

01 April -12 July 2004

THE AUSTRIAN PHENOMENON

Concepts Experiments. Vienna Graz 1958-1973

Press conference: Wednesday, 31 March 2004 at 11am

Opening: Wednesday, 31 March 2004 at 7pm

THE AUSTRIAN PHENOMENON

The work produced within the context of the Viennese and Graz architecture scene during the years 1958-1973 is legendary and, at the same time, generally perceived as being historic neo-avant-garde in international history of 20th century architecture. The title of the exhibition in the Architekturzentrum Wien is a double reference: it is reminiscent of a text on the Austrian architectural avant-garde from 1958, which Hans Hollein published as editor-in-chief of the magazine Bau in 1996 under the title 'Neue Konzeptionen aus Wien' (new concepts from Vienna), as well as recalling Peter Cook's book Experimental Architecture (1970), in which he calls the Austrian shaping of experimental architecture "The Austrian Phenomenon".

In a climate of economic boom, trust in progress and flourishing mass consumerism, architectural utopias developed in the 1960s that created a varied repertoire of conceptions through the cross-fertilisation of technology, art, pop culture and architecture: modernist architectural conventions are criticised using archetypal and ritualistic architectural visions. Architecture overcomes the physical limitations of actual construction, it becomes a medium. Pop strategies attack established 'quality architecture'. Events and activities temporarily modulate meanings of the urban space through the physical intervention of passers-by. Interventions in the everyday life of a town demonstrate political awareness and open the role of the architect up for discussion.

The exhibition examines this Austrian avant-garde and attempts to come close to providing an overview of the conceptual and experimental tendencies which emerged in Vienna and Graz between 1958 and 1973.

THE EXHIBITION

The structure and display of the exhibition derive from the problems inherent in the relation of a myth: discovering the familiar as new through the memory of the past, which is nevertheless in the here and now.

A broadly grouped collection of project documentation reconstructs a range of approximately 50 authors (or author collectives), which extends beyond the most famous of the protagonists and documents their works in the form of 'work biographies'. The logistics behind the assembly is based on the administrative and non-hierarchical procedure of an archive catalogue and, through the use of temporal layers, forms an atlas of images which frames the exhibition and comprises around 700 projects. Like a close-up of the work biographies, individual works are shown in the original: about 100 originals are presented for

comparative study to show individual attempts to develop architecture as a 'medium' and the variety of concepts, strategies and means employed.

THE PROTAGONISTS of the AUSTRIAN PHENOMENON represented in the exhibition:

Raimund Abraham | Herman Czech | Coop Himmelblau | Günther Domenig + Eilfried Huth | Günther Feuerstein | Franco Fonatti | Heinz Frank | Konrad Frey | Klaus Gartner | Heidulf Gerngroß | Johann Georg Gsteu | GUM (Leo Insam, Julius Mende, Thomas Stimm) | Otto Häuselmayr | Bernhard Hafner | Angela Hareiter | Haus-Rucker-Co (Laurids Ortner, Manfred Ortner, Klaus Pinter, Günter Zamp Kelp) | Hans Hollein | I Wilhelm Holzbauer | Horst Hönig | Friedensreich Hundertwasser | IGIRIEN (Franz Kneissl, Werner Appelt, Elsa Prochazka) | Friedrich Kurrent | Frantisek Lesak | Peter Matejka | missing link (Angela Hareiter, Otto Kapfinger, Adolf Krischanitz) | Gernot + Johanne Nalbach | Laurids Ortner | Hermann Painitz | Gustav Peichl | Max Peintner | Walter Pichler | Klaus Pinter | Herbert Prader + Franz Fehring | Carl Pruscha | Helmut Richter | Helmut Rieder | Salz der Erde (Wolfgang Brunbauer, Johann Jascha, Günter Matschiner + ZÜND UP) | Barna von Sartory | Karl Schwanzler | Friedrich St. Florian | Team A Graz (Franz Cziharz, Dietrich Ecker, Herbert Missoni, Helmut Satzinger, Jörg Wallmüller) | Mario Terzic | Heinz Tesar | Ottokar Uhl | Werkgruppe Graz (Eugen Gross, Friedrich Grosz-Rannsbach, Werner Hollomey, Peter Trummer) | Günter Zamp Kelp | Robert Zeppel-Sperl | Zünd Up (Timo Huber, Bertram Mayer, Walter Michael Pühringer, Hermann Simböck)

master and minds guide visitors on a tour of THE AUSTRIAN PHENOMENON and provide an opportunity for personal insights into the lively 1960s, reporting on the beginnings, the influences and the experiences. The first guided tour dates: Wed 07.04.04, 6pm: Eilfried Huth / Wed 14.04.04, 6pm: Günther Feuerstein / Wed 28.04.04, 6pm: Gernot Nalbach / Wed 05.05.04, 6pm: Hermann Czech and Max Peintner / Wed 12.05.04, 6pm: Friedrich St. Florian / Wed 26.05.05, 6pm: Klaus Pinter

PUBLICATION

A special issue of hintergrund is to accompany the exhibition with text from 1965 to 2004, showing the analysis, critique and reception of the phenomenon at different times.

With articles by Peter Cook, Günther Feuerstein, Hans Hollein, Otto Mauer, Georg Schöllhammer, Oswald Wiener and others. Published by the Architekturzentrum Wien, in German only, 6 Euro.

Concept: Johannes Porsch, Katharina Ritter. Assistant: Viola Stifter

Exhibition design: Nicole Six & Paul Petritsch with Annja Krautgasser

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