



THE WHITE CITY OF TEL AVIV – TEL AVIV'S MODERN MOVEMENT

21.02. – 19.05.2008

OPENING: WEDNESDAY 20.02.08 7PM | PRESS CONFERENCE: WEDNESDAY 20.02.08 11AM

The historic centre of Tel Aviv has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 2003. The Israeli city on the seafront includes a unique ensemble of over 4000 houses in new functionalist style – a little known fact in this country – that have only recently been restored. Under the title The White City of Tel Aviv – The Modern Movement, this exhibition organised by the City of Tel Aviv has been touring the world since 2004, and is to be shown for the first time in Austria at the Architekturzentrum Wien.

THE MASTER PLAN

In 1925 the Scottish urban planner Sir Patrick Geddes was commissioned to structure the then fledgling Tel Aviv settlement with a master plan. He envisaged a garden city with a strictly hierarchic traffic network, organically organised and including numerous public squares. In the course of its realisation the density of the project had to be heavily increased – not least to cater to the flood of immigrants to Tel Aviv between 1930 and 1935, increasing the population from 50,000 to 120,000 inhabitants. This notwithstanding, traces of Gedde's original plan can be seen in many places.

THE ARCHITECTURE

Many of the architects living in Tel Aviv were inspired in their designs by the formal language and examples of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and Erich Mendelsohn. However it was not only the immigrant architects from Europe who had fled the economic and political crisis to Palestine that ensured Tel Aviv became – and to an extraordinary degree – an experimental arena for the basic principles of modern architecture. There were also Austrian architects who had enjoyed their training at the most highly reputed architecture colleges in Europe and so come into contact with the spirit of the new functionalist style and left their mark on the 'White City'. Of course the architectural language learned in Europe had to be adapted to suit the entirely different local climate: particularly noticeable in this context is the lack of large glazed surfaces and the increased use of balconies with parapets – features intended to help keep out the ocean heat.

Tel Aviv is the only city in the world with a centre almost completely built in new functionalist style. However today many of the buildings are urgently in need of renovation. Nitza Szmuk, for many years head of the Preservation Group for the city authorities in Tel Aviv and curator of the exhibition, has dedicated years to the conservation of this valuable heritage.



THE EXHIBITION

Historic and contemporary photographs provide an insight into the architectural language of the time, showing the influence that the European heritage had on what was created there. The master plan of the Scottish urban planner Sir Patrick Geddes is presented in the form of plans and models as well as a selection of historic film footage which provides an animated image of the development of the city between 1920 and 1958. The diversity of surface quality and colours of different plaster are shown, as are precise analyses of the detail planning (e.g., the different types of balconies). Animated 3-D graphics of eleven representative buildings add depth to an understanding of the architecture of 'The White City'. Almost 100 brief biographies of architects who worked in Tel Aviv round off the overall image.

A special issue of 'Hintergrund', the Az W's quarterly journal, is being published to accompany the exhibition.

To celebrate 60 years of Israel, the exhibition remains open until 9pm on 8 May 2008.

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Patrons of the Az W: Architecture Lounge

The exhibition is held under the auspices of the Tel Aviv City Council and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.



ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

SYMPOSIUM 'RENOVATING THE MODERN HERITAGE'

A cooperation by the Architekturzentrum Wien with the Bundesdenkmalamt
Sat, 12.04.2008, Admission free!

Tel Aviv has over 4000 houses built in new functionalist style – an inexhaustible research arena for architecture historians and a major challenge to conservationists. To accompany the exhibition, and in collaboration with the Austrian Bundesdenkmalamt, the Az W is organising an international symposium dedicated to the challenge posed by 'Renovating the Modern Heritage'. The symposium focuses on the conservation of the original building substance as far as possible and updating the technological standard of the structures to meet contemporary standards and make alternative use viable. The revitalisation of the modern architectural heritage is a challenge currently having to be faced by many countries. In Austria, too, innumerable period icons urgently require renovation. Accordingly, an international exchange of expertise from specialists in the field promises to provide a new impulse in Austria too.

TWIN PACK. GUIDED TOURS 'FROM VIENNA TO TEL AVIV'

A cooperation by the Az W with the Jüdisches Museum Wien
Sun, 02.03. / Sun, 06.04. / Sun, 04.05.2008
11am: Jüdisches Museum Wien, Dorotheergasse 11, 1010 Vienna
12.30pm: Az W, Museumsplatz 1, MQ, 1070 Vienna
Combination ticket + guided tour: 12.– Euro

Selected exponents, ranging from the spectacular to the kitsch, in the collection of the Jüdisches Museum Wien and the guided tour of the exhibition 'The White City of Tel Aviv' show the history of and background to Zionism and the buildings of the Modern Movement in three Sundays of Twin Pack Tours.

GUIDED TOURS 'THE WHITE CITY OF TEL AVIV'

Wed, 05.03. / Wed, 02.04. / Wed, 07.05.2008, 6pm