

POINTS of contact

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ME N

SIONS

or: figure vs. feeling – what matters?

Under the spell of dimensions

The "true" size of buildings is often defined by our own standards, not mathematical linear dimensions

Page 06

A fascinating perspective

When the land simply folds up, this creates irritating pictures. Photography between reality and fiction

Page 14

A new future?

Peter Reischer takes you on a walk through the 16th Biennale of Architecture in Venice

Page 24

POINTS of contact

The communication initiative for architects



Dealing with various dimensions and different scales that architects come across daily is an essential factor in the creative process of design and planning. Therefore this issue, with its editorial and series of pictures, is primarily dedicated to proportions and how they are perceived.

In specific: The photographer Aydin Büyüktas plays with planes and creates something virtual out of reality. The German architect Silke Vosskötter has written her doctoral thesis about "Scales in Architecture", with which she informs and inspires us with her comments about the examples of Cinderella Castle in Disneyland and Notre Dame in Paris.

The contributions from FSB, Gira and KEUCO may give you somewhat clearer insights into these German companies and show you their attitudes towards design, quality standards and technical expertise.

It will be great if we can inspire you again with this fourth issue and whet your appetite for more. Subscribe to this magazine (if you are not already) and have it sent to your address in future, free of charge and twice a year. Browse through our website and order our monthly newsletter. This will keep you informed and in touch with us.

16th Biennale of Architecture in Venice 2018

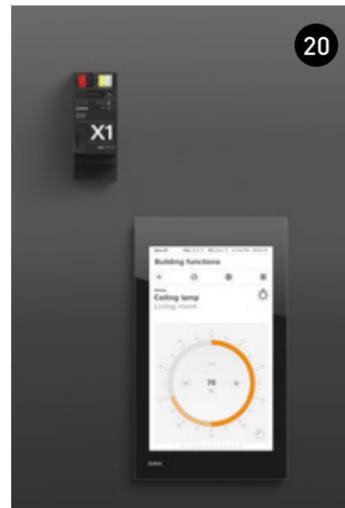
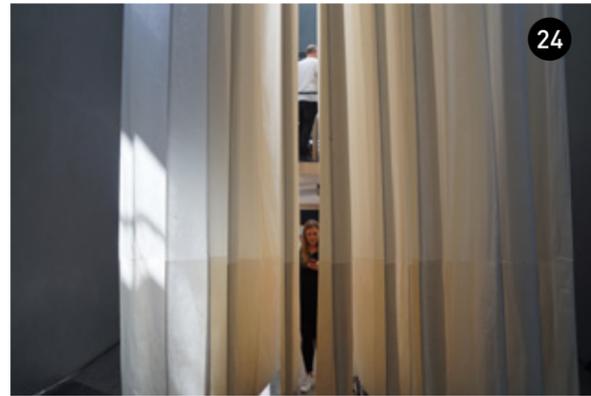
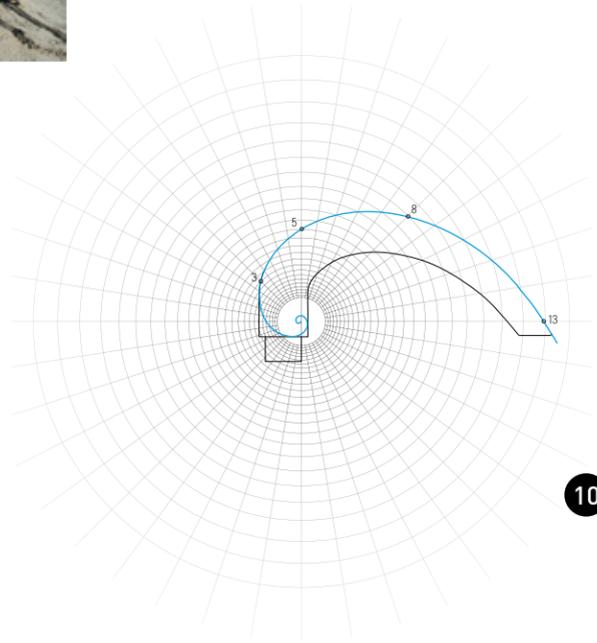
(26 May to 25 November 2018)

Swiss pavilion: "Svizzera 240: House Tour",
winner of the Golden Lion for Best National
Participation

The perceived proportion of the horizontal and vertical planes of various sizes has been altered by door handles, skirting boards, window frames, sockets and cupboard doors in varying dimensions. Just rooms. For giants and dwarves.

 [Wolfgang Reul](#)

CINDERELLA TRICKS



- 06 UNDER THE SPELL OF DIMENSIONS
When Notre Dame suddenly looks tiny. How we perceive and judge proportions – and how we can influence them. Based on a book by Silke Vosskötter.
- 10 THE GOLDEN SECTION AS THE SOUL OF GRIP
FSB: Nature and mathematics as guides in our search for what is right and beautiful. A journey into the world of door handles and their golden ratio.
- 12 WHAT IS RIGHT IS ALSO BEAUTIFUL
FSB: About inner and outer values of door handles. Highly complex technology and aesthetic design provide the necessary added value.
- 14 A FASCINATING PERSPECTIVE
The photographer Aydin Büyüktas twists reality according to his own ideas. Aesthetic, alienating, irritating.
- 20 SMART HOME IN A NEW DIMENSION
Gira: The control of lighting, heating, blinds, etc. is becoming more and more comfortable. Touching, swiping, talking ... it is all possible today.
- 24 A NEW FUTURE?
A guided tour of the Arsenale and the Giardini as a retrospect of the contributions to the 16th Architecture Biennale in Venice.
- 30 THE MEETING POINT FOR ARCHITECTS
POINTS of Contact initiated a meeting point on Canal Grande for the Architecture Biennale in Venice for the fourth time. A review to stimulate anticipation for 2020.
- 34 FITTINGS IN MINIMALIST DESIGN
KEUCO bathroom equipment combines aesthetic design with impressive technology and provides the perfect solutions to fulfil individual wishes.
- 38 NEWS IN BRIEF

About scales in architecture:
This article is based on the reference book "Maßstäbe in der Architektur" (Scales in Architecture) by Dr. Silke Vosskötter. The author is Head of Architecture at the architect's office bkp kolde kollegen GmbH in Germany. This informative volume, which is simultaneously Vosskötter's doctoral thesis, sheds light on the origin and significance of the dimensional concept in architecture with numerous examples.

Vosskötter, Silke: Maßstäbe der Architektur (Scales in Architecture). An examination of dimensional perception and dimensional evaluation of buildings. Published in 2010 by: Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, Marburg. (Available only in German) ISBN: 978-3828823020



You can experience the amazing effects of perception online in our blog: beruehrungspunkte.de

At first glance, the contrast between the Cinderella Castle in the American Disney World and the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris could hardly be any greater. Playful comic kitsch meets a venerable historic monument. But at the second glance, they reveal something special they share: both the castle and the sacral building benefit from design concepts that make them appear exponentially larger than they really are in the eyes of the viewer. Careful consideration was given to scales and proportions in the design of both buildings. Their special structures and substructures make them appear larger to the eye. In other words, they modify our dimensional perception. A feat of strength? No, but rather a complex correlation.

When we think of scales, rigorous numerical ratios are often the first thing that comes to mind. 1:1, 1:7... but scales mean so much more than just mathematical relationships. In an architectural context, they can be described as perceived and interpreted proportions, generated by complex interaction between humans and their surroundings. For dimensions of size are never perceived in isolation, but invariably in a context. In the process of perception, viewers experience the actual dimensions in terms of complex relationships, so that the real dimensions are only relative. The way they are evaluated is not at all based on absolute single variables either.

Up to a certain degree, we are in charge of determining our perception. As rational beings and free thinkers, we create our own dimensions based on our ideas, experiences and values. We adjust these mental references every day. Nevertheless, we are characterised by supraindividual viewing habits, epochal and cultural structures and human cognitive processes. **For example, we subconsciously follow the grouping laws, a number of generally accepted principles of perception.** We see similar objects as belonging together, automatically form groups consisting of obviously similar elements, and we have a preference for closed, whole structures. We cannot escape from our own nature either. So we invariably perceive dimensional characteristics in relation to ourselves and to our own body measurements.

These parameters make it possible to establish basic principles for the perception and evaluation of size in buildings, which deliver important clues for finding answers to questions of architectural design. Do I want to design something that is prominent and monumental, or something attractive and human? Impressions such as these can be specifically enhanced by matching the building's dimensions to those of its elements.

The architect Silke Vosskötter has examined these relationships in detail and identified three main relationships that influence the perception of a building's dimensions.

- the human being and the building
- the building and its elements
- the building and its surroundings

These reference parameters, put into context with each other and compared with our own mental references, have a decisive influence on how large a building seems to us in a specific situation.

UNDER THE SPELL OF DIMENSIONS

Our vision, our physicality and our experiences have a direct influence on how we perceive buildings. Our field of vision is limited; depending on our viewing angle, we therefore perceive either only some details, or the entire building, or, from a greater distance, the building in its surroundings. This is why historic buildings often have a forecourt to provide a viewing angle where the building fills our entire field of vision, thereby increasing its visual dominance.

SIZE SCALE AND KNOWLEDGE

But what we see is not only determined by what we perceive with our eyes. Our whole body influences our perception, since it is the centre of our sphere of perception. We see everything in relation to it. It is our scale of reference, even when we find it easier to relate details such as windows and doors to it than an entire building. Because of this, we overestimate verticals. We can make a fairly accurate assessment of large lengths and widths by walking along them, but heights are invariably somewhat elusive. This is why they make a deeper and more emotional impression on us.

Without experiences, we would drift through life without points of reference. This equally applies to our perception. Memories of dimensional experiences are anchoring points for our sensory impressions, and we possess a large pool of such dimensional concepts. A shed, a lighthouse, a cathedral? Whatever we have in front of us, we compare it with our memories of buildings we have seen before. During this process, sizes of objects that we know of fairly accurately, such as steps of a flight of stairs or bricks in a wall, are what counts besides the type itself. Recognising such architectural elements makes it easier for us to estimate the real size of a building. So by using elements in standard sizes in a building project, I can contribute to making the building comprehensible and fulfil existing expectations, resulting in a positive experience on the viewer's part. But in the same way, I can surprise the viewer by alienating such elements or by leaving out reference values. **Anyone who has already stood under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris knows how small you suddenly feel by comparison to its huge figural reliefs.**

When we look at a building, we not only relate ourselves to it, but also relate its individual components to each other. The scale of this structuring has a vital influence on our reaction to the size of a building.

CINDERELLA TRICKS

A basic principle of perception is that we overestimate the size of buildings consisting of multiple structures. This is why, for example, Notre Dame with the complex structure of its façade appears significantly larger to us than the Arc de Triomphe, which has much fewer structuring elements – although it is actually not much smaller than the cathedral. This principle can be extended further. If I reduce the size of the structuring elements towards the top edge of a building, this will further enhance the impression of height. Therefore all elements in the Cinderella Castle in Florida are downsized by about one third at each higher level. The builders have also applied some other tricks, which Silke Vosskötter discloses as follows: **“The structural elements not only become smaller towards the top edge, but are also generally smaller than their standard architectural precursors. The windows of the castle start with a size of no more than 30 cm and shrink further to 15 cm.”** To prevent a person standing close by from unmasking the windows as “lookouts for dwarves”, they only start from the third level upwards.

Not only downsized elements, but also oversized elements can be an effective means of influencing dimensional perception. Where large forms are emphasized, the building looks massive and monumental, however, where the emphasis is on details, or these are even “shrunk”, intimacy is enhanced, and the viewer feels more important. Such an emphasis on fine structures is often found in outlet centres loaded with awnings, folding blinds, ornaments and lanterns to make them look cosy and inviting.

What also counts apart from the elements themselves is the way they are arranged. Hierarchical structures, where smaller façade elements are grouped together to form substructures, help viewers to visually comprehend complex structures and to compare dimensions. This enhances the impression of size. Coequal, extremely minimalistic structures can suggest order, but may also very quickly drift off into monotony – a balancing act without a clearly defined threshold value.

THE NOTRE DAME DISAPPOINTMENT

When we step back and let our eyes wander, the surroundings of a building will also inevitably draw our attention. That may be the moment when all previous impressions are virtually blotted out. For the reference dimensions of the surroundings can put the dimensional perception of a building into perspective within seconds. Trees, adjoining buildings, but also optical guidelines we establish with the help of roof edges and ledges, are combined into a complex, formal system of correlations. They help us to put the building into the right perspective, and when in doubt, to identify any architecturally atypical elements.

The perceived size effect of the impressive front view of Notre Dame crumbles as soon as we approach it from a distance, rather than directly, with the Caserne de la Cité simultaneously in view. The deceptive alignment when comparing both buildings with each other weakens the visual effect of the cathedral. In relation to the police office building, it appears only slightly larger. This does not fulfil our expectations regarding its monumentality and grandeur.

This reveals how closely perception and evaluation are correlated and influence each other. Real dimensions perceived as yardsticks by the viewer are combined with non-material content. They are linked by processes of association to stored background knowledge and thus gain a significance. The effect is positive when internal and external schemata correspond to each other. In line with the three directions of perception, Silke Vosskötter has identified three relevant levels of evaluation:

- (formal) aesthetic evaluation
- functional evaluation
- symbolic evaluation

In aesthetic terms, we pass a positive judgement primarily on structures we find understandable; in functional terms, we judge the sensible design of a building to serve its purpose. A particularly strong influence is exercised by its symbolic evaluation. The dimensions of a building are physical manifestations of ideals and established values for as long as the building stands. That the visual dominance of a cathedral like Notre Dame should manifest the power of the Church is easy to understand. The architects of the Walt Disney amusement parks, on the other hand, emphasized positive cultural connotations. **The Cinderella Castle is deliberately modelled on the design vocabulary of castles such as Neuschwanstein, to evoke associations with these fantastic, magical buildings.** Yet it stays clear of being an imitation to avoid the negative effect of a “bad copy”.

Silke Vosskötter knows that symbolic evaluations of dimensions have an enormous effect on viewers' perception of their surroundings: “They strengthen existing dimensional schemata or stimulate the formation of new ones. In this way, dimensional design influences future evaluation processes, strengthens social values or initiates, together with other factors, their change.” Which means that dimensional design is more than just playing with figures. It is all the more important to take a very astute look at the dimensions of buildings and the values expressed by them. Neither the approach of “larger, higher, broader” nor the plea of “Unity is everything” is enough to satisfy the need for an elaborate dimensional concept. For buildings which exceed all known scales and limits may look strange and inaccessible, but can also impress and fascinate viewers. Large buildings may be at risk of stealing each other's thunder, but when deliberately designed in pairs, they can also form fascinating street fronts and transform urban skylines in an impressive way. When looking at a building as such, both sensory overload and lack of sensory input can be frustrating, each in its own way. So the task is to create well-balanced dimensions and fine proportions which harmoniously combine the old with the new – so that even Cinderella dreams can co-exist side by side with sacral history.

LIKE
IN THE
FAIRY TALE

Door handle in search of the irrational measure of beauty, or: The Golden Section as the very soul of grip

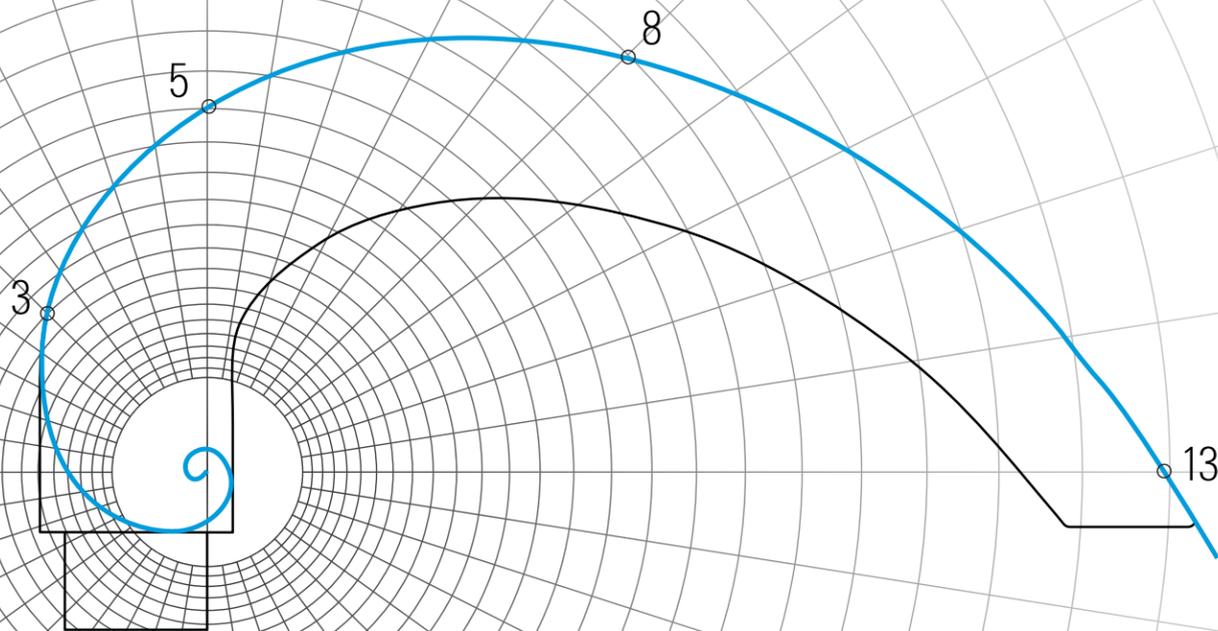


Nature and mathematics are often the best pointers for those in search of what is right and beautiful. Upon reading a book by Friedrich Cramer and Wolfgang Kämpfer whose title translates as “The Nature of Beauty”, FSB undertook to probe the secret of beauty in the world of door handles with resort to the Golden Section.

The secret of beauty, they say, is closely bound up with the history of an irrational number whose mysterious force people have been endeavouring to fathom ever since the time of Vitruvius (first century BC). We read of multifarious efforts by leading minds to visualise this baffling number, are told about the proportional sketches by Leonardo da Vinci and the number series identified by Leonardo da Pisa (1170-1220), about flying squares and rather less flightworthy rectangles. The designers at FSB discovered that “this inexpressible number” (Johannes Kepler, 1571- 1630) is a symbol for the dynamics of life, a process that is generally deemed to be beautiful when it accords with the principle of self-similarity. Providing immediate evidence of this is the natural growth spiral of a seashell, a daisy or the seed pod of a sunflower.

Fascinated by such mathematical elucidations of natural beauty, FSB filtered the dynamics of the Golden Section through the keyhole of the architectural hardware trade to come up with a pleasing door-handle shape. A radial grid was created in our CAD system, the technical requirements for a door handle were entered and a line was plotted through whirling rectangles with the aid of right angles and the Fibonacci sequence (0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13,...). Without further ado, there appeared on the screen the aesthetic soul of a handle shape bending gently back towards the door leaf – an irrational measure of grippability of a most reasonable kind.

The rest was quite routine. Incorporating a circular grip cross-section gave life to FSB 1160, an alternative to conventional door lever handles based on the laws of Pythagoras and exuding “harmonia et symmetria”. The handle tapers from neck to tip – likewise observing the rules of the Golden Section. This reduction in width further intensifies the momentum of the natural path of the curve. The resultant design is discreet, securely grippable and geared to the user’s direction of motion.



Overcoming gravity
through spring loading,
or: what is right is beautiful.



Door handles from FSB boast compelling qualities inside and out. The technically sophisticated bearings beneath their roses, and hence beyond the bounds of design, make for ease of assembly, enduringly fault-free functioning and – and this is where design comes back into its own – visual value-added.

The classic is FSB AGL[®], an acronym that has been the measure of all things on doors for decades now. FSB AGL[®] absorbs the forces exerted when operating lever/lever sets on heavily used doors flexibly and continuously over long periods. The tensile and compressive forces arising are reliably cushioned by means of rubber and metal joints which is taken up by low-friction, maintenance-free, Teflon-coated sliding-bearing bushings. FSB AGL[®] sets comprise two lever-and-rose sub-units pre-assembled at the works and includes a positive mechanism with a built-in horizontal stop that prevents handles from sagging. The levers in “normal” sets are generally pushed about 2° above their ideal horizontal position by the lock spring. The FSB AGL[®] positive mechanism offsets this and ensures that the handle always comes to rest at right angles to the door. Which brings us to the visual value-added: beauty facilitated by the right technology.

FSB ASL[®] guarantees full flexibility coupled with an impressive price/performance ratio. FSB ASL[®] is supplied as a non-handed set with universal applicability. Its adaptor technology makes it extremely easy and quick to assemble. The combination of steel reinforcement and GFR plastic significantly enhances the bearing's tensile strength. Rounding off its benefits are a 45° operating angle and a non-directional positive mechanism spring. Over and above the standard variant for door thicknesses of from 39-58 mm, FSB ASL[®] is also available to order for a far greater range of thicknesses at both ends of the scale (29-98 mm).

FSB AGL[®]

- rotatably fixed compensating bearing
- low-friction, maintenance-free, Teflon-coated sliding-bearing bushings
- assembly and manufacturing tolerances compensated for
- positive-locking connection of male and female handles
- user category 4/EN 1906
- more than 1 million tested operations
- positive mechanism B
- precision horizontal positioning
- effortless screw-fixing owing to adaptor half-set
- DIN handing can be altered on site
- easy, fabricator-friendly assembly

FSB ASL[®]

- non-handed
- concealed handle bearing
- positive mechanism A
- all current door-lever handle designs available
- bearing rotatably fixed
- steel-reinforced base
- M5 steel screws
- 45° angle of operation
- rapid assembly
- 20 mm door-thickness increments
- Class 4-certified under EN 1906



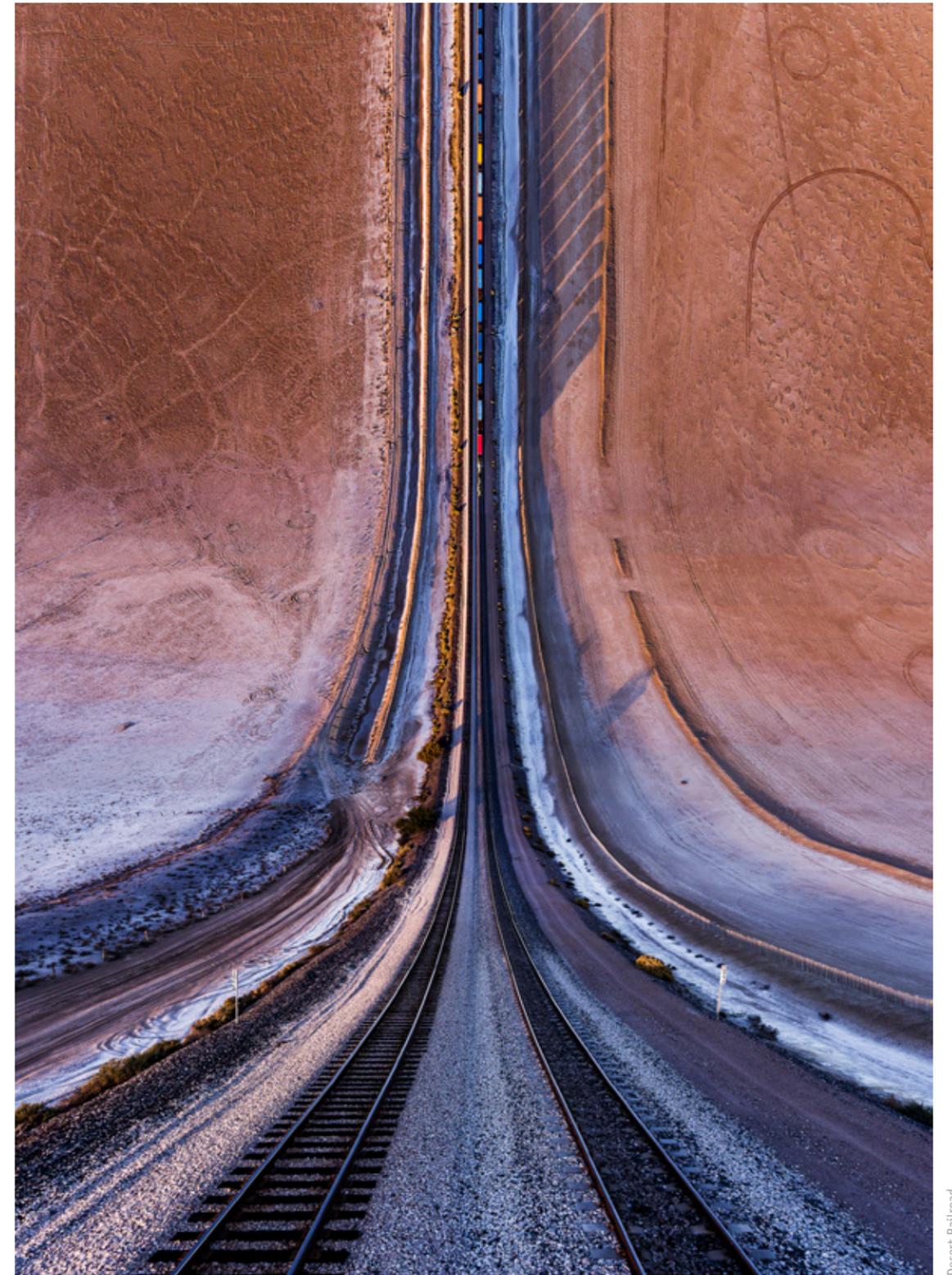
New Mosque

Aydın Büyüktas

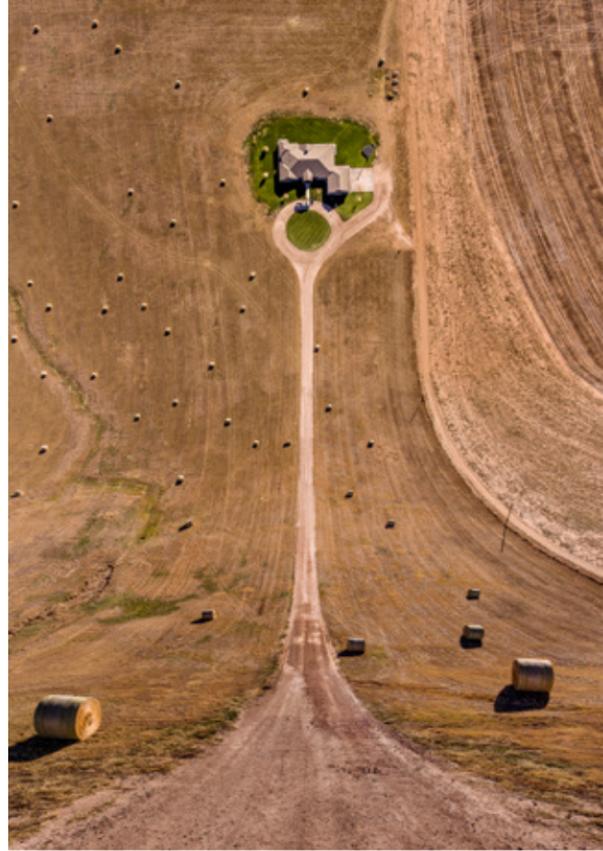
A fascinating perspective

The artistic “Flatland” photographs by the Turkish photographer Aydın Büyüktas appear like a surreal dream, where the world tilts towards the viewer and the boundaries of human perception seem to have been removed in a marvellous way. A great variety of different landscapes, roads, fields and bridges roll up to create a new dimension from which viewers cannot detach themselves.

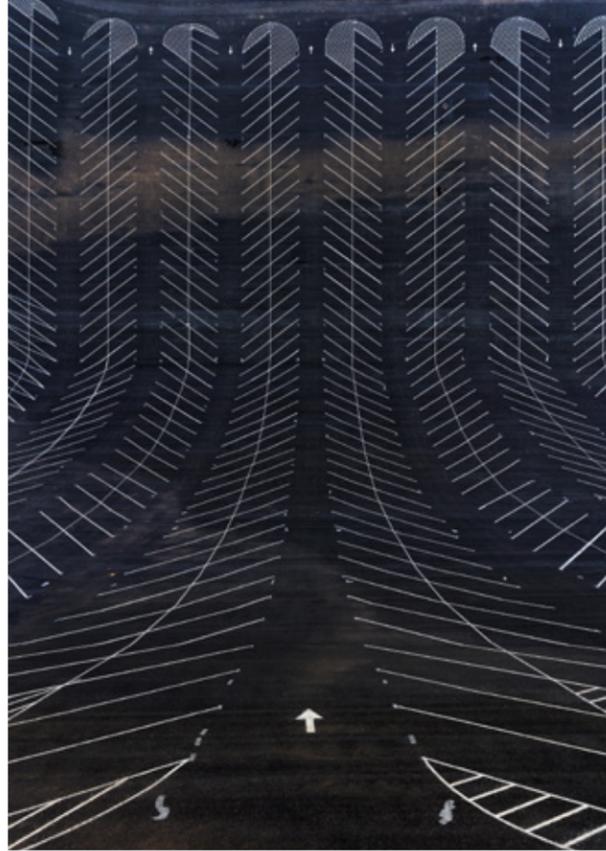
The Turkish photographer Aydın Büyüktas was inspired by the more-than-a-century-old mathematical satire “Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions” by Edwin Abbott, which deals with the inhabitants from various dimensional worlds. He used drones to take his photographs. These were subsequently edited by an elaborate process, since every one of Büyüktas' photographs is made up of 18 to 20 pictures, each taken from a different perspective.



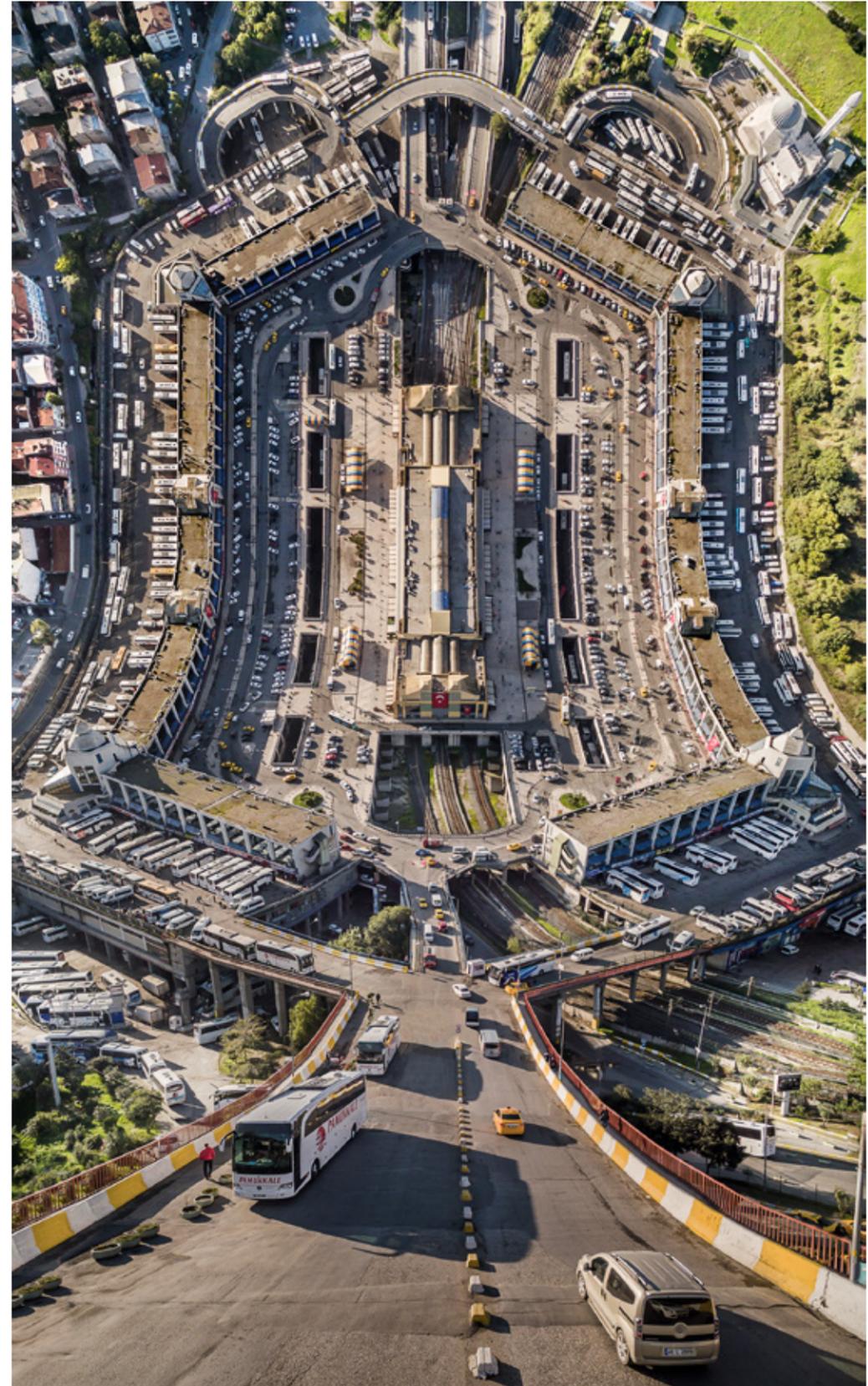
Desert Railroad



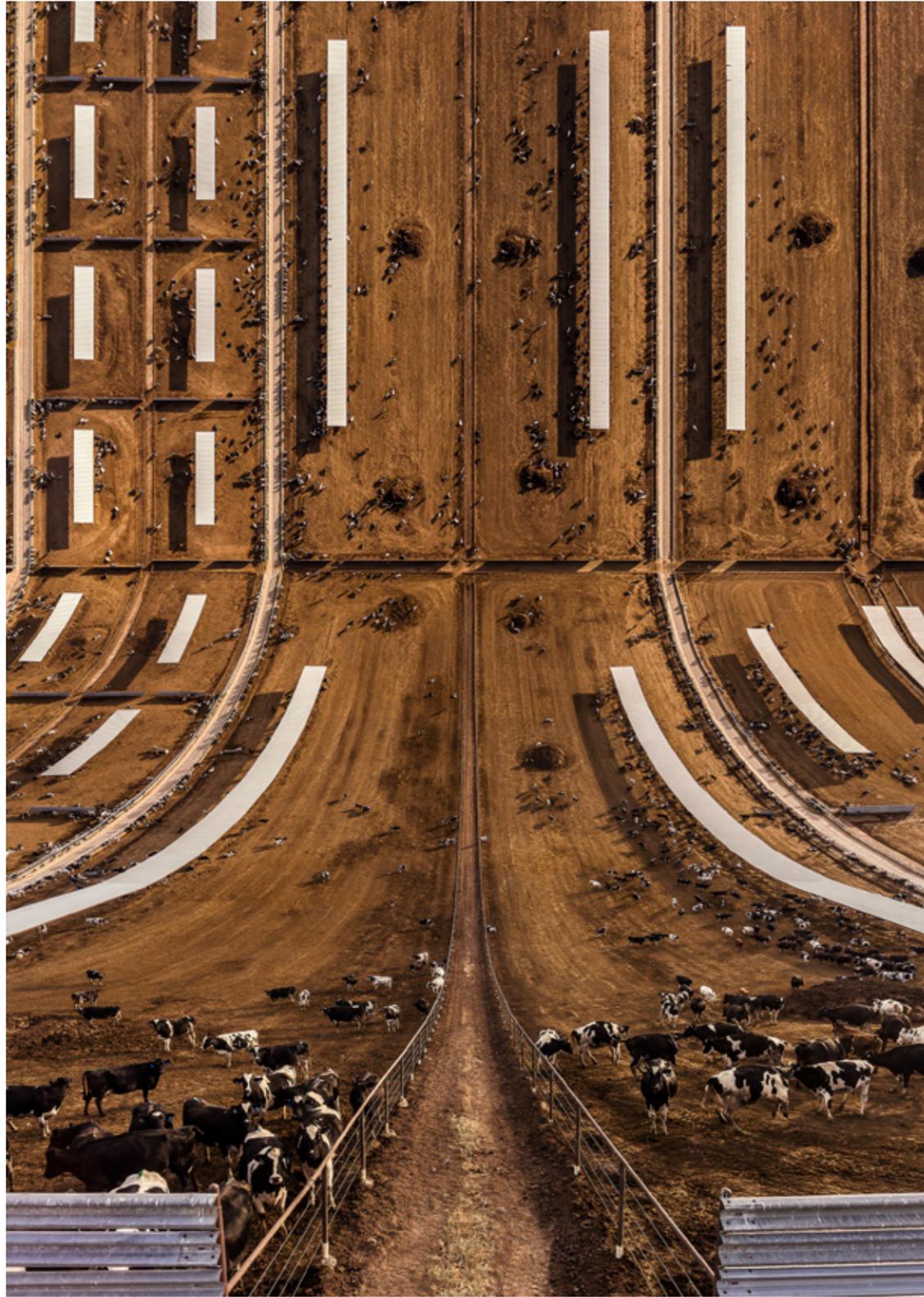
Farm With Bates



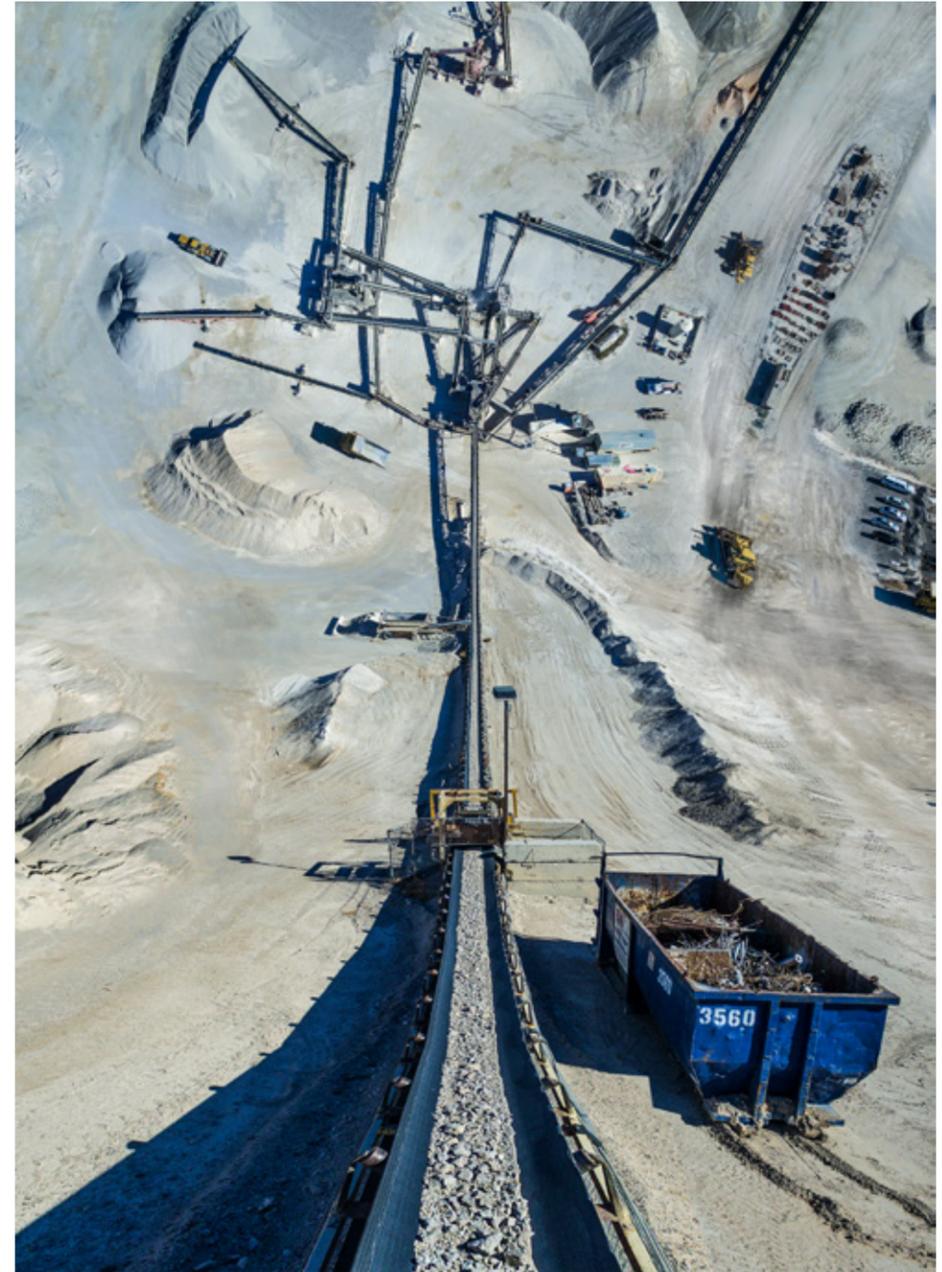
Empty Car Park



Bus Station



Cow Farm



Quarry

Aydın Büyüktas was born in 1972 in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. After moving to Istanbul in 2000, he worked for various film and video production companies. At the same time, he continued his education in the areas of visual effects, 3D animation and video production, and discovered his passion for photography. To expand his skills and knowledge still further, he decided in 2012 to study photography at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul, his chosen place of residence.

 [Aydın Büyüktas](#)
 www.aydinbuyuktas.com

GIRA

New operating comfort with integrated systems

Smart Home in a new dimension

A “smart home” is a top priority for many property owners. The use of intelligent building technology makes it possible to experience a new dimension of smart technology and ensures a high level of living comfort, better security, clever energy management – and all of this with voice control if desired. Gira offers the smart home functions by linking Amazon’s Alexa with the Gira X1 Server and the secure remote access module Gira S1. In this way, the light obeys the owner’s spoken word and the roller blinds move on command. Reliably and securely. A smart home cannot be any smarter.

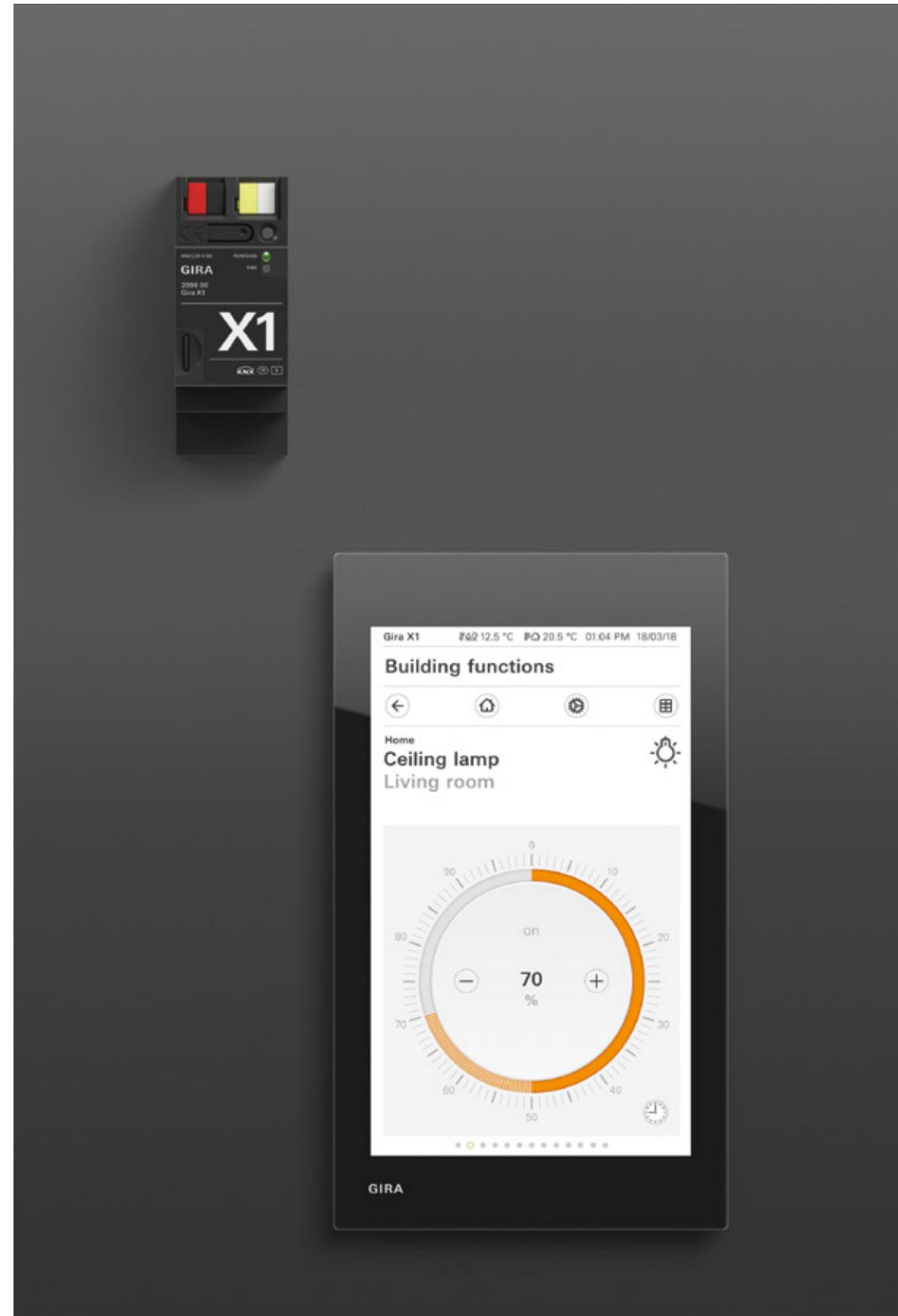
Complex applications can be implemented with system solutions, whose functionality can also be extended later on without any problems. Radio-based systems are recommended primarily for renovation projects, while preference is given to the cable-based, brand-neutral KNX system in new buildings.

The cable-based solution for the intelligent home: KNX

Gira offers solutions with a high level of consistency, because their individual components are synchronised with each other – both technically and optically. The technology is controlled by a central server. This can be the Gira HomeServer, a type of on-board computer that has been a continuous success in the market in the last 20 years. An alternative is now available especially for single-family homes: the Gira X1. This compact server can do everything that is necessary and useful in a smart home: control of lighting, blinds and temperature.

Control on-site and from a distance: the Gira X1 app

It can be operated not only from anywhere inside the building, but also from a distance – with the Gira X1 app. This app for iOS and Android turns existing devices such as Smartphones or tablets into operating terminals for intelligent building technology. The intuitive interface of the Gira X1 app visualises the KNX installation of a single-family house and provides access to its functions: dimming, switching on and off, roller blinds, shutters, heating control, value input, scenery, timers and much more. Pictures taken by surveillance cameras can also be retrieved “live”.



All Gira X1 functions are clearly visualised and easy to operate via the Gira G1.



Permanently installed multi-talent: Gira G1

In addition to mobile control of the smart home, many house owners wish to have a fixed operating terminal. The entire KNX building technology can be controlled via Gira G1. In combination with other devices, Gira G1 also becomes the home station for door communication. When the doorbell rings, the appliance switches automatically to the door intercom mode. With the touch of a finger, communication starts, the door opens, or the light is switched on as required.

The high-resolution multitouch display uses the same interface as the Gira X1 app, with a user-friendly system of icons, large font and easy-to-understand symbols. This allows all control functions to be operated intuitively by the touch of a finger or a gesture – more easily than ever before.

Secure remote access to the smart home: data security

When talking about the smart home today, we cannot ignore the issue of data security. This is the most decisive reason why critical users have reservations about smart technologies. But this concern is no longer valid, as Gira can reliably encode the communication with its S1 remote access module. This module guarantees that users can communicate with their KNX Smart Home simply and securely from outside the house.

Gira S1 supports not only remote control of the entire KNX Smart Home, but also remote servicing with optimal protection for the first time. As the server for the Gira appliance portal is located in Germany and thus subject to German privacy legislation, compliance with German data privacy standards is ensured.

www.gira.com/uk



Top:
The Gira G1, 9 X 16 cm in size, looks very slender and seems to float on the wall. Its design is straightforward and puristic, and the materials used are of high quality. The whole front of the appliance is made of a special scratch-resistant glass, and the frame made of genuine metal underlines its elegant design. The models in glass black and glass white harmonise with every style of interior design. With the G1, Gira adds a new aesthetic, functional dimension to its design competence for switching systems, which is appreciated among architects.

Left:
Gira X1 app – mobile control for the intelligent home

Right:
Alexa is connected securely with Gira X1 via Gira S1. Now Alexa is ready to receive your commands and you can control your house with your voice.



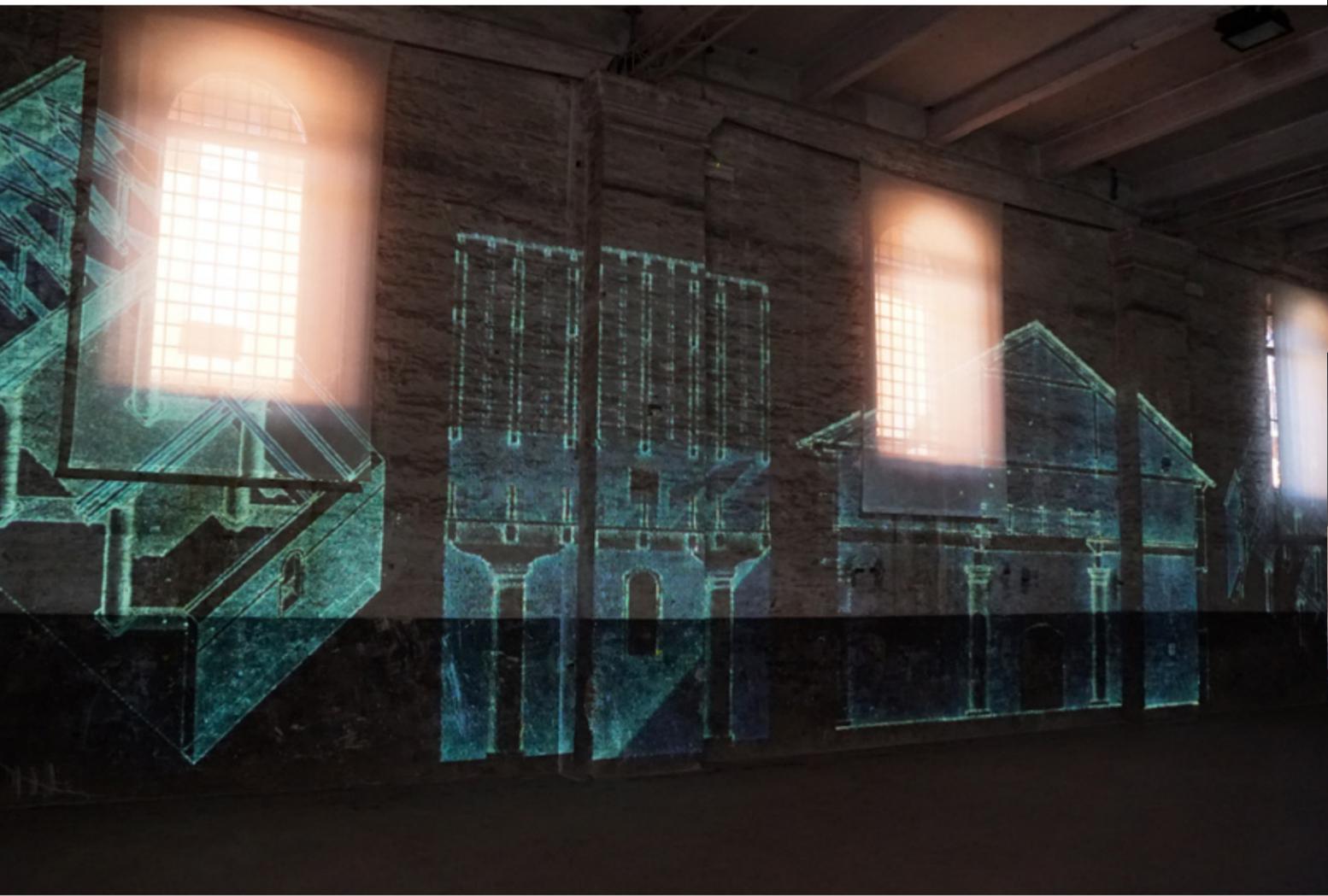
A NEW FUTURE?

The Austrian architecture critic Peter Reischer takes you on a walk through the Giardini and the Arsenale at the Biennale of Architecture 2018 in Venice.

In several reviews and reports, the Biennale of Architecture in Venice was described as a venue for family outings. The programme had something to offer for everyone, including adults, architects, onlookers and even children. And this in spite of the difficult theme of "Freespace", set this time by the two curators Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara (Grafton Architects from Dublin). Other colleagues suspected the curators and their theme manifesto of religious tendencies and saw only a process of cleaning up and clearing out in some exhibits presented (in various national pavilions). Others again were fascinated by the models on display and their perfect workmanship, or they indulged in profound, but purely theoretical discourses about the meaning and purpose of free space. This is all justified in some way, as suggested by the motto of Freespace.

The manifesto of the two curators had already been around for quite some time. Everyone could have read it at any time, in which case people would perhaps not have been quite so surprised by this Biennale of Architecture. It is an attempt to explain the concept of Freespace. Humanistic values and fine words can be found in it; we read about liberality of the spirit and a sense of humaneness as the basis of architecture; about unprogrammed free space intended as a democratic space, the opportunity to use the gifts of nature (light, sunshine, air, etc.), and much more. Freespace is certainly not a simple concept. It includes many aspects and leaves room for different interpretations. But – to express it in the words of Ralf Moneo – Freespace should not be confused with common space or public space. Freespace goes far beyond that. “Free Space” could also be interpreted as a kind of categorical imperative.

“Freespace celebrates the ability of architecture to discover some additional and unexpected liberality in every project”, is how the curators expressed it in somewhat ambiguous and flowery terms. But we must also be able to recognise this talent, this creative gift, and thus this Biennale – the longer back (in time) our last direct experience was – turns out to be a plea for reduction to essentials and self-restraint, and so we can justly say that architecture has finally arrived in the post-heroic era. The time of star architects and photographs suitable for high-gloss prints is definitely over. Sean Griffiths (professor, architect at several international universities of architecture) has already expressed this as much. He questions the future of the architectural profession as it is practised today, and believes that architects are no longer required for constructing the hideous box-shaped, stereotype buildings for residential and other purposes. The function of an architect can certainly not be limited to the colour scheme of awnings and the selection of door handles. Thinking along the lines of this hypothesis proposed by Griffiths can lead in different directions: into a dystopian world where machines construct the buildings (for people), or towards an architecture based on nature and in natural settings, as if growing spontaneously.



Impressions from the main exhibition in the Arsenale, curated by the Biennale curators Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara (Grafton Architects from Dublin).

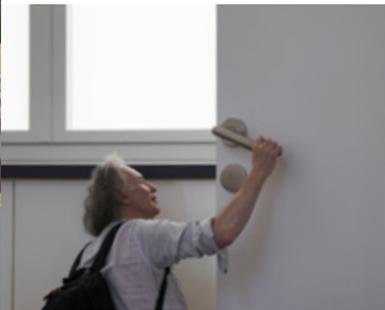


The curators had not fitted out the long, three-nave hall with any installations or partitions. In the two side aisles, there was room for 65 individual presentations. Optical illusions playing with space, projections and empty spaces could be found here, including a circular “digital” freespace with areas for sitting and lying down, deliberately planned as an empty space. And not only those, but also magnificent projects that brought architecture down to earth. All participants again made a special point of presenting carefully planned designs, unlike 2 years ago, when improvisation was also allowed. The models, mainly made of wood or other sustainable materials, were of excellent quality and workmanship. The entire Biennale was pervaded with fragrances of pine resin, smoked bamboo, clay, earth and nature. It seems that Peter Zumthor was right after all with his statement two years ago concerning the return of craftsmanship. Some other participants, though, limited themselves to theory, walls covered with notes, philosophy and constructs. This is also OK, since the Grafton architects expressly mentioned “built and unbuilt”.

In the national exhibitions behind the Cordiere, there were some more moments of visual excitement, until these were unmasked as (pure) show after the initial amazement at the effect of the images. A seemingly endless structure inside a circular white room without horizon with background sound was irritating and made people feel dizzy; suspended arched paper sheets with a narrow slit for passing through, fountains and smoke screens, video projections, etc. In most of the architectural projects presented here, the gap between theory and its materialisation, the period and process of production, as sketched and initiated by Aravena two years ago, was left in its original state and no longer pursued. Or is the creation of architecture actually already being performed by machines, as supposed by parametricism, drones and 3D printing?

INSIDE THE ARSENALE

After you had made your way past Japanese ladies taking selfies and architects wearing white hats with black hat bands and black shirts to reach the entrance to the 317-metre-long Cordiere (the original rope makers’ shop for the Venetian shipyards), you were either hit by a mobile phone selfie stick or struck by the concentrated dynamism of the first image: a curtain made of hemp ropes serving as the entrance door, recalling the original purpose of this hall (picture p. 24). It freed the room from its normal visual appearance and made visitors curious about what was to come. As a reminder of its original purpose, this curtain stripped the hall of its customary function established for many years as an exhibition hall and brought it back to its origin. In the darkness of the next room immediately after the curtain, there were floor plans, cross-sections, drawings of ships and construction plans, all cross-faded and projected onto the walls; they reminded viewers of time, culture, loss and success, and the transience of things. This installation was actually supposed or intended to serve as a guideline for all other projects and presentations, since here the factor “time” took its shape. And that concept of time also included the creative process, the (long) way from an idea to the realisation of a piece of architecture. And architecture cannot be just any result or the single result – invariably, it is also a social process.



From left to right:
United Kingdom: Islands. An empty interior, a platform on the roof that transforms the roof ridge into an island.
Switzerland: Svizzera 240: House Tour. Playing with dimensions.
Germany: Unbuilt Walls. The perception of the exhibition is a question of perspective. Black wall or informative stele.

THE GIARDINI AND ONWARDS

The main pavilion in the Giardini was designed entirely in the spirit of reductionism. Many installations and additional rooms had been removed and a few architectural treasures (windows by Carlo Scarpa) had been rediscovered. If some of the participants did not come up to expectations here, this was due to an overemphasis on theory and the indescribability of Freespace. Walls full of sketches, photos and diagrams are not generally comprehensible. They often require a level of knowledge, the absence of which leaves viewers at a loss. But the suggestion to look in other directions (for example at the floor by Assemble) was also one way of doing justice to the general theme and provided some consolation. However, this “lack of satisfaction” felt by some visitors could also have been partly due to the post-modern way we tend to “read” a Biennale. The various levels and narrative styles existed parallel to each other and simultaneously when seen from this perspective, and the format of a Biennale is seemingly no longer suitable to represent or fulfil all of these reception potentials and expectations. As such, visitors could also discover some exemplary restoration work (modernisation of a pavilion at a psychiatric hospital in Belgium by de vylder vinck taillieu architecten).

Politics also received due attention: There were protests against misguided municipal policy and the shortage of housing in front of the entrance to the Biennale, and for the German contribution, the politician

Marianne Birthler and the Graft architects' office were asked to express their thoughts about spaces growing together after the fall of the Berlin wall. Various steles formed a wall (but only if viewed from a certain angle) on the back of which the “unbuilding” took place in real or suggested projects.

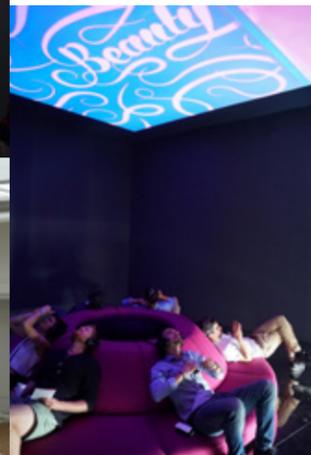
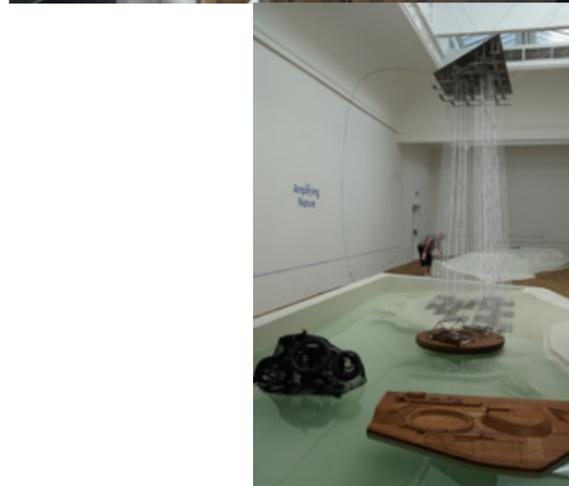
A political statement which was just as unique could be found at the British pavilion. The curators completely emptied the interior. Visitors could climb onto the roof via a scaffold on the outside. Here, there was a large terrace where they could drink tea and take a look at the surroundings – and that was all. The contribution was named “Island”, which puzzled some visitors and caused confusion with a “possible” Icelandic contribution. But “Island” was intended as a critical statement about the Brexit.

Yet some poetic and magical spots could also be found at the Biennale. The Vatican used its first appearance at the Biennale to create a place of silence and contemplation on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, away from the bustle and big crowds. And here it was revealed that so-called stars can also present something different. 10 (world-)famous architects were each allowed to build a chapel in an enchanted park and thus show reality that can be built from different points of view. These places of silence were examples of freespace, but of the kind only feasible with the appropriate mental or even spiritual approach.

This time, the prize of the Biennale, the Golden Lion for the best national pavilion at the Giardini, went to Switzerland. It was one of the few countries which took up one of the main themes set prior to the Biennale – residential building – with a simultaneous attempt to make at least a slight reference to freespace. And that with a typical “Swiss sense of humour”. The curators, four research associates from ETH Zurich, installed an “empty” apartment in the pavilion. Empty is not quite correct, for the rooms are empty, but equipped with all structural elements necessary for living in them, such as doors, windows, built-in cupboards, fittings, sockets and switches. A parquet floor with white skirting, plus white walls and ceilings were installed throughout the entire suite of irregularly arranged rooms – and that was all. But now the dimensions became blurred: Door handles at a height of 1.80 metres, including a door 2.40 metres in height, tiny windows in rooms only 1.60 metres high, and the electrical installations were all customised and adapted to the crazy dimensions of the individual rooms. To the left of the entrance door, everything dwindled to dwarf size, to the right, the elements grew bigger and bigger until they reached the maximum size of 2.40 metres. Hence the title of “Svizzera 240: House Tour”. But did this contribution perhaps also imply some hidden criticism of the title Freespace chosen by Grafton Architects?



From top to bottom:
Australia: Much genuine greenery inside the room and accelerated day-and-night lighting conditions.
Austria: Dark walls, a walk-in floor-to-ceiling wooden structure, sheets of paper fluttering in the breeze, mirror floors inside and outside in the form of a Euclidean circle, video art below the ceiling.
Poland: Odd and fascinating documentation of the performance of the Polish national opera.
Halka by Stanislaw Moniuszko at the Haitian village Cazale in the middle of a country road.
Romania: Room for the play instinct.



A FINAL WORD

Now, after the end of the Biennale, some questions have come more and more to the fore, questions about the future of architecture, but also about the training of future architects. What should we pass on to the next generation of young architects? What will be their ideals? The non-necessity of prestige buildings for corporate headquarters or museums, the nonsense of mega projects for industry and urban development is obvious. Such architectures are determined too much by financial, political, technical and efficiency-based criteria. Perhaps the greatest merit of this year's event and its curators is to have broken the inevitable vicious circle and competition for growth, for surpassing what has been achieved before. Two years ago – Alejandro Avarena – what comes next? Can the conceptual revolution he initiated (Reporting from the Front) still be topped? Is that really necessary, or should a more modest contribution also be acceptable? The inevitable novelty is also not always something better. So Farrell and McNamara restricted themselves to a “quiet” Biennale full of thoughts and full of free spaces, which, however, everyone could and had to discover for themselves. The Grafton architects deliberately concentrated on unspectacular projects. They also abstained from bringing any of their own work to Venice – an expression of a new modesty? “We are architects and not curators!” – a thought-provoking statement.

 Peter Reischer, Vienna/Austria, journalist/architecture critic

 POINTS of contact



PIACERE!

You will find an extensive series of photos under www.points-of-contact.com/category/blog



POINTS of contact Meeting point in Venice

Since the phenomenal start in 2012, the joint communication initiative for architects of the companies FSB, Gira and KEUCO has been extending an invitation to a meeting point in Venice for the opening week of the Biennale of Architecture.

The meeting point is organised every time in a historic Palazzo right beside the Canal Grande, preferably with a garden. Everyone who books the free-of-charge VIP package receives an extensive package of services. It includes daily visits to the Palazzo from 9:00 to 22:00 h, with catering, an evening programme, guided tours, a water taxi shuttle between the Biennale grounds and the Palazzo, and much more ...

By now, this meeting point could already be regarded as an integral part of the first days of the Biennale. The POINTS of Contact welcome party, with which the meeting point opens, is already legendary. The German and international architectural community looks forward eagerly to this date and comes together on site in Venice at POINTS of Contact for relaxing and networking, as well as eating, drinking and celebrating.

In 2018, a total of 2,300 architects visited the meeting point, which was in the historic Palazzo Contarini Polignac again as in 2016. Most visitors came several times during the day – and on more than one day. They took the water taxi shuttle, used the deckchairs in the garden for relaxation and enjoyed the fantastic view of the Canal Grande. On the day of the official opening of the Biennale, the anniversary party was held in the evening at the POINTS of Contact meeting point. More than 1,000 registered architects, media representatives and people interested in culture and architecture celebrated cheerfully and enjoyed the magical atmosphere. A lot of relaxed people, in lively conversation, laughing and discussing things with each other, who had at least three things in common on that evening: their interest in the Biennale, their love of Venice and their feeling at home at this meeting point on Canal Grande.

If you have not yet registered for our newsletter, but would like to receive our Biennale infos and many more interesting news items digitally from now on, please subscribe to it now:
www.points-of-contact.com/newsletter/

Impressions from the meeting point 2018

For many of our guests, numerous presentations and discussion groups rounded off their daily visit to the Biennale. With graft, Matteo Thun and Laurids Ortner, several celebrities came to the Palazzo Contarini Polignac this year. Additional highlights were set by a movie night and the exhibition showing the already quite remarkable history of POINTS of Contact. We will be delighted if you join us at the 17th Architecture Biennale in Venice as our guests in 2020.



20 years of POINTS of Contact – In Germany, the communication initiative has now existed for 20 years. To mark this anniversary, the guests were invited to get an overview of the topics and actions of past years in a special exhibition room. For the last four years, the cooperation has also received an enthusiastic response from architects in the UK and the Netherlands.



International TeamUp event – For the first time, Gira deliberately used the meeting point to strengthen its contacts with architects from the Netherlands and the UK. At a business breakfast, the architects who were exclusively invited had an opportunity to meet and network with representatives from Gira in a relaxed atmosphere.

graft architects – The curators of the German pavilion were our guests at a matinee and commented on their contribution. On Sunday morning, meeting point visitors gathered round “their” curators. Marianne Birthler and the graft architects Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz and Thomas Willemeit inspired our guests with their explanations and their easy-going, approachable manner.



Multimedia platform for architects – In the talk show “New avenues – changing strategies”, the multimedia information platform about the HERZBLUT networking project was presented with more than 150 statements from innovative, creative architects from Austria. The speakers were Prof. Laurids Ortner (Ortner&Ortner Architekten) and the architect Herwig Spiegl (founding partner at AllesWirdGut Architekten, Vienna/Munich).



Metropolis movie night – The monumental silent movie “Metropolis” from 1927 by Fritz Lang, with live piano accompaniment in the Piano Nobile room of the historic Palazzo, was met with an enthusiastic response from the audience of about 100 guests.

Matteo Thun – The Italian architect Matteo Thun and David-Ruben Thies, Managing Director of the Waldkliniken Eisenberg hospitals/Germany spoke about rehabilitation in curative forest environments in connection with the hospital and rehab buildings designed by Thun.



Less can do more:

IXMO

Fittings from KEUCO

IXMO fittings bring the interaction between design and functionality to perfection in a new dimension. Minimalistic design with a focus on geometrical bodies concentrates on essentials. There is nothing superfluous to distract from it. Simple forms and high-quality materials combine to give an impression of calmness and clarity. The concentrated form leads to the use of materials in small quantities, with the main emphasis set on aesthetics of the product and simultaneously on functional design. Product design in minimalist dimensions with complex interior mechanisms.

A minimalistic product design with user-friendliness – in other words, easy and intuitive operation – often hides a complex internal system. This is the ultimate art of reducing things to essentials, as expressed in a nutshell by the creativity researcher Edward de Bono: “Simplicity does not come about by itself”. What looks simple, is the result of deliberately “thinking out of the box”. Even though minimalism as we have known it from the “modern era” since the 1920s is a current trend today, it is more than just a temporary fad. Minimalism exists beyond any specific era; it is a style, a philosophy. Thus, Mies van der Rohe’s famous motto for minimalism “Less is more” is just as modern today as it was then in Bauhaus times. Another piece of evidence is the rewording into “Less, but better” coined in the 1960s by Dieter Rams, a celebrity in German industrial design.



Today's version from the bathroom specialist KEUCO is "Less can do more", its credo for the IXMO family. Created by the design studio Tesseraux + Partner in Potsdam, Germany, the IXMO fittings by KEUCO combine an aesthetic, puristic design vocabulary with latest technology. IXMO fits its functionalities into a very compact space to make them compatible with an extremely minimalistic design. Thanks to bundling of functions, it has become possible, for example, to accommodate the three-way stopping and converter valve, hose connection and shower switch in a single module. The number of on-wall products can thus be reduced to a minimum. This opens up an enormous amount of freedom for planning. Moreover, the visible parts are amazingly small, having a diameter and/or edge length of only 90 millimetres.

This minimalism can be taken even further, however. In the IXMO SOLO shower fitting, KEUCO combines a single-lever mixer with a hose connection in a single functional element for the first time. Minimal installation work and maximum convenience, since only IXMO SOLO without any additional water-bearing element is necessary for providing a complete shower solution. In this way, design and function are perfectly matched, and IXMO SOLO became the "ICONIC AWARDS 2017: Interior Innovation – Winner" and won the "Design Plus powered by ISH" label and the iF Design Award 2017 as well.

KEUCO bathroom equipment invariably combines aesthetic design with high-grade technology and provides the perfect solutions to fulfil individual wishes.

"Bringing several functionalities together was an exciting challenge. We had new ideas every day and this laid the foundation for a completely new approach",

"We offer new dimensions for aesthetes", is how Hartmut Dalheimer, CEO of KEUCO, sums it all up.

www.keuco.com
www.ixmo.de



is how the designer Dominik Tesseraux describes the development work on IXMO. Bathtub or shower? One or several water outlets? Round or angular rosette? IXMO allows for a great variety of combination options. Every solution is based on a thermostat or a single-lever mixer. Added to this are multi-functional modules as required, which provide connections for one, two or three flow paths and other functions. The installation is also extremely flexible. So even the positioning of the individual units can be chosen to the customer's taste.



FSB

FSB wins 2018 ICONIC AWARDS

FSB garners no fewer than three of the ICONIC AWARDS for 2018. We were actually adjudged as being “Best of Best” in two categories. The architecture and design competition run by Germany’s Design Council honours visionary buildings, innovative products and sustainable communication from all spheres of the architecture, construction and real-estate sectors as well as manufacturing industry.

“Winner” in the competition’s “Product” category: FSB’s plug-in handle for timber and metal windows



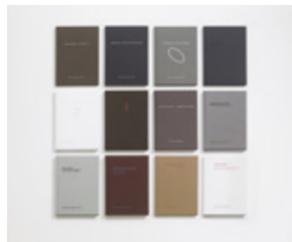
FSB’s plug-in handles feature roses pared down to the absolute minimum, making them ideal for virtually any window profile made of metal and – a market breakthrough – also of timber.

“Best of Best” in the competition’s “Innovative Material” category: Blasted Colour Anodised Aluminium by FSB



The new “Innovative Material” category is devoted to materials that are sustainable, energy-efficient and have scope for a wide range of functions and designs. FSB duly impressed the jury with its Blasted Colour Anodised Aluminium.

“Best of Best” in the competition’s “Communication” category: FSB’s “Paths to Architecture” book series



FSB has been sponsoring the “Lecture on Architecture” held during the “Paths through the Region” festival of literature and music since 2003. The talks are published by FSB in its “Paths to Architecture” series.

www.fsb.de/en

GIRA

BLACK IS BACK New product lines in Gira System 55 – Brochure now available from the Gira download area.

Timeless and trendy. Appealing look, surprising feel. The proven Gira E2 range of switches has now been extended by adding a new surface: **matt black**. Set exclusive highlights – trendy and polarizing – with clear styling and elegant design.

Round and angular, black and white: the new line of switches **Gira Studio** plays with contrasts. As on-wall installations in trendy interiors or flush-mounted in premium-class living areas.

Luminous highlight: **Plug & Light** is a clearly defined interface which combines lighting control with power supply – the light socket. The lamps are connected to the light socket by a magnet. Once installed, every lamp can be rotated by 360° without a stop and even be exchanged while in operation. Plug & Light can be installed very easily in Gira System 55; in this way, Plug & Light not only offers maximum functional versatility, but also extensive scope for interior design.

You can now order the brochure on new product lines from Gira in System 55 under Product No. 18546 99 or on the Internet from www.gira.com/uk.



www.gira.com/uk

KEUCO

www.keuco.com Bathroom expertise, digitally experienced

Experience the KEUCO brand digitally – anywhere, at any time, and with any device. The new KEUCO website www.keuco.com is modern and fascinating. Visitors now gain insights into the multifaceted world of KEUCO with just a few clicks. With intuitive navigation, a useful search function and many convenient service features, interested persons, customers and professional partners reach their goals quickly.

www.keuco.com has a lot more to offer besides a new presentation and extensive information about the entire range of KEUCO fittings, accessories, mirror cabinets, washstands and bathroom furniture. Attractive pictures and detailed background information present the KEUCO world to the viewer: a direct experience of the company’s philosophy, quality standards, innovative strength and long-standing tradition. Various references show where KEUCO products can be found around the world in hotels and private bathrooms and public sanitary areas.

KEUCO BIM data available online

Also new on the website: KEUCO offers BIM data of numerous products. The BIM data of the PLAN, IXMO and iLook_move cosmetic mirror series from the CAD programs Allplan, ArchiCAD and Revit are now available for download with one click.



www.keuco.com

FSB

GIRA

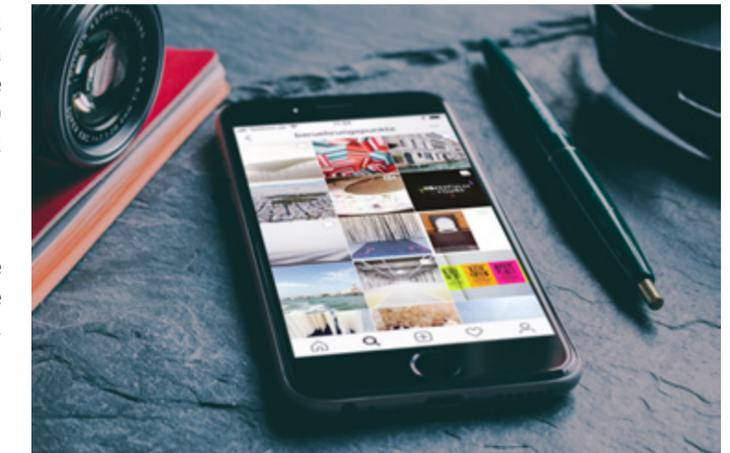
KEUCO

POINTS of contact

The communication initiative for architects

www.instagram.com/beruehrungspunkte (Even digital) Pictures are worth more than 1,000 words

We just call it the digital dimension of being inspired. The hashtags# help with the selection, and the topics dealing with architecture, design (products), creativity and the Biennale speak for themselves. And regardless of how online-savvy you are or what your attitude is towards the (no longer) new media: Simply take a look at our Instagram account and see for yourself whether or not we can serve you as a source of inspiration.



www.points-of-contact.com

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POINTS of contact

The communication initiative for architects

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