

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

This newspaper is an integral part of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion of the project “Places for People” which was initiated on the occasion of the 15th Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2016.

One special feature of this year’s Biennale contribution is that its principal location is Vienna and not Venice. Given the urgent needs and real challenges associated with the current movement of refugees towards Europe it was decided

to use not only the high prestige and strong public presence of the Architecture Biennale but also the budgetary resources associated with participation to improve the living conditions of people who have fled to Austria. In line with the objective of achieving this using the resources of architecture – in the widest sense of the word – three Austrian architectural and design teams were commissioned to work with Caritas Österreich and other NGOs to develop and implement concepts for the accommodation and integration of refugees in three concrete locations in Vienna.

Hence, “Places for People” refers, primarily, to the three real building projects in Vienna which were launched

as part of this initiative as well as to a fourth location – the Austrian Pavilion in Venice and its presentation of the ideas, concepts and results of the six-month working process.

The challenge of transporting both the complex contents and the emotional dimensions of these interventions from Vienna to Venice is met by the architecture of the exhibition in the form of a three-part, hands-on display in and around the pavilion, a photographic essay and this newspaper, which can be read by visitors in situ but can also be taken away free of charge.

In three sections with a total of 72 pages, the newspaper offers ad-

ditional, in-depth information about the three interventions and other issues relating to the future of the European city which are addressed by the project “Places for People”. Under the title “More Places for People” it presents a further 14 inspiring projects in Austria, many of which have already been realised. The publication is rounded off by a supplement in the form of a magazine that contains the entire photographic essay on “Places for People”, from which a concentrated selection of poster-size images can be seen in the main space of the pavilion.

In this sense, the publication provides a link between the three locations in Vienna and the presentation in

Venice, between the exhibition space and the media space opened up by this newspaper.

The contents of the exhibition and newspaper complement and reinforce each other with the aim of offering visitors and readers both a quick introduction to and in-depth information about all aspects of the Austrian contribution.

**DEUTSCHE
TEXTFASSUNGEN**
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Table of Contents

PART 1 Context

- p. 3 **Places for People** by Christian Muhr
- p. 4 **Humane dwelling in the urban fabric** by Martina Frühwirth and Anna Soucek
- p. 6 **Cities on the move** by Lutz Musner
- p. 9 **Gimme shelter** by Kimberly Bradley
- p. 11 **Home is where your phone is** by Katja Schechtner, Katharina Müller and Anton Falkeis
- p. 13 **Fluchtraum Österreich** by Nina Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl
- p. 16 **More than a metaphor** by Christian Muhr

Although concreteness, in terms of not only the starting points and problems tackled but also the solutions proposed, is a central, conceptual criterion for the project “Places for People”, it is clearly impossible to imagine meaningful concrete answers which do not address the complex matrix of current social and urban developments which, in turn, is so strongly affected by such factors as globalisation and digitalisation, the transformation of the nation state and movements of refugees. This is why the essays and reportages address some of these issues while simultaneously attempting to identify plausible connections with the concrete interventions which were launched in the context of “Places for People.”

The focus of the essay by the cultural scientist Lutz Musner is the emancipatory potential of the European city in the light of resurgent nationalism and populism and the special “habitus of Vienna” which, today, is still shaped by, amongst other things, xenophobia and integration. The role of the mobile telephone as a place of retreat in societies characterised by high levels of mobility – especially in the context of the movement of refugees – and the effects of this technology on such traditional topoi as the city are addressed by the contribution from the researchers Katja Schechtner and Katharina Müller. The investigation of the exclusive or integrative functions of architecture which the architectural researchers Nina Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl developed out of their precise analyses of shelters for people seeking protection in Austria was similarly based on original research.

The method of participatory observation and the area of investigation connect the two reportages which are devoted to the various focuses of the development processes of the three interventions and which, thereby, apply the general Biennale motto “Reporting from the Front” to the Austrian contribution. The Viennese cultural journalists Martina Frühwirth and Anna Soucek accompanied the three teams over a number of weeks as they worked at the various locations in Vienna, documenting the concrete complex challenges facing the various players. The focus of the report by the Vienna and Berlin-based cultural journalist Kimberly Bradley is the individual stories and destinies of the people who have fled to Vienna. A special aspect of this report is the architectural experiences which these people have so far had both in their homelands and in the locations in Vienna where they are accommodated and, as a result of which, where they have come into contact with the architectural teams.

This first, general part of the newspaper is introduced by a text from the curatorial team presenting the most important ideas and intentions of “Places for People”.

PART 2 Interventions

- p. 17 **INTERVENTION 1 HOME MADE** by CAMEL TRACES OF IMPROVISATION by Gabriele Kaiser
- p. 25 **INTERVENTION 2 SOCIAL FURNITURE** by EOOS LIVING, WORKING, COOKING by Elke Rauth
- p. 33 **INTERVENTION 3 UN/COMMON SPACE – UN/DEFINED LIVING** by the next ENTERprise WHAT CAN ARCHITECTURE DO? CRISIS, PRECARIOUSNESS AND HOPE by Elke Krasny

The three initiatives launched as part of “Places for People” form the focus of the overall project and, correspondingly, of the presentation in the Austrian Pavilion and in this publication.

The eight pages, which were conceived and composed by the teams themselves, contain not only the guiding themes, central ideas and inspirations behind these three interventions but also their working processes and results so far as well as an outlook on future developments. The term “intervention” was chosen because it appears to come closest to covering both the character of the various strategies and the breadth of their areas of action.

The text contributions are from Gabriele Kaiser, Elke Rauth and Elke Krasny, three well-known Austrian architecture experts, who are particularly familiar with the work and the approaches of the three teams and with the issues which they are addressing. At the end of these three presentations of the individual concepts and projects the most important facts and figures from the three interventions are summarised on the back page in order to offer the reader both a quick overview and some means of comparison.

PART 3 More Places for People

- p. 42 **01 RUDOVSKY REVISITED** Monika Platzer
- p. 44 **02 INVOLVED RATHER THAN IGNORED** Alexander Hagner
- p. 46 **03 OCCUPIED VACANCY** Margot Deerenberg
- p. 48 **04 ACCOMMODATION AS A BASIC RIGHT** Christoph Lammerhuber and Markus Reiter
- p. 50 **05 FIRST AID IN ORIENTATION** Erwin K. Bauer
- p. 52 **06 HOLIDAYS FOR URBANISTS** Christian Knapp and Jonathan Lutter
- p. 54 **07 DESIGNING THROUGH MAKING** Peter Fattinger
- p. 56 **08 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY** Herwig Spiegel
- p. 58 **09 GENTRIFY WISELY** Philipp Furtenbach
- p. 60 **10 ALTRUISM IN ACTION** Elias Walch and Barbara Poberschmigg
- p. 62 **11 URBAN EQUALITY** Gabu Heindl
- p. 64 **12 TRANSFER WOHNRAUM VORARLBERG** Konrad Duelli and Andreas Postner
- p. 66 **13 DISPLACED - SPACE FOR CHANGE** Martina Birtscher, Eliane Etmüller, Karin Harather, Renate Stuefer, Rupert Gruber, Julia Menz and Maria Myskiv
- p. 68 **14 INNOVATION AND INVOLVEMENT** Clemens Foschi and Klaus Schwertner

The three initiatives launched at three locations in Vienna in the context of “Places for People” primarily represent attempts to develop concrete measures aimed at improving the living conditions of people who have fled to the city.

The examination of the varying needs and parameters in these different locations formed the starting point for the development of correspondingly specific ideas, strategies and realisations. While these three projects seek to formulate solutions to concrete problems they also, naturally, address the urban surroundings and the overall social context.

Even if this means that the interventions can be understood as pilot projects, they are also being developed in the knowledge that there is already a multitude of approaches, in Austria and further afield, that the curatorial team of “Places for People” regards as exemplary, inspiring and, at all events, worthy of discussion.

The following 14 interviews present a selection of such projects which have already been developed in Austria to an international audience. The very conscious starting point is projects which have already been completed because it is the experience gained in realising these that is of particular interest, not only for the ongoing activities of “Places for People” but also for future initiatives. The subject matter of these interviews includes the social role and self-image of architecture, the methodology and morality of the discipline and the future of the European city in view of the movement of migrants, technological transformations and social and economic crises.

The protagonists, who were interviewed by either Sabine Dreher or Christian Muhr, include architects, designers, artists, teachers and students who are active in Austria and can be considered as part of a civil society which has been the source of the most dynamic and innovative impulses in this area to date.

- p. 70 **CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS**
- p. 71 **IMPRINT**
- p. 72 **PLAN**

PART 4 Supplement

This publication is rounded off by a supplement in the form of a magazine that contains a photographic essay by Paul Kranzler. The photographer has accompanied the three teams of architects with his camera during several months, documenting their development and implementation work at the three different locations. In contrast with classical architectural photography, this visual essay also focuses on people who were involved in the process. The 40-page magazine presents 52 images selected from the total of around 5,000 photos which were taken between January and May 2016.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An undertaking like “Places for People” in which social interaction plays such a central role can only be realised through co-operation and teamwork. For this reason we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people whose commitment, cooperation and support made the project possible. This applies equally to those people who live in this city and those who have fled here.

While it is unfortunately impossible to mention everyone by name, we would like to offer special thanks to the following people who have made a particular contribution to the creation of this publication. Firstly, we would like to thank the three participating teams, each of which have presented their interventions on eight sides in text and image, all authors of the essays and reportages and all interview partners. Further thanks are due to the photographer Paul Kranzler who not only produced the visual essay in the magazine but also took most of the photographs in this newspaper. We must also acknowledge the tireless work of Linus Baumschlager, Roman Breier, Günter Eder and Marcel Neundörfer of grafisches Büro who were responsible for the graphic conception and design of the newspaper and supplement as well as for the signage system and the web design. The same applies to Rupert Hebblethwaite, who translated all the German texts into English, and to Katharina Sacken and Thomas Raab, who were responsible for proofreading and for the translation into German.

And in addition to this we would like to offer our special thanks to Kilian Kleinschmidt, who supported us with his valuable advice during the earlier stages of the project.

We are particularly grateful to Katharina Boesch of section.a for her experienced support in the areas of finance and production and to Susanne Haider and Sarah Hellwagner of art-phalanx for their media work as well as to Barbara Chen and Tom Hindelang of DMAA who performed very important background roles and the partners of DMAA, Roman Delugan, Dietmar Feistel and Martin Josst.

Last but not least our thanks are due to our partners Caritas and the Samariterbund Wien, whose participation was absolutely essential, and to the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the sponsors, whose budgetary support and help-in-kind made “Places for People” possible in the first place.

Elke Delugan-Meissl, Commissioner Sabine Dreher and Christian Muhr, Co-Curators



Photo: Christian Reisswiesner

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

“Aesthetics and ethics are one and the same.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein in: Tractatus logico-philosophicus (1921)

Occasion and intention
The project “Places for People” was launched in the summer of 2015, a summer marked in Austria not only by extreme heat but also, most memorably, by two tragic events which shocked large swathes of public opinion due to their extreme, unprecedented scale.

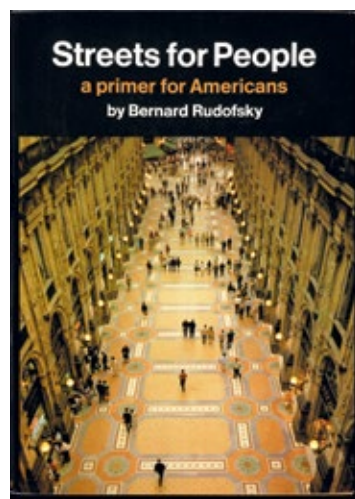
On 28th August 2015 a refrigerated lorry left abandoned on the Eastern Motorway close to the town of Pamdorf in Burgenland was found to contain the corpses of 71 people who had been crammed together in searing heat and, apparently, died a harrowing death from asphyxiation. These victims of people traffickers were largely men but, also, women and children from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Around two weeks earlier, Amnesty International had published a report about the situation of refugees in the Initial Reception Centre at Traiskirchen to the south of Vienna which criticised the centre’s massive overcrowding and inadequate medical, social and sanitary provision. As the centre’s capacity was exhausted and the authorities had been unable to organise enough additional accommodation, around 1,500 people were having to sleep in the open air while others camped in fields outside the town.

A few weeks earlier, the core team had begun a series of regular working meetings at the office of Delugan Meissl Associated Architects in order to develop ideas for Austria’s contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale. The news about the movement of refugees and the precarious situation of these fleeing people had always been present in these discussions but it was these two events, both of which had taken place less than 50 kilometres from this meeting room, that led to the decision at the beginning of September to put aside all other potential approaches and focus on this issue.

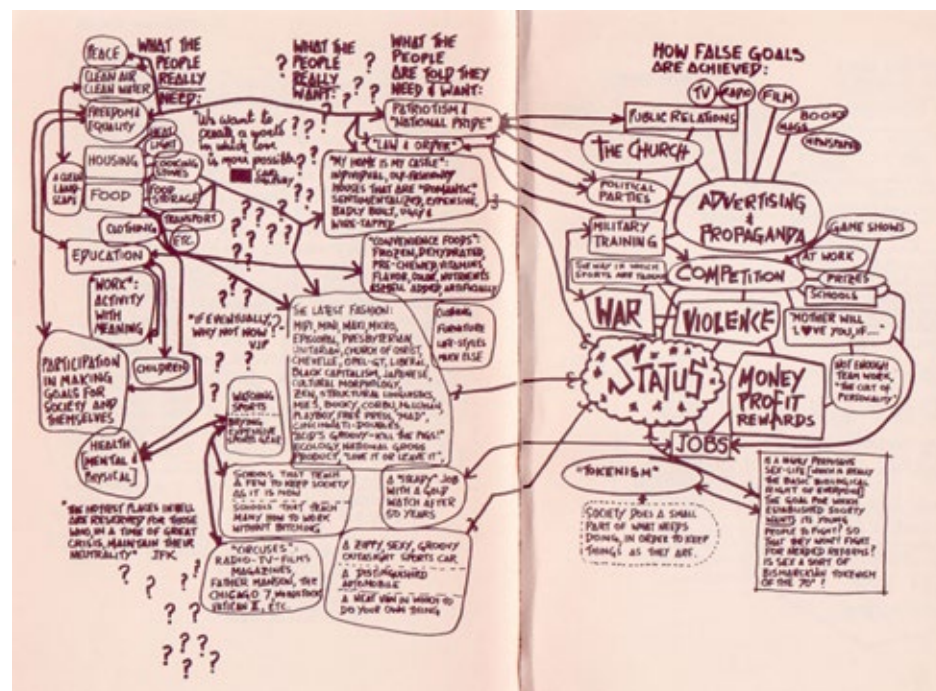
The conviction of the Biennale team that, in the light of these events, it was no longer possible to simply watch from the sidelines, was shared by a large and growing group of citizens, whose many-sided and energetic engagement led to the mobilisation of Austrian civil society on a virtually unprecedented scale.

In view of the conditions in Traiskirchen and in other emergency shelters, the members of the team felt called upon to do something, not only as private individuals but also in their professional roles as architects and curators of an architecture biennale. Hence, a project was immediately set in motion which sought to make constructive use of the know-how of selected Austrian architects, the prestige and production budget of the Biennale and the support of sponsors in order to adapt vacant or partly vacant buildings in Vienna with the help of architectural resources and with the aim of offering people dignified temporary accommodation and care.

Objectives and methods
The chosen approach was deliberately “hands-on”, practical, pragmatic and very decidedly not socio-romantic, given that the declared objective of the project from the very beginning was the concrete improvement of the living conditions of people who had fled to Austria. This decision led firstly to a very welcome shift of focus from Venice to Vienna, from the context of an international cultural event and the artificiality of the exhibition situation to real locations



Bernard Rudofsky, Streets for People. A primer for Americans, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y. 1969, 26.5 x 19 cm



Part of the flowchart illustration at the end of: Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, Victor Papanek, Bantam Books, Toronto/New York/London 1973

in Vienna, from the meta-level to the everyday, from the position of someone commissioned to produce a Biennale contribution to that of a client with concrete building projects and, finally, from the presentation of exhibits and end results to the working and production processes which precede them.

“Places for People” is primarily inspired by the simple, classical or, even, traditional notion that the elementary roles and constituent characteristics of architecture include the protection of people and the creation of humane living spaces and the basic conditions for a functioning communal life. However familiar, obvious or even outdated this assertion may appear, current developments lend it a new potency: how can one still speak legitimately of “Places for People” in an age of mass mobility and mass migration in which increasing numbers of people are switching locations – voluntarily or otherwise – or even abandoning their homes completely? Is the compact relationship between these two terms still valid or has it been replaced by a looser, more temporary arrangement? Given the scale of globalisation and digitalisation can one still legitimately regard people as place-centred beings? How can architecture create “Places for People” when these people spend more and more time moving in virtual worlds?

This background also leads to the inevitable question of whether the self-imposed objective of employing architectural resources to improve the living conditions of refugees is justified or, indeed, achievable. For this reason alone, the project has been driven from the very start by a spirit of experimentation – a spirit which also, quite consciously, accepts the risk of failure.

From the point of view of the curators, the basic question of what architecture can meaningfully contribute in times of crisis and emergency was best answered not generally but specifically, in the form of concrete projects, measures and interventions. This scepticism regarding universal solutions in such highly complex and conflict-ridden contexts was another reason for the selection and commissioning of two architectural teams and a design studio, all Vienna-based, to develop specific concepts for three intentionally contrasting contexts.

Fully conscious of the limitations of such a Biennale contribution, the intention was not only to help as many people as possible but also to encourage a certain pluralism of methods and ideas including, naturally, thoughts about scalability and the wider applicability of each approach.

Selection and approaches
The selection of the three teams was guided both by their intention and by such practical and pragmatic criteria as experience, commitment and resilience. The first discussions with Caramel Architekten, EOOS and the next ENTERprise all took place within 24 hours of an initial contact and all three teams unhesitatingly confirmed their readiness to get involved, despite the then very sketchy outlines of the project. In order to be able to dedicate as much of the available budget as possible to the project it was also agreed that all the independent architecture, design, media and cultural offices directly involved in “Places for People” would provide their services not at their usual rates but on a cost-only basis. All participants were prepared to accept this considerable extra expenditure as the price of their social commitment.

However, while these three offices could be convinced very quickly to participate in the project, finding the right buildings and the other important cooperation partners took much longer. There were weeks of discussions with statutory authorities, government agencies and private investors. Potential locations were visited, cost estimates and needs analyses drawn up and initial concepts developed for buildings which eventually turned out to be unavailable for bureaucratic, economic, contractual or other reasons. This lengthy process was very similar to that being experienced at the same time by many other representatives of civil society. But there was also progress: in particular, the crucial agreement of a process of cooperation with Caritas Österreich which ensured the long-term support of the three pilot projects.

Finally, not only the choice of the three buildings but also such complex issues as the financing, form and duration of the interventions and the type of care



Photo: Antonius Papanek, Vienna Architecture Biennale 2016

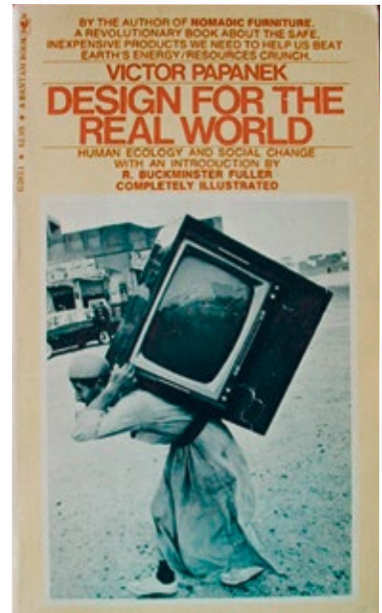
that they would provide were confirmed. From this moment, the three offices consulted intensively with each other and with the curatorial team and worked closely with Caritas’ various experts to develop the specific concepts which are being exhibited in Venice and presented in detail in this newspaper.

PLACES FOR PEOPLE IS PRIMARILY INSPIRED BY THE SIMPLE, CLASSICAL OR, EVEN, TRADITIONAL NOTION THAT THE ELEMENTARY ROLES AND CONSTITUENT CHARACTERISTICS OF ARCHITECTURE INCLUDE THE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AND THE CREATION OF HUMANE LIVING SPACES AND THE BASIC CONDITIONS FOR A FUNCTIONING COMMUNAL LIFE.

The city and the public realm
The strategies, focuses and measures selected for the three interventions - and the results achieved - vary markedly in a number of ways but also exhibit important similarities. The principal common feature is that each of the interventions was developed in co-operation with the people affected - the residents - although the nature and scale of this participation was different in each case.

A further similarity is represented the fact that, for all their specificity, the individual measures are also part of a broader context provided by the building and, beyond this, the city. From their shared starting point of creating humane temporary living places for refugees and for others in a precarious situation, all three interventions developed proposals for alternative, innovative and dynamic ways of using and shaping cities. While the three projects create, as required, real places for real, individual people, they also provide a concrete contribution to the wider discussion of such issues as new and intermediate use, the activation of vacant property, densification, the opening up

Victor Papanek, Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change, Bantam Books, Toronto/New York/London 1973



Originally published by Albert Bonnier, Fricourt St., Stockholm 1970

of public space, new forms of living and working and, not least, the reinvention of social housing, a field in which Vienna can point to both an impressive legacy and a wealth of high-quality examples.

The extent to which the city is central to "Places for People" is also demonstrated by the title itself which was inspired by Bernard Rudofsky's book "Streets for People" and by its passionate plea for a more humane urbanity and for the cultivation of the public realm. The Austrian-American architect, designer, author and exhibition curator (1905-1988) devoted his life and work to travel as a result of which he also experienced involuntary exile. After focussing on an examination of such elementary aspects of life as eating, sleeping, sitting, lying and washing, his writings, buildings and exhibitions ask how these needs can be met in a humane way and what role architecture can play in this process. Rudofsky based his observations on his analysis of anonymous architecture and everyday practices, also in the Arab World. His famous dictum, that what we need is less a new way of building than a new way of living, is a call for a shift of emphasis from the design of materials to the design of relationships – a call which, given today's many crises, has now gained a particular meaning in architecture and, hence, increased political significance, under the rallying cry "social turn". The same goals drive the work of the Austrian-American designer Victor Papanek (1923 -1998) who demanded and, indeed, set in motion a similar paradigm change in the field of design. Given the inspiration which the life and work of these

two cosmopolitan emigrants from Austria provided for the project "Places for People", it seems appropriate that Josef Hoffmann's Austrian pavilion provides the setting in which we can celebrate the continuing influence of two visionary representatives of a socially-oriented and less object-centred Viennese modernist tradition.

Aesthetics and ethics

The results of "Places for People" are being unveiled to a broad international audience on the occasion of the opening of the 2016 Architecture Biennale, around eight months after the launch of the initiative. Basic information about the projects as well as the ideas behind them are being very deliberately presented in the form of an experiment in order to allow the public to arrive at its own conclusions about the extent to which they have met their objectives so far. At the same time, it is important to understand that this is no more than an intermediate report due to the fact that, far from being complete, all three projects are still ongoing.

In keeping with the installation retained from the 2015 Art Biennale a simple, three-part display ensemble has been developed which offers places for both the presentation of content and social interaction: A concrete platform in front of the pavilion can be used by visitors in a multitude of ways in the spirit of the programmatic title of Austria's contribution. The second display presents a selection of 20 photographs,

THE ESSENCE AND STRUCTURE OF ETHICS AND AESTHETICS ENSURE THAT THESE ARE INDIVIDUAL, CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC ACTS WHICH DEMAND FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN EQUAL MEASURE.

in the form of takeaway posters, which feature the places and the people as well as the multiple interactions between architects and users, designers and residents. These are part of a comprehensive visual essay by the Austrian photographer Paul Kranzler who has accompanied the working process in Vienna over the

course of the past five months. A third display to the rear of the pavilion presents the three interventions in more detail. Here, visitors can also help themselves to a copy of this free newspaper containing extensive information about the entire project.

The importance of architecture for a functioning, cohesive society – as claimed by "Places for People" – has been tested by harsh reality more than once during the implementation of the project. Quite in keeping with the overall initiative, a number of very different conclusions can be drawn.

In contrast with this, however, the current popular tendency to reduce this issue to a polarisation between the social and the aesthetic, the autonomous and the auxiliary dimensions of architecture, represents an over-simplification.

Aesthetics and ethics cannot be separated: these two spheres interact in such a way that neither aesthetic nor ethical decisions can be arrived at through the simple application of external rules. The essence and structure of ethics and aesthetics ensure that these are individual, creative and artistic acts which demand freedom and responsibility in equal measure.

These relationships and this room for manoeuvre are also central to these three interventions and, indeed, to the "Places for People" initiative as a whole.

Biennale because it enables one to understand the starting point of "Places for People": "Places for People" are exactly what three offices – two architectural and one design offices – have been developing in this exceptional situation which has been with us since the summer of 2015. In their designs they are attempting to get as near as possible to the idea of a basic right to living space, despite all the limitations of the context in which they are working.

The length of this asylum process is unknown.

Since April 2016, 400 asylum seekers have been living in the large shelter in Erdberg. Outside, in the urban realm, they are more or less invisible. The area is virtually devoid of pedestrians. Over the years, the district of Erdberg in the South-east of Vienna has experienced numerous transformations. From a poverty-stricken area – Erdberg was home to Vienna's last slum – to its connection to the City Centre. Erdberg underground station opened in 1991. Integration into the underground network promises an upgrade: the periphery is brought a little closer to the centre with St. Stephen's Cathedral now just seven minutes away. The motorway is within earshot, thousands of office-bound commuters sit in traffic jams while the clover-leaf junction draws taxis onto the airport motorway. The location embodies transit, representing the condition which the German architect and urban planner Thomas Sieverts described as a "non-place of over-coming space" in his book *Zwischenstadt* in 1997¹. A dense row of office towers lines the underground tracks. In recent years more new office buildings have been completed. The latest office complex is called *Town Town* but, rather than revealing that these are office buildings, the façade design, with its French windows, has more to do with residential architecture. The huge office complex a few metres further away in which the refugees are accommodated today sends quite a different message. This is a huge administrative fortress, a monument to a bureaucracy which was remote from the people and belongs to another age.

Outside, in the urban realm, they are more or less invisible.

Part of the fortress still has an administrative use: The Federal Administrative Court works here, checking, amongst other things, asylum applications. For many years, customs officers were trained in the rest of the building. They used the basement for shooting and their classrooms were located a couple of floors higher up. Earlier, the trainees lived in the two-bed rooms which now accommodate refugees. Upon entering the building the challenge of accommodating several hundred people becomes clear straight away. Such a level of occupation was stretching everyone and everything to the limit – the carers, the residents and also the infrastructure.

¹ Thomas Sieverts: *Zwischenstadt. Zwischen Ort und Welt. Raum und Zeit. Stadt und Land. Vieweg, Braunschweig, 1997*



Lotte Kristoferitsch, Hannes Stepic, Harald Gründl in EOOS's workshop

On our first visit Lotte Kristoferitsch collects us at the entrance. We are immediately struck by a penetrating, sweetish smell. A mixture of stuffy air, urine and disinfectant. The impressions rain down upon us. Too many, too different and, above all, too shameful for us to deal with so quickly. We finally arrive at EOOS's office. Lotte Kristoferitsch unlocks the door. At the centre of the room a large writing desk and a number of chairs. The yellow desktop is used as formwork for concrete walls on building sites. A printer sits on the floor and a coffee machine on the window sill. The atmosphere reminds us of site accommodation in a container. More wooden panels lean against the wall. In the next few weeks a lot will change in the building with the help of precisely these panels.

Such a level of occupation was stretching everyone and everything to the limit – the carers, the residents and also the infrastructure.

EOOS are product designers with many years of experience. Their designs can be found in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. Their interpretation of the "kitchen" as working space which is a return to the origins of the notion of the kitchen – as a workshop – has won them an international reputation. In Erdberg they are also focussing on the kitchen, not for reasons of design but because they see the proposed communal kitchens as a means of empowering the residents. The aid organisations are currently serving brought-in meals to all residents three times a day. The food from the caterers is decent and sufficient but, over time, this 'full-service' becomes a burden for the residents. According to Harald Gründl of EOOS: "They are somewhere they didn't choose to be and are getting something to eat that they also didn't choose. Their room for manoeuvre is reduced to zero. The simplest means of re-establishing this room for manoeuvre and, eventually, some sense of self-esteem, is enabling people to look after themselves." In the communal kitchen proposed by EOOS the residents should be able to cook for themselves and for others and establish contacts, form a community.

The fortress-like character of the architecture also has its positive side: the noise of the surroundings is perfectly screened off.

The orientation of some rooms towards the internal courtyard frees up the view from others. The monotone façade is not exactly edifying but at least it is calm. The fortress-like character of the architecture also has its positive side: the noise of the surroundings is perfectly screened off. The courtyard is quiet and its floor surface undeveloped. But this will soon change because this unused space is simply too valuable, especially given that the building has so little communal space. The courtyard will house something which is becoming increasingly popular in urban residential complexes: community gardening with raised beds as a community-building measure. In late March, Lotte Kristoferitsch is – again – fighting against time: She is stuck to the telephone, looking for sponsors for the necessary substrate because the first shoots must be planted soon if they are to bear fruit.

The main building is another fortress. A corporate HQ and certainly not a residential complex.

The area around the second "Places for People" accommodation is very dif-

ferent from the office district in Erdberg. Reumannplatz in Vienna's 10th district, close to Vienna's Central Station, buzzes with urban life. The background noise is intense. If you leave Reumannplatz and travel east this bustle dies down. There are small shops, greengrocers and hairdressers, betting shops and takeaways which give off the aroma of old cooking oil. The street is edged by late nineteenth century tenement blocks and a series of large housing estates from the 1980s. A few metres further on Quellenstrasse peters out as a stunted dead-end below the supports of a motorway junction, only prevented from joining the adjacent railway tracks by some huge concrete blocks.

Here, a huge, fenced-off plot of land is occupied by a partially vacant office complex from the 1980s. The building, which is being addressed by the architectural office of the next ENTERprise in the context of the Biennale, was the headquarters of the technology company Siemens for many years. A high fence made of wide metal bars signals that the site is private and not to be entered. The main building is another fortress. A corporate HQ and certainly not a residential complex.

The tabloids report almost daily about the fears and misgivings of the people of the city.

The future refugee accommodation – in April 2016 the project is still being planned – is on the edge of a district with a high immigrant population. Favoriten, the 10th district in the South of Vienna, was traditionally a "red" district – a stronghold of the workers' party the SPÖ, not least because of the many municipal housing estates which can be found here. The district's political power structure has changed in recent years. At the last election for district representatives in October 2015, the right-wing populist FPÖ was the second strongest party. In the spring of 2016, while the project by the next ENTERprise was taking form, the FPÖ was protesting loudly against another project for refugee accommodation in Vienna. The tabloids report almost daily about the fears and misgivings of the people of the city. This makes the operators of refugee accommodation cautious about future projects. The position in March 2016 was that no information was to be made public until the support of the district authorities had been officially confirmed. At this point those involved had already been working on the project for months.

The architects of the next ENTERprise understand that the task could set an example for future forms of living which create spaces for action and communication for their users: what could urban living look like in cities in which space is short and yet offices are standing empty? "We want to use the current situation to address the vision of the city", declares Marie-Therese Harnoncourt of the next ENTERprise, "and we see this location as a hybrid urban building block, as a prototype for a special residential form at the interface between office, event and temporary living which also works in external spaces. The city must offer such possibilities because society is constantly under pressure to become more mobile and more flexible." The architects' objective is to create an urban building block for a dynamic city and the room-in-room approach chosen in this project for achieving this end is to accommodate not just refugees but also students – an experimental residential community involving two segments of the population that could just work. This shouldn't be one large unit but a number of residential communities with a total of 80 to 140 residents, of whom half are asylum seekers and half students.

Around a dozen people involved in the project meet at the end of February in a former office on the fourth floor in

order to review the design work carried out so far. Craftsmen have assembled the prefabricated booths – the prototypes for the experimental living modules – in just two hours. While the guests inspect these, trying sitting in them and opening and closing the screens, the last screws are tightened. The presentation of the prototypes focuses on completely practical questions: the size of the wardrobe, the width of the seating bench, the cost of the hinges and angles which, as this is a prototype, are still custom-made, the need for a pinboard and, finally, the material – no detail is so insignificant that it is not critically questioned. Thomas Leventischig, the owner of the building, raises the issue of cost. At what point does the investment cost of over 5,000 euros per module become economical? Couldn't one just buy bunks and throw up plasterboard walls to create separate sleeping places? Clemens Foschi of Caritas argues that as the modules are reusable they are more cost-effective than temporary dividers could ever be. Given the tight timetable there is also discussion of what will be available for display at the Biennale. The modules will have to be photographed in good time – and *in use* insists the Biennale Commissioner Elke Delugan-Meissl.

This shouldn't be one large unit but a number of residential communities with a total of 80 to 140 residents.

The fact that the property developer Thomas Leventischig plays such a part in the discussion and in the whole development process – and not just in the questions of cost which interest him as the co-financier of the next ENTERprise project – is not self-evident. His interest is not focused on the commercial exploitation of the object. He wants a solution which upgrades the residential environment. And a solution which facilitates integration – the integration of the refugees into their social context but also the integration of the building and its residents into their urban context – with the aim of creating added value for the neighbouring population.

The presentation of the prototypes focuses on completely practical questions.

At the end of March work starts on the external areas: rampantly growing bushes and undergrowth are removed from the slopes. *Cotoneaster dammeri* – the modest ground-covering plant was a standard component of planting schemes in the 1980s. Two gardeners remove the "rat's nests" from the sloping banks of the site to create space for a promenade. The wooden promenade with broad steps for sitting



Team meeting with the next ENTERprise

and viewing platforms should offer an attractive pedestrian link with Kempelengasse.

The opening up of the site is a liability issue. Children have far too little space for

playing in the vicinity. They play football on the parking deck on the railway tracks. This means that children from the neighbourhood will be the first to take possession of the newly opened garden. The thought of the potentially dangerous corners of the large site where children can move unsupervised makes the investor's employees very uncomfortable. And yet, the benefits offered by this opening up process to the new urban district are so great that the investor is going to push it through.

This means that children from the neighbourhood will be the first to take possession of the newly opened garden.

The plan for the design of the external areas is presented at the next regular meeting in the neighbouring guesthouse. It has suffered slightly in a hailstorm. It disappears below a timetable unfurled by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt of the next ENTERprise. The investor is pushing for a final plan which will allow him to obtain offers from craftspeople and suppliers. People begin to haggle over deadlines. Together, they count backwards, two weeks, three weeks. No one questions the fact that the design must be fixed so that the project can be implemented by the end of May. There is no time for intellectual games and excessive debate and every meeting must be used efficiently. Things have to advance. The lunchtime meeting highlights the "simultaneity" with which these different issues are being – must be – driven forwards. At the end of March the prototypes for the residential communities with the students have developed further but the client demands concrete calculations with which he can work: How much timber will be required for the promenade? The regular meeting raises more questions than can be answered ad hoc. After one and a half hours everyone around the table has the same amount of information.

The requirements for the third refugee accommodation developed in the context of the Biennale are completely different: The rental agreement for the shelter in Pfeiffergasse is extremely short – initially just until April 2016. Pfeiffergasse is located centrally, surrounded by well-kept residential buildings from various historical periods. Several underground stations and bus and tram stops are just a few minutes away and the area also has a number of parks. As we turn into Pfeiffergasse the neighbourhood seems pleasant. A couple of young people stand smoking in front of the entrance and children are playing on the car-free road. Some girls are climbing on an orange rubbish skip and calling other children whose smiling faces emerge from windows in the building. A young man lifts the children friendly but firmly from the skip. He presents himself as Fayad Mulla-Khalil, the head of the Pfeiffergasse emergency shelter. He guides us through the building. We take the stairs to the upper levels. The lift isn't working today. The day before there was an incident with a washing machine and the basement was briefly flooded.

"When we get the call that the building has to be cleared we take everything down, throw it in a lorry and put it up again in the next building. And that's it!"

In the first floor we meet Günter Kathler of the Vienna architectural office Caramel Architekten. "The objective here was to create cheap and quick structures in the building which can be erected as rapidly as they can be dismantled. When we get the call that the building has to be cleared we take everything down, throw it in a lorry and put it up again in the next building. And that's it!" is how he describes the starting point. Everything must be done very quickly, because people want to see results before the former office has to be cleared and used in another way. Or be vacant again. The building in Pfeiffergasse dates from the 1990s. It was the headquarters of an IT company but then the company moved to a new location and the office has been empty ever since. Caritas has now been renting the manage-



Ernst J. Fuchs on top of Kempelengasse 1

REPORT BY PAUL KRANZLER

Humane dwellings in the urban fabric

Report

Martina Frühwirth / Anna Soucek

The staircase of the large shelter is full of life. People come and go and fire-doors slam shut while the omnipresent flip-flops provide the soundtrack of the building, accompanied by the cacophonous rattle of innumerable conversations on mobile phones. Young men lean against the walls of the corridor and crouch on the floor due to the lack of places to sit, the lack of alternatives. The windowless escape stair offers the best WLAN reception for the smartphones. A typical afternoon in a large shelter for asylum seekers in Vienna in the spring of 2016.

The responsible Austrian authorities were caught completely off their guard by

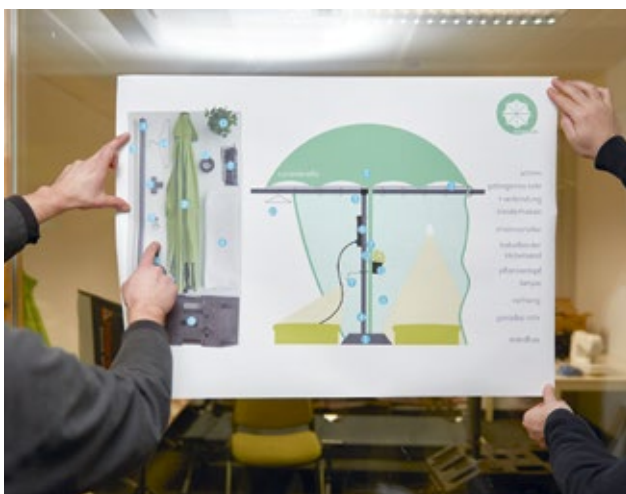
the refugee crisis in summer 2015. Thousands of refugees – predominantly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan – had to sleep on station concourses and camp under the stars. Volunteers spent weeks providing emergency care. In the meantime, the majority of the refugees, estimated at around 600,000 people, have left Austria. For them, this was just one station on their journey. The minority has officially applied for asylum in Austria. Around 87,000 asylum seekers are currently living in the country. Unlike in African countries, refugees cannot be settled in the EU with a UN mandate, and this is the real challenge in Europe: The refugee crisis is happening in a highly-developed, highly-structured society. The tented cities which

spring up in crisis situations around the world are unthinkable in Austria.

The windowless escape stair offers the best WLAN reception for the smartphones.

In the acute emergency situation, refugee accommodation was created in many different sorts of locations: in container settlements, hotels which had seen better days and empty student dormitories as well as private apartments and vacant office buildings – across Austria, there is a

It is important to know this background to Austria's contribution to the



Draft tool-set by Caramel, Haus Pfeiffergasse

ably sized five storey office building as an emergency shelter for refugees since November 2015. Around 300 people live in the whole building, mostly families and single men. All the residents have applied for asylum in Austria. Some have already had their first interview and others will do so in the next days, weeks.

Most residents here are living in former open-plan offices. Adults – many of whom are neither related to nor even know each other – share rooms with six, ten, twelve people. “The only question here was how to adapt the spaces to make them more habitable as quickly as possible,” says Günter Katherl, “personalise them and create some privacy. How can we separate the individual sleeping spaces so that each person has their own cell that they can shape a little, build, move into and soon afterwards, when they move out, take with them?”

Caramel Architekten found a solution that is as simple as it is satisfying. Parasols – everyday models from the garden centre – provide the structure. Red, yellow and green non-flammable fabrics are then hung from the parasols, dividing the room into small units and creating privacy. The individual parasols are connected by plastic pipes from which further panels of fabric are hung to create ancillary spaces. All the provisional walls and doors in the open-plan offices are made out of these strips of fabric. Small objects can be hung from the struts of the parasol and the basic equipment provided by Caramel includes a plant in a plastic pot and a small light. Because the rule in the open-plan office dormitory is lights off at 22:00 and lights on again at 5:00. For everyone. The parasols are erected quickly without constructional expertise – a couple of poles must be fixed together, the parasol opened out and the fabric hung using cable ties. A set of instructions explains the few manual steps.

which one could knock. The way in which this family arranged its space and accepted and developed the architect’s ideas is described by Günter Katherl as ideal: “Even though it was very cramped, with two beds here and three more over here, it was like a smart hotel room. The family had very quickly created its own small residence. We couldn’t have done it better ourselves! And it showed us that our idea was a good one.”

Their parasol-module for delimited sleeping areas in dormitories should also be used elsewhere, says Günter Katherl: “Yes, after Caritas had seen that this worked so well they very quickly asked us if we could do the same in several other buildings and we answered, “Yes, we’ll do them all!” Yet, if the architect had his way, the idea which was only created for this one location should actually develop its own momentum. “Because we saw that it is really very stressful and said to ourselves, “let’s just get this building ready and then see what happens.”

The family had very quickly created its own small residence. We couldn’t have done it better ourselves!

Giving the residents of the Pfeiffergasse shelter a task of their own to perform was a major priority of Caramel Architekten. Hence, they included the residents in the production of the parasol stations and spatial dividers – without payment but with such small privileges as access to the sewing room and, hence, the opportunity to retreat to the bright room with its three sewing machines and tools and to be productive. Because only the seam-

stresses were given the key to the sewing room. “The women really enjoyed being needed,” explained the architect. “There was one woman who, previously, only lay morosely in bed. Now you can see her racing around with a smile – she has found meaning in her life again simply because we gave her a sewing machine and loads of fabric and asked for her help – that really had quite an effect!”

German, English and Farsi are spoken. There are occasional small misunderstandings but work progresses.

Some residents put a real effort into remodelling their sleeping spaces with the colourful parasols and some were indifferent to the modification whereas others reacted to the offer angrily. The inhabitants of double-rooms for men were particularly likely to offer resistance and chase away the Caramel employees as soon as they arrived with material and tools to do the job. In such a building in which 300 people of many nationalities and cultures live there are dynamics and hierarchies which are naturally difficult for outsiders to understand. As Fayad Mulla-Khalil says, you shouldn’t forget that we are dealing with people who are fleeing and have had terrible experiences, at home and en route: “And that is something that we can’t imagine. They come from situations in which we don’t live. So we often can’t understand why they do something or not and why there are sometimes disagreements about such tiny things as cable ties.”

Let’s just get this building ready and then see what happens.

On a Monday at the end of February 2016 the last room should finally be equipped with parasols, naturally, just for those who want them. “Are the 15 people now ready?” asks Günter Katherl. Fayad Mulla-Khalil goes back into the room and speaks with the men. Then work can start. A young woman and a young man, employees of Caramel Architekten, ask the residents who are standing around what they are called, give them parasol stands, pipes and cable ties and energetically organise them for the next phase of work. German, English and Farsi are spoken. There are occasional small misunder-

standings but work progresses. Some men withdraw from the process and watch but others throw themselves into the task. It could be that the sudden blossoming commitment has something to do with the many observers. Besides us there is another journalist and a camera team. Word must have got out that this is the last working session. The refugee accommodation is under observation, even when no camera team is present.

The three teams are developing different approaches to finding a solution in the three locations but the conclusion is that all three projects imply the same questions.

Team members of Caramel Architekten and Caritas at Haus Pfeiffergasse



There have neither been complaints from neighbours nor police activity, says Fayad Mulla-Khalil, head of the emergency shelter. They are clearly careful not to attract negative attention in the locality: “and we are also careful to ensure that the people look after the building and that there is no rubbish in front of it. The residents clean outside every day.”

On a further visit a couple of weeks later the lawn in front of the house and next to the busy road is also clean. Caritas employees and residents are busy building benches out of pallets. Circular areas of soil are set to become plant beds. This is also an initiative of Caramel Architekten, as is the planned forecourt with seating

which is still awaiting approval. The optimism of the architects is intact, without doubt also as a result of the progress of the past few weeks.

The three teams are developing different approaches to finding a solution in the three locations but the conclusion is that all three projects imply the same questions?

Lenka Reinerová, the last of the great German-speaking Prague writers, who herself spent many years as a refugee, wrote in her book *At home in Prague – and sometimes somewhere else!*: “Can we even speak of living in accommodation which is forced upon someone? Does the bird in the brightly polished cage in the brightly polished kitchen live? Does the lion in the perfectly equipped and dimensioned

enclosure in the zoo live? Can you live if your natural freedom has been taken away? Sometimes you have to whether you want to or not. A canary isn’t in a position to think about this and it must be difficult for lions too. But people are apparently destined to address such questions. And in certain circumstances this can be a really difficult task.” A task that the architects and designers of EOOS, Caramel Architekten and the next ENTERprise have set themselves.

1 Lenka Reinerová: *Zu Hause in Prag – manchmal auch anderswo. Erzählungen. Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin 2000*

murder of the Jews under the Nazis nor even the repeated marginalisation of precisely that enlightened intelligentsia whose contributions to modernism and the avant-garde are so enthusiastically claimed as its own achievement are central to Vienna’s urban narrative.

City politics was largely about identity; a symbolically highly-charged project of defining a distinct self-image as an alternative to the alien, to the other or, more specifically, to Vienna’s challengers in the competition between cities.

The latest urban research also does nothing to overturn this. Upheavals and contradictions in the city’s development are sacrificed in the name of a harmonious representational logic which has much the same effect as a daguerreotype. The history of the city is presented as a cosily sentimental mixture of loss, decadence and nostalgia, rid of its traumatic, unsettling and resistant elements.

Cultural scientists describe the genesis of such an effective and symbolic image of a city as the city’s ‘habitus’. The Berlin urban ethnographer Rolf Lindner has pointed out that, rather than reacting indiscriminately to exogenous influences and economic competition, cities tend to do so in their own characteristic way, adopting what could be called a partisan position regarding these external challenges and triggering what for them is a typical dialectic of continuity and transformation, persistence and change. This partisan position is rooted in cultural tendencies which, derived from the history of the city and the formative sectors of its economy, are quasi-symbolic translations of the social conditions which define an urban en-

semble and constitute the city’s habitus. This habitus manifests itself in distinct local practices: in the priorities of the municipal budget and the sums given out for welfare, health, culture and infrastructure. It manifests itself in urban planning, in the use of land, in attitudes to the protection of historic buildings and the historic centre, in the building regulations and in the architectural approach to cityscape. And it also manifests itself in the investment policy of the municipal authorities – in the question of which innovative projects are financed and, consequently, which signals are sent out regarding the city’s economic future. The habitus of a city is neither abstract nor purely discursive. Rather, it is an organising logic which repeatedly surfaces in debates, legal regulations, media reactions and the decisions of citizens and politicians. It functions like a tribunal mediating between tradition and current challenges, between the past and the present. It expresses the manifold interdependencies between the parameters of a city – geography, climate, demography, economy and politics – and its wider political, economic and cultural context (the state, the economy and globalisation).

The history of the city is presented as a cosily sentimental mixture of loss, decadence and nostalgia, rid of its traumatic, unsettling and resistant elements.

The habitus of a city works like an underlying structure which is conveyed by history and historical memory, corresponds with an economics anchored in collective mentalities, skills, preferences and predispositions, represents the cultural stereotype of a city via a specific imaginaire and influences the emergence of landscapes of taste which articulate the city’s symbolic capital in cultural-geographic terms. The habitus of a city is neither closed nor holistic, but an open constellation of characteristics which can evolve, within limits, as a result of ecological, economic, technical and social transformations or, even, be lost completely. Unlike the Bourdieuesque interpretation, the notion of habitus used here refers not to characteristics which have been incorporated or quasi-merged into the “body” of the city but, rather, to its initially abstract, singular nature which is primarily conveyed by its lifestyles, images, culturally transformed geographies and the idiosyncrasies of its representation and material culture and which is, therefore, “biographical” and formative. The habitus of the city – its singular constellation of representations, narratives and images – is constantly contested, highlighted and challenged by a range of social, cultural and political groups and players. Its depth, its historical long-term effect and its ability to resist external impositions and manipulations can be seen in the largely unsuccessful attempts to arbitrarily alter the self-image of a city which has grown over time and gained visual form. In this way, we can also speak about the “habitus of Vienna” – an urban “biography” which influences the development of the city and steers this in certain directions.

But equally integral to the habitus of Vienna is the city’s long and largely successful history of immigration. First came the poor rural workers from Bohemia and Moravia and the Jewish grandfathers of Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler and Joseph Roth from Brody in Eastern Galicia and later, around the end of the First World War, many Jews from Eastern Europe, forced to flee persecution and pogroms. If today’s “refugee crisis” is politically instrumentalized and xenophobic in its air, the city is forgetting this long, successful history of immigration. Instead of recalling what immigrants have done for the city in terms of innovation, economic growth and scientific and artistic excellence, talk is again turning to isolation.

Most statements by politicians about the refugee issue have been, to put it mildly, miserable. As usual, H. C. Strache is playing a leading role. One only has to recall the *Daham statt Islam* (“At home instead of Islam”) campaign poster for the 2006 General Election and the FPÖ’s current rhetoric about ‘down-to-earthness’, ‘homeland’ and exclusive social rights for local people. But Austria and Europe cannot isolate themselves. Unfortunately, also integral to the habitus of Vienna is its history of xenophobia, the fear of strangers, which is being updated right now. The players, mostly men, are known around the city. Naming them here would unnecessarily boost not only their kudos but also their sinister interests.

But what does this mean today, not just in Austria but also across the European Union? What we are experiencing today is not just the same old xenophobia but something new. Slogans heard not just in Eastern European member states such as Poland and Hungary, but also in older ones: talk of a Europe of the nations,



Plan of Venice from above, 1500, large engraving (1.37 x 2.84 m)

a Europe of the regions, a Europe of the cities and, in Austria, of a Europe of the mountain pastures and natural beauties. The fact that such slogans are economic and cultural nonsense plays no role in the political debate. In truth, this debate is about something completely different because it is being dictated by many people’s fears. So what is the debate? It is the usual story: the rumour mill in the pub is working again full time. And its message? Close the borders – ideally using soldiers and the police.

The habitus of a city is neither abstract nor purely discursive. Rather, it is an organising logic which repeatedly surfaces in debates, legal regulations, media reactions and the decisions of citizens and politicians.

In such unspeakable times the debate always ends up producing “Valium” for a general population riven with fear. Aid organisations can put out as many warnings as they wish but, as long as the population doesn’t understand the opportunities represented by immigration, these will have no effect. But we shouldn’t be malicious about or gloat at the politicians who are responsible for this situation. History will be their judge and one day some may even understand that it was their opportunistic political reaction to the “refugee crisis” that sounded the death knell for the European Union.

What is a European city?

In the urban debate one often hears the notion that nothing is currently happening in cities apart from the permanent repetition of one and the same thing. And this repetition – this monotone formation of an artificial landscape of sameness lacking in any “hermeneutical depth” – is understood, not least, as a symptom of the fact that societies have outlived the utopian dream and are now creating (universal) global cities which are strangely flat, monotonous and homogeneous without, in truth, being able to claim any sort of new universality. Boris Groys sees this permanent repetition of uniformity and monotony as the main characteristic of current urbanity:

“On the other hand, today’s art and architecture is spreading globally without any such reduction to the essential or universal (as in the case of Classical Modernism, author’s note). The opportunities of global distribution have rendered obsolete the traditional demand for universal form or content. Universality of thought is replaced by the universal media-led distribution of every local form. As a result, today’s observer is constantly confronted with the same urban context without, at the same time, being able to say whether the formal nature of this context is, in any sense, ‘universal.’”³

Although the quotation from Boris Groys dates from the early 2000s it is still valid. The city that he describes as having become abstract and banal – and which many intellectuals continue to describe today – is that generalised form of dense socialisation in a tight space which results from the process of globalisation. The sensory realisation that, firstly, airports,

3 Boris Groys, *Unsere Welt auf Reisen*, Die Zeit, No. 28, 11th July 2002, p.35.

railway stations, city centres, shopping centres, hotels and restaurants increasingly resemble each other and that, secondly, post-romantic (e.g. mass-) tourism produces homogeneous consumer and perceptual spaces in every corner of the globe, is leading to the declaration of the death of both the historical and the modern city. The city that is described by intellectuals in this way is not the real city, which would indeed be banal enough, but that imagined city, in which cultural Disneyfication, economic Post-Fordism and architectural Postmodernism merge into a concrete generality which can release a scarily-indifferent fear of an entropic, post-utopian and post-political afterlife.

The argument is that the difference between the global and the local is disappearing and compelling the immobile to adopt the characteristics and sensitivities of the mobile or, more precisely, compelling natives to anticipate the expectations of welcome outsiders by aligning their external appearance with the consumption needs of tourists. The result, it is claimed, is that geographies will become fluid and the boundaries between the self and the other will disappear as both are transformed into different “aggregate states” of one and the same cycle of consumption. As a result, we are all sometimes tourists and all sometimes natives – each of us as much a subject as an object of a thoroughly thought-through machine which eradicates contingency in the interests of uniformity as it creates the generalised city.

Thus, if one believes this diagnosis, major cities have no more inherent creative energy. Their utopian, democratic and revolutionary potential and collective political memories are exhausted.

Given that everything is thus in motion and that globalisation appears to equate to some sort of “global ether” which sweeps people, things, symbols and images along in its wake with no regard for differences, the implied result is the disappearance of those demarcations which have defined the historical European city. Neither otherness nor the exotic remain and the secretive aura that poets and writers have always lent to historical cities disintegrates under the attack of globally active corporations which replace historically evolved symbols with indifferent corporate logos. But this is not just about what we conventionally understand as the historical city. Rather, globalisation is conceived as such a radical instrument of urban transformation that it seems to render even the modern city historical or, in other words, obsolete.

Thus, if one believes this diagnosis, major cities have no more inherent creative energy. Their utopian, democratic and revolutionary potential and collective political memories are exhausted. There is criticism not only of processes of gentrification but also of the lack of intellectual input which should be coming from the universities and of the so-called “star-architects”, who do more for the image of a city than for its inhabitants. This criticism may well exist, but it changes little.

The assertion of the totality of consumption brings with it the declaration of the end of diversity. The large city is neither a distinct entity in itself nor one which can be differentiated from its suburban or rural hinterland. In this way it is simply no longer a specific place capable of evoking new ways of living but merely a “global village”. This vast space which, hence, is no longer a city is devised and propagated as a zone with diffuse boundaries in which residing and

travelling, remaining and moving have become one and the difference between residents and visitors has been removed.

But equally integral to the habitus of Vienna is the city’s long and largely successful history of immigration.

The arguments that seek to support this hypothesis of an urban paradigm change are strikingly one-sided. On the one hand we have, naturally, globalisation in all its many forms, although this argument is mostly reduced to the common denominator that radical changes such as the electronic circulation of capital, information, goods and services, the ultra-fast mobility of people and a new perception of both time and space are resulting in a compression of time-space which is neutralising differences between the international and the regional and between places and distances. On the other hand, the standardisation of consumer goods, consumer landscapes and consumer habits are cited as an indicator of the homogenisation of space, behaviour and culture. But Vienna itself can also offer such phenomena, as demonstrated by a glimpse of such recently completed major projects near to the city centre as the “Wien Mitte” station, office and shopping complex or the transformation of the Western Station into the “BahnhofCity Wien West”.

Addressing the notion of the “European City”, the prominent urban researcher Walter Siebel has written succinctly: “presence of history.”

The homogenised, abstract “city” which emerges from such an analysis lacks all the attributes once ascribed to it by modernist discourse: it is neither a place of the ephemeral, fragmentary and contingent, nor is it able to represent density, heterogeneity and scale or evoke those unsettling memories which bear the potential for insight. Rather, it is a space which is cleansed of such attributes and can be freely stretched, manipulated and used. Yet, in this sense, the post-modern city of such all-pervading consumerism and tourism is nothing other than the negation of space and, as such, not only the radicalisation of the economy via the mechanisation and colonisation of space but, at the same time, the negation of the historical European city.

Addressing the notion of the “European City”, the prominent urban researcher Walter Siebel has written succinctly of the presence of history. The fact that this very factor has led to European cities becoming memories cast in stone has nothing to do with their age – there are much older cities elsewhere. The continuous reference to previous ages in the everyday life of city dwellers has much more to do with social factors: The European city is the cradle of modern society. In strolling through a European city, today’s citizen can assure himself of his own history. The pre-modern cities of antiquity or in other parts of the world were places of visible authority and religious cults. This is why, unlike in today’s Europe, there is no economically or politically influential class in such cities seeking to preserve its own historical identity by retaining the city’s historical substance – just look at Beijing and Shanghai. Hope of emancipation: All urban life starts as an attempt to escape the whims of nature, the effects of changing climate and weather. The first city dwell-

Cities on the move

Essay

Lutz Musner

Vienna owes its astonishing career as a leading European destination for city and congress tourism¹ to the fact that its economic, political and cultural players have succeeded in defining Vienna’s urban culture not as a side-effect of the urban way of life or as one factor of many but as the city’s own, characterological trademark. Not, however, that this momentous transformation, which has largely taken place during the past four decades, has come from nowhere.



Extract from a plan of Venice, 1500 Jacopo de’ Barbari – as used as an illustration by Bernard Rudofsky in “Streets for People”

Rather, it has much more to do with layers of historical sediment which built up during the course of the 20th century. Throughout this period, self-images of Vienna as a city of music and theatre, of architecture and literature, as a Baroque city and, not least, as a city with a harmonious and humane everyday culture were produced in a range of contemporary and politi-

cal contexts, perpetuated by the media and constantly re-combined into new collages.

City politics was largely about identity; a symbolically highly-charged project of defining a distinct self-image as an alternative to the alien, to the other or, more specifically, to Vienna’s challengers in the competition between cities. Around 1900, under Mayor Karl Lueger, the image of a historically significant, German and patriarchal ‘father-city’ was established as a contrast to the ethnic plurality of the monarchy

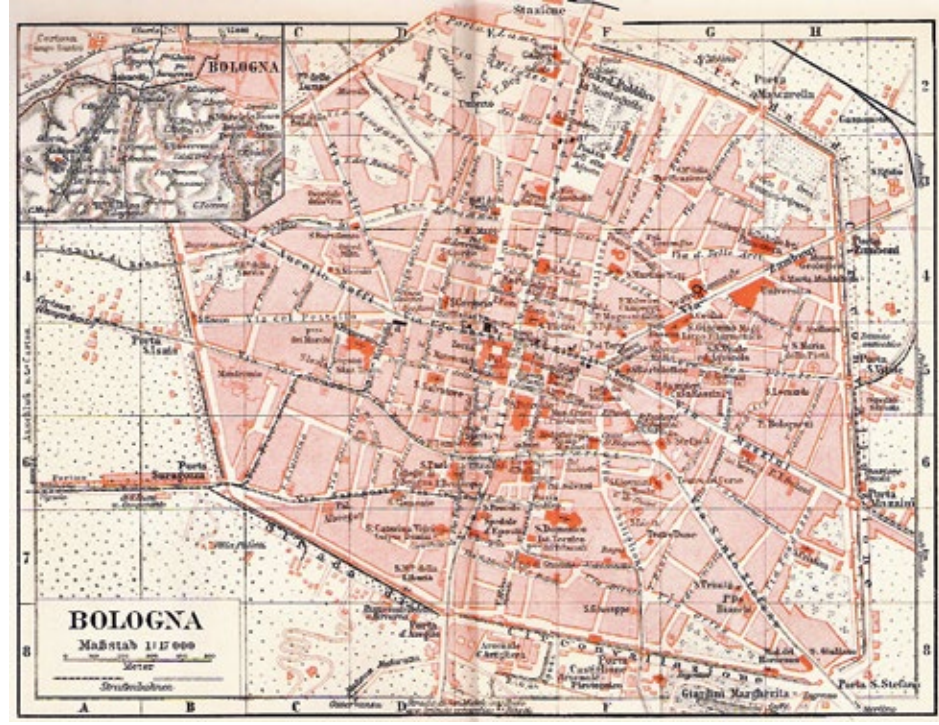
and expressed via the topos of a Germanically-coded “city of music”. During the Corporative State (1934–38) this was replaced by the image of a romantically transfigured Vienna with its own Austrian and, distinctly, non-German identity which traced its exclusivity back to the traditions of Catholicism and the Baroque. Then, in the 1980s, there followed what has so far proved to be the most consequential iconisation of fin-de-siècle Vienna as the artistic, literary and intellectual birthplace of Modernism per se.

These images were and still are selective representations of urban life. In the picturesque contexts of Biedermeier clichés about the cosy Vienna of waltzes and wine-gardens, of the bourgeois historicist representational culture of the late nineteenth-century, of baroque architectural settings and of a colourful panorama of illustrious Viennese personalities – from demure young girls and dubious courtiers to the hallowed Emperor Franz-Joseph himself – the less attractive aspects of the city’s history have been consistently removed. And, as can be seen in the current exhibition about the Emperor, such clichés remain the stuff of urban marketing today.²

Neither the misery of working-class life in late-nineteenth century Vienna nor the expulsion and

2 Franz-Joseph: Zum 100. Todestag des Kaisers. An exhibition in four locations 18.3. – 27.11.2016

1 According to the Mercer Study 2015 Vienna is the city with the highest quality of life worldwide. With Zurich (2nd) and Munich (4th) there are just two more European cities in the top five.



Example for the concept of the ideal European city

Foto: Archivio "Archivio Storico" della Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna

ers were the first people who no longer had to confront uncultivated nature in order to guarantee their own survival. This is why European urban life since the Enlightenment is intrinsically linked with the oldest human utopia, the belief in a realm of freedom far from the dictates of brutal necessity – as Karl Marx defined the release from the tyranny of wage labour. Modern service cities signify a further step in this direction, because these also represent a new economy, even if the inhuman wage levels are conveniently forgotten. European urban history is often the history of low wages, and those in power today are happy for this to remain so because the new economy dominated by the financial markets also envisages simple exploitation based on the Manchester model. Yet, despite this (although perhaps not for much longer), the history of the European city still represents a place of emancipation and, perhaps, even more. Just think of the many citizens' movements, of the countless minor examples of civil disobedience, of what is already pilloried as our "culture of welcome". Despite every setback, European cities have a long tradition of resistance and "outsiders" were always involved: exiles from Germany such as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx and Leon Blum, Mikhail Bakunin from Russia and many, many more. In the shadow of today's dominant ideology, which calls itself neo-liberalism but has absolutely nothing to do with John Stuart Mill or, even, Adam Smith, things are heating up. Ever since the Paris Commune of 1871 there has been a tradition of resistance – passed on from one generation to the next – which has fought for social rights and many of whose adherents have paid with their lives. And yes, so-called outsiders have always played a central role. Not just exiles but providers of ideas or, as we say so euphemistically today, "innovators".

biggest opportunity. Given that Europe is aging, most discussion focuses on the new (naturally precariously employed) workforce and demography. This is one, important, side of the coin but the other is much more decisive. Hopefully, we will learn a way of living together that will liberate us from the looming violence. We are living in a time of multiple crises but we mustn't give up. Crises wherever you look: wars from Afghanistan to Syria, an Islamic fundamentalism that misuses the Koran and radically imposes Sharia law, out-of-control financial markets and the expulsion and flight of ethnic and religious minorities. Only the diversity of dialogue can help us to overcome cultural boundaries because, otherwise, we will find ourselves in a Europe which is socially, culturally and intellectually moribund.

The city and what it is

Ever since the Chicago School of Urban Sociology we know that cities define themselves in terms of the following: population density, ethnic diversity and segregation, which means that one lives well or otherwise in milieus defined by income ranging from the rich to the demimonde or from the middle class to the poor. Of course much has happened since the 1920s. The middle class has experienced social decline as both fact and emotional condition and now projects all its fears onto refugees, with fatal political consequences. The slogans of not just European politicians but also of sinister Austrian politicians amount to a politics of fear, whipped up by the tabloid press. Every day one well-known newspaper whips up our fear of outsiders and the political class plays along

Vienna as an example of a classic, monocentric European city



Plan of Vienna, Fayta & Benet, Vienna 1811

Yet, despite this (although perhaps not for much longer), the history of the European city still represents a place of emancipation and, perhaps, even more. Just think of the many citizens' movements, of the countless minor examples of civil disobedience, of what is already pilloried as our "culture of welcome".

blithely. I don't have to name names because everyone knows who they are. Politicians use the fear of the population like a laboratory, failing to treat the symptoms but confident of being able to win elections as a result. And of course we all know what happens next. With its extreme right wing party the AfD, Germany has already witnessed the first blow against basic rights and in Austria the next elections will probably leave us with our own unsightly 'blue' bruises. Are we responsible for this? Yes, because civil society has largely failed. But it is never too late – let us again recall our basic democratic rights and take to the streets to demand equal rights for all!

No politics of fear!

Let us not be seduced or scared. Let us scorn the demagogues, go to parliament and express our critique. Our city doesn't only belong to us; it is our city with all its history, all the suffering which people had to endure and all the hope that they lost. But it is our city. We are called upon to prepare Vienna for something new, for immigration which is progressively freed from all this fear. It should not be repeated but

it is important: Vienna is not just a city of democracy – one just recalls the magnificent experiment of Red Vienna of the 1920s – it is, despite everything, a city of the Enlightenment. And this means: a way for man to emerge from his self-imposed immaturity.

The city and the outsider

Vienna will be, was and already is a city of outsiders – whether migrants from the provinces or the guest-workers who made it possible for the country to become so wealthy. Whether wartime refugees from the former Yugoslavia, from today's Syria or from other warzones. They require our solidarity, not because we are such great human-beings but out of humanity, solidarity and, if you will allow me, self-interest. As everyone knows from the history of the USA, so-called outsiders were a huge asset. They laboured in horrendous conditions in New York's docks, made the steel industry profitable and, in the second and third generations, became "good Americans". But that is a history which Europeans find difficult to understand.

Vienna should recall what once made it into a Central European metropolis. The city should not only be open to the new – which also means being multicultural and international, but should also initiate projects, which are able to offer young people – locals and outsiders – good opportunities in terms of both jobs and education.

And what does it mean to be an outsider? For now, being an outsider only means, coming from far away,

Plan of Vienna, reimagined by BM&A, 2016



Yes, of course there are such compassionate people in Austria, but far too few. Being an outsider usually means rejection, criminalisation and exclusion.

Vienna as a global city, again?

In the 1950s Vienna's city government proclaimed that "Vienna will once again be a global city!" In my opinion the city remains far from this goal. There is a little more to being a 21st century metropolis: more than turning the city centre into a museum, becoming a World Heritage Site, having start-up companies, progressive architecture or even a city government which presents itself as the best and most socially progressive. Being a metropolis today means much more – both positively and negatively. First the positive: it means attracting the best minds in science, art, craft and services and offering them the right infrastructure. But now the negative: brain gain, this unbelievably ironic neologism which, above all, means "brain-downing", a mass, poverty-stricken neo-proletariat forced to live and work in precarious conditions. Vienna's mixture of nostalgia and limited modernism is both its charm and its Achilles' heel. Of course one tries. But times have speeded up and Vienna would have a great opportunity. A couple of thoughts in this direction:

Vienna should recall what once made it into a Central European metropolis. The city should not only be open to the new – which also means being multicultural and international, but should also initiate projects, which are able to offer young people – locals and outsiders – good opportunities in terms of both jobs and education.

If Vienna wants to be more than just a city with a high quality of life then the city government must do more. Regurgitating Viennese Schmah – the city's unique ironic charm – is not enough (especially considering that the word is derived from Schmähung or 'abuse'). Much more important would be to draw up a well-thought-out plan for distributing refugees across the city. The current policy of largely leaving immigrants at the mercy of the free market with its horrendous rents is a major problem.

In the city we have a so-called local support system but these bodies are often inactive or pay inad-



Vienna is growing particularly strongly in the districts to the east of the Danube. One effect of this is an increasing polarisation between the centre and the periphery.

quate attention to the problems in their area. The city government would do well to rethink and reform this basically good idea.

Résumé: Places for People

This is why Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale in Venice takes a different path this year, using the framework of this major event to implement real, in the broader sense of the word, architectural measures in three locations in Vienna with the objective of concretely improving the living conditions of refugees. These three projects are also presented in the Giardini and illustrate a major challenge because they highlight that our "refugee crisis" is not just a crisis for Vienna and other European cities but also a decisive problem for the European Union. And one should conclude by once again recalling the habitus of Vienna because this makes it very clear that there is not only a Vienna of exclusion but also a Vienna which embodies the successful history of migration.

Gimme shelter

Kimberly Bradley

Report



Habibe Ibrahim at Haus Pfeiffergasse

The first time I visit the Caritas refugee shelter on Pfeiffergasse – a short street in a forgotten corner of Vienna's 15th district – one of the last umbrellas unfurls.

In an open-plan office space, Amin, a tall, muscular 22-year-old from Iran, is helping Günter Katherl from Caramel Architekten install a large umbrella, the kind coffee drinkers sit under in outdoor cafes. Like small Mongolian yurts, green umbrellas swathed in popping preschool colours dot the rooms throughout the building, offering privacy and structure.

Until today in this room, single male asylum-seekers from many countries slept on mattresses in rows on a flat grey carpet. Until November 2015, the shelter was an empty office building, before that it housed an IT firm, whose leftover accoutrements are obvious everywhere.

I imagine this room filled with desks and crisp-shirted managers. Amin strings curved rods through hoops set along the umbrella's perimeter, then hangs curtains from the circle. A curtain with pockets will bisect the inside of the tent; two private sleeping areas are the result.

Not all the refugees today want an umbrella. Two guys grumble from their floorbound mattresses. "Some are against the umbrellas," says Katherl, smiling. "At first." Others eagerly await theirs. A film crew is here. The atmosphere is lively, too busy to talk.

But the shelter, with around 250 people, is mixed, mostly families originally placed in what is still considered emergency care. Who are they? What are their stories, how did they live before? How do they feel about the architectural interventions in their temporary living space?

A group of Syrian men emerges from another room. This floor is for men, but the shelter, with around 200 people, is mixed, mostly families originally placed in

what is still considered emergency care.² Who are they? What are their stories, how did they live before? How do they feel about the architectural interventions in their temporary living space? I ask Amin – who, I'm told, studied architecture in Iran – for his phone number. I'd soon find out.

(Dis)placement
The broader notion of displacement has been curiously missing in discussions of the refugee crisis in most European media. In late 2015, most buzzwords in the German-language press – Flut (flood), Welle (wave), Krise (crisis) – addressed the sheer numbers coming from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, and other war-torn, broken places.

This year's buzzwords include Grenze (a multipurpose word meaning both borders and upper limits), Werte (values, as in western, non-Islamic ones, but try getting anyone to agree on what exactly they are), or Integration (often implying the impossibility thereof).

Displacement is not a newspaper word. It's a word used after the displaced have had a chance to realise where they are... or are they merely recast, translated, patched together? The recovering of a new personality is as difficult – as hopeless – as the creation of a new world," wrote Arendt, in her seminal essay "We Refugees."³ If new worlds are so difficult to create, how can new places – nations, cities, but also shelters – become homes?

Arendt knew that the displaced lose their sense of community, their identity, their grounding. Can identity or community be reconstructed... or are they merely recast, translated, patched together? The recovering of a new personality is as difficult – as hopeless – as the creation of a new world," wrote Arendt, in her seminal essay "We Refugees."³ If new worlds are so difficult to create, how can new places – nations, cities, but also shelters – become homes?

Amin
Amin doesn't answer my text messages. I soon realise why: he has no credit on his smartphone. Most refugees on Pfeiffergasse, as they are not yet recognised recipients of Austrian asylum, are still in green-

1 I've chosen to use the terms "asylum-seeker" and "refugee" in this essay.

card limbo⁴. Until they have asylum in Austria (after the white card and a successful second interview, a "travel document" is issued that looks suspiciously like an Austrian passport, but isn't), they receive a monthly allowance of 40 euros. This is enough to send a text or two, and maybe get a membership at a fitness centre.⁵ Phone credit disappears fast when you're checking in with family in war zones. Seeing how they are, or whether they're alive,

Amin is pretty sure the umbrellas are not architecture. I try to convince him that they might be. He admires Viennese architecture – the beautiful façades, how history is visible from the outside, interiors are modern and perfect.

When I arrive at the shelter at 10:30am, passing through the stairwell (just starting to teem with small children, mothers running after them), Amin is on the stairwell on the fourth floor in grey and black striped pyjamas. They're cute, and later I tell him so. He asks me to wait for him to shower. For our first "interview" we go to the conference room where German classes take place twice a week – and I learn that he's indeed a studied architect, that he's Christian, that he grew up in the southern city of Ahvaz.

"As a Christian, this is what would happen to me if I'd stayed," says Amin in choppy English, making a slashing gesture across his neck. Amin's father, a baker, died nine years ago of a diabetes-related cause. Although Amin completed a degree, working as an architect would have been difficult if not impossible in Iran. "If you have money and connections in Iran, you'll live well, but if you don't, you never will."

2 "Green card" sounds good to westerners who know the United States work permit. In the Austrian asylum procedure, however, the green card is the first document an asylum-seeker receives. It means he/she is registered; the process pending. It grants the fewest rights.

3 In my acquaintances with refugees spanning ages and nationalities, one constant amongst young men is the hours spent at Vienna fitness centres. I initially thought it was about chasing the elusive six-pack, but one young man explained that it was far more about mental health – an outlet for fear and anxiety – and filling time.

4 Data courtesy of Vienna City Hall.

In Ahvaz, Amin lived in a one-family house. He arrived in Austria in November 2015, and has lived in this shelter for three months. He's open, smiles a lot, and is just as friendly to Muhammad, my Syrian translator and cultural conduit, when he arrives. Muhammad realizes that Amin speaks not only Farsi but also Arabic, so our talks continue mostly in their common lan-

guage, which flows much faster than English⁶. We discuss the intervention, and again and again I hear the word "umbrella" dropped untranslated into the Arabic, and I have to laugh.

The contrast between his general assessment of Caramel's umbrellas and his personal one is also oddly humorous. "The umbrella – it's good! It's good for people who have families wanting privacy. Some people were upset with windows that had no curtains – the umbrellas made things better. You put it up in 20 minutes, and people are happy, the kids loved it. It's easy," he says.

"But I don't love the umbrella. I don't live in one. It's good for learning deutsch, sleeping, watching movies. But not for 24 hours. I live with five guys in one room. I want to see them. In umbrella, just see green and red."

Amin is pretty sure the umbrellas are not architecture. I try to convince him that they might be. He admires Viennese architecture – the beautiful façades, how history is visible from the outside, interiors are modern and perfect. Caritas has told him his final interview might be in June or July.

Then hopefully he'll learn German, get a master's degree in architecture, intern, work. "The education in architecture is higher quality here," he says. In the meantime he tries to fill the endless, ultimately oppressive expanse of time that at first were about eating, sleeping, and not much else.

Vienna
The human flood into and through Austria began in earnest in early September 2015, when Germany threw open its doors with a cry of *wir schaffen das* and Hungary began slamming its gates closed behind them.

In autumn 2015, 788,000 refugees passed through Austria; 300,000 through the city of Vienna. Ultimately, in 2015, 90,000 would apply for asylum in Austria.

Interestingly, per capita asylum registration numbers for 2015 are higher in Austria than in Germany: 441,800 asy-

lum applications in Germany, or one to every 185 citizens versus 88,900 in Austria, or one to every 98 citizens.⁷ As of April 2015, 21,600 refugees live in Vienna, with about 4,600 still in "emergency"

shelters of more than 200 people.⁸

Community
Ahmad⁹ lives on the fourth floor in what could only be described as an umbrella village. Here, around a dozen men of mixed nationality live together. Their umbrellas form a row along the back of the room; the front has become a kind of commons, with chairs and tea tables. Ahmad is from Aleppo. Muhammad is with me to translate, and recognizes Ahmad as a shopkeeper from his Aleppo neighbourhood. Laughter, back-patting, fast chatting I don't understand. No matter the circumstances, meeting someone from home so far away is a comfort.

Ahmad invites us to sit, as if we're on his front porch¹⁰. Age 30, he has hypnotic sea-green eyes that peer from oval specs. His voice is quiet. In Vienna he could have lived with his brother, who fled Syria to avoid serving in Bashar al-Assad's army and landed in Austria in 2014. But Ahmad chose to live in the shelter... for the company and community. The men unanimously voted to have umbrellas installed in this room, and have settled in nicely.

In Syria, Ahmad was diagnosed with depression. His therapist recommended establishing an independent life beyond his family, all of whom were buckling under the pressures of war. His depression and isolation are slowly lifting. The people here have noticed.

Today Ahmad got his white card, which he'd been worried about. His passport had been copied in Croatia.

"Now, I might be the happiest person in this whole place," he says, smiling slowly, then laughing out loud.

Habibe and Elmira
Habibe can't remember the European countries she passed through to get to Austria.

She does remember the 25 hours she and her family of five covered on foot from Tehran to Turkey. She remembers the month spent in Izmir waiting for storms in the Aegean to subside. She remembers the first rubber boat from Turkey to Greece, which had a leak; her husband jumped into the sea and obtained help to return to the coast – sadly the Turkish side. She remembers the second boat, which made it to Greece. The first smuggler disappeared; the family paid twice.¹¹

She, too, comes from Iran, the city of Mashhad, where she was born as an Afghan refugee. This double displacement is surprisingly prevalent in Vienna's refugee shelters. In Iran, she says, Afghan children are not allowed citizenship and are denied proper schooling. Habibe says she came to Europe to give her children – two boys, ages 10 and 14, and a girl, Elmira, 16, a chance at a better life.

We're back on Pfeiffergasse's fourth floor after meeting Habibe's younger son

in the busy foyer; he's returning from school and already speaks German. Habibe is wearing a hijab and has a kind but world-weary face. She speaks only Farsi, so she shows me her white card when I ask about her name. I see she was born in

8 Jon Henley, "After the Flood, Vienna's struggle to make its refugee residents feel at home," in: The Guardian, 6th April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/06/vienna-migration-crisis-refugees-refuge-cities-residents> (accessed on 11th April 2016).

9 By request, not his real name.

10 In a way, are.

11 In autumn 2015, the going rate for the Turkey-Greece rubber-boat journey was 1,200 euros per person.



Mahafi Amin at Haus Erdberg

1977.¹² In Iran she worked as a tailor in a company. In the Pfeiffergasse shelter, she became the unofficial Head Umbrella-Curtain Seamstress.

For two and a half months, she and other women – all Afghani and including daughter Elmira – hemmed and worked on nearly 2,000 square metres of fabric to be hung around and between the umbrellas. “There were six women working; three sewing, three helping,” says Elmira, who is taller than her mother. “We worked hard; we were happy. It was fun,” she adds. She was the only young sewer. Her family lives in a room with two other families, their umbrella is surrounded by additional curtains, creating a delineated zone.

Mohammad says how thankful he is to the Austrian people and government, but remembers the current European situation and suddenly begins to gently weep. He pauses. We all pause. “We Syrians took in the refugees from Iraq and never asked questions,” he says, through tears.

Habibe was given the key to the sewing room; often she’d start at 8:30am. Caramel’s architects were “decent, nice, cooperative. The work helped the time pass. It helped us help ourselves.”

The family lived in the center of Mashhad in a rented house. Habibe’s husband had heard that Austrians treated refugees well, that Vienna was beautiful. Still, the idea of what it would be like here has not corresponded to reality. She doesn’t mind the umbrella (she later shows us a “meeting” room on the fifth floor – with the family umbrella, Habibe says, they talk less to their neighbours; the need for common space was accommodated here and in the cafeteria). But it’s very slow. “Nothing has happened,” she says. “We’ve been here for four months. No transfer, no progress.”

She looks resigned, not angry. Elmira, on the other hand, looks determined, unstoppable. She wants to be a doctor. I imagine her in a white coat 20 years from now. The young woman looks at her watch, her German class begins soon. She seems bored with us. She’s 16. Some things cross cultural boundaries.

Erdberg

Near its eponymous subway station, Erdberg is an unattractive area; one outsiders might know only if they are unlucky enough to first arrive in Vienna by bus. Not far from the bus terminal, a complex of seven or eight-storey buildings sits sturdy and scary along the nondescript Erdbergstrasse. A concrete courtyard is decorated with a vaguely Brutalist sculpture in a dry fountain. Being here feels like hanging out under a highway overpass.

¹² The Farsi translator I’d lined up had disappeared, so for these interviews we set up a Habibe/Elmira-Amin-Muhammad-Kimberly (and back again) translation chain, which made for laughs despite the conversations’ gravity.

On one side of the courtyard, a group of obviously non-Austrian men stand smoking. Many others enter and exit a door nearby. This is the entrance to Erdberg’s refugee shelter, which at its peak housed 600 people. In March 2015 the number was 441, with plans to ultimately increase again with the addition of families to the current demographic of single men.¹³

Above are tiered storeys with rows of windows. This was once a boarding school for customs officers; infrastructural features like well-equipped rooms and a cafeteria already existed. “Who knows,” says Lotte Kristoferitsch from the design firm EOOS, whom I’m meeting for the first time. “Maybe we’ll need border patrols again.” She’s joking, but considering the tenuous state of the European Union’s Schengen policies, we only half-heartedly chuckle.

“Everybody needs a place to be. Especially people who don’t have a place to be,” says Gründl.

In the same building are two high schools. Across the courtyard is the Bundesverwaltungsgericht für Asyl und Fremdenrecht, the court where asylum cases are decided. Three stories under the refugee shelter is a subterranean sound-proof shooting range for Vienna’s police

Mansour Mohammed Subhi and Hanout Tamimah at Haus Erdberg



force. The irony that teenage pupils, cops in uniform, asylum seekers and the civil servants who decide their cases all use this courtyard every day, sometimes simultaneously, is not lost on me.

EOOS

Kristoferitsch takes me to the EOOS field office on the shelter’s third floor. Hallways and stairwells are institutional – not unfriendly, but rundown, scuffed, past their prime.

Each floor is a large oval around an inner courtyard; each has about 80 rooms, most of which house two men. The EOOS office is steps away from the Caritas offices, a hub of activity placed into a couple of rooms turned into offices and what was once a “tea room” repurposed into a meeting space.¹⁴

“Beyond seeing the disadvantages of a shelter with 600 people, what could its advantages be?” says Harald Gründl, one of the firm’s three founders. “Part of what we are exploring is creating models that could be used elsewhere.”¹⁵

EOOS has taken on the longest-term project; the Fonds Soziales Wien (Vienna Social Funds) has a 15-year lease on the building. Facilitating a situation in which refugees care for themselves is the top consideration. Currently there’s a top-floor catered cafeteria; allowing refugees to cook would be a first step.

“We’ve developed two kitchen typologies – one meant for ten rooms to share, one larger,” says Gründl. The idea

¹³ Until late 2015, Erdberg’s shelter housed a large number of unaccompanied minors. One is still here: Fadi, age 17, from a mountainous region in Syria near the Israeli border. Fadi is also on the carpentry team and came to Austria alone; a flat his family had rented in Damascus was destroyed. He hopes to become an electrician and bring his family to safety in Europe.

¹⁴ The local branches of the NGOs Caritas and Samariterbund have administered these refugees since December 2015, replacing the Swiss private security firm ORS.

¹⁵ According to Gründl, the Next ENTER-prize-architects, this Biennale’s third participant but not included in this essay as no refugees yet live in the shelter it is outfitting, will likely use the kitchens as well.

is that refugees are not only more independent, but also have places to meet and form communities. Beyond kitchens, each room gets a refrigerator cabinet with space for personal utensils.¹⁶

EOOS has larger plans, like an outdoor garden in the now desolate inner courtyard. The empty tea rooms and landings could be made into meeting spaces in dialogue with the refugees. There’s even talk of a hallway “bazaar” – where barbers, bakers, and other professionals could sell their services or goods for a kind of alternative currency.

Time expands; it drags. It ceases being an asset and becomes a liability. When temporal structures do not or cannot exist, even the strongest human character can falter.

Place

The Erdberg shelter looks eerily empty in comparison to Pfeiffergasse. The men mostly stay in their rooms. The long hallways are interrupted by doors and turn sharp corners, making a walk through them seem labyrinthine. A few young guys gather on benches around Wi-Fi points. Instead of children’s drawings on the walls, a bulletin board lists who re-

ceived post that day – many residents obsessively check it – post might mean an asylum appointment. No other common space exists here.

“Everybody needs a place to be. Especially people who don’t have a place to be,” says Gründl. “The kitchens are a first step to independence. My goal is that the situation in the building is improved. That the people have work, not only free time. You don’t want to force anyone to work. But it’s the waiting that kills them.” On the ground floor, a workshop for building the cabinets and the first two prototype kitchens will be ready to go the following week.

The carpenters: Tammam

“It’s been too hard to just eat and sleep. This is not a life,” says Tammam. “I can’t concentrate without my kids, I’m worried. It’s hard to learn German. I’m 50, I don’t have so much time left.”

What Tammam does have is 35 years’ experience in carpentry. In the western Syrian city of Homs, he had his own workshop, as well as a house, a car, and family. When the attacks on Homs – a rebel stronghold, now largely destroyed – began, he fled to Jordan with his wife and three children. He’d been dodging snipers for too long, the workshop and home were completely flattened, gone. Even leaving was an ordeal. After a harrowing time in a Jordanian refugee camp, Tammam left for Europe with his nephew on February 28th, 2015.

At the time, the Macedonian borders were closed and brutally patrolled. Parts of the journey involved clandestine hours-long overnight walks through forests. The goal was Berlin, where Tammam has relatives, but he was caught in the Czech Republic, whose officials returned him to Austria, where he was surprised. “The Austrian police were so nice, they kept telling me, ‘You’re in a safe place,’ so I am here.”

Tammam has been in Erdberg for ten months. All he wants to do is work. Every time I visit the workshop, he’s there, making cabinets. He built kitchens in Homs, too. “I’m so happy to work in my profession again. They gave me the design. I understood it right away, I made it. I think they were impressed.”¹⁷

The carpenters: Mohammad

In Damascus, Mohammad, 41, was a perfumer. Now he is a fixture in the wood-shop. Sitting in a room alongside EOOS’ worktable prototype, he jokes that he can do anything, and is so bored that he will do anything. He has fixed windows and doors, and painted a kindergarten wall. He came with his older son, who was about to be conscripted into Bashar al-Assad’s army (he’s now being trained as a barber and learning German). Mohammad’s wife and two other children are still in Damascus, living 300 metres from the front lines.

“I didn’t want to kill, or be killed,” he says in a soft voice. It’s difficult to imagine him in any violent situation, but he witnessed many. He borrowed money to finally leave – alone – when the war became too much to bear. He paid a smuggler to take him to Berlin, where his brother is waiting for an asylum decision, but near Salzburg, the smuggler abandoned the truck, filled with 20 refugees. The police

He’s intelligent, fast-talking, straightforward, and satisfied with how Erdberg is run. Since Caritas and the Samariterbund came, there are more interviews, people moving out and on, more activity and work within the shelter. The people at Caritas and EOOS listen to suggestions.

Tammam is sceptical that the kitchens will foster community, but Mohammad thinks they are a good idea. But who will keep them clean? What happens when summer brings flies and bugs? What about children, who are notoriously messy? Or different nationalities not getting along? Mohammad says how thankful he is to

¹⁶ Many of these objects are present in the EOOS field office; on the wall is a large yellow board on which kitchen utensils would hang. Also here is a yellow table adopted from one EOOS developed for luxury kitchen outfitter Bulthaup, as well as the efficient refrigerator cabinet.

¹⁷ He later proudly says he has an appointment with the asylum authorities in late April, and asks whether I needed any carpentry work done.

the Austrian people and government, but remembers the current European situation and suddenly begins to gently weep. He pauses. We all pause. “We Syrians took in the refugees from Iraq and never asked questions,” he says, through tears. “Don’t forget the people stuck in Syria. The people stuck on the borders. I don’t know them, but they have families, too.”

Amer has seen a therapist, but he says therapy won’t solve his problems. “In the end, it’s not about therapy. In the end, it’s the war. I’ve lost my future, I can’t continue studying. Nothing kills more than waiting.”

Transit

Between 1919 and 1937, 80,000 Austrians left the country for overseas destinations.

At the end of World War II, more than 500,000 displaced persons settled permanently in Austria.

In 1956, more than 180,000 refugees from Hungary came to Austria; 20,000 were permanently resettled.

In the early 1990s, approximately 95,000 refugees of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina came to Austria, receiving temporary protection. By 1999, about 70,000 of them had been granted long-term residence. About 20,000 of these returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina or went elsewhere; the rest have remained.¹⁸

The carpenters: Amer

Amer’s smile could light up a room, and I expect him to be a sunny boy. But his story makes me saddest.

Amer is 20. He is Palestinian-Syrian, and stayed in Syria for a year and half after his family fled a Damascus suburb to Lebanon – they lost two flats in a row in buildings that were destroyed. He stayed as a homeless teenager, couch-surfing with friends for a few nights here, a few nights there, and studying in buses or outdoors so he could finish high school and then embark on a computer science and telecommunications programme.

“I didn’t want to kill, or be killed,” he says in a soft voice. It’s difficult to imagine him in any violent situation, but he witnessed many. He borrowed money to finally leave – alone – when the war became too much to bear. He paid a smuggler to take him to Berlin, where his brother is waiting for an asylum decision, but near Salzburg, the smuggler abandoned the truck, filled with 20 refugees. The police

Mohammad Amer at Haus Erdberg



¹⁸ See <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/austria-country-immigration> (accessed 11th April 2016).

came two hours later. Amer had 50 euros left, and no other options.



Mohamed Umar at Haus Erdberg

Twice displaced

Number of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan: 1.5 million (registered, UNCHR). Number of Afghans living in Iran: 950,000 (registered, UNHCR).

Number of Iraqis living in Syria in the late 2000s: Two million; those registered as refugees in 2013: 63,500.²⁰

Since March 2012, Pakistan has banned the extension of visas to all foreigners, including Afghans born there.

In March 2016, an estimated 450,000 of the 560,000 Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief Works Agency in Syria remained inside Syria.²¹

Of the several young Afghans I meet, none arrived from Afghanistan. Two of them, Ishaq and Hameed (both 18, the latter speaks German, English, and many other languages) attend Austrian vocational school, learning to be electricians. They seem more stable than residents without temporal structure.

“First, I’d like to thank the Austrian people. They behave like our family. They are kind people. I love it here. I like this camp,” says Ishaq, in English. His roommate Miagan agrees, speaking Pashto, with Ishaq interpreting.

Ishaq is 18, attended a military school, and married his 16-year-old girlfriend before leaving the Taliban-ridden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan to Austria in 2014. His trip took two months and cost 10,500 euros. Soldiers killed his father four months ago. Ishaq knew this would happen. He has copies of the warrants for the family’s arrest and murder; hoping these will be key in granting asylum.

Miagan’s family was also embroiled in tribal land disputes that forced a move from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Miagan’s brother was murdered, he, too, was next on the list. He was fingerprinted in Croatia, and he is terrified of deportation. He wants to stay in Vienna, even if he’s never seen St. Stephen’s Cathedral. On 40 euros

as Hannah Arendt wrote in 1943, as a German-Jewish refugee in the United States: “Since everyone plans and wishes and hopes, so do we.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Arendt, op. cit., p. 111.

Home is, where your phone is

Katja Schechtner, Katharina Müller, Anton Falkeis

Reflections on places for people with phones.

“We live in confusing times, as is often the case in periods of historical transition between different forms of society. I contend that around the end of the second millennium of the common era a number of major social, technological, economic and cultural transformations came together to give rise to a new form of society, the network society.” Manuel Castells, “The Rise of the Network Society”

Architecture and urban design go far beyond the tangible, physical space: they create emotional landmarks and landscapes in people’s minds. Today we are witness to the convergence of the digital and physical worlds: Our mental maps of cities are becoming augmented by multiple layers of data that – metaphorically – float above the built cityscape.

Even before the refugee attached to his mobile phone prominently entered our image canon, the rising availability of location-based digital data and mobile devices had globally changed not only our perception of technology, humanity and its built en-

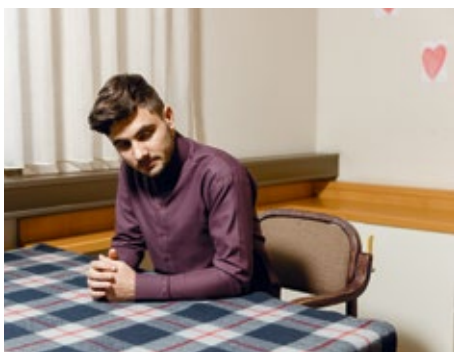
vironment, but also our behaviour when navigating public and private spaces. Since the advent of GoogleMaps, Twitter and Foursquare and other geo-location social media sites, the mental image of our cities has become more complex. Mobile technologies are changing our daily experience by enabling us to access some of the intangible informational infrastructures, such as digital maps, shops, banks, housing, transport, restaurant recommendation sites and e-government from the comfort of our beds and the busyness of our streets.

Ishaq lived in a modest house in Pakistan, his father was a village elder. But with the father dead and house “smashed,” his remaining family now lives with an uncle. Ishaq sends them what little money he has. On Miagan’s side of the room, a spray-painted poster proclaims NEIN WIR WOLLEN BLEIBEN. On Ishaq’s bulletin board, a handmade Austrian flag bears one sentence: “Austria, my best contri.” Of all the countries he’s known, this is perhaps the only one where he has known peace.

Integration

The human flood may be abating²³ but the metaphorical waters in Central Europe are still choppy, the undercurrents overwhelming, just like in the Aegean.

Vienna’s integration policies are exemplary. German classes, uniformly referred to as mein Deutschkurs by the residents I speak to, are offered immediately to every refugee. The multilingual notes in Erdberg’s entrance announce dance courses, football-game visits, and movie nights run by an army of volunteers. These architecture projects cleverly use existing skills to fill time with useful activity and promote solutions and maybe even contacts that may reverberate into the future.²⁴



Ishaq Afridi at Haus Erdberg

And yet... is integration possible with an unfathomably heterogeneous group of people, most traumatised, some illiterate? In April, the Viennese local government considered requiring courses of refugees, not only in the German language but also

²² The young Afghans do organise rogue cricket games in a parking lot near Erdberg. They ask me if I know any Austrians who play cricket.

²³ The reasons for this are current, controversial, and complex: Austria’s upper limit for asylum applications was announced in February 2018 and, as I write, feesries have begun transporting refugees in Greece back to Turkey.

²⁴ Amin hopes to intern in a Vienna architecture office.

in Austrian values, western mores, everyday social graces. A good investment, but effective? I realise that even I, a German-speaking American, am often perplexed by often contradictory Austrian values and behavioural norms, and occasionally make major social faux pas. What is successful integration?

Write about that

Omar, 50, has been in the Erdberg shelter for seven months. Although he told this publication’s photographer that he was an actor, he is not, and never was, although he says he can act and sing. “I was playing with him,” he says.

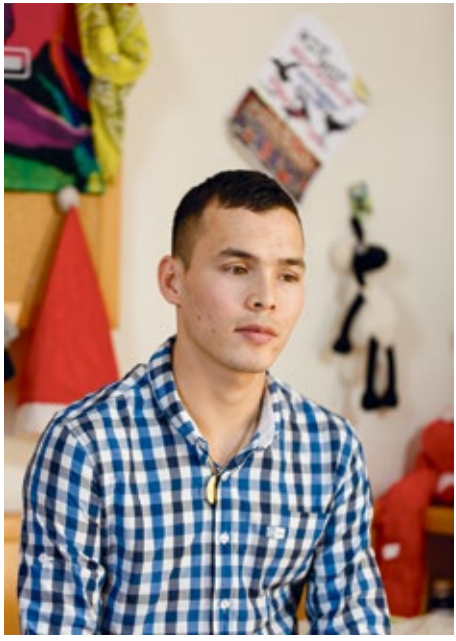
We go to his room – a single corner accommodation; his former roommate was 18 and “messy” and he was moved. The door stays open. There are no locks anyway, which Omar says leads to rampant theft amongst refugees.

“Look through the window. It’s a prison here. A prison,” he says in German he learned 30 years ago at Damascus University and practiced by leading German and Austrian tourists on holiday tours in Syria. It was a summer gig; Omar worked for the government. He bought a plot of land and built a house. “In my country, I was a rich man,” he says.

Like Amer, Omar is a Palestinian from Syria; his parents fled Palestine in 1948. “For 68 years my parents were homeless,” he says. “I was born in Syria in 1965, and now I’ve lost my second home.” Omar speaks of his older son, age 20, who is studying in Brazil, and shows me a film of his eight-year-old son, who is still in Syria with his mother, Omar’s wife.

On Miagan’s side of the room, a spray-painted poster proclaims NEIN WIR WOLLEN BLEIBEN. On Ishaq’s bulletin board, a handmade Austrian flag bears one sentence: “Austria, my best contri.”

Omar can’t bear being without his family. He’s not doing well at Erdberg, and shows me his psychological reports. He drinks alcohol to forget, but he cannot forget. “It will be better when the kitchens are here, when families are here. We’ll have more freedom, we can cook what we want. We’re all waiting for this. But I think it might just be a promise,” he says.



Masoomi Hameed at Haus Erdberg

He accuses “my government” of forgetting about them, “throwing them away,” and I realise he thinks I’m American. I tell him I’m American, that my government, while absolutely deserv- ing a multitude of accusations, isn’t the one he’s thinking of. He continues more passionately, now addressing me as a writer.

“You can’t write just about these kitchens. You have to write about our psychological diseases, what hurts us, what we feel. What happens with the kitchens? Is it about food? We don’t need just food, we need freedom! The government has to tell us from the very first month: you can stay, you can’t stay. Just tell us. Then we won’t be so destroyed. Then I won’t be sick. I lived in war, but didn’t have psychological problems in my country. You can’t live without hope. If they tell us, we can be happy from the inside. That’s the main thing, the interesting thing. Write about that.”

Thanks to: All the asylum-seekers for their trust and honesty. Günter at Caramel; Harald and Lotte from EOOS. Fayad, the director of the Pfeiffergasse shelter. Philipp from Samariterbund at Erdberg’s front desk. Veli, Sarah, and Dr. Ahmad at Caritas at Erdberg, for easing access. And Muhammad Al Najjar for his linguistic and cultural interpretation, and invaluable moral support.



Corridor with WLAN at Haus Erdberg



Crashed smartphone at Haus Erdberg

This might be related to the public discussion about refugees and their use of technology, which negated the inseparability of the material and digital space and was largely characterised by a socio-technical dissonance that denied today's realities of global living. Its dominant narratives reiterated images of a pre-digital era:

Refugees are poor.

What does a refugee look like? Receiving little first-hand information from border crossings and emergency shelters we also hardly ever set eyes on them in the midst of our cities and refugees themselves rarely tell their own stories in the media.

So we invent "our" refugee: the "ideal" or, namely, "poor" and "grateful", hence, the "good" refugee. The media's presentation of the "refugee crisis" – on screen and in the papers – supports this image creation: the winning photo in the general news category of the World Press Photo 2016 shows refugees arriving by boat on the Greek island of Lesbos. A dozen people, squeezed onto an unstable nutshell-like boat, clinging together and surrounded by the endless sea. Sergey Ponomarev's photograph of the act of arrival represents the everyday, historic reality of humanitarian journalism: images of ragged, torn, tired, dirty and hungry people thankful for safety. These images resonate with us; they bring to mind TV documentaries about the expulsion of millions of Germans after the Second World War, when the European borders were redrawn after the defeat of the Nazi regime. Yesterday and today merge into a ritualised tale of escape: people reduced to the bare essentials struggling towards an apparent goal ("towards us"), alongside railway tracks and motorways, across open fields and the open sea. Masses of people. The refugee rarely appears alone. He is part of a flood, fighting for survival against the natural forces of heat, waves, rain and snow. In close-up, he clammers over barbed-wire fences. He keeps on going. Our ideal refugee is perpetually moving. Mobile. And poor.

Itulah Sunday at Haus Erdberg



Mobile phones are a luxury.

Technology used to be all about function. Big, grey and clunky machines that helped us build our world and leave gruesome physical labour behind. But then Moore's Law and design intervened. Machines became small, sleek and shiny, providing expensive, even frivolous comfort and entertainment. First at home and then personalised and miniaturised for people on the move. Mobile phones, once a magic tool of connection and disembodied transfer for the "chosen few" in movies like "The Matrix" quickly became a powerful symbol of the technologically advanced, rich societies, transferring the notion of affluence to its individual users. Mobile. And rich.

Refugees with mobile phones are phony.

"A scandal!" In the wake of the refugee crisis images soon emerge that don't seem to portray people in a crisis: The dust and dirt and the ceaseless movement have been left behind and they lounge on public benches in parks and on shopping streets – their need for support is obviously in question: they do have mobile phones!

"An iPhone in a refugee camp. How did such technology get there?" In the midst of the "refugee tragedy" it suddenly seems as if there is nothing as scandalous as seeing people who were forced into mobility using mobile telephones and laptops. These can't possibly be "real" refugees. Watchful citizens report on social media sites that they have seen refugees in mobile phone shops being given expensive smartphones for free. There are rumours that the Austrian government has instructed a large mobile telephone operator to equip refugees with new telephones upon their arrival. The aid organisation Caritas is forced to defend itself against accusations of having given asylum-seekers mobile telephones and data vouchers. "Luxury or emergency?" is the question asked by the German news agency reporter²⁴ at the Austrian border: A black African, his face an anonymised blur of pixels, turns a corner, the criminalising image focused on the circle-marked telephone in his hand. Mobile. And phony.

The mobile phone – a symbol of differentiation and association?

This simplified narrative of the supposed dichotomy of technology and migration aimed at defining the debate on core socio-cultural concepts such as space, identity, economy, order and the creation of home. In this discourse the mobile phone became a near magical symbol for the perceived difference between the resident and the migrant population. A notion that was swiftly challenged by media scientists and the tech community:

The mobile phone. And space.

The debate about migration and spatial distribution constantly refers to "immigration" versus "integration". This makes clear the extent to which the public discourse is caught up in the notion of the separation of spaces of origin and destination. While most architects have a very physical understanding of space, for sociologists the idea is more abstract, a result of social norms and conditions, imbued with cultural meaning and mediated through objects and structures.

The mobile phone as a global design object counteracts the notion of separation and thus fails to transfer characteristics of belonging to a specific place.

The mobile phone. And identity. The ownership of a particular object doesn't allow for distinguishing between members of the "arrival societies" versus "immigrants". This functional logic denies the contemporary social shift towards transitory, globally linked living and working patterns and defends seemingly "evolved", conservative structures.

Beyond physical manifestations such as museums, housing, plazas or parks the identity of a place is first of all characterised by its social setting. It is a product of diverse and ever changing cultural practices, social conventions and the dynamics of capital and political representation. The concept of migration is presented – especially in German-speaking countries – as a new and abstract phenomenon, a fact that relates to the difficulty of speaking about race and racism in Germany and Austria.

The use of a specific piece of technology fails as a token of differentiation or association.

The mobile phone. And economy. Poverty is by definition a social phenomenon, which principally refers to a condition of serious social disadvantage across the whole spectrum of human life: It mostly concerns the failure to meet basic needs in such areas as clothing, food, accommodation and health. A single tool, however, no matter its singular monetary value, fails to transform a person from rags to riches.

The mobile phone. And order.

The notion of a refugee can only exist in terms of the situation that has made him a refugee. Within this construction, "stabilising" him plays a decisive role. In 1952 in *Black Skin, White Masks*, his famous study of the psychology of racism, Frantz Fanon noted that he was trapped in an image that "fixed" him as an object of observation and description. To create order from chaos, refugees aren't only physically held by the police and security agencies: Constant monitoring transforms illegal migration into a visible, countable and controllable movement. The mobile phone as a tool both for authorities and migrants breaks the understanding of one-directional creation of order and structure.

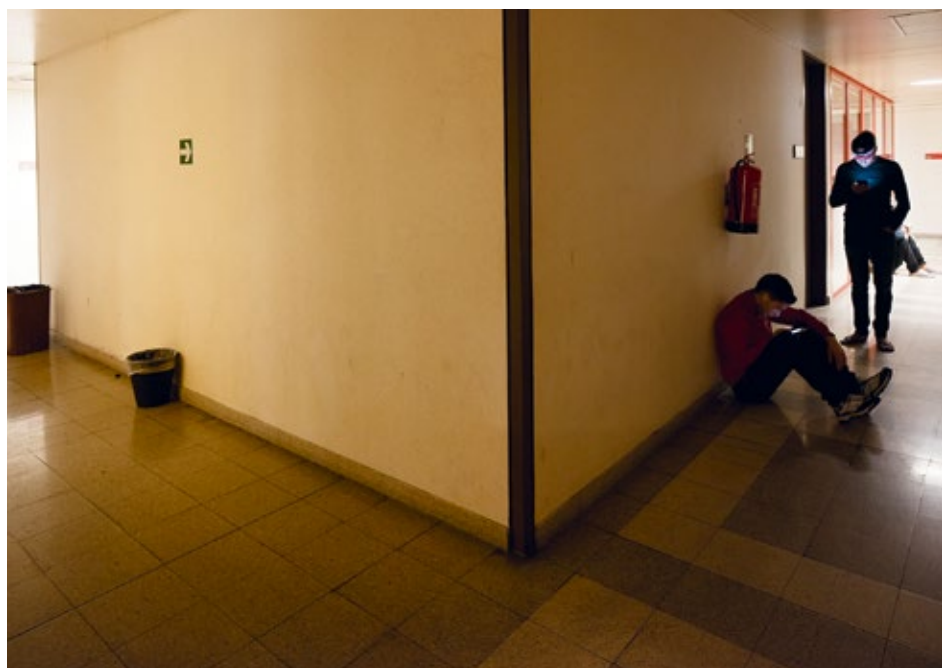
Apps for your strive, places of your life?

2011 was the watershed year for those interested in the relationship between technology and the formation of (urban) society: while, on one hand, technology companies such as IBM, Cisco and Siemens started the implementation of large scale top-down Smart City projects in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Songdo, South Korea and Masdar, UAE to better monitor, manage and streamline the constant migration of people to cities, on the other hand, civic protest and bottom-up initiatives such as the Arab Spring, Wikileaks, the Spanish May 15th and the American Occupy movement relied on the very same technologies to coordinate their agenda of societal and urban change, echoing William J. Mitchell's prediction that "...the emerging civic structures and spatial arrangements of the digital era will profoundly affect our access to economic opportunities and public services, the character and content of public discourse".

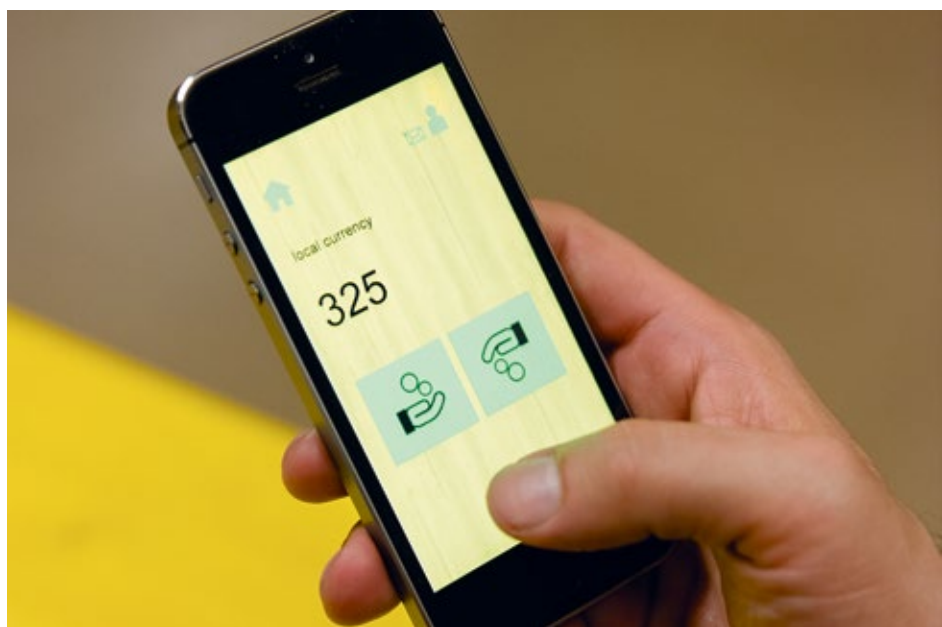
2011 was also the year the Syrian Civil War began.

Thus both the tech and the humanitarian communities were well aware of the potential of mobile phone-based social networks. In daily practice the mobile phone as a platform for apps became the focal point for reaching refugees directly. For both govern-

Use of WLAN at Haus Erdberg



Smartphone with test app at Haus Erdberg



ment agencies & NGO's and the (shadow) migration industry apps presented themselves as a convenient entry point for the delivery of physical support through digital information in the very corporal world of human flight.

Moreover, the international humanitarian community has had experience of working with the tech community for crisis relief ever since the 2010 earthquake disaster in Haiti, when, according to Patrick Meier from the volunteer organisation Standby Task Force by building up to date maps, based on different kinds of ad hoc reported datasets: "... a bunch of volunteers in snowy Boston, who were not humanitarian, had never done humanitarian response and who had never left Boston, but were still able to provide the kind of situational awareness faster in ways that were more usable." While the governmental institutions proved to be reluctant to work with technologists at first, by 2013 the digitally linked, globally distributed 900 volunteers of the Standby Task Force had provided support in more than 26 humanitarian deployments and, according to Patrick Meier: "... had repeatedly proven themselves as worthy partners over a certain period of time, and publicly demonstrated the results, both good and bad."

Consequently, apps targeted at refugees were developed by the tech community at hackathons, i.e. the Refugee Hacks in Vienna, Berlin and Amsterdam, where apps to charter a route, find transportation, a place to sleep, food, medical support, etc. quickly evolved in a rush to provide support and to demonstrate the tech community's ability to tackle real world problems quickly. The apps that emerged were designed for the perceived needs of the travelling refugee versus the settling migrant and are placeless versus hyper-local.

However, similar to the public discourse in the media, the development teams rarely included refugees themselves.

A notable exception is the app "Gherbtna", which was developed by a Syrian refugee, Mojahed Akil, for his fellow compatriots who wanted to make Turkey their temporal home and which features information about residency regulations, but focuses on accessing the formal and informal job and housing markets.

Germany chose a more top down approach for a national level app: several government agencies co-

Bujalan Aswa, Alnaji Karar, Abdulmo Mohamed at Haus Pfeiffergasse



Refugee apps proliferated with such pace and variety that it became necessary to compile information about them into the App Stores, e.g. at the meta-site: <http://appsforrefugees.com/>, which lists 31 different custom-made apps, clustered into six different categories. In the race to help through spot-on information the humanitarian app developers were quickly faced with the challenges of regular app coding: accuracy and actuality of information and reaching the clients in significant numbers. On a refugee's mobile phone all those customised apps vie for space with regular global apps for information and communication, such as facebook, WhatsApp and Google Maps. When analysing the download numbers of apps, those featuring nation state level information seem to have reached their target audiences in somewhat significant numbers, e.g. Gherbtna had been downloaded to almost 20,000 phones by the end of 2015, Ankommen had showed about 100,000 installations via the Google Play store by the end of March 2016 although it remains unclear what number of installations came from the resident population vs. the migrant population.

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Digital natives, not digital naïves are designing their future.

Thus refuting the dichotomy of migration and technology and demonstrating that migrants are digital natives, rather than digital naïves, the mobile phone has firmly proven its value to refugees, governmental authorities and civic support communities alike as a reliable tool along the refugee routes and for distributing initial arrival information – but will

it be of the same significance for urban planning and homemaking in the arrival cities?

According to the urban sociologist Richard Sennett, learning to live with people who differ ethnically, religiously and economically is the most urgent challenge facing civil society today: "... a healthy city can embrace and make productive use of the differences of class, ethnicity and lifestyles it contains, while a sick city cannot; the sick city isolates and segregates different, drawing no collective strength from its mixture of different people".

In the context of planning for a diversifying and digitally linked urban population, the difference between the physical and informational space becomes less important. The mobile phone and the information it contains can be leveraged to question traditional design assumptions and inform new spatial patterns.

In the past two decades architects quickly adopted the broad collection of digital tools and computational packages that allowed them to interactively design and build spaces that were previously unimaginable.

Similarly, urban planners will be able to benefit from the tools for analysing anonymised population level mobile phone and social network data that are currently becoming available. Those tools can be employed to understand the use of urban infrastructures and public spaces by different groups – covering the whole spectrum of long-term residents, recent arrivals or short time visitors like tourists. For example: Today the mobile phone model, generation and software platform says a lot about the socio-economic status of its user and the country code – or the location of the IP address – that he/she calls frequently abroad can be

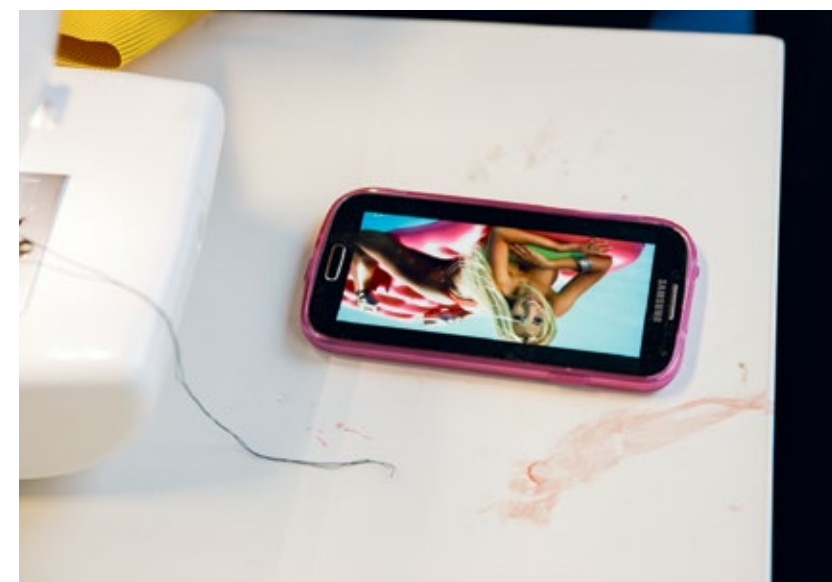
a tell-tale sign of pockets of ethnic communities in a city. By analysing the combined data of all citizens and their mobile phones' geo-located access of the mobile network, urban data scientists like Eric Fischer were able to accurately pinpoint urban areas that were inhabited by poorer or richer and ethnically diverse or similar groups in society and to monitor changes in the social fabric over time. Consequently urban planners can use this information to plan either in favour of generating ethnically similar or diverse neighbourhoods across the city e.g. creating a "Little Syria", similar to the "Chinatown" or "Little Italy" we find today in the centre of many North American Cities, while still avoiding the negative effects of ethnically segregated communities, like the banlieus on the fringes of Paris. Moreover, urban infrastructure services such as transport, waste management and energy supply can be efficiently and swiftly adapted to those changes.

The emotional landscape of a city and how citizens perceive its different neighbourhoods matters dramatically for the urban quality of life. Via different apps and their meta-data people reveal their emotions, often creating a psychological map of their city, as Sarah Williams demonstrated in New York City. Based on Foursquare and Facebook data she visualised the emotions that New York's inhabitants associated with different spaces in the city, attributing some with very distinct emotions, e.g.: Heartapocalypse, Heaven/Hudson or "Where Dreams Die" (apparently just north of Grand Central Station). Regarding the notion that only certain groups of people would contribute to these emotional maps, Sarah Williams stressed that: What we found was that all socio-economic classes in New York City use social media to broadcast information about the places they visit, and, when they do so, they tell us about the economy and the emotions of the city itself."

On a smaller scale, such as the refurbishment of buildings to initially house refugees or the design of new housing for diverse migrant-resident communities, architects don't need to partner with data scientists. Photo apps encapsulate the form, meaning and values of different places: Just taking the time to collect the pictures that most refugees carry on their phones and to analyse and discuss the qualities of the rooms and streets depicted in the background can inform new, welcoming designs.

Taking a good look at the images on refugees' phones can be a powerful tool for understanding the architectural and urban qualities of their lost home. Concealed in these pictures are testimonies about the physical qualities of the migrants' former homes: the function and use of private and public spaces; the spatial allocation programmes that constitute a cultural identity, e.g. the private courtyards and gardens of previous homes; materials and colour schemes; the

form and proportion of the artefacts of daily life; and what emotional qualities of safety, community and "heimat" are associated with specific designs. In their daily work with refugees to create "Places for People", the architects quickly realised the importance of mobile phones as tools for finding refuge and making home. Therefore, they integrated mobile phones in various ways into their designs, depending on the nature of the project. Caramel made use of the physical domain and created tangible rooms of privacy by including headphones and electric plugs into their flexible kits for each refugee, thus ensuring that their connection to the digital space linking their past and future lives was always available. EOOS, on the other hand, leveraged the community building capacity of the mobile phone and created an app that allows refugees to make use of their expertise and talents to support other refugees or people in the neighbourhood and thus earn "credits" for help in other areas.



Smartphone with screensaver at Haus Pfeiffergasse

The response of the Austrian architecture and design community to the rush of government authorities, tech communities and humanitarian organisations to employ mobile technologies as means of creating order, structure and socio-cultural context – and ultimately - new places of shelter and home was innovative but, as one of the architects put it, also self-evident: Building places for people with phones.

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Fluchtraum Österreich

On the hospitality of Austrian tourism establishments towards asylum seekers

Nina Valerie Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl

At first sight, accommodating refugees in tourism establishments seems an obvious idea. In Austria this approach to housing asylum seekers is not a new phenomenon, but has a history going back 60 years, and stands for a national asylum policy that handles the provision of space for people who have been forced to flee as a short-term issue. Yet, the apparently seamless transition of former tourism facilities into places of refuge is met by the overlapping of two radically different concepts – the voluntary escape from everyday life of the tourist and the search for an

everyday life of a migrant who has been forced to flee.

To what extent does Austria, as a nation of tourism, apply the basic rule of hospitality - "the guest is the guest" – in the area of asylum policy and why is it urgently necessary to regard these two groups of guests separately and to understand and recognise their different (living) needs while still offering both the same hospitality?

Since the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and the resulting flight of around 170,000 Hungarians to Austria there have been

periods when up to 95 per cent of asylum seekers in Austria have been accommodated in tourist establishments of different sizes and types. According to the political scientist Raimund Pehm,¹ the persistence in using tourist accommodation as a place of refuge is a consequence of the over-supply of low-standard or unclassified

tourist facilities in Austria as well as of the strategic advantages that the small-scale structure of the tourism industry provides for the asylum system.

As a result of the current challenges of refugees fleeing from crisis-ridden areas, together with around 90,000 asylum applications in 2015,² asylum seekers have replaced tourists, in particular in in-

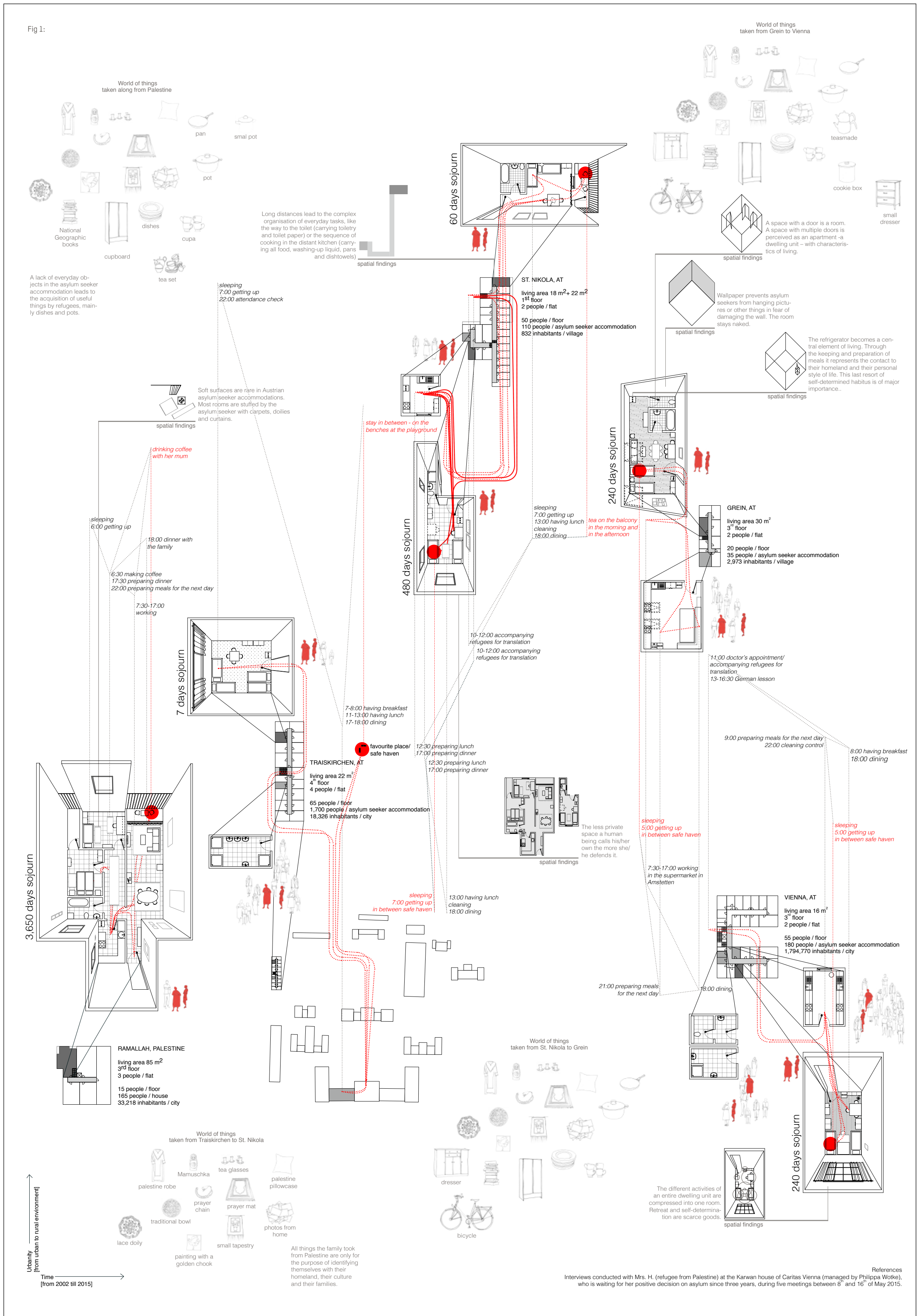
stances (voluntarily or otherwise), screen them from their surroundings and, hence, exclude them from society.

Among the total of around 700 establishments for asylum seekers in Austria's nine provinces there are several examples of the temporary repurposing of premises, which can offer "hospitality" to either refugees or tourists, depending upon

1 Raimund Pehm, "Die Flüchtlingspension: Eine österreichische Besonderheit im Wandel", Lecture during the symposium "1st Guest gleich Guest? Asylsuchende in österreichischen Tourismusarchitekturen", 7th April 2016, Architektur Haus Kärnten, Klagenfurt.

2 Interim asylum statistics, December 2015, Austria Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, Section III-Legal Issues, http://www.bmi.gv.at/Content/001_Asylinwesen/01statistik/files/Asylstatistik_Dezember_2015.pdf

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References: Interviews conducted with Mrs. H. (refugee from Palestine) at the Karwan house of Caritas Vienna (managed by Philippe Weske), who is working for her positive decision on asylum since three years, during five meetings between 8th and 16th of May 2015.

left - Fig 1
A biography of living - Living situations experienced during the escape from Ramallah to Vienna; Mapping by Lea Soltau, developed as part of the course *Fluchtraum Österreich* at the Vienna University of Technology, taught by Nina Valerie Kolowratnik and Johannes Pointl in 2015.

capacity. This flexibility in the provision of accommodation is possible because the infrastructure required by provincial governments for accommodating asylum seekers is often already in place, the establishments are ready for use without major rebuilding or renovating work and the provincial governments - like large travel companies - offer contracts for 100% occupancy. The involvement of the proprietors on the other hand means that the control of foreigners can be delegated to a sector that is already accustomed to the formalities of Austrian visitor registration.

Although the use of establishments with fewer beds should be seen positively, the often remote locations of private guest rooms, rural guest-houses, motels and holiday villages is leading to an increasing isolation of asylum seekers - limiting their opportunities to establish social networks, act politically and participate actively in society.

Hospitality is defined as the sympathy of a host towards his guest, regardless of where the guest comes from or his reason for making use of that hospitality, and to the related provision of accommodation, food and service.

The question of the extent to which the activities of proprietors have changed with the taking in of asylum seekers is initially and decidedly answered by all those interviewed⁴ with the words "I treat all guests the same. I make no difference between asylum seekers and tourists." However, in the course of these conversations, proprietors such as Elisabeth Steiner who runs the *Gasthof Bärenwirt* which accommodates asylum seekers in Weitenfeld in Kärnten add that they have surely been given a new role: "We are simply thrown into this situation. None of us has the remote notion of what we should actually expect. And we really have to be everything. We are not only landlord, provider of accommodation and proprietor, we are also mother, psychologist, social worker and nurse."

Legally, they are merely required to provide appropriate accommodation which respects human dignity.

In order to transform a tourism establishment into accommodation for asylum seekers, proprietors in Austria must neither show evidence of any special training in the provision for asylum seekers and the care of their needs nor employ specially trained staff. The support of asylum seekers within the basic care system is the responsibility of either the refugee department of the provincial government or one of the religious, private or aid organisations commissioned by that same government to do this. However, as this task is limited to visiting each establishment once or twice a week and as, in some provinces, one car can be responsible for up to 200 asylum seekers, the reality is that the operator of the establishment both remains the day-to-day contact person for the refugees and has to organise the co-living of diverse individuals and cultural groups.

Hence, most proprietors who take in asylum seekers find themselves having to

play a double role. As the provider of the accommodation they are responsible for its operation and, at the same time, they are expected to care for persons in need of protection with special (housing) needs, most of whom arrive having experienced traumas in the countries they are fleeing from as well as during their flight and now have to adjust to a radically new environment.

In addition to having to play these multiple roles, providers of accommodation also have to deal with the fact that there are no legally determined minimum standards for the accommodation of asylum seekers and that both provincial governments and proprietors can only orient themselves using extremely vaguely defined guidelines. Legally, they are merely required - not only by EU guidelines⁵ but also by the Austrian law on basic care⁶ and the laws of the individual provinces - to "provide appropriate accommodation which respects human dignity." The "minimum standards related to basic care accommodation in Austria"⁷ developed by the refugee departments of the provincial governments are not legally binding and, besides defining a maximum occupancy (five people per room) and minimum area per person (8 m² plus 4 m² for every additional person in a room) only list the numbers of sanitary facilities (a maximum of 10 people per WC, washbasin and shower) and the minimum equipment for a residential unit (a wardrobe and table plus - per person - a bed with a pillow, blanket, sheets, a chair and a one-piece cupboard). On top of this, very few concrete requirements in these (non-binding) guidelines go beyond the elementary information regarding the usability of the space.

The systematic shifting of responsibility from national to provincial government and then on to private individuals becomes evident in the inadequate control of the minimum requirements for asylum seeker accommodation. Given that the clear majority of such accommodation is realised in existing buildings, most of which were previously used for tourism, it is permitted to deviate from the minimum standards in individual cases with regard to the local and financial situation. A further reason for not implementing all of these requirements represents the event of refugee mass movements. In this context, *Anny Knapp of Asylkoordination Österreich* criticises the current "undermining of minimum standards"⁸, which officials seek to justify with the present high number of asylum applications. As a result, it is generally up to proprietors to decide the extent to which they should respond to the needs of their residents and implement the requirements set out by their contractual partners, the provincial governments.

However, what these requirements completely fail to mention are the special needs of people who are fleeing or to properly address the notion of *living*. This latter omission is particularly startling given the fact that asylum processes in Austria currently last several months and, in extreme cases, several years.

Neither the basic elements of *living* nor the special living requirements of refugees with different cultural backgrounds are covered in the minimum standards. Although the need for protection at the moment of flight and immediately after arriving in the country of asylum naturally takes precedence, the need for an everyday routine, to rediscover the notion of *living* and to feel a sense of belonging in a space become paramount again, shortly after asylum seekers have moved into their accommodation.⁹

Among the minimum requirements which make *living* possible again are the possibility to make decisions about one's own life and living space - in particular if and for how long one remains in a par-

ticular place - as well as the opportunity to decide how one appropriates this living space and expresses oneself individually and culturally. As basic care rules determine that provincial governments allocate asylum seekers to particular establishments and define their radius of movement, asylum seekers in Austria cannot influence where they will be located during their asylum process. The duration of their stay is also not foreseeable due to the variable length of the process, leaving asylum seekers in a state of continuous stand-by and waiting. Within the accommodation itself, the proprietor decides which rooms can be used at what times and for what purposes. Asylum seekers often have to share a room with up to five people and the "individual design of the room must be agreed between the residents and the proprietor."¹⁰

Living also means having private space into which one can retreat. As rooms have several occupants, personal space in asylum seeker accommodation is mostly heavily limited. In many cases, residents have no opportunity to create their own private space and the last remaining retreat is - rather than to themselves - available to their private objects only, under the bed or inside the cupboard. Unannounced controls of rooms by operators and the fact that keys are often missing means that even the smallest unit allocated to refugees is always visible to outsiders.

As suitable communal spaces are often lacking, or simply because one prefers the maximum possible amount of individual living, many aspects of *living* have to take place in the resident's room. Sleeping, eating, studying, watching television mostly all happen in the same place - on one's own bed - which is both a source of potential conflict with other residents and reduces the already limited radius of movement of asylum seekers even further. In conversations it also became clear that,



A former tourism establishment in Styria that is currently hosting asylum seekers photographed during the *Fluchtraum Österreich* research trip, April 2016

the smaller this private space becomes, the more important it gets and the more steps the resident will take to differentiate it clearly from the space of fellow residents and others.

Far too often it is left to operators of accommodation for asylum seekers to determine whether the space provided allows not only for physical but also psychological refuge and offers an environment with which the refugees can identify and in which they can preserve their identity. For many operators it appears that the only way of dealing with this situation is increased regulation. The concept of unconditional hospitality in which, as the philosopher Jacques Derrida describes,¹¹ the guest is taken in without having to speak or act in the language of the host, is replaced by a strongly regulated hospitality in asylum seeker accommodation, which prescribes the use of space and freedom of movement and determines clear rules and hierarchies.

Rather than being designed for long-term stays, tourism establishments are mostly intended for guests on shorter visits. For asylum seeker guests this means having to create their new home in a place of permanent mobility. In this context, Raimund Pehm speaks of "built migration policy"¹² in which, firstly, the policy of accommodating asylum seek-

10 "Mindeststandards betreffend die Unterbringung in der Grundversorgung in Österreich", 2nd Conference of the Refugee Departments of the Provincial Governments 2014.
11 See Jacques Derrida, *Van der Gastfreundschaft* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2015).
12 Raimund Pehm, "Die Flüchtlingsspenden: Eine österreichische Besonderheit im Wandel", Lecture as part of the symposium "1st Gast gleich Gast? Asylsuchende in österreichischen Tourismusarchitekturen 7th April 2016, Architektur Haus Kärnten, Klagenfurt."
13 Leo Soltau, "Grenzen des Wohnens", in: Nina Kolowratnik, Johannes Pointl, eds., *Fluchtraum Österreich* (States of Refuge in Austria), 05/1 Okt 2015 (2015) 2.



Common area in a former tourism establishments in Styria that is currently hosting asylum seekers photographed during the *Fluchtraum Österreich* research trip, April 2016

ers in tourism establishments mirrors the short-term approach of the responsible politicians and, secondly, the sense of permanent mobility and insecurity which accompanies fleeing people simply continues after their arrival at their destination due to the lack of the long-term planning which would offer them the needed protection.

Unlike the tourism industry or the public health system, the asylum system in Austria lacks the long-term planning required to provide asylum seekers with the necessary infrastructure. The apparent temporality of flight, which is sustained by the recurrent institutional state of emergency of both European and Austrian asylum policy, makes any strategic approach impossible as a result of which the subject of asylum has yet to become part of the architectural debate at a significant scale. However, the movement of migrants is now a permanent geopolitical reality. Host countries must begin



A former tourism establishment in Styria that is currently hosting asylum seekers photographed during the *Fluchtraum Österreich* research trip, April 2016

to work on long-term spatial solutions instead of resorting to ad-hoc solutions such as tents, containers or the reuse of warehouses under the guise of temporality. Since the summer of 2015 architects in Austria and other European countries have launched a wealth of initiatives which have addressed forced migration. However, the role of architects, in both academia and practice, has so far been largely passive and limited to the mere execution of governmental initiatives. Architectural designs which locally improve the situation of a few asylum seekers are, naturally, to be valued for their positive intentions but they also show how architects, by simply adapting spatial manifestations of current asylum policies, become accomplices of a system which hides behind claims of a national emergency to ignore such fundamental needs as *living*, the right to self-determination and the respect for privacy and identity.

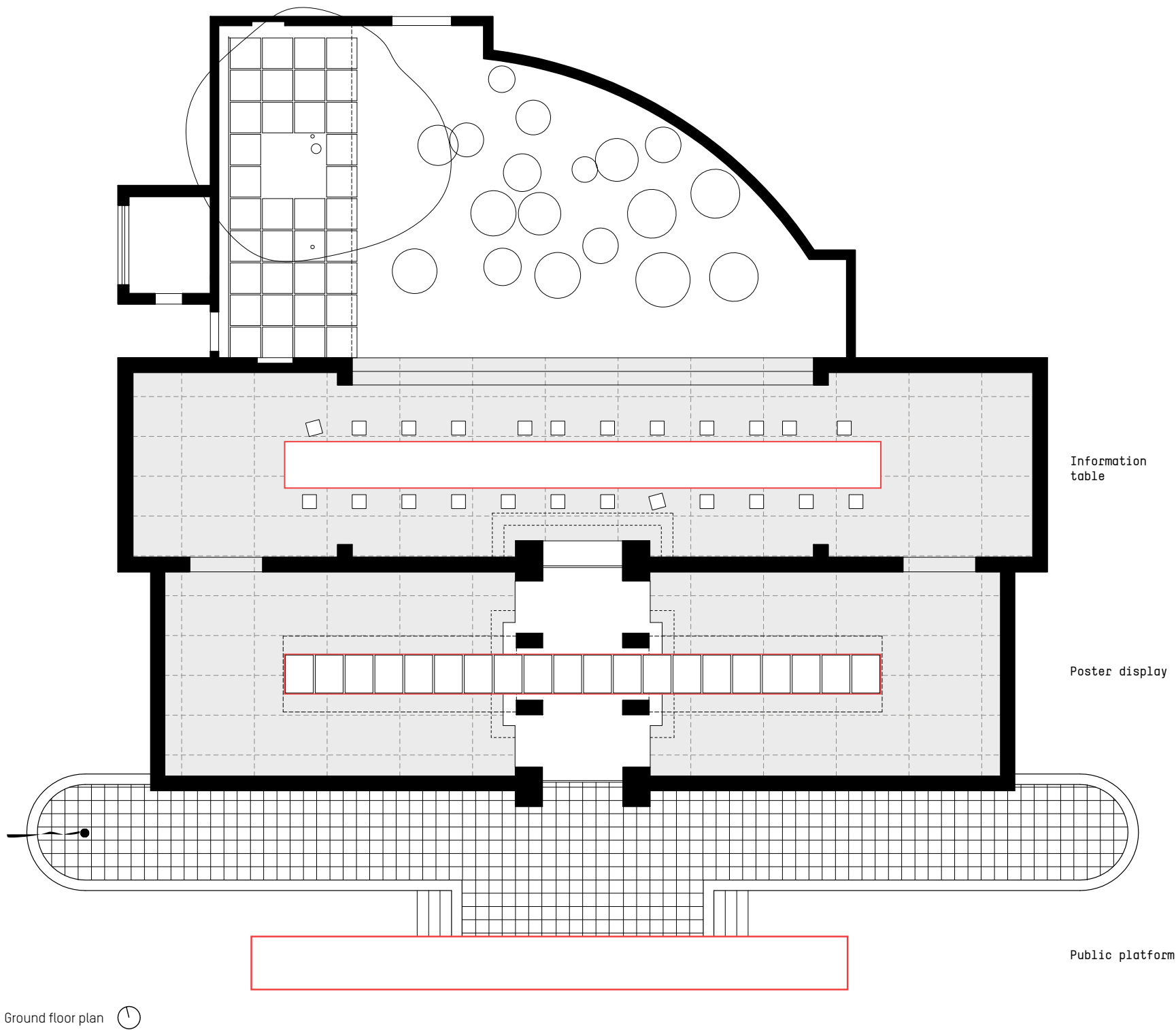
Yet the tools of architects can achieve much more: Thanks to their knowledge of spatial, social and economic relationships, architects are in a position to shape the asylum system in Austria on many levels and on multiple scales. The project *Fluchtraum Österreich*¹³ highlights the effects of spatial action and design - or the lack thereof - and argues for the proactive engagement of architecture in the asylum debate. The cartographies developed during a design course at the Vienna Uni-

14 The results of the design course 2015 have been published in the guest edition *Fluchtraum Österreich* of the magazine *05/1 Okt 2015* in cooperation with the *Asylkoordination Österreich* and the Department for Building Theory and Design at the Institute of Architecture and Design at the Vienna University of Technology. As a traveling exhibition, *Fluchtraum Österreich* was shown throughout Austria in the autumn and spring of 2015/2016 at, amongst others, the asylum seeker accommodation *Gasthof Bärenwirt* in Weitenfeld, the UNHCR *Langer Tag der Flucht* at Karlsplatz, in Vienna, the architecture forum *österreich* in Linz and the *Architektur Haus Kärnten* in Klagenfurt.
15 For further information on the ongoing research project please visit: www.fluchtraum.at

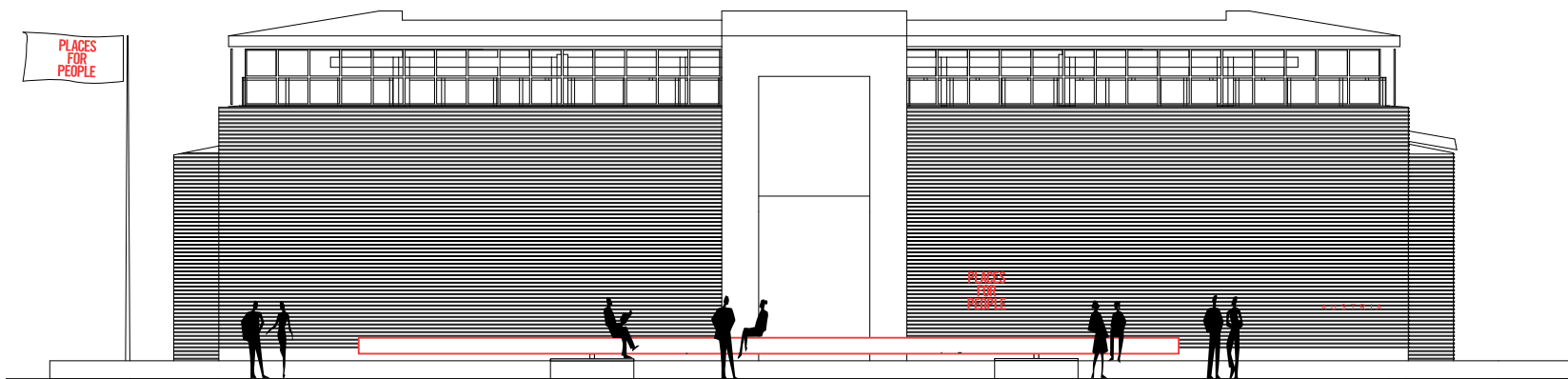
More than a metaphor

Architectural intervention and exhibition architecture by Delugan Meissl Associated Architects

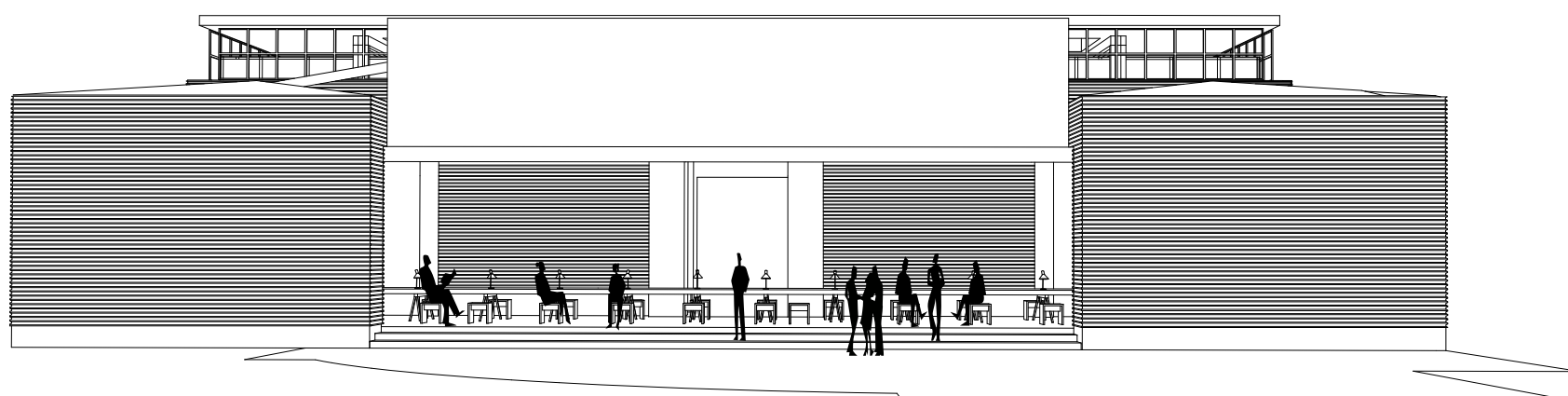
by Christian Muhr



Ground floor plan



Elevation entrance



Perspective – view from the garden

The history of the Austrian Pavilion is well-documented thanks to the research carried out in connection with the currently out-of-print publication “Österreich und die Biennale Venedig 1895–2013”¹. According to this book, the building is based not just upon the ideas of Josef Hoffmann, the founder of the Wiener Werkstätte and Österreichischer Werkbund and co-founder of the Wiener Secession but also upon the designs of the Vienna architect Robert Kramreiter.

The genesis, architecture and symbolism of the building opened on 12th May 1934 has been repeatedly addressed in the course of comprehensive restoration work and by individual contributions to art and architecture biennales such as, most recently, Heimo Zobernig’s work for the 2015 Art Biennale.

A central feature of the building which, with its classicist and modernistic elements acts as both a prime example of Viennese Modernism and a manifesto for the *Ständestaat* (Corporative State), is the symmetry demonstrated by both its longitudinal and transverse axes.

One special feature of the Austrian Contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale is the fact that the eponymous “Places for People” are real places in Vienna. In this sense, the pavilion in Venice is primarily a display space. At the same time, however, this exhibition space is also a further “Place for People” in the sense that it offers an opportunity to experience those same special spatial and social qualities which lie at the heart of the entire project.

The exhibition architecture reacts to this situation with the principal decision to retain, unchanged, the sculptural, artistic intervention of Heimo Zobernig, rather than, as is customary, to replace it with a new design. In the eyes of the architects, the artist created an excellent spatial and atmospheric context with his installation which should be used further.

Apart from this, the exhibition design of DMAA reacts to the architecture of the pavilion and the spatial sculpture with a three-part ensemble of table-like elements with a uniform length of 18 metres and a range of heights and details.

The starting point of this triad is a concrete platform which stretches along the front of the pavilion while, at the same time, being disengaged from the building’s monumental central axis. This permits the entrance area with its steps and terrace to open in the direction of the green space of the forecourt. The size and position of this element are an invitation to visitors to make use of it.

Parallel with this, but in strict accordance with the internal symmetry of the pavilion, a second, lower display in the main volume is used for the presentation of poster-size photographs which are piled at different heights on the flat structure.

The third element in the concluding side room consists of a long wooden table equipped with reading lights and stools which will invite visitors to read the publications that are lying around in the room or, simply, to rest awhile. In addition to this, three panels integrated into the table provide key information and illustrative material compiled by the three teams regarding their three interventions.

As the most directly functional element of the exhibition design this table will be divided into its three parts at the end of the Architecture Biennale and reused in the three locations in Vienna. Thus, quite in keeping with the spirit of the overall project, the exhibition architecture not only makes use of such metaphors as the table as symbols of communication and community, but also goes much further.

¹ “Austria and the Venice Biennale 1895–2013” (ed) Jasper Sharp Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg (D) 2013