its performative understanding of architecture to a concert and event space and transform this into a catalyst for synaesthetic experiences between space and music, art and nature. The numerous experiments and ongoing research by the team into subjects of particular relevance to the project "Places for People" including temporary, flexible and multifunctional architecture and city use were central reasons for inviting the next ENTERprise – architects to participate.

www.thenextenterprise.at

1
Cloud Tower Grafenegg, 2007, © Lukas Schaller

2
Outdoor pools, Kaltern, 2006, © Lukas Schaller

3
Bettenturm, © B&R 2012

4
Turm 2012 © tnE

Kempelengasse Vienna X 2016 2019

German version available at
www.placesforpeople.at/qr1

Alle Inhalte auf Deutsch abrufbar unter
www.ortefuermenschen.at/qr1

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

INTERVIEWS

Biennale Architettura
2016

Austrian Pavilion

Eds. Curators of the Austrian Pavilion
Elke Delugan-Meissl, Sabine Dreher, Christian Muhr

la Biennale di Venezia
15. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura
Partecipazioni Nazionali

MORE PLACES FOR PEOPLE

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The three pilot projects initiated on the occasion of "Places for People" are being developed in the knowledge that there is already a multitude of approaches, in Austria and further afield, that the curatorial team regards as exemplary, inspiring and, at all events, worthy of discussion. The following 14 interviews present a selection of such projects which have already been developed in Austria.

01 Rudofsky Revisited
A conversation with the architectural historian and Rudofsky expert Monika Platzer about Bernard Rudofsky's way of thinking and working, regionally-styled refugee housing and self-explanatory exhibitions.

02 Involved rather than Ignored
The architect Alexander Hagner of gaupenraub+/- on his view of his own role, the deficits of the profession and why it is precisely social projects that have to meet the highest standards.

03 Occupied Vacancy
Margot Deerenberg of Paradocks reflects on causes, counterstrategies and previous experiences with innovative forms of temporary use.

04 Accommodation as a Basic Right
The social economist and neunerhaus CEO Markus Reiter and the architect Christoph Lammerhuber of pool Architektur about the causes of increasing homelessness, the importance of having one's own postbox and new ideas for the housing estates of the 1960s and 70s.

05 First Aid in Orientation
Erwin K. Bauer, the initiator of the First Aid Kit, talks about "inclusive design", the topicality of such Viennese pioneers as Otto Neurath and Victor Papanek and the future role of designers as "social entrepreneurs".

06 Holidays for Urbanists
A conversation with the designers Christian Knapp and Jonathan Lutter of Kohlmayr Lutter Knapp about strategies for activating vacant space, the power of the planners and Vienna in a time of change.

07 Designing through Making
Peter Fattinger, head of the design.build studio of the TU Vienna and partner of Fattinger Orso Architektur, in a discussion about "learning by doing", the popularity of communal kitchens and what he feels when the diggers arrive.

08 Celebrating Diversity
The architect Herwig Spiegl of AllesWirdGut talks about the social business project magdas hotel in Vienna which creates jobs for people with a refugee background and about the scalability of the idea and parallels between designing hotels and apartments.

09 Gentrify Wisely
A conversation with Philipp Furtenbach of AO& about areas of allotments as "gated communities", urban planners as desk-bound bureaucrats and the significance of vacant plots in the city.

10 Altruism in Action
Barbara Poberschnigg and Elias Walch of Studio Lois address unconventional procurement practices, new neighbourly relationships and the rewarding dynamic so far released by the transformation of an unused boarding house in an introspective residential corner of Innsbruck.

11 Urban Equality
The architect Gabu Heindl of Gabu Heindl Architektur discusses vacancy rates, the socio-political implications of the notion of accessibility and participation as a strategy of distraction.

12 Transfer Wohnraum Vorarlberg
The architects Konrad Duelli and Andreas Postner on the emergency housing needs of refugees and local people in the West of Austria, untapped sites in municipal areas and strategies for maintaining standards in one of Europe's wealthiest regions.

13 Displaced. Space for Change
A conversation with Martina Burtscher and Eliane Ettmüller of Rotes Kreuz, Karin Harather, Renate Stuefer and members of their core student team from TU Vienna about "opportunities that urgently require space."

14 Innovation and Involvement
Klaus Schwertner and Clemens Foschi of Caritas talk about innovative approaches in the social field and the role played by comprehensive involvement.

Photo: Bernard Rudofsky Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, The Bernard Rudofsky Estate Vienna/Copyright, Vienna, 2016

Dubrovnik, Croatia, 1966

RUDOFSKY REVISITED

Only rediscovered in Austria in 1987 due to the exhibition "Sparta/Sybaris" which he himself curated in the Museum for Applied Arts, the work of the Austro-American architect Bernard Rudofsky remains especially inspiring today. This inspiration extends to the approach taken by the Austrian contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale. A conversation with the architectural historian and Rudofsky expert Monika Platzer about Rudofsky's way of thinking and working, regionally-styled refugee housing and self-explanatory exhibitions.

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 2nd 2016

The title "Places for People" is also intended as a reference to the Austro-American architect, designer, author and exhibition designer Bernard Rudofsky, by whose nomadic life and visionary ideas the Biennale contribution is also contentually inspired. As an architect, Rudofsky understood that travel and the investigation of different cultures were essential aspects of his multifarious activities. The focus of his texts, buildings and exhibitions is an examination of such elementary facets of life as eating, sleeping, sitting, lying and washing coupled with the questions of how these needs can be met in a humane and cultivated way and what is the role of architecture in this process. Rudofsky who, apart from Vienna, also lived in Naples, Milan, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, New York, Tokyo and, finally, in Frigiliana was also the author of contributions to the debate on the city and public space which were as critical as they were original, such as those which he formulated in his book "Streets for People".

Bernard Rudofsky developed his celebrated belief that man required less a new way of building than a new way of living from his observations of everyday life also in the Arab Region. This proclaimed a paradigm change from the design of buildings to the design of social encounters which can also be found in the work of Viktor Papanek, with whom Rudofsky displays many similarities.

The particular fruitfulness and socio-political relevance of this approach is reflected not only in the current discussions about socially participative and sustainable architecture and design practice but also in the approaches selected by the three teams for their contributions to "Places for People".

CM: We are having this conversation because the Biennale Project is also inspired to a certain extent by Bernard Rudofsky and the title is, amongst other things, a reference to his book "Streets for People". One reason for the choice of this title was that it is universally comprehensible and that people come to the fore. Is it true that people also played a prominent role in Rudofsky's work? My question refers firstly to his drawings and watercolours and also, later, to his photographs.

MP: For me, people appear in Rudofsky's work indirectly via his architecture, space and notion of culture. This is to say that I don't believe that Rudofsky was thinking about the design of humane architecture the same way Aalto did. Rudofsky's interest was in the wider understanding of architecture and perception and he was less focussed on building per se.

CM: Anyone with the appropriately sophisticated perceptive ability is, for example, able to see architecture even in places where no architect was involved.

MP: Rudofsky was interested in a provocative interpretation of architecture. Of architecture as an elixir of life or cultural asset. But at the same time he wanted to increase awareness of urban and rural intermediate spaces, of wasteland, gaps and non-places. Architecture as a medium that emerges collectively, is geographically anchored and isn't subject to any dogma.

CM: There is also his saying that one basically cannot build until one knows how the person for whom one is building eats, sleeps, drinks and washes, etc. Is that not a clue to the fact that people are right in the centre?

MP: The unusual thing about his texts is that rather than describing architecture tfrom the mere perspective of the user he approaches it via phenomena, perception and atmosphere and places its civilising at the centre of his analysis. When he says "architecture without architects" he is dismissing not just the architectural profession but also that profession's complacency.

CM: Which also means that this is a serious criticism of his own profession's widely-shared self-image by an outsider. In purely practical terms it is certainly true that Rudofsky – in contrast with the representational conventions of the time - often included people in his sketches and plans.

He banished the word homogeneity from his vocabulary.

MP: Perhaps you could put it like this: He didn't see people as "measurable" quantities. Since the 1920s an increased scientization of architecture occurred. People and their activities were statistically recorded on a daily basis – a tendency against which Rudofsky fought. He wanted people to be understood as individuals and not as a standardised mass. In this sense his approach can be seen as the opposite of Modernism's linear way of thinking.

CM: Rudofsky abhorred this idea of people as dummies or statistical variable.

MP: He was against against producing modules and in favour of fine tailoring. Rudofsky felt a certain obligation to the individual and his specific needs.
At the same time, however, I wouldn't romanticise this. Rudofsky was well aware of the effectiveness of the medium of photography. By combining images from other cultures he was happy to irritate and provoke and, alongside his drive for 'enlightenment', he had a very clear penchant for aesthetics. The method of visual decontextualisation which is a common practice in the field of architecture should be critically questioned today.

CM: The second reason for this reference to "Streets for People" concerns the fact that the book formulates a plea on behalf of public space. He once claimed that he couldn't find a single work on the subject of streets amongst the millions of books in the "Library of Congress" – although he was sitting in the New York Public Library at the time. Discussions about refugees, migration and precarious living conditions always immediately turn to the word "accommodation". One is always happy to overlook the importance of public space. But if, for example, one thinks about the events in Cologne: the attacks took place in a prominent public square. How important do you think that public space was to Rudofsky?

MP: Firstly I must of course say that there were many books about "streets" – but not in Rudofsky's sense. Urban planing after 1945 was influenced by the idea of the "car-friendly city". With their streets, squares and alleys, cities that had accrued over time were to be adapted to the needs of mobility. Huge interventions in the built substance, clear land allocation and the separation of uses were to facilitate freely-flowing traffic.
Rudofsky reacted to this rationalist approach not by "demixing" streets and removing people but by regarding streets as – to use today's terminology – "shared space." Unlike today, Rudofsky wasn't thinking politically about public space in the sense of the "right to the city" movement. His focuses were the variation of form and materiality and the surface treatment and colour which were responsible for perception. The public space which offers people an emotional experience.
Putting it provocatively in Rudofsky's sense: if we could learn to interact in public spaces with the support of improved, socially acceptable parameters then perhaps such unfortunate events could be minimised.

CM: Public spaces were the birthplace of democracy and, hence, the place where political ideas are still discussed today. Such phenomena as exclusion, segregation and ghettoization are closely linked with public space. This could possibly provide further evidence that our loan from Rudofsky has a certain validity. One implication of this would be to strengthen public space, especially in the current situation but also for general socio-political reasons.

MP: I see a danger in the overregulation of public space and the disenfranchisement of the user. We should strengthen our awareness of the quality of the city as a space for a mix of uses. The transition between public and private space should be treated more permeably for all citizens.
My belief is that Rudofsky challenges us to recognise space as public where it was perhaps previously not "signalled" as such. These "informal", "hidden" spaces form an important part of the city. And we already define such zones ourselves intuitively in that we either use them or we don't.

My belief is that Rudofsky challenges us to recognise space as public where it was perhaps previously not "signalled" as such.

CM: This generates a classic conflict with urban planners who think that they can also plan "informal spaces" so well that we will then find them. "Streets for People" was written in America in 1969 from the point of view of the pedestrian and from here it is a short step to the notion of the flâneur - the 'idly strolling man-about-town'. Is Rudofsky himself not an exemplary flâneur?

MP: Rudofsky was a flâneur who criticised the acceleration of his age and embodied a class-specific characteristic of a certain status.

CM: A dandy, for example?

MP: A dandy yet, at the same time, a much-travelled cosmopolitan. But one must also first arrive somewhere where flâner both makes sense and is fun.
The periphery is less the realm of the flâneur. This brings us back again to the subject of refugee accommodation which is almost exclusively planned on the periphery. This is certainly a problem for any integration efforts because the periphery continues to suffer from poor connections with the centre and the rest of the city. But what do we mean by the word periphery? How do we deal with it? Can we use it is an opportunity to generate new neighbourhoods?
At the same time there is a clash of cultures. Many of Rudofsky's images come from Southeast Europe and the Mediterranean, where public space is used completely differently. Vienna, for instance, has many stately public spaces. Sometimes, other cultures have a completely different relationship with public space. We could allow ourselves to be inspired by this but other ways of occupying space are very often perceived as annoying, even when they could be used as an opportunity to question and then to widen our own use of public space. I would find this exciting because it could result in completely new experiences and forms of urban use.

Photo: The Bernard Rudofsky Estate Vienna/ Copyright, Vienna, 2016

Spain, 1970

CM: Yes, that would be an important "Lesson from Rudofsky!"

MP: He banished the word homogeneity from his vocabulary. Rudofsky was a disciple of heterogeneity and plurality. This can be seen in the interdisciplinary nature of his sources of inspiration and the variety of cultures in which he was interested and he also flirted regularly with his Central European identity. In this diversity he is effectively an exemplary European.

About "Streets for People"

The book was published in 1969 under the original title "Streets for People: a primer for Americans", by Doubleday in New York and, alongside "Architecture without Architects" (1964), counts as one of Bernard Rudofsky's most successful and influential books. In 16 chapters with such (sometimes) eloquent titles as "In Praise of Stairs" and "The Supply and Feeding of Pedestrians", together with many observations, urban details and rich pictorial material, the book delivers a passionate defence of the cultivation of the public realm as is generally found in the cities of the Mediterranean. The German translation of the book only appeared posthumously in 1995 thanks to the collaboration of his wife Berta Rudofsky.

Photo: Bernard Rudofsky Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles The Bernard Rudofsky Estate Vienna/ Copyright, Vienna, 2016

Calabria, Italy 1963.

CM: Yet the exemplary European is actually a New Yorker! He probably felt most at home in New York, the place where he remained longest and was most productive.

MP: Something in which he was not alone. Many of the intellectuals driven from Europe ended up in New York from where they conquered the world and rewrote architectural history.

CM: But for all this global cosmopolitanism, Rudofsky is very fond of the local: local traditions, local crafts and the local repertory of forms.

MP: Architectural tradition and local craftmanship were important to him but not if these were used emptied of meaning. He would have been sceptical about the return to local tradition currently being realized in the construction of timber houses for refugees in Salzburg. The inclusion of a pitched roof and shutters isn't enough to define a building as a "Salzburg House" - which was reduced to a cliché a long time ago. Linking the social acceptance of new refugee accommodation to a regional building style is highly questionable.

CM: To a cliché or to a museum?

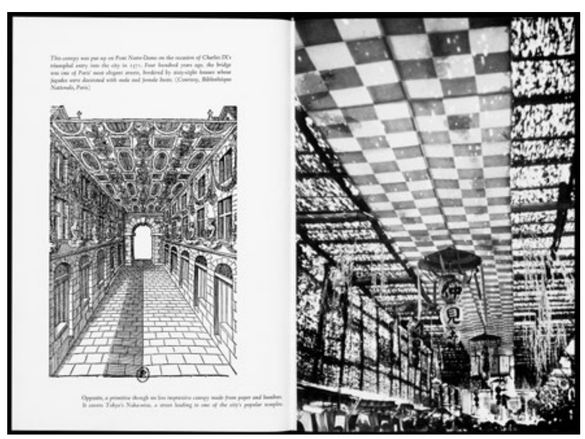
MP: Rudofsky repudiated the reduction of a formal repertoire to a norm. Of course it is important to engage with local, traditional context - but with the local, traditional context of the residents. With this in mind it would be interesting to ask the refugees about their own backgrounds and customs and the ways in which our cities are different. We mostly have only vague or somewhat romanticised notions of an Arab-Oriental way of living which we shouldn't reproduce. I have now seen the images of bombed-out Aleppo – but my impression is that Aleppo was a historic and yet, at the same time, very modern major city – which in some ways was perhaps even more modern and urban than Vienna.

Rudofsky repudiated the reduction of a formal repertoire to a norm.

MP: The sureness with which many refugees appropriate urban space is exemplary and the mixed use of their apartments and staircases demonstrates their ability to improvise. Many small shops appear at ground level offering ranges that react flexibly to the reality of supply and demand.
The idea of "pop-up-stores" has recently become fashionable but these have actually been standard for years in the home countries of many refugees. We have simply never taken such potential ways of using cities seriously.

CM: Rudofsky felt particularly inspired by this urban vitality and plurality. In "Streets for People" there are many images of the Moroccan or Italian streets, markets and squares that he viewed as examples of liveliness and cultivation. Even if these places also experience conflicts and contradictions they are able to withstand these without immediately being eliminated.

Canopied streets



from: B.R. Streets for People, p. 206-207

CM: In "Architecture without Architects" there are images of a Syrian waterwheel. But I believe that he was never in the region?

MP: To be perfectly honest I'm not sure about that right now. One also has to say that many of these images were already old back then. He very consciously looked for images which corresponded with his arguments, associations and vision and he rooted through the archives to find these. But somebody else that comes to mind in this respect is Bogdan Bogdanović who writes about the systematic destruction of cities and civilian life in his book "City and Death". How does one deal with the murder of cities and the related symbolism? What does this destruction of Aleppo mean for civilisation and what does this do to people? For me, the current discussion fails to address this aspect adequately.

CM: I find this reference to Bogdanović very interesting. As someone located between different cultures and as a writing architect he is a similar figure to a Rudofsky.

MP: His concerns are the pluralistic coexistence of different ethnic groups and the sensually poetic perception of cities. But Bogdanović is slightly more open than Rudofsky. He also belongs to a different generation and has been subject to different influences. In his book "Vom Glück in den Städten" (On Urban Happiness) a wonderful text describes how a blind person perceives a city sensually as a result of which they see more than a sighted person.

CM: Our reasons for developing reservations about a certain place have much to do with phenomenological, subjective and sensual questions. At the same time there remains a tendency to dismiss precisely these aspects as luxuries. Yet it is precisely these qualities that determine whether these spaces will be filled with life.

CM: Which is exactly what architects saw as their calling: eliminating and bringing order to urban chaos.

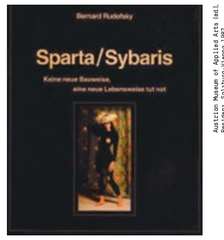
CM: There is a story about de Gaulle flying in his helicopter over Paris with his city planner and asking him to "bring some order to this chaos for me" - and it was this order which led to the "Ville Nouvelle".

MP: This obsession with the bird's eye view of cities started much earlier and reached its worst excesses under the National Socialists. Rudofsky doesn't look from above but from below – or at eye level.

CM: Another reason why Rudofsky was such an interesting figure is that he was a writing architect, perhaps also because he felt that this would give him more influence than he would have as a building architect. And he was also a pioneer as an 'exhibition maker' before this profession had even been invented. In Venice we will also make an exhibition – which tempts one to ask the question: what could we learn from him in this respect?

MP: Rudofsky was a master in using images to tell a story. He had an unbelievable feeling for dramaturgy and worked very skilfully with opposites and irritations. These tales were not always historically "correct" but they were exhilarating and inspiring. His exhibitions were visually conceived in such a way that you could take them in fully without having to read much. The exhibitions developed via chains of association and it would be great if you managed to do the same in Venice.

CM: Well we shall see about that! But to get back to Rudofsky: this is another point at which we see his ambivalence because the visual stories that he told in the forms of exhibitions or books are, at the same time, the expression of an all-powerful author and examples of "total design".



Bernhard Rudofsky, Sparta/ Syberis. Keine neue Bauweise, eine neue Lebensweise tut not

Austrian Museum of Applied Arts (ed.), Rudofsky, Salzburg/Vienna 1987

Rudofsky was a master in using images to tell a story. He had an unbelievable feeling for dramaturgy and worked very skilfully with opposites and irritations.

MP: Rudofsky displays a huge talent for presenting complex relationships in the form of a story but there was then just this single, relatively closed narration. He constantly recycled his themes, a fact that one can understand clearly when one looks at his nine books and handful of exhibitions. Rudofsky "reworked" his ideas with creativity and great intensity and shows that questions don't always have to be new in order to be interesting.

CM: Rudofsky was a traveller and took pleasure in starting a new life in every new location as a way of refreshing his thoughts and perception. In his own very special way he was perhaps even a precursor of those "modern nomads" who have emerged in recent times, particularly as a result of globalisation and digitalisation. At the same time, however, he fled Europe – albeit under comparatively painless circumstances.

MP: His was a privileged emigration. Rudofsky didn't have to flee from the Nazis for reasons of race but wanted to escape from military service and the increasingly menacing developments in Europe. Thanks to his wealthy wife Berta, both were able to afford to leave Europe with a first-class ticket, which was the requirement for being allowed entry to Buenos Aires. With the exception of the early years, his travels were rather comfortable and partly financed by fellowships from bodies such as the Fulbright Foundation. These travels were, for him, an important research instrument and, at the same time, an expression of his search for independence. He had contact with many prominent colleagues and circles and taught at such well-known universities as Yale without, however, ever taking up a formal appointment. Intellectual and physical independence were very important to him.

CM: Perhaps this also had something to do with some sort of inability?

MP: Perhaps a certain unwillingness to get close to anyone – he didn't need anyone other than himself.

CM: Many of today's architects travel more often than Rudofsky but perhaps see less than he did because they have less time and take less trouble to engage with different places.

MP: And also because the world has become more homogenised and globalised. I don't know if it would be possible to travel today in the same way that Rudofsky did. Now it would perhaps be more interesting to do things the other way round – to remain here and rediscover one's own surroundings.

CM: The Austrian writer Ilse Aichinger said that she experienced more while walking between Herrengasse and Café Demel than people who circumnavigate the world.

MP: Which has brought us back again to the subject of public space.

CM: The important thing is how aware one is and not how far one travels. And this is perhaps not only the hardest "Lesson from Rudofsky" but one that cannot be communicated by a theory or taught as a set of formal rules. One has to appropriate this for oneself. Paradigms and inspirations can help but one basically has to do this alone.

MP: It is a question of perception – you need to see for yourself.

About Monika Platzer

The art and architectural historian is a curator a the Architekturzentrum Wien. The focus of her research is post-war architecture in Austria, whose ambivalence she is currently addressing with a special spotlight on the Cold War. Alongside numerous other exhibitions Monika Platzer, together with Wim de Wit, designed the 2007 exhibition "Lessons from Rudofsky". This first comprehensive investigation of the origins, interdependencies and influences of his work was realised in cooperation with the Getty Research Center and, alongside Vienna, was also shown in Montreal and Los Angeles.

Interview: Christian Muhr, January 25th 2016

Homelessness has many faces but exclusion is always one of them. This is precisely the issue addressed by a residential project in Central Vienna in which formerly homeless people and students live together under one roof.

A conversation with the architect Alexander Hagner about his view of his own role, the deficits of the profession and why it is precisely social projects that have to meet the highest standards.

INVOLVED RATHER THAN IGNORED

Homelessness is a complex phenomenon whose high level of uncertainty is reflected in the range of estimates of its true scale. According to experts close to the "Armutskonferenz" around 12,000 people are currently homeless in Austria. A further indication of the magnitude of the problem comes from the charity Caritas which, alongside other such facilities, runs the "Gruft" emergency shelter in Vienna which, in 2015, served around 97,000 warm meals.

Among the key reasons why increasing numbers of people are threatened by homelessness is the fact that, according to a study by the "Vienna Association of Help to the Homeless," rental levels rose by an average of 15% between 2001 and 2015. Compounded by equally strong growth in the proportion of time-limited rental contracts, this has led to increased demand for apartments in the non-profit sector and, consequently, to a toughening of the access criteria as a result of which the approximately 400,000 people in Vienna threatened by poverty find themselves increasingly excluded from social housing.

Photo: Kurt Kuball

VinziRast mittendrin, Ground floor workshop

VinziRast mittendrin, Public restaurant

Opened in 2013 the residential project VinziRast-mittendrin addresses the problem of homelessness in a completely new and – as one can already judge – successful way. Instead of exclusion and separation the focuses here are on living as a community, breaking down fears and addressing the urban surroundings. The former Biedermeier period tenement block close to the city centre was converted by the Vienan architectural team gaupenraub+/- into a modern, four-story apartment building in which around 30 formerly homeless people live together with students in 10 three-room flatshares. Alongside the connected workshops and numerous communal spaces VinziRast-mittendrin also contains a ground-floor establishment which is open to the public and which catering professionals, residents and volunteer helpers run as a restaurant, café, bar and urban foyer.

A significant aspect of the project is the high spatial and architectural quality which the building offers to its various groups of users. Here, rather than being seen as contradictions, good design and a social ethos are important success factors.

CM: It seems to me that there is a parallel between our motivation in starting "Places for People" and your own motivation, because I have read that your strong sense of social commitment is based on your professional ethos as an architect.

AH: In view of the precarious situation of so many people I simply recognised that there was a strong need for architecture. Principally, of course, in the form of buildings and homes and places to live and places to feel safe but also, in general, as a specific set of skills.
As an architect I have the tools that I need in order to actively intervene and work on concrete solutions. However, the more that we, as a team, address social problems, the more I sense that our commitment is a way of escaping our own powerlessness. Our basic approach is: "We can do something, so let's do something!" Indeed, virtually everyone could do something to help disadvantaged people today, regardless of their profession.

CM: Apparently there are 10,000 homeless people in Vienna.

My opinion is that architecture as spectacle – as it has been presented to us in recent years – is on the wrong track.

AH: I don't trust numbers anymore because there is always the question of what one means by the homeless. People with no fixed abode or those who simply sit around on the street even when it is ten degrees below zero? The homeless are just as mixed a bunch as we architects or any other group.

CM: Is this social commitment also a reaction to a crisis of identity in architecture? The motto of one biennale a few years ago was "More Ethics, less Aesthetics".

AH: My opinion is that architecture as spectacle – as it has been presented to us in recent years – is on the wrong track. This development is related to the fact that today's architecture is principally transported in images. In this situation, architects try to deliver the most spectacular images possible. But this dominance of the image is reducing our profession to the shaping of dead material. And even this role is no longer indisputably ours: In Sweden, for example, the architect is just one of four consultants in the construction process alongside the building services, building physics and structural engineers and the idea that an architect could be more than a specialised service provider or that he or she is the point at which everything comes together no longer exists. I consider this to be a catastrophe.

CM: In view of the current challenges, many of the things that have been regarded as particularly innovative in recent years suddenly seem very old.

AH: The form can never be an end in itself but must always result from an investigation of complex social relationships. If architects only address form, the outcome will only ever have limited relevance. Computer-supported parametric design has strengthened the fetishizing of form even further but this is an approach which has long since gone as far as it can.
We must urgently get back to thinking about content! In social projects, the high quality of every aspect of content is particularly essential because we are all tired of social projects where only the "social" aspects seem to count. Poor quality social projects don't have a chance because they neither offer social benefits nor advance the cause of architecture. We must improve our tools enormously in order to achieve high quality with limited resources and must avoid any danger of becoming distracted by questions of form. No one is approaching us to provide solutions in the current refugee situation for the simple reason that we have already outed ourselves as a profession that has absolutely nothing to do with this and other social issues.

CM: Well we, in any case, didn't wait any longer for such an official approach and simply commissioned three teams to address the issue. We are, however, experiencing a lot of scepticism from people who fear that the involvement of architects could complicate an otherwise smooth-running process.

AH: Architecture always starts life as a parasite. It occupies space and attaches itself firmly to the water, electricity and drainage networks. In the urban context, sequences of such parasitic attachments can cause systems to collapse as a result of which we must be careful to aim for symbiotic outcomes. But who takes responsibility for this? Politicians and developers certainly don't – and neither do the majority of building owners.
The idea that a parasite can become a symbiont because it is part of an integrated structure in which give and take are equally important must take centre stage. The more symbiotic that architecture becomes, the better it will function. But if, on the other hand, architecture degenerates into a series of special disciplines coordinated by developers then it will be impossible for any social organism to develop and these special interests will prevail.
When we think of socially disadvantaged people who have no lobby and whom nobody wants as neighbours then the catastrophe for which we are heading is plain for everyone to see. Here, the challenge really is to create "Places for People". The task is economic, ecological and social and, as the social aspect is the one that cannot be expressed in numbers, it is the one which nobody addresses at all.
We have been working since 2002 on a concept for a homeless village in Vienna based on the WienziDorf in Graz and we have only received the building permit now – 12 years after starting! Why has this taken so long? Simply, because nobody wanted the project. And yet the role of architects is also to design social projects in such a way that people will want them. VinziRast-mittendrin (literally: VinziRast at the heart of things) was the first project which wasn't even opposed by the FPÖ in the planning committee.

Photo: Alexandra Pawloff

VinziChance workshop

CM: Why was there such a high degree of acceptance?

AH: Because of how we approached the task from the beginning: very transparently and open in many directions. We invited people to get involved rather than to object. The hybrid range of uses and the involvement of students also played an important role. The project was manageable, well-mixed and generally appeared unthreatening. It is possible to present social projects in such a way that nobody needs to be afraid.

CM: In understanding architecture as a social discipline one must naturally take a stand against specialisation and fragmentation. But if we see the public realm as nothing more than a sequence of usable areas for different target groups then the social and the integrative will disappear along, naturally, with all that is truly public.

AH: The city is a melting pot. In a gated community one might still be able to distinguish between individual groups but this is no longer possible by the time one has reached the underground. For me, exclusion, inclusion and segregation are a series of theoretical constructs which the city can confront. I would like to make a comparison: If a circus arrives in a small town everybody looks sceptical at first because of the strangers who have come with it. But then a tent is built which not only embodies a perfect, light architecture but which even enables the ground floor to be opened up if the weather permits or if contact is desired.

Photo: Christopher Dibiol

Grand Opening 2013

There is a space and a story line – namely, the circus performance – which ensures that even those who don't like circuses but are curious enough can still come and watch. We have both within us: the mistrust of strangers but also the curiosity. This should be our focus.

CM: What do you see as the opportunities presented by the current situation?

AH: You only have to be a realist to recognise that our society is becoming more heterogeneous and more global. This process cannot be reversed so we should make the most of it! If we, as architects, use our tools intelligently we can have a considerable influence on this process. For example: people often come to 'mittendrin' to eat without realising that it has anything to do with the homeless. Then, on their second visit, they read a folder and, on their third visit, they ring the bell and say, "I think that this is great, can I help?" Our objective of using the design, the atmosphere and the mood of the place to awaken people's interest in getting involved socially worked perfectly. But something like this can only work if quality isn't sacrificed in order to save effort or money. The idea of money being the end rather than a means to that end is fatal for the whole of society and – especially in this social context – completely inappropriate. The same naturally applies to the current refugee situation, which certain players are already seeing as a business opportunity.

CM: Can you explain that a little more clearly?

AH: Property developers and other business people have naturally already discovered that the countless regulatory exceptions introduced as a result of the so-called crisis are enabling development in places where this was previously taboo. The lowering of standards is also problematic because, on the one hand, some of today's residential standards have already been fully degraded in order to meet the needs of the building industry and, on the other hand, because every additional lowering of standards could lead to the construction of even cheaper buildings with even higher margins.

At the mittendrin restaurant our main objective was to give our residents something to do. At the same time it should provide a link between the city, society and the housing project. It didn't need to make a profit but had to break even. Bearing this objective in mind we drew up a plan and then designed it in detail right down to the very last screw.

The result proves that we were right: the restaurant is always full and earns money which means that we will be able to pay off our debts earlier than planned. The same was true of the rooftop atelier which is, naturally, a luxury. In order to be able to build it we did without an expensive solar protection because we believed that the rooftop atelier is very important for the project – even if it can only be used for eleven months of the year. This is now the most successful space in the entire building and is intensively used for birthday parties for people from outside or yoga seminars. This also earns money as well as bringing us into contact with people who wouldn't otherwise visit the building. The positive development of VinziRast-mittendrin shows that such strictly quality-oriented concepts work.

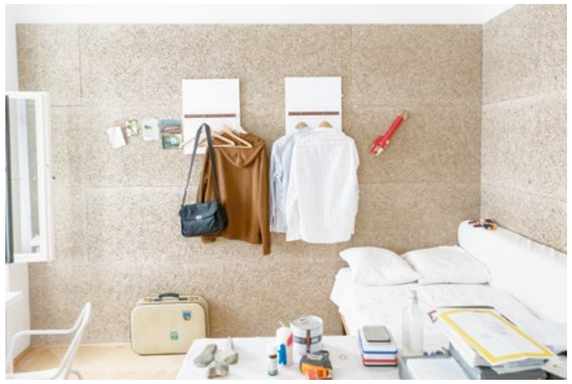


Photo: Simon Jappel

A room in one of the flatshares

CM: mittendrin is also economically successful, despite – or perhaps precisely due to – the fact that such success wasn't the primary objective.

AH: My conclusion is that the project objectives must be absolutely paramount.
Only when one is fully focussed on these objectives is it possible to decide which cuts and compromises one could potentially accept without endangering them.
We have come a long way from our original objective of designing good buildings, homes and workplaces for people. But if architects say this they are laughed at because the basic bottom line is profit. Our experience of providing accommodation for the homeless has made it clear to us that this is a user group that nobody takes seriously. If my students produce a project for the homeless that meets all the official requirements of Vienna's municipal authorities then I have to say to them: "sorry, but you have completely ignored these people's real needs". The accommodation being built today has nothing to do with people's needs and everything to do with what politicians and others are prepared to give them.

CM: How did you find out what the people in VinziRast-mittendrin really need?

AH: Through observation and exchange. You can't ask a homeless person how they would like to live. You can only observe, work together and do a lot of reading. You have to get involved and develop your own view. This can't be done through guidelines.

CM: There is a discrepancy between that which is necessary and that which is demanded. Do you have an example to illustrate this?

AH: A severe alcoholic with deep psychological problems who has been living under a bridge for years can't go to an emergency shelter like the Gruft anymore because they can't cope with living as part of a group. Perhaps such a person needs their own apartment straight away. The classic progression from the bridge to the emergency shelter to the shared accommodation to the one-person apartment can work – but not for everyone. VinziDorf also isn't the right solution for everyone. Small cave-like private rooms can often be the best solution, just like run-down old buildings can often work better than new buildings.

CM: But these are observations which can't simply be collected in some sort of design guide and then generalised and universally applied – as a politician would like.

AH: And certainly not in the case of the homeless because these are not only individuals but are also simply not adapted to society. In the case of refugees we are talking about individuals who are even more individual because they are traumatised, because they are victims who have left everything behind and because they cannot simply go home and curl up in their own bed. The homeless, refugees and other people in difficult circumstances are even more individual than we are. Creating a shelter for such people requires even more skill and, at the same time, has a much greater effect. At least we know how people live.

CM: Not only did you learn to empathise with the homeless but you also involved them in the project.

AH: It is difficult for these groups to participate in the design process but one should definitely involve users in the implementation process. We involved our users twice, once as we worked together to clear the building before the construction companies started their work and then again much later. It was difficult to be involved during the heavy construction phase for insurance reasons. The last three months during which we finished the building together were difficult because it was essential that no mistakes occurred and I lost seven kilos during this period because I never knew whether the future residents would turn up or whether they would be drunk or able to do anything. During this final phase I felt a special responsibility to all those involved to ensure that everything was completely finished.

People often come to 'mittendrin' to eat without realising that it has anything to do with the homeless. Then, on their second visit, they read a folder and, on their third visit, they ring the bell and say, "I think that this is great, can I help?"

CM: And how did you do that?

AH: I more or less lived on site and dealt with everything. This enabled me to meet people whom I would otherwise never have met. For example, I spent two weeks working with someone who had been to prison five times including, on the last occasion, for manslaughter. I learnt a lot from him – as he probably did from me. Every day I learnt something new and had my horizons broadened like virtually never before.

CM: What is the potential of vacant buildings for such projects and, in general, as a way of invigorating the city? The building had previously been empty.

AH: As a rule I think that empty buildings are better than new ones because people who have crossed the Mediterranean and lost everything get a much better sense of cultural values from an existing built environment than from a new one. I am thinking of established structures which will naturally have to be adapted - and of doing this together because there is nothing worse than being condemned to do nothing. Many are carrying the hopes of others. I feel that one can also regard refugees as pioneer plants for new urban districts although, at the same time, it is vital to pay great attention to heterogeneity because envy is a major problem and one must engage with a whole range of groups from the very start.

CM: You must know the approach in Vorarlberg of providing two buildings in every municipality.

AH: That is very good and, not only good, but also necessary. If you look at France you can see what has happened in the suburbs due to a lack of integration efforts. If you calculate the value of social harmony it soon becomes clear that we should be investing much more in accommodating people who cannot pay for this accommodation themselves. This is worth doing because, as one says, "the worst thing about being poor is not having nothing but being nothing."

CM: I find it interesting how one moves around within mittendrin.

AH: There were two existing staircases but these were simply too narrow so we added an extra one and there is also a new lift for reasons of accessibility. This allows one to move freely or, if one prefers, to avoid others. Two of the corridors are open air.

Photo: Christopher Dibiol

Open-air restaurant in the courtyard

Photo: Simon Jappel

VinziRast

Photo: Sebastian Schubert

VinziRast

However, rather than being a luxury this is something very important because there is a much higher potential for conflict amongst disadvantaged people due to the fact that their situation often leaves them feeling deeply unsatisfied. Hence, the residents of mittendrin can avoid each other. Other places for defusing these conflicts include the workshops and the communal kitchen.

About gaupenraub+/- Büro für Architektur

Established by Alexander Hagner (*1963) and Ulrike Schartner (*1966) in 1999, the office has built its reputation with a series of unconventional projects, each of which is tailor-made to meet the special requirements of its users and its specific context. Alongside such cultural buildings as the museum in Burgenland for the egg collection of the Austrian sculptor Wander Bertoni which took the form of a two-storey accessible display case, socially-oriented projects have long been a focus of the versatile team. Through its work with supporting NGOs and also the individuals affected, +/ - gaupenraub is one of the pioneers of integrative architecture in Austria. Following the conversion of a late nineteenth-century building into the Vinzi-Rast, a hostel for 50 homeless people, in 2004, and the adaptation of further small objects as emergency shelters, VinziRast-mittendrin was the architects' first project for the longer-term accommodation of students and the homeless. The project's high level of innovation has brought it both international attention and numerous awards.

www.gaupenraub.net

CM: The restaurant is commercially successful. Who works there, professionals with residents?

AH. The maître is a professional who is supported by volunteers from the association who don't feel up to working in the emergency shelter. Students and residents also work there. It was clear that we couldn't lease out the restaurant because these people had to be employed.

CM: And what about the workshops?

AH: The workshops were empty for a long time before the director Jacqueline Kornmüller came up with the idea of the VinziChance project in which she works with people from the VinziRast emergency shelter. Every morning the 60 guests have to leave the shelter. They now get a tram ticket, lunch and German lessons and spend the day working in the textile, metal or wood workshops producing objects which are then exchanged for a donation at the Easter and Christmas markets. Some come and build wooden trucks for a grandchild who is still living somewhere. "Nabil's Truck" is an example of this: a Syrian who is actually an engineer built a small wooden truck with a suspension and steering and received a lot of feedback. This work restored his self-esteem.

CM: Why are the emergency shelters closed during the day?

AH: Because we can't find enough volunteers to provide the necessary support and because there isn't enough room. At night we only need two people but during the day we would need a completely different team. The idea of volunteering has a psychological dimension, because none of those involved are exactly sure how they should deal with each other – as equals or otherwise. The key here is community and in order to create community one needs continuity.

CM: Fixed terms are a major problem on the apartment market and one wouldn't like this to also be a problem here. How do you deal with this at VinziRast-mittendrin? Do you have time limits?

AH: Some people have been living there since we opened in May 2013. Students leave when they have completed their studies. In the case of those who were previously homeless the hope is that after a couple of years they are fed up with arguing with the students about whose turn it is to clean the fridge and have regained the confidence to find their own apartment. But there are some who arrived one day and simply don't want to leave again. That is OK as well. There is a need for more such places.

CM: You are working on emergency accommodation for which you couldn't get building permission for a very long time?

AH: But now we have it.

CM: Your project was extremely successful and widely published. Did this success provide a boost to you and your other projects? The model could set a precedent without running the risk of becoming inflexible.

AH: There is room for many more such diversity-based projects but we only received a limited boost.

CM: What are the reasons for this given that you have already shown that there is nothing to be afraid of? In reality, each politician should be thumping the table and demanding their own mittendrin.

AH: But this wouldn't win them any votes. What one also needs is a supporter like Hans Peter Haselsteiner. One needs more commitment from the rich because it is they who profit hugely from the social stability in this country.

The worst thing about being poor is not having nothing but being nothing.

CM: You could use this project to carry out more lobbying – or do politicians also put a stop to this because they don't want to be dependent upon the whims of private individuals?

AH: I myself much prefer private individuals to the authorities who always end up hiding behind some regulation or other. Take the example of a combined accommodation for refugees and students in Munich where the groups are divided by the staircase which means that one must waste a lot of effort getting to the other part of the building if one wants to invite the refugees living there to come and eat or cook together.

CM: What are you doing right now?

AH: We are designing accommodation for eight refugees. Two buildings away from the emergency shelter is a failed Chinese restaurant. We started building there last week. We have given this shared accommodation for refugees the name VinziRast HOME.

CM: Do you always approach such work in the same way or are there differences?

AH: There are differences and similarities. The opposite staircase contains our shared accommodation for formerly alcohol-dependent homeless people who want to be teetotal. We always start with intersection analysis and believe that the set of refugees is different from the set of people who have given up alcohol and are supporting each other, even when the spatial outcome might appear quite similar. Two buildings further on one finds the structure of the VinziRast where there is a possibility of finding something to do. Without this context I would be sceptical.

CM: By now you have a lot of experience with social projects. What advice would you give to people like us who are becoming active in this area?

AH: The objectives must be totally focussed on the people involved and not on all those boundary conditions which one must naturally take into consideration but not at the expense of quality. And in this context it is particularly important to tackle projects which could also fail.

CM: Does that mean that one should take more risks precisely because this is the social sector?

AH: The projects which are doomed to failure are probably those which take too few risks. If you are dealing with people who can't afford to live anywhere and who are more focussed on subsistence you develop another viewpoint. Cutting away the fat you soon realise that what we understand as living has little to do with this intrinsic need. Living means security and protection against rain, snow and the cold. It means having somewhere where one can simply be. Only when this is in place can you start thinking about everything else. It is a long time since this applied to everyone in this part of the world – even compared with the favelas where life may well be very difficult but where people are at least allowed to be. At times like today when the state is obviously unable to meet such basic needs it should at least make a piece of land available and hand this over to the people rather than brushing them off with explanations about depleted capacity. My opinion is that this option must be discussed.

About VinziRast-mittendrin

The residential building for formerly homeless people and students is one of four social facilities aimed at the reintegration of marginalised people into society which are operated by the Vinzenzgemeinschaft on a self-supporting and voluntary basis in Austria. The building in Vienna's 9th district was acquired in 2011 with funds from the family trust of the Austrian building entrepreneur Hans-Peter Haselsteiner and refurbished thanks to further support from numerous private donors, companies and voluntary helpers including many homeless people, current residents and the project architects themselves before opening in 2013.

www.vinzirast.at

OCCUPIED VACANCY

Although Vienna is growing swiftly, around 10,000 apartments and more than 100,000 square metres of usable space in the city are vacant. A conversation about causes, counter-strategies and previous experiences with innovative forms of temporary use.

Photo: Deena Kolenicheva

Paradocks | bridging potential

Interview: Christian Muhr, January 20th 2016

Alongside real estate speculation and complicated tenancy laws, a major reason for Vienna's high vacancy rates is the significant growth of shopping centres at the edge of the city during the course of the past two decades and the resulting decline of both classical inner-city retailers and local shops. Rather than being more restrictive in approving such large-scale complexes, politicians have reacted to this situation by introducing a series of initiatives designed to promote temporary uses. For example, the City of Vienna has a "Project Coordinator for Multiple Uses" and has recently commissioned a number of studies on the subject including the "Perspectives on Vacancy" investigation, which IG Kultur has been carrying out since 2011.

There are many barriers to the successful activation of Vienna's vacant buildings, stretching from the exaggerated yield expectations of building owners to legal insecurity and bureaucratic obstacles. The debate about vacancy rates and temporary use which, until now, has tended to be somewhat technical, has been given increased public significance and energy by the current movement of refugees towards Austria.

The "spatial enterprise" Paradocks is one of Vienna's pioneers in the area of temporary use. The company was established in 2013 by Margot Deerenberg who is Dutch yet has lived in Vienna for several years. Deerenberg and her five colleagues see themselves as "urban entrepreneurs" whose radius of action stretches from the development of new property-related participatory, use and business models to urban research and city marketing.

The Packhaus is not only an experiment in temporary use but also one of the largest-scale initiatives in this field to date – both in Vienna and in the Paradocks portfolio.

CM: What is the Packhaus?

MD: The Packhaus is a 1970's office building close to the "Wien Mitte" transport hub in Vienna's third district. The building, with its approximately 6,000 square metres of usable space, had already been largely vacant for several years when the real estate company Conwert made 4,000 square metres available to us for a limited period in the form of a precarium contract. We developed a concept for the temporary use of the building and launched an open call in March 2014. To date, 87 start-ups and artists have moved into that part of the building which we were able to let until the end of 2016. The basic idea is to offer the start-ups both their own flexible and affordable office space and, at the same time, a series of shared facilities. For instance, the ground floor contains workshops and spaces for events and meetings which are available to the users of the building at no extra cost as well as a cafeteria, where they can eat lunch, drink coffee or participate in the many events that are regularly held there. These zones are open not only to users of the Packhaus but to everyone, because we also see the building as a semi-public space for the entire city!

At the end of the day, the use of vacant space allows one to react faster to the needs of a city and to take better advantage of innovation and opportunity.

CM: What was here previously and how long is it since the last of the previous tenants moved out?

Photo: Marija Jocuta

MD: I have heard that parts of the building were empty for a decade. It had partly been occupied by a department of Bank Austria – as one can still see. The Federal Computing Centre was also here for a long time, which is good for us because it left behind not only huge numbers of electrical sockets but also an infrastructure of fibre optic cables and server racks. In this sense, the building's previous history is much to our advantage.

CM: The first impression is one of a typical functional building which was built with a lack of any particular architectural ambition.

MD: When you see the building for the first time you probably find it ugly. We, however, have now come to love it because it is very functional and well-structured. From the very start it was a mixed-use building with offices on the lower levels and apartments above. Today, some of these still have tenants and there are even a number of owners. This is a problem for a real estate company because the building cannot simply be demolished and these owners have a right to have their say regarding both alterations and the use of the building.

CM: We will get onto this subject but, before this, I would like to know what criteria you follow when looking for buildings for temporary uses?

MD: We have criteria – but we are continuously altering and refining these on the basis of ongoing experience and the feedback received from all those involved. We are primarily interested in buildings which have more than 2,000 square metres of usable space because this size is necessary if networks and cooperative activities are to emerge. And, besides this, large buildings are more economical. Operating costs in the case of precarium contracts must not exceed four euros per square metre. We prefer district heating, because it is easier to invoice. In addition to this we have established that,

in Vienna, buildings should be in the 1st – 9th or the 15th – 18th districts or very close to the underground if they are to successfully house temporary use projects.

CM: Does this mean that the preferences and trends of the "normal" real estate market also determine the radius for temporary uses?

MD: Basically, yes, because our start-ups are completely normal users who, apart from being interested in cheaper conditions, differ very little in their other requirements. They are perhaps more flexible and more open but this doesn't mean that they are happy to be located far off the beaten track. This, by the way, basically applies to office buildings. In the case of the Packhaus, demand far exceeded our capacity. If the building had been located in the 11th district the situation would certainly have been somewhat different.
However, rather than being principally driven by location, we are constantly looking to see which vacant objects are to be found in the city and then we think about how each concrete building can be most effectively activated for temporary uses. For instance, these could also be warehouses, in which case location is irrelevant as long as a motorway is nearby. If we include vacant ground floors, Vienna contains a large number of locations which are suitable for a wide range of temporary uses.
Such vacant ground floor space is typical for Vienna. There is even invisible vacant space in the city centre. The lack of a requirement to report vacant space and the difficulty in identifying owners makes it harder to gain access to such space. Our basic aim should be to promote a culture in which the sensible use of resources is a priority. In this sense, one could even make better use of public facilities such as schools. Such practical examples are the best means of countering the fears of property owners. Positive results motivate the inhabitants of cities and show them that the use of resources is essential for urban growth, not only in the economic and atmospheric sense but also in terms of the environment and security. At the end of the day, the use of vacant space allows one to react faster to the needs of a city and to take better advantage of innovation and opportunity. Currently, of course, there is some vacant space which has been created as a result of bankruptcies and closures. This varies from city to city but, in general terms, the situation in most cities is similar.

Photo: Deena Kolenicheva

CM: The architecture and location of the Packhaus suggested a certain use from the very start. You have used the term "start-ups" on several occasions and yet, at the same time, your concept emphasises that it is very important to you to have the greatest possible mix of uses. Does the building also have users that are not start-ups?

MD: From the very start we were faced with the dilemma of what to call our users, given that "temporary users" is simply not very elegant. The terms "start-up" and "creative" then became standard although many users are not start-ups in the true sense of the term. In fact, diversity is very important to us, which is why we used the "open call" to very deliberately seek tenants from such different areas as technology, art, research and the crafts.

CM: Where does this desire for mixing come from? Wouldn't it also be conceivable to put one's faith in focuses and clusters? Concentrations of companies from the same sector often develop in cities as those companies hope to benefit from being close to each other.

MD: Yes, and that can also make a lot of sense. This is why we established certain focuses when distributing the tenants between the various floors, despite the fact that the offices on every floor have very similar plans. The fact is, however, that we had gained experience of monocultures from earlier projects and now wanted to try a mix of uses. Diversity is also a more appropriate solution here because this is a building about which one can say - if one allows oneself to exaggerate just a little - that it really is a "city" within the city. A further explanation here is that we were keen to experiment with bartering. Thanks to the breadth of the mix, a photographer can now help a programmer while a video company can get advice from a tax advisor or a massage from the building's Grinberg therapist. In order to be able to exchange the different skills within the building, the individual players must also know each other personally. Opportunities for getting acquainted with each other include a shared lunch in the cafeteria and all the other activities that we organise on the ground floor.

CM: You have stimulated a sort of "shared economy".

MD: Yes, we wanted to facilitate a "cycle economy". This is why one feature of the open call was a questionnaire which asked potential tenants not only what skills they had but also what skills they would be willing to exchange. This was another reason why we were careful not to fill the building with 50 architects. In addition to this, we also wanted to open the project to professions who - unlike architects and artists – are not so accustomed to temporary use, such as prospective speech therapists or masseurs for whom it is also important to find affordable studios in good locations.

CM: At Paradocks you design and organise temporary use solutions while also guiding your projects through a form of research process. What is the true role of Paradocks? Are you more real estate agents or more operators, more practitioners than researchers?

Fear is a poor counsellor and gets in the way of progress. So far we haven't had a major problem but I don't think that the legal status of temporary use is satisfactory.

MD: Not to forget social workers and janitors! Everyone who has executed such a project knows that one is required to perform a thousand different roles and it is this that makes our work so exciting. Naturally this work depends primarily on the size of the object and on the different areas and functions that it covers. In the Packhaus we are constantly organising a range of artistic and cultural events as well as running a think tank, in which we reflect upon what is working well and what is working less well. Much of our work is indeed building management. Shortly before I arrived today, the electricity wasn't working on the third floor. Dealing with such things immediately isn't necessarily exciting – but it is very important. The following day one might have a meeting with the management of the Wiener Privatbank, Conwert or Soravia.

CM: It has become uncommon to see problems solved so quickly because the classic role of the janitor has been outsourced.

MD: Of course we also have our own building managers but when they have to become involved it can be complicated and last much longer. This is why we do so much of this janitorial work ourselves and this has the additional advantage of allowing us to maintain close contacts with our tenants.

About DAS PACKHAUS

Packhaus is the name of the former office building in Vienna's third district which has been given a temporary use by Paradocks since 2014 and in which around 80 different companies, associations and initiatives currently have an office. The Packhaus has a number of communal spaces and a semi-public ground floor zone with restaurants and areas for events which can also be used by non-tenants. Rather than merely managing the Packhaus, Paradocks also regularly enlivens it by organising a variety of events devoted to such subjects as urban development, education, alternative economies and technology.

www.daspackhaus.at

Photo: Marija Jocuta

CM: But you wouldn't be able to simultaneously look after a number of buildings in this way.

MD: Yes and no. When we are here there are constant questions but we get the impression that these often result from people's need to communicate. We are present five days a week between nine and six and many people simply come to talk with us but I suspect that the building would still work even if we weren't here so often. However, the mood simply seems to be better when we are present. We could certainly work more efficiently and be here less often but we have decided very consciously against doing this because the atmosphere and the mood in the building are very important to us.

CM: We are also interested in your projects due to the background of the refugee situation which has made the subject of "temporary use" so topical. When asking myself what we could learn from you I noted two key phrases: one is "quality of support" and the other "legal security". As we have already discussed the first of these I would like to ask a question regarding the second: Is this why you make contracts with both building owners and your users?

MD: We have contracts but this practice is risky for us. Building owners just have one contract – with us. We, however, have 87. This is now a proper tenancy agreement whereas earlier it was a precarium contract. In the case of a precarium contract one doesn't pay very much but one has hardly any rights and can be evicted from one day to the next. For the building owner that is very simple but we, on the other hand, have to give notice to 87 other parties. If one party doesn't move out we can naturally start proceedings – but do very little else. If just one user did this and refused to pay not much would happen but if several did so then we would soon be bankrupt. This legal risk is certainly one of the reasons why so many people are not prepared to get involved with such projects. And yet we have decided to do so. Fear is a poor counsellor and gets in the way of progress. So far we haven't had a major problem but I don't think that the legal status of temporary use is satisfactory.

CM: What would you suggest in order to improve this?

MD: One could examine this instrument of "precarium" much more closely. At the beginning two out of three people advised us against signing precarium contracts. Even if temporary uses tend to be bottom-up initiatives, my opinion is that the city authorities could offer a kind of guarantee for the operator and, if necessary, support in return for which the projects should at least be partly implemented on a not-for-profit basis. This must not mean that the city must pay but it is, for example, impossible for us to gain legal costs insurance because this would simply be too expensive. If the city was able to offer a guarantee, things could look very different. It would, however, also be important to have a system of public land registration.

CM: Paradocks works exclusively with private real estate companies. Why?

MD: Our contacts with public property companies have been – and continue to be – extremely positive: However, there is still a lot of fear and, perhaps, a little ignorance. This is a shame because these could be such role models! Conwert, for example, is a large company which owns many vacant properties as well as offering the advantage of being a company which rarely interferes.

CM: The Packhaus is also an experiment designed to find out how such questions can be solved. There are, for example, demands that the public sector should reserve a certain volume of vacant space which it can then hand over to various initiatives, such as those which help refugees.

At the risk of sounding a little conservative, my opinion is that the provision of housing for refugees demands solid structures which will be stable in the long term and should principally be the responsibility of institutions.

MD: And in the case of something like the refugee crisis that is necessary. At the risk of sounding a little conservative, my opinion is that the provision of housing for refugees demands solid structures which will be stable in the long term and should principally be the responsibility of institutions. The notion of temporary use is often unable to guarantee such conditions – or can only do so on a small scale. After all, this is a question of "people in need" and, beyond a certain scale, these people cannot be supported informally.

CM: No refugees are housed in the Packhaus.

MD: We are permitted to use the building for creative but not for residential purposes. That is an important use restriction imposed by the precarium contract. It would, however, be interesting and conceivable to accommodate three or four families in apartments who could then be looked after by the tenants. Such an idea must, however, be well thought through. I would find it arrogant to simply start such a project spontaneously because we are dealing here with people in emergency situations.

CM: But it would be thinkable.

MD: Yes, but we are already helping in other ways by, for example, cooking for refugees in the Wandelbar, one of our temporary use projects. Here in the Packhaus we have started language courses for refugees from the nearby Zollamtsstraße and are looking to expand this provision. We can – and want to – use our spaces to help. In May we will start to offer temporary learning and working space for young people in the Packhaus, in a process in which we will merely play the role of "matchmaker".

CM: In Trust111 - an earlier temporary use project in Schönbrunnerstraße - you provided an apartment for refugees who were supported by Caritas.

MD: The refugees were already there before we moved in. Hence, it wasn't our initiative but the refugees became part of the project and the "building community". While we were making temporary use of a restaurant in Grundsteingasse we took in eight Chechen families who came to us from the Verein Ute Bock and then we informally supported these families ourselves. There were, however, a number of problems and the police had to visit several times. We were able to offer them help, even if we were not responsible for providing direct support.

CM: The name Paradocks is, after all, derived from the term "docking" and you have the potential to make a contribution – even when this doesn't mean providing accommodation.

MD: One shouldn't forget that having somewhere to sleep is only one issue. Providing accommodation is only part of a much broader set of requirements.

CM: How important is public space in the city given that you are already providing so much inside the building? Couldn't you also be located somewhere at the edge of the city?

Photo: Marija Jocuta

MD: But then we would hardly have any of those people who come to us now. Of course such mixed approaches are also conceivable in other districts – but not everywhere.

CM: How important is the surrounding urban structure for your projects?

MD: We have little to do with the local area although it is home to many users. Perhaps we are bringing a little more culture to a district where it has been lacking – although this has improved recently. In general terms, however, the contact with the area is very positive.

CM: What else do you have to offer? One hopes that initiatives such as yours will lead to things becoming a little livelier. However, such hoped-for stimulation often becomes a precursor to gentrification. You prefer to talk about "upgrading". What do you think about this subject which so dominates the debate about vacancy rates? The criticism is perhaps less focussed on upgrading itself as on the sharing out of the profits of such upgrading.

MD: We could really talk about this subject for a long time. Although I have often written about gentrification, the discussion is becoming boring. Let us turn the question on its head: Should we stop doing such work due to the possibility that gentrification could occur?

CM: What is the role of architecture in the Packhaus itself? How important is architectural design for the social processes that you want to support? What did you find there and what did you have to do?

MD: There was a lot of concrete, steel and carpeting and many walls stained yellow by smoke. We very deliberately decided not to fit out floors1-6 because we know how enjoyable it is to do that oneself. The result is that the offices are organised in very different ways which also contributes to the particular quality of the current situation: this is a form of community design. Some offices are very chic whereas in others very little was changed. At ground floor level we opened up a couple of walls but otherwise did very little in order to minimise investment costs. Hence, there is very little architecture but, mainly, "do-it-yourself design."

CM: Even though, for you, "software" was more important than "hardware"?

MD: Yes, the question of how we organise the social aspect of the building was and also remains the most important, even if we enjoy being architects and designers. I have spent my life in a series of very different cities and experienced some very experimental ways of living and can confirm that the software – the social aspect – is always absolutely decisive. In Trust111 I had no shower and it was often very cold but the people got on very well. We hung out a lot in the corridor, effectively using it as a social space. At the same time we each had the opportunity to close our door behind us if we wanted some privacy. In my experience, however, one can only encourage such social processes – as long as one's approach is authentic – but one cannot organise them by means of some sort of externally-imposed long-distance design.

CM: Perhaps you could also say something about the period required in order for something to develop.

MD: Two years are the minimum. Of course we have ways of encouraging something to develop much quicker but less than two to three years is simply not fair. We are currently watching as so much is happening and the dynamic is constantly getting better and better and it would be a real shame if this process soon ended.

CM: Isn't Airbnb the most successful temporary use model of recent years?

MD: That depends upon how you define temporary use. Whether something has to be vacant. Last Friday, "store me", a start-up from the Packhaus which is similar to Airbnb but deals with storage space, went online. In the case of Airbnb it is often not a question of the use of resources because we are not dealing with truly vacant space but, at most, with a form of exchange – and yet the use solution is, of course, super!

CM: Airbnb is one of the greatest beneficiaries of gentrification as well as an example of how common property and public space can be commercialised and privatised. New network technologies will doubtlessly facilitate even more ways of using public space and common property. How do you see this development? Do you see any potential for using this approach to a social end?

MD: That is like car sharing: In the shared economy or circular economy both sides must benefit strongly. In the building we also tried to create workshops and share materials but this only partially worked. Sharing should make things easier but if there are too many rules then this is no longer any fun. The key is to establish clear limits and, between these, to enjoy huge freedom. We continue to experiment.

CM: What are you working on currently?

MD: On projects in other cities in Austria and, internationally, in Amsterdam, Bratislava and Budapest. We are also often approached for help by municipalities and offer support ranging from workshops with public participation to practical implementation. Austria is not yet a pioneer in the area of temporary use - which is why we were surprised by the response to our open call. The interest in the subject is growing and there is a backlog of demand.

CM: The movement of refugees is being most directly felt in cities yet this is set against a global background of intense rural depopulation. At the same time, many say that this issue would be easier to solve in rural areas because these contain so much vacant space. And mayors say that refugees are easier to integrate in small numbers.

MD: Yes, but what should the people do there? There isn't any work. You can't take in people and let them play in the football team but not offer them a job. And besides this, people need their own communities. This could, however, be a very good solution for families.

CM: But perhaps there will be a renaissance of the sort of "medium-sized" city which is heterogeneous enough to be able to absorb people.

MD: Perhaps, but the important thing is the overall package. If you ask young people how they want to live they decide firstly about the place, then about the job and only then about the apartment. You cannot simply alter the order of these three wishes.

About Margot Deerenberg

Born in the Netherlands in 1982 and, after periods in Shanghai, Istanbul and Tirana/Skopje, resident in Vienna since 2008, Margot Deerenberg addresses cities and their latent potential - both practically and theoretically. Educated as an urban sociologist and human geographer, she is working on a dissertation on the subject of "temporary uses" and implements her ideas and some of the results of her research as a "spatial entrepreneur" through her company Paradocks, which was founded in 2013. Operated by Paradocks since 2014, Packhaus is one of the first large-scale temporary use projects. Further pilot projects in the area of the activation of unused resources are currently under development.

www.paradocks.at

ACCOMMODATION AS A BASIC RIGHT

Homelessness is neither an isolated fate nor an isolated problem. This is why innovative and promising long-term approaches seek to offer support on a number of levels, not least through high-quality architecture.

A conversation with the social scientist and neunerhaus CEO Markus Reiter and the architect Christoph Lammerhuber about the causes of increasing homelessness, the importance of having one's own postbox and new ideas for the housing estates of the 1960s and 70s.

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 11th 2016
Photos: Johanna Rauch

Strongly rising urban populations, the euro crisis, the ECB's zero interest rate policy and the stagnation in social housing have led to strong demand for real estate and a consequently steep increase in purchase and rental prices for apartments, especially in large cities such as Vienna.

According to a recent report by the social organisation neunerhaus both the number of people at risk of poverty who are facing high accommodation costs and the average level of these costs has risen significantly in Austria. The situation has worsened further due to the high number of these new rental contracts which have fixed terms.

The independent aid organisation neunerhaus has been addressing the complex subject of housing and homelessness for 15 years with the twin aims of developing innovative concepts for the sustainable social inclusion of homeless people and implementing these concepts in its own apartments and apartment buildings. The three current buildings and around 80 further apartments in Vienna now offer about 500 homeless people each year the opportunity to lead a self-determined and dignified life within their own four walls.

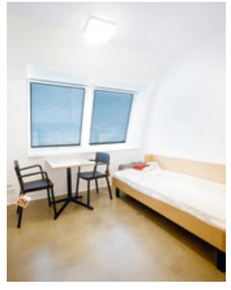
The recently completed neunerhaus Hagenmüllergasse in Vienna's 3rd district was designed by pool Architekten and built by WBV-GPA. It opened in 2015. Each of the 73 small, individually shaped apartments has a kitchen and everything required for an independent decent quality of life. While the privacy and autonomy of the residents is expressly respected and encouraged the house also contains numerous communal spaces in and around the central staircase which is structured as a half-open, vertical meeting space that rises through six storeys of the building.

With its progressive philosophy and a radical architecture which is based on the needs of its residents the neunerhaus embodies the complete antithesis of the still widespread typology of the "home" which was originally derived from the clinic and the barracks.

CM: I have read that, over time, homeless people forget how to live in a home. As the architect and the CEO of neunerhaus, Vienna's social organisation for homeless people, you have a lot of experience with residential building and have been involved with this subject for a long time. As the designers of the neunerhaus were you able to learn something from the residents, from the homeless people?

MR: What everyone needs and wants is privacy, respect, a home and a place where they can be reached. This is just as true for homeless people. Everyone would like to decide for themselves who comes to visit or whether or not to take a letter from the postbox. And doubly important for our clients is the opportunity to retreat into their own private space. I would like to disagree with this notion that one can forget how to live in a home. I don't understand why one should question the ability of homeless people to do this. Everyone knows how to live in a home.

More than a shelter, built by WBV-GPA: At neunerhaus Hagenmüllergasse in Vienna 79 formerly homeless people receive privacy, autonomy and a home.



CM: How can one imagine a life without an address or a legal status?

MR: Living on the street is an extreme, exceptional situation. People on the street find themselves in many sorts of crisis situations: psychological and physical. Life becomes extremely tasking if you have no living space with a private place to cook or bathe and no door to close behind you. But without a postbox or address where you can be reached, legally or formally, things also quickly become complicated. Only when you have spent some time without an address do you become aware of what the social state expects of its citizens.

CM: neunerhaus Hagenmüllergasse, which was opened in June 2015, is one of three neunerhaus residential buildings in Vienna. It offers everything that one would expect of "normal" living but the truth is that those who move in here have had to make do without these self-evident things for a considerable period of time.

MR: The residents were indeed all homeless – but they have different backgrounds. These are often crises such as debts, dismissals, divorces or the death of someone close – and when such things happen simultaneously things can go downhill very fast. It is important to remember that homelessness doesn't always mean that someone has spent a long time living on the street or in a park. Many come from "hidden homelessness". This particularly affects women – who have often accepted terrible conditions in order not to be homeless. Many initially find such temporary solutions on a friend's couch: The social network is used first. But even the strongest network has holes. In order to get quickly back on one's feet one then needs quick and qualitative help.

CL: This is why I believe that projects like the neunerhaus should apply the highest standards of construction and social care: this, for me, is also a form of fairness. I find it perfidious that people from a whole range of professions are using the refugee crisis as an excuse for suddenly reducing standards that we have spent centuries resolutely establishing. One hears that we don't need to build lifts in student and refugee accommodation because they are "in any case young and have no problem walking." In socio-political terms it is pathetic to act as if we are already doing too much for homeless people. Why are these people in this situation? Nobody chooses homelessness.

CM: Accommodation is one of the main basic needs and can't be granted temporarily or made subject to certain conditions. Quite apart from the moral and political arguments there are also practical or therapeutic reasons for this: constant helplessness prolongs crises. In order to regain control of their lives, those affected require stable conditions.

MR: Yes. But we also have to change something about the roots of the problem. We are stuck in a crisis of distribution. The economy is suffering and this affects incomes. Public resources are declining and housing is becoming ever more expensive, not least as a result of privatisation.

If a household that is already in a crisis situation then loses one income, things can happen quickly and basic needs can no longer be met. We must find differentiated ways of discussing the problem of how to create affordable living space. In addition to the question of how to affordably build good-quality residential buildings, we must also ask why people's incomes are so low. We have calculated that around a third of people in the lowest income segment have to bear an average accommodation cost load of over 40 per cent. This means that they are threatened by the loss of this accommodation!

CM: In the interest of fairness one must also say that, due to Vienna's complicated and partly almost byzantine tenancy regulations, there are also many people who pay very little for a lot of living space.

MR: That is true, which is why we also campaign for easier access to affordable living space for homeless people. But we must also do something in the area of new building. Another reason why building is so expensive is that no one wants to take responsibility for risks in such areas as fire protection. But quality must not suffer. One cannot make external walls 15 centimetres thinner just in order to cut costs. This also explains why people acknowledge the high quality offered by the neunerhaus. People see and feel this value and are more motivated to take their lives into their own hands.

CM: Because of your special expertise you were able to formulate a very precise brief for the competition. The quality achieved in the building has much to do with the fact that you knew exactly what was important and what has proven to be worthwhile.

MR: That "we" is not just the neunerhaus organisation or the social workers but also the residents. It was very important to me that they were involved in the design of the building from the very start.

CM: How were the users involved in the design process?

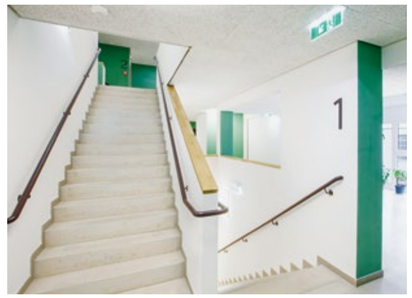
MR: We asked users their opinions in workshops. The questions were formulated very concretely and concerned functions and the design of communicative encounters in the building. This enabled us to avoid such issues as whether the building should be painted yellow or grey. We also gathered information in a series of steps about how they envisaged the interior and the exterior of the building and their own living spaces.

CL: These were largely descriptions of how life was lived on a daily basis without any specific spatial information. In comparison with the other more classical competition entries did our design surprise you?

MR: We chose you because in your presentation you established a very specific way of communicating with us. In the discussion it was also clear that we had a common understanding.

CM: Although this common understanding is a central requirement for the success of a project it is often underestimated.

CL: It was very unusual for us to have a client in the classic sense. We are more used to somewhat anonymous clients such as banks or housing associations who then pass on a project to an equally anonymous building manager as soon as it has been developed and built. This means that there is very little direct and personal feedback from either the client or the residents, which is naturally a great disadvantage. In the case of neunerhaus we had a concrete counterpart who had clear ideas and with whom we could debate.



pool Architects designed a staircase which is structured as a half-open, vertical meeting space that rises through six storeys of the building.

MR: It was important to us that the architects were able to gather feedback at an early stage in the shape of workshops with the users of two other neunerhaus residential buildings in Vienna and also that they were able to repeatedly present their ideas and discuss these openly.

CM: Can I assume that pool Architekten basically act in this way because you understand architecture as a social discipline?

CL: Yes, that's right. From my point of view architecture has been in a fundamental crisis for quite some time: if, for instance, some star architect designs a handbag for Louis Vuitton, which, in truth, is something that interests nobody, then this is celebrated as a groundbreaking flagship project whereas housing which, for me, is the architectural crème de la crème, gets far too little attention. In saying this, however, I must emphasise that the socio-political culture of the City of Vienna is comparatively sophisticated. If an organisation such as neunerhaus is trusted by the Vienna Social Fund with the operation of a housing project for homeless people, then this facility will also be awarded housing subsidy. We have done a lot with limited resources but without this subsidy we would never have even been able to start at all.

MR: The result is also a statement by the city authorities about the solution to homelessness in the city. There is nothing comparable in the whole of Austria

CM: An important factor in this success and also in the role of the building as a model is the support that you offer.

MR: Here we developed a really clever concept. More than anything else our objective in the neunerhaus is: living as normally as possible. The carers should act as much as possible like guests rather than proprietors: knock, wait to see if someone opens the door and never disturb. Even when offering socio-political counselling we act as equals and everything that we offer is voluntary and never based on compulsion.
It goes without saying that most homeless people want to live independently and of their own accord but the aid system still seems dominated by the notion that these people aspire to living in shared accommodation. In the meantime we know that this is only true in a small number of cases. As neunerhaus our opinion is that support can only succeed if it doesn't anticipate the actions of the people it is supporting. One opens perspectives and people realise that they are just as valuable as we are. We can only help when those affected are ready for this. This requires time and trust but neither instructions nor control. Of course we feel pressure from public bodies but there is a difference between stipulation and support.

CM: So you are self-critical enough to know that care also has this "disciplining" aspect and this is how you keep this in check.

MR: Professionals from a number of fields work in neunerhaus. Our approach is holistic. It is not just a question of social work but also of support from doctors and psychologists. It is also important that residents also take responsibility for themselves - at both the small and large scale. Our tenants are invited to help with the cleaning or cooking. This is just as important as the communication zones. We don't understand this encouragement of self-responsibility in the neo-liberal sense that they must support themselves in order to be able to repay the benefits handed out by the state. We invest in the quality of the support in order to get away from control mechanisms. A lot of money in the social sector is invested in control.

CM: The apartments in neunerhaus are small. This means that more people can live here but, at the same time, this should not be seen as an expression of frugality. How do you achieve this balance?

If, for instance, some star architect designs a handbag for Louis Vuitton, which, in truth, is something that interests nobody, then this is celebrated as a groundbreaking flagship project whereas housing which, for me, is the architectural crème de la crème, gets far too little attention.

CL: Good living space is not necessarily a question of size and, in any event, in the case of residential space it is the immediate living environment which is particularly important. Hence we were able to create spaces next to the apartments which, on first appearance, may not seem very practical: small, half-open spaces containing two chairs. You get out of the lift, look out, know that you are on the third floor and there is still enough room here to meet up or read a book. We could certainly have squeezed in another four or five apartments but I think that these intermediate spaces are vital, even if they don't seem very efficient at first glance. In this case these "unnecessary" extras are crucial for the living quality because the living conditions are correspondingly minimal. We spent a long time discussing the minimum requirements for the fittings: wardrobe, kitchen, bathroom, table, chairs, beds. My belief is that we managed more than the minimum.

MR: And although we naturally made every effort on their behalf our employees are the least satisfied, probably because they sense that they don't play the main role in this building. They are actually just guests and the fact that they feel this is, for me, a form of positive feedback.

CM: The building feels like a good tool that offers answers to many current needs. What will happen if these change in the future? How adaptable is the building?

CL: This can be seen in, amongst other things, the structure: the entire building consists of just a load-bearing external skin and a few internal columns. If we find out in ten years that the units should only have 12 square metres or that the homeless don't need any more help then everything can be changed easily.

The carers should act as much as possible like guests rather than proprietors: knock, wait to see if someone opens the door and never disturb.

CM: Homeless people use the city intensively and are – or at least this is what one imagines – people who move around the city a lot. What is the relationship between the neunerhaus and its urban environment? How important is it that the building has the infrastructure to meet all its own needs or can the urban infrastructure also provide some of this?

MR: I think that the location of neunerhaus Hagenmüllergasse in the heart of the third district is an excellent way of countering the tendency to banish homeless people from the city and out towards the periphery. I fought for six years to be able to realise this project downtown. This has something to do with participation and with the question of how the city deals with this issue. Our other two buildings are also well situated in the tenth and the nineteenth districts. This simplifies participation in the life of society and our buildings are very well integrated in their respective neighbourhoods. This is very important to us.
Because even if we offer an infrastructure in the building – such as doctors or a cafeteria or suchlike – we want to encourage our residents to use the "normal" offerings of the city in line with their capacity to do so.

CM: Which other forms of exclusion do you see?

CL: In the past forty years hundreds of millions of euros have been invested in the refurbishment of Vienna's late nineteenth-century building stock. This is an insane amount of money and has led to an explosion in prices. Where can the student from Linz, the Syrian refugee and the Bosnian labourer now live? As there are hardly any sub-standard apartments any more, these groups are increasingly being forced into local authority housing.

MR: The opportunities for affordable living in this city are steadily disappearing. And one must meet certain requirements if wants to rent a local authority apartment.

CL: This is why we are looking intensely at the large housing estates of the 1960s and 70s. As they belong to the city they also have certain development potential that we are currently investigating as part of a research project.
Basically, these estates are models of success. The fact that 50 per cent of the residents are now pensioners signifies that the first generation is still living there. Most are satisfied and dissatisfaction is usually limited to the fact that the children playing in the green areas disturb the pensioners' peace and quiet. These estates are currently experiencing change processes which the late nineteenth-century parts of the city already have behind them.

CM: For many years Vienna was a shrinking city and one never expected the growth that we are experiencing today. Despite this, however, the city is dealing with this well because, thanks to Otto Wagner, it has an urban infrastructure which was planned for a projected population of four million.

CL: The estates on the edge of the city from the 1960s date back to Roland Rainer. One often forgets why they were built in the first place. In his 1963 design concept for Vienna Roland Rainer said that life in the nineteenth-century tenement block was inhuman because so many people there lived without water and electricity. He proposed these peripheral estates in order to allow the nineteenth-century districts to be refurbished.

MR: In the inner city this led to people being displaced. The assumption is that such developments are always positive and that distribution always follows. But this is no longer the case. The crisis of distribution is leading to the fact that some of the displaced can no longer even find a place for themselves on the periphery and end up homeless.

We invest in the quality of the support in order to get away from control mechanisms. A lot of money in the social sector is invested in control.

CL: Accommodation is primarily a challenge in terms of distribution policy. In the late nineteenth century fifty people were living in space which today is occupied by two.

MR: We cannot compare the situation with that of a century ago but we are currently experiencing a huge rise in the incidence of precarious living conditions and the number of people who are facing the threat of becoming homeless due to the burden of high living costs. In Vienna around 150,000 households have housing costs which are simply too high. We must find a politico-economic way of driving up lower incomes. But the impact of market mechanisms on residential building continues to grow while the availability of basic infrastructure continues to diminish. This is why we base our work on the premise that accommodation is a basic right – a human right. This implies that this should not be exposed to pure economic mechanisms. When housing is built one should be able to speak about quality and urban meaning. Price should not be the paramount issue.

About neunerhaus

Ever since it was founded in 1999 the social organisation has pursued the objective of sustainably helping homeless people through empowerment and through the provision of a home, medical care and other high-quality services. Social workers provide support where required but the aim is for the residents to be independent as possible. To this end they have their own key and the freedom to invite visitors, keep pets and drink alcohol. In addition to this, the aid organisation campaigns for the improvement of policies in the areas of health, social policy and housing in the interest of Vienna's poorest people – its homeless. The organisation neunerhaus is led by one of the founders of the initiative, the social economist Markus Reiter.

www.neunerhaus.at

About pool Architektur

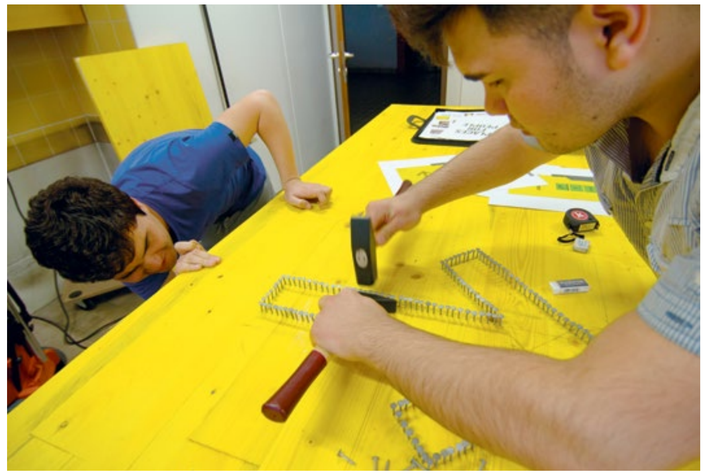
The office, which was established by four partners including Christoph Lammerhuber (*1966) in 1999 and now has a staff of 15, sees the design of housing as the architect's most important role and has presented numerous projects in this area which successfully test the increasingly rigid regulations to the limit. With its clever design, the new neunerhaus Hagenmüllergasse offers accommodation to 79 instead of the earlier 59 inhabitants and, with its cafeteria and group practice of doctors and therapists, has the space required for the optimal implementation of the building's innovative support concept.

www.pool-arch.at

FIRST AID IN ORIENTATION

The Austrian graphic designer Erwin K. Bauer has developed a visual guidance system with his team, aimed at improving orientation and communication in temporary accommodation that – in a modified form – is also being used in "Places for People" projects.
A conversation with the initiator of the First Aid Kit about "inclusive design", the topicality of such Viennese pioneers as Otto Neurath and Victor Papanek and the future role of designers as "social entrepreneurs".

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 3rd 2016
Photos: buero bauer



Next stage of First Aid Kit: Refugees' redesign for Haus Erdberg
Adapted for Haus Erdberg in partnership with grafisches Büro – Roman Breier, Günter Eder, Marcel Neundörfer

Serious linguistic barriers and difficulties in understanding lead to insecurity on the part of both people fleeing to Europe and the people and institutions looking after them. This situation is particularly acute in rapidly created emergency accommodation. The most important information about orientation within the building, about the help on offer and about rights and obligations are often only to be found on simple handwritten pieces of paper stuck to doors and walls. Only very exceptionally does this makeshift signage offer information in the languages of all the countries of origins of the residents. Originally intended as temporary, these improvised, rudimentary aids to orientation often remain in use over longer periods and often clash with existing visual guidance systems which were originally installed for a completely different purpose. There is a limitation to the extent to which those caring for the residents can personally compensate for this information gap – and this also costs valuable time.

With his Gesellschaft für Orientierung und Identität (Company for Orientation and Identity) the graphic designer Erwin K. Bauer specialises in an area of visual communication with huge social relevance. At the same time, his work traces its lineage directly back to the pioneering efforts of the Austrian philosopher, economist, social policy expert and proponent of the settlement movement, Otto Neurath who, together with a small team, developed image-based visualisation systems and pictograms in the 1930s with the aim of spreading knowledge and, as a result, improving people's living conditions.

Erwin Bauer CEO of Design Studio buero bauer

Next stage of First Aid Kit: Refugees' redesign for Haus Erdberg

CM: The First Aid Kit is your studio's initiative. Please can you describe what it is, how you designed it and what the feedback has been like so far?

EB: Everything that we do as designers is to all intents and purposes political. We can accompany events, simply watch them happening or even ignore them completely. It is better, however, to anticipate them, comment upon them or use our work – the shaping of communication – to react to them. In the words of Paul Watzlawick "one cannot not communicate." Our initiative was triggered by the first refugees who arrived here in ever growing numbers in autumn 2015. Within our team we asked ourselves what designers could contribute to improving the situation at that moment. Our list of possibilities included not only the First Aid Kit but also an information design campaign about the motives of the refugees and why they were arriving in which countries. As a result of the rapidly shifting situation we were unable to gather the decisive data for the information design project. Hence, we abandoned this and went back to our list to single out something that we could swiftly implement and that offered concrete help. This was the First Aid Kit.

CM: So what can the First Aid Kit do?

EB: Most people arriving in emergency accommodation lack important information. They often don't even know where they are, whether they are safe or how far it is to the nearest railway station. By talking to helpers on the ground we identified the concrete need and the sticking points. We reckoned that these could be overcome by a temporary information system which could be simply printed, applied and managed by the helpers – a low-threshold system in terms of both use and appearance: robust rather than finely-tuned. Designers usually want to control form but we, on the other hand, chose to loosen our control and leave part of the formal design open. Initially, it was much more important to limit the information to the essential and to concentrate on content and the structure of this content. One also has to take into account the fact that there are many volunteers in the shelters and that these regularly change. They are there of their own free will and don't want to have to follow the instructions of a designer. That would fail immediately. This is why our info kit is an uncomplicated, work-saving tool - and this is why it was immediately and very well accepted.

CM: In what timeframe did this all happen?

EB: We started in October 2015 and literally shot it out in two and a half weeks. Having intensively addressed the type and the visual message of individual elements my team was surprised when I suddenly said, "so let's put it up and see!" In classic design terms we were far from ready but I desperately wanted to test the first elements in order to get some user reaction. With the help of interpreters we distributed questionnaires about both the refugee's understanding of and the completeness of the system and these brought us immediate feedback which allowed us to swiftly improve it.

CM: That was for the building in Vordere Zollamtsstraße?

EB: Yes, the testing procedure in this first location was swift and uncomplicated because the Red Cross was very open to the idea. At the beginning we were on the ground every day and the helpers told us what was working well and what was working less well or was missing altogether.

CM: What did you have to correct?

EB: After analysing various processes we identified three categories of information: offers, instructions and prohibitions. These include, for example, instructions for people from other cultural contexts on the use of toilets.
We had to use pictograms to explain that one should throw nothing in the WC and do nothing in the shower because this could block the drain. These instructions significantly reduced the load on the helpers. We also had to counter myths which were generated by both refugees and helpers – such as the idea that one should on no account drink the tap water, which in Vienna is ridiculous. We developed signs and symbols for such purposes.

CM: Does one have to break new ground when designing for people from other cultural backgrounds?

EB: Yes, that's a good point. It was particularly important for us to start from the cultural context of those arriving here rather than from our own. Adopting this perspective brings new solutions. The issue of identity is very important. This, for example, is why our symbol for a woman can be read in two ways: as a figure with a headscarf or with long hair. We realised that one could only introduce an air of domesticity to these uncomfortable, temporary spaces if this was also supported on the information level. Hence, our symbols were human rather than technical, softened by their lightly rounded corners. Standardised icons are normally designed as silhouettes because this makes them more recognisable from a distance. However, we preferred to sacrifice a modicum of legibility in order to dress the man in a pullover and trousers and the woman in a dress. This means that the symbols are much more concrete yet remain highly legible. Links to digital or public information were also extremely important. Particularly essential are departure addresses in a range of languages: Where am I? Where must I go to? Where is the railway station? We also hung a huge map in the foyer which showed the precise location of the accommodation. Last autumn many people arrived here from Hungary where they were put in buses before being driven across the border and suddenly set down in the middle of Vienna without knowing where they were. Just this correct and clear information about their current location brought the refugees a sense of security and calm.

CM: The First Aid Kit is an open tool box. You can react to new needs by thinking about the correct pictogram. The Zollamt building is huge. How many signs are in use there?

EB: There is room for 800 refugees. Signs are naturally used most intensively where there is most activity, where people arrive for the first time and in the medical area. At peak times, however, there are simply too few interpreters and this observation led to the first extension of our system. In order to support the initial medical examination we drew up symbols for the key indicators of illness because it is obviously impossible to arrive at a proper diagnosis without dialogue. Our symbols allow patients to communicate: I am hot or cold, I am pregnant, I am dizzy. And in order to avoid mistakes regarding the most important complaints we worked directly with the doctors.

CM: And are you doing all this for free?

EB: The kit is a voluntary project of our studio. The tool kit can be used free-of-charge in line with a "creative-commons" licence as long as the project is not commercial – which more or less applies to every project in which our kit is used. The system can be downloaded free from our website. However, if someone starts to earn money using our system a royalty becomes payable. This is comparable with a licence for using a font and its size naturally depends upon the scale of the project.

Everything that we do as designers is to all intents and purposes political.

CM: How widely is the tool used?

EB: It has already spread across Europe. In Berlin it is used in LAGeSo which, as the biggest refugee accommodation, is much larger than any in Austria. The Berlin designers were good enough to call us to inform us that they were using - and had even extended - the system. Hence, it is not always extended by us but also by the design community and I find this really good. We are still discussing how these additions can flow back into our system and who, in such cases, is the author. We already have an ongoing direct cooperation with the Berlin designers.

Hairstyle or headscarf?
Pictogram of a woman from the First Aid Kit

CM: What did they change?

EB: They added elements which were especially necessary there including numbering systems and symbols for tents or indications of video surveillance. As a result of the abduction of two children the entire area is monitored for the security of the refugees. Naturally this must be made apparent: "Careful, here there is video surveillance by means of cameras".

CM: Has it also already been used for "Places for People?"

EB: Our First Aid Kit was originally intended for the initial emergency shelters. The fact that the Biennale project involves medium-term accommodation rather than such initial shelters means that the requirements are different. The key issue here is work because, as the people in this accommodation aren't allowed to seek employment, one of the major challenges is boredom. The approach of EOOS seeks to tackle this 'lack of something to do,' largely by involving their clients in a form of 'economy of the common good' in which they participate in the upkeep of the building by such activities as cleaning or cooking. In the same sense we don't want to simply impose our information system here from the outside but, rather,

to involve the clients in production and assembly – by, for instance, identifying certain areas as a means of enabling them to gain some sense of ownership. Once this is done there is much work cutting, screwing, painting and fixing and, once again, we only partially define the form. The process of identification with a place and the subsequent appropriation of this place by the refugees through their own efforts are much more important than the question of who controls the design. We merely establish the parameters and moderate the process as a means of ensuring an effective outcome for everyone.

Independence from stigmatisation, WU Campus

The image of the wheelchair user in the current Ö Norm is stigmatising. The person seems like a captive, completely dependent and cannot move on their own.

CM: The number one source of information is the mobile telephone. Would it also be possible to design the tool as an app?

EB: There are already some projects in this direction such as the digital guide Welcome-App Germany. The dissemination of our tool across Europe via social media means that we are constantly receiving offers of cooperation. Most commonly, these are requests to use our icons and to exchange information. We are just starting a project of cooperation in this direction in Vienna. Markus Riedler, a graduate of the graphic design class at the University of Applied Arts, is working with NGOs and activists from civil society on the project "new here", a map-based digital platform for orientation in and integration into day-to-day life in Vienna. Here, our expertise in map-making and using symbols is required. In this way, the best elements of the First Aid Kit flow into other initiatives. I am always particularly pleased when such positive signals come from civil society.

CM: Let us move away from this special tool and towards the subject of orientation systems. Here, you and your team realised two projects of which Caritas was the client. One of these was in the area of social business in the Ankerbrot factory where magdas kantine is based and the other is a concrete drop-in centre for the homeless at the Central Station. And you also developed a barrier-free guidance system at the WU Campus of the University of Economics & Business. Can you say something about the similarities and differences between these concepts?

EB: Our design follows the principles of "design for all" and "inclusive design". Our focus is the question of who needs what information or support, regardless of whether these are refugees, people who drop out of our society or are marginalised or disabled. This can be solved functionally using the 2-3 senses principle. If one sense fails, such as sight in the case of the blind, then the necessary information is provided tactilely and/or acoustically. We are interested in the question of how one can cultivate information fairness. One aim of the WU Campus was that it should be known as a place that works for everyone, whatever their disability. Every lecture is accessible to wheelchair users because this issue was addressed early enough in the design process. Distances are short and everything is tactile to help the blind.

If you look for the legal basis for equality – especially in the case of barrier-free orientation – then you find the OIB Guidelines and the norms. But these are largely conceived – and formulated – from the technical perspective and only determine "hard" design factors: How large should the lettering be? Which contrasts are necessary? At what height should the information be mounted?

CM: Which is to say that they are based on the "normal case"?

EB: Precisely! In construction, approaches aimed at removing barriers tend to be technical rather than cultural or contentual. The image of the wheelchair user in the current Ö Norm is stigmatising. The person seems like a captive, completely dependent and cannot move on their own. And yet the equality question is: How can I give someone back their own energy and authority? Disabled people have skills in other areas where they may be better than us. The blind, for example, can differentiate between sounds much better than the sighted. The truth is that each of us has our own form of disability. We grow old, see less well, require glasses. By now, the idea of a visual designer assuming that everyone is able-bodied seems somewhat absurd to me. We addressed this basic difference by visually activating several details of this symbol. Now the person in the wheelchair acts independently and is fairly and equally represented.

About the First Aid Kit

In a similarly way to its medical counterpart, the First Aid Kit contains an essential selection of language-independent icons which are aligned with the ethnic characteristics of refugees and intuitively comprehensible. The idea behind this set of symbols is to enable refugees to orientate themselves in their emergency accommodation and live as independently there as possible. One part of this aid package consists of a series of symbols representing the most common medical symptoms while another contains the central elements of a visual guidance system which can be easily printed and copied in black on neon green paper. The First Aid Kit is already used internationally in a number of such shelters and is being continuously updated. Its contents are freely available to other initiatives and engaged people in line with creative commons principles.

buerobauer.com/first-aid-download

The welcome area at the Caritas drop-in-centre for homeless people

CM: How do viewers perceive this difference?

EB: The key is to use thought as a way of visualising and, hence, removing prejudices. Our tool kit for refugees is a system that communicates on various levels. Much more than just an effective tool which helps NGOs to better manage their daily programme, it is also a signal to the population. We represent medical care with a crescent moon and a cross, a combined symbol which signifies first aid throughout the Arab World. For us, combining a red crescent and a red cross in a single symbol in such a way that they are of equal value is a sign of respect. When we, as Austrians, see this combination of two such religiously charged symbols, we sit up and think, suddenly aware of the contrast when different cultural content appears in our context. It was important to us not only to communicate with the refugees but also to give the locals something to think about. And this brings us right back to the design approach for the WU Campus.

CM: When the symbol is unveiled the phenomenon also becomes visible.

EB: There are also symbols for wheelchair users elsewhere but not in this specially activated form.

CM: Wittgenstein said that "ethics and aesthetics are one." How do you see this?

EB: The ideal after which we aspire is the combination of contentual statement with both functional implementation and aesthetic expectation. I know many projects which exclusively focus on the functional aspect. Some designers are so obsessed about a form that they forget to put themselves in the shoes of other people. It might look great but it is functionally hopeless. A good piece of design should contain the best of both worlds. In the context of the projects which we are discussing here this is a very challenging subject: how does one find the right language and form of implementation for people who are struggling to survive – whether they are refugees or homeless? The Caritas drop-in-centre at the Central Station attracts people from Austria's northern and southern neighbours. They have no roof over their head, are ill, tired and exhausted and arrive somewhere where they can get medical treatment, something to eat and an offer of accommodation. We worked with the architects to find a robust language which communicated the right combination of friendliness and openness. Hygiene requirements meant that everything had to be washable and disinfectable but, on the other hand, we wanted to create a sense of comfort and demonstrate to people that they were welcome. Our primary motivation was not to receive a design prize. Hence, even though the language is powerful the design is reserved, if not subservient. Of course we had aesthetic objectives but the key thing about the design is the part which, while not formal in itself, conveys itself via the form. In practice, this is never as simple as it seems.

CM: Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of visiting an Austrian police station will have asked themselves if the design is part of the punishment.

EB: Have you ever seen the police's new federal eagle? It is fascinating how the state uses symbols. The Austrian eagle on police uniforms and cars is more like a chicken and would be more at home in a comic than as a symbol of security and trust. In recent years the police have undoubtedly become more approachable. However, the clarity of this image change means that it is even more of a shame that this hasn't been accompanied by the appropriate design change. This is because the bureaucrats who commission such design services know little about the subject. In such cases experts from our area should define the task and an independent jury should evaluate the results. It would be worthwhile.

CM: Back to the Biennale, where we have been inspired by Bernard Rudofsky. I have read that one of your inspirations is Victor Papanek. It is interesting that there are similarities between Rudofsky and Papanek. What excites or fascinates you most about him?

Hand-drawn pictograms at Caritas Ankerbrot Fabrik

Tactile sitemap,
WU Campus

EB: The political dimension that he lends to design. On the one hand he is practical and this appeals to me very much. In his projects for the Third World he gives people the tools with which they can act for themselves in the spirit of "development cooperation" rather than pursuing one-sided "development aid". On the other hand I admire the role that Papanek played as a member of civic society or, even better, as a citizen of the world. He was a visionary who was already thinking globally and acting locally. His rallying call was: "Take the future of society into your own hands and make a contribution." For me, this is also related to Ken Garland's manifesto "first things first". He urged designers not to allow themselves to be instrumentalized by the production and consumer society but rather to act as independent, critical and productive citizens. This is what I learnt from both Papanek and Neurath.

CM: Papanek and Rudofsky were both outsiders. Rudofsky hardly built and wasn't a member of anything while Papanek was also a lateral thinker. Neurath brings us to information design but also, interestingly, to the settlement movement and, hence, to our subject. This combination of talents is very interesting.

EB: A philosopher and member of the Vienna Circle, qualified economist and museum director – Neurath had a number of talents and professions. In this sense he was extraordinary.

Some designers are so obsessed about a form that they forget to put themselves in the shoes of other people.

CM: And almost comparable with Rudofsky who apparently had 18 professions.

EB: The fascinating thing about Neurath is that, in the 1920s and 30s, he led an interdisciplinary team which he had specially put together to realise his visions. These included statisticians, graphic designers, publishers, printers, architects and linguists. He also had good political contacts. One part of his political vision was the class-free society which he wanted to promote and establish via democratic access to knowledge. Today, this is more topical than ever.

CM: There is the term "social design". We support the view that architecture has a social role per se. How do you see this?

EB: The term "social design" is strongly architectural. But one could stretch it further. Social processes have to do with more than just urban space or, indeed, space of any sort. I am interested in how to design social processes so that they can facilitate, accelerate or even create something new. A more up-to-date term for me is "social business", because I think that the key to improvement lies in the transformation of cooperation and new economic structures. I have just read "Capital in the 21st Century", a book that I wouldn't have read ten years ago. But now I am interested in the macroeconomic context because the economy pervades every area of life, including design. One should start where one can change things and should never succumb to a sense of powerlessness or the idea that nothing can be done. "Social business" is an alternative organisational structure in which responsibilities are redistributed and self-reliance is encouraged. Responsibility, collaboration and network thinking are important here. Instead of "social design" I would love people to study "social business" because I believe that precisely this could create momentum for new ways of working and living. And these don't have to be primarily based on money because this is a situation in which other values also count.

CM: Caritas has its own "social business" division.

EB: I find it fantastic the way that magdas hotel or magdas kantine in the Ankerbrot factory work and people in difficult situations can find their way back into

a more regular life by working together with professionals. The greatest success for the management there is when their employees are lured away by other hotels or restaurants – because losing their best employees means that they have room for new clients.

The way that they expose their business idea to open source thinking is also visionary. People come to study their business idea before implementing it elsewhere. Here "open source," "social design" and "social business" come together. During the Vienna Biennale in the MAK we were part of an interdisciplinary team that developed and designed a manifesto for the future of work on the initiative of Christoph Thun-Hohenstein. That is a key subject for the development of our society. It has less to do with the question of whether one feels better in the city if public space is designed differently and much more to do with redefining processes and ways of living together. Fairness, distribution and international value chains are factors that affect us directly and have long since ceased to be national issues. For me, the transformation of these aspects is the focus of "social design".

CM: I agree. It is inspiring to see what is being tried in this area because this also represents a certain form of self-empowerment.

EB: When such a project works well it looks easy. But I have enormous respect for people who commit themselves to such things and aren't put off by setbacks. Because these are always inevitable when one tries something new.

About Erwin K. Bauer

Amongst the specialities of the graphic designer (*1966), whose multiple award-winning design studio was established in 1996 and now has 16 employees from a wide range of disciplines, are the areas of "signage" and, with special reference to this project, "inclusive design". The team's numerous exemplary projects include the guidance system for Caritas' drop-in-centre at Vienna's Central Station which, thanks to its consciously simple design, is comprehensible to homeless people from a range of countries and language areas. While Bauer is relentless in his pursuit of practicability in such socially-oriented projects as the First Aid Kit, he is also committed to strengthening awareness of the social dimension of design, as exemplified in his co-authorship of a book about Otto Neurath's visual language, his intense programme of workshops and lectures and the founding of the Include Initiative for Inclusive Orientation Design.

buerobauer.com

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 21st 2016

While apartments in Vienna's nineteenth-century buildings are being widely refurbished and their rooftops are being converted, their now largely vacant ground floors continue to offer spatial reserves for new, experimental uses.

A conversation with the designers Christian Knapp and Jonathan Lutter about strategies for activating this vacant space, the power of the planners and Vienna in a time of change.

HOLIDAYS FOR URBANISTS

Photo: Heidrun Henke

Grätzlhotel Karmelitermarkt

There are also historical reasons for Vienna's high vacancy rates because, for many years, the city was simply too large for the small country which Austria became after 1918 in comparison with the eight-times larger monarchy which had preceded it. Up until 1987 Vienna continued to shrink until it was a city of around 1.5 million people – who naturally had a lot of space at their disposal. The subsidies which became available in the same decade for the refurbishment of the late nineteenth-century buildings which constitute around a quarter of the city's built substance led to a systematic improvement in the quality of apartments. Less affected, however, were areas which were not used for residential purposes – ground floors, basements and cellars.

As a result of the steep decline in the number of small retailers and other trades, increasing traffic congestion and tax-saving strategies, Vienna's ground-floor zone has suffered from extremely high vacancy rates for many years. The fact that the city is now growing rapidly again and that rental levels are also rising as a result means that this vacant space has become the subject of increasing attention in recent years.

In 2011 the Vienna designers Kohlmayr Lutter Knapp began to rent empty street-level shops in their locality and to convert these into single guestrooms which they then let out as part of a so-called "Grätzlhotel" under the "Urbanauts" label. The integrative element of these decentralised city hotels is the neighbourhood network of various restaurants, cafés and shops which the hotel guests can use. In this way, these guests gain not only access to all these necessary services but also insight into everyday life in Vienna.

Vienna is a slow-moving city which sometimes resembles a museum. We tend to focus on what we have preserved. The idea of quickly finding new functions often simply doesn't arise.

As the architects of this hotel project are also its operators, they simultaneously belong to the group of creative companies and "start-ups", which have been using vacant space in good locations as relatively cheap offices and ateliers for some time. Overall, the number of small shops closing in Vienna continues to exceed the number of such start-ups. However, studies show that, for people with an immigrant background, the access to such vacant space continues to be very difficult

CK: The starting point of Urbanauts was loss-making, residual urban spaces and this, in the case of Vienna, generally means empty shops. This is a vast network of small spaces for which we wanted to find a sustainable use. Then we had the idea of fitting out and running these units as guestrooms.

CM: At what scale did you organise this?

CK: We started with a prototype in order to test the concept and be able to get feedback. Then we expanded this to five rooms and now have – in order to be able to operate cost-effectively - 21, of which three are still being converted.

CM: Why were these shops empty?

CK: Many small shops in late nineteenth-century buildings are empty because all sorts of businesses and shops have moved to the periphery in the past 30 to 40 years. The lack of any sort of business to replace these has led to this surplus of unused urban space.

CM: How is it commercially conceivable that a centrally located space could remain empty for so long?

CK: In Vienna there can be two reasons for this. The first is the spatial structure of the city. Objects such as shopping centres and malls are assuming a particular role as a result of which demand for smaller units of 30 to 40 square metres is declining. The second reason results from a number of legal and commercial issues, combined with the peculiarities of rental structures. Many owners prefer to use these spaces for storage because they assume that in old buildings it makes no commercial sense to rent them out.

JL: Building owners often have personal reasons for not wanting to fully exploit such spaces. The central question should be: which new functions can one give to them in order to make them exciting again?

CM: I am amazed that this status quo has gone on for so long because what we are talking about here is a valuable resource.

JL: Vienna is a slow-moving city which sometimes resembles a museum. We tend to focus on what we have preserved. The idea of quickly finding new functions often simply doesn't arise. It is as if we think and act in slow motion, as a result of which long periods can go by in which nothing happens.

CM: But something new is happening now. Not only are refugees moving towards Vienna but there is also a large-scale influx of other people into the city for which the authorities appear not to be prepared. Vienna will soon have a population of two million. You have discovered vacant space for which you have developed touristic and gastronomic uses.

JL: When we first saw these residual spaces we defined them as blank canvases, places in a global city which could be given a use. We thought about what we could do there. Initially, we didn't actually care what happened there – as long as something did. The aim of Urbanauts was to demonstrate something that could function sustainably rather than attract occasional, temporary attention. In this we succeeded.

CM: The urbanistic heart of the idea is reflected in the name. You decided that this sort of sustainable use could be successful and the reality has confirmed this. How temporary or how stable is the use of these 18 rooms?

CK: Urbanauts is not conceived as a temporary intermediate use project. This difference must be made quite clear. Urbanauts is about permanent reuse.

CM: That means that you have an open-ended rental contract?

CK: We buy, agree open-ended rental contracts or lease the spaces. The business is planned over the long-term and minimum contractual periods are 10 to 15 years. One temporary intermediate use project is the Betonküche (The Concrete Kitchen).

CM: Can you say something about this?

JL: The Betonküche is the other way of ensuring the speedier reuse of vacant space and, in comparison with Urbanauts, is a small boat which can both go anywhere and leave again quickly. One motivation was to draw attention to the number of vacant units in good locations which are simply waiting to have life breathed into them.

CM: What is the Betonküche? The name already conjures up certain images.

JL: The Betonküche sees itself as a temporary cultural space which has a special relationship with the culinary arts. We take over small shops without refurbishing them and only carry out such minimal interventions as setting up tables and hanging art in order to occupy them for up to four weeks. The aim is to show that in a very short time and with very little money one can create spaces in which one is both happy to be and happy to eat.

CM: You mean a sort of pop-up restaurant?

JL: Exactly, although the Betonküche has never seen itself as a classic restaurant.

Which new functions can one give to spaces and buildings in order to make them exciting again?

CM: Much is said about the intermediate use of vacant space and the lack of the dynamism to do anything. Are we living in a city which is over-regulated? Places are available but one cannot simply decide to open an ice cream shop. What is the connection between the space on offer and the legal situation?

JL: Vienna is a comfortable city because people's lives have been very good for a long time. They try to keep things as they are. The first district in particular is becoming more and more like a museum. But the only result of surrounding oneself with increasing numbers of regulations is that the corset becomes ever tighter. At some point in the process it becomes difficult to introduce any new ideas or innovations without two worlds colliding.

CM: Must we liberalise the statutory framework in Vienna in order to achieve a dynamic similar to that in other cities?

JL: There are cities in which districts change completely within a week. Some are in a permanent process of change. This can, of course, also have its disadvantages, such as the fact that these cities often have very weak or even no social networks. The advantage, on the other hand, is that this also means that a lot can happen as, for example, in Seoul. These two factors are always connected and these are contradictions which we must address in detail. And this is where things become complicated.

It takes unimaginable amounts of energy and perseverance to breathe life into residual urban spaces.

CK: One may succumb to a certain amount of romanticisation but one also has to be sure to include many other much more important factors in the discussion.

JL: It takes unimaginable amounts of energy and perseverance to breathe life into residual urban spaces.

CK: Three years ago we were even more radical but now we are less focussed on tearing down regulations and more focussed on the fact that these can change. Fewer rules don't automatically mean more room for manoeuvre.

CM: To what does this experience apply?

JL: To everything – from boutique to bar. The volume of regulations is sometimes absurd. One often needs a separate project manager dedicated to dealing with the authorities.

CM: Alongside the temporary use as a restaurant in the case of the Betonküche or the reuse by Urbanauts, a third aspect of your project is that each individual unit has a certain autarchy. We may only be taking about small rooms but you are reproducing the entire service offering of a hotel by integrating these services into the surrounding area. Is that the heart of the matter?

CK: Absolutely. The background certainly has a post-structuralist aspect. There is simply no need to realise a 200-bed hotel and a functioning infrastructure with restaurant and bar in a building if all that already exists locally. Why invent things that others already do better? We see our neighbours as "fellows". We are delighted to offer their services to our guests alongside our rooms. On the basis of these small units we develop similar areas and service offerings but distributed horizontally in the city and with a different physical approach to that of the well-known hotel.

CM: What does this mean exactly?

CK: In the Belvedere district, for instance, we have five rooms. For breakfast one goes to the Café Goldegg, an old Viennese coffee house, there is a wellness zone, the Moroccan hamam known as Mon Corps, and the Opocensky offers an excellent lunch. We acquaint our guests with all these services via city plans without making concrete recommendations.

Photo: Heidrun Henke

Grätzlhotel Karmelitermarkt

Photo: Monika Nguyen

Grätzlhotel Belvedere

About Grätzlhotel

With an annual total of around five million tourists Vienna is one of the world's top ten travel destinations. Tourism is a key economic factor and an attractive market for the growing number of hotel operators with their range of operating concepts. With its vertical structure and the integration of the urban surroundings the "Grätzlhotel" can be seen as not only a high-quality, professional and commercial response to Airbnb but also an impulse for local development. The company, which is run by hotel professionals, Kohlmayr Lutter Knapp and BWM Architekten, currently operates a total of 21 guestrooms and suites, all of which were designed by the team of architects, in a total of three city centre locations.

www.graetzlhotel.com

CM: One gets a room without breakfast and can take advantage of your recommendation or go to the Sacher Hotel or the hot-dog stand? Are you limited to certain parts of the city due to these questions of infrastructure?

JL: Not really. We are currently developing the system on the Meidlinger Markt in the 12th district and Karmeliter Markt in the 2nd district. The local populations may be somewhat different but, in principle, the same possibilities can be found everywhere.

CK: The only limit to which we subject ourselves is urban identity. The location must be urbanistically interesting and have a special character. Not every corner of the city can be presented in such a way that it meets the needs of a foreign visitor.
JL: You also have to see this from two sides. Our approach is both urbanistic and economic and, perhaps surprisingly, these two aspects are highly compatible. Our basic idea was based on densification and the attempt to bring new people into a district. We mean densification in the sense of creating connections because, without densification, the idea will certainly not work.

CM: Besides the guestrooms, do you have other ideas for vacant space?

JL: We have many concepts and ideas. We have fully "processed" the subject and now see our role as attracting the attention of as many people as possible to this blank canvas. As far back as the early eighties nobody knew what to do with empty factory buildings. Then artists, architects and designers appeared and some of these buildings now feature amongst the most expensive real estate.

CM: Another variant would perhaps be decentralised, non-residential healthcare provision?

We are trying to change the city by means of a sort of mini-revolution.

JL: Definitely. We see the ground floor of the city as a semi-public zone which one can access more easily than if one has to climb three stories. As soon as you think about accessibility then healthcare provision is of course an excellent opportunity.

CM: Lofts are amongst the most expensive forms of accommodation. For many who are now arriving in the city such spaces are no longer affordable. How do you feel about this issue? Gentrification?

JL: The term "gentrification" is problematic. Whenever there is progress, things change. But we are not blind and have huge empathy and social commitment. On the other hand, leaving everything as it was is also certainly not the answer. In my opinion, mixing is an important word because this is a way of getting things moving. It's OK that lofts are expensive because not everyone has to live in a loft. Certain people recognised this quality and now we are addressing small shops and these could have the same quality. But at the same time we must be serious about social housing in order to ensure that the rents in old buildings don't rise too high and that there are enough apartments to meet demand. With an intelligent mix we can soften the negative "touch" of gentrification.

CM: Urbanauts has proved itself to be successful?

CK: We like advancing in small steps. Our guestrooms have had no physical impact on the city. They are more like tiny pinpricks in a neighbourhood but the initial feedback is excellent. The guests are providing the neighbours with new experiences and this is bringing a new quality to their lives.

JL: But a lot of tiny pinpricks can produce considerable input and output. I believe that this can lead to considerable change. On the Meidlinger Markt one can already see that things are happening.

CM: What are you doing there exactly?

JL: Hotel rooms again.

CM: Allow me to exaggerate: the Café Goldegg could close down but, because your hotel guests go there, they decide to stay open.

JL: Yes, for example! Someone comes and does something and the others see and recognise this and then also want to go there.

CM: If you see the city as a canvas then one could call you the directors. What image of Vienna would you like to communicate?

JL: I have the feeling that Vienna is going through a period of transformation. This is still happening at the small scale of, for example, the exodus of people who are still attached to the old structures. We want to participate in precisely this transformation. We are trying to change the city by means of a sort of mini-revolution.

CM: Austria generates much of its economic output through tourism in that it is permanently selling its natural and cultural resources. Perhaps little has happened due to the fact that we could always rely on this lucrative source of income.

Photo: Markus Kaplan

Grätzlhotel Karmelitermarkt

Photo: Ingo Kanitschnik

Grätzlhotel Belvedere

JL: But we won't always be able to rely on it.

CK: We are not talking about suddenly doing away with everything but, rather, about adding things and thinking and developing further. Movement and densification are the two main factors that make a city interesting.

Form is becoming increasingly unimportant and architects are increasingly required to find functions.

CM: You are not the sort of architects who sit around waiting for an hotelier to turn up. You are entrepreneurial yourselves and, by developing this second string to your bow, you have freed yourself from this dependency. Perhaps you could explain this in a little more detail.

CK: We have defined the role of the architect in such a way that he acts like an entrepreneur in order to open up and then experience new perspectives.

JL: We noticed that it was very difficult to explain something completely new to somebody. So we said to ourselves: if no one understands this – and virtually no one did - then we'll simply do it ourselves. In hindsight we can say that the idea is being accepted and that we can develop it further. One example in the case of the guestrooms is that the external walls have this extraordinary depth of almost 80 cm which creates an unbelievably spatial threshold. You cannot explain this to anyone – they have to experience it as they step off the street and enter their incredibly intimate hotel room.

CM: Other architects also act in parallel as developers.

JL: My feeling is that things will develop even further in this direction. Form is becoming increasingly unimportant and architects are increasingly required to find functions. In principle, this is project development work. The first question isn't about form but something like "what should I do here at all?" Such ideas are often supplied by architects free of charge in the hope that they will then be allowed to

Grätzlhotel Belvedere

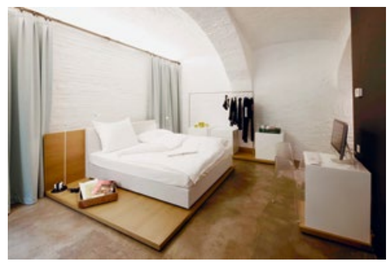


Photo: Markus Kaplan

Photo: Nora Kreimayr

Betonküche

About Kohlmayr Lutter Knapp

The "office for systemic design" which was founded by the three eponymous partners Theresia Kohlmayr (*1985), Jonathan Lutter (*1981) and Christian Knapp (*1980) in 2010 gained experience in the fields of gastronomy and temporary use right at the beginning of their cooperation in the form of the "Betonküche" project. Here, empty streetfront shops in a range of locations across Vienna were converted for a single night into pop-up restaurants offering space for up to 40 guests. This situationist approach was continued in the form of hotel rooms under the "Urbanauts" name and, most recently, developed further and professionalised under the umbrella brand Grätzlhotel. Kohlmayr Lutter Knapp are one of the most interesting offices of the next generation due to both the refined interior design of such restaurants as Mochi in Vienna and to the fact that they work not only as designers but also as entrepreneurs and consultants.

www.kohlmayrlutterknapp.com

design the form. But we only get paid for this form. And this is problematic.

CM: That's right. So our contribution concerns the social relevance of architecture?

JL: Which is actually the most important aspect at the moment.

CM: Are you also addressing the subject of refugees?

JL: We are – but in a more peripheral role. In summer some extraordinary people such as Sophie Pollak put a lot of effort into establishing private initiatives like "happy thank you more please" and "he who saves a life saves the whole world" and, under the auspices of the latter, we helped to look after refugees privately last summer. In principle that was a completely private matter which didn't give us the opportunity to use our professional know-how.

CM: Why not?

JL: If one is confronted with human suffering, other aspects are important. We provided space in which we could apply what we had already learnt. The most important thing was to accompany the refugees as they made their first steps from being on the run to becoming part of our society. Some of them have already been awarded asylum status.

CM: So as an architect you were less in demand?

JL: If you are close to a person you are asked to help them as a person. It is when one considers these people as a human mass that the viewpoint of the architect becomes important.

DESIGNING THROUGH MAKING

Photo: Peter Fattinger

Multifunctional building for an orphanage, Nias Island, Indonesia, 2007

Teamwork, social added value, a high level of voluntary commitment, technological innovation and the stimulation of the urban realm are characteristic features of the projects that the design.build studio of the TU Vienna has realised over the course of the past 15 years.

The leader of the studio Peter Fattinger in a conversation covering "learning by doing", the popularity of communal kitchens and what he feels when the diggers arrive.

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 10th 2016

The first design-build initiatives emerged in the 1980s, above all in American universities, as a means of intensifying the connection between teaching, research and practice and, simultaneously, increasing the attention paid to social and communal fields of activity.

Design-build studios give architecture students the opportunity to experience all phases of a real building project from conception to completion. The participants work in teams and, ideally, in the same space and are required to address all aspects of the implementation and, hence, to get their own hands dirty.

In addition to the social added value of many design-build projects, the method also offers the opportunity to study the relationship between design and implementation more closely and, hence, to make better use of the resulting feedback as developments on site can flow back into the design process.

Amongst the current projects of the design.build studio of the TU Vienna are OPENmarx, the temporary intermediate use of an empty plot of land of around 40,000 square metres in St. Marx in Vienna's 3rd district. Formerly a part of Vienna's abattoir which has been undergoing a process of transformation for several years, the site is being equipped with mobile modules housing workshops, kitchens, event spaces, classrooms and sports facilities which are available for communal use by both local people and the residents of the *Haus Erdberg* refugee accommodation.

The support and programming are the responsibility of a number of social and community organisations and the future. lab of the TU Vienna.

CM: I would like to focus our conversation firstly on the methods and then on the contents of your projects, although it is clear to me that one cannot really separate the two. You run the design.build studio at TU Vienna, the Vienna University of Technology. Such studios, in which students not only design but also implement concrete projects together, can now be found at many universities.

Taking part requires a lot of effort, commitment and time so it is essential that only those students register who absolutely want to do so.

PF: In the USA "design-build" has a longer academic tradition whereas in Europe the method has mostly established itself in the past decade. I started such projects at TU Vienna fifteen years ago. The circle of architecture schools which offer "design-build" courses is steadily growing. The journal ARCH+ even recently wrote about a "design-build movement". Together with TU Berlin and some non-European universities we have founded a platform called the Design Build Knowledge Network whose objective is to support the implementation, spread and sustainability of design-build methods in architecture schools. To this end, TU Vienna is hosting the conference and exhibition "HANDS ON.enhancing architectural education" between 1st and 3rd June 2016.

CM: Can one interpret this as a criticism of the universities in the sense that "design build" studios are conceived as particularly practice-oriented and as a means of compensating for too much theoretical and traditional lecture-based teaching?

PF: I prefer to see the design.build studio simply as a complement to or enhancement of the architecture course. It is a way of practically applying and testing what one has learnt theoretically. But it would be both impossible and counter-productive to stipulate such a studio as an obligatory course for every student. Taking part requires a lot of effort, commitment and time to so it is essential that only those students register who absolutely want to do so. Unfortunately, many of today's students simply want to race through their studies as quickly as possible.

CM: You don't only develop and implement real projects but you also see how they work after completion?

PF: As our projects are generally public buildings we have constant access and, hence, knowledge about how they are standing up to being used. This offers us insights, not just constructional but also about how the spaces feel, how they withstand the pressure of daily life and the extent to which they are accepted or, eventually, adapted, by their users.The objective of our projects is, in any case, not simply reduced to realising buildings and has much more to do with offering students the opportunity to experience and understand the direct consequences of their thoughts, communication and actions in a broader context.

CM: Was the design.build studio at TU Vienna an initiative which came from below, from the students, or from above, from the dean?

PF: Neither of these! In 2000, when I had the opportunity to teach with Joep van Lieshout at TU Vienna during the guest professorship of Atelier van Lieshout, I used this to work with students to develop, build and use a modular, temporary intervention in the public realm. This project was the foundation for the design.build studio that I have continuously developed and widened at the university over the course of the intervening 16 years.

CM: Such a design.build studio often acts in a non-academic way. Students probably do things as part of the studio for which they are not officially certified.
PF: Yes, that's partly true. Of course we cooperate with qualified professionals who, for example, accompany our projects pro bono through the approvals process. Regarding the manual implementation, however, few students have prior experience. Not, however, that this is a hindrance, because "learning by doing" is a central motto in our studio.

CM: But the principle of "learning by doing" is somewhat at odds with the notion of a teaching institution which imparts scholarly knowledge.

PF: This knowledge provides the basis. In the design.build studio you then experience the entire complexity and breadth of the processes which you pass through between the first ideas and sketches and your own hands-on, on-site implementation. In all this, communication with clients, professionals, companies, craftspeople, users and the authorities plays a key role. In this process, students work collaboratively as a large team, collectively bearing the responsibility for and the consequences of their actions. They learn to deal with small budgets, tight deadlines and unexpected problems and – most importantly – they are confronted with the setbacks with which one usually has to deal when one is transforming plans into built reality. In a normal course of study, such influential factors receive little attention.

Photo: Peter Fattinger

Students erecting a multifunctional building for an orphanage, Nias Island, Indonesia, 2007

CM: The entire work in the design.build studio is carried out in groups and can often last several semesters.

PF: Teamwork is an important factor. During an architectural degree course design studio projects are usually tacked as individual projects or, at most, in pairs. In the design.build studio up to 25 students can develop and implement a project. The fact that this often lasts several semesters is certainly a challenge for the participating students, given that they have to attend many other courses at the same time.

CM: In recent years this understanding that architecture requires teamwork has strengthened. At the same time, however, architecture remains a discipline with an intense focus on the individual talent – not least in architecture schools.

PF: In my opinion, the age of the star architect is over. In architecture today there are many more collectives, who act together, a change that has not gone unnoticed amongst students. Today, architecture is best carried out as a team. But a case such as the design.build studio where 25 students develop a design together is also, naturally, an exception. This approach is perhaps not advisable for later architectural practice for economic reasons!

CM: A further specific aspect is the social orientation of the projects.In this sense, the design.build studio has already realised numerous projects for Caritas and other NGOs. The spectrum stretches from an actionFabrik for socially engaged young people in Vienna via a bed & breakfast hotel that is partially operated by disabled people to kindergartens in South Africa and countless projects in the public realm.

PF: Precisely in the case of social facilities this is a chance to use good architecture to add value. However, such institutions usually lack the budget to hire an architectural office. The fact that we are acting as part of a "design-build" course means that we can provide, pro bono, not just design services but also the contribution of the student workforce to the implementation process. And in addition to this, by working in large teams we can invest considerably more time than commercially-acting offices. Without economic pressure we use this time bonus to experiment and develop new solutions. The inducement for the students is the opportunity to create architectural added-value with a generally tiny budget but with, in contrast, even greater intellectual and physical exertion.

CM: While working on "Places for People" we have noticed that it is often not so easy to make a commitment because social institutions are often somewhat sceptical or, at least, uncertain, about what architects can offer at all. The design.build studio has often worked together with, for example, Caritas. Can I assume that you don't have to explain to them what you do?

PF: No, fortunately not any longer! The first project with Caritas actually took place 15 years ago. On that occasion we worked with the airport welfare services to develop structures to improve the situation for asylum seekers in the special transit areas at Schwechat Airport. We also, for example, expanded an orphanage on the Indonesian island of Nias for Caritas' foreign aid programme after the 2005 earthquake. When we converted one of the arches of Vienna's Gürtel into an actionFabrik, a competence centre for socially engaged young people, in 2011, young-Caritas was the client. And only recently we have expanded the Caritas Bauernhof Unternalb in Weinviertel, a day centre for disabled people, by adding a workshop dedicated to the subject of tourism. More concretely, a historically-protected part of the complex was transformed into a bed & breakfast operated by disabled people which now offers a versatile range of services for up to ten guests under the "OBENauf" label.

CM: I would love to speak about the latest project that you are also developing in cooperation with Caritas. In addition to this, the location is very close to *Haus Erdberg*, the building which we have commissioned EOOS to adapt for long-term use by refugee families.

PF: In OPENmarx we wanted to create a place which would encourage exchange, initially temporarily and then, perhaps, permanently, between two groups of people living locally– on the one hand the residents of the district and, on the other hand, the residents of *Haus Erdberg*. The site of OPENmarx, an empty 40,000-square-metre plot in Vienna's Neu Marx urban development area, is particularly interesting because it has never been built upon before. Hence, rather than being burdened by an old identity it can develop a new one. On this section of the former central cattle market we are creating a completely new place with the aim of facilitating new forms of use and interaction, especially with members of such new groups as refugees. The aim is to offer a range of spatial settings, from a large communal kitchen via sport and leisure facilities and a seminar building to community workshops.
The intense cooperation with a number of NGOs, associations and local initiatives and the involvement of interested private individuals – both those who were born in Vienna and those who have just arrived here – is particularly important for both the immediate process of adaptation and the longer-term use. Hence, we are working with, amongst others, youngCaritas and the association PROSA - Projekt Schule für alle, as well as also being in regular contact with EOOS and *Haus Erdberg*.

CM: To what extent is the decision of whether to install a communal kitchen or provide sports facilities based either on location analysis or your experience of other such projects?

PF: This decision is based on the rich experience gathered from previous projects. Cooking and eating together is a particularly important tool which has repeatedly proved its value in our temporary projects.

CM: Or, in other words, there is never any harm in building a kitchen.

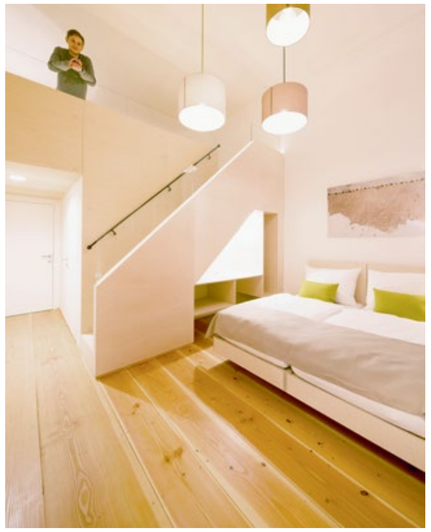


Photo: Markus Fattinger Architekturfotografie

OBENauf, bed & breakfast at Caritas Bauernhof Unternalb, Retz, 2016

It is often not so easy to make a commitment because social institutions are often somewhat sceptical or, at least, uncertain, about what architects can offer at all.

PF: Precisely. To date, our kitchens have always been used intensively because eating brings people together. I am very optimistic that this will also be the case at OPENmarx. Due to its location and dimension, the piece of land is also predestined for a range of leisure activities, from kite flying and ball games to cycle tracks. We see the items of sporting and leisure equipment that we will provide there as tools for generating common ground. And the community workshops also have huge potential in this location. Amongst other things we will create a bicycle workshop to which people can donate their old or broken bicycles. These will then be repaired with the help of the refugees as a means of offering them independent mobility within the city. Many refugees have little experience with bicycles but the car-free site and the workshop will enable them to gather this.

CM: Can one also live on the OPENmarx site? It is, after all, living space that is most urgently needed.

PF: Living space should be provided elsewhere more professionally and on a longer term basis. OPENmarx is a temporary use project which is, currently, limited to a duration of two years with an optional extension. Instead of installing living containers here which will, once again, only provide emergency, temporary and improvised accommodation, we very deliberately want to use the location to create a broader range of activities which, rather than having to do with living, create something for the refugees to do during the day. This also includes the direct involvement of the refugees in the design, construction and, then, continuous further development of OPENmarx.

CM: The little word "for", which one also finds in our title "Places for People", always conceals the risk that those to whom it refers will have something imposed upon them because they simply aren't involved in what is going on. The risk that architects are designing something for refugees who don't even have a place at the table.

PF: Yes, this risk exists, especially of course in places which are already finished before the users are involved in any way. The special quality of the site in Erdberg is based on the fact that one can still shape it and involve the users in that process. Right now we are in the process of determining with Caritas how much and in which phases the refugees can be actively involved while still being appropriately insured.

CM: If you are successful in bringing life to this former piece of left-over land then the district and the real estate market will naturally benefit. But you can't profit from this "upgrading process" to which you yourselves have contributed because you will then be moving on.

PF: Yes, that is of course always the downside of temporary use. One plays into the hands of certain market mechanisms and generates added-value for an area but still has to up sticks and move on. At the same time, however, the opportunity to use such a large area is an excellent one, however temporary. And temporary projects also have the huge advantage that they offer one considerably more room for experimentation than the straightjacket of permanence. In this way one can try new approaches, debate and, ideally, trigger new, sustainable development processes.

CM: Can you bear the idea that the diggers will then move in?

PF: Of course – you have to.
CM: And are you also confident that the real estate developers will also retain at least some of the area for communal uses due to the fact that barbecuing and gardening together has become so well established there and added to the attractiveness of the area?

Photo: Peter Fattinger

Students building the Mobile Stadtlabor as the base for the project OPENmarx, Vienna, 2015

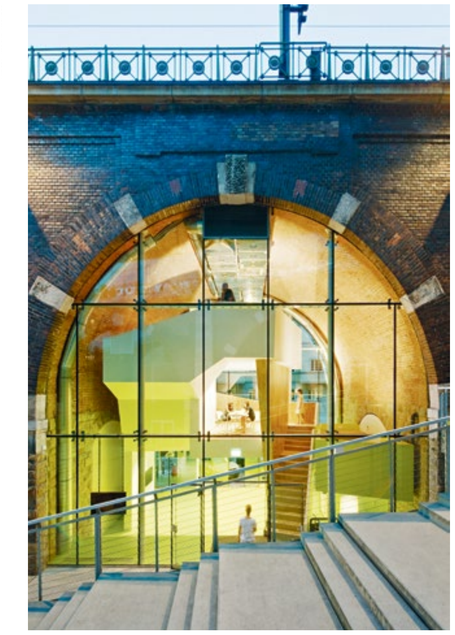


Photo: Hertha Hurnaus

actionFabrik, the youngCaritas competence centre for socially engaged young people, Vienna, 2013

About "design.build studio"

Founded by Peter Fattinger in 2000 as part of the Department for Housing and Design of TU Vienna, the studio offers students the opportunity to work in teams on small, socially oriented projects, experiencing all phases of the process from design to practical implementation.

The spectrum of projects realised in this way ranges from accessible and usable temporary installations in public spaces such as Add-on in Vienna's 20th district and the Mobile Stadtlabor, which is used in various locations in the city to emergency accommodation for asylum seekers and long-term educational and community facilities in Vienna, South Africa and Indonesia.

www.design-build.at

PF: Yes, I see every possibility that our initiatives will be taken further by others. Many developers have a problem knowing how to use and stimulate the ground floor zone. Our use experiments deliver clear ideas in this direction which can also be implemented more long-term in both the bases of buildings and public space in general.

CM: OPENmarx is partly based on experience that you gathered during the Mobile Stadtlabor (mobile urban laboratory) project. The Mobile Stadtlabor is part of future. lab, the platform for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and teaching of the Faculty for Architecture and Planning at TU Vienna which functions as a mobile lecture theatre and seminar room. It has also pitched its tent (or, more accurately, its container) at OPENmarx and students are using this as their basecamp for developing the project. In the context of the refugee situation there is regular, intense debate about the use of containers. What is your experience of containers - even if, in the case of Stadtlabor, you are just working and not living in them?

PF: We have had good experiences with containers. As mobility was a key requirement of Stadtlabor, their use was relatively obvious. The container is a simple and optimised element that is adapted to road transport and easy to relocate. In addition to this, the low cost of acquiring containers also plays a role. They simply represented the most economical way of providing a closed, watertight and structurally resilient initial volume which one can progressively develop, extend and adapt. However, the majority of office containers which are currently being used for short-term accommodation are hideously furnished and, mostly, uncreatively set down in rows. Rather than debating whether living modules should be containers or wooden boxes, the much more important questions are how these are arranged and whether they establish communal or open intermediate spaces which invite people to spend some time or can be adapted for additional uses.

CM: One criticism of the use of containers as refugee accommodation is that they imply a certain form of use. There is a tendency not only to situate them in remote locations such as motorway exits but also to line them up in rows in order to ease monitoring. This organisation, which has more to do with military, police or administrative uses and is certainly not architectural, appears to be very common and is yet, to us, highly questionable.

PF: Yes, this is indeed extremely questionable! More than anything because such spatial segregation as this is – in social terms - a huge problem.

CM: So could you imagine a container-based structured residential settlement?

PF: In principle, yes. On the condition that the settlement is in a location which is appropriate in urban and social terms – which is to say busy and central – and that an appropriate range of communal and open spaces is provided amongst the living modules. If these requirements are met there is certainly potential in the idea of using containers for temporary residential purposes on left-over inner-city plots.
CM: Both of these play a key role in your

Photo: Markus Fattinger Architekturfotographie

Mobile Stadtlabor in the Resselpark, Vienna, 2014

Photo: Peter Fattinger

Parklife, multifunctional building for leisure-time childcare, Vienna, 2010

"parklife" project. This is an architectural "add-on" to an existing playground close to a large 1970s housing estate in Vienna's 22nd district.

PF: Cost-free, leisure-oriented childcare has been provided in this park all-year-round for more than 15 years by Vienna's "Parkbetreuung" or, more specifically, by the association "Institut für Erlebnispädagogik". The association's indoor activities were based in a large hut which was, however, difficult to use because it was sub-divided into so many small spaces. And there was a lack of a large communal space. Hence, we developed "parklife" as a stage, auditorium, action space and multifunctional usable sculpture which also opens outwards to the surrounding urban space and park.

CM: So it is a sort of "hybrid building"?

PF: Precisely, it permits a range of uses: The auditorium opens onto the park and also serves as a space for interaction. The huge terraced seating also leads to a higher, cushioned and more withdrawn space which offers broad views across the park. The workshop is located below the tribune and opens onto the neighbouring play area via a large trap door. This area has a construction theme and children can experiment with a range of building materials and tools under expert instruction and supervision. In spatial terms, the unusual form and varying angles, corners and interior heights of the building provide a contrast with the monotone surroundings. For the children and young people who are growing up in the relatively tight spaces of the concrete blocks of the Rennbahnweg estate, "parklife" is intended to offer a contrasting, freer spatial experience and stand out from its environment as a consciously different object.

CM: How strong is the role of aesthetic or design considerations?

PF: With "parklife", we wanted to create a place with which children and young people could identify. And the very special form and bright red of its polyurethane surfaces also mean that it naturally fulfils a certain landmark function.

CM: Apropos special form: All of the projects of the design.build studio are created in a special context which they also reflect in terms of their content.At the same time these projects always have a social purpose and there is, of course, huge need in this area. Would it not be possible to develop prototypes and even produce some of them in series? This would enable more people to benefit from them.

PF: Of course that would be an interesting aspect. The reality, however, is that so far we have generally worked for very specific users or institutions as a result of which we have principally reacted to very special contexts. However, there are also certain aspects of these projects that could undoubtedly lend themselves to being copied or serially reproduced.

About Peter Fattinger

After studying architecture at TU Vienna, Peter Fattinger (*1972) worked as a project leader in Atelier van Lieshout in Rotterdam. During Lieshout's guest professorship at the TU Vienna in 2000, he started to teach there and began to establish the design.build studio. In 2011 he concluded his PhD in architecture on the theme: "Design-Build-Studio. Conditions, Processes and Potentials of Design-Build-Projects in Architectural Education". Alongside his work as leader of this university-based studio he also runs an architectural office in partnership with Veronika Orso which also specialises in experimental, mostly temporary projects at the interface between architecture, design, art und urbanism which the team themselves oversee completely from conception to implementation.

www.fattinger-orso.com

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

It is widely agreed that work is a central factor for successful integration. But at the same time, access to the job market in Austria is difficult for both asylum-seekers and recognised refugees.

A conversation with the architect Herwig Spiegl of AllesWirdGut about the social business project magdas hotel in Vienna which creates jobs for people with a refugee background and about the scalability of the idea and parallels between designing hotels and apartments.

Interview: Christian Muhr, January 22nd 2016
Photos: AllesWirdGut/Guilherme Silva Da Rosa (2015)

In Austria, the Employment of Foreigners Law determines that asylum-seekers may work after three months but that they only have unlimited access to the job market when their asylum process has been successfully completed and when they have been awarded "subsidiary protection". The question of the average length of asylum processes in Austria is difficult to answer: according to the latest information from the Interior Ministry the initial process lasts around 4.7 months whereas Caritas estimates the average length as being around one year. At the same time there are repeated reports of cases which last much longer. But even after the positive conclusion of such a process the job search is very difficult for most of those involved.

This is precisely the point at which the innovative hotel project magdas, which opened in Vienna in 2015, is seeking to intervene.

In around eighteen months a 1960's building formerly used as an old people's home in an excellent green location near to the Prater was transformed by the architecture team AllesWirdGut and many volunteers – including refugees – into a 78-room hotel. Financed by Caritas and crowdfunding and launched as one of four current social business projects under the magdas umbrella brand, the hotel is distinct due to its personnel and its operation: around two-thirds of the employees have recognised refugee or subsidiary protection status or are juvenile asylum-seekers, who are permitted to serve an apprenticeship in the hotel due to a special legislative exemption. Alongside the hotel guests, magdas also contains two units of shared accommodation for unaccompanied underage refugees.

This intelligent concept is not only a functioning social and training facility that creates jobs but also an example of successful, real integration which helps to counter the fear of and prejudice against people with refugee backgrounds.

CM: magdas is not only Vienna's first social business hotel but also the first hotel to be run by recognised refugees, because the majority of the staff has this status. What is exactly meant by "social business"?

HS: The basic idea is to use our commercial success to generate social added value. But profit maximisation is not the only focus. The principle is that these profits should be used to wholly or partially solve social problems and this is something that magdas Hotel does in a very concrete way. Firstly, it addresses the issue of long-term unemployment which often threatens asylum-seekers after they have been granted this status. And it also seeks to challenge preconceptions about this group by showing that a hotel with such personnel works quite normally.

CM: Can you please describe the operation of the hotel in a little more detail.

An architectural office like ours also benefits from the diversity of its people and the range of perspectives and talents that they bring.

HS: Yes, that's relatively easy. magdas Hotel is a so-called budget hotel of the sort which one often finds in Vienna. A double room costs around seventy euros and the hotel facilities reflect this category in that there is, for example, no wellness area or other such "extras". The hotel team consists of both professionals who have gathered experience in other hotels around the world and others who, due to their status as asylum-seekers, had previously spent long periods of time unemployed.

CM: We are now talking about recognised refugees?

HS: Precisely, these are people who are no longer involved in asylum processes but have already received a positive decision and are now facing the difficult task of entering the job market. A similar problem is faced by many older job seekers because they also face a lot of prejudice.

CM: Hence, magdas is a concrete job market measure which was established by Caritas in order to create real jobs. At the same time, however, it is also a sort of "PR action" for the demand that the jobs market should be opened up to asylum-seekers and recognised refugees. Is that correct?

HS: Only Caritas can answer whether it was a conscious PR action. But both explanations are possible and also legitimate. The hotel is in itself a job market measure in the sense that, like every other hotel, it creates jobs. magdas Hotel aims to prove that it possible to operate a hotel in a competitive market using people with a history as migrants or refugees. The objective is to progressively increase the proportion of these people in all areas and at all levels of the hotel in order to both employ as many people as possible and prove that such a concept really can work.

CM: Hence, this is an exemplary project that is sending a signal. One could also perhaps critically note that the creation of 25 jobs has little impact when one compares this with the number of job seekers.

HS: Of course this number will have no direct impact on the high unemployment rate but as a role model and symbol it could be pivotal. This is why I must also say that the project will also be a success when it no longer stands out from the crowd due to the fact that the operation of such social businesses has already become common practice.

CM: In a statement the hotel director declared that he wanted guests to come because of the quality of the service and not because the hotel is operated by people with a refugee background.

HS: From his point of view that is completely right. As far as I understand the hotel has a very high occupancy rate and it is certain that this is also related to this special aspect of the hotel and the subject in general. Both aspects are quite legitimate. Every hotel has a target public and it is clear that many guests are open on this whole issue and sympathetic towards the project.

CM: A key word in the business context is "scalability". Can the magdas concept be scaled up like the sort of seminar hotel of which Austria probably has hundreds?

HS: I am convinced that the concept could be scaled. The quality and the appeal of the hotel are based on the fact that people from a wide range of backgrounds work there. This diversity brings very concrete advantages for guests, in terms of both the variety of cuisine on offer and the multilingual reception. And regardless of this, the basic message that prejudice makes the world narrower and leads to misjudgements is certainly scalable.

And in a very conscious break with the prevailing standard the hotel rooms have no televisions.

CM: This basic notion can also be applied outside the hotel industry.

HS: Yes, naturally: an architectural office like ours also benefits from the diversity of its people and the range of perspectives and talents that they bring. magdas' advantage is derived from the range of experience that it offers and this is also embodied in its design. In my eyes, diversity is a productive and enriching factor.

CM: The city is another place in which diversity manifests itself to a special degree and, ideally, is also exchanged. This is the reason why the city also plays such an important role in our project "Places for People". Does magdas also include elements of an "urban vision" for the future?

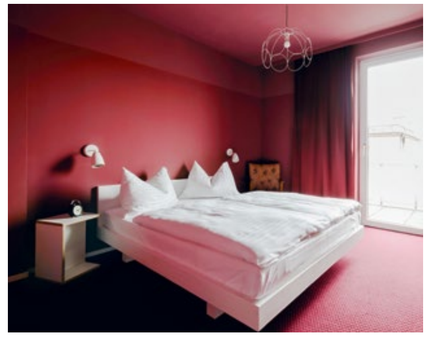
HS: The concept could, for example, be transferred to a small urban element - housing. I am convinced that here, too, diversity and mix are essential for positive cooperation, both on the level of the residential building itself but also at the level of the city and society as a whole.
In this sense, one can transfer many aspects to the city. This hotel has both public and private areas. We have very consciously attempted to create places in which the broadest possible range of people can meet because such meetings are inspiring and, more than anything else, also help to reduce fear and prejudice. My opinion is that exactly the same principle applies to the city.
Here we can once again raise the topical issue of parallel societies which naturally also has an impact on the city and on patterns of settlement. Fighting this development is important and, in this sense, magdas also contains elements of an integrative model of the city.

CM: If we speak about segregation and parallel societies we can say that, quite apart from their social and political implications, such phenomena are also problematic, because they weaken the exchange of ideas and, thereby, the innovative energy of a city. The implied conclusion is: differences are productive.

HS: For me that is certainly true. I am active in what one can call the creative sector. Creativity is always related to surprises and the unexpected and these are things which one cannot necessarily concretely design. Sometimes such things – which include irritations and other points of view and perspectives - must simply be allowed to arise. Personally, I am a huge fan of heterogeneity and mixing. One is always hearing about progress, innovation and heterogeneity on one side and tradition, history and values on the other being played off dramatically against each other. My belief is that this doesn't have to be a conflict and that coexistence is perfectly possible.

CM: Which of the ideas, concepts and methods that you have implemented at magdas could you also use in such other areas as housing?

HS: Both residential and hotel architecture are about accommodation. Their multiple requirements mean that each has its own clear orientation but they also share such concerns as the provision of public, semi-public and private spaces. It is incredibly important to create this range within the city: from large to small, from the scale of the urban plan to the scale of the apartment. We need structures which make it possible to create spaces for communal activities. I can see parallels here between magdas' lounge, which is precisely such a space, and the open spaces which we are currently designing in residential schemes. In such schemes, open space doesn't necessarily mean just the green internal courtyard. There are also meeting zones which are no longer limited to the Viennese staircase and which provide an incentive to discover the surroundings. The message which we are currently getting from on high is that private spaces must be smaller in order to make them more affordable. That is actually not true but, even if it was, such a change would make public space even more important. This can be the laundry or even the vertical garden in a stairwell. People come together and create something together that they wouldn't manage in this form on their own. This is where I see the parallels. magdas is a demonstration of the maximum possible reduction of private space and this is naturally also relevant for housing. The room is no more than the place in which one sleeps and washes. It is where the most basic needs for intimacy and privacy are met and my opinion is that this will not change fundamentally in the future. At the same time, the hotel offers enough space for "sharing resources". This situation isn't new but already well-known from flat-sharing communities. The flat-share is a model for success that, in reality, is only taken advantage of by certain groups although there is little reason for this. magdas Hotel has many similarities with a flat share, although the period of use is naturally very different. This thought becomes very clear in the design of the lobby. I generally find that hotel lobbies are sad and lonely places in which encounters are hardly possible and this has a lot do with their architecture.
magdas' lobby embodies a number of functions and possibilities. It is publicly accessible and not just reserved for hotel guests. Alongside the 87 rooms there are also two flat sharing communities of unaccompanied underage refugees. Unaccompanied underage refugees have no difficulty finding something to do because they are also permitted to take part in training courses. They are also successful in establishing and developing social contacts in the city and their only problem is pursuing these contacts. Going to a coffee house is, for example, often impossible because they have no money. magdas' lounge provides these people with a kind of living room which thus welcomes the neighbours, the hotel guests, the unaccompanied underage refugees and, ideally, even the hotel staff when they have a break. This means that four different groups meet here and it is these meetings which make one's stay special. Rather than just watching television one can hear stories in another way, which brings certain benefits or advantages for each of these groups. And in a very conscious break with the prevailing standard the hotel rooms have no televisions.



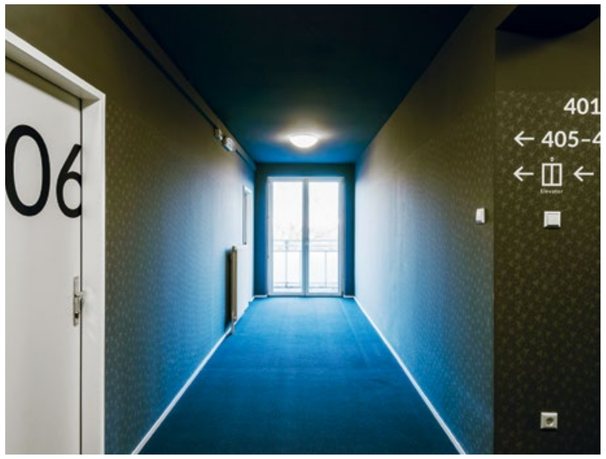
CM: The term "integrative architecture" always makes one think of the social dimension but in your case this also concerns the "management". Many different players including the refugees themselves were involved in the process of realisation.

At times we were no longer the captain of the ship but just passengers.

HS: The process was something which we neither knew nor had ever tried in that form. Integration plays a key role. For example, the design process had no clear start or finish and certainly wasn't linear. It was subject to many surprises and unplanned influences and was constantly evolving. A classic issue in this respect is help-in-kind from sponsors, which often appears at very short notice. And sometimes very different things as originally planned ended up being sponsored. Another special challenge was how to deal with the public because the project was often in the media from the very beginning as a result of which it received both very positive and very negative reactions. Our response to the latter was to try and counter prejudice and fear with explanation and information. On the other hand, this media attention meant that many people approached us wanting to get involved and contribute. Of course we were able to control neither of these two dynamics - engagement and protest. We simply had to work with them.
This often meant walking a tightrope between allowing enough freedom for surprising things to happen and keeping enough control in order to ensure that things didn't get out of hand. And at the end of the day this was a building site with rules that we had to observe. This challenge was also interesting because the various actors couldn't be placed in specific groups in advance. Quite the contrary: they were as varied as the people that you find in Vienna.

CM: After completing three or four more magdas Hotels the design process could begin to become more streamlined. Along the lines of "In week 34 the communal garden will be delivered by XY communal garden experts."

HS: Exactly. Although in doing so we would turn magdas into a product and reduce its qualities to a set of reproducible features and sacrifice the key qualities of the undesigned and the undesignable. For architects this is perhaps unusual – or even threatening - because architects have a clear plan in their head and always like to be in control of everything.
Here I would like to make another comparison with the city and the fact that city planners naturally always try to develop and implement well-thought-out and, generally, well-meant concepts. But one reason why many of these concepts lead to disappointing urban spaces is that they are unable to react to feedback from users because such feedback usually comes too late. magdas was also exciting because its small scale enabled us to constantly react to the feedback coming from every direction. This was often difficult due to the intensely public nature of every action and the number of participants. At times we were no longer the captain of the ship but just passengers.
At the same time, however, I have to admit that we are also architects who love controlled, planned processes and I wouldn't want to only do such projects. This was



About magdas hotel

The conversion of the old people's home into a three-star hotel cost around 1.5 million euros – a sum which Caritas invested in this social business project. This should be refinanced by the income of the hotel within five years. An additional sum of around 60,000 euros was raised through crowdfunding.
The hotel has 78 rooms in five categories which were individually furnished on the basis of upcycling and sponsorship-in-kind. Around half of the rooms have balconies. The distinctive interior design was largely developed by the designer Daniel Büchel and produced in cooperation with engaged helpers in a specially equipped workshop. The hotel currently employs 27 people with refugee backgrounds from a total of 16 countries. A publicly accessible restaurant with bar and café at ground floor level and countless further interior and exterior communication zones offer sufficient space for coming together, helping to create that special, open atmosphere, which is so central to the hotel's success.

www.magdas-hotel.at

the reason why we also decided to document our experiences. We published a book about magdas in order to make this knowledge and know-how more generally available.

CM: Interestingly, this book contains neither photos of the finished building nor floor plans but, rather, suggestions of strategies for approaching similar projects. These, in total, 17 "tools" are strongly shaped by digital culture and stretch from "networking" to "crowdfunding". And the book certainly doesn't communicate a special architectural language or typology.

HS: Precisely. We thought for ages about whether we should call these "tools" but it was the word "recipe" that seemed to hit the nail on the head. In principle we are telling people how to cook something – helping them to copy us.
The back of the book lists other projects as a way of showing how the results can be completely different. I was both delighted and astonished that magdas Hotel was awarded the State Prize for Design because it is not a product like a Philippe Starck candlestick. It is much more the result of a project of cooperation between many people and its success had only a limited amount to do with its photographable external form. I think that architecture has long since moved beyond such concerns and new solutions are waiting to be found in many areas. In finding these solutions we wouldn't want to limit ourselves to questions of form.

About AllesWirdGut

Seeing "problems as opportunities" has been the motto of the architectural office ever since it was founded in 1999. The fact that this approach has been highly productive can be seen in both the huge number of projects which have been realised in the intervening years and in the expansion of the team from its original core of four founders to the current number of 50 employees. Having recently opened a second office in Munich, AllesWirdGut works at all scales and in all sectors from urban design to industrial, school and residential buildings, and has an uncompromising commitment to quality. The combination of straight design and improvisation in its work on magdas hotel was a key factor behind not only the hotel's success but also the huge media interest raised by such a comparatively small project.

www.alleswirdgut.cc

Interview: Christian Muhr, February 17th 2016

GENTRIFY WISELY

Even though cities, villages and landscapes are amongst the preferred areas of activity of the artists' group AO&, the team investigates questions concerning potential new uses with very special, theatrical methods which are quite unlike any of the tools of classic urban and regional planning.

A conversation with Philipp Furtenbach of AO& about areas of allotments as "gated communities", urban planners as desk-bound bureaucrats and the significance of vacant plots in the city.

Around a tenth of the population of Vienna lives in the district of Favoriten to the south of the city centre and many of these people are, themselves, former immigrants. Once a typical working-class area, the city's most populous district has been undergoing a profound transformation for more than a decade. Aspects of this include not only the construction of huge building projects such as the new Central Station and its neighbouring residential quarter but also the cultural reuse of obsolete industrial premises such as the former Ankerbrot factory, which is now home to numerous galleries as well as Caritas workshops.
A vacant industrial complex at the start of Quellenstraße in Favoriten's Kreta neighbourhood has been transformed by the artists' collective AO& into a place of discourse, production and presentation. Today, the locally founded Großgartengesellschaft (GGGW), a group of representatives of several branches of the arts together with people from the neighbourhood, is responsible for the programming and operation of the Oststation.

CM: You have been working for quite some time with a part of the city very close to one of our pilot projects. The city and the urban context play a major role in all our interventions. As we are active in the same vicinity we would like to know more about your approach and your experience so far.

PF: As AO& we have been working on the Oststation site since 2013 when its owner approached us and asked if we could imagine transforming it into a cultural location. It was a piece of industrial wasteland – a plot of 4,000 square metres that had originally been part of a larger complex. Since the 1960s it had been used by a company for the production of steel cable for bridges and buildings and, later, also electrical cables. The location is very special. It consists of a high industrial hall measuring around 250-300 square metres with a basement of the same size. This basement is the starting point of a 400-metre-long tunnel in which the cable used to be stretched out.

CM: Since when had the building stood empty?

PF: Production ceased in the early nineties. It had been empty ever since, as a result of which it was extremely run down. The property also includes external spaces such as a rear courtyard, a forecourt and a garden measuring around 2,000 square metres. From the very beginning the owner left us free rein and hardly ever visited. We decided to start the work with our own hands but soon noticed that we needed more. We came into contact with a group of Armenian labourers, some of whom also had a refugee background. We worked together to tidy the site and then turned to the garden, which astonished the owner because he had assumed that we would only bother about the hall and the basement. This purely subtractive tidying and clearing process took over two months. During this time it became clear to us what we wanted to add to the location.

CM: And what elements were those?

PF: Basically two objects: We mirrored the small building in front of the hall with an exact copy in order to frame the forecourt as a forum. This is connected to a public bridge over the railway into the 11th district which is located behind the fence. On the private side we extended the railway crossing with a further stair, a suggestion that is now used as a tribune. However, the decisive contribution was less our interventions and more the social process triggered by our approach. The location is surrounded by further industrial buildings on one side and allotments on the other. Initially, we were watched with suspicion but then we approached our neighbours and engaged them in conversation. In order to avoid having kebabs for lunch every day we began to shop locally and cook. The Armenian labourers and people from the companies involved in the construction project joined us and, over time, the site huts stored on the plot became a sort of "canteen". The number of guests also grew because of friends who came from the centre of the city in response to our invitation to eat with us. The result was that a whole range of people regularly spent time there together who would otherwise be very unlikely to meet.

Photo: GGGW 2015

Foundation

CM: A sort of informal, public "lunchtime special"?

PF: Yes, informal but daily from September to December. The next step was the remodelling of the garden and the positioning of the site huts so that one can cook, sleep, shower and do a lot more there. Social events moved to the garden so that the hall, forecourt and basement – the locations where events take place – allow more concentration.
We also reversed the social process: having got to know the Armenians very well and learnt a lot about the background to their flight we also knew about their cuisine and this led to the idea of including them in the opening week's activities. You could visit over eight days, day and night, and there was always something going on because we were always there. We effectively created a temporary Armenian Grill which was visited by several hundred people. During this time even more friends and neighbours joined in and the entire project was a visible success. Ultimately, this social process was more important than the formal one. We agreed with the art-loving owner that we, as AO&, could draw up the programme for the first year as part of the transformation project. Our only objective was to set out a certain direction for a certain period while, more importantly, a local curatorial culture could establish itself. To this end, we invited people from various cultural and artistic fields as well as interested neighbours to get involved in the continuation of these activities and, together with them, we established the Großgartengesellschaft Wien (The Vienna Large Garden Company). Today we mostly use the abbreviation GGGW.

CM: That is of course a wonderfully ironic title! What does this company do? Is it carrying on the utilisation of the site?

PF: The title is a reference to the allotment associations in the surrounding area. As self-sufficiency gardens they were not originally intended to be used for housing but in the 1990s this was permitted and, over the years, this green zone has become a residential area with its own paths and streets which are only accessible to members and their guests. Each of these "gated-communities" consists of similarly fenced gardens with houses. These structures occupy relatively large areas of the city and are not part of the public realm. Our name begs the question of whether the urban space of today and tomorrow shouldn't be organised differently.
The key actors and decision makers within GGGW are the artists Yasmina Haddad, Ipek Hamzaoglu and Andrea Lumplecker, the curator Melanie Ohnemus, the pensioner Erwin Mikes, our neighbour Rudolf Schmid, the cultural scientist Leander Gussmann, the urban designer Peer Sievers and the artists Mirko Winkel, Thomas Wisser and Philipp Riccabona as well as me from AO&, plus a few others who are closely involved with the locality and activities.
The groundwork takes place one weekend every month. We organise things like visits, walks and local excursions and let people tell us about their local situation. We spent time in one of these allotment communities, instigated a spontaneous residents' disco in the courtyard of the Ankerbrotsiedlung social housing complex, discussed the future of unemployment in a centre for job-seekers' courses, visited the occupied Ernst Kirchweger Haus, a Turkish school, new residential projects and a food cooperative, etc. We are going to visit the district police station and are continuously discovering new places and developing new relationships, the longer we keep our contact with the area.

About AO&

Revealing the potential of specific places and transforming these into special, perceptible locations while developing scenarios for future and often alternative uses are among the characteristic features of the projects of the three artists Philipp Furtenbach (*1975), Philipp Riccabona (*1979) and Thomas Wisser (*1978) who have worked together under the name AO& since 2008.

Architectural, performative, musical, culinary and other interventions are the means whereby given spatial and social situations are transformed in such a way that they also become platforms for meetings and exchanges between completely different social groups. The focuses of these platforms are process-based events such as walking tours, concerts, performances and tastings in which the artists are actively involved not only as directors but also as fellow performers.

www.aound.net

At weekends, the Oststation is also the setting for the "Soundcheck" series where we spend half an hour together listening to loud music. This is put together by people whom we invite – and who often have a local connection.
Three or four times a year we invite artists to produce works with and at the location. Roman Signer, Phillip Sollmann and Charlemagne Palestine were already there and Nina Könnemann is coming and there are some other things which I prefer to keep secret. Many people come to Oststation from downtown or elsewhere. These days and evenings are also special because, to a certain extent, we also come from this world and these moments shed new light on our own social involvement. I must of course add here that I am just part of GGGW and that this is my personal view and that I am not speaking for the others.

CM: Looking back, did things happen that you were not expecting?

PF: The development to the south of the Central Station means that the existing part of Favoriten will also experience enormous social change. The location between the new district and the green area around the Laaerberg where you can find the Böhmischer Prater and the closest fields to the city is hardly noticed from the centre. The entire area – including this industrial site – will be developed someday. Whether one finds this is a good thing or not, it will eventually happen.

CM: That is certainly the intention of the planners. But you don't have this birds-eye view.

PF: The way in which AO& works always generates personal relationships. We are often asked how people are in such-and-such an area because we also work in remote places. My position is that people are pretty similar everywhere. There is nothing that one can do in one location and not in another. The details may very but, otherwise, there is no great difference.

CM: I heard on the radio today about citizen's protests against accommodation for 750 refugees which is planned in Liesing. How would you address this?

PF: My personal opinion is that we can also react positively to these developments which have been foreseeable for a long time. Europe would be well-advised to resolutely declare itself to be a place of migration as a way of dealing proactively with this influx. But we have to engage with the people here – especially those with such concerns – just as much as we engage with those for whom we are now making space.

Disko

Photo: OSW 2015

Oststation Grandstand

Photo: AOE 2014

CM: You are an architect and are acquainted with a range of strategies. You say that we must engage with the urban space but also with the people.

PF: I prefer to work as an architectural artist than as an artistic architect. And, yes, the people are also the urban space.

CM: OK, but different disciplines see this differently. When thinking about public space, architects think about squares and parks whereas you maybe think more about kitchens and coffee houses.

PF: About encounters and about opportunities for residing and working.

CM: How would you weight that?

PF: I wouldn't – I see what comes and don't differentiate.

CM: The social process normally gets going somehow but you have actively moderated it.

PF: But only in the sense that we spend time there and not in the sense that we interfere from outside.

CM: The number of planners who actually spend months based in the area that they are planning is very small.

PF: Which leads to many problems. Planners and architects have a tendency to remain glued to their desks. If one wants to transform places it is necessary to spend time there – ideally together with the people who already live there.

CM: You can't separate the hardware from the software. In your hierarchy the development of kitchen furniture would be less important than local employment and the social fabric.

PF: Exactly! The key thing is how one gets on with other people, but this is not something that you can deal with in an afternoon. You must really live this in practice.
CM: You mean that the focus on the social process is central?

PF: I'm sure it is. The distanced view from outside or above is naturally important but it cannot be the only basis for developments or decisions. We don't run around naively either - we analyse things seriously.

PF: Funnily enough, his book about anonymous architecture is one of my favourites.

CM: "Architecture without architects". And why?

PF: Even if much of the book is historical one gets the impression that these are places that have been created from within out of necessity. They were developed more by society and less by architects.

> In terms of business ethics the question is: should those who trade living space earn more than they deserve for the responsibility they shoulder and the work they do?

CM: Your answer to the question of how to use the site was culture.

PF: Not explicitly. I see this fabric as spatial sculpture, as sculpture in this subtractive sense, but also as a conscious urban void, a stylised wasteland. The commitment of many people enabled a much more comprehensive and valuable process to emerge as originally imagined. Through the development of inter-personal relationships and the nimbus of art one can also see Oststation as a built barrier against an urban development which is driven by economic interests.

CM: In a totally functional neighbourhood a void is a particularly important corrective element. But the absence of programme plays a role in this.

PF: Lightness of programme, not absence of programme.

Photo: GGGW 2015

Walk 01

PF: These descriptions are less important for us in themselves and intended more as a statement in the direction of regional and urban development as a means of being able to apply precisely such an approach.

CM: The project "Places for People" is seen as a homage to Bernard Rudofsky. What is your relationship with him?

CM: Your commitment is making the area more attractive – through both the cultural use and the introduction of neighbourhood qualities. Is that a problem?

PF: As artists and part of a certain milieu we are constantly asked this question. Everyone has the right to go to a place and engage with it. One changes it and this can increase its value. We have no significant role in the urban and economic development pressure in a city which is growing strongly and needs living space. My interests are strongly connected with people. This feels right. In response to the issue of gentrification I would simply say "gentrify wisely".

CM: What does "wisely" mean for you?

PF: Gentrification is always a sort of takeover. Seen like this, the expression is of course both humorous and nonsensical. It is more important to deal with what is already there. If you accommodate 200 people seeking protection in the area then you have to deal with them but also with the people who already live there.

CM: Increasing value in itself is not a problem as long as this means an "upgrade for all" but there are still great differences in terms of profit.

PF: In terms of business ethics the question is: should those who trade living space earn more money than what they deserve for the responsibility they shoulder and their work they do for it?

CM: Even someone who runs a kebab stall benefits from an underground connection with the centre but there are others who earn considerably more.

PF: We must address this critically. The landowner of Oststation is also an investor who trades in living space but despite and, indeed, because of this I enjoy discussing this issue with him. This is fascinating and this is how things start to happen.
Or in talking to a whole range of people who already live and work here and whose opinions on the issue of immigration are restrictive or even very negative. The result is a collision between partly completely opposing opinions and attitudes. These discussions arise automatically and work best in an atmosphere of mutual respect. There is often no contradiction in having a completely opposite opinion as someone and yet still being fond of them on a personal level. And then in using this fondness in order to spend time together and discuss further.

CM: Your deep personal commitment is also a feature of the Hotel Konkurrenz project. Dealing with conflicts is something that constantly arises in your work.

PF: This is possible because this way of working uses theatrical concepts. We want to be able to both act emotionally in such situations and deal with the emotions of other people.

CM: Freely quoting Shakespeare that would be to say that all the world's a stage and everyone is playing their role. Is that how you see it?

PF: Let's rather say: Not everyone is playing their role but one can experience it as such. For me this is a great help. Otherwise, such extremely charged relationships would be unmanageable.
CM: Can this method be applied everywhere?

PF: Yes, I think that everyone does it like this – whether consciously or unconsciously.

CM: It would help to play this card more often in certain conflicts. One is sometimes a player and sometimes a spectator. Maybe one wouldn't imagine that this is a situation where the theatre can prove its worth.

About Oststation

The site of around 4,000 square metres was used for decades for the production of cables and steel ropes. After production ceased the complex was vacant for years before, in 2013, the artists' group AO& was commissioned by the new owner to find a temporary use of its own choosing for the piece of industrial wasteland. After a year of intense work on the site which included extensive cleaning and ground-clearing and the addition of new buildings, an extraordinary ensemble of internal and external spaces had been created which is now brought to life by a programme of artistic events drawn up together with friends and neighbours.

www.oststation.at

ALTRUISM IN ACTION

The principles of the Sisters of Charity, for whom humanity and not, for example, the size of the rental income are important, are being used by the architectural office STUDiO LOiS to define quality in a very special way - despite limited resources.

A conversation with Barbara Poberschnigg and Elias Walch about unconventional procurement practices, new neighbourly relationships and the rewarding dynamic so far released by the transformation of an unused boarding house in an introspective residential corner of Innsbruck.

Photo: David Schreyer

The retired master joiner Bruno Holzhammer (76) donates his time and his skills

Interview: Sabine Dreher, March 14th 2016

Although the motivations of tourists and refugees could not be more different, one can still find similarities between voluntary and involuntary mobility. As the tourist region par excellence, the Province of Tyrol has enormous expertise in tourism and an excellent tourist infrastructure, which can also be used in receiving and looking after refugees.

With more than 44 million overnight stays per year, Austria's third largest province accounts for almost 40 per cent of visitors coming to the country. Despite its mere 4,000 inhabitants, the municipality of Sölden alone copes with more than three million overnight stays per year thanks to its huge capacity. It is also not uncommon to find Tyrolean villages where, tourists aside, the local people are outnumbered by foreign residents. And yet, although the fully stretched Tyrolean tourist industry continues to report record numbers, the province is currently only meeting 85 per cent of its already modest target for providing refugee accommodation.

According to Tiroler Soziale Dienste GmbH, which was established in autumn 2015, of the around 6,600 refugees registered in Tyrol in March 2016, about a quarter were living in Innsbruck. An average of 35 people live in each unit, some of which are guesthouses which once accommodated tourists and are still run commercially. However, there are also emergency shelters for up to 300 people. In February 2016, an inflatable building produced negative headlines because, apart from numerous other problems, the air in the temporary structure was so dry that the mucous membranes of both residents and carers were affected, raising the risk of infection.

In contrast with this, a positive example of genuine, active hospitality is that of the Sisters of Charity and their HERberge home for refugees in Innsbruck's Saggen district. It was designed in cooperation with STUDiO LOiS and implemented with the help of many volunteers.

Sabine Dreher: Working together with an order of nuns seems almost exotic in 2016. How can one imagine this?

Barbara Poberschnigg: The Sisters of Charity have been living according to the principles of St. Vincent de Paul for around 150 years. The focuses of the order are the education of girls and the care of the sick. This is why their complex in Innsbruck includes a former sanatorium, which is now a sort of private clinic, and schools - which now, naturally, welcome both girls and boys – ranging from a nursery and primary school to a high school and training college for kindergarten teachers. The order has many provinces throughout Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino and has also been active for thirty years in Tanzania where the majority of its nuns are now based.

SD: Your joint project was initiated in 2014 long before politicians had recognised the scale of the flow of refugees. What circumstances had led to this?

BP: The convent complex included an empty former boarding house which was no longer required. The first idea was to adapt this for use as temporary accommodation during the rebuilding of the Caritas Integrationshaus. This however proved too expensive. The next idea was to create refugee accommodation. I became involved in the project in August/September 2014 well before we had become aware of the scale of the crisis. Due to their experience in Tanzania the nuns have a different feeling for this subject.
SD: In what way do they feel things differently?

BP: They understand the subject because one reason why the Sisters of Charity attract so many women in Africa is that many join to seek refuge. They seek refuge because they are fleeing violence and because this is the only way of receiving an education.

There was less tendering but a lot more communication.

SD: What needs had to be met by the project of adaptation?

BP: There was already a conceptual study from the Provincial Government of Tyrol which we had to review. This proposed simple accommodation without any notion of residential quality or leisure provision. It merely filled the existing rooms of the boarding house with a suitable number of people and added a fire stair.

SD: How could someone ever even think of proposing such a concept?

BP: Each existing 17-square-metre room was occupied by three people in line with the Federal Government's guidelines: eight square metres for the first person plus four for each additional one. It was already clear that the provincial refugee agency would operate the facility and that the Sisters of Charity would be the landlord. The rental level was also clear and this defined the investment cost which was to be repaid from long-term rental income – not that the nuns had any intention to make a profit on the deal. Given these conditions we said that we could make more of the opportunity.

SD: What did you do differently in comparison with this conceptual study?

EW: One could have created 12 rooms per floor and cheaply added the required second staircase. Our plan, however, was to create not just this extra stair but also an extra building which could include five levels of rooms for families. We intended not just to use the building as a barracks but to offer larger communal spaces and opportunities for meeting. Our concept includes a sort of living room at every level together with specific rooms for children, sewing, learning or training that can be simply modified as required. And we concretely reduced the density at each level by three rooms – or nine people – in order to improve the residential quality as much as possible. We saw the building a little like a student residence.

SD: The owners were open to this argument although it meant that fewer people could be accommodated?

BP: The nuns spoke out quite clearly for this concept and wrote a maximum occupancy of 131 people into the rental contract.

SD: You started work in 2014 and were overtaken by reality in the shape of the refugee situation. The first clients were able to move in in November 2015. What was the reaction to this model in comparison with other accommodation models which, even in Tyrol, tend to take the almost industrial forms of container villages and inflatable buildings?

BP: The Sisters of Charity trust us. Their primary concern is humanity and not the level of rental income. They financed the construction and handed over the building to the Provincial Government ready for use. The tenants were theoretically responsible for the furniture although, at this point, Tiroler Soziale Dienste GmbH had just been established.

SD: You may have been freed from the demands of federal tendering regulations and, hence, from a certain level of tender bureaucracy but this approach also meant that you had a lot to do. At the end of the day did this approach cause you more or less work?

BP: There was less tendering but a lot more communication. This meant more work for us but was an advantage for the project. There were many details that we repeatedly redesigned as we constantly hunted down cheaper products. The balustrades, for example, consist of wire-mesh fencing because the two staircases and balconies meant that we needed many metres of such material. This is unquestionably more time-consuming. Even if you draw a detail two or three times you are only paid once.

SD: And you were even involved hands-on in the interior fitting out?

BP: Yes, in a sort of spontaneous protest action. As communication with the future tenants wasn't working too well we decided to finance and build the furniture for one room ourselves in order to demonstrate the quality which could be achieved with little money. The three of us planned a three-bed room with a single bed, bunk-bed, cupboard, table, chair and curtain etc. and then organised and built everything ourselves at a total cost of 1,700 euros. When we showed this idea to the Financial Manager of the Sisters of Charity he said that he would also pay for one room himself.

In general the courage to take risks is lacking.

SD: As a private donation?

BP: Yes, that was the second room. Then we told friends and acquaintances about this and some of them also wanted to get involved. In this way we fitted out the entire first floor with donations from friends. We then explained this situation to the consultants and contractors at a site meeting and this secured the financing for the second floor. We slowly became aware that three of us couldn't build 18 rooms. But the Financial Manager, on the other hand, was so enthused by the whole idea that he started to support us in presenting the idea publicly within the Diocese and to Caritas and some of the contractual partners of the Sisters of Charity as well as banks and insurance companies, as a result of which we ended up "selling" one floor per week – a total of 43 rooms in five weeks.

Photo: David Schreyer

Standard 4-person room in the new wing

EW: The basic requirement was to build economically without reducing our own standards. We sought help from companies in order to finance certain things for which there was no room in the budget.

SD: Where did you make economies and where not? Perhaps you could name a couple of areas which you prioritised.

BP: We knew how much there was in the budget and wanted to make this go as far as possible. Hence, first of all we looked around to see what was available cheaply. Rather than define the colour of the floor we asked companies which cheap flooring was available in the shape of, for example, remaindered or discontinued products. We made savings in the area of technology. We were aware that we weren't building a passive house but were still able to profit from the huge boom in this area in Tyrol by using insulating products and windows which, while not meeting strict AA passive house energy requirements, still represented an enormous improvement for our building.

SD: Who managed all this?

BP: We collected the information and, after all the rooms had been financed, were able to use further donations to equip the communal rooms. However, we already had the concept of using the order's own furniture reserve to furnish these rooms. As I had been lucky enough to work with the community for many years I knew that it had a central store of furniture brought from buildings in the provinces which it had ceased to use. When we saw this store we were very excited.

SD: I have also heard the benevolent accusation that you ended up creating a home for refugees which is too trendy and photogenic.

The HERberge

The boarding house for girls dating from the 1960s was completely refurbished and extended by means of a new volume including a staircase. Each of the five floors has residential communities of between 25 and 27 people who share kitchens and sanitary facilities. Taking into account the addition of four-bed rooms, some of which have balconies, the building offers home to 131 people.
The construction costs were borne by the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in the Province of Innsbruck and should be refinanced in the long term by the rental income from Tiroler Sozialen Dienste GmbH. The entire internal fitting out was realised through a special form of sponsoring. The contemporary look is a result of the wealth of second-hand furniture which the architects discovered in – and then carefully selected from - the order's own furniture store.

The Sisters of Charity

The strong historical affinity of the order which was founded in France in 1694 for both the care of the sick and education are clearly expressed on the campus of the Sisters of Charity in Innsbruck. In addition to the several educational institutions this is also home to a medical clinic. This close proximity facilitates not only synergy effects through the integration of the children of refugee families into the schools but also means that the nuns are direct neighbours of the people to whom the HERberge would like to offer protection and a sense of security.

www.barmherzige-schwestern.at

Photo: David Schreyer 2015

Communication niche on the corridor of a residential community.

EW: The furniture dates from the past thirty and forty years which means that it is in line with current fashion. We can say with a clear conscience that we cleaned furniture which was already available and scoured Innsbruck's second-hand furniture shops to find the rest. But we only took stuff that fitted and arranged everything as well as possible.

SD: If I understand correctly you organised the funding for one room after the next on a sort of snowball principle and assembled the furniture for one entire floor yourselves. But then the rest was assembled by companies?

BP: There are just the three of us and after the first floor this would have been too much. Hence, we organised the assembly work for all five floors in the form of a voluntary weekend event at the end of October. Beforehand, we coordinated the delivery of all materials. The logistics were complex: all the panels for the cupboards, benches and tables were, for example, provided very economically by a joiner. Elias then drew cutting patterns and a second joiner cut the panels to shape for the furniture so that they could then be assembled by the volunteers during the weekend event using IKEA-like diagrams.

EW: We set up an e-mail address and called for volunteers via various organisations. Three days before the planned event only five people had signed up but then, thanks to the support of both Catholic and Protestant parishes and ORF, more than 200 people turned up on the two assembly days, ranging from school classes and refugees from other homes to pensioners and many others, all fully engaged and doing whatever they could.

SD: That sounds like an extraordinary amount of coordinating work. Was it a curse or a blessing that so many people came?
BP: My partner advised us to organise everything according to a strict plan of action – and that is exactly what we did. In every area there was a clear "chain of command" and these worked very well. Apart from a few cupboards for which the panels had yet to be cut, everything was assembled during the course of this weekend.

EW: Regarding these cupboards it is important to know that they are built as both washbasins and storage spaces. Hence, their size alone means that they cannot simply be built 'on the side' in a joiner's workshop. However, we still managed to produce these in a local joinery equipped for mass production rather than buy them wholesale from abroad. If a company is commissioned to produce a certain number of items they can always use this volume to lower the price. This is how domestic companies can remain competitive.

I was astonished to see how much one can achieve as an architect through communication and commitment.

SD: It sounds as if you were carrying out a small study of regional value creation on the side?

EW: Precisely! We evaluated every option. If there was no alternative we purchased a basic model from IKEA – as was the case with the bunk beds, for example, which were sold out across Europe last summer. We obtained chairs from a retailer at cost price.

SD: Communication played a major role in your processes. Were the future users also involved?

EW: We thought a lot about how we could involve refugees, for example in the painting work. But the fact that they are not allowed to work for private companies made this difficult.

Photo: David Schreyer

Infoboard at the entrance

Photo: John Maclellife 2015

Obaida and his friend, both asylum seekers from Syria, help to carry furniture during the volunteer weekend.

BP: During the volunteer weekend ten Syrian young men spent an entire day carrying furniture. They loved this and were very happy to be working with other people.

SD: How is your project viewed by those in power? There is intense political discussion about the extent to which the involvement of civil society enables those in power to escape their responsibility.

BP: In Tyrol, no politician wanted to concretely raise the refugee issue before the local elections which took place a fortnight ago. Now, however, we are in contact with the Provincial Minister for Social Affairs. She is very impressed and can see that something very special has happened here. In general, however, the courage to take risks is lacking. The straightjacket remains very tight. Our HERberge is repeatedly described as luxury accommodation and I have heard this so often that I am quite prepared to say, "yes, our accommodation is, indeed, luxury accommodation," because so many people became involved. But that was the only luxury.

SD: People moved in in autumn. How have they taken to it? Have your concepts worked?

BP: The furniture in the resident's rooms is new but in the communal rooms it is second-hand. This helps to avoid the sense of entering a completely new building. This communal furniture radiates atmosphere and life. Since the beginning of November this has been home to 130 people from nine different nations who didn't know each other previously and, partly, still don't know each other. And yet they live together here more-or-less free of any conflict – give or take the usual everyday disputes arising from such things as an uncleaned stove. I am often in the building. A Circle of Friends has emerged out of all the people involved in the building project and we also belong to this.

SD: And what exactly does this Circle of Friends do?

BP: It accompanies a range of projects. The building is operated by Tiroler Soziale Dienste GmbH and two people are there every day. The first is responsible for administration and bookkeeping and the second for supporting all 130 residents. This obviously means that they don't have the time to organise activities which go far beyond managing the building and this is where the Circle of Friends takes over.
Ute Greiter, who is already almost doing this as a half-day job is in the building every afternoon. She has an excellent network and organises everything: from handicraft courses to buddies for the residents. She has already found people to accompany half of them in solving everyday problems or supporting them if they are pregnant or have small children – always taking careful account of professions and nationality. She is also responsible for creating the 'clothes bank', a small shop which is run by the nuns themselves.
SD: Are the residents also involved in the education available on the campus?

EW: Yes, the children go to school and the number of events is steadily increasing. The director of the training college for kindergarten teachers had the good idea that the pupils of the college could do some of their practical afternoon training with the children in the HERberge. Many were initially sceptical but, after six months, we can happily say that we have had no incidents of any sort – aside from one neighbour who officially complained about the lights burning all night in the communal areas.

SD: What has most surprised you about the way in which the residents have taken over the building?

BP: We thought that three-bed rooms would be regarded as luxurious. However, in talking to residents I have learnt how much they long for calm and privacy. They use every space in the search for the chance to be alone. Given the opportunity to extend the building we would create such spaces – even if they were tiny. Now that it is spring they can find their peace and quiet outside but in winter they were mostly only in the building.
I also notice the extent to which the women support each other. This works very well when they are alone in the communal rooms but when I, for example, arrive accompanied by men they gather their things together and leave. Many are traumatised and afraid. The nuns would like to build a separate wing for these women in order to allow them to return to communal life with men on their own terms. In the bathroom areas we foresightedly created spacious shower cubicles in order to ensure that people can enter the shower and undress, wash and get dressed again without the danger of eye contact of any sort.

SD: But there were of course some things that you couldn't anticipate. Which processes cost you most energy and which experiences did you find most valuable?

EW: Certain decisions are taken very quickly as soon as one considers the cost.

BP: Our longest discussions concerned the use of colour. We wanted to use colours to create a rich atmosphere but were limited in choice due to the fact that these were donated by a paint manufacturer. This led to daily debates about colour samples.

EW: One experience that we would like to continue in our work is the idea of always thinking about how to realise things in an uncomplicated way.

BP: I was astonished to see how much one can achieve as an architect through communication and commitment. By demonstrating possibilities we triggered processes which are still underway. It is wonderful to see the extent to which one can shape society with one's actions if one really thinks about all the processes which can be covered by organisations such as the Circle of Friends.

The renovated and new façades of HERberge on Sennstraße

SD: How has the HERberge affected the neighbours and the surrounding area?

BP: When the residents moved in, many nuns compared the effect with that of an advent calendar. Earlier there was an empty building which was always dark and now the lights are on and they are happy. The hundred, mostly older women now have 130 close neighbours. I get the impression that the wider neighbourhood is also waking from its slumbers. Previously, this was a protected, somewhat posh residential district. The campus, whose schools are its only real source of life, is hidden behind the convent walls. Thanks to the HERberge, however, we now get requests from cultural initiatives: The Innsbruck Festival for Early Music is setting up a theatre truck and Rainer Prohaska, who operates a mobile teahouse at various locations across the city, is also coming to visit. And the final event of the Tyrol Architecture Days will also take place here.

We can never take a tour of the building without being invited to tea.

SD: How have the leadership of the order and the city authorities reacted to this?

BP: Very well. Indeed, the leadership of the order requested an extension. In place of the garden which is currently hidden behind a high wall we are designing a building with a basement and a sunken atrium which will make these basement rooms both usable and relatively private. Discussions about financing have already started. The idea is to accommodate forty more people in large rooms on two floors but, even more important to us, there should also be a large communal room – a living room for the city – which will be located on the street and make it easier to communicate with the public. We are very aware of the need of people to show their hospitality. We can never take a tour of the building without being invited to tea. This is why we are thinking of setting up some sort of restaurant which will be run by the residents.

SD: The HERberge as a trigger for urban development?

BP: An old building used to occupy this site. Now the façade is not dilapidated and the building is playfully revealing the notion of living. That is important for the immediate neighbourhood

STUDiO LOiS

Although Barbara Poberschnigg, Elias Walch and Christian Hammerl have only been operating under the STUDiO LOiS label in Innsbruck since 2015, they have been working together since 2012.
Amongst the projects realised by the engaged team are the construction of the cultural centre and refurbishment of the Altes Widum in Ischgl, which led to their nomination for the Mies van der Rohe Award in 2015, and such exotic projects as the Fansipan ropeway station on Vietnam's highest peak which is currently under construction.
Barbara Poberschnigg has been connected with the Sisters of Charity for many years. She was, for example, involved in the rebuilding of their mother house in Innsbruck where the high average age of the nuns necessitated the integration of a care home into the convent buildings. Uninterested in producing architecture for its own sake, STUDiO LOiS strives to react to social and cultural change by the simplest possible means and to produce buildings which, in addition to the necessary functionality, offer atmospheric and emotional added value.

www.studiolois.io

URBAN EQUALITY

The movement of refugees towards Europe provides the background to the intensification of a bitter and long-brewing debate about such issues as the use and distribution of spatial and other resources.

A conversation with the architect Gabu Heindl about vacancy rates, the socio-political implications of the notion of "accessibility" and participation as a strategy of distraction.

Interview: Christian Muhr, March 3rd 2016
Photo: Alejandra Loreto

With such symptoms as a steady influx of new residents, a high proportion of the population with an immigration background, an intensified cultural reuse of abandoned craft and industrial premises, high vacancy rates and rising property prices and rental levels, the once typical industrial and working-class district of Ottakring is one of those areas of Vienna where the central mechanisms of the city's transformation of the past two decades can be seen with particular clarity. Ottakring is considered a model of the "gentle urban regeneration" which took hold in Vienna in the 1970s and which employs public resources to support private refurbishment measures with the objective of improving residential quality. As a result of these improvements, many of the immigrants or, as they were earlier known, 'guest workers' who came to Vienna and settled in Ottakring have lost their previously inexpensive accommodation while the area's long-established working class population has increasingly chosen to move outside the city. Today, Ottakring is, not uncontroversially, regarded as a model of "gentle gentrification".

As an architect who sees her own discipline not as an uncritical service but very much as a socio-critical activity, Gabu Heindl uses her various architectural and research projects as opportunities to intensively address economic, social and political relationships and the effects of these on architecture and urban planning.

Gabu Heindl is currently engaged with the platform "Raum4Refugees", which offers free design and consultancy services to municipalities and associations which would like to accommodate and support refugees.

www.raum4refugees.at

In addition to this she is involved as an architect in a conversion project in Ottakring which is being developed according to the principles of solidarity, inclusion and emancipation and in which people who have fled to Vienna are also participating.

CM: You are one of the 41 experts who have already offered to get involved in the "Raum4Refugees" initiative. What exactly do you do as part of this platform?

GH: The initiative is an interdisciplinary pool of planners, architects and landscape architects who have experience in participative processes and cooperative project development. These fields are extremely important when we are considering how to create affordable living space, not only for refugees. The creation of such living space is not just a question of building a minimal number of square metres on the edge of a city or community and should be understood – and approached - as a complex architectural and socio-political task. This initiative emerged from a course of lectures entitled "Ethics in Land Use Planning" to which I have been contributing as an architect for the past two years. It is a forum where architects and land use and urban planners come together. We asked ourselves whether we, as architects and planners (beyond going to railway stations or emergency shelters in order, for example, to help with the cooking) had opportunities to help by concretely offering our professional experience – whether in the form of general consultancy or by supporting specific projects. We wanted to offer assistance in processes where such expert support is required at the very beginning.

CM: Can you give me a concrete example of the sort of "assistance" that you are offering and providing?

GH: I represented this initiative at the first Mayors' Meeting in Wieselburg which was convened by the Association of Municipal Authorities and Forum Alpbach together with "Österreich hilft" in January 2016. There, 80–100 mayors gathered to exchange opinions and advice. I was asked to contribute some thoughts on the issue of vacant properties or, more concretely, on the potential for converting empty and unused space into accommodation for refugees. There is enough such space in Austria to provide accomodation for all refugees who have come here. My objective was to show that it would be a mistake to react in panic and hastily produce cheap housing in peripheral locations and that the situation should be seen as an opportunity for two sorts of integration: not only the social integration of the new arrivals but also the strengthening of town and village centres and the fair use of existing buildings. I emphasised that the current situation should be seen against the background of housing politics in general and the wider social context.
A series of workshops enabled the mayors to investigate how to approach such a task. This is a complex question which is even difficult for urban planners to answer. For example, of course many people recognise that it is important to reactivate vacant space. However, alongside the roles of planning and motivating there is a political role here, because no one can be forced to hand over vacant space as accommodation for the homeless or others seeking somewhere to live. Vacant space doesn't just sit there but it also costs society money because it is public money which provides and maintains the entire surrounding infrastructure.

About the "Transversal Urban Building" (Intersektionales Stadthaus) in the 16th district

A late-nineteenth-century urban building in Vienna's 16th district is currently being adapted on the initiative of Vienna's "association for the removal of barriers in art, in everyday life and in our heads" to meet the varied needs of around 20 of the association's members aged between 10 and over 50. The open and mixed building community includes people with various gender identities and languages and a range of legal residency statuses.
The design process, financing, reconstruction and use are organised in line with the principles of participation, emancipation and solidarity with the objective of preventing discrimination of any sort and laying good foundations for a life which is as self-determined as it is communal.
In addition to private rooms, the building located in an inner courtyard with a garden also has rooms for working, consulting and meeting with the association or clients as well as generous communal spaces.

I believe that the role of architects and urban and land use planners is to cast light on the link between vacant space and the housing crisis and to show how we can use this vacant space and, at the same time, make a political demand for urban justice – without playing off refugees and the long-term local poor against each other.

The creation of such living space is not just a question of building a minimal number of square metres on the edge of a city or community; it should rather be understood – and approached - as a complex architectural and socio-political task.

CM: I have the impression that most of those involved in "Raum4Refugees" are white and middle-class – although I say this not judgementally but as a simple statement of fact. If we now turn to the city – which also plays a key role in "Places for People" – I ask myself if we should really leave such a multi-layered phenomenon as the city in the hands of the experts?

GH: Our group is growing constantly and is open to new members, regardless of their background. As experts, our aim is not to build entire cities. Rather, as an expert I can contribute when there is a concrete request for help in a situation which involves the creation of living space, legal requirements, federal aid for refugees or the calculation of refurbishment and rental costs, etc. But this doesn't mean that the city should be built only by experts.
An interesting example in this context is our project in Grundsteingasse where people are freeing themselves from traditional models by building a house together. This means that the role of the architect is being questioned, not through denial – as if having expertise is something negative - but through critically challenging such paternalistic labelling as "you are a refugee and I am an architect."

CM: Just to clarify: the platform is intended not for private individuals but for institutions and municipalities who would like to do something in the area of accommodating refugees?

GH: It is not that mayors are constantly beating down our door but rather that the platform enables people from a range of disciplines – and soon, hopefully, from a range of social and ethnic groups – to actively put this subject on their agenda. It cannot be that civil society must continue to empty its own coffers providing something the state is in reality obliged to provide. Just as I am opposed to the fact that voluntary helpers have to cook in emergency shelters on a self-exploitative basis over months I am also opposed to exploitation of unpaid architectural work. Having said this, however, I believe that the combination of this civil-society-based initiative and the provision of services can set the agenda. The basic question is how we – in such neoliberal times – can really push home this demand for affordable high-quality living space for all. The desperate need for accommodation for refugees demonstrates how rapidly things can be downgraded. Suddenly we are talking about tents, containers and technical means of providing minimal living space. This mass movement of refugees is a wake-up call which is telling us that we need a new politics which seriously addresses the rights of the various poverty-stricken groups in society.

CM: I have the impression that the mayors are, as a rule, extremely cooperative and engaged, despite the well-known fact that there are still many municipalities in Austria which have yet to take in a single refugee.

GH: There is lots of engagement but there are also lots of delays. Many things only happen very slowly – but some happen far too fast. We have already had an industry for quite some time offering off-the-shelf recipes for producing low-quality new buildings. The problem is that those following differentiated approaches are much less visible. The speedy erection of upgraded containers is both highly visible and fast. Instead of considering more complex approaches, such new buildings are often seen as as the only obvious solution.

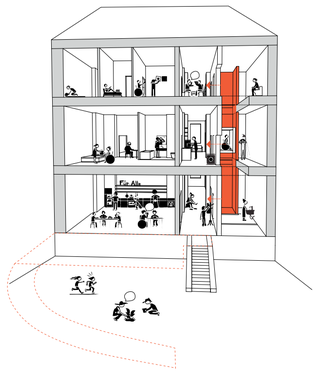
Vacant space doesn't just sit there but it also costs society money because it is public money which provides and maintains the entire surrounding infrastructure.

CM: But there are already several concepts aimed not just at refugees but also explicitly at people who already live – or are already looking for somewhere to live – in an area. In Vorarlberg, for example, the initiative "Transfer Wohnraum" by the architects Postner and Duelli addresses unused plots owned by the Catholic Church on which they are also building homes for local people.

GH: But this is about building plots rather than vacant space.

CM: Yes, that is of course true. Your project involves a 'house community' and I'm interested in both how this community is put together and how the burdens and benefits, costs and advantages are shared. In German, the term "house community" is derived from the Greek "Oikos", from which the word "Ökonomie" also developed. This means that the two were originally closely connected.

GH: The "Intersectional city house" in Grundsteingasse is not an example of emergency provision but of provision by a self-organised association called the Verein für die Barrierefreiheit in der Kunst, im Alltag, im Denken (Association for the Removal of Barriers in Art, in Everyday Life and in Our Heads). Unlike building communities, the objective of the association is not to invest in the ownership of property but to develop and, then, experience



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a new form of house and association-based community. It is an intersectional urban building in two senses. The three stories and staircase share a single, central kitchen and, rather than individual apartments, the building consists of a mixture of collectively used and private rooms. The members – and this is, along with its spatial significance, the second meaning of intersectional– come from both the queer and the refugee communities and, while not particularly affluent, have a strong sense of solidarity. After searching for a long time they found a house to rent in Grundsteingasse that the association developed together with me, as their architect. At the end they wanted to do most of the building themselves. This approach stretches back to the heart of Vienna's Settlement Movement.

CM: How did these various people find each other?

GH: These people have not only worked for years on emancipatory projects but have also themselves lived in various residential communities. Many are anti-racist, queer or artistic activists or belong to organisations involved in fighting discrimination, preventing violence or addressing gender issues. In this respect, this new form of living is naturally being developed by people who are already sensitised. They themselves call this a "project of redistribution" - and this redistribution is dynamic: sometimes one person will have to contribute more to cover the rent and other shared costs and sometimes it is someone else's turn.

We have already had an industry for quite some time offering off-the-shelf recipes for producing low-quality new buildings.

CM: Does "more" also mean more space?

GH: Sometimes more space, sometimes more money – the two are not necessarily connected. But some of these people also come from experimental communities in which rooms are also exchanged. The group consists of some people who use the stairs and some who use the lift. People ranging in ages from 6 to 60 with a range of gender identities and linguistic abilities as well as various forms of legalised residency. The fashion designer from Tajikistan with a recognised right to asylum has an atelier, the consultant who has always lived in Vienna can use a collective room for her consultations and the children share the garden with the neighbouring children. With the help of interpreters my colleague, Lisi Zeininger, and I always carried out workshops in the languages of all those present. This may have taken longer but the workshops were not complicated at all because the common objective was so clear. This issue of translation is interesting because the questions are not usually linguistic but involve understanding and deeper analysis. What do we mean by intimate space? How big should it be? How big should the kitchen or living room be? We need translation in both senses of the word.

CM: Approximately how many people are involved?

GH: The association has between 15 and 20 active members of all ages.

CM: How are decisions made? Are votes taken?

GH: Not generally – it is more about finding a consensus – and is completely uncomplicated. Everyone is treated with respect but at the same time decisions are arrived at very pragmatically. After two or three workshops the central question was how to put together the budget for rent and refurbishment. It is no coincidence that the name of the association includes the words "removing barriers" and it takes these words seriously in many ways. Although they have little money they do many things which others maybe wouldn't do such as building a lift in order to offer the members of the association who use wheelchairs access to the top floor. This is expensive – but very sustainable. On the other hand, the bathroom tiles are either second-hand or a gift. When discussion turned to sharing out the rent and the repayment of the loan the group set up a flipchart and established how much each member could afford, irrespective of the size of their private space. After half an hour they had a solution. A wonderful example of 'solidarity-economics'.

CM: The idea of a "house community" that this model interprets progressively rather than traditionally reminds me of the "Sargfabrik" in Vienna that made similarly new inroads into the areas of communal use and the financing of an apartment building two decades ago. Of course, "Grundsteingasse" has a different agenda – also because today's priorities are simply different. For example, people with a refugee background will live there. How on earth did refugees come into contact with the association in the first place?

GH: Via various mutual friendships with the members. I don't believe that this project represents a new standard for addressing the massive demand for housing. But it would be interesting to develop such a combination of top-down and bottom-up solutions further. A publicly stimulated and funded initiative which encouraged both social housing adapted to new forms of living and new, collective constructional approaches – by both building companies and users themselves – would naturally be a top-down measure designed to facilitate large-scale bottom-up building. A genuine tax on vacant buildings or living space would also generate a lot of potential for small initiatives. The key is to ensure that people gain both access and the opportunity to develop something that they can afford.

CM: The special heterogeneity of the group, as well as the principle and model of "redistribution" are characteristic of this project.

GH: 'Solidarity-economics' was applied to the payment of not only the rent but also our fee. We had already agreed that everyone working on site would be paid equally. The architect would earn the same hourly rate as the labourer and receive a guarantee that every hour would really be paid. In practice, this can be a much better solution than keeping a time sheet with a fictionally high hourly rate and then agreeing a lump sum. Even if the Chamber of Architects won't like reading this: from the point of view of an alternative economy it is quite legitimate to ask why the hourly rates of different trades vary so massively.

CM: You have said that you quite consciously went without some 'usual' things in order, amongst other things, to afford other 'unusual' ones. The refugee situation has revigorated the debate about the necessity of standards and norms. Grundsteingasse is at any rate a place where norms do not rule. Do I understand this correctly?

GH: A three-storey lift in a single, over-dimensioned apartment would be unaffordable in subsidised housing. In order to achieve this we were much more flexible with other standards. Architects have been fighting for years for the simplification of the excessive regulatory structure. Grundsteingasse doesn't need an underground garage because no one has a private car but its commitment to accessibility standards standards is high. This is a self-imposed standard that demonstrates a clear sense of priority: everyone should be able to reach – physically and figuratively – every corner of a building which is both the embodiment of and a symbol for equality of opportunity. When considering standards one must differentiate between those that emancipate, those that merely affect design or superficial appearance and those whose objective is to protect human life. For example, in the area of school design I would argue against those standards which are designed to cater for the (extremely unlikely) possibility of a huge fire but which are so restrictive in terms of the creative use of space - but this raises the dilemma of who bears responsibility if something really happens to a child.

CM: An important aspect of the "house community" in Grundsteingasse is its collective structure and communal approach. I think that there is a connection between the commitment to solidarity which underlies this approach and the increase in the number of standards and norms in society which we could describe with the motto "the less solidarity that exists, the more we seem to need standards and norms because no one is there when things go wrong." Do you see this in a similar way?

GH: This conflict is also about weighing up the extent to which certain standards impinge upon quality of life. Planning is always affected by some form of political approach and this has to be discussed. There is no such thing as a technically-optimised guaranteed best solution.

CM: The phrase "house community" already suggests that it consists of people who not only live alongside each other but also know each other, with the result that neighbours maybe even help each other from time to time if necessary.

They can keep people busy with participation for a long time while the last plots are sold.

GH: At the same time, there are many people who, in contrast, love big cities for the anonymity that they offer. In Grundsteingasse there is no obligation to be continuously in contact with 20 other people yet the notion of solidarity is still very present. I find it important that one is able to withdraw but also that one is able to meet others (that is to say, those of different social or cultural backgrounds). Indeed, I fear that we could suffer some form of cultural compartmentalisation if improved standards were to result in, for example, every apartment having a terrace. If everyone had their own terrace it would of course be wonderful but it would also encourage them to retreat within their own four walls. And in their way of thinking too, which would be less oriented to public space and the unexpected.

CM: This is hardly a danger in "Grundsteingasse". There is more of a danger that it has no place for the classic small family because such a family is not "unconventional" enough.

GH: When I first heard about the gender and patchwork structure with its wheelchair users and asylum holders it really sounded like a cliché. The community does not represent some average normality in the sense of a traditional model of society. In the best sense it demonstrates that residential building has to move beyond the dominance of the classic small family and facilitate new forms of collective living.

CM: I would also like to discuss with you the notion of public space which is very important to us, as embodied by the reference of our project title to Bernard Rudofsky's book "Streets for People". In your text "Waschküchenurbanismus" (The Urbanism of the Laundry) you argued, amongst other things, about the importance and political effectiveness of the factor of "visibility", not only with reference to the very low visibility of domestic work (which is still predominantly carried out by women) but also for all forms of social exchange. Much of the importance of public space is derived from the visibility which it not only possesses but also lends to, for example, the conflicts for which it provides the setting.

GH: In the context of public space I would like to quote the example of a demonstration in Traiskirchen in summer 2015 which remains very firmly imprinted in my memory. As the camp was at that time

completely overflowing with up to 4,000 asylum-seekers they were able to use this demonstration to raise their own voices in public with the result that this public space became unaccustomedly conflict-laden because so many voices could suddenly be heard. Even if just 400 of these 4,000 people exercise their right – which we all share – to freely express their opinion, then this is an important moment which is, naturally, not free of conflict potential. It reminds us that public space exists for precisely such moments and not as a place in which we can all behave properly and quietly or, during a major event, with an appropriate sense of the "spectacular."
In contrast, participation as a planning instrument is often used as an "appeasement strategy", a way of pacifying people by

keeping them busy. This is not to say that I am an opponent of participation processes. I simply feel that in some planning measures they distract attention from the main issue. They can keep people busy for a long time while the last plots are sold. In addition to this it is well known that participation often only truly involves one section of the population as a result of what critics today also call the "reproduction of middle-class taste." Hence, the issue here is also to prioritise. The mass movement of refugees is finally showing us on a public stage that this is a question of distribution. Every city would be well advised to ensure that the right to the city and the right to the centre are preserved. Anyone should be able to turn up in the centre of a city and find places which they regard as liveable. No city should become a homogenous and commoditised consumer-oriented space.

CM: You also developed a concept for a prominent public space in Vienna – the Danube Canal.

GH: This project that Susan Kraupp and I developed for the MA19 was for the drawing up of design and development guidelines for the Danube Canal. This project made clear the impossibility of including two million Viennese in a design process. The project required both a strong design and a clear political approach. It was important to not commercialise the area any further but, rather, to draw up a non-building plan. Such a planning approach is not participative in the sense set out above but, in my opinion, it is even more democratic because its objective is to keep space free in order to allow as many actors as possible to become involved and unplanned action to occur. Such a situation may allow for solidarity to occur - or not. Solidarity remains unforeseeable – but desirable. All that planning can do is create the space where this could still happen.

About Gabu Heindl

Gabu Heindl works as an architect involved in building, researching and writing in Vienna. The office for architecture and urban planning which she established in 2004 specialises in public cultural and social buildings and urban studies and design as well as research into work, urbanity and everyday life. Alongside kindergartens and schools, her best-known realised works include the design of the façades, foyer and bar of the Austrian Film Museum and Stadtkino in Vienna and temporary installations for the Vienna Festival while her current theoretical work addresses, amongst other things, such phenomena as Post-Fordism, neo-liberal urban development and equality-oriented design concepts. Gabu Heindl is the chairperson of the Austrian Society for Architecture, a platform for independent, critical debate about architecture and urban planning.

www.gabu-wang.at
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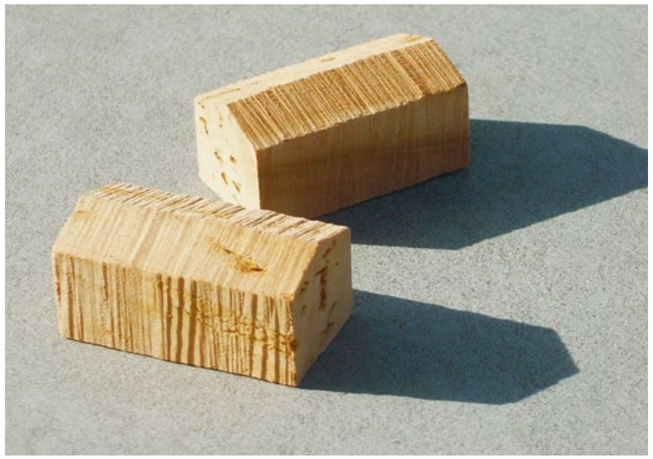
TRANSFER WOHNRAUM VORARLBERG

This powerful Alemannic name conceals not only a scaleable initiative for the accommodation and integration of refugees but also a land-use planning concept and socio-political programme, which takes into account both cultural traditions and the legal and economic context.

The architects Konrad Duelli and Andreas Postner on the emergency housing needs of refugees and local people in the West of Austria, untapped sites in municipal areas and strategies for maintaining standards in one of Europe's wealthiest regions.



Model houses from pear wood

Interview: Sabine Dreher, January 6th 2016
Photos: Kaufmann, Postner, Duelli

Austria's smallest province in terms of area has around 380,000 inhabitants of whom 6,500 are registered as seeking accommodation. The high cost of building land and the fact that up to 10,000 vacant private apartments are not available on the market are leading to an acute shortage of accommodation, particularly in the affordable price category, which is particularly affecting families and young people.

While the fast-growing conurbations in Rheintal and Walgau which border Switzerland and Germany have population densities of 353 residents per square kilometre, high levels of emigration mean that Vorarlberg's rural regions, with their average of 43 residents per square kilometre are steadily losing not only density but also their economic strength and workforces and, hence, their dynamism and diversity.

The holistic concept proposed by three architecture experts is attracting attention as a means of reinforcing the socio-economic balance between one of Austria's strongest industrial regions and these largely tourism-dominated valleys. They use an apparently succinct calculation to present a new solution for creating affordable living space in rural areas.

The key to our approach is that we are building in exactly the same way for both refugees and locals.

SD: You developed your project on your own initiative, just as we have done with our contribution. How did you start?

AP: At Christmas 2014 it was clear to us that the flows of refugees would intensify – a fact that had already been acknowledged by the UN High Commissioner but largely underestimated by politicians. We reflected upon this with a multi-disciplinary group of friends and it soon became very clear to us that it wasn't going to be possible to house refugees in private accommodation alone as had been the case during the Yugoslavian crisis. Assuming that this analysis would also interest the church, we found a ready listener in Bishop Benno Elbs of Vorarlberg. At our first meeting I explained to him that we would first have to address any prejudice amongst the population because we knew that we would only be able to realise new buildings if these were going to be accepted by the public.

Bishop understood immediately that this approach would make it clear to the locals that the refugees wanted to both work and contribute. In addition to this, giving the refugees something useful to do is central to the programme because the opportunity to be active and contribute is almost a basic human right. And this is also a clear message to the population because Vorarlberg has a time-honoured and deeply engrained tradition of self-building. The approach is, thus, both culturally coherent and comprehensible. The Bishop immediately started to search for suitable sites in his diocese.

Rendering: Design Therapy

Northern view of the plastered timber houses with street-facing carports and parking areas for bicycles.

SD: What measures did you have in mind?

AP: We were thinking of very small objects for a maximum of 25 to 30 people that could be integrated into the urban structure of villages or small towns – a typology that is already well established in Vorarlberg: sometimes in a traditional form and sometimes through the use of modern timber building techniques. While aware that refugees are not allowed to work, we felt that the future residents should be involved in the final construction phase in order to counteract the preconception that refugees arrive in a feathered nest and contribute nothing. The Bishop understood immediately that this approach would make it clear to the locals that the refugees wanted to both work and contribute. In addition to this, giving the refugees something useful to do is central to the programme because the opportunity to be active and contribute is almost a basic human right. And this is also a clear message to the population because Vorarlberg has a time-honoured and deeply engrained tradition of self-building. The approach is, thus, both culturally coherent and comprehensible. The Bishop immediately started to search for suitable sites in his diocese.

SD: What region did you have in mind?

AP: The entire province – given that the Bishop is responsible for the whole of Vorarlberg. We also gained his support for another idea which we found very important: Rather than just construct buildings we also wanted to create communal kitchen gardens because, as experts in integration confirm, this is one of the best ways in which refugees can establish new roots and come to terms with their new location. Hereupon, the diocese examined its property portfolio and identified more than 45 building plots which would be suitable for such purposes. Rather than purchase such plots our idea from the very beginning was that we should conclude 50-year leasehold agreements and that the church should waive any lease or rental payments for the first five to ten years during which the very difficult refugee situation was likely to continue.

SD: Your concept is a very long-term one?

AP: The buildings will be built for refugees and asylum seekers but can later "switch" to being communal buildings for the use of the municipality or as starter homes. After this initial use, the municipalities would be able to occupy the buildings in line with their own needs. After 50 years the buildings would revert to their original owners in line with the leasehold agreement.

SD: Who is constructing the buildings: the interior ministry, the municipalities or someone else?

AP: Several partners could provide the land: the diocese, a municipality or the province, a not-for-profit housing corporation or the Federal Government. We have focussed on the most realistic option - the diocese - but have also considered the issue of financing.

Currently, private apartments are being rented at huge logistical cost. Due to the 15A agreement between the provincial and federal governments, rental costs are divided in the proportion of 60:40. If we build our own objects we will no longer be paying money that we will never see again to private individuals but, rather, we will be using public money to create public assets for the entire community. These objects will remain as visible and usable assets which embody not only communal added value and, also, a certain win-win situation for municipalities for whom the crisis has so far been a heavy burden. However, the entire approach will only make sense if these buildings become a fixed element in the overall development of a municipality.

SD: Are municipalities in a position to deal with this?

AP: In principle we are using the same financing that would otherwise flow into private pockets. Three of the not-for-profit housing associations who have been approached by the Provincial Government are already on board. This means that the financing has effectively been resolved in the form of housing subsidies or the internal or, partially, external financing of the individual housing associations. This is one model, although others are also being discussed: such as private participation or the creation of a trust or new form of co-operative. Whatever the solution, financing is definitely feasible.

SD: What have been the greatest reservations that you have encountered?

During one meeting a young man from Vorarlberg asked us if the refugee crisis wasn't perhaps vital because it was the only way of making politicians understand the urgency of providing housing for young people.

AP: Up until mid-2015, discussion was dominated by the impoverishment scenario: "let's not do much so that fewer people come" or "let's do it badly so that fewer come." If, however, you think this through, you realise that that is a way not of solving problems but of creating a backlog of problems. Both of us have already worked in the field of development aid and are neither naïve nor social romanticists. When we first spoke with decision-makers they said that they wanted to build new settlements for 50-70 people on the edges of towns and villages. We managed to convince politicians to adopt our smaller scale approach. I think that we can regard this as a success.

SD: How did you manage to convince them?

AP: The key to our approach is that we are building in exactly the same way for both refugees and locals. This surprised the political opposition: Vorarlberg has a population of 380,000 of whom 6,500 are officially looking for accommodation. We discovered that several housing markets are competing with each other: the housing markets of asylum seekers, recognised refugees and local people. In order to address such a highly competitive situation we focussed our model equally on refugees and locals. We are building for local people as part of the same programme and in line with exactly the same requirements and the recognised refugees can automatically become part of that process because they have the same legal status. In the case of asylum seekers we will offer even more integration services as well as build at an even smaller scale in order to encourage local people to be supportive. Our assumption is that we will build two buildings for 25 people in each municipality – with a three-storey typology for small towns.

SD: In your experience are these recognised refugees already integrated into the jobs market?

AP: The question of integration into the jobs market is a very specific one. It is a great moment when refugee status is recognised but this also means that the recipient has a maximum of only four more months of federal support. And what happens then? We cannot assume that they will immediately find work and earn an income. When the support programme comes to an end people face a very tough reality. This raises a number of issues which politicians have yet to adequately address. Our building programme, on the other hand, is based on a much broader socio-political model.

Rendering: Design Therapy

South elevation: two-storey timber houses with kitchen gardens in front and the Swiss mountains behind.

SD: Which is why we are so interested in your project. Before starting to plan your buildings you addressed contract issues as well as broader economic, political and socio-cultural questions.

Timberwork detail

AP: Yes, and we are very clear about this. We are both architects - as is Hermann Kaufmann, who is also involved. We discuss everything, including all key project steps, together. The socio-political programme is essential because, otherwise, we will make no progress in the area of integration. But building measures must be designed which embody this wider programme.

SD: For politicians it seems as if this is initially just an architectural issue whereas you can make it clear that it must be holistically addressed – and that this is easier today than five years ago.

AP: Quite regardless of the current refugee situation, far too little happened in Austria for decades in the whole area of affordable housing. During one meeting a young man from Vorarlberg asked us if the refugee crisis wasn't perhaps vital because it was the only way of making politicians understand the urgency of providing housing for young people. This puts it in a nutshell: the problem already existed but now we have a decisive reason for finally being forced to discuss the issue of social housing – and to act fast.

We are, however, against lowering standards in general. This would play into the hands of interest groups who have little time for sustainable building.

SD: Architects often warn that this discussion could result in falling standards.

AP: We already have a debate over exaggerated standards in the area of building services, quite regardless of the refugee issue. Some developments go too far and simply no longer make sense. We are, however, against lowering standards in general. This would play into the hands of interest groups who have little time for sustainable building. It is very important to differentiate here and I would like to illustrate this with the concrete example of energy standards. We want to build timber buildings and design to a very good low energy standard but we don't build passive houses because we must remain focussed on the issue of direct social compatibility. Austrians sometimes find it very difficult to deal properly with passive house technology in a way that produces good results. Much more intensive training is required.

SD: What know-how is required to achieve this?

AP: Concrete know-how about switching and control. And lifestyles must adapt so that ventilation is much better controlled. Rather than switching to a higher level of technology, we want to address the issue of sustainability through small-scale integrated interventions. For example, we don't build underground garages and we reduce numbers of parking spaces because we are interested in the idea of car free settlements. We provide for parking spaces in our plots but, rather than building them all, we create extra areas of garden or lawn. Our energy concept evaluates building and mobility as a whole. This allows us to make huge strides without having to adopt every technological novelty.

KD: Of course it is not possible to achieve 40% savings with such a building. We economise by eliminating the underground garage and building smaller apartments. Two-room social housing units in Vorarlberg currently occupy 75 square metres. Such dimensions prevent one from achieving effective cost reductions.

SD: How much smaller are your apartments?

KD: Basically, we have relatively small units of around 50 square metres. We could, however, build both larger and smaller ones.

AP: Demand for housing among the people of Vorarlberg is currently so high that everything that is built is immediately snapped up – regardless of size. This highlights the explosiveness of the entire situation. Young people – alone or as couples - often just want a small, affordable apartment. At the same time we have to ensure that recognised refugees with children have access to apartments with room for five people. We have reacted to this situation by creating simple typologies with a basic area of 50 square metres and variants ranging from 35 to 110 square metres. In order to build economically, we pay special attention to three aspects: the unit size, the energy concept in relationship with mobility and, thirdly, the final constructional standard. The leasehold model also helps, not least as a counterweight against land speculation.

Hermann Kaufmann, Andreas Postner, Konrad Duelli

SD: Your basic assumption is based on the temporary use of land and yet the buildings themselves are built for the long term rather than being temporary?

AP: No, we don't think that that would make sense either. We don't want to build emergency architecture. Why should we react to such a situation by suddenly rejecting everything that we have worked on for so long in the areas of land-use planning, architectural theory and urban development? This is our principle criticism of politicians. Austria has at least seven faculties or schools of architecture which deal with the subject of land-use planning as well as countless universities and universities of applied sciences which address social and communal questions. But then the politicians come along and only think about emergency architecture and ignore the whole complex issue by simply acting as a major investor and realising problematic projects such as container villages. Whether these are wooden or metal, we find the approach not only bizarre but also damaging for the overall development of the country.

We don't want to build emergency architecture. Why should we react to such a situation by suddenly rejecting everything that we have worked on for so long in the areas of land-use planning, architectural theory and urban development?

SD: We agree. There are some initiatives which stand out for the richness of their ideas or their increased level of innovation. That is what drew us to your broad approach. From your point of view, what has been the most striking result of your intervention?

AP: We were, for example, very surprised by the number of sites that the church offered to us. One mayor compared this to a piece of cheese: The holes are the vacant plots in built-up areas and one can be pretty sure that these belong to the church. These mayors are delighted to see the church becoming involved because it means that plots in built-up areas which have been empty for years can finally be developed. These small plots, which often measure no more than 2,000 square metres, will enable us to carry out some very positive densification.

SD: You keep emphasising that what you have actually developed is a programme. But programmes have a tendency to become inflexibly universal models. Is there not a risk that the end result will carry only your signature?

AP: We are not talking here about an architectural task that we think we have to solve on our own. This has nothing to do with self-fulfilment. Quite the opposite. This is why we have very consciously neither created a website nor presented ourselves as a company. We have developed an idea for a programme which interested colleagues can make use of at any time in order to adapt it specifically for any Austrian municipality.

CM: Have you opted for a timber-building variant which can be realised at an industrial scale?

SD: Large-scale industrial timber-building concepts require huge areas in order to be viable. In Vorarlberg, however, suppliers of industrial timber-building technology have long adapted their concepts to a smaller scale. It is important to us to use panel-based or modular timber-building systems because these are mastered by every carpenter in Vorarlberg. The province has 50-70 excellent timber-building companies. We didn't want to develop a programme which could only be implemented by a couple of industrial-scale builders while the local carpenters looked on. That would contradict the integrative approach because integration and inclusion require the support and participation of all local people. This regional added value – from forest to sawmill and then builder – is central for us. Politicians have only come to understand this over time.
SD: Do you already know when you will celebrate the first ground-breaking ceremony?

AP: Having presented our model to the Provincial Government towards the end of summer 2015 we are now extremely impatient. The concrete design process in several municipalities is already underway. The status of the leasehold contracts is currently being checked in order to satisfy parishes, the diocese and the housing associations. As soon as agreement is reached we will make our first planning application.

SD: Approximately how many projects do you envisage?

AP: We suggested to politicians that we should start with not one but four or five pilot projects simultaneously - for a number of reasons. One of these is to protect people while reducing the risk of municipalities coming under increased socio-psychological pressure.

SD: You fear such problems even in the case of such small units?

AP: If we start in several places simultaneously any such pressure will simply be spread out. And, in addition to this, we want to study the building and communication processes scientifically in order to learn as much from them as possible.

KD: One has to assume that there will be delays in some municipalities. But if we succeed in clarifying everything with the neighbours in advance, things should happen very quickly. At the same time, however, even after a year of working voluntarily we don't want to awaken any false hopes.

About "two buildings for each municipality"

"The Austrian Association of Municipalities represents the 70% of the Austrian population which lives in 2,180 municipalities. An average of 2,800 people lives in each municipality. With two buildings, each with 15 people, we can create living space for 30 people x 2,180 municipalities or 65,400 people. 70% of the 90,000 refugees in Austria represent a total 63,000 people. This would solve the accommodation problem."
In cooperation with "Wohnbau"-Selbsthilfe Vorarlberg the first projects will be realized in Meiningen, Rankweil, Feldkirch-Altenstadt und Götzis.

About the Initiators

Together with other fellow-thinkers, the three colleagues and architecture experts Konrad Duelli (*1961), Hermann Kaufmann (*1955) and Andreas Postner (*1956) established the initiative Transfer Wohnraum Vorarlberg as a result of private conversations. While Hermann Kaufmann has developed an international reputation as a specialist constructor and teacher in the field of timber building, the self-employed architects Konrad Duelli and Andreas Postner share a commitment to and experience in the areas of migration and development aid. In addition to this, Postner works across national barriers in the areas of energy, land-use planning, transport and environment as a founding member of the NGO Transform Alpenrhein/Bodensee.

DISPLACED. SPACE FOR CHANGE

A conversation with the Red Cross employees and managers of the facility Martina Burtscher and Eliane Ettmüller, the university teachers and initiators of the project "Displaced" Karin Harather and Renate Stuefer and members of the core project team of "Displaced. Space for Change", the students Rupert Gruber, Julia Menz and Maria Myskiw, about "opportunities that urgently require space."

"Security for all those involved" is a key aspect of taking in and integrating refugees. In the former provincial financial headquarters in Wien Mitte an interdisciplinary team has demonstrated how thousands of people with a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be accommodated without conflict despite difficult circumstances. On May 1st, 2016 the project was awarded the "Sozial Marie", the Austrian prize for social innovation.

Women create one of the communal areas. The ornaments were jointly designed in workshops and the students transformed these into lasercut stencils used for wall and tile paintings.

Interview: Sabine Dreher, April 18th 2016
Photos: Displaced

On 15th September 2015 a vacant 30,000 m² office building in a central location in Wien Mitte was jointly handed over by the Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft (BIG) and the University of Applied Arts to the Red Cross as temporary accommodation for refugees. Within a few hours the space had been filled with camp beds by disaster relief specialists so that a daily total of up to 1,250 refugees in transit could be given something to eat and a place to sleep. A few weeks later the temporary shelter was reclassified as longer-term refugee accommodation without, however, the building being granted official status as primary care accommodation or equipped to meet the related minimum standards.

At the same time, the "Urbanize" cultural festival was taking place in the same building with the participation of teachers and students of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning of Vienna University of Technology amongst many other creative project-teams. The project group "Displaced. Space for Change" spontaneously investigated the possibility of working with the Operational Directors of the Red Cross with whom they formed a type of "open alliance". Together with other initiatives, the participants succeeded in using the "art of cooperation" to implement improvements in the spatial and social qualities of the building on behalf of its residents. The trust built up between the aid organisations and this cultural approach led to numerous projects of cooperation and a broad range of activities and, not least, generated a wealth of interpersonal experiences and relationships between all those involved.

The foreseeable closure of the shelter at the end of May 2016 provides a perfect example of a common question. How can the expertise and successful models produced during these few months be bundled, redeployed for the benefit of all those involved and transferred to other locations?

SD: I would first like to hear how this initiative came about from the student point of view.

Integration occurs when people are involved in a self-evident daily routine within a wider cultural context.

Maria: We visited the building in the context of a course run by Karin Harather and Renate Stuefer during the Urbanize Festival. The task then was to create spaces for learning for young refugees and we were working in mixed teams with PROSA pupils developing various approaches to the question. Our group decided to work directly in the building and to try using small-scale interventions to create a certain quality. At this point we had neither money nor any other resources. The workshop lasted a week and ended with six different "table talks" at which we exchanged ideas about the subject with a range of experts and interested people. Our group had already decided to continue working rather than stopping at this stage. Martina Burtscher from the Red Cross who managed the building and had supported our efforts from the beginning endorsed our idea of staying in the building after the end of the Urbanize Festival and provided space for our ongoing work.
It was important to be in situ and experience the processes in the building at first hand. It became very clear to us that we had to work on the creation of communal facilities because there were 1,250 people in the building and it would have been impossible to do something for individuals without fostering inequality.

Planning the provision of shower containers

The Kulturcafé with its wide range of cultural activities has become the heart of the house

SD: Had this course already been planned long in advance?

RS: Our research and teaching work primarily addresses the areas of "Architecture and Education". It was while preparing a teaching project on the subject of "New places for learning" that we contacted the organisation PROSA. Young refugees who are above compulsory school age have no access to public education in Austria. We arranged to teach the initial workshop during the Urbanize Festival. At that point, the building in Vordere Zollamtsstraße in which it was planned to hold the festival was still vacant. Then, just before the festival began, the location was transformed overnight into an emergency shelter for more than 1,000 people.

KH: The private organisation PROSA – Projekt Schule für Alle! was founded in 2012 and has a three-pillar model consisting of: school-based education, although the examinations must be organised externally, social work, in order to absorb the young people and networking with the neighbourhood. This offer is very well accepted and PROSA is constantly searching for new opportunities and, in doing so, consciously tries to avoid hiding away in rooms in basements.
We had already prepared our submission for the Urbanize Festival together with colleagues from the area of "urban culture and public space" who also planned to address the refugee issue in the winter semester. Under the Urbanize mottos "Do it together" and "Cooperative playground" we wanted to run an open seminar with interdisciplinary teams from three areas in an intensive week right at the start of term. The ground floor rooms of Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7 had been named as the festival headquarters six months earlier. As we toured the building in mid-September we were surprised that such a large building in the heart of the city was vacant at a time when tented camps were being set up all over the place. Shortly after our visit we read in the media that "The University of Applied Arts is providing sleeping space for 1,000 refugees." We asked ourselves where they had found so much space and learnt shortly afterwards that this was in Vordere Zollamtsstraße – in precisely the building in which the Urbanize Festival was scheduled to take place.

RS: Then everything happened very quickly. The BIG informed the Festival Director Elke Rauth that the building was being handed over to the Red Cross. She went there personally that evening and opened up the building, thinking that otherwise one would probably have had to break in.
Naturally there was a moment in which one wondered whether it was at all politically correct for the festival to occupy space that people perhaps needed much more urgently in order to have somewhere to sleep.

SD: So the building was handed over very quickly. How did you at the Red Cross experience this from your perspective?

MB: The key was taken over by a volunteer from the Disaster Relief Service together with a volunteer from the Carinthian Red Cross who spent that night checking the water pipes and sanitary facilities. Then, hundreds of camp beds were assembled and set up in the partly very dusty and completely empty spaces. One had no idea how the building was organised and how many floors and rooms there were. Between mid and late September the building was managed exclusively by volunteers until the Red Cross understood that it would not be possible to create continuity without the use of specialists.

SD: At what rate did the people arrive? All at once or progressively?

MB: We were initially an emergency shelter for refugees in transit. There was huge fluctuation. Buses would often arrive unannounced at night. Entire trams would stop in front of the building. The volunteers had placards carrying the words "Germany" and the refugees wanted to carry on to the Central Station from where the trains to Germany departed. Everything was coordinated by disaster relief specialists but the information was unreliable: we once heard that "500 people will arrive in two hours and 750 in three hours," but they only arrived after five hours and the numbers were also wrong. We were constantly racing to have vacant beds ready for the next arrivals. Volunteers did the cleaning. I took over the building from volunteer helpers on 29th September.

SD: Who were these volunteers and who coordinated them?

MB: At the beginning they were a mix of volunteers from the Red Cross with experience of crisis situations and medics and officials from the Disaster Relief Service who took over the supervision of the shifts. There was no security, no cleaning personnel, no computer, nothing.

SD: Quite by coincidence, specialists from completely different areas suddenly arrived in the midst of this extreme situation in which up to a thousand people a day were arriving while just as many were leaving again. The disaster relief helpers on one side overseeing the rollout of camp beds and the architecture experts on the other with their special interest in the cultural and social aspects of spatial design. How did you find common ground in this operative work?

MB: Right on the first day. I found out about the job on 28th September and began my work on the 29th, without the slightest idea about what I was going to have to face. A second manager cancelled at the last minute – but a month later I was fortunate enough to persuade my colleague Eliane to come with her husband and child from Switzerland to Vienna to work with me. It wouldn't have been possible alone.

EE: Martina rang to tell us that she was in a very difficult situation and needed help. We had known each other since 2013 when we had worked together in a prison in Jordan for the International Committee of the Red Cross. In such extreme situations one grows close. Martina was in the worst places that the Red Cross can send you – in Iraq and Libya. After my assignment in Jordan I was in Geneva. My partner had just arrived back from Afghanistan and, after brief consideration, we moved to Vienna.

SD: What were the conditions like here in comparison with the international arenas where you have already worked?

The focus of the discussion is always money and never the long-term damage caused by a lack of human respect.

EE: In comparison with the Vienna Committee, the International Committee of the Red Cross has more money, more people and more structure. We knew how one can work in an extreme crisis situation and that it is essential to create clear structures. Martina had experience of Zaatari, the largest refugee camp on the border between Jordan and Syria where I was also able to repeatedly accompany her. We were familiar with the set-up and the problems and this was an opportunity to use our experience for the first time in a position of leadership, although the payment is comparable with expenses. We were interested in creating a structure here and were happy to have partners from the fields of art and architecture from the neighbouring universities because this would make it possible for us to offer the arriving refugees positive qualities that we as crisis managers could have perhaps overlooked.

Library with a mixture of furniture produced in the communal workshop, found objects and donations

MB: There are structures for which we are responsible such as logistics, administration, maintenance and the management of security, volunteers and personnel that one can use at a certain scale in every crisis region but there are other aspects which have to be individually developed for each context.

KH: In this connection it is important to mention that, as soon as the Festival ended in the first week of October, the camp was restructured from a pure transit shelter into buffer accommodation. It was good news for us that the people were going to stay longer because we were able to deal with this better. In the emergency care situation the people sometimes didn't even know what country they were in and simply wanted to keep going. Now we had the opportunity to develop contact with them.

MB: You cannot communicate with people who are over-tired and only want to keep going by giving them a two-sided set of rules to read. In such situations, symbols are much more effective than little luminous posters with messages like 'Don't smoke in the rooms! Throw the rubbish in the bins provided! This is the way out!'

RS: At the beginning the building was very full. Martina was permanently working but, thankfully, she tried from the very start to find time to talk with us.

MB: I was interested in you from the start and knew that your approach is very valuable for the project.

RS: Because we have an architectural background and are very inquisitive we had explored every corner of the building and discovered that there was a cafeteria on the fifth floor. At that time, when the people were simply coming and going all the time it naturally made sense to distribute food close to the entrance. However, as they started to stay longer and the weather got colder this solution was no longer acceptable. We were able to tell Martina that there was a cafeteria. She hadn't penetrated the building that far because she simply didn't have the time to look at everything so closely. We relocated the serving of food to the fifth floor and created a ground floor café.

MB: All I did was run along corridors and check rooms. Our team had to do everything. Three people were responsible for keeping the entire building clean and safe: 30,000 square metres per day.

RS: While we brought the luxury of time and another way of looking at things.

SD: How did you students perceive the difference between conceptual design work and the practical challenge of having to react to conditions very quickly?

Rupert: It was exciting suddenly being thrown in somewhere and being able to act immediately – something that we weren't used to from university. At the beginning there were ten of us. As there was nothing here apart from empty rooms and as it was difficult to find anyone to talk to we were responsible for everything and had to organise it all ourselves with the energetic help of our two teachers.

SD: What criteria did you use to establish priorities and decide what you should do?

Maria: In the first weeks we tried small interventions. For example, we hung up hooks and painted walls in order to make everything look a little friendlier. We worked a lot with fabric at that time because we didn't know that this wasn't allowed and so sadly had to remove it all later due to fire safety. But after we had decided to stay longer on site, our focus shifted. Our time horizon was then the end of December and later it slipped completely into the background.

KH: We had the information that the contract for the temporary use ran until 31st May 2016 but hoped that ,by setting up a strong impact for open-minded future solutions, our efforts could be carried on – even elsewhere.

SD: Can we briefly talk about the concrete measures that you were able to implement during these months?

Rupert: Right at the start there was an urgent need for a meeting room for all volunteers who didn't directly belong to the Red Cross but simply wanted to make a cultural or artistic contribution. This made us the contact point for the "Displaced" project and the café became an important meeting point. In parallel with this we established workshops. By the end of November we already had an impressive range of both materials and tools which we had organised via Facebook and with the help of the institute and our own appeal for donations.

Julia: After establishing the café and the workshops we immediately turned to the sanitary facilities. The building had previously been used as offices and there was just one shower for a thousand people.
As we weren't allowed to drill holes in any walls, the showers couldn't be installed inside the building and it was determined that shower containers would have to be positioned outside.
We became involved and ensured that these weren't merely squeezed together as tightly as possible on the car park but configured in a way that ensured at least a modicum of space and privacy. In drawing up the plans we worked closely together with the representatives of the Red Cross before approaching the BIG and then obtaining all the necessary permits.

SD: How many showers are there in the containers?

JM: There are seven containers, each of which contains five showers, separated into areas for men and women.

EE: Our experience of the camp in Jordan, where many women were raped in the sanitary area, told us that this can pose a security problem. For this reason we didn't only separate the showers spatially but also ensured that they were used at different times: by men in the morning and by women and children in the afternoon. As it is dark early in winter we also ensured that there was adequate lighting and that the entrance area was permanently controlled by security personnel.

SD: Were there any violent incidents?

MB: From time to time there was tension in the building but in the case of the showers – touchwood – everything has gone well.

SD: Let us turn to the workshop that you equipped. Is it only used by students or are residents also integrated into the working process?

Rupert: At the moment it is run as an open workshop. We are in the building four days a week from 10:00-16:00 when we oversee the workshop and build things together with the people. Residents can also build small items of furniture for themselves and we exchange expertise. There are, for example, kitchen makers from Iran, who are very valuable for us.

KH: In the summer semester the course has focussed on the communal workshop. During the winter semester the key learning points turned out to relate to such necessary processes as working in networks, organisation and creating structures. The great thing about such a practice-related course is that everyone in the team can bring in their own special abilities. In order to move things forward one really has to stand up and fight. There were euphoric moments but also moments of failure when something didn't work at all.

Maria: We knew that we wouldn't be able to push our ideas through if we weren't there permanently as a result of which we all overreached ourselves a little. Some gave up but others joined the process from outside. Without them there is much that we wouldn't have achieved.

SD: From architecture one knows that processes can drag on for a long time despite being well planned. In this exceptional situation there was a certain easing of regulations by the authorities coupled with pressure to implement certain measures quickly. But the issue of design unavoidably slows down some creative processes at least temporarily.

We are not simply a bunch of people who want to help somewhere but professional players who have found each other thanks to a stroke of good fortune.

MB: In all longer term camps in the field I have experienced that people are very creative. Reduced to a camp bed and a tin of fish a day they lose their humanity and become numbers. Nobody wants to live like that. If one can also offer some sort of cooperation then these are the first steps in the direction of integration. Then one is offering more than just a camp. It is a little bit of home. If the people know that Maria is coming on Monday, Julia on Wednesday and Rupert on Thursday to build a birdhouse with them it is much easier to make contact. If we just give them food, a shower and a camp bed they don't have any reason to talk with us because we are telling them that we don't see them as fully-fledged human beings and don't work with them.

Maria: At the end of the "urbanize-week", we wanted to demonstrate the living situation in the building, and did so at the "Displaced. Table of Plenty". We set up a camp bed with a blanket and, next to it, placed a roll of bread and a tin of fish. In an emergency situation this provision is the first step but it is far from being a place to live.

SD: There are conditions in which this temporary situation could also be an inspiring phase for those involved. What initiatives did you develop to offer people experiences that they otherwise wouldn't be able to have, such as seeing the city or establishing social contact?

RS: Communal life in this building was only possible because we didn't lump everybody together from the start and say "you all have to be the same". We were very successful here in enabling different people with different qualities and abilities to contribute precisely that which makes them special. Whether this is someone from the neighbourhood or from the building itself, from the university or from the Red Cross is utterly irrelevant. This is a network in which everyone can work – and from which anyone can benefit . This is what makes the whole thing so valuable.

KH: We are currently composing a letter to the responsible authorities because we don't want everything that we developed here together in such an exemplary way to simply get lost when the building is closed. Here, the Urbanize Festival provided an artistic-creative impulse which led to something with a very different spirit. Just 30 in January. This was only possible because we insisted upon this in cooperation with the educational authorities. 50 children who arrived later are still not attending school so they still don't speak a word of German.
A retired kindergarten teacher comes and occupies these children in a way which helps them to deal with their traumatic wartime experiences. If she wasn't doing this voluntarily there would be nobody there for these children at all. Martina and I teach these much talked-about courses about values ourselves because a common understanding is the key to security in the building for which we are responsible. Every day we bring together thirty residents and explain to them our rules for living together in their language. We both speak Arabic and Martina also speaks Farsi.

KH: The size of the building means that a lot can take place there. For many people it is a real effort to leave it. Most rooms cannot be locked and they are afraid that their place and their belongings will have disappeared when they return.

RS: For example, a music school teacher offered nine children places in a course which was, of course, extremely welcome although it caused a lot of work getting these children together, finding tram tickets for them and accompanying them to the music school. The music lessons now take place in the building, which is much simpler for everyone.

SD: Most residents have been here since October. What is the spatial situation like? Do they have places to which they can retire and find some privacy?

MB: My sister runs a hotel and I oriented myself on the same structure, albeit with a little less comfort. We have 260 rooms and ensure that every family has its own room. For security reasons there is a wing for women travelling alone and we try to accommodate all the single men on the same level, although uncontrollable factors mean that we get some mixing from time to time.

Initiated and developed by the students, the spatially structuring arrangement of the seven shower containers and the additional timber terracing offer both visual protection and places to sit.

About the Operational Directors of the Austrian Red Cross in Wien Mitte

"The Austrian Red Cross supports refugees in Austria, in countries of transit and in their home countries." Alongside its broad international engagement, employees of the Red Cross are also involved in caring for refugees in all of Austria's provinces.
The leadership of the emergency shelter in Wien Mitte was put in the hands of two professionals with international experience in trouble spots: Martina Burtscher (*1984) who, amongst other places, has already served in Libya, Iraq and Jordan, not only studied political science and international development but also speaks a total of six languages including Arabic and Farsi. Eliane Ettmüller (*1980) is an expert in Islamic and political studies and also speaks fluent Arabic and several other languages. The women met during an assignment in a jail in Jordan.

www.roteskreuz.at

feeding people and giving them a bed isn't enough. Integration occurs when people are involved in a self-evident daily routine within a wider cultural context.

EE: Take for example the question of childcare. In the Middle East children are simply allowed to run around and they are somehow taken care of by everyone. Hence, it can happen that a child gets a clip around the ear from a complete stranger because it has done something that it shouldn't have done. Because our new arrivals have come to stay we have to explain to them how children are brought up here and that such 'educational' measures are legally punishable.
The notion that everyone in Austria attends some sort of integration class and German lessons from day one is simply untrue! We had to fight to find a school for the children because we are not classified as a primary care facility. We sent 90 children to school in December and another

SD: You students have invested a disproportionally large amount of time in just one course. Was this time well invested?

Maria: We simply did what we wanted to do and what we thought was right and were strongly supported in doing so by our teachers, but there was no predefined level of commitment.

Julia: We invested a lot but also gained a lot from the experience, which is why we have decided to do exactly the same next semester.

Rupert: Friendships have developed. We have cooked together, worked together, welded together. After his asylum claim had been recognised Abdullah gave us all presents.

Maria: We have learnt an awful lot about how one gets a project like this going and establishes a presence in a building. We

have much more self-confidence and have also learnt how to use and also pass on our expertise.

SD: This developed organism is due to be broken up at the end of May and there is a threat that the processes that you have developed will be lost. How much of all this will you be able to take with you and use in other locations?

MB: This complete break-up without any sort of scenario for cushioning the blow destroys virtually everything. Most of the 30 employees have already received their notice. A few have had their contracts extended to June so that the schoolchildren can at least complete the academic year. This is a severe blow for the team which worked so hard for months for very little money. Many have families and will simply have to cope with this very difficult situation.

SD: Martina, You have a lot of international experience and have done an excellent job here and developed a lot of know-how for this special task. What happens next for you personally?

MB: I was born in Vorarlberg but cannot stay in Austria. I am married to a foreigner and the Kafkaesque process required for obtaining permission to stay from the MA35 in Vienna has become our private nightmare. The fact that, together with Eliane, I have managed the city's largest refugee accommodation doesn't help me at all. After ten years abroad I was delighted to return to Austria to do something for my country. But as my country doesn't want to do anything for me I will return abroad and move to London.

RS: During our round table discussion I was shocked to hear that the talk is never of people but of masses that have to be pushed around. The focus of the discussion is always money and never the long-term damage caused by a lack of human respect. It is unbelievable how careless we are when dealing in human resources.

SD: You are referring to the social capital generated by your cooperation?

KH: And also to the professional capital! We are not simply a bunch of people who want to help somewhere but professional players who have found each other thanks to a stroke of good fortune. From the specialists of the Red Cross and the experts from the universities to the kindergarten teacher and the retired grammar school headmistress who organised and developed the German courses in the building.

MB: We succeeded in creating a functioning space. The police came to us to give us their collective thanks for our efforts because, of all the large facilities, ours was the one which easily caused them the least work.

SD: And what can we learn from that?

RS: We knew that we could only stay in this building for a limited length of time but if we had been offered another building we would have moved there together. But the responsible authorities apparently aren't interested. They prefer to stick with camp beds, tins of fish and throwaway blankets and hence, the scenario of non-integration.

MB: One often gets the impression that positive examples like this building simply aren't wanted in this country. They probably assumed that we would all fail.

SD: Well we won't do the same. One of the declared objectives of the "Places for People" initiative is to use the public platform of the Architecture Biennale to feature best practice examples so that nobody can pretend that these positive models don't exist, with the objective of ensuring that such standards for the accommodation and care of refugees can no longer be ignored - and must always be met – in the future.

About "Displaced. Space for Change"

The initiative was established by Karin Harather and Renate Stuefer in the context of a cooperative teaching project with architecture students from Vienna University of Technology (Yasmin El-Isa, Rupert Gruber, Jacinta Klein, Lilian Mandalios, Elaine Mang, Julia Menz, Stefanie Mras, Maria Myskiw, Karina Ruseva, Simon Uebleis-Lang), "with the aim of using targeted spatial interventions to create a range of qualities in buildings, in cooperation with the refugees living in those buildings, as a means of providing practice-related social and spatial models for the activation of vacant properties. The cooperative process, carried out together with many internal and external participants, should be seen as a model and a catalyst for new forms of informal learning, with and from each other."

www.displaced.at

INNOVATION AND INVOLVEMENT

While state institutions respond to the ongoing movement of refugees towards Europe with increasing levels of political populism, Caritas has long since put this and other challenges at the heart of its Agenda 2020.

A conversation with Klaus Schwertner, General Secretary of Caritas in the Diocese of Vienna, and Clemens Foschi, the coordinator of the cooperation between Caritas and "Places for People," about new, innovative approaches in the social field and the role played by comprehensive involvement.

Photo: Paul Kranzler

Bar element created by Caramel in Haus Pfeifergasse

Interview: Sabine Dreher, March 30th 2016

The room for manoeuvre for those attempting to react appropriately to extraordinary situations while respecting the letter of the law is extremely restricted, even for aid organisations like Caritas. With around 14,000 full-time employees, 40,000 volunteers and an annual budget of around 700 million euros, the aid organisation of the Catholic Church may well have the size of a large Austrian corporation but, at the same time, it is clear that the objective of charitable organisations is not to make a profit but to generate social benefits and social added value.

This objective is also made clear by a series of "social business" projects that have emerged in recent years. The term can be traced back to the economist Mohammad Yunus who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2006 for his idea of microcredit. Under the umbrella brand magdas, Caritas is currently active in the areas of hotels, restaurants, recycling, trade and facility management with the objective of also solving social problems with commercially successful and sustainable approaches. The objective of all the projects is to offer work to people who have difficulty gaining a foothold on the jobs market.

Caritas is one of the most active players in the area of helping refugees. This is another reason why the "Places for People" initiative contacted Caritas when looking for cooperation partners and operators. After a series of conversations, the cooperation which was essential to the development and implementation of the project was fixed in autumn 2015.

During a period of several months, representatives of Caritas and others met regularly with the architecture teams for working sessions in which they exchanged ideas, checked the feasibility of these ideas and determined the measures required for their implementation.

SD: In 2014 there were 25,000 asylum applications in Austria and in 2015 90,000 people arrived in the country in order to apply for asylum. How has this impacted on the work of Caritas in Austria?

KS: These are, quite literally, moving times. But they are also times in which we can and should move things ourselves. In addition to the asylum seekers we mustn't forget the several hundred thousand people who passed through Austria en route for Germany or Sweden. Of course that was and is sometimes very challenging but, at the same time, these times have shown us what we are capable of. Not just Caritas but also society in general. We are currently experiencing a true renaissance of civil society. And it is also clear that, without the engagement of many, much would simply not have been possible. And regarding the question of accommodation: here, we have learnt in the past year how difficult it is to create enough accommodation that meets legal requirements.

SD: To be more precise: In late summer 2015 the task was to create emergency shelters. The interior ministry ordered containers and camp beds were set up in sports halls.

> Integration starts the moment that someone gets their own four walls and a door that they can close behind them.

KS: At that time, Austrian politicians assumed that it would be necessary to accommodate refugees in tents. Now, after nine months during which the political situation changed and municipalities, NGOs and civil society worked together, we are in the fortunate position of being able to say that not a single tent is still standing in Austria, despite 90,000 asylum applications. Even if conditions are sometimes far from easy, at least all refugees have a proper roof over their heads. In the emergency care situation, large structures such as sports halls or office buildings were provisionally adapted in a few hours or days in order to accommodate people. Now, some of this transit accommodation which was originally only intended for stays of one or two nights has become permanent due to the lack of medium-term living space. Yet, even in those places where the exceptional circumstances make it impossible for us to meet minimum primary care standards we strive to create humane conditions. This is why the cooperation with the Architecture Biennale is also so important for us. We need creative solutions which can also be quickly and economically realised.

SD: Man often hears the phrase "better than nothing" in connection, for example, with the inflatable building in Tyrol where conditions are, apparently, very poor.

KS: We have repeatedly emphasised that having a roof over one's head isn't enough. One must distinguish between the urgent help which enabled large numbers of people to be looked after last autumn and the support of people during their asylum procedures which, in Austria, can last several months or, even, years. Here, different standards apply.

SD: What was the concrete reason for abandoning the policy of tented camps?

KS: Alongside the tents, the Initial Reception Centre in Traiskirchen was dominated by mass homelessness. Hundreds of men, women and even children had to sleep in the open – in a care facility run by the Federal Government! From our point of view the opening of the border at the beginning of September, after the humanitarian situation in Hungary and the mass denial of human rights had become unbearable, was decisive for this change of direction. In Germany and Austria it was decided to take people in and then accompany and look after them better. But legal changes also improved the situation. After the first six months, two-thirds of Austria's municipalities still hadn't taken in any refugees but that changed because of engaged, socially responsible mayors who worked with civil society to accept responsibility. And, in addition to this, the legal power of Federal Government to intervene was a warning to the provinces and municipalities. The government's message was: "Either you meet your legal obligations and provide accommodation yourselves or the Federal Government will do this for the provinces and municipalities itself."

Photo: Stefanie Steindl

Westbahnhof September 2015

SD: In 2015 Caritas looked after two refugee homes in Vienna and now there are 20.

KS: In 2015 "only" 3,500 asylum seekers were being supported by Caritas in the whole of Austria and now the figure is almost 9,000, which represent a virtual tripling of the number of beds. If you add the people we are supporting who are living in private accommodation or guesthouses you realise that we are now looking after every third asylum seeker in Austria.

SD: How does an organisation like Caritas find its clients? Who precisely registers the refugees who arrive in Austria?

KS: That has also changed since last summer. Now, rather than just the two Initial Reception Centres in Traiskirchen and Thalham, there are also so-called distribution centres in several provinces which allocate refugees to accommodation in local districts. The way it basically works is that the provinces request people from the Interior Ministry's central database and that these people are then passed on to the individual accommodation provided by supporting organisations and private landlords. In Vienna, everything is coordinated via the Vienna Social Fund and, in Lower Austria, via the responsible department. Mayors can also, naturally, make a request for a particular target group.

CF: NGOs send a sort of concept with information about the target group and type of accommodation and support, on the basis of which the refugees are allocated. The accommodation is developed together with the provinces. Spatial and support needs differ widely. Underage refugees are, for example, looked after differently from adults.

> Architects and designers must get heavily involved with social processes in order to introduce exciting inputs and fresh wind into the care of refugees.

SD: So clients are only assigned when it can be shown that their support requirements can be met.

CF: This is dealt with in various different ways. In the case of underage refugees, for example, the youth welfare services are responsible and these draw up a very precise catalogue of requirements and then check that these are being met. At the beginning of 2015, everything was still much more strongly regulated but, after the number of refugees rose so quickly, things sometimes got very confused, partly due to the increasing mixture of emergency shelters and primary care accommodation. Its experience in dealing with catastrophes means that the Red Cross has different expertise in the preparation of emergency shelters than Caritas, for whom this is a relatively new area of responsibility.

KS: We had to improvise a lot and sometimes even ignore the minimum standards which we had set for ourselves in other accommodation – and this led to a certain amount of internal debate within Caritas. How far should one go? Is failing to meet the standards still not better than homelessness? What does this mean exactly? Last year, 15,000 new volunteers approached Caritas. People who wanted to help our work with refugees. Many of these people are still involved today: in the emergency shelters they sort out clothing and other donations, receive and share out food and help, for example, in looking after children. Now we are also very active in the area of integration: organising German courses and leisure activities and supporting refugees in dealing with the authorities. The people of Vienna came to the Westbahnhof and took people to live in their homes for a couple of nights, looked after them and then brought them back to the station. This form of personal hospitality was very moving. It was also impressive to see how many companies and organisations offered office space for use as emergency accommodation, from insurance companies and banks to monasteries. Empty space was sometimes transformed into accommodation in a matter of hours and, in Vienna in particular, we managed to find enough places for refugees to sleep every night, even during those most intense days last September and October.

SD: Even if there was little time for reflection in this whole process it was clear that these people were not going to be staying for just one night. A lot of empty buildings may have been offered but they weren't all suitable for use as medium-term accommodation. What criteria did you work with?

KS: The decisive factors were things like quick availability, the level of investment required to adapt the space, the potential for longer–term use and the size and location of the property. In rural areas in particular the issue of whether the accommodation could be reached by public transport was very important. Visiting premises and checking their suitability took a lot of time.

Photo: Paul Kranzler

Improvised seating in Haus Pfeiffergasse

Photo: Johannes Kluich

Westbahnhof September 2015

CF: In the case of empty office buildings, the clarification of both basic standards and the conditions for using such buildings was sometimes done very quickly. But it also often became very quickly apparent that, as soon as it is no longer a question of providing emergency shelter but rather longer-term primary care accommodation, such additional qualities as social space, communication and employment are very important. This is the process we are involved in now and this is why the Biennale projects looking at office buildings are so fascinating because it is precisely such space that is currently most easily available.

Photo: Paul Kranzler

First cooking event in a kitchen in Haus Erdberg, April 2016

SD: What are your expectations of the cooperation with the teams of architects?

KS: With a view to integration and the longer-term perspective the ability to provide privacy plays a very significant role. This is already important in the early days of an emergency shelter. Integration starts the moment that someone gets their own four walls and a door that they can close behind them: a space into which they can retreat and find some peace. The problems that these people have experienced in their homelands and the experiences that they have had on the way here cause extraordinary stress and often mean that they are severely traumatised. In these circumstances it is extremely difficult to have to live with many people in a small space. I have known mountain huts where I have had to sleep with 20 or 30 other people in a dormitory. If just one of them snores then it's difficult to last more than one night without becoming irritable or aggressive. This is why I was so astonished to see how calm our emergency shelters with 250 people were when I was on night duty. Even with no real separation – just one camp bed after another.
The fact that it is so important for everyone to have their own four walls and some private space which they can organise as they want can be seen especially intensively in Pfeiffergasse. During one visit a family invited me into their room for tea. They wanted to be hosts – to meet me as equals rather than just being someone dependent upon help. This possibility has been created by Caramel using the simplest of methods.

SD: These prototypes required enormous commitment on the part of the architects. This was a lot more than just plug-and-play. How was this seen by Caritas?

KS: I find that it is almost a political statement if one uses architecture as a means of highlighting how little one requires in order to give people more dignity in an emergency situation. It is much more a question of 'wanting to' than 'being able to'. It is still too early for Caritas to evaluate all this properly but it is certainly a signal which should wake us up. The simple detail that each unit has a doorbell and that you therefore ask if you may enter rather than just barging in shows that one can guarantee minimal privacy even in such extreme situations.

CF: I would go back another step. Caritas has tried to work with architects in a number of situations but in the light of whatever emergency it was there was always discussion about the advisability of empowering someone else to get involved. We always needed preparation time in order to align our levels of knowledge. In order to work with architects to improve quality in certain locations we had to turn the clock back a little in order to think ideas through and then test them. This always happens and is nothing new but in emergency situations one assumes that going back a step, bringing in experts and working together to develop something new is particularly challenging. Architects and designers must get heavily involved with social processes in order to introduce exciting inputs and fresh wind into the care of refugees. Our perspective is that we could also use some elements in other locations.

KS: As well as the result itself it is certainly important to bring together the worlds of architecture and social organisation, and - above all of course – the people affected, in order to develop more mutual understanding.

> Now, the decisive task is to avoid the accommodation issue of today becoming the integration crisis of tomorrow.

SD: Caritas is an organisation with enormous responsibility. How much flexibility do you have and where are your limitations?

KS: In our Caritas 2020 strategy we worked on two main issues: innovation and involvement. In terms of both these issues, this project of cooperation is working well because it is about developing new ways of living. For us, involvement also means working with other partners to create something new while always ensuring that there is some added value for those affected – who, in this case, are asylum seekers. In the social field, developing something new is indispensable – even if not every idea will be taken further. And participation means not only involving those affected but also our employees, who are active in looking after refugees and the homeless every day and, hence, know more than most about what people really need.
In future, the issue of affordable housing will occupy us in areas other than just the refugee situation. 260,000 people in Austria can't afford to heat their homes properly in winter. Integration is directly linked with the subject of affordable housing and here we need architects again. How can affordable housing be built without creating ghettos? This is highly political and also a question of frameworks, building regulations and other requirements which should be shaped in such a way that they facilitate the provision of more accommodation which doesn't require large amounts of private capital. The people who we look after can't afford to pay either a deposit or three months' rent in advance.

SD: So how do these people get a home?

CF: No more than four months after receiving a positive asylum decision recognised refugees lose their right to primary care and have to look around on the apartment market. This discussion is now getting going. Instead of building 10,000 apartments in Vienna every year as planned, 13,000 should now be built. Of the 90,000 refugees who claimed asylum in 2015 many will also have it granted – and many of these will come to Vienna. This raises the danger of levelling down. In Germany a simpler control mechanism – the vacancy tax – is under discussions. That would be a means of providing accommodation. Integration only starts when people have their own home, find a job and are no longer dependent upon our support.

SD: There are models in which housing associations or provincial governments assume liability on behalf of tenants.

CF: Other fascinating concepts include those which promote a stronger mix of accommodation types. I know one housing association project in the 20th district in which the upper stories contain expensive apartments and the lower stories cheaper ones.

SD: One of our joint initiatives plans to accommodate students alongside refugees. According to what you have said you have experience with refugees but not with students. But you are still willing to try this?

CF: We have now decided to also organise and support the student accommodation ourselves in order to gain experience. Even in the case of VinziRast Mittendrin it has been necessary to adapt the model over time. It is becoming more difficult to find students whereas there are always enough homeless people who would love to move in. Despite this, however, the mix will be retained.

KS: As the group which, on the one hand, doesn't have a lot of money and, on the other hand, is highly mobile, students are always considered for such concepts. And, as we have often experienced – at the Westbahnhof and elsewhere - they also demonstrate readiness and commitment. Many students work voluntarily in the refugee accommodation. It would be great if one could institutionalise this readiness more strongly in the form of a voluntary social year.

SD: Perhaps, to finish, a question about the perspective for 2020. What is Caritas' scenario for the future?

KS: One focus of our work in the area of refugees is the subject of integration. Now that we have created a large amount of accommodation the challenge is to counter the growing atmosphere of polarisation. The discussion about tents and the mass homelessness were a humanitarian scandal and a disgrace for Austria. Certain people were trying to suggest that the boat was full and these images naturally created fear amongst the population. One aspect of an asylum process which is carried out in accordance with the rule of law is that no one is forced to sleep under a bridge and everyone receives primary care. Thousands of people are still living in emergency shelters and either these people must move into proper accommodation or the emergency shelters must be adapted in such a way that they meet primary care standards. We are not talking here about luxury accommodation but about very simple requirements. The issues of living space, education and the jobs market will also play key roles in the integration debate. Now, the decisive task is to avoid the accommodation issue of today becoming the integration crisis of tomorrow. It is time to set course in such a way that, in a few years' time, we don't have to look back in anger lamenting what we failed to do today.

Caritas

As well as providing emergency help for refugees, Caritas provides primary care to around 43,000 asylum seekers across Austria of whom almost 9,000 are in accommodation run by the organisation. These include more than 870 unaccompanied underage refugees. 34,000 refugees who are in either private accommodation or accommodation provided by other organisations are also cared for by Caritas. This means that Caritas currently looks after around every third asylum seeker in Austria which makes it the largest organisation in the area of primary care.
Apart from this, Caritas is also a pioneer in the area of "social business" in Austria. The newest and most prominent example of this is magdas Hotel which opened in Vienna in early 2015.
The design and development of the individual projects of "Places for People" was carried out in close cooperation with Caritas into whose capable hands they will be delivered for further support.

www.caritas.at

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Commissioner of the Austrian Pavilion

As a founder and partner of Delugan Meissl Associated Architects **Elke Delugan-Meissl**, (*1959) is one of few women playing a leading role in the, until now, strongly male-dominated Austrian architectural scene. Together with her partners, the University of Innsbruck-trained architect runs an office whose, currently, 25 employees produce a strikingly large volume of work. Although Elke Delugan-Meissl is directly involved in all of DMAA's projects, she continuously devotes some of her capacity to teaching and jury roles in Austria and abroad as a means of making an active contribution to the architectural debate and promoting the commitment to quality which runs consistently through her work.

www.dmaa.at

Co-Curators

Liquid Frontiers is a think and do tank, design studio and production office with a strong cultural background and a base in Vienna's Museumsquartier. As well as the conception of exhibitions and publications in the areas of art, design and architecture, concrete cooperative projects with architects and designers are a key focus of the work of the company which was formed in 2000 by **Sabine Dreher** (*1968) and **Christian Muhr** (*1963). Constantly interested in new creative line-ups and areas of activity, the two-person team has, over the years, assembled a network of excellent partners who can be mobilised as required by each project.

The ongoing collaboration with Delugan Meissl Associated Architects began in 2002 when Liquid Frontiers organised the first exhibition of the work of the architectural office in the Kunsthaus Meran under the title "State of Flux". Another important joint project was the 2009 book about the Porsche Museum which was published by Springer Verlag and conceived and produced by Liquid Frontiers.

www.liquidfrontiers.com

Photography

Paul Kranzler (*1979) was born in Linz, Austria and is an artist based in Austria and Leipzig, Germany where he studied Fine Art Photography at the Academy of Visual Arts.

Alongside his own work which emerges in both Europe and the US and is exhibited in galleries and museums as well as published in monographs, he carries out commissions for architects, editorial and corporate clients.

www.paulkranzler.com

Art Direction

Lettering is at the heart of the diverse activities of **grafisches Büro**, which was established in 2001 by Günter Eder and Roman Breier. Reinforced by the arrival of Marcel Neundörfer in 2006, grafisches Büro develops visual identities for both cultural and commercial clients and finds that this combination is more a source of stimulation than of conflict. A common feature of the team's work is a tendency towards radical reduction as a means of distilling and visually reinforcing essential content. In this process, lettering is used not only as a set of semantic symbols but also as a counterweight to suggestive images or even as an image in its own right which is also always imbued with an emotional dimension. The effectiveness of grafisches Büro in organising this interplay between information and atmosphere, typography and photography is exemplified by such recent projects as their work for CARITAS' "Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur" initiative and the "Theater Nestroyhof Hamakom" as well as their design of the book "by: EOOS - Design zwischen Archaik und Hightech."

The conceptual strength of the team and its ability to develop intelligent means of winning the required attention for social issues were key reasons for trusting grafisches Büro with the extensive design agenda related to "Places for People".

www.g-b.at

Spatial installation

Heimo Zobernig
www.heimozobernig.com

Landscape design

Auböck+Kárász Landscape Architects
www.auboeck-karasz.at

Exhibition design

Established by Elke Meissl and Roman Delugan in Vienna in 1993, the office practices architecture as the radicalisation of that relational logic in which it recognises the DNA of the discipline itself. In the understanding of the team, which became **DMAA Delugan Meissl Associated Architects** in 2004 upon the appointment of Dietmar Feistel and Martin Josst as partners, architecture itself is also structured like a language in which meaning is derived from the relationship between its individual elements.

In contrast with other influential architectural approaches of recent decades, DMAA is not satisfied with the mere application of this principle in the form of hermetic linguistic games but rather uses its works to establish the maximum possible number of relationships between architecture and its environment, with a focus on context and the ability to physiologically experience a building. The architectural approach of DMAA demands that conventional spatial boundaries are rejected - both inside and outside its buildings - in favour of sequential experiences with smooth transitions. Despite this emphasis on the physical presence and physiological effect of architecture the works of DMAA constantly create situations in which the immaterial becomes perceptible beyond traditional gestures of pathos. This extensive, original oeuvre, which stretches from such iconic cultural buildings as the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart, the EYE film museum in Amsterdam and the Winterfestspielhaus Erl to numerous innovative residential buildings, led to the award to DMAA of the Grand Austrian State Prize in 2015.

www.dmaa.at

Press

Art and culture are the two specialist core areas of the communications agency with the combative name which was founded in 1998. In addition to such classic services as marketing, PR, project management and fundraising, the company – which currently has ten employees and is led by the theatre expert Susanne Haider and the social scientist and economist Clemens Kopetzky – also conceives and executes its own projects. Alongside productions in such areas as theatre and the visual arts, the spectrum of work has increasingly extended in the past few years into the areas of architecture, urban planning and regional development.

art:phalanx is, for example, responsible for the content and design-based repositioning of the magazine KONstruktiv as it seeks to widen its appeal from its current readership of architects and engineers in order to reach a broader public. As it has taken the initiative to deepen its expertise in the sector of urban and regional development, art:phalanx was given responsibility for the PR and communication work for "Places for People" with the objective of maximising the level of public awareness of the aims of the project.

www.artphalanx.at

Production

Katharina Boesch, Christine Haupt-Stummer, Andreas Krištof and Viktoria Pontoni have been working together under the name **section.a** since 2001. They support artists and designers by meeting all the content-related and organisational requirements of contemporary cultural and artistic production. The output and scope of services of the team is correspondingly broad, ranging from exhibitions, publications and museum concepts to product development and consultancy services. The latest of over 160 realised projects provides a perfect example of the team's holistic way of working: section.a was responsible for the development of the masterplan and spatial programme, the accompaniment of the execution and the design of the opening exhibition of the recently opened Kunsthalle "arlberg 1800".

section.a has been responsible for the project and production management and, hence, the successful implementation of Austria's contributions to the last three Art Biennales in Venice. In the context of "Places for People," section.a is in charge of the areas of sponsorship and finance as well as the production in Venice.

www.sectiona.at

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Translation

Rupert Hebblethwaite (*1964) was born in Sheffield, England and studied at Cambridge before spending a decade working as an architect in Paris, Prague and Rio de Janeiro. For the past fifteen years he has been working in Austria as a translator, specialising in architecture and real estate, the fine arts and the charitable sector. He also provides English language coaching and has recently completed his first novel.

Website

nextroom was founded by the Swiss architect **Juerg Meister** in 1996. Today, thanks to its extensive database of buildings, images and text, nextroom has developed into a comprehensive archive of contemporary building. With 350,000 page views per month and a constantly growing community, nextroom has established itself as an important player on the architectural scene. The company "nextroom – architektur im netz" is responsible for the commercial exploitation of platforms and online applications and the development of web solutions in the architectural field.

www.nextroom.at

Authors

Kimberly Bradley, (*1967) was born in Blythe, California and studied political philosophy, German studies and art history. Since the early 1990s she has been a journalist specialising in visual culture, writing for publications including Art Review, Frieze, The New York Times, Monocle, Mark, Metropolis, the Wall Street Journal magazine and many others. She also edits monographs and books on art and architecture for institutions such as Haus der Kunst and Akademie Schloss Solitude and currently teaches contemporary art courses at New York University Berlin. After several years in Hamburg and a decade in New York, she moved to Berlin in the early 2000s and now lives and works in both Berlin and Vienna.

Anton Falkeis (*1960) is Professor for Special Topics in Architecture Design at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and uses the latest building technologies in his design practice.

Martina Frühwirth (*1972) was born in New York and grew up in Vienna where she studied landscape architecture at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences. Since 1993 she has worked freelance with the ORF, the Austrian Broadcasting Authority, creating contributions and programmes for the cultural channel Ö1 and winning numerous awards. Since 2004 she has worked at the Architekturzentrum Wien where she is responsible for documenting, publishing and communicating contemporary architecture (print and online: Architektur Archiv Austria). In 2012 she was commissioned to produce photographic work for the "Regionale XII - Festival für zeitgenössische Kunst und Kultur" (travel documentation) and she has been intensely involved with b/w photography and analogue darkroom work since 2015.

Gabriele Kaiser (*1967) is an architectural journalist and curator. She was Editor of the monthly magazine "architektur aktuell" (Springer Verlag, Vienna New York) between 1996 and 2000 and lectured at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (Institute of History and Theory of Architecture) between 2000 and 2003. Since 2010 she has lectured at the University for Art and Industrial Design (Kunstuniversität Linz). From 2002 to 2010 she was editor of the online database at the Architekturzentrum Wien and of "Hintergrund" magazine and she carried out research and editorial work for the guide "Austrian Architecture in the 20th century" (volume III/3) by Friedrich Achleitner between 2003 and 2010. Since October 2010 she has been director of the Architecture Forum Upper Austria (afo) and has written articles in catalogues and architectural magazines (with a focus on contemporary architecture). She lives and works in Vienna and Linz.

Nina Valerie Kolowratnik (*1983) is an architectural researcher, advisor on systems of spatial notation and curator. She studied architecture at Graz University of Technology and completed a master's degree in critical curatorial and conceptual practices at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, GSAPP, of Columbia University in New York. Since 2013 she has taught the seminar series Echoing Borders as an adjunct assistant professor at GSAPP and, since 2014, the design studio Fluchtraum Österreich at Vienna University of Technology. Her research addresses systems of spatial notation in the context of human rights and the movement of refugees.

Elke Krasny (*1965) is a curator, cultural theorist, urban researcher and writer. Professor of Art and Education at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna she taught at the Postgraduate Programme on Post Industrial Design at the University of Thessaly, Volos in 2016. She was City of Vienna Visiting Professor at the Vienna University of Technology in 2014, Visiting Scholar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal in 2012 and Visiting Curator at the Hong Kong Community Museum Project in 2011. She holds a Ph.D. in fine arts from the University of Reading.

She co-edited the 2012 volume Hands-On Urbanism. The Right to Green and the 2013 volume Women's:Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art.

Her recent curatorial works include On the Art of Housekeeping and Budgeting in the 21st Century, curated together with Regina Bittner at Bauhaus Dessau, Suzanne Lacy's International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought at Zurich University of the Arts in 2015, Mapping the Everyday. Neighborhood Claims for the Future at the Simon Fraser Gallery in 2011-2012 and Hands-On Urbanism 1850-2012. The Right to Green was shown at the Architecture Centre Vienna and the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Katharina Müller (*1985) is a cultural scientist and teaches media studies at the Universities of Vienna and St. Gallen (HSG). She lectures in reflection and cultural competence, film studies and media theory and her research focuses are media use and digital migration, technical sociology, actor-network theory and artistic research. Her latest monograph is "Haneke: Keine Biografie" (transcript) and she recently led the Austria Film Meeting of Digagonale'16 on the subject of "(E)Quality & Diversity".

Lutz Musner (*1954) works as a cultural scientist in Vienna. His latest relevant publications include: Der Geschmack von Wien. Kultur und Habitus einer Stadt, Frankfurt/Main 2009; Stephansdom und Stadtmuschel – zur visuellen Signatur Wiens, in: Beate Binder, Moritz Ege, Anja Schwanhäuser, Jens Wietschorke (eds); in: Orte – Situationen – Atmosphären. Kulturanalytische Schriften, Frankfurt/Main 2010; Die Kulturhauptstädte Graz und Linz – Versuch einer kritischen Bilanz, in: Ferdinand Opll, Walter Schuster (ed.), Stadtkultur – Kultur(haupt)stadt, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Städte Mitteleuropas, Band XXIII, Vienna 2012.

Johannes Pointl (*1982) is an architect and urbanist. He studied architecture at Graz University of Technology and completed a postgraduate master's degree in Architecture and Urban Design at GSAPP, Columbia University in New York. Between 2012 and 2014 he worked as a project leader in the urban design office Scape in New York and taught as an adjunct assistant professor in the design studios at GSAPP. Johannes Pointl works freelance with the architecture and urban planning office Studio Vlay in Vienna and as a university assistant in the Department for Building Theory and Design of Vienna University of Technology. His practical work focusses on the physical design of political space and the visualisation of everyday processes on the urban margins.

Elke Rauth (*1968) lives in Vienna, Austria. She is Chairwoman of dérive - Society for Urban Research, an independent and interdisciplinary platform for critical urban research. She is Managing Director and Co-curator of the annual urbanize! International Festival for Urban Explorations which aims to encourage interdisciplinary knowledge transfer, the exchange of ideas, multi-perspective thinking and collective debate on current urban issues from a socio-political point of view between urban researchers, artists and urban activists. She is an editorial board member of dérive - Magazine for Urban Research and Radio dérive. Her cultural work, writings and lectures have addressed questions of urbanity and social change since 1991. She graduated in journalism and communication sciences, political sciences and theatre studies and studied arts management as a post graduate.

www.derive.at
www.urbanize.at

Katja Schechtner (*1973), holds a dual appointment with MIT Media Lab in Boston, USA and the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, involving the creation and building of urban technology. She is also a visiting professor at the University of Applied Arts and the University of Technology in Vienna, Austria. She serves as a consultant and advisor to the EU Commission, global tech companies and start-ups and has published widely, most recently two books on Urban Data and Accountability Technologies. Together with fellow researchers, Katja received a special mention for her contribution to the Spontaneous Interventions exhibition at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2012. She has also served as a curator at Ars Electronica, the Technical Museum and Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, the Seoul Biennale for Architecture and Urbanism and VivaManila.

Anna Soucek was born in Vienna, studied history of art and has curated exhibitions as well as being a co-founder of the forum experimentelle architektur. Since 2004 she has worked with the Österreich 1 radio channel of the ORF, presenting and providing contributions to such programmes as Leporello, Kulturjournal, Diagonal, Nachtquartier and Kunstradio-Radiokunst. Her text contributions to such print publications as "Salzburger Nachrichten", "KONstruktiv" and "QUER-Magazin: Architektur und Leben im urbanen Raum" focus on the visual arts, architecture and urban design.

Partner NGOs

Caritas

The largest support organisation in the area of basic services, Caritas currently looks after every third asylum seeker in Austria. More than 6,500 people – including 450 unaccompanied underage refugees – are living in accommodation which it operates. In addition to this, 24,500 refugees housed in accommodation provided by private individuals or other bodies are being supported by Caritas' mobile, regional or ambulant support services. In the past three months alone, around 15,000 voluntary helpers have been involved in Caritas' programme of providing food and clothing to refugees. They also offer German courses and help with translation.

The design and development of each of the projects of "Places for People" was carried out in close cooperation with Caritas which, after their successful adaptation, will also be responsible for their operation.

www.caritas.at

Samariterbund Wien

The Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Österreich has set itself the task of supporting people who have been forced by catastrophic living conditions to leave their homelands in war-torn and crisis-ridden regions and to seek asylum in Austria.

The Samariterbund Wien has already been looking after around 150 asylum seekers in Floridsdorf for several years on behalf of the Vienna Social Fund. In addition to this, children and young people who have fled to Austria alone and without their parents have been housed in a special residential building adapted to the needs of 14 to 18 year olds since August 2013. In the meantime, the organisation is now running 14 facilities in Vienna alone in which around 2,200 people are currently being cared for. One of these is "Haus Erdberg", in which EOOS has been working alongside the Samariterbund Wien to develop and, already, partly implement new use concepts as part of "Places for People".

www.samariterbund.net

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