

Eurovision

Guest edited by a leading national organization in one of the European countries. Within a range of eight pre-selected themes each country strives to give deeper insight into the current state of architectural affairs:

- Urban
- Green
- Connecting
- Social
- Offbeat
- Global
- Future
- The dark side of...

During the New Arch symposium in Aachen a few years back, a German journalist stated that there is nothing exciting in German architecture today. 'The overall quality is high, but where are the bewildering concepts?' Indeed, pragmatic and technical are words that come to mind when describing projects by German architects. Perfectionism is another. But what about conceptual approach? When this is lacking, according to Michael Braun and

Carl Zillig of Bundesstiftung Baukultur, it is caused by the deep-rooted German fear to make mistakes. And as a consequence, too many rules, which in turn hinders innovation. In certain sectors, however, innovation does flourish: infrastructure, education, housing. Despite the annoying bureaucracy and regulations, in these can be found sufficient space for experimentation, leading to new collaborations, new techniques and a new role for architects. ←



↑ The foundation for *Baukultur* is located in Potsdam, in the state of Brandenburg. Springer Architects, together with Weidinger Landscape Architects, won the competition to remodel and extend the century-old brick building (completion 2011). They did so by inverting a garden as an extension of the house and adding a new floor on top, both using the same material as found – altogether an exemplary process and project of *Baukultur* and architecture.



↑ With a staff of five people, plus freelancers and interns, the Federal Foundation for *Baukultur* strives to initiate and to be a platform for debate on the quality of the built environment in Germany.



↑ *Baukultur* is about balancing contradictory opinions. Through the young online platform *bkult.de*, polemic questions are discussed among prominent or engaging opponents. Polls, comments and arguments build the structure of a biweekly culture of debate initiated by the foundation in 2011 with a concept by Ilka and Andreas Ruby and Something Fantastic.

A liveable future with Baukultur

MICHAEL BRAUM, CEO / CARL ZILLICH, EDITOR

We are pleased to guest edit this edition of Eurovision, as a young institution and concept that has a story to tell, not just about a culture of building.

Following an idea for a foundation that communicates with a wider audience about architecture, engineering, urban design, landscape architecture, city planning, interior design, conservation, and so on, and originating from concerned interest groups and others, the federal government finally embraced the idea and stepped in as its founder.

In early 2008, a small staff took up the challenge to orchestrate a debate, accompanied by the so-called 'Convent of *Baukultur*' – about 350 stakeholders and award-winning professionals, together with a chief executive and administrative board. While the foundation is dependent on federal funding, it works independently from day-to-day politics. In our first five years, we have initiated debates and collaborated with nationwide and local initiatives that go beyond the celebration of architecture and our ability to shape the built environment.

Beginning with reconstruction and the future of post-war Modernism, and followed by *Baukultur* as public infrastructure, we chose subjects where many open questions

exist between those who plan or design and the decision-makers, politicians and administrations involved. Additional platforms, in cooperation with stakeholders, were concerned with the future of housing or workspaces while addressing the role of the real-estate and construction industries.

For all these fields of interest, different formats of communication and debate were implemented. Through workshops and conferences, or public walks and events, we reach various audiences, from the decision-makers to the general public. By now there are numerous local and regional transdisciplinary associations concerned with *Baukultur* throughout the country – a necessary base to build on.

Baukultur has spread across Germany and beyond over the last decade in an attempt to address the ever-growing fragmentation of professions and responsibilities concerned with the built environment. We believe that it holds the opportunity to go beyond interdisciplinary projects and transdisciplinary challenges. We need a common ground, a culture of building rooted in society as a whole, so we can deliver what we do best: designing a liveable future for all. ←

Info www.bundesstiftung-baukultur.de

↓ *Baukultur* is not (only) for professionals. Therefore the foundation advertises its on-site discussions with images to which everybody can relate. The pigeon was chosen for the 2010 baukuTOUR in Gelsenkirchen, a walk through and discussion about the downtown pedestrian zone. (Design: phantom)



↑ *Baukultur* cannot be negotiated at roundtables, but instead must face reality. Therefore, the foundation has integrated the 'Strollology' of Lucius Burckhardt, questioning the qualities of our built environment on-site with the help of dialogues between so-called experts and the interested public, like here in Karlsruhe with Benedikt Loderer (2011).



↑ *Baukultur* challenges the perception of our everyday as the foundation initiates artistic interventions in public spaces. They relate to the issues in a particular city, carrying the questions addressed beyond the inner circles and into the media. Shown is the nomadic construction site by KARO* architects in Leipzig (2011).



→ Since the start of the federal foundation in 2008, Michael Braum, as president, and Carl Zillich, as head of research, are devoted to delivering *Baukultur* throughout Germany. Michael Braum (left) has practiced as city planner and urbanist since 1980. In 1998, he became a tenured professor at Leibniz University in Hanover. He also chairs the jury of the prestigious German Urban Design Award (*Städtebaupreis*) and is the author of numerous publications. Carl Zillich (right) is an architect and theoretician who has taught, lectured and published on an international level. Realized and award-winning architecture projects are also part of his portfolio.



The fear to make mistakes

Housing is returning as a central theme in Germany, with a focus on housing inside the cities. But a booming real estate market followed by increasing rents in popular areas makes housing a political topic as well. How can innovative methods be found when regulations and safety precautions bar paths toward new solutions? According to [Michael Braum](#) and [Carl Zillich](#), 'Baukultur and its debate – and shaking off the (typically German) fear to make mistakes – that's the only way to find new strategies for affordable housing and to make necessary connections between city planning, mobility, technical sensibility and architecture.'

GERMANY — TEXT: INDIRA VAN 'T KLOOSTER PHOTOGRAPHY: TILL BUDDÉ

Indira van 't Klooster: How would you describe *Baukultur*, the typically German concept meant to relate architecture to society and politics?

Michael Braum: *Baukultur* is building and culture, expertise and common sense, acting and reflecting. We strongly believe that *Baukultur* is necessary to push back the lawyers and bureaucratic view on every step we take. With this comes the holistic longing for beauty, especially the possibilities that lie in contemporary solutions.

Carl Zillich: Our goal is to make the culture of planning and building a topic of public interest and debate, to foster a demand for quality by the decision-makers and the general public. We push for excellence of processes and products in all fields that relate to the built environment, also beyond architecture.

IvtK: So now you've turned to affordable housing.

MB: Yes, but it is only one field of action which we focus on. Since the government pulled out of the housing market in the 1990s, the issue needs more attention. Where and how can we produce dwellings for today's needs, and what do we need to do for families to come back into the city? How can we finance that? What should they look like?

CZ: The problem starts before we build in the interrelations of politics and architecture. With this I mean not just the lack of public investment in housing, but ever-growing regulations. Codes for energy-efficiency make housing an expensive, high-tech endeavour; perfectionist safety regulations add to that. Germany's reputation for sustainable architecture might be excellent, but is it affordable, and are the resources directed into the true quality of living spaces? Fewer rules would make housing not only cheaper but also more open to innovation, including sustainability.

IvtK: Why aren't there fewer rules?

MB: Because we have lost an important part of our *Baukultur*: to aim for the best, each in his field, but balancing the different intentions at hand. Politics through regulations and subsidies works with quantitative measures. For qualitative measures you need cooperation, trust, a common ground. We have lost that in the last decades. So it is not about style, but quality. A difficult discourse to establish, even among different generations of architects. The older generation works with the regulations, still aiming for everlasting buildings. And we have the younger generation that is experimenting with cheaper materials and shorter life spans.

IvtK: Isn't German architecture famous for its pragmatic and technical quality?

MB: Yes, but we could use more conceptual approaches. German schools for architecture have a tradition of 'applied' rather than experimental solutions. We need to go beyond applied construction, applied styles, applied technology, applied sociology, applied economics, etc.

CZ: We are too afraid to make mistakes. No one wants to fail. That is why everybody is perfecting their own turf and missing the dialogue with the surrounding expertise. We need to put interdisciplinary work back on the agenda and work on trans-disciplinary concepts.

IvtK: Why this fear for mistakes today?

CZ: We are perfectionists. We want everything to be at least a hundred per cent! But in what? An experimental attitude is absent in our *Baukultur*. And if we do, our experiments are isolated, not part of our everyday life! Young architects are not welcomed in Germany, like elsewhere, but we need them. We must dare to test things out.

IvtK: So how could the direction in architecture be steered towards experiment?

CZ: The technical skills do not have to be a contradiction to the experimental. We do have those successful collaborations between engineering and architecture. But the system has to become more flexible and honest. Today certain regulations and economies prevent us from using clay instead of concrete in buildings up to three or more floors, as Manfred Grohmann points out (see page 45). We need to liberate architects to do what they are trained to do – integrating, not dissecting! With that attitude one can fail, but we need those experiences.

MB: We need to broaden the scale of architectural approaches!

IvtK: If this happens, where does innovation come from?

MB: It comes from in between the disciplines. Infrastructure, schools, workspaces, housing – all need to be considered in relation to each other. We don't have many institutions that work like this. We need think tanks and practitioners who deviate from the mainstream.

CZ: Those agents for change are needed on all levels. In schools of engineering and architecture, in politics, administrations, chambers of architecture and commerce – not to forget the clients! That's why we call it *Baukultur*. There are no top-down revolutions. ←





↑ KINDERGARTEN LICHTENBERGWEG, LEIPZIG
Susanne Hofmann Architects developed a new child-care centre through an intense participatory planning process, which has provided differentiated indoor and outdoor spatial experiences and learning environments since 2012.

Learning by doing

For years, Susanne Hofmann has been combining architectural teaching and practice in a unique way. Her project, *Baupiloten*, became famous throughout Germany for its conversions and installations. She began with design-and-build participatory projects with students of the TU Berlin, and has since become an in-demand expert for educational buildings. For [Susanne Hofmann Architects](#), involving future users is an important part of the design approach.

Carl Zillich: What was the starting point of the idea for the *Baupiloten*? Was it as a result of shortcomings in school construction or in architectural education?

Susanne Hofmann: People were lamenting how little architecture graduates were prepared for professional practice – they were either unsuited to it, or they were not trained for the offices in which they would later pursue careers. That's where the idea of making students the main actors in real projects came from – 'building pilots' (*Baupiloten*) who are involved in learning by doing. The students did everything, from defining the task with the user to developing their own ideas, which became individual designs in collaboration with the users. The conceptual-academic process ran parallel to the practical process of communicating with the user and working on the real design that would be built.

CZ: What was the role of the user in this process?

SH: It all started when the Erika Mann Primary School in Berlin was to be given a facelift in collaboration with pupils from the third grade and upwards. 'A path through the garden of the future' became an area of focus, from which much ambient material could be drawn. The students were able to take up on precisely that and to develop it into concrete design proposals in exchange with the pupils.

CZ: Isn't the bottom line that, despite all of this, the children end up drawing the pictures while the students design the spaces?

SH: Children think from the very beginning in three-dimensional worlds, which they are already able to describe very well using words. The young 'client representatives' therefore speak about how they would like to be able to feel their environment and the students translate the essence of that into spaces. Models make collaboration easy and perspective drawings can give the pupils an idea of this new world, which they are able to critically examine. The students become the mediators between desire and reality. The pupils are happy with the mere fact that they are often experiencing self-efficacy for the first time.

CZ: When speaking of space as a third teacher, many warn against designing it too efficaciously. How do you deal with such a supposition?

SH: I think both are needed – restraint and design intent. I am told again and again that our architecture stimulates the children's imaginations. Critics claim that the children will no longer be able to develop their own fantasies. We experience the opposite because the design is only the beginning, which can be reflected upon, used and shaped. ←

Info www.baupiloten.com



↑ ERIKA MANN PRIMARY SCHOOL, BERLIN
In the socially disadvantaged Berlin area of Wedding, the *Baupiloten* developed ideas and collages with the pupils for a retrofit of the building that was built during the era of the German Empire. As a result, the school, the self-esteem of the pupils and the architectural education at the TU Berlin changed significantly in two phases between 2002 and 2008.

Openness in design

In 2003, Patrick Ostrop set up [bof architects](#) in Hamburg with Bert Bücking and Ole Flemming. As a young practice, they attracted much attention by winning diverse competitions. A defining feature of the practice is that its approach to architecture derives from the task and context at hand, meaning they do not appear to have a signature style.

Carl Zillich: What are the differences if you compare German school buildings with those in other European countries?

Patrick Ostrop: I can only really directly compare with Scandinavia – Denmark in particular – and they are somewhat ahead of us. A lot of convincing has to be done before teachers will open up to new spatial concepts. Since we became familiar with almost all types of schooling through two projects, I can say that primary schools appear to be further advanced than secondary. In competition tenders, one is often still faced with mere lists of classrooms and access areas. Interest in change still appears to be absent on many levels.

CZ: How do clients, educators, architects and even pupils and parents come together? Are competitions at all adequate when it comes to such complex correlations?

PQ: Competition tenders that do not involve the schools themselves are tragic, especially when the school administration

simply ignores the future users. The knowledge of the teachers in a specific place is decisive, but not all architects are open enough to let users contribute to the process. Perhaps openness when it comes to design also needs to be learned and isn't necessarily compatible with all approaches to design.

CZ: What do you mean by 'openness when it comes to design'?

PQ: Participation is just as important before a competition as after. The structure of the design must outlive the competition because it is important that the user can recognize himself in it. From that point of view it is important that the user is adequately involved in the jury. In Wolfsburg, it was apparently a high school student who convinced the consultant adjudicator of the value of our architecture.

CZ: In all of this, what becomes of the characteristic style of the architect?

PQ: We do not bring a characteristic bof school concept to the table – on the contrary, openness takes us to the ideal school each time. We do, however, salvage certain design decisions for ourselves. The users tell us in what relation the rooms should be placed to one another and we decide what those rooms will look like. ←

Info <http://bof-architekten.de>



↑ TOR-ZUR-WELT EDUCATIONAL CENTRE, HAMBURG
Within the context of the Hamburg International Building Exhibition 2013, bof architects won a competition with a project that transformed a collection of multi-generational educational institutes into a coherent educational landscape. They used wood as the main facade material, which is untypical for site and function, and created unique classrooms by playfully applying polygonal forms to the facade and interiors.



↑ FALLERSLEBEN SCHOOL CENTRE, WOLFSBURG
Despite the fact that an on-site participatory workshop had already taken place and a design had been created for the extension of an existing mixed secondary school complex, the client chose to hold an invited international competition, which bof architects won. In contrast to an obvious extension, they suggested a new structure to consolidate the square 1960s and '70s building volumes, thus providing completely novel spatial possibilities and combinations.

Dancing in chains

Mike Schlaich has been running [schlaich bergemann und partner](#) since 2002, with offices in Stuttgart, Berlin, New York, São Paulo and Shanghai. The world is familiar with this new generation of structural engineers thanks to football stadiums, often realized in collaboration with high-profile architectural practices. The spectrum of the practice's involvement, from long-span and lightweight to everyday building projects, is particularly evident in the area of bridge construction.

Carl Zillich: Your father, Jörg Schlaich, and his partner, Rudolf Bergemann, passed the practice to a younger generation. Where do you consider the differences to be, and where is the continuity within this change of generation?

Mike Schlaich: Just like Bergemann and my father, the four new partners are committed to the classical principles of engineering. There was no upheaval; the transition took place rather discretely. [My father's] thinking in principles and concepts – such as the 'spoke wheel' for stadiums, the 'colander' for shells, the 'curving beam' for bridges, and the 'tennis racket' for facades – is still relevant to this day. On top of that is homage to history; knowing one's own history and building upon that is the second constant.

CZ: Does that mean that there are no new inventions these days and that there are only evolutions? What about materials and technologies?

MS: I do believe strongly in this 'evolutionary character' and on moving forwards in small steps – civil engineers cannot afford to do it any other way because we bear a lot of responsibility, and are therefore per definition conservative – if we move too quickly, the risk increases and that can cost human lives. That

applies to the wealth of experience on supporting structures; new materials come on top of that. Today such materials as carbon fibre composites and heat-insulating concretes are appearing. Our practice is committed to lightweight construction, which minimizes the amount of materials used and is therefore very sustainable.

CZ: How does the collaboration between architect and engineer work? Do you operate as equals, or who takes the lead, and when?

MS: We are convinced that the art of building cannot be separated, and we do not share the opinion that the architect is responsible for beauty and the engineer only for the calculations. When it comes to erecting buildings, the architect is the team leader, and when it comes to bridges, the engineer is. If you start to work as a team at an early stage and if things go smoothly, it often happens that it is impossible to tell which part belongs to whom in the end. And that is how it should be.

CZ: Is not the work in material design rather restricted by rules and regulations, particularly in Germany?

MS: Volkwin Marg once described the architectural profession as 'dancing in chains', which is a lovely description of the challenge. As engineers, we must be competent in the technical-scientific fields as well as in regard to the creative components. The restrictions cut both ways – good designs evolve particularly when the conditions are difficult, but it is frustrating when even small innovations are made difficult by a lack of flexibility in the regulations. Luckily we manage to find courageous clients and test engineers who are willing to stretch their leeway in decision-making to the last. ←

Info www.sbp.de



↑ **CHRISTIAN GARDEN, BERLIN**
A pergola consisting only of letters and quotes from the Bible was developed in collaboration with relais landscape architects to create a contemplative light and shadow area. Using a specially developed font and aluminium alloy to make four-metre-high walls that are merely three centimetres thick, a space that is only enclosed by letters became a reality.



← **'SLINKY SPRINGS TO FAME' BRIDGE, OBERHAUSEN**
According to the concept by artist Tobias Rehberger, a coloured ribbon connects the two sides of a park, which are separated by a navigation canal. In order to make the lightness of the curving spiral shape constructible, a stress-ribbon bridge made of very tough steel was integrated into the concept. The springy, artificial surface of the pathway and the lighting and colour concepts underscore the liveliness of the structure.



↑ **EXENTERHAUS, BOCHUM**
In many German cities, underground bunkers that date back to World War II are often destined to a sad existence because neither their removal nor re-use is economically viable. The architect Gerhard Spangenberg developed an office building in collaboration with the engineers that transformed the existing form and integrated its heavy plinth into a dynamic larger form.

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↑ **EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, FRANKFURT AM MAIN**
The structural engineers were part of the design team of this prestigious building by Coop Himmelb(l)au from the first phase of a 2003 worldwide open competition to rebuild the headquarters of the ECB in the vicinity of the former large market hall by Martin Elsässer.

Innovation equals collaboration

Manfred Grohmann set up an engineering practice in 1983, in collaboration with Klaus Bollinger, which has since become a global player with branches in several cities. Apart from high-profile projects by Coop Himmelb(l)au, NOX, OMA, SANAA, Zaha Hadid and others in Germany, the priority of [Bollinger + Grohmann Ingenieure](#) is continuing to collaborate closely with architects to build everyday buildings while also testing a variety of innovative ideas.

Carl Zillich: Your practice represents a particularly strong intersection between architecture and engineering. How did that come about?

Manfred Grohmann: Developing architecture in collaboration with architects was not part of our engineering training. However, we had other people to look at, such as Stefan Polónyi. He, along with Frei Otto and Jörg Schlaich, represented an integrative approach to architecture in which a specific topic, such as structural efficiency, was thought through starting from the architecture. We have the great advantage of working with architects who work in very different ways. It is always fascinating for us to become absorbed in new ideas of architecture, to understand them and to think about how the architecture can be enhanced and improved by the structure.

CZ: Where does innovation come from in Germany?

MG: New developments in architecture generally come from universities. Students of architecture in particular always know 'which way the wind is blowing' and chase potentials. This was certainly the case in the rapid rise of computer-aided design. For example, in 1999 we worked on the first almost perfectly built blob – the BMW Bubble with Bernhard Franken – with a beta version of Rhino, which came from the university environment.

CZ: Are such things as parametric design really relevant for everyday business, particularly for the architects you teach?

MG: It is not only relevant to complex geometries, it is also a matter for everyday life. Klaus Bollinger developed the digital tool Karamba in collaboration with the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, where he teaches, and with our Vienna office. It allows structures to be calculated in real time on-screen.

CZ: Does that involve the infamous delegating of decisions to the software?

MG: Not at all! Karamba does not replace the work of the engineer – it gives him and the architect qualitative feedback on

how the structure works. Many of the offices we collaborate with work in parallel on both computer and model. Design decisions are, however, almost always made using a model.

CZ: Of what relevance is structural efficiency, or more precisely, the use of resources?

MG: Sustainability involves more than saving resources. A high-profile, complicated structure which becomes a catalyst of urban development is not wasteful. A ceiling with a clear span of fourteen metres can be very efficient for the life cycle of a building because it is more flexible for varying uses. Investors often build with the intention of making a quick profit. The amount invested is kept low and after a short period the structure has to be demolished and something new is built. It is hardly possible to develop corporate identity or added value to the benefit of building culture within such a context. The building industry is also becoming less of an innovation partner because attitudes are changing in that area, too.

CZ: However, Germany continues to be a leading force in the sustainability debate. Or are we on the wrong path? What is your opinion about embodied energy?

MG: Obviously there still remains a lot to be achieved, although it does seem to be moving in the wrong direction when energy-saving regulations for new buildings are becoming so strict that detached homes somewhere in the countryside have to be built as plus-energy houses. Neglect of the topic of embodied energy, i.e. the primary energy that is inherent in building materials, means that in residential construction, for example, concrete continues to be the most prolific material, although clay and timber would make much more sense from an energy point of view. ←

Info www.bollinger-grohmann.de



↑ **CELTIC MUSEUM, GLAUBURG**
The building by kadawittfeldarchitektur extends into the open landscape as a counterpart to the hill of a Celtic burial place. Close collaboration between the architects and engineers has resulted in a simple structure despite an eleven-metre cantilever.

Rebuilding Germany

Post-war Modernism in Germany remains a significant cultural marker, an essential component and tangible legacy of a time during which the divided nation struggled to recover from a devastating conflict. Christian Welzbacher explores this phenomenon and the ways in which it continues to be approached in architectural practice today.

TEXT: CHRISTIAN WELZBACHER

The cities of Germany are still largely shaped by post-1945 architecture and urban design. Those years of reconstruction and economic miracle represent an era of its own, known in architectural history as post-war Modernism. From a stylistic point of view, however, it has never been as homogenous as the name suggests. Firstly, because buildings from that period differ according to their location and the extent of damage the area suffered. It depended on whether it was a matter of reinstating historical buildings or streets, of providing living space, of reusing existing structures, or of removing rubble and completely re-planning whole city districts. Secondly, every community approached the problem in its own way, resulting in fundamental differences in reconstruction. Conservative Düsseldorf was considered a repository for blindly obedient planners who had begun their careers under General Building Inspector Albert Speer. Münster erected historicising fronts that mimicked the destroyed gable houses at Prinzipalmarkt. In Frankfurt am Main, there was a continuity of classical Modernism: former colleagues of Ernst May dominated there, striving to apply the CIAM ideals and the Athens Charter. Despite such differences, reconstruction took place in

Berlin as throughout almost the whole of Germany. Pragmatism quickly replaced utopian ideals planned on the *tabula rasa* of the former city – ruins were secured and rebuilt, the infrastructure below the city was tapped into, improvisations were built on individual plots rather than collective, coherent ensembles. Apart from large suburban settlements built in the 1960s, post-war Modernism left behind a multilayered concerto of design types whose voice cannot be overlooked, or ignored, to this day due to the sheer mass of buildings.

The fact that post-war Modernism has become a thing of the past since the 1980s is not only reflected in a departure from such models as the 'loosened up and structured city', functional separation on an urban design level, or modernist-functionalistic aesthetics. Another clear sign was that the initial 1950s-era buildings were recognized as witnesses of the past and listed as protected buildings. The city of Cologne – and its former head of Monument Preservation, Hiltrud Kier – played a leading role. It received recognition throughout Europe, although initially only in specialist circles.

This first period of post-war Modernism has since become widely recognized such that one can now speak of a broad

acceptance of 1950s architecture in Germany. That tendency is gradually spreading to architecture of the 1960s and 1970s. Local lobby groups form to prevent demolition of characteristic post-war Modernist buildings. In Hanover, the parliament building of the Federal State of Lower Saxony – inaugurated in 1962 and built according to a stringently Cubist design by Dieter Oesterlen – was defended in this manner. After tough struggles, threatened legal proceedings and protests, the members of parliament, already having voted to erect a new building, decided in July 2012 to renovate the existing building. In Bonn, the Beethovenhalle concert hall by Siegfried Wolske, built in 1957 and listed since 1990, went through a similar process; it was to be replaced by a new building – a 'gift' from several companies. A group of local citizens prevented the building's demolition; heated discussions continue as to what measures should be taken to renovate and extend the building.

The majority of post-war Modernist architecture in Germany currently inhabits this spectrum between demolition and protection. Renovation, no matter how sensitive, has proven to be just as multifaceted as post-war Modernism itself. The issue of 'continuing' post-war Modernism is currently one of the biggest areas of debate in Germany; it dominates theory and practice, architectural journals, faculties of architecture and exhibition venues.

Within this context, one of the most radical projects has become renowned: the retrofit of former GDR industrial metropolis Leinfelde. Characterized by factories and concrete, prefabricated structures and by unstoppable emigration, this shrinking city opted for a urban revamp. Five-storey prefabricated buildings were not simply demolished, they were transformed into single-family terraced houses or maisonette apartments; they were renovated, optimized to become more energy efficient, and their facades were given new colours. Since 2000, Frankfurt-based architect Stefan Forster has

earned a reputation with several of these projects, and also set new standards in how to approach so-called 'concrete panel structures'. Apartment and settlement structures erected between 1950 and 1980 are generally part of a category of buildings that require the utmost sensitivity, innovation, creativity and, above all, budgeting of retrofit architects; for example, the 'Treehouses' in Hamburg.

In Dresden, it is now recognized that a late-Modernist urban ensemble such as Prager Strasse should never have been altered to its present form. The relationships between the recessed block building and the low shopping pavilion have become almost unrecognizable as a result of densification processes. The politically motivated demolition of iconic post-war Modernist buildings such as the Palast der Republik (Heinz Graffunder and collective), inaugurated in 1977, would be unthinkable today without public debate and protest. Nevertheless, there are also some recent examples of defining 1960s and 1970s buildings disappearing. These include the Technical Rathaus, which was located beside the Gothic Dome in Frankfurt am Main and has now been demolished to make way for partial reconstruction of the once famous half-timbered town destroyed during the war.

Perhaps this example, in particular, quite clearly demonstrates the fate of post-war Modernism, although on a lesser scale, in other places: buildings from the reconstruction period mirror the war which was carried by Germany into the world and which later hit back with violent force. Post-war Modernism is a symbol of a drastic societal turning point that Germany is still struggling with to this day. Each and every renovation, each demolition, is therefore about more than the success or failure of a piece of architecture. It represents the processing of mentality, culture, society, democracy and responsibility, which is also transmitted internationally. It is precisely for this reason that post-war Modernism is, and will remain, such a central epoch for Germany. ←



↑ **TREEHOUSES, HAMBURG**
Energetic renovation, aesthetic transformation and an extension of 64 apartments (approximately 9000 m²) is how Hamburg practice blauraum approached the renovation of five (originally two-storey) late-1950s apartment slabs in the green district of Hamburg-Alsterdorf, resulting in the 'Treehouses' concept. An independent statement and an adaptation to contemporary living requirements. The former one- to three-room apartments were between 40 and 70 m² in size; the new apartments in the 'tree canopy' are between 90 and 140 m² and have between two and four rooms. Completed early 2011.



↑ **URBAN VILLAS LEINFELDE-WORBIS**
Stefan Forster architects from Frankfurt am Main accompanied the shrinking process of the former GDR industrial city of Leinfelde with several projects. The transformation of a prefabricated slab building into urban villas (2001–2004) remains a model project and continues to set standards to this day. Forster succeeded in breaking up the serially-planned layouts and instead accommodated several different types of maisonette apartments. The insulated facades have been given strong colours and residents' gardens are located in front of the ground floors.



↑ **BURG GIEBICHENSTEIN, HALLE**
The prestigious Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design consists of a variety of buildings dating from medieval times to the 20th century. This complex as a whole and its individual buildings have been the subject of a comprehensive renovation and adaptation process in recent years. The Berlin practice Aderhalten Architects (see Interview in A10 #24) transformed a modest 1950s-era building into a sparkling gem at a cost of six million euros, clad in gold-anodized aluminium elements and restructured inside (approximately 2500 m²) with lecture theatres, offices and studios.



↑ **STAATSTHEATER DARMSTADT**
Fair-faced concrete as far as the eye can see. As a milestone of German Brutalism and one of the largest theatre buildings of its time, Staatstheater Darmstadt was renovated in adherence with monument protection regulations in 2007, and the open spaces around it were revitalized as part of the construction of an underground car park in 2010 (design: Lederer, Ragnsdottir, Oei). The new entrance building and the pavilions on the forecourt correspond to one another through their sturdy materiality, taking up the aesthetics of the historical building in contemporary formal language.



↑ **P 88, BERLIN**
In 2012, eins:eins architects succeeded in comprehensively renovating a 1960s office building at 88 Potsdamer Strasse, Berlin. Under other circumstances it would have undoubtedly been demolished. The proportions and structure of this old building remained intact, while the rest was altered: a new soundproof glass envelope, large swinging windows, perforated metal panels. These measures have instilled the formerly banal building with its own character.



↑ **RE-DENSIFICATION OF NEUE MITTE, ULM**
Although the urban framework plan to scale down a traffic axis at the centre of the Swabian city of Ulm was completed in 1998 (design: Guthert, Lutz and Schwenk), the project only attracted attention throughout Germany when a couple of characteristic new buildings by Braunfels architects were completed in 2008. Two blocks – at the beginning and end of the former axis – reduce the scale of the street and transform the traffic-dominated city into a people-oriented one.

Global meets local

The architecture of the younger generation of architects in Germany is as diverse as the country itself. From north and south, and east to west, we have selected realized projects which show German *Baukultur* is not about style, but about context, and at the same time, closely linked to the global discourse about the possibilities of architecture.



1 GNADLER.MEYN.WOITASSEK
Christoph Meyn, Stralsund
www.gmw-architekten.de

HOUSE, STRALSUND
Opposite Stralsund's Jacobi Church, this inserted private home demonstrates the outstanding quality that contemporary architecture can achieve, also within an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The two available plots have been almost entirely filled, whereby the split building reflects its neighbouring structures in distribution and height. This project represents a surprising, economically and ecologically appropriate – as well as an architecturally outstanding – building, particularly within the context of this shrinking East German city.



4 KRAUSSCHÖNBERG
Tobias Kraus and Timm Schönberg, Hamburg/Constance
www.kraus-schoenberg.com

'H27D' RESIDENTIAL AND OFFICE BUILDING, CONSTANCE
This building's perforated facade derives from its function and is oriented towards the neighbouring existing buildings. Its deeply moulded exterior walls, which could be manufactured monolithically due to the use of light concrete, give the building its outstanding character. The increased stringency of energy-saving regulations would make this structure, which is sustainable on many levels, impossible to build today. Thus it is an even more significant architectural response to the challenges of the present day.



2 REALITIES:UNITED
Tim and Jan Edler, Berlin
www.realities-united.de

'TRANSREFLEX' FACADE INSTALLATION, MAGDEBURG
Altogether, seventeen reflective shutters move in different directions and angles on the oldest building in Magdeburg, a former monastery, now the Kloster Unsere Lieben Frauen Museum of Art. The meeting of historical masonry, the post-war Modernist architecture opposite and the old trees nearby creates a surprising effect. The complexity of an animated facade, implemented elsewhere by the architects as illuminated facades, finds an appropriate manifestation at this historic site.



3 MODULORBEAT
Marc Günnewig and Jan Kampshoff, Münster
www.modulorbeat.de

GOLDEN WORKSHOP, MÜNSTER
This star-shaped building was located on the central Domplatz as a temporary space for artesian education within the context of a special exhibition on medieval treasury art. The goldsmith workshop with display windows was created as a design-and-build project at the local architecture school, selected by a jury and built in collaboration with the students.



5 LUDLOFF & LUDLOFF
Laura Fogorasi-Ludloff and Jens Ludloff, Berlin
www.ludloffludloff.de

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, DOGERN
The architects have created a mystical building of persuasive but unobtrusive sculptural qualities, both inside and out, that pits itself against the architectural banality of a German industrial estate. A translucent skin intensifies the spatial experience on both sides of the facade. Light and shadow, foreground and background, take the eye on an exploration of unobtrusive structural details.



6 PALAIS MAI
Ina-Maria Schmidbauer, Patrick von Ridder and Peter Scheller, Munich
www.palaismai.de

TRUCK DEALERSHIP, OBERSCHLEISSHEIM
A distinctive building was created to replace a container ensemble that had prevailed over many years at a rather unusual workplace – a truck dealership. As if dropped off there, the clad timber-steel structure oversees the trucks and provides a view of the gigantic car park. With a limited budget, the pragmatics of operating procedures were translated as an interpretation of the context and shaped into contextual architecture of a different kind.



8 POOL 2
Tore Pape, Kassel
www.pool2-architekten.de

MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTRE, MELSUNGEN
This new inter-municipal service centre building combines public facilities and services, which used to be distributed throughout the town, in one central location – right at the entrance to the quiet timber-frame town of Melsungen. The ridge of this new building is oriented perpendicular to the 1960s 'Forsthaus', thus continuing the alternately arranged roofscape of the town's neighbouring peripheral buildings. A precise building envelope made of fibre cement slabs underscores the diagrammatic interpretation of traditional building typology.



10 GRUPPE OMP
Oliver Ohlenbusch, Sven Martens and Oliver Platz, Rastede/Bremen
www.gruppeomp.de

MOTORWAY STATION RESTROOMS, CREMLINGEN
While the norm in other countries, restrooms alongside German roads are usually characterized by the absence of architecture. This pilot project responds to the many demands placed upon it through a pragmatic approach to the design-adverse conditions. The volumes made of prefabricated concrete components have been clad in steel grating, symbolically overstated and artistically framed (by Andreas Uebele) around the entrance area. The contrast between technical structure and a pleasant opening creates a provocative effect of its very own quality.



7 MOTORPLAN
Johann Bierkandt, Jean Heemskerck, Urs Löffelhardt and Bernhard Wondra, Mannheim
www.motorplan.de

EXTENSION TO THE POP ACADEMY, MANNHEIM
It rarely happens that a new building is extended by the same architects only a few years later. This was the plan from the very beginning for this site along a canal, to allow the stacking of heterogeneously designed volumes, one on top of another. The new section differs from the original as a result of its extensive, monochrome facade. In so doing, the building demonstrates a certain degree of abrasiveness, which is appropriate to this area containing many industrial buildings.



9 AMUNT
Björn Martenson, Sonja Nagel and Jan Theissen, Aachen/Stuttgart
www.amunt.info

'JUSTK' SINGLE-FAMILY HOME, TÜBINGEN
A small site was available to accommodate the space required for a family of two adults and four children. The compact volume rises with irregular angles in tower-like fashion in order to adhere to the required distance from the neighbours. This spatial volume is disguised by avoiding a clear differentiation between walls and roof. The prefabricated, massive timber structure has been clad in a correspondingly uniform weather-protective skin.



11 BLAURAUUM
Volker Halbach, Rüdiger Ebel and Carsten Venus, Hamburg
www.blauraum.eu

PORT LOGISTICS STATION, HAMBURG
This building positions itself as a functional structure with a simple shape within an endless network of tracks. Its ground floor social spaces and first floor office spaces for the handling of freight trains in the port of Hamburg are enclosed by a tiled facade. The building is accentuated by rooftop south-facing solar modules, which extend the volume below in an asymmetrical manner. The result is a simple yet sculptural form that gives the place its own identity and provides a solution for integrating renewable energy in architecture.