

POINTS of contact

freespace

See you in Venice ...

At your Place or Non Place

The dancing duo Kaiser-Antonino transforms spaces with their performances.

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Architecture Biennale 2018

Sign in now: Our Meeting Point will take place from 24 to 28 May 2018 in Venice.

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Island concept

A portrait of the curators of the British Pavilion, Caruso St John architects.

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POINTS of contact

The communication initiative for architects



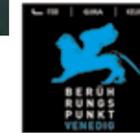
Freedom begins in the mind. No doubt about that! The first idea for a building design, a plan for life or a phase of creative work invariably occurs at the back of one's mind. Originally, the idea of having a meeting point in Venice also existed only in the minds of some people with vision. But the idea became reality – and now, already for the fourth time, architects and fans of architecture have been invited to meet on Canal Grande by FSB, Gira and KEUCO.

Just in time for the Biennale, this issue is presenting a portrait of Caruso St. John architects, who are setting the scene for the British pavilion this year – with the motto “Island”. There you will also find an interview with the foundation members of GRAFT, who are creating the German pavilion for this year's Architecture Biennale in Venice in cooperation with Marianne Birthler, with the theme of “Unbuilding Walls”.

The AT YOUR PLACE and NON PLACE performances also fit into the overall theme of “FREESPACE” for the Biennale: places brought to life metaphorically by the dancing duo Kaiser-Antonino – performing either in private rooms or in public places not really intended for human living.

Besides, you can read about what is new from the companies and look forward to some additional interdisciplinary contributions about “FREESPACE”. After reading all of this, you may also wish for some personal freedom. Make use of this impulse and plan your trip to Venice! Then we will see you there on 24 May 2018 (or already on the evening of 23 May at the welcome party) – and enjoy the wonderful (open) spaces of the Palazzo Contarini Polignac on Canal Grande together.

We look forward to seeing you!



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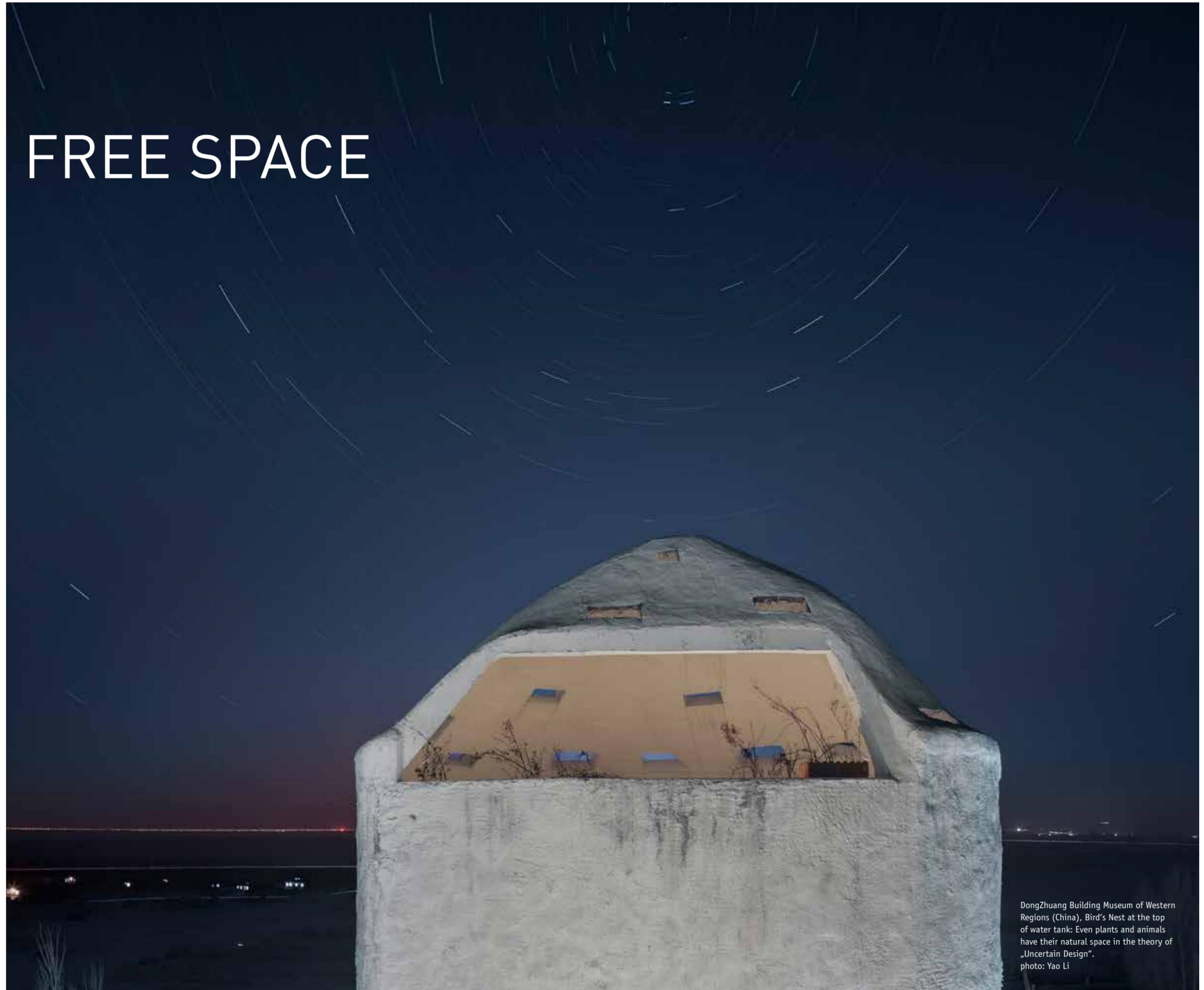
Peter Reischer

(MY) FREE SPACE

An editorial is something very personal; according to my understanding of journalism, it expresses – or can express – a personal opinion of its author. This also means accepting responsibility for its content. To write an editorial about “free space” (and to do so with unrestricted freedom) is a double challenge, since the responsibility for using the little word “free” (and all terms derived from it) is very great. Architectural free space can very quickly turn into areas of constraint, freedom into captivity, and free thinking can end up as schematic concepts and stereotypes.

The urge generated by the masses of high-gloss photos published in magazines to write a hymn of praise about free space or freedom in architecture and the innumerable possibilities (seemingly) available to us today would be tempting indeed, and perhaps even justified. Pictures of palaces made of steel, wood, concrete and other materials, of skyscrapers and parametric marvels are plentiful. Impressive open space designs can also be found among the works of many a creative architect.

However, to write a eulogy about the general achievements of our civilisation, about the free space gained by them for human beings and about the state of democracy would be out of place in view of the current global situation. According to an FAO study, the World Food Report states that the global agriculture could feed twice the world’s population without any problems. Why then does one child below the age of ten die of starvation every five seconds in this world? That makes 17,000 people every day. Jean Ziegler has expressed this very clearly and drastically: “A child dying of starvation is murdered!” This statement was one of the reasons why he was not allowed to hold his speech at the opening ceremony of the Salzburg Festival in 2011. Too many people in the audience would have felt personally accused, and no one sitting in an opera house wants to feel like being called a murderer on hearing this statement.



DongZhuang Building Museum of Western Regions (China), Bird's Nest at the top of water tank: Even plants and animals have their natural space in the theory of „Uncertain Design“.
photo: Yao Li

Quite apart from this, it would be easy to paint an apocalyptic or dystopic future and write about it in the form of a forecast. An area of nature equal to several thousand airfields or (pardon) football fields is being covered with concrete every day. The pieces of architecture built on these areas are not even opened on time and become obsolete in the course of time. Landmarks are created and disappear, people starve beside pots full of food, the homeless are begging in front of luxury shop windows for the super-rich, searching for the meaning of life no longer makes sense, Westerners seek their salvation in the Eastern concept of reincarnation, while those in the East desperately try to escape the cycle of rebirth. Are the roles and positions perhaps being reversed here?

Now I come to my own free space. In spite of all those negative forecasts from scientists and futurologists, and although I realise how serious the situation really is, I don't want to write a gloomy article. Too great is my faith in what is good in human beings, in their evolutionary qualities and in the victory of sanity over reptile brains. Everything that has been said by people like Ziegler or Ugo Bardi (Bardi is a long-standing member of the Club of Rome, his book "The Seneca Effect" deals with the collapse of global systems. Here it is the famous or notorious last straw which suddenly breaks the camel's back, regardless of whether the issue is interpersonal relations, political systems or ecological problems such as the climate change), all of this need not necessarily be seen as a threat to our self-image, but can be taken as a challenge instead. A wake-up call, to see the world as a reality rather than as a product of economic growth. One football field less under concrete is not a step back, but a real step forward. I hope for and count on this type of sanity, although I find this sometimes very difficult in view of certain election results (in USA, Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic). But this also must be accepted, since it falls into the category of "free-will decisions" on the part of the voters and is an integral part of democratic freedom. No one can take away our responsibility for how we use this freedom.

If we consider the development of mankind as a line spiralling upwards, as do, for example, some French philosophers, we will see that this spiral turns into a straight line at a certain point and then threatens to disappear into nothingness. When we have lost our way on a walking tour, when we have taken a wrong turn, the vital point is to turn around and retrace our steps. Taking such a wrong turn can be compared with a crisis, and crises happen in human history at periodic intervals.

And in the middle of a crisis, we lose sight of our purpose and goals. But in such cases, turning back or returning to traditional values invariably means going right back to the point where we left the right path. To me, finding that point seems to be the big problem today. There are many schools of thought centring around notions of "back", "again" or "re-". Such trends can also be found in architecture. Fewer and fewer architectural teams concentrate on new buildings; instead, they invest a lot of expert knowledge in alternative uses and in remodelling old structures. Construction in existing context is an absolute trend.

The great words, -isms and complex sentences in architectural theory right up to the post-modern era and beyond are stale and worn out. My suggestion is to disregard the well-known theorists such as Charles Jencks, Robert Venturi, Heinrich Klotz etc., and turn to the intellectual approach of Sir Karl Popper. In his way of thinking, to disregard does not mean to ignore, but to take a critical approach. For Popper takes the basic fallibility of knowledge and science into account. In contrast to a "closed society" (as proposed by Plato, Hegel and Marx, whom he accused of totalitarian traits), he proposed an "open society" not planned on the drawing board, but one which should develop in a pluralistic and evolutionary way by a continuous process of attempts of improvement and corrections of errors. In architectural terms, I see this as something alive and moving, which serves mankind. And this can already be seen more and often in the planning concepts of some architects.

Many planners have a vague, uncomfortable feeling that, in spite of all powerful imagery and perfectionism, there is something wrong with the immense amount of building activity. Tilting and bending things, painting them green – solutions of this kind often cause astonishment, but never focus on human needs. When architecture has developed away from its original purpose of housing and protecting people, from the spiral to the straight line, this could be diagnosed as suffering from a kind of borderline syndrome. Desperately running after continuous progress and maximisation of images, it knows very well that it is on a wrong track. But it is subject to an inner conflict, and this state of tension leads to more and more excesses. Or is it the awareness of the transience of what it intends to build for a small eternity? Why are ideas such as God, faith, hope, love and poetry actually stigmatized and regarded as taboos in architecture?



above:
DongZhuang Building Museum of
Western Regions (China) – a mix of
brutalism, post-modernism, romantic
approach and authentic material
photo: Yao Li

left:
Dovecote – like the Garden of Eden
photo: João Morgado

Here, of course, I would also like to briefly mention the upcoming Architecture Biennale in Venice. Can a clear line be drawn in the choice of themes for the Biennale over recent years with “Common Ground”, “Reporting from the Front” and now with “Freespace”? From the Show of Egomaniacs (2014) via the Underground (2016) to Women’s Power (2018)? I sincerely hope to avoid any misunderstanding of this concept and especially any deliberate misinterpretation (Honi soit qui mal y pense!). I respect the two architects Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara as very conscientious and responsible people. It is probably no accident that both this year’s curators are primarily known by their buildings for schools and educational institutions. After all, education and learning provide the opportunity of having fewer football fields covered with concrete worldwide in future. And women certainly make a major contribution to the education and development of men’s world.

In 2016, Alejandro Aravena taught us that architecture is one of the civil society’s instruments for organising the space in which people live and work. This time, Farrell and McNamara will focus on and specify the perspectives for the quality of public and private space of urban areas, territories and countryside areas as the main purpose of architecture. Some passages from their press releases are noteworthy. For instance, they speak of a “democratic space, unprogrammed and free for unplanned uses”. This comes close to the “hodological space” (Greek: hodos = way, path) concept of Otto Friedrich Bollnow. He describes a kind of space which exists independently of geometric and Euclidean space, which can be experienced exclusively by human beings through movement. A “living geometry” of this “hodological” connection is totally different from the ideas proposed by architects.

When looking around a little in the architectural scene, it is already possible to discover something like that in pieces of architecture from the East. For example, when the DongZhuang Building Museum of Western Regions was built in China. The architects from the Xinjiang Wind Architectural Design & Research Institute Co. Ltd followed the theory known as “Uncertain Design”. This theory is an attempt to install in free spaces a “space” filled with fresh air, sunshine, moisture, heat, cold, snow and rain and all those innumerable effects and parameters for growth. That provides the conditions for life and reproduction. Reliability, continuity, non-utilitarianism, simplicity of materials, labour and costs, free, flexible use of buildings and empty spaces are the essential ideas and principles of action behind this type of architecture.

Another good example for the ABSENCE of functional predetermination on the part of the architects or the architecture is the restoration and alternative use of an ancient granary combined with a pigeonry in Portugal by Tiago do Vale Arq.tos. The small, rebuilt wooden structure, which gives viewers a certain poetic feeling, will remain at the disposal of time and nature and be dedicated to all kinds of possible, unpredictable uses.

Some similar approaches can even be found in high-tech Japan. There, Schemata Architects have built a residential unit for a private user inside an old warehouse hall. Since the hall was far too large, a sizeable amount of empty space was left over apart from the space actually used; no one can foresee the exact purpose to which that space will eventually be dedicated, and its future use is will remain undecided. Living next to this empty space is a source of tension; it is in contrast to Western thought in terms of maximization and full utilization of all resources. Here, we have a free space, a space of opportunities, a gift to the user.

For our countries, I would desire, for example, some legislation obliging property owners to plant a tree for every 10 square metres of ground covered with concrete, or to cover 10 square metres of façade with greenery. A (tax-) grant to reward intelligent wastefulness instead of foolish thrift. A change of thought in architecture, away from mere utility and profitability towards a focus on human needs in the use of space. There are plenty of free spaces, since all spaces currently not in use are such free spaces.

And they are already there, all those positive social, economic, ecological and architectural alternatives: public welfare economy, fair banking, car, desk and room sharing, architects engaged in restoration rather than new construction, six-storey high-rise office buildings, which function without heating and cooling (2226 by Arch. Eberle), urban gardening and urban mining, the “new wilderness” in open space design (Berlin/Tempelhof and Vienna/Northern railway station), civil society initiatives and the increasing use of wood in architecture are all examples of change and transformation. Baruch Spinoza’s concept of “meeting God in nature” becomes more and more often visible in the works of some architects. His rationalistic renunciation technique may have model character. For simplification is a gain, not a loss.

 Peter Reischer, journalist and architecture critic

 www.architektur-text.at



left:
The popular building „2226“
photo: Wienerberger

below:
Life with „free space“ offers not only
excitement but also possibilities for
the future.
photo: Takumi Ota



KEUCO

Space for ideas

On the one hand, freedom of design means limitless creativity, on the other - user-oriented products and applications. Sometimes a balancing act, usually a challenge. Always an exciting task. Limitless freedom of design is not a triviality nor does it brook compromise. Maximum design freedom is right at the forefront, perhaps even the chief consideration when developing a new design. Because that is the ultimate goal here: an outstanding new design.

Over and over again, freedom is the basic formula in the world of design that is essential to the creation of new innovations. By designers, product developers, and creative spirits. By all who would attempt to extract the optimum out of the feasible, and seek the maximum for the functional. To bring the beautiful in perfect harmony with the useful.

Freedom of design comes to a halt where limits exist or are set. But in the design process the limits are dictated by the feasible and possible. Maximum design freedom flourishes where the impossible is conceived to be possible, and where the limits of the feasible are questioned. „Only when intellectual freedom becomes a freedom to shape things can we speak of innovation“, says Hartmut Dalheimer, Managing Director of KEUCO.

With the ROYAL LUMOS mirror cabinet high-end LED lighting solutions merge with top design.

The design of the PLAN S fitting speaks a flowing language of form. In their design the spouts of the series dynamically mimic the flow of water.

The PLAN bathroom furnishings and washbasin series presents itself with modern linearity and straightforward elegance.



KEUCO



Freedom in the bathroom

Freedom of design turns ideas into new concepts, of which one doesn't even know in advance whether they are technically feasible or not. This is precisely the point where new innovations may and can come to life. Driven by new technologies, by evolving expectations, but chiefly by the desire to develop KEUCO products in-house.

To succeed by perfectly uniting the functional with the aesthetic. That is how, for rooms large and small, bathroom furnishings are produced which leave nothing to be desired.

A multitude of possibilities

With roughly 500 products KEUCO's PLAN Collection offers a multitude of solutions – whether for private bathrooms, hotel bathrooms, or for use in semi-public and public areas such as offices, restaurants and clinics. Because of its pronounced aesthetic character, top functionality and outstanding quality, the PLAN Collection became a sought-after, contemporary classic. As with all PLAN fittings, PLAN accessories are available in brilliant chrome, matt aluminium and high-quality stainless steel. In the context of modern architecture these surface alternatives allow much design freedom and many options for subtle combination.



Another side of PLAN is its extensive furniture and washbasin series, developed by the Tesseraux + Partner design agency in Potsdam. With modern linearity and straightforward elegance in tone-in-tone look. As such glass fronts and the bodies of the furniture always confine themselves to one colour. Through their very unobtrusiveness, PLAN's handleless furniture comes to the forefront. And for a touch more design freedom, the bathroom furniture is also available as more modern variation with legs.



The ROYAL LUMOS mirror cabinet demonstrates how high-end lighting solutions can be successfully merged with top design and premium made-in-Germany quality. The three-sided LED lighting radiating from within the translucent rim gives the mirror cabinet a lightweight appearance, creating an impression of hovering in front of the wall. With the semi-recessed wall installation of the mirror cabinet this appearance of weightlessness is particularly pronounced. Half of the generous storage space is concealed in the wall. Even with the mirror doors closed, the open shelf compartment still allows easy access to frequently-used utensils. Multiple light sources and sophisticated lighting scenarios establish the perfect ambience for every situation.



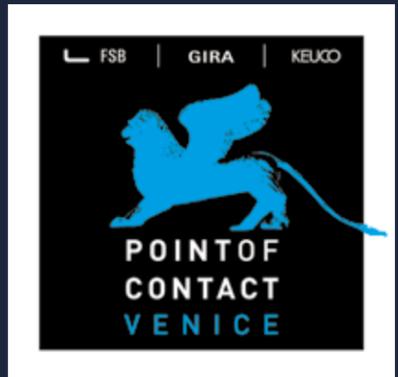
Welcome to Freespace on Canal Grande

FSB, Gira and KEUCO cordially invite you for the 16th Architecture Biennale to the meeting point on Canal Grande for the fourth time, and we look forward to seeing you!

Again, the main objectives are encounters, communication, exchange of views and of course also enjoyment. After the extremely successful events at the last three Architecture Biennale exhibitions, we look forward to welcoming you once more in the historic Palazzo Contarini Polignac. More than 2,000 registrations have been received so far – so don't wait any longer! Book your flight now, look for a pleasant hotel and be our guests from 24 to 28 May 2018.*

Registration on
www.points-of-contact.com/biennale

* Please note that the Architecture Biennale will not officially open before 26 May 2018. On the 2 to 3 preceding days, the Giardini and the Arsenale are open exclusively to visitors with expensive preview tickets. For more information see www.labiennale.org



Meeting point for architects

From 24 to 28 May 2018, the historic Palazzo Contarini Polignac will be open to you daily from 9:00 to 22:00 h.



Programme of events

A number of guided tours and presentations await you again! On 23 May, the already legendary welcome party will take place, and on 26 May the big anniversary gala.



Water taxi

Our shuttle service will take you to the Biennale grounds and back every day – and to the grounds again.



Catering

During the opening hours of the meeting point, we will treat you to delicious food and drinks.



Reporting

We will publish reports before, during and after the Architecture Biennale in our magazine, online on our blog and live on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram.



Programme

Parties

23 May 2018, 18.00 h _ Welcome Party*

Already a tradition: the kick-off for an exciting time and some unforgettable moments in the Serenissima. Until 28 May 2018, the neighbouring garden is also open to all Palazzo guests, with a panoramic view on Canal Grande from every point.

26 May 2018, 18.00 h _ Anniversary gala*

POINTS of contact celebrates its birthday. For 20 years, the communication initiative has now enriched the architectural community in Germany with special events, publications and, since 2012, the place-to-be in Venice. Celebrate with us at the Palazzo Contarini Polignac.

* Please note that the access will be limited.

Presentations

25 May, 20.30 h _ Film night: Metropolis

accompanied by live piano music
This monumental silent film from the era of German expressionism by Fritz Lang, dating back to 1927, shows a futurist city with a distinctive two-class society. This film was one of the most expensive of its time and is regarded as an important work of in the history of film. It will be shown in the renovated Piano Nobile of the Palazzo. Binding registration required on www.points-of-contact.com/program. The number of participants is limited.

28 May, 18.00 h _ Presentation about "Singer Buildings"

A presentation about the Singer Buildings, "The Dakota" in New York, the Everglades Club in Florida, etc. Charming: Palazzo Contarini Polignac was formerly owned by Winaretta Singer and Edmond de Polignac...

Guided tours**

24 May, 25 May, 26 May 2018, 9.00 h Half-day architecture tours

FONDACO DEI TEDESCHI

During the time of the Serenissima Republic of Venice the Fondaco dei Tedeschi served the German merchants as accommodation, warehouse and meeting place. In 2008 the local administration sold the renaissance building to the Benetton Group which commissioned Rem Koolhaas with the planning of a luxury shopping mall.

OLIVETTI SHOWROOM

The showroom of the Olivetti company is located under the portico of the Procuratie Vecchie along the St. Mark's square. Scarpa reorganized the long and narrow space by introducing a sculpture like staircase and two one way "alleys". The pavement with its small Murano glass tiles in different colours is a clear reference to the famous mosaic floor of the close St. Mark's basilica. Carlo Scarpa designed every detail. Starting with his profound knowledge of the materials and their processing, adding then his own distinctive poetry.

PALAZZO QUERINI STAMPALIA

In the 1950s Carlo Scarpa was called for the restoration of the ground floor of the Palace Querini Stampalia, suffering the floods of the high water. Scarpa's response to the problem was quite unusual: instead of keeping the water out he let it flow inside. In addition to the conference room and the garden he created a new entrance by enlarging a window. Over the last 20 years Mario Botta followed the project of new spatial needs of the Foundation.

LITTLE THEATRE GRASSI

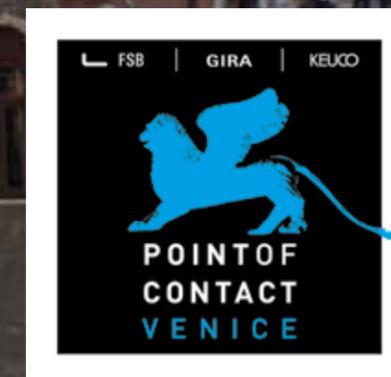
Without the inscription over the entry door no one would recognize the little theatre behind the old garden walls. Ando, best known for his minimalism created flowing spaces with artfully swaying walls. The light reflects on the light grey marmorino just like on facades of the venetian Palaces.

** Program changes possible due to opening of sites

Starting point: Palazzo Contarini Polignac

Binding registration for the guided tours

www.points-of-contact.com/program. The contribution towards expenses of 10.- Euros per person will be due in cash at the Palazzo immediately prior to the start of each guided tour. The number of participants is limited.



16th Architecture Biennale in Venice 2018

Curators of the British Pavilion

Architects Peter St John and Adam Caruso (Caruso St John Architects) and artist Marcus Taylor have been selected by the British Council as curators of the British Pavilion for the 16th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice. The pavilion will be transformed in one generous public space and meeting point in Giardini. This is in line with the overall theme 'Freespace', set by the 2018 Architecture Biennale curators Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara (Grafton Architects). The 'Island' concept of the British curators should spark debate in the pre-Brexit year.



Katia Waegemans is the founder of The Venice Insider, a travel guide for frequent visitors to Venice. She provides insights, background information and insider tips on events such as the Architecture Biennale, but also on neighbourhoods, traditions and culture in Venice. www.theveniceinsider.com www.facebook.com/theveniceinsider www.twitter.com/thveniceinsider www.instagram.com/the_venice_insider/

The proposal was selected by an advisory panel of 7 architecture professionals from the UK, chaired by Sarah Mann, Director of Architecture Design Fashion at the British Council. The thought-provoking proposal, including the quote from Shakespeare, impressed all of them and resulted in a unanimous choice.

A blend of architecture and art

This collaboration between two architects and one artist is bound to result in an intriguing exhibition. The mixed partnership, however, feels natural for both parties.

On the one hand, it is in line with the interest in art, sensitivity to the installation of art and profound expertise within the art world of Caruso St John Architects. They are well-known for their museum and gallery projects, that include public institutions and commercial galleries, as well as work for artists. Their Newport Street Gallery for Damien Hirst won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2016. Other recent examples in the cultural sector include the Millbank project at Tate Britain, Nottingham Contemporary and the Gagosian Galleries in London, Rome, Paris and Hong Kong.

On the other hand, artist Marcus Taylor regularly works with architects on large scale projects. One stunning example is the Redshank project, which he developed together with Lisa Shell Architects. This beautiful structure, made of cork and cross-laminated timber, stands on 3 metal supports over reclaimed marshland along the coastal waters in Essex. It even incorporates nesting and bat boxes. In 2017, the project received a RIBA East Award and a RIBA East Small Project Award and was nominated for the RIBA House of the Year.

Freespace

This is not the first collaboration between Caruso St John Architects and Marcus Taylor. The curators have recently worked together on a proposal for the UK Holocaust Memorial in the Victoria Tower Gardens in London. It consists of a cast, translucent sculpture above ground and a series of large chambers below ground. The sculpture brings natural light into the largest and most memorable of these spaces, the 'Hall of Voices'. The stunning proposal was one of the 10 shortlisted designs. This project would fit perfectly in the 'Freespace' theme of the 2018 Architecture Biennale.

The urban design projects of Caruso St John Architects are concerned with the close physical relationship between buildings, public space, and the feeling of being in the city. One of their current projects is the transformation of the 'Lycée Hôtelier de Lille', a historically important industrial area in the city of Lille (France). The combination of former factory structures, open spaces of a disused industrial complex and new structures will form a natural bridge between the existing communities that surround the site, and the new communities that will inhabit this new urban quarter.

La Biennale di Venezia

Caruso St John Architects has already participated in the Architecture Biennale in Venice. In 2010, they presented – together with the German artist Thomas Demand – a full scale fragment of their 'Nagelhaus' project for the City of Zurich. In 2012, Caruso St John Architects curated the 'Pasticcio' exhibition. They invited a group of seven contemporary European architects from different countries and generations. These exhibitions were not part of the British Pavilion, but of the overall exhibition in the central pavilion in Giardini. Marcus Taylor has never participated in the Biennale. His work has been exhibited in the UK and abroad, among other places in the Saatchi Gallery and the British Art Show. His work has been collected by several major institutions including the Tate, Fondation Cartier and private collectors. The British Pavilion in Giardini was opened at the 8th Art Biennale in 1909. The building originally housed the café and restaurant of La Biennale. It was redesigned by Edwin Alfred Rickards, a representative of British Edwardian classicism, with the support of William Frank Brangwyn for the interior. In this beautiful setting, Caruso St John Architects and Marcus Taylor follow in the curatorial footsteps of Shumi Bose, Jack Self and Finn Williams (Home Economics, 2016) and Sam Jacob and Wouter Vanstiphout (A Clockwork Jerusalem, 2014).



British Pavilion Curators 2018_Caruso St John and Marcus Taylor
© British Council_Lucia Scerankov



The British Pavilion, Venice.
© John Riddy



Be not afraid;
the isle is full of noises;
Sounds and sweet airs,
that give delight and hurt not.

The Tempest, Shakespeare

Redshank from West.
© Photo: Helene Binet

POINTS of contact talking with GRAFT about free space in building construction and walls left unbuilt.

FREE SPACE

an all-round talent



January 2018 in icy cold Berlin, near the main railway station, in Heidestraße, back yard, 4th floor. The POINTS of contact editors have an appointment for an interview with the founding partners of GRAFT, Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz and Thomas Willemeit. On our arrival, they are still in their fixed weekly Biennale meeting with Marianne Birthler and other members of the Biennale team. The reason for this interview with POINTS of contact was, of course, their appointment to the team of curators for the German contribution to the upcoming Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Under the heading of “Unbuilding Walls”, the three architects, together with Marianne Birthler, former Commissioner for Stasi Documents, are planning the contribution and implementing it for completion in Venice by May. In conjunction with the overriding theme of “Freespace”, under which the architects from Grafton act as curators for the entire Biennale, there was a wide range of topics for discussion. Also: GRAFT and POINTS of contact will both celebrate their 20th anniversary in 2018. A more fitting basis for POINTS of contact could hardly be imagined.

What were the first thoughts coming to your minds when you heard about the overriding theme of FREESPACE for the Architecture Biennale 2018?

Wolfram Putz: This theme follows up the last Biennale in perfect continuity. Then, Aravena had opened up an excellent range of new topics to present architecture in the light of its comprehensive responsibility and complex social dimensions. That was a good start. With the two Grafton architects Yvonne Farrell and Shelley Mc Namara, we can be sure that we will not, after a small aberration, fall back into formalism and traditional professional debate, but stay in line with the contemporary spirit, which has now been expressed very clearly by the concept of Freespace. The two curators are women, something I welcome from the heart. They are a pair and do not stand in the first row like pop stars, but stand out by their subtle, sublime architecture and curatorial quality which does not cultivate spectacular effects.

Lars Krückeberg: Whatever was a bit fuzzy about Aravena and perhaps failed to hold the exhibition together completely, seems to be remedied now. So which actual social phenomena lead to which definite, recognizable gestures in urban development and architecture? What is the response of human interaction rituals to real, existing or newly built spaces? These are the kind of questions I expect – and maybe some statement or other to answer them.



What does free space mean to you personally?

Thomas Willemeit: I always associate the term free space immediately with freedom. In architecture, this is invariably the point: our intellectual, emotional and creative freedom and the definition, consideration and preservation of free space. It is invariably a matter of finding different answers to the same, unchanging question. The issue is never to seek the final, valid, correct answer, but always to explore that little bit of additional ground which goes beyond answering the question. We need to understand that there is no such thing as an ultimate truth. There are all the possibilities which lie beyond, the variations, the heterogeneous mentalities of the world we live in and the differences in our cultures, which we must learn to recognize, to accept and to appreciate.

WP: I just love that expression. It removes barriers and describes primarily a potential. Free space does not say how we should behave, but that we have potentials for which we are responsible. I also think it is necessary in our time to combine the term free space with the concept of freedom. Both terms imply confidence in the champions of architecture – regardless of whether they work with the programming template of the floor plan or on the meta level of creative design. They allow us to let go of the reins every now and again, to leave out a wall, to create a flexible instead of a rigid frame, and to promote fewer rather than more rules and regulations.

And the two Grafton architects take a friendly, relaxed approach to everything. They are not the Jeanne d’Arcs of the architectural scene, they simply present their definition of free space in their buildings, their theories, their teaching and their own personalities.

How do you define your sphere of responsibility, which you should observe in connection with your architectural understanding of free space?

LK: We think that we can all get up every morning to investigate something new that is still unfamiliar to us or pursue a question to which we have not yet found a personal answer. This has something to do with a



particular attitude with which we approach things, communicate with each other, and which accompanies us throughout our lives.

WP: And of course, our stage of life plays a part. At which point in your lives are you finding yourselves at present? What lies behind you, and what expectations do you have for the present and for the future? Personally, I had the most intense feeling of freedom right at the beginning of my career, during the prelude, so to speak. We had nothing to lose, no reputation, no history, we were rebellious and provocative. I found the middle game very difficult. Then we were already responsible for staff, but had no reserves in terms of manpower or money. Today we are fortunate in having good success which is unlikely to come to a sudden end the day after tomorrow. So now we are free to invest in dealing with a free space which seems important to us, we can take the entire company along on a daring expedition – without threatening our existence. But basically, free space is not a cosy concept – that is where the wind blows, it can be either hot or cold, and it is where real life takes place.

TW: Now, after so many years, we carry on our backs quite a sizeable pack full of heterogeneous, contradictory and valuable experiences. And we have now reached an altitude which gives us a considerable audience. Our voices are heard, our ideas are discussed, but basically taken seriously. Somehow, this also has a positive effect on the depth of our freedom. Greater audibility, more conscious perception, more presence in society and in the media – that means more responsibility.

WP: Again and again, I catch myself feeling that I am hemmed in by worst-case scenarios through my increase in life experience. I find it difficult for me to preserve my inner intellectual free space, a certain amount of naiveté and the readiness to take risks. Very often, I have to struggle against an inner reflex which tries to induce me not to follow certain paths I remember having taken once before in the past. At such moments, I do not realise that the direction perhaps has the same parameters, but that we, as architects, have changed, and our environment has changed as well, so that we would now follow that direction with totally different know-how and under totally different circumstances.

What range of topics do you expect in Venice? What kinds of themes will be included in the Freespace concept?

LK: We expect entirely traditional architectural analyses of houses, as well as simple re-designs of lobbies and opera house foyers and new workplace concepts, along with social analyses and also radical political statements, even extreme, utopian and formalistic contributions. The theme of “Freespace” is an all-round talent. We know where the curators come from and what interests them about the theme – as to the rest: 50% of all participants and contributions will have nothing to do with the theme.

Unbuilding Walls – converted, demolished, dismantled, not built, real and mental walls in the present and the past, with or without shadows ... what are you planning for the German pavilion?

TW: The term “unbuilding” is quite unusual for an architecture Biennale, which focuses on “buildings”. For us, the starting point was an architectural debate in Berlin about removing things. We are interested in what will be built or can be built to replace something which has previously been removed. The actual trigger, of course was the Berlin wall – and the turn of the era: On 5 February 2018, the Berlin wall had been gone for exactly as long as it had previously existed: for 28 years, 2 months and 26 days. Now our special concern was to look closely at how the removal of that border proceeded, and how haphazardly it was implemented in some places. What we see now, is a heterogeneous string of pearls along the line of the former wall, a fascinating reflection of societal and urban development-related debate. Therefore, at the very beginning stands the removal, the “unbuilding”, and the discovery of the new free space, a new surface.

WP: To begin with, this was a theme we were latently interested in addressing. Berlin is our chosen home, and we live at a time when, unfortunately, walls are coming back into fashion as ideological instruments. So the starting point of our contribution is this piece of land in Berlin, Germany, 28 years ago. Here people can see how we Germans deal with our history in terms of architecture. These historically relevant places have another level of importance compared to others, and their architectures as well – regardless of whether built or unbuilt. A gap also represents an attitude, a statement, which is sometimes even more formative or expressive than a building. The way the useless wall was dealt with from November 1989 onwards can be regarded as a therapeutic session. What are the various stages in coping with grief?

When does anger permit nothing except tearing down, destroying and wanting to forget, when are people again able to take a look without reopening old wounds?

LK: The turn of an era is a type of access door, which provides us, as well as every visitor in Venice and everyone coming into contact with our topic, with a personal and emotional way of entry. Most Germans still remember the time of the wall, know exactly what they were doing on this historic

Thursday, 9 November 1989, have memories of their life behind the wall as former GDR citizens, or perhaps of crossing the border as a “Westerner”, which always used to be a bit spectacular and scary. Once more it becomes clear that a process of remembrance is always dynamic, and that when architecture becomes an expression of such a process of change, it is not necessarily always the right solution for all time.

WP: Finally, we can certainly say that architecture also offers a large projection screen for the non-professional public – as long as the relevant discussions do not take place on too high an academic level. And this is certainly not our intention.

Marianne Birthler is a member of your Biennale team. Why her?

TW: We couldn’t do it without her. She is fantastic. She is a woman, she comes from the East, she is invaluable for us as a likeable personality and an eloquent discussion partner. She had first-hand experience of the “turnaround” and the events leading up to it, she was 13 years old when the wall was built. From 2000 to 2011, she was the Commissioner for Stasi Documents; she has been a member of the GDR Volkskammer as well as the German Federal Parliament, and has served as a state minister, too. Marianne Birthler is not embittered and has no missionary zeal. We very quickly realised that it is not possible to address such a socially relevant theme, so closely connected with public affairs, exclusively from an architectural point of view. If we did that, this would lead to complete failure.

So what will await us from May onwards in the German pavilion in the Gardini? What part will history play in the pavilion built in 1909 and remodelled in 1938 by the National Socialists in Germany?

LK: In planning such an exhibition it is certainly not possible to completely disregard the building in which the stage is set. Without wanting to attach too great an importance to the turn of the era: If we go back another 28 years and 2 months, we will land in the year 1933... a fact to which we will certainly make no direct reference, but it will still be a hidden line of reference to be read between the lines.



WP: Our approach to the exhibition consists of three areas: an emotional introduction asking the question “What was the division of Germany?”; an exhibition of architecture, in which we will present about 25 projects; and finally a journalistic documentation of six walls worldwide: in Israel, Korea, Northern Ireland, Mexico, Cyprus and Spain.

At the beginning of the exhibition, visitors will perhaps see the theme of walls, but at the end they will realise that the real topic is the absence of walls, and that, even when a wall comes down, we have to look at what was originally hidden behind it, or at the walls still existing in people’s minds. The buildings around us are invariably of only secondary importance. The crucial point is to consider them in the context of their special history.

20 years of Graft. What does that mean to you?

TW: We have never had a master plan. In retrospective, life explains itself looking forward to the present. It is lived intuitively, full of curiosity, but not with a clear-cut logic. It really is a great privilege for us to engage in “Unbuilding Walls” in such a milestone anniversary year. This really fits the occasion. We can look back on many personal encounters with this wall and the former GDR. The transit route from Hanover to Berlin in those days went past Brunswick. This was where we studied, and we got to know each other almost exactly at the time when the wall came down. When the

UN
BUILD
WALLS



Project example: the new Axel Springer building

The design by Rem Koolhaas/OMA takes the former course of the wall diagonally through the building in the form of a void (empty space) and thus creates a spacious interior, which, in addition to the division of Berlin, also refers to the city growing together again.

Top left: Axel Springer high-rise, photo: Axel Springer SE
Top right: Axel Springer Campus, photo: courtesy of OMA

excitement about the Architecture Biennale has subsided a little, we may initiate a convention. And of course we will also celebrate. Every now and again when we have time, and in the near future also at your POINTS of contact meeting point at the Palazzo Contarini Polignac on Canal Grande.

Many thanks!

We look forward to seeing you!



Lars Krückeberg, Thomas Willemeit, Marianne Birthler and Wolfram Putz (photo: Pablo Castagnola)

FSB

More open space on window profiles with the new FSB plug-in handle



The new plug-in handle by FSB

- suitable for metal and timber profiles
- round rose
- concealed fixing
- tested to DIN EN 13126-3
- supplied in all FSB materials
- also available as a lock

The FSB acronym is a byword the world over for visually and functionally topquality system solutions for doors and windows – and a lot more besides. Architects and builders' clients are favourably disposed towards products from Brakel because they see us as having great design expertise and a profound understanding of the requirements of modern Civic/Commercial construction.

FSB is now launching a matchless new plugin handle that finally allows anyone for whom less is more to enjoy the visual allure of plug-in handles. Our slimline model can be fitted not only to aluminium but also to timber profiles, an option that's new to the market. The window is given more space to unfold its own aesthetic potential in this way.

The new FSB plug-in handle aids correct operation of the window by both tactile and acoustic means. The window can be heard and felt to slot into position at 90° intervals when opened, closed and tilted. All FSB window handles fitted with ball catches – and hence also its plug-in handles – are engineered to deliver 25,000 operations/150,000 click-stop events (180° turnandtilt cycles), earning them the highest quality rating of 5/180 under DIN EN 13126-3. This standard defines requirements for window handles that ensure consistent quality and fitness for function over many years.

FSB also has a new solution on offer for burglarresistant windows, to wit a lock cylinder that can be comfortably operated from the front. It is possible using the lock cylinder to fit a selection of the FSB plug-in handles shown alongside to burglar-resistant windows too. Thus functional add-ons can be executed in the same style and material as your favoured handle! It goes without saying that certification to the RAL quality standard RAL-GZ 607/9 and DIN EN 13126-3 respectively is pending for these solutions too and that they are wholly suitable for burglar-resistant windows of resistance classes RC 1 to RC 6 pursuant to standards DIN EN 1627 to 1630.



FSB

What a difference less can make!

With its radically pared-down rose, the FSB plug-in handle is ideal for any window profile – whether timber or metal. There’s nothing reductionist about the range of variants available, though: awaiting assembly are 30 different handle designs in Aluminium, Stainless Steel, Brass and Bronze.



Dancing in their own Freespace

A portrait of Avi Kaiser and Sergio Antonino – two dancers who create context around free space and allow themselves to be embraced by it.

Avi Kaiser and Sergio Antonino dance everywhere. Just not necessarily in dance halls or on stages. They have their very own definition of a stage, their very own concept of presence, expression and closeness. They interact instead of performing. They communicate instead of presenting.

The first vital point, before their bodies start to move and to shape characters, is the question of space. Of the place. This is followed by reflection, by feeling their way. Ideas come to mind about lines in space which can be danced, the accompanying music is still a soundless whisper in their minds and helps them to trace the right movements. Avi and Sergio appear in a variety of formats. Their specialty is the ability to make every space, really every space, their own and to touch and transform it, as well as the people who intentionally or accidentally come into contact with the danced images – in department stores, pedestrian zones, parks or stairwells. Sustainably.



AT YOUR PLACE:
dancing performance in private living areas.

The performances staged as part of the AT YOUR PLACE programme have been transformed into elaborately staged images.



AT YOUR PLACE is a performance in private rooms, in residential buildings, galleries or offices, close to the audience. For one night the host becomes a theatre director, provides the rooms, selects the type and number of guests, and supplies the outer framework. The dancers come, move very close to the host and the spectators, and unite all who are present. A living room, for example, loses its privacy, is automatically transformed from a “private place” into a “public place”. The guests cannot withdraw to the anonymity and darkness of theatre seats – they have direct eye contact with the dancers, hear them breathing, see the beads of sweat and are themselves a part of the whole performance. For them, being so closely involved is a real effort. Total presence is also required from the audience, and when finally the tension of both the actors and the spectators subsides at the close of the dancing movements, something new has been created. This private room is no longer what it was before. The memory of the music, the dancers’ intense breathing and movements has now become a part of it. And so have the interpersonal relations. No applause, no bustling to the cloakroom and to the exit, but instead a pause, thankful looks, astonishment about and acceptance

of this intensity, lively exchange of views and a joint conclusion of the event with well-earned cold drinks among “new friends”. “We had always wished to come into contact with people, but with conventional performances on stages this was not possible!” explains Avi Kaiser (born in 1954), with his home in Israel and his second residence in Duisburg. About 17 years ago, he and the Italian dancer Sergio Antonino (born in 1974) met for the first time in Milan at a major dancing academy, which marked the beginning of an intense cooperation and a great love, which endures to this day.

Ever since, they have been living and working together across borders, they travel a lot, conquer the free spaces they need for their inspiration, are at home sometimes here, sometimes there and communicate with their bodies and in many languages. “This is a constant in-between situation for us. We are always moving between places, between people and between actions. This gives all we do a certain amount of dynamism, which inspires many of our ideas with life and makes them something special.”

For **NON PLACE** performances, the dancers go to space offs, deserted areas such as motorway intersections or industrial areas where human beings are not necessarily the measure of all things. These sessions can be compared to studies – studies of bodies and movement: “How does a dancing body move in this space off? What does it feel? What rhythm does it feel in the sound of traffic, in the rustle of the wind or the hammering of steel mills?”

This field of tension between the direct contact of protagonists with spectators on the one hand, and on the other hand a performance in empty (or even hostile) spaces is for both dancers the starting point for many of their creations. What is the significance of the term “beauty” for them? What is their personal definition of “Freespace”? Avi and Sergio feel a close affinity to Duisburg and to the Ruhr metropolis. Most things here have not been built to fulfil an aesthetic purpose, but for a functional reason instead. And they find the interaction with industrial wastelands a unique opportunity. For them, the steel towers in the Duisburg-North Landscape Park are cathedrals. They

and most of their built-up surroundings are based on a deep sincerity, from which the two dancers derive their inspiration. For what they do themselves is also sincere and without frills. Beauty is not the issue. They take a public free space and, by their interaction, appropriate it to themselves and to their spectators. They dance in private rooms and open up these rooms.

“We have a space inside ourselves, a physical volume surrounded by our skin. When we move, we transform the volume of the space which surrounds us. This is real art: to create something which is not necessarily visible in a physical sense, yet can be felt. Spaces are transformed into seismographs.”

With this statement, the two space artists begin to explain their thoughts about free space. The greatest, most important free space is the ability to express oneself and the freedom to do so. This is not about answering any questions, but about opening one’s mind. Without inner free space, no outer free space becomes visible.



NON PLACE at Tel Aviv and Duisburg



NON PLACE in the Dizengoff Shopping Center Tel Aviv



- I Ann-Kristin Masjoshusmann talked to the dancers in their studio at Duisburg
- 📺 AYP Bochum © Wolfgang Emmrich
AYP inszeniert © Avishai Finkelstein
NP © RAN BIRAN
- + By the way: The dancers can be booked for a performance „at your place“!
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Gira E2 in matt-finished black

Prestigious, pure, exciting



Gira E2, matt-finished black

Black is the opposite of light. Something that may appear dark and threatening can also strike us as distinguished, pure, elegant, modern – and a little dramatic as well, because the dark colour highlights structures and creates tension.

Black is the opposite of light. Something that may appear dark and threatening can also strike us as distinguished, pure, elegant, modern – and a little dramatic as well, because the dark colour highlights structures and creates tension. Something that architects and designers have always made use of. However, right now, black is experiencing a great comeback. This is why Gira has extended its Gira E2 range – the design classic among its series of switches – by adding the exclusive trend colour matt-finished black. Here, pure elegance meets with formal austerity and sophisticated functionality.

Gira will be presenting the Gira E2 range of switches in matt-finished black for the first time at the Light+Building. Then the entire range with all of its variants will include stainless steel and thermoplastic versions in the colours matt-finished black, anthracite, varnished aluminium, as well as satin-finished and glossy pure white. The complete range will also be available for flat installation, in which case the frame of the switch will protrude from the wall by no more than 3 mm. This diversity of design with its varying effects provides architects with numerous opportunities to enliven walls with decorative highlights.

Nevertheless, the beautiful surface conceals ultra-modern technology. Since the Gira E2 range not only includes switches and power sockets, but electronic components as well, such as data transmission and communication technology as well as numerous functions of door communication and of the KNX system. The reason: Gira E2 is a part of the Gira System 55. This modular system combines a wide range of modern building service functions – altogether more than 300 – with a great variety of different designs included in six lines of switches from Gira. The standard square dimensions of 55 x 55 mm are the key. These uniform dimensions for functional modules and matching frames facilitate planning, logistics and installation for switches and other building service functions.



Free space for lateral thinkers



Free spaces in architecture can be created in very different ways. A particularly impressive example of free space in building construction is given by the transformation of a former tank hall in Salzburg into lofts. This project was implemented by the smartvoll Architekten ZT bureau of architects from Vienna, who describe themselves as a team of lateral thinkers and visionaries. Their motto in line with this concept: "Everything stays different".

This fascinating building, which was converted in 2015, has been put to a wide range of uses, with retailers, trades, and creative professions all under one roof. These uses include a market hall, restaurants, a medical centre, exhibition and commercial spaces as well as lofts.

smartvoll architects from Vienna won the international design competition for the loft in the Panzerhalle. The architects realised their own vision of a loft over an area of 350 m² and two floors. Not only the size, but also the eight metre-high ceiling came in handy in this respect. They decided against using fixed walls as room partitions as they wanted to realise an open-plan living concept.

A spacious concrete staircase links the two levels. It is located in the middle of the room and has a captivating flamboyance. The staircase has several functions: It acts as a room divider between the living and entrance area and serves as an eye-catcher in the light-flooded space.

The sleeping area is located on the upper floor. A view of the Salzburg mountains is guaranteed from here – directly from the bed. The bathroom is also located on the second floor, as well as the guest room.

The 7-metre long, free-standing kitchen island made from lava stone is a particularly impressive feature in the lower area. With its unusual length and dark colour, it gives the impression of being a work of art in the light-flooded loft.



A KNX system was installed for the complex building control. The „brain“ behind the system is the Gira HomeServer, which brings together and evaluates all of the information, and then sends the commands to the devices. Gira was also chosen for door communication. The simple design appears elegant and refined.

KEUCO has provided the products for this extraordinary bathroom with its suspended shower area. Brassware, accessories, basins and bathroom furniture are from the collection EDITION 11. The Shower Thermostat Unit is from the collection meTime_spa.

GIRA

KEUCO



FSB

Hot off the press: the new FSB Manual 13

The FSB Manual has been a dependable companion to those planning and equipping architecture projects around the world for several decades now. On over 800 pages, the 13th edition presents a range of systems and solutions covering all aspects of doors, windows and barrier-free homes that will always stand you in good stead – including a wide variety of new items: Selected architects and designers get hands-on for us with delightful regularity. We have 15 new handle collections to present to you in our latest Manual. Several door levers form part of each coordinated product collection, which also now includes our new window handles with considerably slimmed down rose dimensions for narrow profiles. We are setting new standards with the FSB ASL® bearing for heavy-duty applications. FSB ASL® is always supplied as a set, can be universally deployed as either a “righthand” or a “lefthand” model, and is available for doors 29–98 mm thick. The new adaptor technology makes for extremely simple and rapid assembly. FSB has breathed new life into the medium of aluminium with our new Blasted Aluminium Colour Anodised.

The 5 different anodised colours boast velvet matt finishes whose inimitable sheen and pleasant haptic quality lend them an allure of a kind never before seen.

The new FSB Manual 13 can be ordered free of charge from export@fsb.de



GIRA

Online Magazine G-Pulse



Since March 2015, Gira's interactive online magazine G-Pulse has been providing regular, up-to-the-minute information on interesting developments in multiple areas: Smart Home technology, interior design, lifestyle, trends and architecture. The online magazine is your source for interior design and lifestyle inspiration and your platform for exchanging views on your favourite topics with other design enthusiasts. 15 authors keep you informed, up-to-date and are especially keen on visiting key industry events, so you will always be informed about the latest Interior and Smart Home trends. www.g-pulse.com

www.gira.de

KEUCO

Only a few clicks to perfect fittings for the shower and bath tub

A multitude of options is available for customers when it comes to planning fittings for the shower and the bath tub. How many water draw-off points are needed? Is a thermostatic mixer preferred or a single-lever mixer? Are chrome-plated fittings best for the bathroom furnishings or should they have an extravagant special finish such as polished bronze? These questions and more are asked step by step during the configuration process in KEUCO's IXMO online planner at www.ixmo.de. The goal is to develop the perfect plan for your own personalised shower or bath tub solution.

Professional bathroom installers and customers value the IXMO online planner's ease of use. After the configuration of your personal solution is complete, it is displayed visually and a detailed list of the products required for the installation is generated. All the information is summarised clearly in a PDF file. Also available are installation diagrams and videos. It is the professional planning tool for personalised bathroom planning.



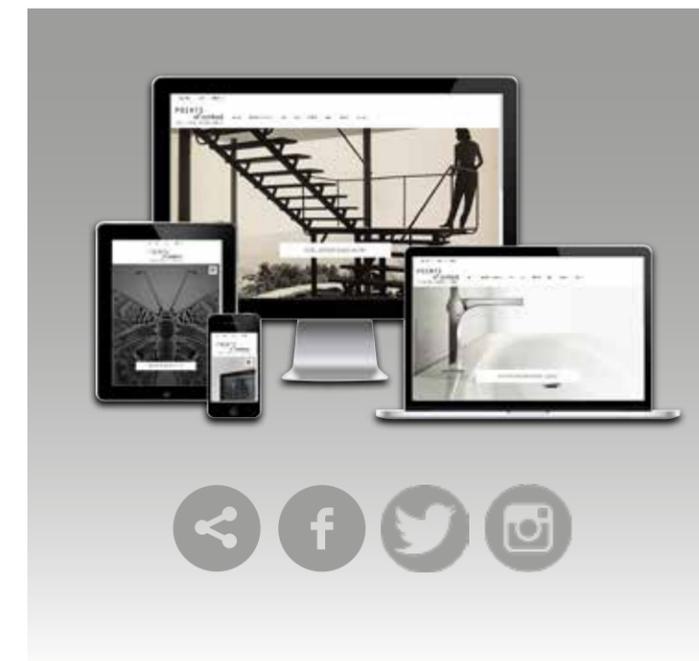
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