



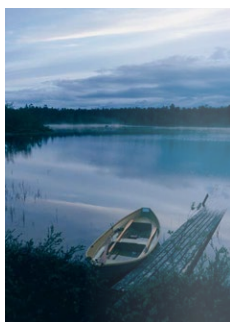
Foreword August Sarnitz

"Architecture needs to start from an idea" reads the statement made by Berger+Parkkinen in the publication *40 under 40*, a documentation published in 2002 about young architecture firms in Finland.

With this postulate Alfred Berger and Tiina Parkkinen position themselves in the tradition of artistic intellectuality and idealism, where the world of ideas surpasses the real world. The idea – from the Ancient Greek *idéa* for "pattern", "appearance", "essence", or "archetype" – has very different connotations in philosophical and artistic contexts. Latest since the modern era, René Descartes defined "idea" in the broadest sense as any type of content of consciousness. So it is in the interest of the architect to refine this definition of "idea" and to formulate the thoughts along which one intends to act – the idea as instruction.

Thus, the meaning of the plan or intention is also intrinsic to the notion of the "idea", and as such has a very architectural quality.

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Lake near Inari, Lapland 1989

Salzburg's mountain landscape, 2016

Beauty today can have no other measure except the depth to which a work resolves contradictions. A work must cut through the contradictions and overcome them, not by covering them up but by pursuing them.

Theodor Adorno, Functionalism Today

Recollections

Childhood memories of a Finnish birch forest, a room with a view of the snow-capped peaks surrounding Salzburg, a revealing study trip through North Africa, the geometries of an Islamic lattice work, Mozart's Piano Concerto No 21, the endless splendor of the narthex of a Romanesque church in southern France, a solitary barn blurred by the morning fog. Architecture can mold thoughts, experiences and feelings and transform them into spaces; it can capture past consciousness and give it a tangible, built form. Very often architects enjoy the idea of giving second opportunities to the things they have seen or experienced, second chances to the recollections unconsciously recorded in their memory. They often envisage an architecture which arises from a harvest of fragments and

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Embassy of the Nordic Countries, roof garden in the Fellehshaus, Berlin 1999

element is somehow reminiscent of the impenetrable forests painted by Max Ernst⁸ using the “grattage” technique. It also has clear echoes of the wrapped structures of Christo and Jeanne Claude⁹.

This corporeal character of the facade, which works as a unifying skin and as a backdrop for urban life, characterizes the first period of the architecture of Berger+Parkkinen. This feature can be found in other early office projects like the Central Library in Turku (1998), the project at the Île Seguin in Paris (2004), or at the competition project for the Musical Theater (MUMUT)¹⁰ in Graz (1998). All of these are somehow involved in the reinterpretation of long-lasting elements of the history of architecture such as the facade, the monumental entry or the portico.

In this Berliner project, the architects were able to configure a band that has optical, spatial and emotional qualities using primary and elemental materials. The choice of using this metallic band as a cohesive symbol in this particular geographical context, where barriers and iron curtains still had such strong historical connotations at that time was indeed quite audacious.

⁸ Max Ernst (1891–1976) was a German painter renowned for his works linked with the dada and surrealist movements. The “grattage” technique, which he invented, involves scraping the paint across the canvas so that the paint takes on the imprints of objects located beneath it.

⁹ Christo Vladimirov Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude (1935–2009) were a couple of artists widely known for their environmental works of art. One of their most celebrated works included the wrapping of the Reichstag in Berlin in 1995.

¹⁰ The massive folded wood facade of the MUMUT was designed in collaboration with the Austrian composer Christoph Cech. It consists of 12 flat parts interrupted by narrow glass slots, distributed according to Arnold Schönberg’s twelftone method. The principle of the twelftone composition is surely one of Austria’s most important contributions in the field of modern music.



Ice Hockey Stadium Vienna, exterior view autumn, 2011

I believe that truth has only one face – that of a violent contradiction.

Georges Bataille, Violent Silence

A simple truth miscalled simplicity

The first thing we perceive in approaching the Ice Hockey Stadium Vienna (2008–2011) is the diffuse glow produced by its facade and the subtle, striated texture of the profiled glass that wraps it. This blurred and translucent aspect provides the feeling of evanescence, an instant aura which reaffirms the impression of a material unity essence.

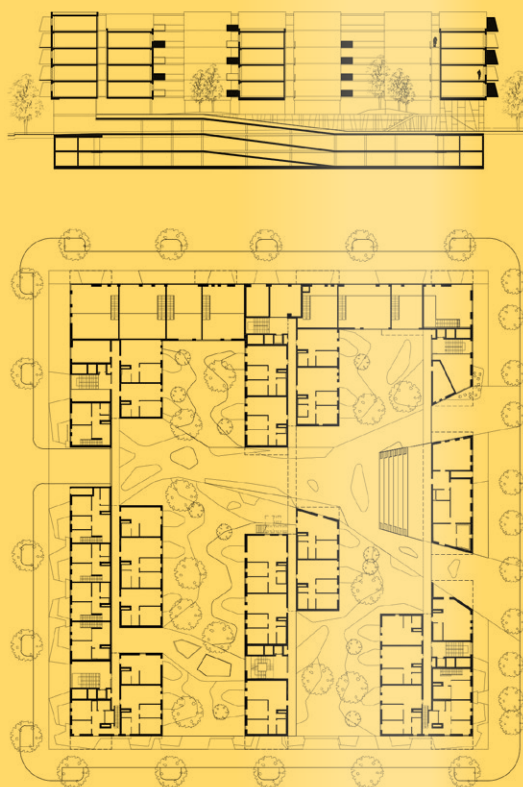
The Ice Hockey Stadium Vienna in its current configuration is the result of two separate interventions. Fifteen years after the stadium was completed, a second commission was announced, envisaging the construction of two additional ice rinks and the enlargement of the main building in order to reach a capacity of 7,000 spectators, to become the biggest stadium of its kind in the whole of Austria.

which includes the first three levels, houses the spa facilities and functions as an over-dimensioned plinth or crepidoma with a two-story stereobate and a single-story stilobate. A monumental stair crosses these levels and becomes the public route up across the edifice, with a sense of moving towards the light. Here the static geometry is energized by the diagonal. Through this diagonalization process the space explores the whole section, changing from a glowing opaque to the direct transparency of the main level. This level, in which the swimming pool is located, is a glazed space that seems to be an overhead prolongation of the Kurgarten, the park located nearby framing a unique panorama of the famous Salzburg roofscape. The ascetic character of the first levels contrasts radically with the extroverted aspect of this space. There is here a very dramatic visual reverberation effect between the gently undulating ceiling and the pool's water wavelets. When approaching this space the softening natural light and the playful effect of the ceiling's reflection gives the impression that the main purpose

Paracelsusbad, swimming level, Salzburg 2012-2019



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Wooden Housing Seestadt Aspern, Vienna 2015 (Section, Site plan)

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yard as the real social center, as we knew it from the interwar period, the golden age of Viennese social housing. We developed the project as a wood construction: The houses follow the logic of traditional wood houses with a standard cross-section because they work like a bar from which you can cut off pieces with different lengths, thereby allowing flexibility in the size of the individual apartments. The apartments are accessed from arcades. The wood houses rest upon a two-story plinth, which accommodates a ring of shops and studios on the street façades. In the courtyard we had the opportunity to shape a two-story landscape with a social heart – the canyon – for communication and recreational areas for the residents. Higher up on the plinth, where there is more privacy, are the terraces and garden areas of the ground floor apartments.

HL At this point I would like to follow with a question related to both Berlin and Aspern. Both projects involve different forms of collaboration. Where do you see the chances or the difficulties in collaborations with other architectural offices, other architects?

AB In the case of the Embassies of the Nordic Countries there was a point in the design process where we realized that the five embassy buildings were so clearly defined that it would be possible to give our national clients not only a free hand in the design of their interiors but also autonomy in the design of their individual buildings. This possibility was naturally well received by the countries. This led to the integration of five architects from the respective nations following a complex selection procedure based on a guideline we developed.

This process was an incredible learning experience for us. Sometimes we were also a bit worried, but we followed our belief that when a city is well-planned, it isn't a catastrophe when one or the other building bends the rules here or there. At any rate, we had very clear rules, and all of the participants of these national compe-

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