

EPHEMERALITY AND ARCHITECTURE

spatial stories and surprises in the exhibition

by Luma Ziad Ifram

Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
MA(Honours) Architecture
Architecture Dissertation
April 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my tutor, Dr Ella Chmielewska, for her guidance, enthusiasm, encouragement and advice throughout the preparation of this dissertation. I feel lucky to have been privy to many delightful conversations in her office-cum-library.

I am also grateful to the curators, architects and designers, individually recognized in the dissertation, for their willingness to devote precious time to meet and converse with me. Their assistance has been indispensable.

Finally, I cannot thank my family and dear friends enough for their continued support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

Architecture is present in our world as a material phenomenon inherent in our everyday encounters. But what happens when it happens within the context of the exhibition? Architecture and the exhibition cover a history that goes back beyond the museum, however, the ephemeral display of architecture in the architecture museum (a purpose-built site for exhibiting/displaying/communicating architecture) is a recent phenomenon of the architectural culture. Beyond the exhibition's historiographical and museological role, this study explores the evolving relationship between architecture as a discipline and the architecture exhibition.

Writing in this dissertation emerged after a visit to the 2012 Architecture Biennale in Venice where I found myself questioning the role of architecture in the exhibition setting. What is the form, function and place of architecture in the exhibition? How can architecture be created within the framework of the exhibition?

The term exhibition derives from the Latin *exhibere*, meaning to display. This study investigates the term from its process of making, which occupies an important place in this dissertation. Through the study there of, various interesting relationships within the exhibition come to surface, revealing spatial stories and surprises within this temporal setting. The selection criteria of the carefully picked exhibitions in this study therefore were ones to which I could gain access to the process, documentation and designer/architect of the exhibition. The study weaves together memories and documentations of my encounter with an exhibition space, conversations with designers, allowing me a particular access into the exhibition process, as well as my reflective thinking as a researcher, exhibition viewer and architecture student. Chapters move through various explorations of the exhibition, guiding the reader on a kind of journey.

This study is a beginning, and not any kind of end. "Ephemerality and Architecture: Spatial Stories and Surprises in the Exhibition" is an invitation, an opening to look at the architecture exhibition as an emerging medium and an important setting that is productive and fruitful for architecture and the architect, establishing a critical discourse by relating practice(s) and theory

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
	CHAPTER 1 EXHIBITING ARCHITECTURE
5	Part One – Architecture and the exhibition: an evolving relationship
7	Part Two– Entering the exhibition
	CHAPTER 2 MAKING THE EXHIBITION
23	Part One– Hidden exhibition stories
25	Part Two - Bringing back an exhibition to life: a pictorial piece
	CHAPTER 3 SPATIAL WONDERS OF THE EXHIBITION
38	Part One - Communicating messages through space, material and the body
54	Part Two - Testing ideas in the exhibition
	CHAPTER 4 EPHEMERALITY AND THE EXHIBITION
56	Part One – Exhibiting architecture through ephemeral atmosphere
60	Part Two - Producing atmosphere: a pictorial piece
73	Part Three- Documenting, reviewing and representing the ephemeral
	CHAPTER 5 LEAVING THE MUSEUM.....
78	Part One – Leaving the museum, opening to the city
85	Part Two - Leaving the museum, opening to architectural practice
87	CODA
90	BIBLIOGRAPHY
95	LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS
	APPENDICES
	A - Exhibition Placards
	B - Sample Questions (Unstructured Interviews)
	C - Fieldwork <i>Soviet Modernism 1955-1991. Unknown Stories</i> Exhibition (Vienna, Austria 2013)
	D- Exercise: write from a map

INTRODUCTION

Architecture is always exhibitionistic — it can't help exposing itself.

Geert Bekaert

(‘Architecture Can’t Help Exposing Itself’: In conversation with Geert Bekaert. OASE Journal for Architecture (2012))

Architecture is already present in our world as a material phenomenon inherent in our everyday encounters and our “collective culture.”¹ But what happens when it happens within the context of the exhibition? How does the discipline of architecture encounter the exhibition space? How does the exhibition environment embrace architecture? The art curator Walter Hopps once likened installing a museum exhibition to conducting a symphony orchestra. His analogy conveys the exhibition as — in the words of Jennifer Carter— “a complex and poetic composition.”² Architecture exhibitions, as temporary spatial settings, forms of creative expression and as a synthesis of content and design challenge relationships between objects and messages by shifting them into ephemeral, spatial paradigms.

Why the architecture exhibition as an object of study?

1. Fleur Watson, “Beyond Art, The Challenge of Exhibiting Architecture.” *In D*Hub* March 6, 2008. <http://www.dhub.org/beyond-art-the-challenge-of-exhibiting-architecture/>

2. Jennifer Carter, “Editorial Introduction.” *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): i. <http://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16886/13885>



[1]. 2012 Venice Biennale Map

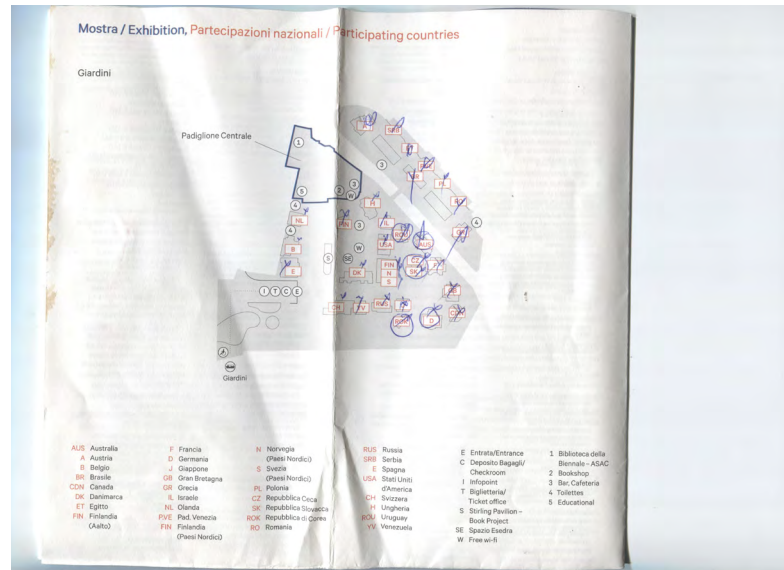
It was during my visit to the Architecture Biennale in Venice in September 2012 that I found myself questioning the role of architecture in the exhibition setting. Looking back, I can remember the United States Pavilion particularly well. I recall a pleasurable atmosphere in one of the rooms where colourful banners were suspended from an open scaffold. The pulling down of a banner in the room, to reveal specifics of a project, triggered the movement of a counterweight on a neighbouring wall, engraved with solutions to resolve urban problems.

Playing hide and seek between the faceted walls of Alvaro Siza's structure in the gardens of the Arsenale invokes another memory in my mind. Openings in the earth red walls framed particular views over the water and exteriors of the Arsenale, shading and exposing me from the sunlight as I moved between the walls, hiding from the seeker. The bareness of the walls situated amongst trees and underneath the effects of sunlight and shadows created a theatrical experience for the <<hider>> (me) and seeker.

Engaging with and then being followed by a fuzzy, animated figure on a wall in the cool, sober space of the Austrian Pavilion; crouching down to insert my head in a box with four inner display screens hung from the ceiling in the Nordic Pavilion; watching purple curtains slide along tracks to restructure the spaces inside the Dutch Pavilion are some other vivid recollections of mine.

However, the flat, foldable, territorial map [2], handed to me as I purchased my entrance pass, in no way hinted at these dynamic experiences. Many of my memories from the Architecture Biennale emerge from the experiences evoked through the various exhibitions. I started to see the exhibition as a dialogue between objects exhibited, their arrangement, the space in which they were exhibited and their engagement with the visitor's body.

[2]. Unfolding the Venice Biennale Map



The functions that architectural exhibitions take on are quite variable. Writing about the architecture exhibition, architectural critic and scholar Sylvia Lavin explains, “as with any medium, it is possible to use the exhibit to articulate myriad messages.”³ In the case of my Biennale visit the messages ranged from advocating for interventions as design actions for the common good (United States Pavilion) to emphasising the thinking of architecture in a more corporeal manner (Austrian Pavilion). The notion of communication therefore seems to be vital in the exhibition space. But how are the intended messages articulated to tell a story? And how do these messages exploit the distinctive setting of the exhibition medium?

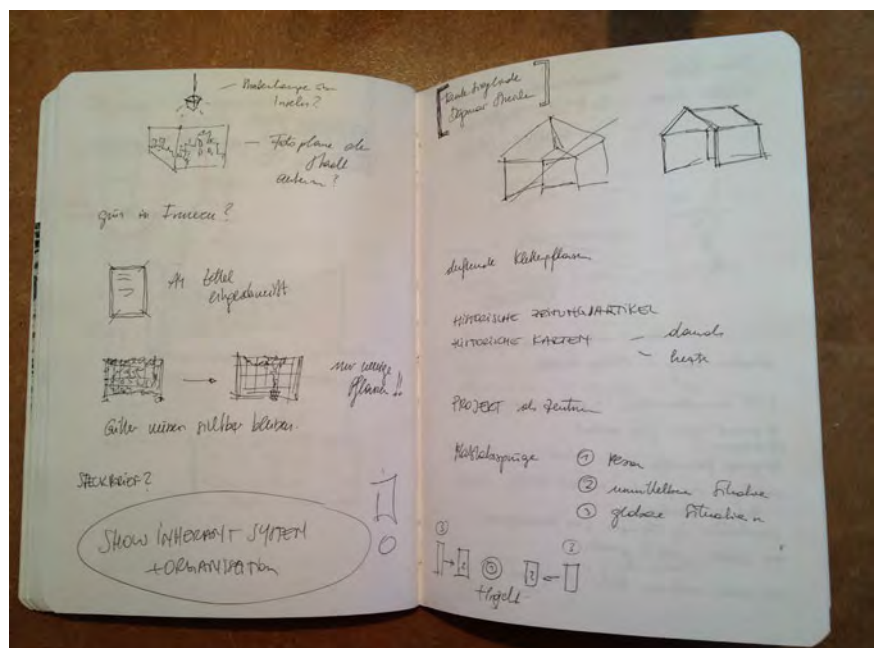
The relationship between content and container is sometimes visible, being gleaned from just looking at the exhibition. However, the stories behind this relationship are not always as easily discernable. So, against the background of a body of literature on the history and theory of exhibitions from a museological perspective, this study examines the visible and invisible spatial stories of the exhibition from an architectural perspective.

Just as the exhibition map of the Architecture Biennale did not convey the spatial qualities of the exhibition, discussion platforms of the exhibition (websites, catalogues, journals) rarely communicate details of the exhibition form, its architecture and the process of making the exhibition. The process of making the exhibition occupies an important focus in this dissertation, and through the study there of, various interesting relationships within the exhibition come to surface. The process of making exhibitions, however, requires a close examination of various elements of the design process—not simply the final product on site. The selection criteria of the carefully picked exhibitions in this study therefore were ones to which I could gain access to the process, documentation and designer/architect of the exhibition. The kind of access to the exhibition together with my specific standpoint to the exhibition reveal something specific, allowing me to elaborate on certain theoretical investigations and exhibition stories. Also, because of the different ways of exhibiting architecture, each exhibition highlights a particular set of interesting relationships regarding the role of exhibition as a two-fold space of communication and experience.

3. Sylvia Lavin, “A little less conversation please.” In *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol 64, no. 2 (2011): 83. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1531314X.2010.01131.x/abstract>

I begin this study without an intention to formulate a position on the success or failure of various exhibitions, but rather to study the exhibition from a different perspective, allowing for understandings of the role of the architect and architecture in the exhibition to emerge. The nature of my role as a researcher, exhibition viewer, and architecture student formulates particular curiosities and ways of looking at five exhibitions, each one positioned to explore a particular aspect of exhibition design. Chapter One explores several sites of various scales in exhibiting architecture and through a study of the *Soviet Modernism: Unknown Stories* 2012 exhibition introduces the relationship between curatorial narrative and design of the display. Chapter Two uses the *Bogdan Bogdanovic: The Doomed Architect* exhibition as a gateway into investigating the exhibition site as a construction site. Chapter Three questions the nature and potential of the exhibition medium and through the *Shaping the Great City: Modern Architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1937* exhibition looks at communicating a curatorial message with architecture. In Chapter Four the *Hands on Urbanism 1850-2012: The Right to Green* exhibition is used in a study of the notion of ephemerality and atmosphere in the exhibition site. Chapter Five makes a move away from the museum boundary and discovers the relationships between architecture and the museum that open to the city. Just as there are various voices and modalities in the exhibition, I am attempting to differentiate between and to curate various modes of information from conversations with designers and personal recollections to visual details from the design process and theoretical investigations.

As I move through the various aspects of the study, I guide the reader along a kind of journey that moves through various explorations of the exhibition.



[3]. Scenographer Alexandra Marringer's sketchbook. Notes for the exhibition *Hands on Urbanism: The Right to Green*

CHAPTER 1 | EXHIBITING ARCHITECTURE

Part One | Architecture and the exhibition: an evolving relationship

The architecture exhibition, placed between practice and history, has increased significantly in number since the 1960s. However, its development, compared to the fine art discipline, has been slow to “realise the potential of a specialised environment with which to communicate to the general public.”¹ Phyllis Lambert, founder and director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), traces the active collection of architectural materials to the thirteenth century.² However, architectural materials have only recently been “recognized as the basis of a new entity, the architectural museum”³, she argues further.

While architects displayed their work in salons and galleries, the proliferation of exhibitions presenting architecture as a new typology, has only recently made an impact on the curatorial landscape, thus a recent phenomenon of the architectural culture. Although the act of curating the exhibition is young, architecture and the exhibition and the ephemeral display of architecture, cover a history that extends beyond the museum. One can consider the great fairs such as those held in Paris (1889, 1925, 1931, 1937), Chicago and New York (1893, 1933, and 1939) as sites built and composed architecturally and displaying architecture in a specific way. World Fairs, such as the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts (held in Paris, France in 1925) and Expo 67 (held in Montreal, Canada in 1967)⁴ as opportunities where pavilion architects, through exhibition design, presented visionary ideas on the city or developed architectural concepts in response to a specified theme and Architecture Biennales, as archipelagos conversing between museum and the city. Exhibiting architecture in such scales allows for several interesting explorations, however, the object of inquiry here is the exhibition in the architecture museum/centre — a purpose-built site for exhibiting/displaying/showcasing architecture.

The rapid rise of the dedicated architecture exhibition is a result of the formation of the International Confederation of Architectural Museums (ICAM) as well as many purpose-built architecture museums such as the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal (founded in 1979 and opened to the public in 1989), the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt (1979), the Architekturmuseum in Basel (1984), the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam (1988)⁵ and the Architekturzentrum in Vienna (1993). Jennifer Carter explains: “[these institutions] have not only aimed to endow the architectural museum with a strong research mandate specifically dedicated to architectural and urban issues, they have also generated momentum by radically re-thinking the form that architectural exhibitions should take.”⁶

The form of the architecture exhibition has witnessed many changes with the exhibition designer experimenting with various techniques to navigate its mediation role. “From early cabinets of curiosity to the modern museum, techniques for presenting objects and images have developed into a codified repertoire.”⁷ With the 1920’s shift of emphasis from staging the object to staging the observer came new languages, attitudes and forms of exhibition design.⁸ Exhibitonary conventions were being challenged as the role of the exhibition apparatus shifted from acting as a mere

1. Watson, *Beyond Art, The Challenge of Exhibiting Architecture*.

2. Phyllis, Lambert “The Architectural Museum: A Founder’s Perspective.” *The Journal of Architectural Historians*. Vol 58, no. 3 (1999): 308. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/991523?origin=JSTOR-pdf>

3. Lambert, “The Architectural Museum: A Founder’s Perspective,” 308.

4. Jean-Louis, Cohen. “Exhibitionist Revisionism: Exposing Architectural History.” *The Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, no 3. (1999): 319. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/991524?origin=JSTOR-pdf>

5. Jennifer, Carter. “Architecture by Design: Exhibiting Architecture Architecturally.” *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): 25. <http://www.mediastropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16888/13881>

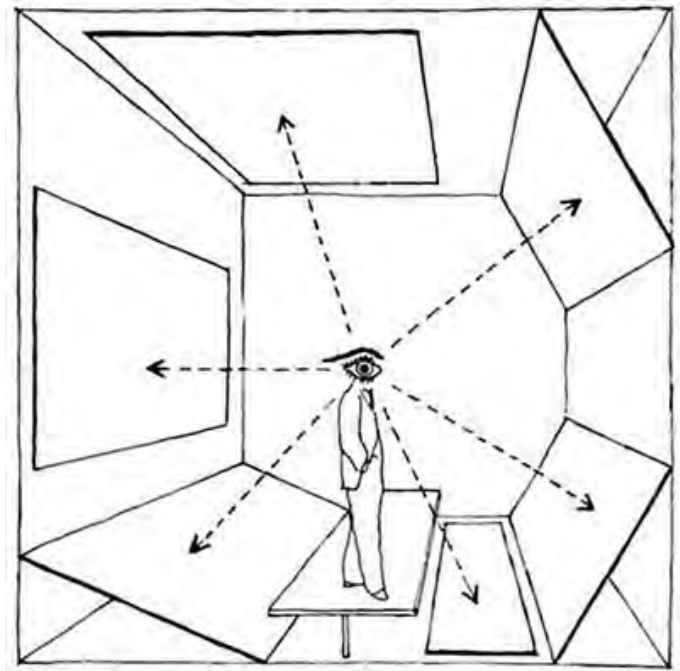
6. Carter, “Architecture by Design: Exhibiting Architecture Architecturally,” 25.

7. Abbott, Miller. “From Object to Observer.” In *Eye Magazine* Autumn, 2006. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/from-object-to-observer>

8. Miller, *From Object to Observer*

support to an important role in telling the curatorial narrative and in guiding the visitor through an experience. In his article “From object to observer”, Abbott Miller, graphic designer and writer, explains, “whereas traditional exhibitions had assumed an idealised and disembodied viewer, avant-garde designers were captivated by the idea of a dynamic observer.”⁹ This article also discusses a diagram by Herbert Bayer — the ‘Diagram of extended vision in exhibition presentation (1930)’ — where Bayer draws a human figure in an exhibition setting with a big eyeball in place of its head. As Miller points out, “positioned on a platform and enveloped by angled planes, the eye-body is a vivid illustration of the Modernist desire to both expand the field of vision and situate the body in space and time.”¹⁰

[1.1]. Herbert Bayer, Diagram of extended vision in exhibition presentation, 1930.



Developments in painting, film and sculpture began to influence exhibition design as can be seen in the work of El Lissitzky who integrated photomontage techniques in his exhibition designs, “dissolving the boundaries between the physical space and the more abstract space of photography and mass media.”¹¹ In his installations in Germany, for example, his *Proun Room* at the Great Art Exhibition in Berlin in 1923 and his *Abstract Cabinet* in the Provinzialmuseum in Hanover in 1927, the unique feature of El Lissitzky’s exhibition architecture evolved: considering the viewer as both object and subject. In these structures, the active involvement of the visitors transformed the exhibition room into an “optically dynamic form.”¹²

9. Miller, *From Object to Observer*

10. Miller, *From Object to Observer*

11. Miller, *From Object to Observer*

12. Margarita, Tupitsyn, *El Lissitzky: beyond the Abstract Cabinet: photography, design, collaboration*. (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1999), 52.

Part Two | Entering the exhibition

French philosopher Yves Michaud has discussed the coupling of the artist and curator in the art exhibition.¹³ In architecture exhibitions the addition of an exhibition designer or scenographer or architect turns this “mad couple into a hellish threesome.”¹⁴ “In addition to the architectural work exhibited, a new work is layered on top”¹⁵, Jean-Louis Cohen explains. The architectural work- curator -exhibition designer rapport is not always perceivable in the exhibition but one could speculate that features of El Lissitzky’s exhibition architecture influenced the design of the *Soviet Modernism 1955-1991: Unknown stories* exhibition at the Architekturzentrums (AZW) in Vienna, especially when images of his installation of the Soviet section at the 1929 Film and Photography Exhibition in Stuttgart come to mind.



[1.2-1.3] El-Lissitzky / 1929 Film and Photography Exhibition in Stuttgart



[1.4] *Soviet Modernism 1955-1991: Unknown stories* exhibition at the Architekturzentrums (AZW) in Vienna

13. Cohen, “Exhibitionist Revisionism: Exposing Architectural History,” 316.

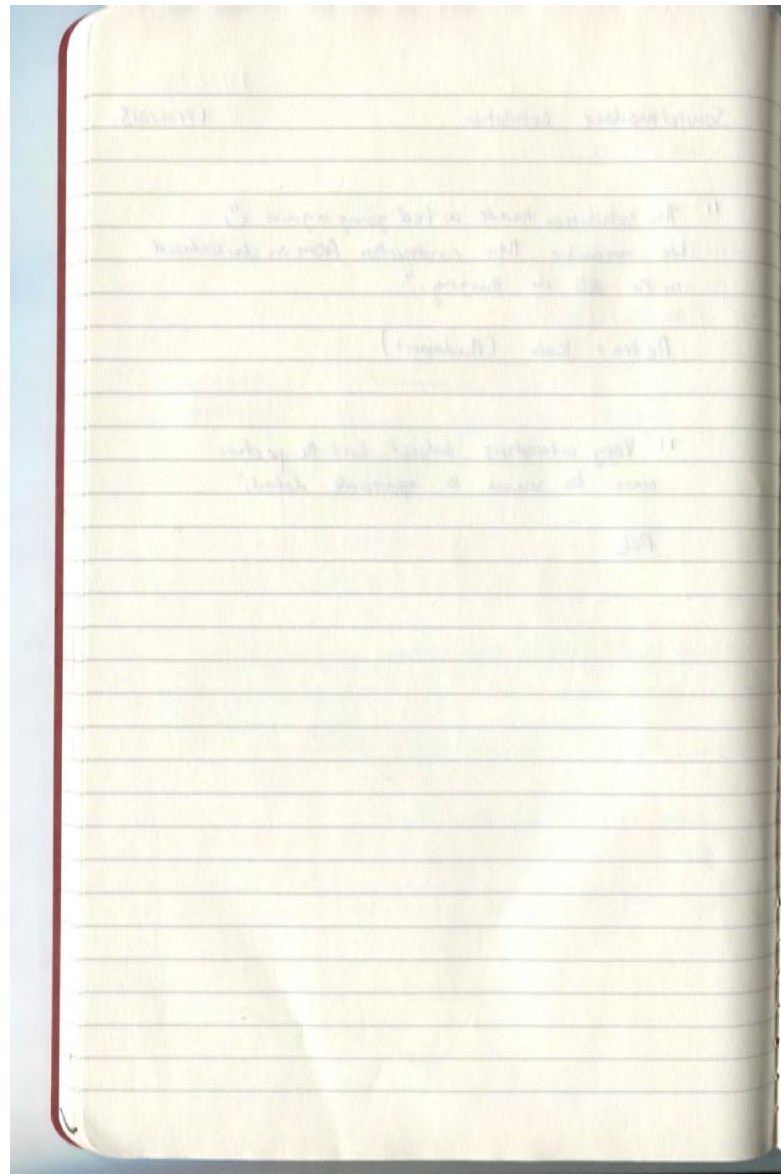
14. Cohen, “Exhibitionist Revisionism: Exposing Architectural History,” 316.

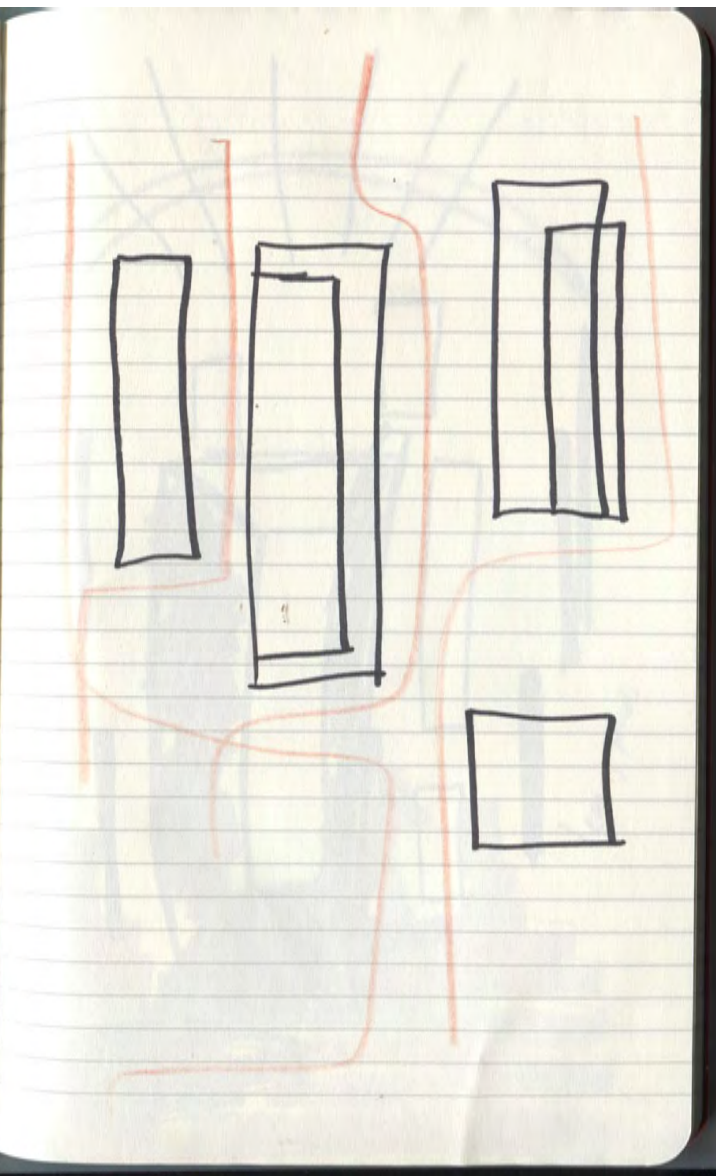
15. Cohen, “Exhibitionist Revisionism: Exposing Architectural History,” 317.

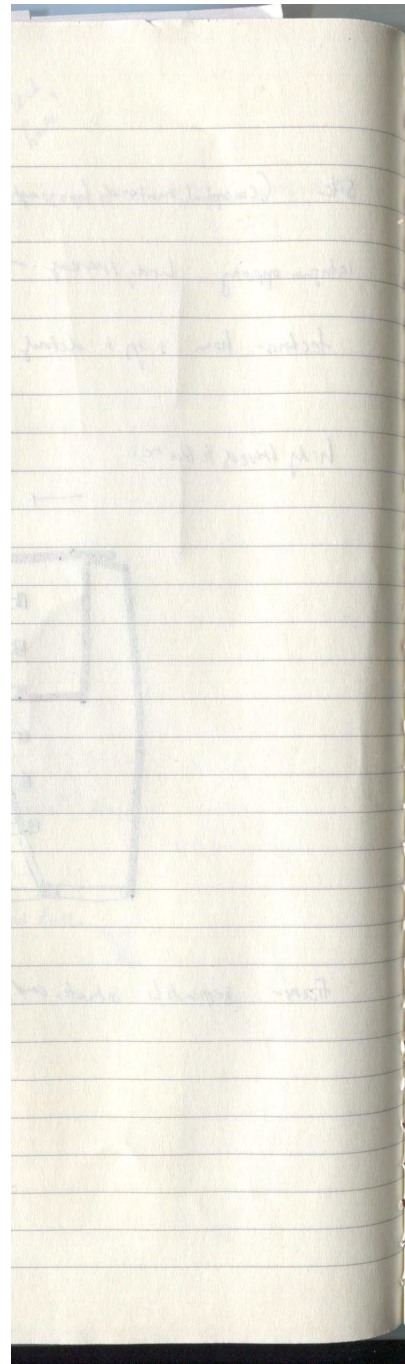
To gain a better understanding of this rapport, I engaged in a discussion with Katharina Ritter, curator at the AZW, and Paul Petritsch, exhibition designer at Six And Petritsch (see appendix B). “Unknown Stories”, taken from the exhibition title refers to the exhibition revealing the Soviet modern architecture that has remained unknown to date. In a like manner, my conversation with Ritter and Petritsch revealed unknown stories about the exhibition.

On entering the exhibition, there was a rush of calm that crept up on me. The space felt bright, light and translucent; it had a particular ease and rawness about it. I didn't feel the necessity to roam the entire space with my eyes, trying to grasp it all in. Instead, I positioned myself in the space and made my way to the introductory panel on the far right of the room. It was quiet. The sound of footsteps, one or two whispers, and the shuttering of the slide projector were all my ears took in. The exhibition didn't have a start or an end. It was a space that I could meander with no map. Steel frames in orange, green and brown, occupied the centre while flat panels rested on the longer sides of this rectangular room. If someone were tracing my footsteps, a manic arrangement of routes would emerge. The permeability of the space meant I could amble to the end of the room in a linear manner and come back in a winding walk, moving between the steel frames and stopping to catch glimpses of the external courtyard through the high windows.

[1.5] at the *Soviet Modernism* exhibition
My sketchbook, sketching the permeability of the space





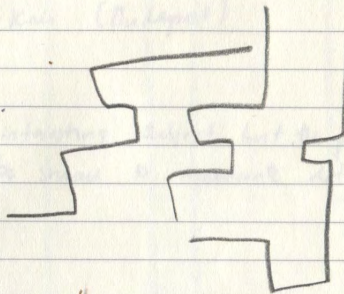


Soviet modern
exhibition @ azum

18/02/2013
[11 AM]

reflective
permeable
TRANSLUCENCY
LIGHT

Wandering.



Multiple
journeys.

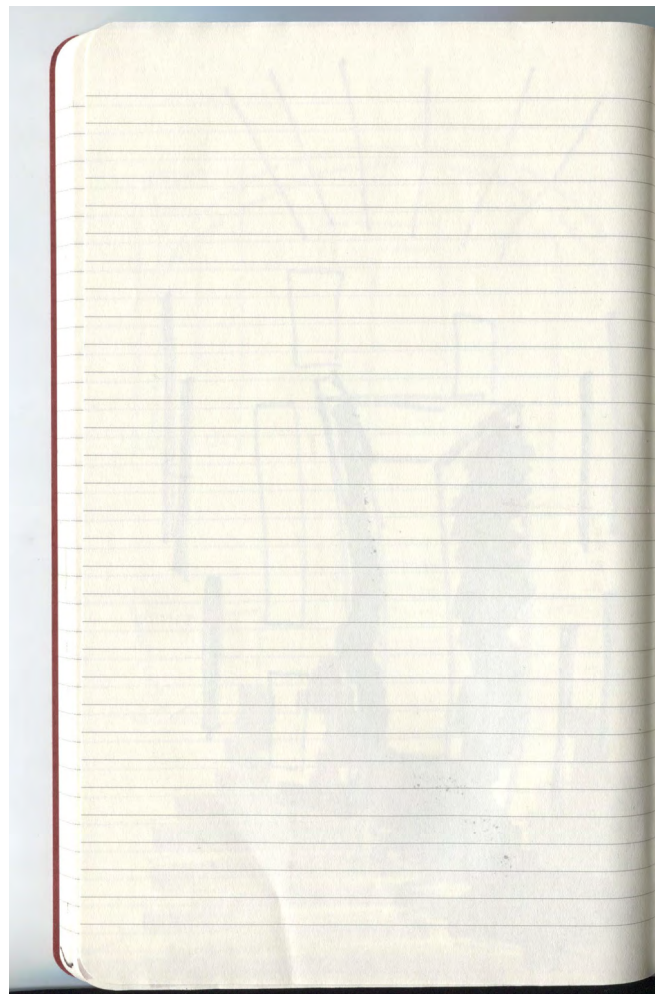
Colour code? orange, brown, green.

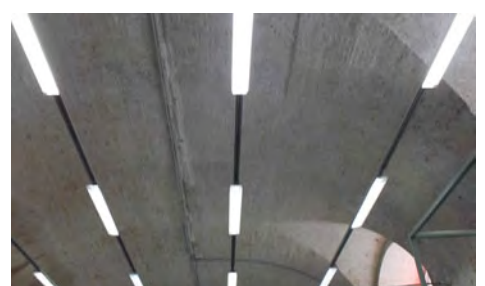
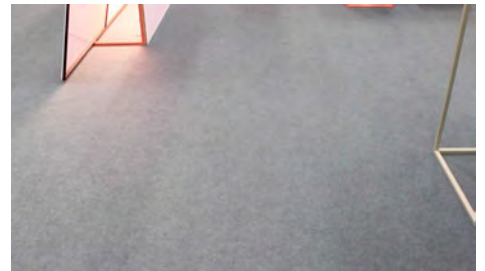
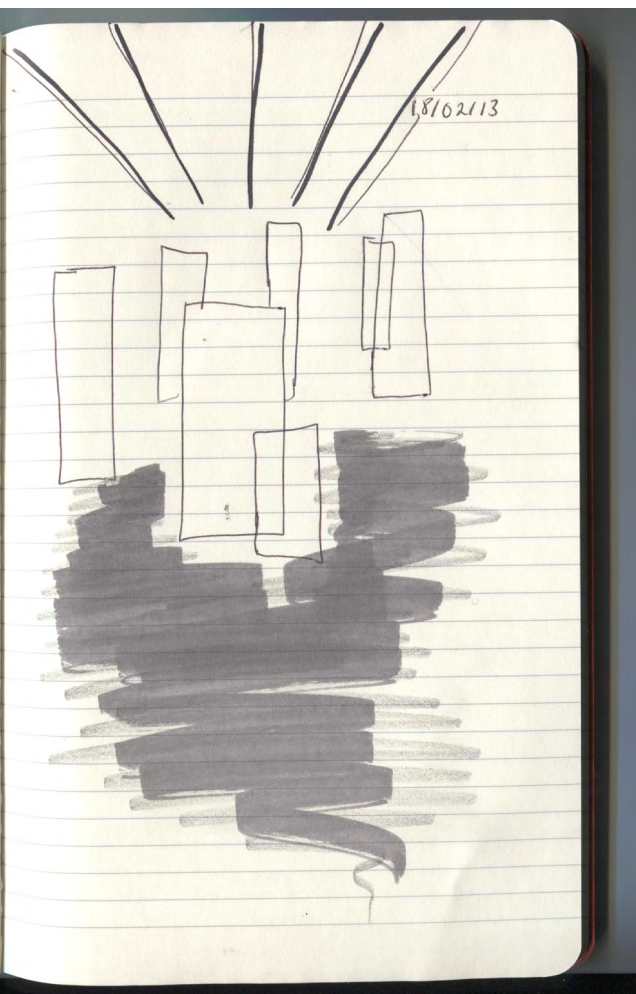
"click, click" - sand at tape changing.

Water reflections - coincidence?

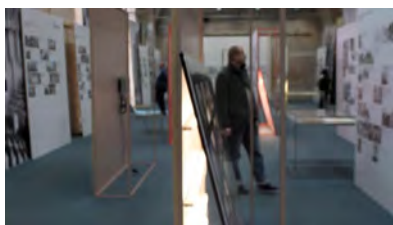
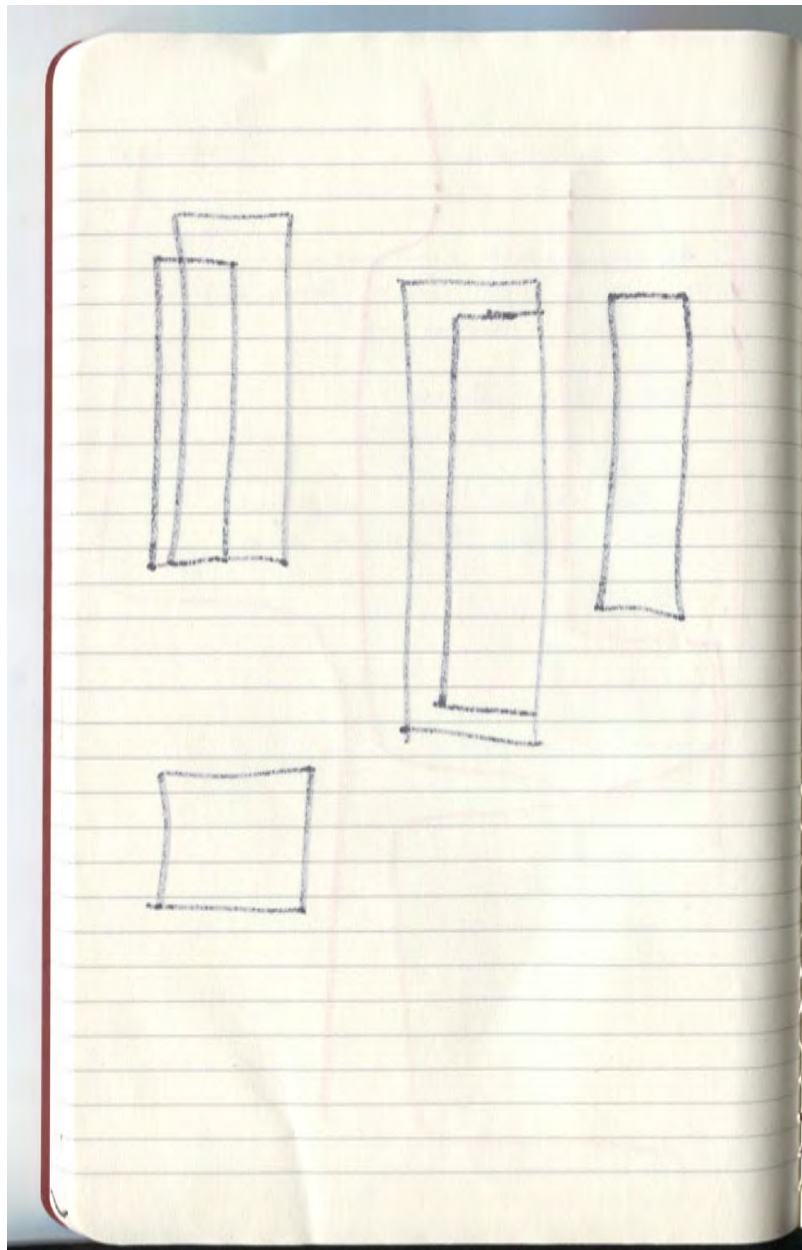
[1.6] at the Soviet Modernism
exhibition
My sketchbook, entry 18 February,
2013.
-reflective
-permeable
-translucency
-light

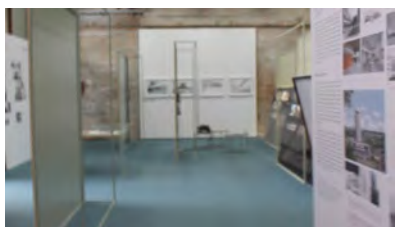
[1.7] at the *Soviet Modernism*
exhibition
field of vision: from the teal carpet to
the bare neon lighting





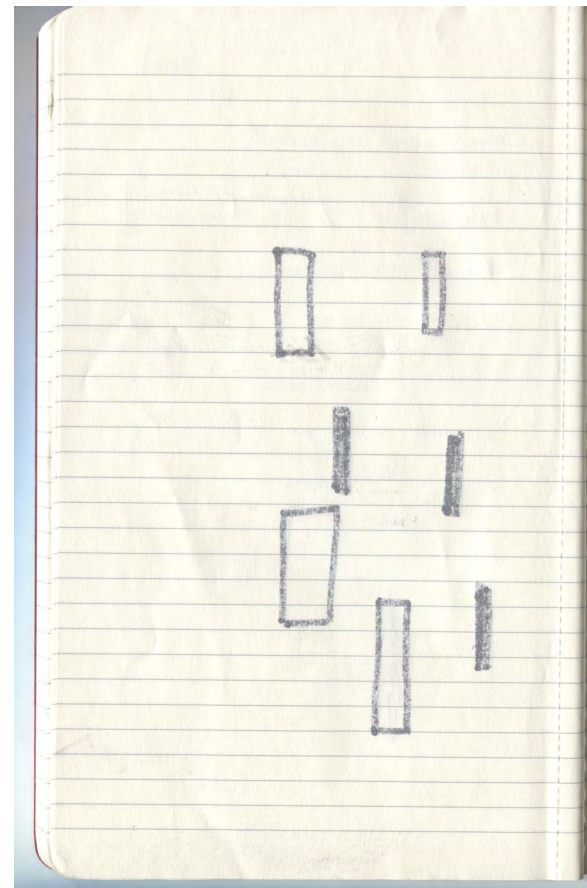
[1.8] at the *Soviet Modernism*
exhibition
navigating trough the space

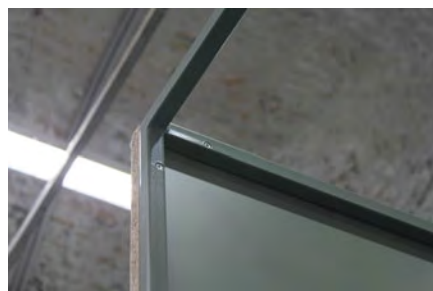
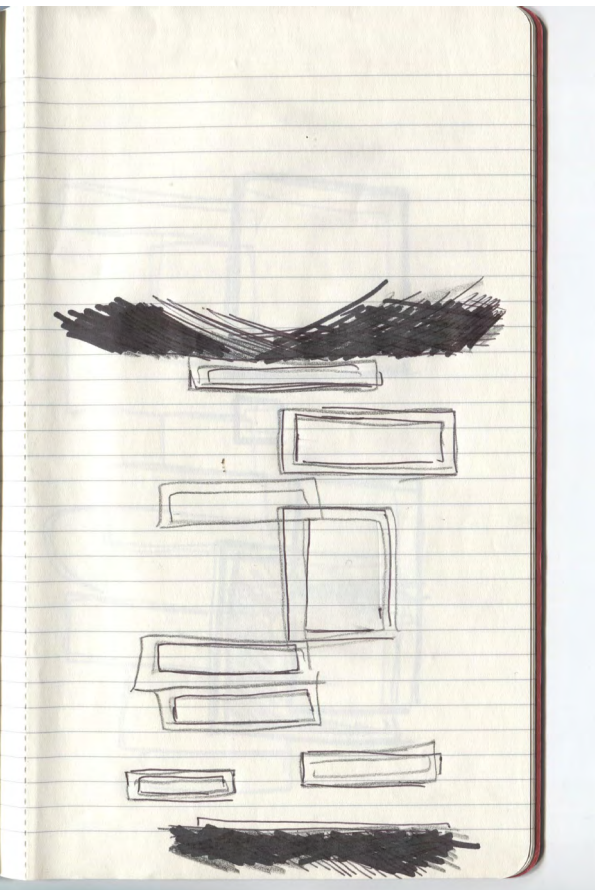






[1.9] at the *Soviet Modernism* exhibition
details of the apparatus





In my conversation with Petritsch, he quickly explains that the first question on his part was to ask, “how do we get the material into the space?”¹⁶ (The space is the Old Hall at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna. With a floor area of approximately 284 square metres and six metres in height, the hall is free of insertions, features brickwork walls and a timber floorboard.¹⁷) When asked about the role of architecture in exhibition design, his response was, “our aim was not to make architecture but to work against it, to make a non-architectural intervention somehow.” He emphasises this point when he claims, “we don’t build architecture. We try to keep distance from architecture.”

Sitting beside Ritter and Petritsch in Ritter’s office at the AZW, the rapport between the two is witty yet close. As we converse, I became aware of the constant communication necessary between them in the process of making the exhibition. “Thorough research is conducted in tandem with design”¹⁸ explains Kayoko Ota, curator in the AMO arm of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture. Curating and designing thus takes place as one synthetic process where mutual inspiration and information constantly takes place.¹⁹ The content can be informed by the container, and vice versa.

The first meeting, however Petritsch explains “took place without a design in mind.” He adds that ideas for form are not considered in the very early stages because of the possibility that the material collated will change in content, amount and medium. He points out, “we don’t think about how beautiful a design can be. We have to let the material speak.”

16. Katharina, Ritter and Paul, Petritsch. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 22, 2013. (Note: all quotes from Ritter and Petritsch in this section come from the above interview)

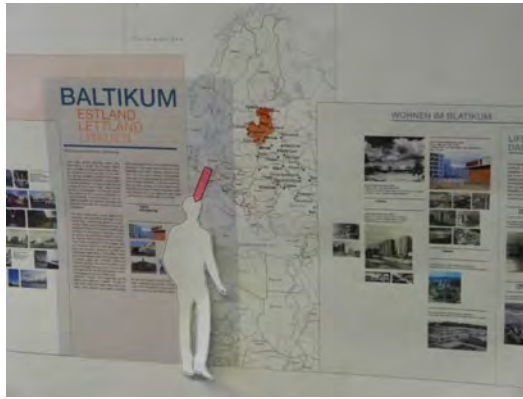
17. Architekturzentrum. Service, http://www.azw.at/page.php?node_id=30

18. Kayoko Ota, “Curating as Architectural Practice,” *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010), 143.

19. Ota, “Curting as Architectural Practice,” 148.

While the exhibition apparatus is described by Petritsch as mere support to the curatorial narrative, the stories behind the making of it are nevertheless interesting. The exhibition transformed into a platform to exhibit a research project when less original material could be obtained. The concept of layering thus became an approach to showcasing the exhibition as a research project. Petritsch explains that the leaning panels resting on the walls of the Old Hall showcase this research as an “unfinished situation, as status quo.” Furthermore, the decision to use standardized, pre-fabricated, cheap materials was not only to reflect the period of exploration in the exhibition but also to make the exhibition look clean for the distinguished guests visiting the exhibition.

A colour coding system was employed to allow the visitor to distinguish and navigate between different fields of research. Discussing this strategy with Petritsch, he explains that colour is merely a guide to the information, not indicative of its content. Similarly, the decision to cover the wooden floor of the Old Hall with a teal blue carpet was a “pragmatic but important decision”, according to Paul. “The new floor holds the set together and creates a different sound for the visitor”, he explains.



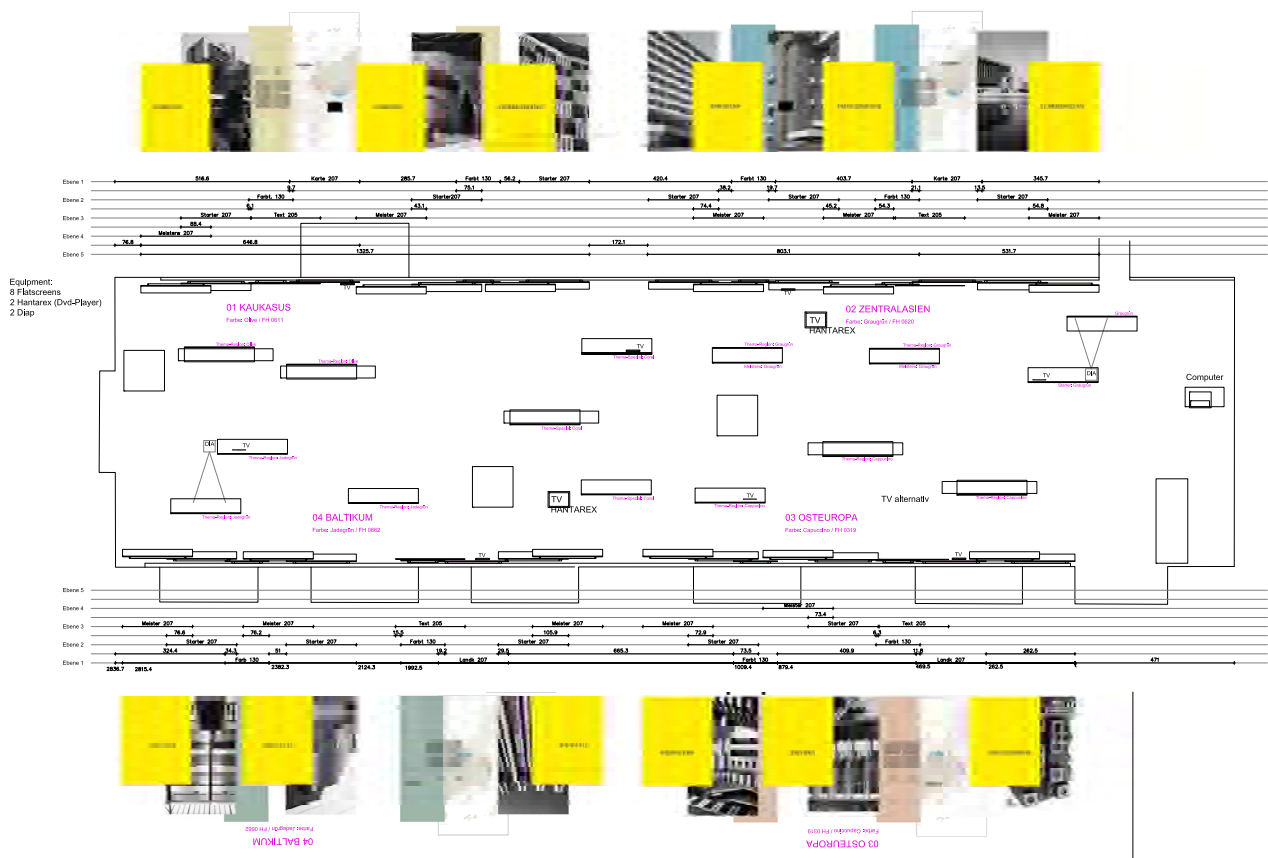
[1.10] exhibition concept, layering the research (Six and Petritsch)



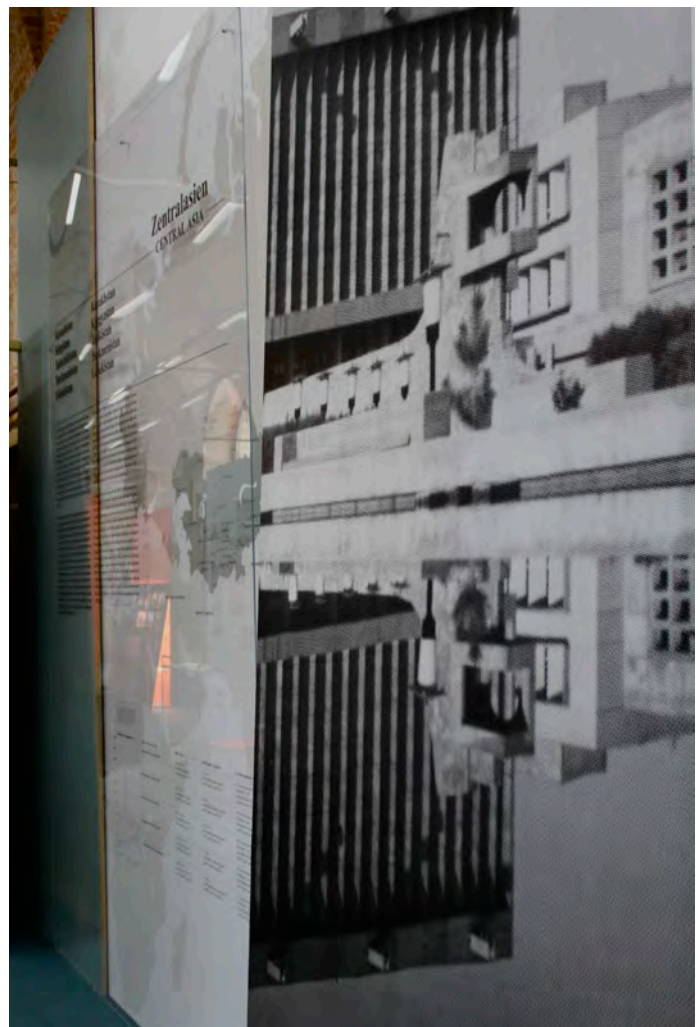
[1.11] at the *Soviet Modernism* exhibition
leaning panels

[1.12] plan of the Old Hall (AZW),
exhibition concept (Six and Petritsch)

Wandabwicklung A



I remember two specific moments in the exhibition where I felt the display made a connection with the curatorial message and myself, the visitor in the space. In the first moment [1.13], I was looking at a print of the Therapeutic Baths in Druskininkai, Lithuania where the reflection of the building was captured on the water surface. Beside this display board was a translucent board imprinted with text. Standing and staring at the boards, I could see the reflection of the Old Hall on the translucent board, complementing the sight of the Therapeutic Baths. This dual act of reflection— the reflection of the immediate space I was in against the reflection of the building on display —engaged the visitor in a unique experience. The second moment [1.14] arose when I was looking at a particular image on a display wall and then shifted my view to the space I was in. I had made a connection between the arch in a building on display, the Ethnographic Museum of Armenia in Armavir, and the brickwork arch in the room of the Old Hall. It felt like a gateway into understanding what the space on display might feel like.



[1.13] the first moment



[1.14] *the second moment*

While viewing the exhibition, I imagined that these moments used the space of the exhibition to communicate a particular message or feeling across. However, upon my asking whether these were intentional gestures, I learned they were in fact coincidences and glitches. There is no contingency in how a visitor reads an exhibition space. For example, in an exhibition review in *Der Falter* (see appendix D), journalist Erich Klein links the exhibition to a visit from Leonid Brezhnev. He writes:

The exhibition itself resembles, with its tableaux leaned against the wall, its numerous photographs and its inadequate contextualization, the preparation for the next visit from the Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev.²⁰

On the other hand, a message left by a pair, in the exhibition guest book, likens the exhibition to a particular childhood feeling:

This exhibition made us feel young again. ☺ We remember this construction from our childhood in the 80's in Hungary.

Petra and Kali (Budapest)

There is something wondrous about exploring the various ways every individual responds to the exhibition space, especially when “misunderstandings fit together.”²¹ Therefore, it seems difficult to condense the exhibition to the collection of objects and their associated stories. The discipline of exhibition design and the receptions of the space seem to play a significant role. While my conversation with Ritter and Petritsch dispelled the notion that El Lissitzky could have been an influence in the exhibition, the exhibition is emerging as a space that has a particular character, a space that produces a particular atmosphere and experience, making the body an integral factor in the reception of these qualities.

20. Erich Klein, “Im Wirbel der Akanthusblätter.” *Der Falter* 46, no. 12 (2012): 31

21. Ritter and Petritsch, interview

CHAPTER 4 | EPHEMERALITY AND THE EXHIBITION

Part One | Exhibiting architecture through ephemeral atmosphere

In his essay ‘Exhibition as Atmosphere’ for the Fall 2010 issue of *Log* (Journal for Architecture), Henry Urbach starts with a description of San Francisco’s summer fog, its qualities, characters and ability to “crash over the city’s western hills.”¹ After admitting his deviation – “but I digress”, he explains that there is one point he wishes to make about fog:

The point is, simply, that fog is one thing when it is an object and quite another when it is an atmosphere. When you see the fog, over there, however still or swift it may be, it is an object, something to apprehend, observe, enjoy, or fear at a distance. As it approaches and eventually overtakes the place you are in, it becomes atmosphere. An atmosphere that is palpable, undeniable, and collective in nature. The fog, when it surrounds, is your atmosphere. Our atmosphere. And suddenly, whether you are looking or not, you are in it and it affects you considerably.²

1. Henry Urbach. “Exhibition as Atmosphere.” *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 11.

2. Urbach, “Exhibition as Atmosphere,” 11.

3. Urbach, “Exhibition as Atmosphere,” 13.

4. Urbach, “Exhibition as Atmosphere,” 16.

5. Alexandra Maringer, “Maringorama,” *Alexandra Maringer*. <http://www.maringorama.com/>

6. Maringer, “Maringorama.”

7. Alexandra Marginer, Interview by author, Skype video call, March 8, 2013. (Note: all quotes by Maringer in this section of text were taken from this interview)

The exhibition can produce atmosphere, just as fog can. Atmosphere in the exhibition can be vibrant but can also be thin and lacking in life. While, at the heart of the matter, the exhibition is principally concerned with objects and their arrangements, it is not, however, a slide show. The exhibition takes place in space. Urbach explains, “and that space, which will soon acquire some characteristics, is something I would like to call atmosphere.”³ Exhibition atmosphere can be seen but more essentially felt, inhabited and remembered. The exhibition atmosphere can envelop a viewer, however temporarily, creating a “collective experience”⁴ for the visitor, who becomes as much a participant as an observer.

In a Skype conversation with Austrian scenographer Alexandra Maringer (see appendix B), I discovered that creating atmosphere and a collective experience for the visitor is a significant characteristic of her work.

Scenography, as she explains on her website is:

[of the greek origins *σκηνή* “scene” and *γραφειν* “write, describe”]

the art of creating and making a scenic space with the help of artistic and technical means.⁵

For Maringer, scenography starts with the “conceptualisation of the spatial layout and the movements in a scene.”⁶ This scene can however exist in various disciplines such as film, theatre and exhibition. She explains, “the way in which the public can enter/ touch this space is very different in the various spaces.”⁷ But for whatever task it is, she reveals that her main interest is to “tell a story with space.” And atmosphere plays a crucial role in telling this story.

The atmosphere imagined for the exhibition *Hands on Urbanism 1850-2012: The Right to Green* at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna — an exhibition presenting 19 historical and contemporary case studies of bottom-up urban development— was “a space which is urban in a way”, reveals Maringer. Taking a cue from the exhibition’s curatorial message — offering insight into self-organised, informal urban movements initiated by self-help, architects and activists— the exhibition design looks at, as Maringer explains, “what you can do with the least possible things and how you can make them blossom again.”

The design of a self made urban system as the basic structure of the exhibition incorporates construction-site mesh fences for the basic structure, waste timber for seating cubes as well as the re-use and adaption of plastic bottles to hold various kinds of wild plants. Although Maringer chose not to design something new, however, giving “spatial form” to the curatorial message created a new space in the exhibition site just like the new spaces created as a result of urban movement projects on display.

This new space in the Old Hall of the Architekturzentrum Wien had a particular atmosphere. In my conversation with Maringer, she explains the meandering movement possible in a city and the decision to recycle the display material contributed to this atmosphere. The freedom to move through the labyrinth of fences and the self-made quality of the scenography enveloped the visitor in an atmosphere that reflected and added to the curatorial narrative. Atmosphere is the driving force of Maringer’s work. She asks, “If it doesn’t create atmosphere, then why do it?”

It was during her architectural education that Maringer started to question space and develop an interest in scripting and producing atmosphere. She asks, “how do you define space? What is proportion? What is scale? How do you guide people through a space? — This is architecture.” What if we started to approach atmosphere in an architectural way? Can the architecture exhibition exhibit architecture through atmosphere? What if we, in the words of Urbach, “posited the exhibition as a saturated space of collective, and collectivizing experience?”⁸

8. Urbach, “Exhibition as Atmosphere,” 16.

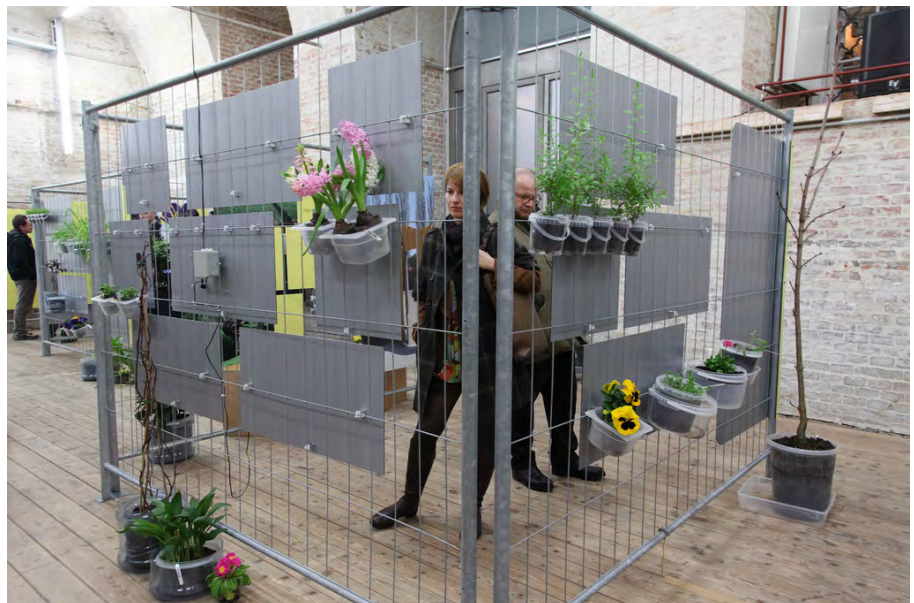
[4.1] *Hands on Urbanism*
exhibition flyer





[4.2-4.4] *Hands on Urbanism* at the Old Hall, Architekturzentrum Vienna, 2012.
a labyrinth of construction fences, defining inside and outside

[4.6] *Hands on Urbanism* at the Old Hall, Architekturzentrum Vienna, 2012.
see-through plot plants to show two urban resources: soil and waste



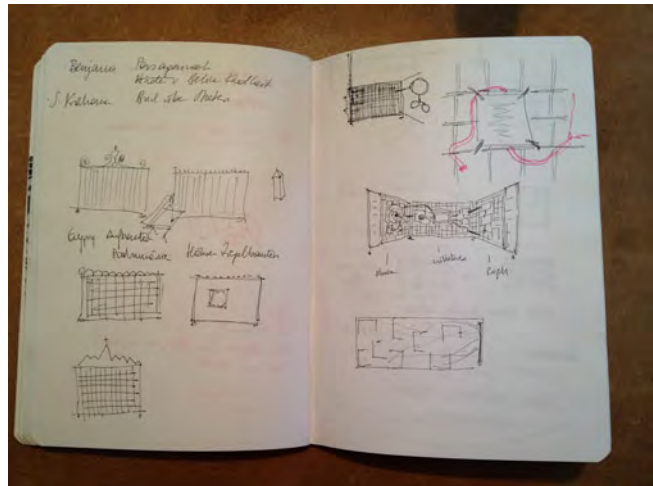
[4.6] *Hands on Urbanism* at the Old Hall, Architekturzentrum Vienna, 2012.
aluminium panels refer to street signs

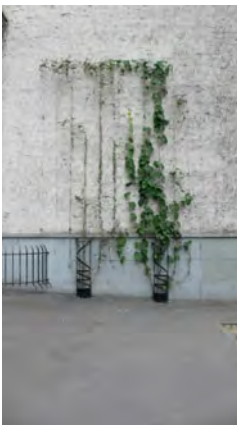


Part Two | Producing atmosphere: a pictorial piece

In this second pictorial piece of this dissertation, the process of thinking about, scripting, testing and producing atmosphere in the exhibition site is illustrated through a selection of visual material—material that is rarely shown, discussed or reviewed outside the curator-design team.

[4.7,4.8] Alexandra Marginer's
 sketchbook
 developing an initial response to the
 brief





[4.9-4.11]
Maringer's inspiration photographs
going out into the urban to find
inspiration



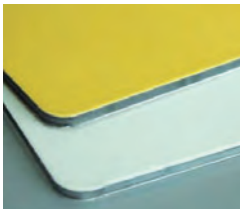
PROJEKTPRÄSENTATION

Die BesucherInnen können die Projekte in einer selbst gewählten Reihenfolge entdecken. Für jedes Projekt gibt es 3 Erzählebenen: planliche Verortung im Stadtraum und Bedeutung für den urbanistischen Kontext - Vorstellung der AkteurInnen, der Rolle der Architektur - detaillierte Vorstellung des jeweiligen Projekts.

Trägermaterial: 1,5mm beschichtetes Alublech (weiß, gelb), direkt bedruckt Texte / Pläne / Skizzen / Fotos (gedruckt) - Objekte / Videos - über Alubleche montiert - je 1 Steckbrief - je 1 Versatzstück (dem Projekt entsprechend)



NIMM DIE STADT IN DIE HAND



[4.12]

Maringer's presentation to the exhibition team
visitor can roam the space freely
project information is categorised into
three narrative levels:



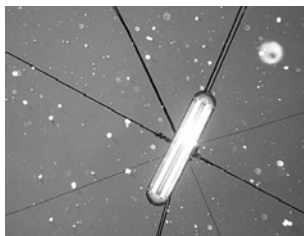
LICHT

Tageslicht ist für Pflanzen eine wesentliche Wachstumsressource - Arbeiten mit der vorhandenen Infrastruktur - Erweiterung und Umdeutung - Element des Städtischen (Straßenbeleuchtung)

An den beiden Stirnseiten werden jeweils 4 Neonbalken die der Gestalt der vorhandenen entsprechen senkrecht montiert, alle Lichtlamellen werden abgenommen, keine Spots.



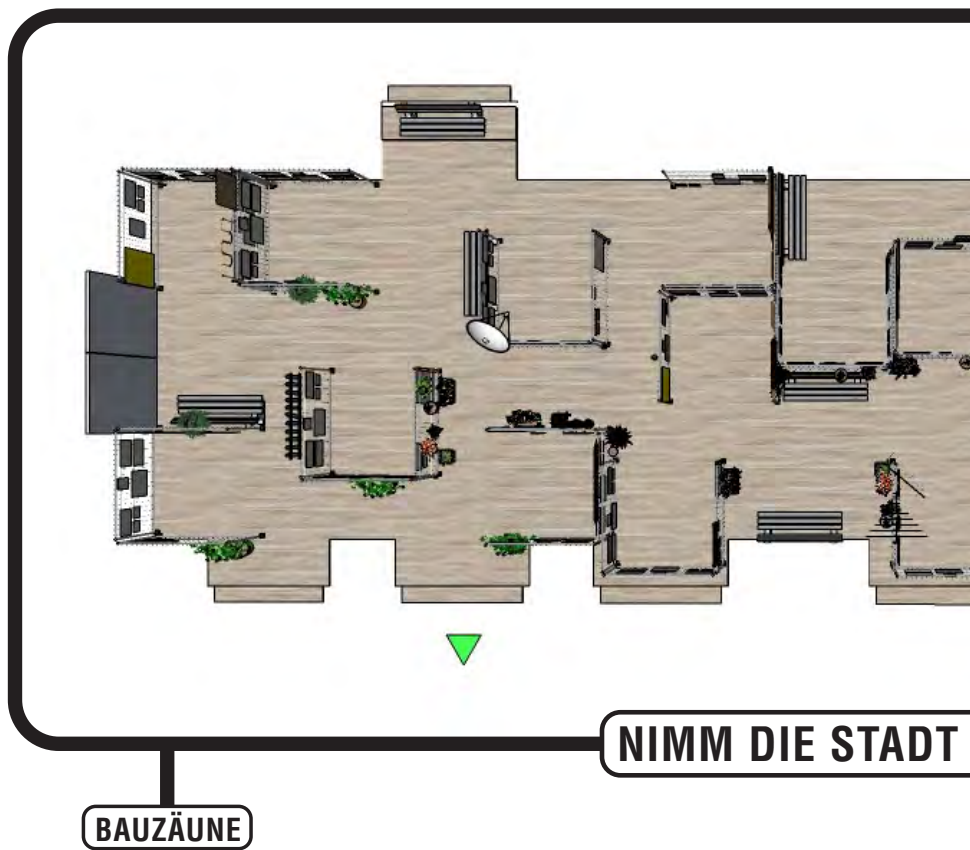
NIMM DIE STADT IN DIE HAND

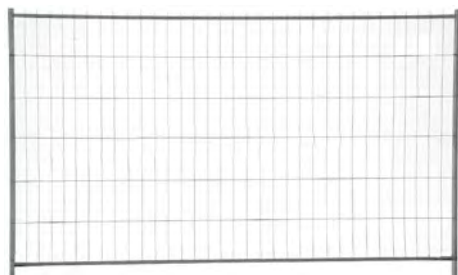


[4.13]

Maringer's presentation to the exhibition team

- light is essential for the indoor plants (existing windows will not be covered)
- strip existing lighting system to bare neon lamps to hold the space together

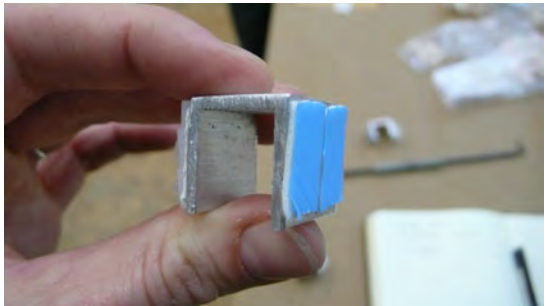
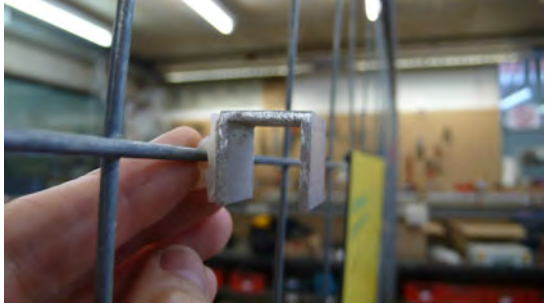




[4.14]

Maringer's presentation to the exhibition team

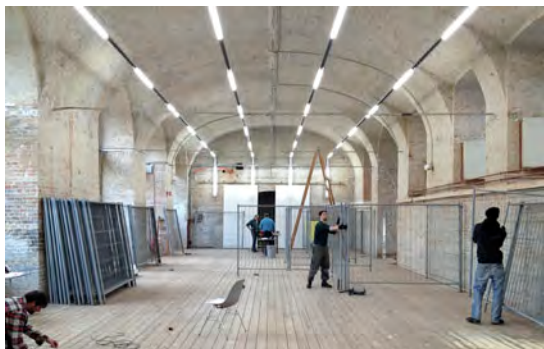
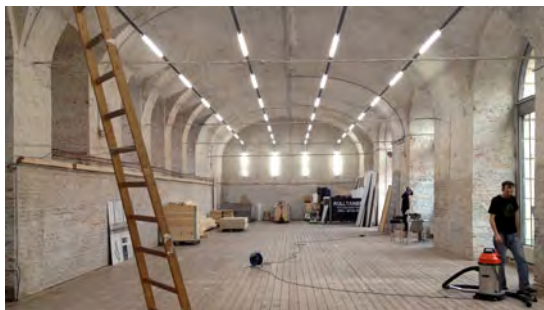
- fences: temporary, found, conversion, raw.
- fence structure to remind visitors of urban space
- repeating the urban grid, like in the city



[4.15]
Construction tests

[4.16]
the exhibition process: creating atmosphere





[4.17]
transforming the Architekturzentrums
into a temporary urban space within
the space of the Old Hall



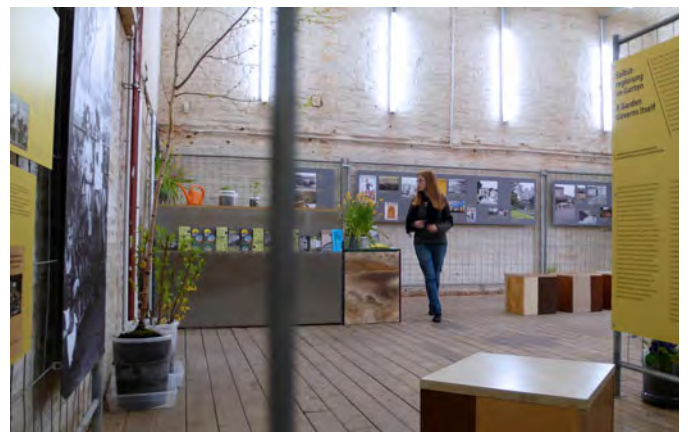
[4.18]

Hands on Urbanism exhibition: a social space

Part Three | Documenting, reviewing and representing the ephemeral

Although exhibition atmosphere is temporary, it can still be remembered and can make the visitor feel and imagine. Exhibition atmosphere can also be lost as it did with the adapted version of the *Hands on Urbanism 1850-2012: The Right to Green* exhibition shown at the Venice Biennale 2012. Viewing images of the exhibition as shown at the Biennale and at the Architekturzentrum side by side, the loss of atmosphere is obvious. While the exhibition in its original representation activated space itself to express ideas, the re-representation altered the site to a didactic display of the curatorial message. This opens up questions concerning the documentation, review and representation of the exhibition, and the loss of atmosphere in the process of translation.

[4.19] *Hands on Urbanism* in the Arsenale, 2012 Venice Biennale and in the Old Hall, Architekturzentrum Vienna, 2012.



An exhibition, if treated as a medium of its own, will not be seen as a book on a wall. To consider it as such is “abuse.”⁹ The exhibition looks at, represents and constructs arguments about architecture that are different from that of an essay, or scholarly article, or any other medium. For exhibitions should, as Forty argues in his essay “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: a Short History of the Architectural Exhibitions”, “set out to achieve what could not be achieved in any other medium, and show what could not be apprehended through any other means.”¹⁰

Looking at and reflecting on the design of the spatial relationships within an exhibition can, in itself, be an interesting form of examination. Similar to gaining insight into the architectural studio, access to the exhibition design process might uncover raw explanations, ideas, inspirations, methods of thinking and strategies of display. This kind of insight can be seen as “affording various kinds of primary access to intentions and thus clues for us to work with, when encountering the exhibition space.”¹¹ It would be like stopping to watch an artist painting outdoors—a revealing of “*tacit* understanding”¹² through seeing and reflecting on the design process.

As curator Eve Blau has noted, the exhibition review is “something of an anomaly”¹³ for it sometimes appears when the exhibition has met its fatal temporal condition and is therefore no longer alive for viewing or reflection by the reader. But I do not find this to be the main issue here. While the exhibition review may have to consider a “spatial organisation that no longer exists”¹⁴, it sometimes forgets this spatial organisation altogether. Space is a crucial means of expression for the exhibition because it “represents its subjects visually and constructs its arguments spatially - by assembling rather than explication, and through relationships of proximity, juxtaposition, contingency, estrangement, and so on, that are essentially SPATIAL.”¹⁵ The exhibition review should thus discuss not only the curatorial content on display but endeavour to explore the way in which the exhibition organises this content through various strategies of design and display.

9. Adrian Forty, “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: A Short History of Architectural Exhibition.” In *Representing Architecture. New Discussions: Ideologies, Techniques, Curation*. Edited by Sparke, Penny and Sudkic, Deyan. (London: Design Museum, 2008), 3.

10. Forty, “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: A Short History of Architectural Exhibition,” 3.

11. Jon Wood, “The studio in the gallery?” In *Reshaping Museum Space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, edited by Suzanne Macleoud (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 158.

12. Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking* (London: Routledge, 2006), 52–3.

13. Eve Blau, “Exhibiting Ideas.” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 57, no.3 (1998): 256.

14. Blau, “Exhibiting Ideas,” 256.

15. Blau, “Exhibiting Ideas,” 256.



[4.20] *Hands on Urbanism* in the 2012 Venice Biennale Catalogue

16. Philip Ursprung, “The Indispensable Catalogue,” *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 50.

17. Jeffrey Kipnis, “Exhibiting Architecture: The Praxis Questionnaire for Architectural Curators,” *Praxis Journal of Writing and Building*, no. 7 (2005): 110.

18. Marie Elizabeth Laberge, email to author, April 2, 2013.

A similar argument can be made for the exhibition catalogue. The catalogue, usually a collection of commissioned essays, is not on the exhibition as such. It does not explore the curatorial or design strategies, the atmosphere or the exhibition experience, which is something in itself worth of critique. Philip Ursprung raises the following question in his essay “The Indispensable Catalogue”: “How many of us visiting an exhibition for which we have written a catalogue essay have not wished that we might have been allowed to wait until the show had opened to complete our final draft?”¹⁶ And so what if the exhibition was to precede the catalogue? Would the catalogue writer then be inspired to write about the exhibition architecture, strategies of display or the atmosphere of the exhibition?

Is the intention of the catalogue to, as Ursprung argues, “prolong the life span of the exhibition and live in its own right—as a book”? Or perhaps to provide a platform where “writers have time to unfold the scholarship”? However, the increasing emphasis on the catalogue, the “assumption that the exhibition must be an essay”¹⁷ and the supposition that the catalogue and exhibition are interdependent, defeat the unique condition of the exhibition – its transience.

Conversing with curator Monika Platzer (see appendix B), she expresses her view that the press rarely picks up exhibition design, unless in a superficial way, because the public is not sensitive to this topic, so it becomes difficult to communicate it. While architects intervene in the architecture of the space, most catalogues and reviews are edited and written by curators, art historians and journalists, which changes the perspective. “When a person is not comfortable commenting on something, they usually just do not”¹⁸ This lack of sensitivity also surfaces in another dialogue with scenographer Alexandra Maringer when discussing the exhibition *Hands on Urbanism*. She explains the insistence and extra effort needed on her part to have her name printed on some of the exhibition press material as well as provide the visitors with a leaflet explaining the scenography, its process, intentions and story. Furthermore, the adaptation of the exhibition at the Venice Biennale 2012 took

place without her input. She explains, “*Hands on Urbanism* was about materiality, about getting your hands dirty. It lost all of this at the Biennale.” Having been to the Biennale, I witnessed this loss. It was only through research that I formulated the link that the *Hands on Urbanism* exhibition Maringer was discussing with me was the same exhibition re-represented at the Biennale.

Maringer likens naming a curator and not the designer in an exhibition to naming the producer and not the production designer in a film. She points out that the creation of space in film is also rarely discussed, where attention is focused on directors, actors and costumes. This space is, however, just as important, creating a world for a film to take place in and producing a backdrop that envelops the story. She mentions the film *Carnage*, set primarily in one apartment, which does not make itself important, so “who ever talks about it?” she asks.

Reading a few reviews of the *Hands on Urbanism* exhibition, it becomes clear that there is little room to look at the exhibition in a spatial way. While writers mention Maringer’s name and make some references to her scenography or “austellungsarchitektur” (exhibition architecture), they only do so very briefly and typically with no images of the exhibition space. What if the exhibition review followed some strategies of a building review – looking at scale, detail, site, circulation and form? What if the review explored the ways in which the exhibition communicated architecture? The key is to find, according to Maringer, “a good way of talking about it.” She talks about recognizing the lack as the first stage and developing a certain language of communication as the second. This language can start to look at and reflect on the hidden spatial stories of the exhibition.



Stadtstruktur im Innenraum: Blick in die Ausstellung A city in interior space



Bau von Notunterkünften in Bremen, Auf der Schmelz (Wien), informelle Häuser in Indien, Sarigöl (Istanbul) Bremen, Vienna, India and Istanbul

Hands on Urbanism im Architekturzentrum Wien Hands on Urbanism in the Architekturzentrum Wien | p.15 | Claudia Rinne

In der Frühjahrsausstellung des Wiener Architekturzentrums geht es um pragmatische Stadtgestaltung und Selbsthilfe, um Hütten und Beete. Bauzäune dienen als Displays und betonen, dass die Stadt und das Leben in ihr immer auch im Umbau sind und die Akteure nicht nur in der kommunalen Verwaltung daheim.

Der erste Eindruck: es riecht gut. Viele Pflanzen, nützliche, zierliche, Unkräuter, sind in der Ausstellungshalle verteilt und machen Lust auf das Grün, auf das jeder, dem Untertitel zufolge, ein Anrecht hat. Bauzäune bilden einen mäandernden Weg, der sich mal zu Kojen hin verzweigt, mal zu kleinen öffentlichen Plätzen mit Pflanzen und Sitzgelegenheiten weitet, durchsichtig und labyrinthisch zugleich. Eine Stadt im Innenraum war die Leitidee der Szenografin Alexandra Maringer, aus umgenutzten oder wiederverwendbaren Materialien „wie oft bei der Stadtentwicklung von unten“. In den 18 Kojen werden Ort für Ort die internationalen, zeitgenössischen und historischen Projekte dargestellt, die Kuratorin Elke Krasny während mehrerer Jahre besucht und erforscht hat. Dass sie diejenigen, deren Projekte oder Recherchen sie zeigt, auch zur Eröffnung

einlädt und beim sehr empfehlenswerten Begleitprogramm zu Wort kommen lässt, dass sie Erfahrungsberichten die gleiche Würde gibt wie theoriebildenden Untersuchungen ist programmatisch. Ihre historische Aufarbeitung eines Urbanismus der Ränder und Übergänge setzt mit der Industrialisierung in Europa und Nordamerika um 1850 ein. Als frühestes gut dokumentiertes Beispiel dient der Schreiberplatz in Leipzig, auf dem Eltern ab 1865 Grünraum für ihre Kinder gestalteten, mit pädagogisch gemeinten Beeten, die bald zu

„Uns nährt die Erde“

eingezäunten „Familiengärten“ mutierten. Rousseau lässt grüßen. Die Schrebergärten auf der Schmelz in Wien wurden als Gemüsegärten während des 1. Weltkriegs gegründet und existieren heute noch, in Bremen wurden nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Kleingärten provisorische Unterkünfte errichtet und Subsistenzwirtschaft betrieben. Als die unmittelbare Not vorbei war, wollten dennoch nur wenige in neue Wohnblocks übersiedeln. In den USA, in einem multiethnischen Armenbezirk des rapide wachsenden Chicago, initiierte Jane Addams schon 1889 das Hull House Settlement nach Ideen englischer Sozialre-

former, unterstützt von Pond & Pond Architects. Und heute? Prekäre Bleiben aus Plastikplanen, ob in den Straßen indischer oder japanischer Metropolen, fotografierte der Berliner Künstler Daniel Kerber für seine Ausstellungen, dann gründete er das Unternehmen morethanshelters zur Realisierung und Verbreitung eines faltbaren Hauses, um etwas zurückzugeben. Gecekondus, die traditionsreichen informellen Siedlungen in Istanbul, gelten seit 2004 als illegal und sind akut vom Abriss bedroht. In Brasilien hingegen wurde aus einem Slum ein selbstverwaltetes Gebiet, eine kooperative Recyclinganlage ermöglicht vielen Bewohnern Erwerbsarbeit und unterstützt Alphabetisierung, Umweltbewusstsein und Partizipation. Angetrieben wurde diese Entwicklung vor allem von der Frauenrechtlerin Doña Marli. Im schnellen Berlin sind die Gärten selbst mobil, und aus Amsterdam kommt die Lehre: organisiert euch, gebt euch eine Form und einen Statut, sonst überdauert selbst ein behördlich veranlasstes Projekt wie „The Cook, the Farmer, his Wife and their Neighbour“ nicht.

25.6.2012
www.azw.at

[4.22] *Hands on Urbanism* Exhibition review by Claudia Rinne in architektur. aktuell. May 2012

“At first impression: it smells good. Many plants- useful, decorative, and weeds- are distributed throughout the exhibition hall and stimulate an interest in green which, according to the exhibition's title, everyone has a right to.”

CHAPTER 5 | LEAVING THE MUSEUM.....

Part One | Leaving the museum, opening to the city

The exhibition has many layers, responding to the existing urban context at several levels: the city, the neighbourhood and the exhibition's immediate context.¹ What might the context of exhibition expose if it reflected on its umbilical cord linking it to the built and the functional — the city?

1. Tom Vandeputte, "Provisional Practices: In Conversation with Common Room." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 83.

2. David Gissen, *Museums of the City*, July 9, 2011. <http://htcexperiments.org/2011/07/09/museums-of-the-city/>

3. Mahan Javadi, *Public Notations*, February 7, 2012. <http://www.designboom.com/readers/public-notations-by-mahan-javadi-salome-nikuradze-novka-cosovic/>

4. Didier Faustino, *(G)host in the (S)hell*, 2008. <http://didierfaustino.com/2008/12/ghost-in-the-shell/>

A number of exhibitions and projects have explored the gesture of moving into the city, pronouncing various links between the exhibition, museum, architecture and the city. David Gissen's *Museum of the City* (2011) project, investigates "how the type of lights, vitrines, podia, stanchions, and scaffolds used to protect, maintain, and visualize historical objects within museums might migrate out into the city at large."² This move to the city displaces the architectural apparatus within the museum into the city, transforming matter into a more public and external form.



[5.1] David Gissen *Museum of the City*
Cross Bronx Expressway (2011)

Public Notations, a project by Mahan Javadi, Salome Nikuradze and Novka Cosovic (2012) demarcated building and streets in Brooklyn and New York with life size architectural notations (North arrows, architectural scales and linear/radial dimensions).³ The move of two-dimensional notations into the city acts like a memorial site (a reminder) to architecture and the design process, making a remote action into a public gesture. *(G)host in the (S)hell*, an exhibition at the Storefront for Art and Architecture (2008)[5.4-5.5], highlights another particular move to the city by creating an interstitial space, between inside and outside the gallery. The exhibition opened up

all the revolving panels in the façade of Storefront as well as the doors of the gallery through the design of chain-link fences. Incidentally, this allowed the curator to get into the building by climbing over the fences when he forgot his keys one day.⁴ This ambivalence between what is public and what is private space was also explored in the exhibition design by Looping Architecture for the exhibition *Platz da! European Urban Public Space* at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna (2011).

[5.2-5.3] *Public Notations*
demarcating the street with
architecture (2012)





[5.4-5.5] *(G)host in the (S)hell*
exhibition at the Storefront for Art and
Architecture (2008)
-diffusing borders between public and
private, inside and outside

In a conversation I have had with Christa Stuerzlinger from Looping Architecture (see appendix B), she talks about how the architectural concept of the apparatus was inspired by the curatorial theme of public issues. She explains, “we tried to transfer ‘somehow’ the situation of public space into the exhibition and to install public, private and public-private spaces inside.”⁵ Taking inspiration from the set design of *Dogville* [5.6], a film by Lars Von Trier, the idea of defining borders translated into creating and defining public and private spaces both inside and outside the exhibition space through barriers and thresholds. Fragments of wall, windows and windowsills in the city found their way into the exhibition space. Stuerzlinger discusses the concept of layering the wall with wallpaper to define inside and with advertisements to define outside. The exhibition design thus made a link with the city in three ways: it reminded visitors of the city—of urban space— it grew out into the real public space [5.7, 5.8] (the courtyard between the Old and New Hall of the Architekturzentrum) and allowed various insights into the exhibition from this courtyard, thus enabling people to see the exhibition without really being in it.

Moving back into the city can be seen as a second displacement of objects, the first being the exhibition removing objects from their “rightful places, their application, their points of reference”⁶ to a different spatial setting. In this light, the exhibition is always a different reality. This different reality may, however, create an environment that is recognizable and meaningful at the same time. EventArchitectuur, an Eindhoven-based design company, discuss the use of the 1:1 scale model as an architecture typology and alienating element.⁷ They explain:

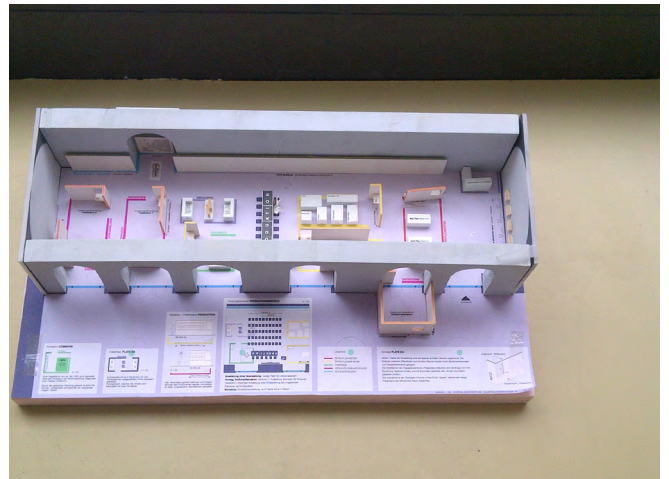
.....an interesting aspect is the alienating quality engendered by the unusual scale and materialization: people may recognize the typology of the space immediately, but nevertheless the space does not function in the normal way, inviting you to readjust the way you relate to the specificity of this space and what is being displayed within it.⁸

5. Christa Stuerzlinger, Interview by author. Tape recording. Looping Architecture Office, Vienna, February 25, 2013. (Note: all quotes by Stuerzlinger in this section of text were taken from this interview)

6. Boris Podrecca, “The Exhibition: A Substitute Reality,” in *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*, eds. Kristin Feireiss (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2001), 54.

7. Veronique Patteeuw and Tom Vandeputte, “When Things Merge: In Conversation with EventArchitectuur,” *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 97.

8. Patteeuw and Vandeputte, “When Things Merge: In Conversation with EventArchitectuur,” 97, 98.



[5.6] *Platz da! European Urban Public Space* at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna (2011).
-from Lars Von Trier to model making
to intervening in space to creating
space

[5.7, 5.8] *Platz da! European Urban Public Space* at the Architekturzentrum in Vienna (2011).
-leaving the museum boundary



What if the 1:1 scale model migrated back out into to the city? In his essay “Exhibition as Laboratory” Florian Kossak opines that the architectural installation does not have to be confined to the gallery of museum space. He explains only one premise: “the installation is installed within an existing space, and furthermore is conceived in reaction to this existing space and transforms it through its existence.”⁹

9. Kossak, “Exhibiting architecture: the installation as laboratory for emerging architecture,” 120.

Can then the space of the installation be an interior enclosed space just as it can be an exterior open space? Exhibitions are carried back to the city in people’s memories, but what if we started to think about exhibitions as miniature landscapes that move between the museum and the city? [5.9] Shaping the City travelled to four cities, four galleries and thus experienced ‘life and death’ four times. What if the exhibition travelled to the city in between its journey to another gallery? In reflection, what if an exhibition on the city moved into the city? Might this point at other possibilities of exhibiting architecture?

What if the city welcomed particular exhibitionary practices? What might the movement of notations and certain rhetorical and display strategies from the museum into the city, as displace, uncover or create? The temporal condition of the exhibition means the installation will cease to exist once it is removed from its spatial context. But what if the exhibition travelled through various spatial contexts, between inside and outside, just like an exhibition might travel between galleries. Might such a journey reflect back to architecture and the urban realm?

This reflection comes from contemplating on a specific image in mind: that of the exhibition architecture without the curatorial narrative, in drawing or model form. What happens when the narrative is removed? Should it say something? Is it still exhibition architecture? What happens when a building is not used for its purpose? Is it still architecture?

[5.9] from narrative to
narrative and form to form: moving
the exhibition apparatus into the city





[5.10] The Old Hall at the
Architekturzentrum Wien:
one space, 3 exhibitions, 3
architectures, 3 lives and 3 deaths.

Part Two- | Leaving the museum, opening to architectural practice

The ambiguous zone between public and private space, explored in the exhibition *Platz da! European Urban Public Space* and what it entails in terms of the physical move out to the city invokes the effect of a gestural move out to the city and to the practice of architecture. The central issue here is looking at exhibition-making as part of architectural practice.

For Jeffrey Kipnis the mission of a curator is to “see architecture exhibitions as a practice.....to re-originate the life of architecture—its talents, achievements, and foibles—in the medium of the exhibition.”¹⁰ The exhibition can thus be seen not only as a site for presenting and displaying architecture but also as a site for production and discourse. The architecture exhibition can be taken as an “arena of questioning and redefining in the same way as with architecture.”¹¹

What is architecture’s true medium? Professor Adrian Forty writes in his essay “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: A Short History of the Architectural Exhibitions”, “far from being a single medium activity, architecture has, since the sixteenth century, always involved multiple media, operating variously through building, drawing, writing, speaking—and, since the early twentieth century—photography, film and exhibitions.”¹² The exhibition should therefore not be seen as a cipher for other modes of representation but instead as a medium in itself, one of the various modes through which architecture is explored, reflected on and carried out.

What the architecture exhibition displays should not be seen as a substitute for something ‘real’. Although the exhibition suffers from a temporal fate, it is still an efficient tool for reflection and communication and can influence architectural discourse.¹³ Exhibition-making can therefore be examined as a process of acquiring new means to practise architecture. A building is not the best way to explore an architectural idea.¹⁴ While testing and questioning the limits of architecture can occur in building, drawing and writing, it can also occur in the exhibition setting. Furthermore, Tina Di Carlo has argued, “the gallery or exhibition hall becomes one discursive element within a spatial practice that mobilizes architecture within and outside the institution.”¹⁵

10. Jeffrey Kipnis, “Exhibiting Architecture: The Praxis Questionnaire for Architectural Curators.” *Praxis Journal of Writing and Building*, no. 7 (2005): 110.

11. Ota, “Curating as Architectural Practice,” 142.

12. Forty, “Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: A Short History of Architectural Exhibition,” 5.

13. Mirko Zardini, “Exhibiting and Collecting Ideas: A Montreal Perspective.” *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 78.

14. Jonathan Hill, “Criticism by Design,” in *Critical Architecture* eds. Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser and Mark Dorian (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 166.

15. Tina Di Carlo, “Exhibitionsim.” *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 151.

In her essay *Exhibitionism*, Tina Di Carlo explains, “exhibitionism by definition connotes a display that acts, conflict as productive, and an aberrant mode of behaviour.” She begins a questioning of what this aberrance and conflict as a performative act can provide? Or reveal? She also questions what the 1:1 objects in the exhibition can command and enable. She asks:

Could they suggest the gallery as a place of experimentation,
an alternative form of looking as productive, that exposes
instead of displays, that acts, proposes? Could such a method
and forum suggest a practice that is both documentary and
propositional, performative and productive as architecture? ¹⁶

16. Di Carlo, “Exhibitionism,” 157.

17. Di Carlo, “Exhibitionism,” 157.

18. Di Carlo, “Exhibitionism,” 151.

19. Kristin Feireiss, “It’s not about Art”, in *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*, eds Kristin Feireiss (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2001), 14.

Examining exhibitionism as Di Carlo does, as a “method and open project”¹⁷ proposes the exhibition designer as a spatial expert within a broader spatial discourse. “What would it mean to speak through an exhibition rather than about it?”¹⁸ Might speaking through suggest exposing and reflecting on the exhibition process? The possibilities of exhibition design will be highlighted, where architecture unfolds and evolves beyond what is on display. Highlighting a productive way of looking at the architecture exhibition—looking at the exhibition as a productive space—contributes to the notion that the exhibition is a medium significant to the practice of architecture and architectural education, not just for the museum. Talking about the architecture exhibition is a “never-ending story”¹⁹; the exhibition can engage with and beyond the museum can engage itself inside and beyond the museum, creating many opportunities for stories to emerge. The idea of the exhibition as a medium rich in stories and possibilities will emerge when the role of the architect, architecture and architectural thinking is not just considered but made visible and reflected upon.

CODA

The architecture exhibition exhibits architecture inside architecture and sometimes with architecture. So, how does the architecture exhibition relate to the discipline of architecture? And what might approaching the exhibition from an architectural perspective reveal? The architecture exhibition can be seen as a medium where objects are on display for a short span of time. However, the process underlying the making of the exhibitions deserves our attention and careful analysis with a view to revealing hidden spatial stories and surprises within this temporal setting.

The exhibition process is rarely expounded. Typically, it is left hidden behind sketchbooks, drawings and models that remain in the design studio. This is quite unfortunate because through the apprehension of the exhibition process, a productive way of looking at the exhibition emerges.

When architecture first started to exhibit in the modern museum, it was its ability to produce space that went missing. Exhibitions, however, construct spatial stories, denoting that the architecture exhibition does not only exhibit architecture in the space of the museum but is also constitutive of this space and can produce architecture in this space. These spatial stories within the exhibition and meanings of the exhibition emerge from the exhibition itself, its architecture and process. While little attention is paid to the exhibition — beyond its final state— it is in the processes of designing and construction the exhibition where the architect and architecture plays interesting roles. The design of the exhibition is thus not confined to the museum or the museum professional but extends to reach architecture and the architect. Looking at, talking about and reflecting on how this extension occurs can be valuable, fruitful and productive for architecture.

The exhibition process says something about architecture, allowing it to be more than what is on display in the exhibition setting. Documentation of the exhibition process also makes the role of the architect and architecture visible. The idea of the architect as an author and creator of space, as a choreographer of objects and people, as a scripter of atmosphere, and as a communicator of messages through spatial and bodily terms becomes apparent when looking at the exhibition process. Looking at the exhibition through its process is thus productive for architecture not just for the museum, highlighting the possibilities of exhibition design as well as potential for research, architectural thinking and reflection. In this light, the exhibition, as explored in this study, does not make conclusive statements about architecture or say anything about what architecture is but it opens up questions about the role of architecture in the exhibition, its design and process.

Through an exploration of certain exhibitions and their processes, the study is not concluding here but ending with an opening — an opening instead of an ending — to highlight the relationships, suggestions and questions this study proposes. An intimate insight into the exhibition design process through access to documentation that is rarely talked about as well as conversations with designers reveals a productive way of looking at the role of the architect and architecture in the exhibition. This process suggests interesting roles of architecture in the apparatus,

the creation of space and production of atmosphere. The dissertation thus hopes to open up a discussion about the importance of looking at the design of the exhibition for the architectural profession and education. The role of the curator is made apparent in the museum, yet the role of the architect is still not equally visible. This role should not just be considered, but should be made visible and reflected upon. Thus, this study has aimed at bringing the role of the architecture and architecture into light and awakening curiosity with regards to particular architectural features in the exhibition through revealing particular roles and stories that are rarely discussed.

The nature of my multiple roles as a researcher, exhibition viewer, and architecture student led me to formulate particular curiosities and ways of looking at the selected exhibitions. Placing myself in a reflective mood — reflecting on my experience in the exhibition space, my architectural thinking in the space together with theoretical investigations, which enlighten my experience—allowed me to approach this study in a particular way. Through the weaving of various materials — memories and documentations of my encounter with an exhibition space, conversations with designers, allowing me a particular access into the exhibition process, as well as my reflective thinking as a researcher, exhibition viewer and architecture student — architecture emerged not only in one dimension via drawings, models and images on display but also in the imaginary – the many roles architecture can play in the exhibition setting.

Beyond the inherent temporality that defines the exhibition and the constraints of space, it is still a medium where envisioning architecture futures and possibilities are possible. The destiny of the exhibition is not to dissolve, after its ‘death’, into photos of the final product on site, text or the catalogue publication but instead provide another way of understanding the architectural profession and its processes, what architecture can be and how it can be communicated. In this light, beyond the question whether architecture can ever be exhibited in the exhibition, the exhibition is a productive space.

The exhibition is another means of engaging in the spatial practice of architecture—a way of exploring, reflecting on and occupying the built environment in a temporal spatial setting. This spatial setting—the museum—welcomed architecture in the mid-nineteenth century and is still an ongoing process of inquiry, reflection and production. The exhibition challenges the exhibition of architecture but does so in a setting with specific architectural qualities. Unlike a drawing, or photo or an architecture publication, the exhibition is a spatial setting, providing an opportunity for architectural ideas to be narrated and experienced in a spatial way, telling a story through architectonic means.

My visit to the Architecture Biennale allowed me to see and reflect on the role of architecture in choreographing the relations between the display, the work and the public engagement in the space. Taking this curiosity to exploring the exhibition site and its process, I discovered that the exhibition positions architecture in a different context, one of many layers, one open to many stories and surprises and worth considering in relation to the architectural discipline at large. While the exhibition environment has a unique communicative role, it does not only communicate

architecture but creates new approaches for engaging with architecture and, like architecture other techniques such as interior architecture, scenography, graphic design, digital media and lighting. The objective of the exhibition is not to exhibit architecture that is absent but to provide a platform to propose, reflect and comment on architecture.

Insight into the process of making the exhibition reveals a productive way of understanding its context – one that has the potential to create a space for displaying architecture but also constituting this space and choreographing modes of perceiving this space. The exhibition offers a new idea of engaging with and displaying architecture, departing from the traditional white cube setting and images hung at eye level. Instead, the exhibition encounters a theme in an intervention that can reveal theoretical and spatial speculations. The architectural exhibition is an emerging medium and an important interactive site for learning, experimenting and sharing knowledge that also allows for the testing of the boundaries of architecture itself.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Material

Bogner, Dieter. Interview by author. Bogner.cc Office, Vienna, February 21, 2013.

Dessing, Anne. E-mail to the author. April 19, 2013.

Forlati, Silvia. Interview by author. Tape recording. SHARE Architects Office, Vienna, February 21, 2013.

Laberge, Marie Elizabeth. Email to the author. April 2, 2013.

Marringer, Alexandra. E-mail to the author. March 15, 2013.

Marringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.

Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.

Moser, Johann. E-mail to the author. April 8, 2013.

Platzer, Monika. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 19, 2013.

Ritter Katharina, and Petritsch, Paul. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 22, 2013.

“Soviet Modernism 1955-1991 Unknown Stories.” Architekturzentrum Wien. Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Vienna, Austria. 18, 19, and 22 February 2013.

Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013.

Stuerzlinger, Christa. Interview by author. Tape recording. Looping Architecture Office, Vienna, February 25, 2013.

Secondary Material

- Bergdoll, Barry. "Curating History." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 57, no.3 (1998): 257, 366. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/stable/991345> [accessed February 8, 2013].
- Blau, Eve. "Exhibiting Ideas." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 57, no.3 (1998): 256, 366. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/stable/991344> [accessed February 22, 2013].
- Carson, Chan. "Exhibiting architecture: show, don't tell." In *Domus*. September 17, 2010. <http://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2010/09/17/exhibiting-architecture-show-don-t-tell.html> [accessed March 3, 2013].
- Carson, Chan. "Measures of an Exhibition: Space, Not Art, Is the Curator's Primary Material." In *Fillip Publication of Art, Culture and Ideas* 2011. <http://fillip.ca/content/measures-of-an-exhibition> [accessed March 14, 2013].
- Carter, Jennifer. "Architecture by Design: Exhibiting Architecture Architecturally." *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): 25-51. <http://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16888/13881> [accessed February 8, 2013].
- Carter, Jennifer. "Editorial Introduction." *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): i-v. <http://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16886/13885> [accessed February 8, 2013].
- Chaplin Sarah, and Stara, Alexandra. *Curating Architecture and the City*. Oxon: Routledge, 2009.
- Chmielewska, Ella. "Material errata: Warsaw neons and socialist modernity." *The Journal of Architecture* 15, no.1 (2010): 53-70. http://www.gla.ac.uk/0t4/crcees/files/summerschool11/ss11_readinglist/Chmielewska.pdf [accessed February 20, 2013].
- Cohen, Louis-Jean. "Mirror of Dreams." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 11- 18.
- Cohen, Jean-Louis. "Exposing Architectural History." *The Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, no 3. (1999): 316-325. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/991524?origin=JSTOR-pdf> [accessed February 8, 2013].
- Dernie, David. *Exhibition Design*. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2006.
- Dessing, Anne. "Exhibition Articulations." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 113-126.
- Dezeen magazine. "Venice Arch Biennale 2012." <http://www.dezeen.com/events/2012/venice-arch-biennale-2012/> [accessed April 3 2013].
- Di Carlo, Tina. "Exhibitionsim." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 151-158.
- Dieter Schaal, Dieter. *In-Between: Exhibition Architecture*. Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 1999.
- Faustino, Didier. (G)host in the (S)hell, 2008. <http://didierfaustino.com/2008/12/ghost-in-the-shell/> [accessed April 6, 2013].
- Feireiss, Kristin. *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*. Rotterdam, Nai Publishers, 2001.

Forty, Adrian. "Ways of Knowing, Ways of Showing: A Short History of Architectural Exhibition." In *Representing Architecture. New Discussions: Ideologies, Techniques, Curation*. Edited by Sparke, Penny and Sudkic, Deyan. London: Design Museum, 2008. Essay sent in an email to the author. <https://mail.google.com/mail/#search/forty/13d12ce3b2668543> [accessed February 28, 2013].

Franz-Woels, Michael. "Urban Tremors." *The Architectural Review* 1383 (2012): 97.

Gissen, David. Museums of the City, July 9, 2011. <http://htcexperiments.org/2011/07/09/museums-of-the-city/> [accessed January 2, 2013].

Javadi, Mahan. Public Notations, February 7, 2012. <http://www.designboom.com/readers/public-notations-by-mahan-javadi-salome-nikuradze-novka-cosovic/> [accessed December 22, 2012].

Klein, Erich. "Im Wirbel der Akanthusblätter." *Der Falter* 46, no. 12 (2012): 31

Kossak, Florian. "Exhibiting architecture: the installation as laboratory for emerging architecture." In *Curating Architecture and the City*, edited by Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara, 117- 128. Oxon: Routledge, 2009.

Laberge, Marie Elizabeth. "Communiquer l'architecture par le media exposition." *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): 82-108. <http://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16897> [accessed February 17, 2013].

Lambert, Phyllis. "The Architectural Museum: A Founder's Perspective." *The Journal of Architectural Historians*. Vol 58, no. 3 (1999): 308-315. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/991523?origin=JSTOR-pdf> [accessed February 22, 2013].

Lavin, Sylvia. "A little less conversation please." In *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol 64, no. 2 (2011): 83. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1531314X.2010.01131.x/abstract> [accessed February 6, 2013].

Lawrence, Amanda, and Schafer, Ashley. "Exhibiting Architecture: The Praxis Questionnaire for Architectural Curators." *Praxis Journal of Writing and Building*, no. 7 (2005): 106-119.

Lawrence, Amanda, and Schafer, Ashley. "Curating Culture." *Praxis Journal of Writing and Building*, no. 7 (2005): 4-5.
Macdonald, Sharon, and Basu Paul. Exhibition Experiments. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Macleod, Suzanne. *Reshaping Museum Space: architecture, design, exhibitions*. Oxon: Routledge, 2005.

Macleod, Suzanne, Hourston Hanks Laura, and Hale Jonathan. *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions*. Oxon: Routledge, 2012.

Maringer, Alexandra. "Maringorama." Alexandra Maringer. <http://www.maringorama.com/> [accessed February 19 2013].

Mattern, Shannon. "Animated Spaces: Experience and Context in Interaction and Architectural Design Exhibitions." In *Words in Space*, December 2, 2012. <http://www.wordsinspace.net/wordpress/2012/12/02/animated-spaces-experience-and-context-in-interaction-and-architectural-design-exhibitions/> [accessed March 23 2013].

Miller, Abbott. "From Object to Observer." In *Eye Magazine* Autumn, 2006. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/from-object-to-observer> [accessed February 18, 2013].

Monpetit, Raymond. "Making sense of space." In *Museum International* Vol 47, no. 1 (1995): 41-45. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0033.1995.tb01223.x/abstract> [accessed March 23, 2013].

Mueller, Marianne. "The Exhibition as Social Ground." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 90-95.

Ota, Kayoko. "Curating as Architectural Practice." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 141-150.

Pamuk, Orhan. *The Museum of Innocence*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2009.

Patteeuw, Veronique, Vandeputte, Tom, and Van Gerrewey, Christophe. "The Exhibition as Productive Space." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 1-5.

Patteeuw, Veronique, and Vandeputte, Tom. "When Things Merge: In Conversation with EventArchitectuur." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 96-108.

Podrecca, Boris. "The Exhibition: A Substitute Reality." In *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*, edited by Kristin Feireiss, 54-58. Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2001.

Rashid, Hani. "Installing Space." In *The Art of Architecture Exhibitions*, edited by Kristin Feireiss, 34-42. Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2001.

Rendell, Jane, Hill Jonathan, Fraser Murray and Dorrian, Mark. *Critical Architecture*. Oxon: Routledge, 2007.

Saville, John Stephen. "Playing with fear: parkour and the mobility of emotion." *Social and Cultural Geography* 9, no 8 (2008): 891-914.

Schwarz, Ulrich, Bertron, Aurelia, and Frey, Claudia. *Designing Exhibitions: A Compendium for Architects, Designers and Museum Professionals*. Basel: Birkhauser, 2006.

Searing, Helen. "The Architecture Gallery." *The Journal of Architectural Historians*. Vol 65, no. 1 (2006): 115-118. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25068242?origin=JSTOR-pdf> [accessed February 22, 2013].

Shaping the Great City: Modern Architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1937. Edited by Eve Blau and Monika Platzer. Prestel: Bundesministerium fuer Unterricht und Kulturelle Angelegenheiten, Vienna, The Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, and The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 1999. Catalogue for an exhibition at the Municipal House in Prague, December 15, 1999 through March 1, 2000, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, May 23 through October 15, 2000, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, February 20 through May 13, 2001 and the Kunstforum Wien, Vienna, June 6 through August 28, 2001.

Sorkin, Michael. *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2009.

Soviet Modernism 1955-1991: Unknown History. Edited by Katharina Ritter, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, Dietmar Steiner, and Alexandra Wachter. Park Books: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2012. Catalogue of an exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien, November 7, 2012 through February 25, 2013.

Steierhoffer, Eszter. "The Exhibitionary Complex of Architecture." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 5-14.

Storrie, Calum. *The Delirious Museum: A Journey from the Louvre to Las Vegas*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006.

Szacka, Lea Catherine. "The 1980 Architecture Biennale: The Street as a Spatial and Representational Device." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 14-26.

The 1920s: age of the metropolis. Edited by Jean Clair. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada, 1991. Catalogue for an exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, June 20 through November 10, 1991.

Tupitsyn, Margarita. *El Lissitzky: beyond the Abstract Cabinet: photography, design, collaboration*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1999.

Urbach, Henry. "Exhibition as Atmosphere." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 11- 18.

Ursprung, Philip. "The Indispensable Catalogue." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 49- 54.

Vandeputte, Tom. "Provisional Practices: In Conversation with Common Room." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 82-90.

Watson, Fleur. "Beyond Art, The Challenge of Exhibiting Architecture." In *D*Hub* March 6, 2008. <http://www.dhub.org/beyond-art-the-challenge-of-exhibiting-architecture/> [accessed March 4, 2013].

Wood, Jon. "The studio in the gallery?" In *Reshaping Museum Space: architecture, design, exhibitions*, edited by Suzanne Macleoud, 158-169. Oxon: Routledge, 2005.

Zardini, Mirko. "Exhibiting and Collecting Ideas: A Montreal Perspective." *Log Journal for Architecture*, no. 20 (2010): 77- 84.

Zardini, Mirko. "Mostre e promesse di architettura/Exhibitions and Promises of Architecture." *LOTUS Quarterly Architecture Magazine* 146 (2011): 89-96.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

[1] Ifram, Luma. "2012 Venice Biennale Map (unfolded)" Photograph. 2012. Venice, Italy

[2] Ifram, Luma. "unfolding the map" Photograph. 2012. Venice, Italy

[3]. Maringer, Alexandra. "Sketchbook drawings" 2012. (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. E-mail to the author. March 15, 2013.)

CHAPTER 1: exhibiting architecture

[1.1]. Bayer, Herbert. "Diagram of extended vision in exhibition presentation." Drawing, 1930. http://www.juxtapost.com/site/permlink/d7bd2d20-1954-11e2-9fbf-85330f4fcc15/post/herbert_bayer_ideas_about_the_extended_field_of_vision_1935/ (accessed March 24, 2013)

[1.2-1.3] El-Lissitzky / 1929 Film and Photography Exhibition in Stuttgart. Photograph. From: Tupitsyn, Margarita. El Lissitzky: beyond the *Abstract Cabinet: photography, design, collaboration*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1999.

[1.4] Ifram, Luma . "Soviet Modernism 1955-1991: Unknown stories exhibition" Photograph. 2013 Vienna, 18 February.

[1.5] Ifram, Luma. sketchbook. (entry 18, February 2013, Architekturzentrum Wien, Soviet Modernism Exhibition) *sketching the permeability of the space*

[1.6] Ifram, Luma. sketchbook. (entry 18, February 2013, Architekturzentrum Wien, Soviet Modernism Exhibition)

[1.7] Ifram, Luma. sketchbook. (entry 18, February 2013, Architekturzentrum Wien, Soviet Modernism Exhibition) *field of vision: from the teal carpet to the bare neon lighting*

[1.8] Ifram, Luma. "navigating through the space." Photograph. 19 February, 2013 In Soviet Modernism exhibition, Architekturzentrum Wien

[1.9] Ifram, Luma. "details of the apparatus." Photograph. 19 February, 2013. In Soviet Modernism exhibition, Architekturzentrum Wien

[1.10] Petritsch, Paul. "exhibition concept", 2012. (accessed: Ritter Katharina, and Petritsch, Paul. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 22, 2013.)

[1.11] Ifram, Luma. "leaning wall panels." Photograph. February 2013, Vienna, Austria.

[1.12] Petritsch, Paul. "Alte Halle Konzept", 2012. (accessed: Ritter Katharina, and Petritsch, Paul. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 22, 2013.)

[1.13] Ifram, Luma. "the first moment." Photograph. February 2013, Vienna, Austria.

[1.14] Ifram, Luma. "the second moment." Photograph. February 2013, Vienna, Austria.

CHAPTER 2: making the exhibition

[2.1, 2.2] Moser, Johann. "Bogdan Bogdanović : The Doomed Architect Ausstellung" Photograph. 2009 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.3, 2.4] Moser, Johann. "Ausstellung Exponate" Presentation Material. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.5] Moser, Johann. "Konzept Modelle" Photograph of Model. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.6] Moser, Johann. "Visualisierung, Ausstellung Bogdan Bogdanovic" Visualisation. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.6, 2.7] Moser, Johann. "Concept drawing 1" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.8, 2.9] Moser, Johann. "Concept drawing 2" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013.)

[2.10] Moser, Johann. "Scheme Aufhaengung" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013).

[2.11] Moser, Johann. "Konzept Tischvitrine1" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013).

[2.12] Moser, Johann. "Konzept Tischvitrine 4" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013).

[2.13] Moser, Johann. "Konzept Tischvitrine 2" Sketch. 2008 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013).

[2.14-2.17] Moser, Johann. "Baustelle. Ausstellung Bogdan Bogdanovic" Photographs. 2009 (accessed: Moser, Johann. Interview by author. Tape recording. BWM Architekten Office, Vienna, February 19, 2013).

CHAPTER 3: spatial wonders of the exhibition

[3.1] Kiesler, Frederick. "City in Space" 1925. <http://www.kiesler.org/cms/index.php?lang=3&idcat=18> (accessed: 23 February, 2013)

[3.2] J. Paul Getty Museum Newsletter "Shaping the Great City Feature" Newsletter article, 2001. (accessed: Bogner, Dieter. Interview by author. Bogner.cc Office, Vienna, February 21, 2013.)

[3.3-3.5] Shaping the Great City (Canadian Centre for Architecture) "installation view" Photograph 2000. Carter, Jennifer. "Architecture by Design: Exhibiting Architecture Architecturally." *Media Tropes* Vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): 25-51. <http://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/Mediatropes/article/view/16888/13881> (accessed February 8, 2013).

[3.6] Steiner, Norbert. "Concept model for the Municipal House, Prague" Photograph of Model. 1999. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.7] Steiner, Norbert. "Concept model for the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal" Photograph of Model. 1999. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.8] Steiner, Norbert. "Concept model for the Kunstfroum Wien, Vienna" Photograph of Model. 1999. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.9] Steiner, Norbert. "Austellung Mythos" Drawing. 2000. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.10] Steiner, Norbert. "Austellung Mythos" Photographs of Models. 2000. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.11] Sputnik. "Austellungs Konzept" Drawing, 2000. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.12] Sputnik. "Projet Mythos Grosssdadt Kunstforum Wien Axo" Drawing, 2001. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.13] Sputnik. "Projet Mythos Grosssdadt Kunstforum Wien Schnitt A-A" Drawing, 2001. (accessed: Steiner, Norbert. Interview by author. Tape recording. Sputnik Office, Vienna February 25, 2013)

[3.14] Szacka, Lea-Catherine. "View of the Strada Novissima" 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale. From Szacka, Lea Catherine. "The 1980 Architecture Biennale: The Street as a Spatial and Representational Device." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012)

[3.14-3.17] Dessing, Anne. "Exhibition Articulations" Drawing 2012. From Dessing, Anne. "Exhibition Articulations." *OASE Journal for Architecture*, no. 88 (2012): 113-126.

[3.18-3.19] Bogner, Dieter. "Ausstellung Mythos Fotos" Photography of exhibition prototype. 2000. (accessed: Bogner, Dieter. Interview by author. Bogner.cc Office, Vienna, February 21, 2013.)

CHAPTER 4: ephemerality and the exhibition

[4.1] Ritter, Catharina “Hands on Urbanism exhibition flyer” Scan of exhibition flyer. 2012 (accessed: Ritter Katharina, and Petritsch, Paul. Interview by author. Tape recording. Architekturzentrum Vienna, February 22, 2013.)

[4.2-4.6] Maringer, Alexandra. “Hands on Urbanism Fotos” Photographs. 2012. (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.7,4.8] Maringer, Alexandra. “sketchbook notes” 2011. Sketchbook scan (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.9-4.11] Maringer, Alexandra. “inspiration photos” 2011. Photographs (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.12-4.14] Maringer, Alexandra. “Praesentation Mappe” 2011. Presentation slides (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.15] Maringer, Alexandra. “Construction tests” 2012. Photographs (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.16-4.18] Maringer, Alexandra. “Ausstellung Baustelle” 2012. Photographs (accessed: Maringer, Alexandra. Interview by author. Skype video call. March 8, 2013.)

[4.19-4.20] Krasny, Elke. “Hands-On Urbanism 1850-2012 “ Photograph 2012. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/labiennale/8184798849/> (March 3, 2013)

CHAPTER 5: leaving the museum....

[5.1] Gissen, David. “Museum of the City Cross Bronx Expressway” Visualisation 2011. <http://davidgissen.org/Project-Museums-of-the-City> (accessed: January 2, 2013)

[5.2-5.3] Cosovic, Novka “Public Notations” Photographs 2012. (accessed: Novka, Cosovic. E-mail to the author. January 8, 2013)

[5.4-5.5] Faustino, Didier. “(G)host in the (S)hell exhibition at the Storefront for Art and Architecture” Photograph 2008. <http://didierfaustino.com/2008/12/ghost-in-the-shell/> (accessed: April 6, 2013)

[5.6-5.8] Stuerzlinger, Chrita. “Austellung Fotos” Photograph. (accessed: Stuerzlinger, Christa, Interview by author. Tape recording. Looping Architecture Office, Vienna, February 25, 2013.)

[5.9] Ifram, Luma. “from narrative to narrative and form to form: moving the exhibition apparatus into the city” Photographic Collage, 2013. Edinburgh, Scotland.

[5.10] Ifram, Luma. “The Old Hall at the Architekturzentrum Wien: one space, 3 exhibitions, 3 architectures, 3 lives and 3 deaths” Photographic Collage, 2013. Edinburgh, Scotland.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Exhibition Placards

EXHIBITION

Soviet Modernism 1955-1991 ***Unknown Stories***

Exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien

Runtime: November 8, 2012 - February 25, 2013

Team of curators: Katharina Ritter, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, Alexandra Wachter

Exhibition design: Six & Petritsch

“Our aim was not to make architecture but to work against it, to make a non-architectural intervention somehow.”

Paul Petritsch



EXHIBITION

Bogdan Bogdanović. The Doomed Architect

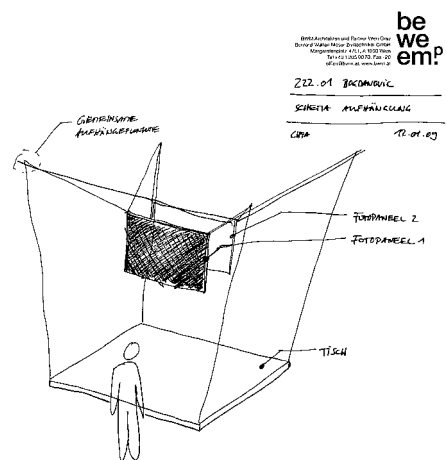
Exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien
Runtime: March, 5 - June 2, 2009

Curator: Ivan Ristić
Project coordination: Monika Platzer

Exhibition architecture: BWM Architekten und Partner

“The exhibition design emerged from an interpretation of the person of Bogdan Bogdanović.”

Johann Moser



EXHIBITION

Shaping the Great City: Modern Architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1937

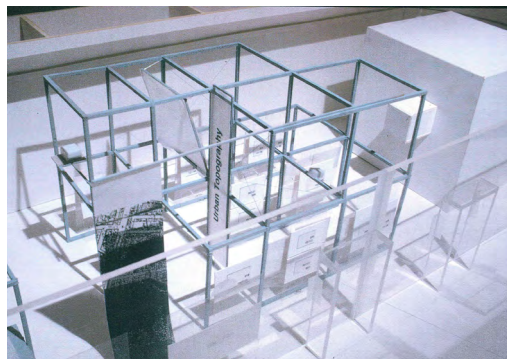
Municipal House, Prague (December 15, 1999 - March 1, 2000)
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal (May 23 - October 15, 2000)
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (February 20 - May 13, 2001)
Kunstforum Wien, Vienna (June 6 - August 28, 2001)

Team of curators: Eve Blau, Dieter Bogner, Monika Platzer

Exhibition architecture: Coop Himmelb(l)au (Design Architects), Sputnik (Project Architects)

“Architecture was necessary because otherwise it would have been a documentary exhibition of how it was back then.”

Norbert Steiner



EXHIBITION

Hands-On Urbanism 1850 - 2012: The Right to Green

Exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien
Runtime: March, 15 - June 25, 2012

Curator: Elke Krasny

Scenographer: Alexandra Maringer
Exhibition graphics: Alexander Schuh

“If it doesn’t create atmosphere, then why do it?”

Alexandra Maringer



EXHIBITION

Platz da! European Urban Public Space

Exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien
Runtime: October 14, 2010 - January 31, 2011

Curator: Andrea Seidling

Exhibition architecture: Looping Architecture
Graphic design: Thomas Kussin, buero8

“We tried to transfer ‘somehow’ the situation of public space into the exhibition and to install public, private and public-private spaces inside the exhibition.”

Christa Stuerzlinger



EXHIBITION

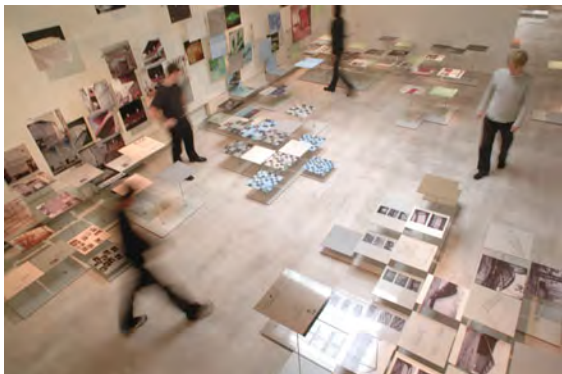
Wonderland Platform for Architecture TOUR

Exhibition at the Kärntens Haus der Architektur, St. Veit, Klagenfurt
Runtime: September 15 - October 1, 2006

Exhibition architecture: SHARE Architects

“We developed a flexible system that could adapt to different spaces.”

Silvia Forlati



APPENDIX B.1

Sample Questions considered as guidance for unstructured interviews with curators Monika Platzer, Katharina Ritter (curators at the Architekturzentrum Wien) and Dieter Bogner (Dieter Bogner cc)

- What is your role in mediating and creating the architectural exhibition?
- What architectural exhibition curated by someone other than yourself had the strongest impact on you and why?
- What can you reveal about collaborating with the exhibition designers? How do your different roles come together?
- What is the story (ideas, narratives, influences, inspiration) behind the exhibition?
- What is the relationship of your work and thinking about architecture?
- What is the role of architecture in curating an architecture exhibition?
- How was the exhibition designed to be accommodated to the display site?

APPENDIX B.2

Sample Questions considered as guidance for unstructured interviews with architects / designers Paul Petritsch (Six and Petritsch) Norbert Steiner (Sputnic), Christa Stuerzlinger (Looping Architecture), Johann Moser (BWM Architekten & Parter), and Silvia Forlati (Share Architects)

- What is your role in mediating and creating the architectural exhibition?
- Who/ What are your influences?
- What architectural exhibition designed by someone other than yourself had the strongest impact on you and why?
- What was the role of architecture in designing this architecture exhibition?
- What is the story (ideas, narratives, influences, inspiration) behind the design of this exhibition?
- How was the exhibition designed to be accommodated to the display site?
- What can you reveal about collaborating with the curators for this exhibition? How do your different roles come together?
- How do you consider the visitor in the exhibition? Revealing information to them? Signs of navigation/ wayfinding?
- What does the process of designing an architectural exhibition consist of?
- How does your architecture background affect the way you perceive, design and create space?
- How was the apparatus designed to 'carry' the exhibition across the various sites?
- There is very little said or written about the curatorial process and the exhibitionary apparatus in the architecture exhibition. Why do you think this is?
- What is the role of architecture in curating/ designing the architecture exhibition?
- Is there architecture in the architecture exhibition?
- Do you think the curatorial narrative and the exhibition design have an equal role in the architecture exhibition?
- Do you think exhibitions can be successful in exhibiting architecture?

APPENDIX B.3

Sample Questions considered as guidance for the unstructured interview with scenographer Alexandra Maringer.

-What is your role in mediating and creating the architectural exhibition?

-Who/ What are your influences?

-What architectural exhibition designed by someone other than yourself had the strongest impact on you and why?

-What is the difference between a design and scenography of an exhibition?

What is the story (ideas, narratives, influences, inspiration) behind the scenography of this exhibition?

-What was the role of architecture in designing this architecture exhibition?

-What is architecture in the architecture exhibition?

-How does your architecture background affect the way you perceive, design and create space?

-How was the exhibition designed to be accommodated to the display site?

-Catalogues and exhibition reviews rarely discuss the exhibition apparatus and the spatial qualities of the space, focusing on curatorial narratives instead. Why do you think this is the case? And does this need changing?

-What can you reveal about collaborating with the curators and others for this exhibition? How do your different roles come together?

-How was the exhibition adapted/ re-exhibited in the Venice Biennale 2012?

-What does the process of 'scenographing' an architectural exhibition consist of?

-What is the role of the map in the architecture exhibition? Do you think it can leave its territorial boundary and become a map that illustrates the spatial qualities and scenes of the exhibition?

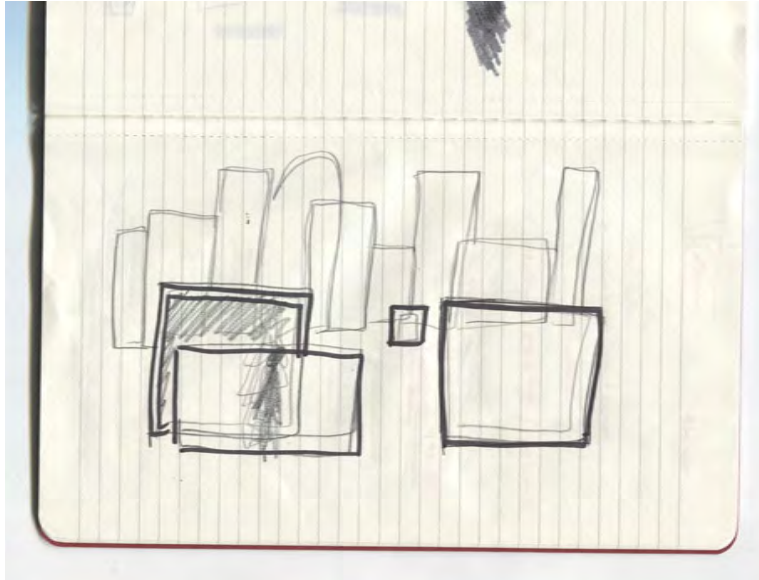
APPENDIX C

Fieldwork and other research material

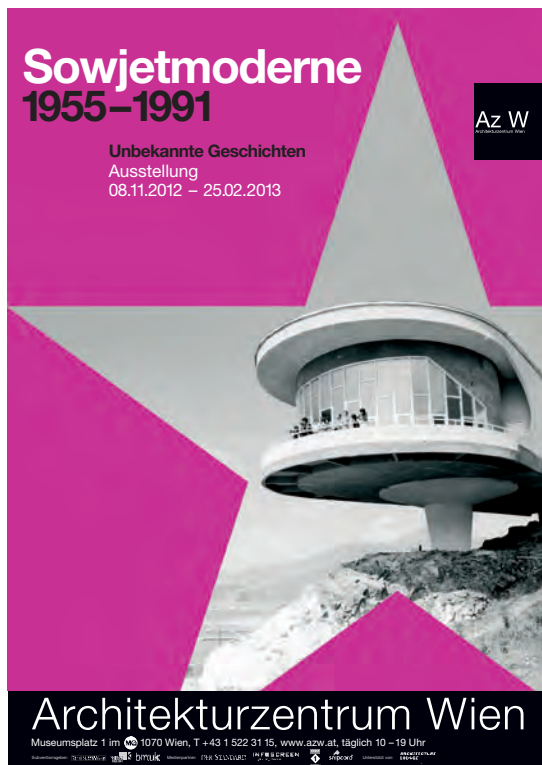
Exhibition *Soviet Modernism 1955-1991 Unknown Stories*.

Exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien , Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Vienna, Austria.

Dates of Visit: 18, 19, and 22 February 2013.



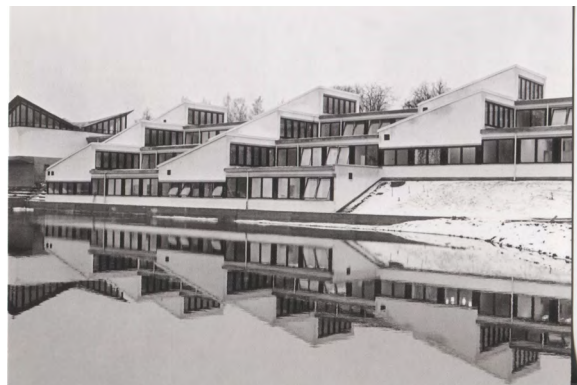
Sketchbook entry
frames occupying centre/panels
leaning against walls



Exhibition poster

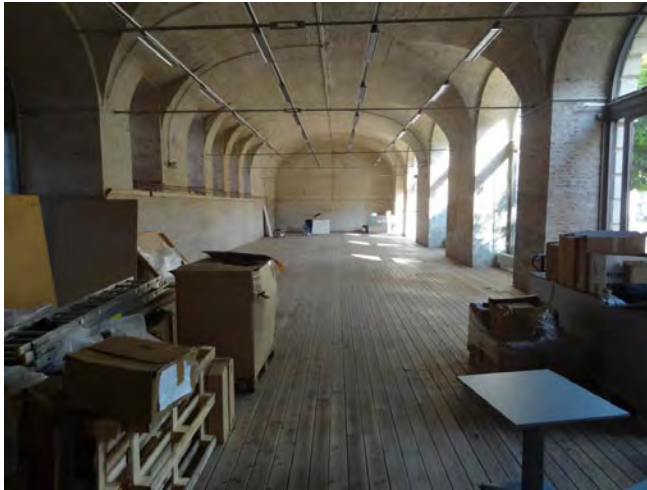
Exhibition postcards

Technical College, Estonia,
1968-1975

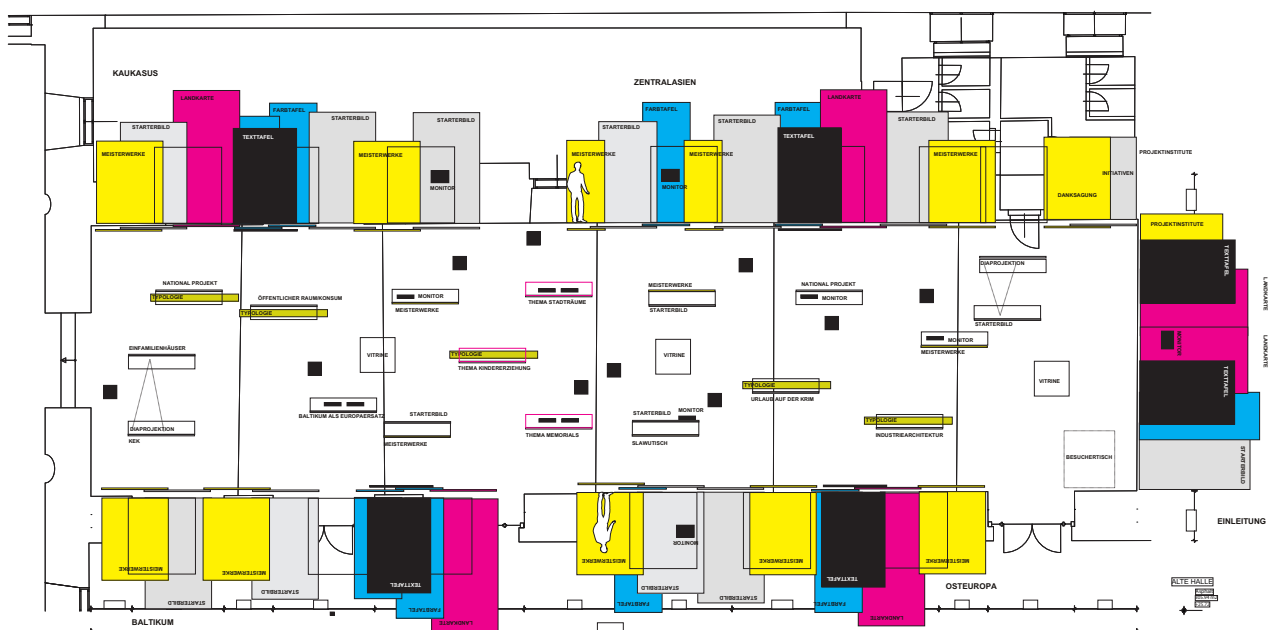


WDNCh, Georgia
1961





Exhibition concept test



Exhibition review
Der Standard
Vienna 10.11.2012
(1/2)



Eine Ausstellung über die Sowjetmoderne im Architekturzentrum Wien erzählt von der Vielfalt des Bauens an den Rändern des Imperiums. Von Maik Novotny

Dass die flachen Weiten des Ostens von Minsk bis Sibirien eine Fülle von Geschichten bergen, bezeugt die Weltliteratur mehr als deutlich. Dass sich Erzählungen auch aus der vermeintlich in öden Apparatschikberichten dokumentierten Periode der Planwirtschaft destillieren lassen, zeigte zuletzt *Rote Zukunft*, Francis Spuffords großartiger Doku-Roman-Hybrid über die vom Zukunftsoptimismus erfüllte Wirtschaftspolitik der Chruschtschow-Ära.

Parallel zur Neuorientierung zur „friedlichen Koexistenz“ mit dem Westen in der Nach-Stalin-Ära sorgte das Tauwetter auch für fruchtbaren Boden auf dem Feld der Architektur. Der Zuckerbäckerstil wurde entsorgt, Chruschtschow wollte es lieber geradlinig, nüchtern und transparent. Als es nach seiner Entmachtung unter Breschnew zur Dezentralisierung der Wirtschaft kam, war dies der Startschuss für einen regionalen Formenreichtum im Bauen.

Neben öffentlichen Gebäuden, wie sie zur selben Zeit auch in den bürokratischen Großplanungen westlicher Städte wie London und Frankfurt entstanden, fanden sich diese zu zeichenhafter Simplizität verdichteten Formen in Hotels, Sportarenen, Fernsehtürmen und Denkmälern wieder.

Heute werden die spektakulärsten Bauten dieser Spätmoderne der 60er- und 70er-Jahre, wohl nicht zuletzt aufgrund ihrer Ähnlichkeit mit der firmenlogoartigen Überwältigungsarchitektur der Nullerjahre, nach und nach wiederentdeckt. Auch die sowjetischen sind bereits zu Coffee-Table-Book-Würden gekommen, die Hintergründe bleiben bisher aber meist ausgespart.

Das ändert nun die Ausstellung *Sowjetmoderne 1955–1991*, die diese Woche im Wiener Architekturzentrum eröffnet wurde und die den perfekt passenden Untertitel *Unbekannte Geschichten* trägt. Denn Geschichten gibt es reichlich zu erzählen aus dem Vielvölkerstaat, in dessen zentral gesteuerten Planwirtschaft sich lokale Kuriositäten entwickelten und Traditionen nicht wegzubekommen waren.

Ursprünglich nur als Exkursion nach Armenien geplant, zeigt die Schau nun stolze 14 ehemalige Sowjetrepubliken. Aufgeteilt in vier Regionen, Baltikum, Osteuropa, Kaukasus und Zentralasien – Russland bleibt absichtlich ausge-

spart –, wird nun sichtbar, welche zum Teil ganz eigenen Wege das Bauen in den heute eigenständigen Staaten genommen hat.

In den von jeher stark an Mitteleuropa gebundenen baltischen Staaten konnte beispielsweise Estland auch zu Sowjetzeiten enge Bindungen zu Finnland halten, hier waren Einfamilienhäuser im Eigenbau erlaubt, die öffentlichen Bauten sind geprägt von skandinavischer Präzision und wohllicher Sparsamkeit. Als kurioses Zugeständnis an die katholisch geprägte Litauen wiederum wurden dort „Trauerpaläste“ als Kirchenersatz errichtet.

Der Trick mit dem Mosaik

Dass das Klichsée, hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang sei man von den Entwicklungen der westlichen Architektur abgeschottet gewesen, nicht zu halten ist, wie AzW-Leiter Dietmar Steiner bei der Eröffnung anmerkte, zeigen Bauten aus der Ukraine und Weißrussland. Der Sportpalast in Minsk von 1966 etwa ähnelt Roland Rainers zwei Jahre zuvor erbauter Stadthalle in Bremen, die Beton-schalen des Krematoriums in Kiew nahmen Bezug auf das Opernhaus in Sydney.

Ebenso wurde im Sozialismus nicht von anonymen Kollektiven entworfen, es gab namhafte Architekturpersönlichkeiten, die sich in öffentlichen Wettbewerben messen durften. Bis ins Detail rigide

durchgenormt war die Bauwirtschaft dennoch. Wie sich das ausdrücken ließ, zeigen vor allem die Geschichten aus dem Kaukasus und Zentralasien.

In Usbekistan entwickelten zwei schlaue Brüder eine Methode, genormte Fassadenplatten in handwerklicher Eigenarbeit ab Werk mit Mosaiken zu verzieren. In Georgien gelang es mit dem Argument, das lokale Klima und die Gefahr durch Erdbeben zwingt zur Anpassung der Wohnbauten von der Stange, dem Zentralstaat höhere Wohnräume und luftige Balkone abzutrotzen, und mit etwas Geschicklichkeit ließen sich architektonisch ahnungslosen Funktionären radikale Entwürfe als systemkonform verkaufen.

In Armenien hielt man die Bauprojekte künstlich so klein, dass sie den Genehmigungsprozess unterlaufen konnten, was Jerewan heute einen menschenfreundlichen Maßstab verleiht. Nach Protesten zum 50. Jahrestag des Massakers an den Armeniern von 1915 wurden außerdem nationale Bedürfnisse so weit anerkannt, dass man auf traditionelle Bauformen aus dem Mittelalter zurückgreifen konnte. Diese Mischung aus Archaisk und Technologie, die auch bei Großbauten wie dem Kino Rossija und dem Flughafen Jerewan beeindruckt, macht Armenien zu einem der faszinierendsten unter den gezeigten Staaten.

Von ihren teils abenteuerlichen Reisen in die Weiten des Ostens brachten die Kuratorinnen Katharina Ritter, Ekaterina Shapira-Obermair und Alexandra Wächter neben kistenweise Archivmaterial Reiseberichte, Interviews und Essays der beteiligten Architekten mit nach Wien. Diese unbekannten Geschichten aus der Innenperspektive sind der große Gewinn dieser Schau.

Die Ausstellung selbst verströmt, möbliert mit Tafeln in beamtenhaften Pastelltönen, authentischen bürokratischen Partei-zentralenflair im Minsk-1967-Look. Leider kommt in diesem etwas anämischen Arrangement der überbordende Formenreichtum der Bauten, die Entdeckungsfreude und der erzählerische Charme der Architekten zu kurz.

Doch das tut der Wichtigkeit der Dokumentation keinen Abbruch. Unbestreitbar ist: Die technisch mutigen und architektonisch vielfältigen Bauten müssen sich in den Nachschlagewerken der Weltarchitektur nicht verstecken. Es lohnt sich also, einen vielleicht letzten Blick auf sie zu erhaschen: Viele der von den neuen Regimes meist ungeliebten Bauten sind vom Abriss ebenso bedroht wie ihre Verwandten aus der Nachkriegszeit im Westen.

„Sowjetmoderne 1955–1991“, Architekturzentrum Wien, bis 25.2.2013. Der Katalog kostet 48,- Euro.



Kaukasische Bandbreiten der Sowjetmoderne: der Brutalismus des Transportministeriums in Tiflis (oben), die traditionellen Formen des Basars in Baku und die kosmopolitische Schwerelosigkeit des Erholungshelms für Schriftsteller in Armenien.
Fotos: Simone Rota, Eduard Gabrielyan

Im Wirbel der Akanthusblätter

Das Architektur Zentrum Wien schießt mit seiner Begeisterung
für die Sowjetmoderne übers Ziel hinaus



AUSSTELLUNGSKRITIK:
ERICH KLEIN

Ein Sechstel der Erde, 300 Millionen Menschen. Die Sowjetunion sah sich bis zu Stalins Tod 1953 gerne selbst als mächtigstes Imperium der Weltgeschichte. Mit Chruschtschows Sputnik und dem Kalten Krieg kam der Fall. Was zwischen „Taufwetter“ und dem glanzlosen Ende der UdSSR 1991 in den 14 Republiken außerhalb Russlands gebaut wurde, zeigt das Architektur Zentrum Wien mit „Sowjetmoderne 1955–1991 – Unbekannte Geschichte“.

Man wolle aufräumen mit dem Klischee, dass es zwischen dem litauischen Vilnius und dem kasachischen Almaty nur Plattenbauten gegeben hätte und dass Sowjetarchitektur in den kaukasischen oder mittelasiatischen Büros nur von anonymen Kollektiven geplant worden wäre.

Wer immer das behauptet haben mag – jeder Sowjettourist konnte sich vom Gegenteil überzeugen –, mit seiner wiederentdeckten Begeisterung für die Nachkriegsmoderne schießt AzW-Chef Dietmar Steiner gehörig übers Ziel hinaus: „Staat und Kommune, die öffentliche Hand, waren die wichtigsten Auftraggeber architektonischer Repräsentation, und nicht die Marktkräfte neoliberaler Investoren. Das Thema der Zeit war: die große Form für die große Zahl, das Experiment in räumlicher und konstruktiver Dimension – im Westen wie im Osten.“

Bisher wählte man die Konversionstheorie als überholt und konnte zwischen dem „Sozialismus mit menschlichem Antlitz“ von Chruschtschow & Co und der sozialen Marktwirtschaft des Westens doch einen kleinen Unterschied ausmachen: Der östliche Patient war nach dem Experiment tatsächlich tot, seine Bauten verrotteten nutzlos.

Zur Charakterisierung der „vegetarischen Phase“ des Kommunismus wurde in der Sowjetunion gerne folgender Witz erzählt: „Wer ist Breschnew? – Ein kleiner Diktator in der Epoche von Sacharow und Solschenizyn!“ Bezeichnenderweise galten ein Physiker und ein Schriftsteller als

die Dekonstruktivisten der Diktatur. Und nach einem sowjetischen Architekten von Weltgeltung sucht man in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts ohnehin vergeblich.

Der Aufbruch in der Architektur begann – nach einem Erlass gegen die „Unmäßigkeit im Bauwesen“ – in den 1960er-Jahren entsprechend fromm. „Die Akanthusblätter flogen von den Kapitellen, der Vorsprung der Gesimse wurde gekürzt und Einsparungen berechnet.“ Diese Kurzfassung der architektonischen Entstalinisierung stammt von Felix Novikow – gebürtig aus Baku, Aserbaidschan. Ein spätstalinistischer Moskauer Wohnbau wurde mit geringen Abänderungen gerade noch fertiggestellt, später führte Novikow vom Moskauer Zentrum aus auch in Bucharra und Samarkand Projekte durch.

Die vorrangige Aufgabe der 1960er lag im Wohnungsbau. Das Planziel, demzufolge jeder Sowjetbürger bis 1980 eine Gratiswohnung bekommen sollte, führte zur Entstehung der unionsweit stilbildenden und tatsächlich uniformen vier- bis fünfstöckigen „Chruschtschowkas“. Stadtplaner hielten sich mittlerweile zwar an westliche „Errungenschaften“ und fantasierten weiter von der „optimalen Stadt“, aber die so entstandenen „Mikro-Rayone“ über-

zogen – national unterschiedlich ornamentiert – weiterhin die eurasische Landmasse. Bei der Neuplanung des Hauptplatzes von Taschkent musste man nicht erst auf den Verfall alter Bausubstanz warten, 1966 kam ein verheerendes Erdbeben zu Hilfe. Im Zentrum wurde ein monumentaler Aufmarschplatz für Paraden errichtet. Das Ganze ließ sich als „postkoloniale Entwicklungsstrategie“ verkaufen, tatsächlich blieb ein deutliches Ost-West-Gefälle bestehen.

Die jeweiligen Nomenklaturen bestanden auf lokalen Aperçus, insgesamt aber wurde diese Kolonialisierung von Moskau aus gesteuert. Die Architektur eines Imperiums unter Ausklammerung von dessen Zentrum (Russland) darstellen zu wollen ist also ein Unterfangen, das notwendig zum Scheitern verurteilt ist. Was das Az W als unterschiedliche Formen der sowjetischen Moderne präsentiert, war in Wirklichkeit nichts anderes als die Manifestation der Postmoderne in einem Schmuddelparadies auf Erden, für das keine Zukunft vorgesehen war.

Dass es neben schwergewichtigen Repräsentationsbauten, Parteihochschulen, üppigen Kaffeehäusern und Bibliotheken, die ewigen Bestand, aber Erstarrung symbolisierten, auch Ausnahmen gab, bestätigt die Regel:

Es gab das lettische Lokal am Ostseestrand ebenso wie die litauischen Wohnanlagen für Kolchosen, das über Jahrzehnte eigenhändig gebaute Haus des estnischen Architekten Raine Karp oder das auf El Lissitzkys „Volkenbügel“ zurückgreifende Transportministerium im georgischen Tiflis.

Krankenhäuser waren Krankenhäuser, darin behandelt werden mochte man nicht. Die Bibliotheken wurden überwacht. Bisweilen hielten sich Tragik und Komik monumentaler Museumsbauten die Waage: Rafael Israeljans Ethnografisches Museum in Jerewan stand auf pathetisch-düstere Weise für den Genozid an den Armeniern, von dem in Sowjetzeiten lange nicht gesprochen werden durfte, und das Lenin-Museum in Bischkek interessierte bei seiner Eröffnung niemanden mehr. Wer den dortigen zentralen Platz bei sommerlicher Gluthitze je überquert hat, zweifelt auch am angeblichen Wunder der mittelasiatischen Architektenschule.

Unter den „unbekannten Geschichten“, die die Ausstellung verspricht, hätte man sich ein wenig mehr Episoden wie jene vom Bau des Kiewer Krematoriums durch Awraam Mylezkyj und die Beseitigung eines politisch anstößigen Frieses des Bildhauers Melnytschenko gewünscht. Insgesamt bietet der Ausstellungskatalog mit seinen „lokalen“ Textbeiträgen über die jeweiligen Sowjetrepubliken viel Information, die jedem Kapitel vorangestellten Reiseskizzen sind bisweilen ziemlich kursorisch geraten.

Die Ausstellung selbst wirkt mit ihren an die Wand gelehnten Tafeln, mit ihren zahlreichen Fotos und ihrer unzulänglichen Kontextualisierung wie die Vorbereitung auf den nächsten Besuch des sowjetischen Generalsekretärs Breschnew. Das Kapperl mit Sowjetstern im Museumsshop ist jenseitig geschmacklos. Dennoch: hingehen!

Die Ausstellung ist bis zum 25.2.2013 im Az W zu sehen. Der Katalog kostet € 48.–

Dem Thema gewidmet ist auch der 19. Wiener Architektur Kongress – vom 24. bis zum 25.11. ebenfalls im Az W. Weitere Info: www.azw.at



Gebauter Post-Leninismus mit lokalen Aperçus: Lenin-Palast (1970) in Almaty, Kasachstan (o.) und das ehemalige Lenin-Museum (1984) in Bischkek, Kirgisistan

FOTOS: AZW/SIMONA ROTA

APPENDIX D

Exercise: write from a map.

Map: Coop Himmelb(l)au. 7 + Exhibition Map. (Berlin, Aedes)

I am just not a very exciting map, unfortunately. I am sure you've seen something with more colour and liveliness. So I am sorry to disappoint. But then again, I am revealing some things to you. The key to my right reveals to you that models play a significant role in this space. So that is a revelation of some kind. I suppose. But what else? I tell you that they are 17 projects being displayed, the earliest being 'The Cloud' in 1968 and the 'European Central Bank' expected to be completed in 2014. Particular words in the key such as Villa Rosa, New York Tower and Rooftop Remodeling suggest a theme of architecture and the built environment. I also reveal to you through the key where a Livecam, study and installation, publications and detail brochures are located.

Can you take a guess where this space I am representing is? Who does this space belong to? Frankly, I am representing a space I don't know much about. But you'll be able to read the space architecturally if you know something about reading buildings. There are walls of varying thicknesses, perhaps extensions to an older building? The space is punctured with many windows as well as, what appear to be, blocked up windows. The three entrances are all marked with a step. There appear to be four columns, two circular and the other two rectangular in shape. Marking the openings of the doors exposes a sense of scale if you remember that the minimum width of a door is 780mm.

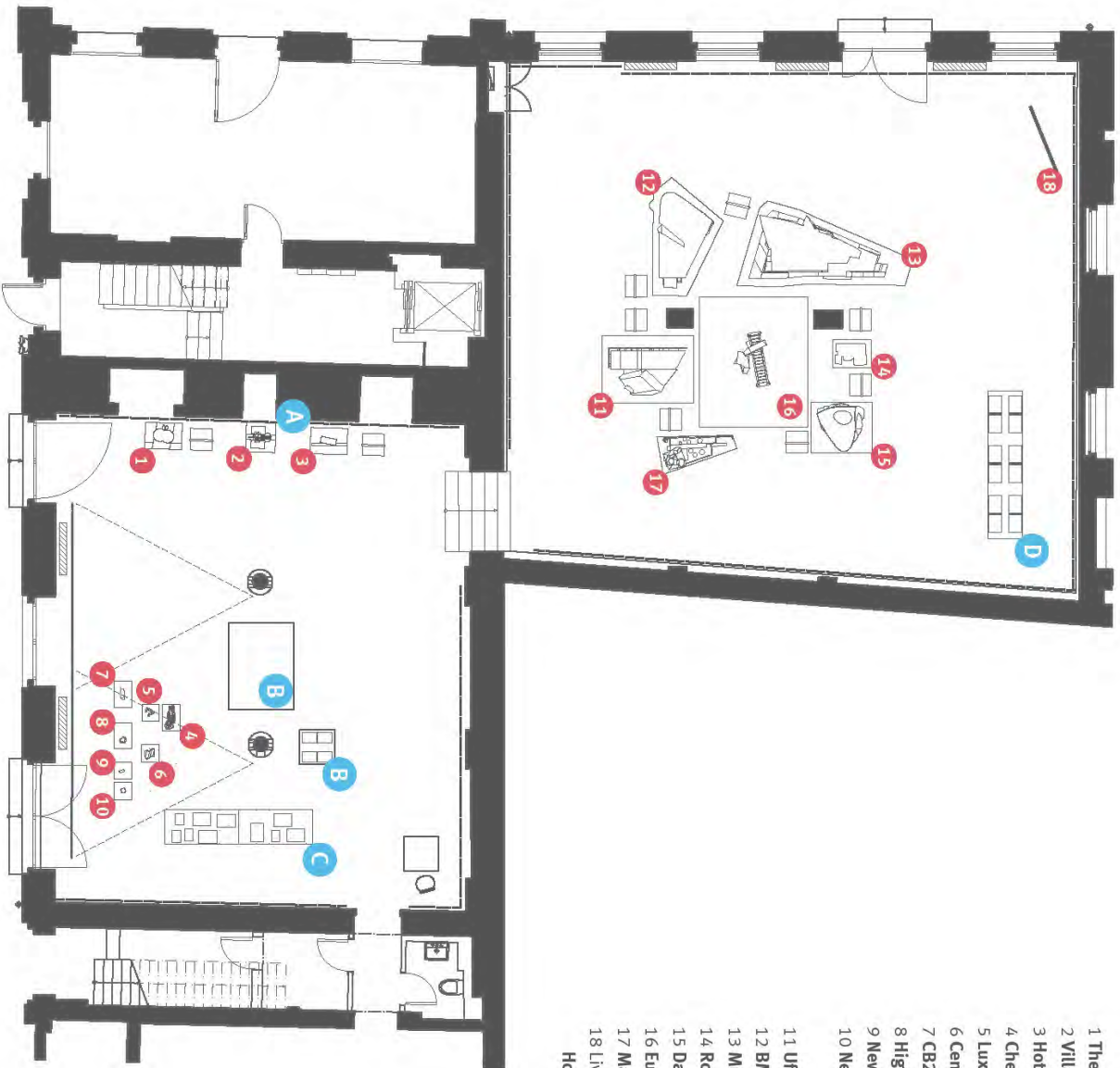
Are you wondering what is happening in the spaces that are not identified in my key? I am afraid I don't have the answer. The architect's at Coop Himmelb(l)au (yes, these models belong to the Viennese architectural firm and unless you are familiar with their work, I assume you would never have known) drew me on the computer. What were their thoughts whilst drawing me? Did they think about the spatial qualities of the space together with the points they have considered worthy enough to create a key for? How did they curate this space? How did the idea to occupy this space begin?

I wish I could tell you more about the space. Like perhaps, what it feels like to watch the Livecam of buildings being built or what the various atmospheres of the spaces are. Whoever drew me must have not thought too much about my role or didn't think I have an important one. Perhaps this could change?

APPENDIX D

EXERCISE: WRITE FROM A MAP.

Map: Coop Himmelb(l)au. 7 + Exhibition Map. (Berlin, Aedes)



Models

- 1 The Cloud, 1968
- 2 Villa Rosa, 1968
- 3 Hot Flat, Vienna, Austria, 1978
- 4 Chess Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2010-
- 5 Luxury Hotel Chongqing, Chongqing, China, 2011-
- 6 Central Bank Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2008-2015
- 7 CB21 - Erdberg Tower Vienna, Vienna, Austria, 2012-
- 8 Highrise, 2012-
- 9 New York Tower Maiden Lane, New York, USA, 2008
- 10 New York Tower, New York, USA, 2006
- 11 Ufa Cinema Center, Dresden, Germany, 1993-1998
- 12 BMW Welt, Munich, Germany, 2001-2007
- 13 Musée des Confluences, Lyon, France, 2001/2010-2014
- 14 Rooftop Remodeling Falkstraße, Vienna, Austria, 1983/1987-1988
- 15 Dalian International Conference Center, Dalian, China, 2008-2012
- 16 European Central Bank, Frankfurt/M., Germany, 2003-2014
- 17 Martin Luther Church, Hainburg, Austria, 2008-2011
- 18 Livecam: European Central Bank, Frankfurt/M., Germany, 2003-2014;
House of Music II, Aalborg, Denmark, 2003/2008-2013

*.....Architecture is always exhibitionistic —
it can't help exposing itself.*

Geert Bekaert (2012)