

Press  
release

ORTE  
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15. Internationale  
Architekturausstellung  
La Biennale di Venezia  
2016  
Österreich Pavillon

# 15TH INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2016 AUSTRIAN PAVILION PLACES FOR PEOPLE

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[www.placesforpeople.at](http://www.placesforpeople.at)

Press  
release

Places  
for People/  
Orte für  
Menschen

15th International Architecture Exhibition  
La Biennale di Venezia 2016  
Austrian Pavilion

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Curator

Elke Delugan-Meissl

Concept & Projectmanagement

Elke Delugan-Meissl  
DMAA  
[www.dmaa.at](http://www.dmaa.at)

Sabine Dreher & Christian Muhr  
Liquid Frontiers  
[www.liquidfrontiers.com](http://www.liquidfrontiers.com)

Invited Architectural and  
Design Offices

Caramel Architekten  
[www.caramel.at](http://www.caramel.at)

Günter Katherl, Martin Haller,  
& Ulrich Aspetsberger

EOOS  
[www.eoos.com](http://www.eoos.com)

Gernot Bohmann, Harald  
Gründl, Martin Bergmann  
& Lotte Kristoferitsch

the next ENTERprise - architects  
[www.thenextenterprise.at](http://www.thenextenterprise.at)

Marie-Therese Harnoncourt  
& Ernst J. Fuchs

Production & Finance

Katharina Boesch, section a  
[www.sectiona.at](http://www.sectiona.at)

Visual Communication

grafisches Büro  
[www.g-b.at](http://www.g-b.at)

Press

art:phalanx, Kunst- &  
Kommunikationsagentur  
[www.artphalanx.at](http://www.artphalanx.at)

on behalf of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, Arts & Culture Section

BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH

Introduction

Austria's Contribution to  
the Architecture Biennale,  
Venice 2016

Due to the refugee crisis, this contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale is not limited to the pavilion in Venice but also includes three ongoing projects in Vienna. More concretely, three teams have been commissioned to work together with NGOs not only to design the conversion of empty buildings into temporary accommodation for people whose asylum claims are being processed but also to accompany these buildings in the longer term.

The objectives of these interventions are to subject the social responsibility of architecture to a reality check, to provide humane places to live for those affected and to present the results in Venice to a broader public.



Credit: Archive HZ Georg Petermichl  
Visualisation: grafisches Büro

Statement from  
Federal Minister  
Josef Ostermayer

I am particularly delighted that Elke Delugan-Meissl - a highly respected architect and recipient of the Great Austrian State Prize in 2015 – is the curator of this year’s Austrian contribution to the Architecture Biennale. With the broad global experience which she – together with Roman Delugan and their partners - has gathered as an architect, teacher and member of countless competition juries, she has a clear view of how Austria should present itself at the internationally important Architecture Biennale in Venice. Her buildings have a prominent place on the international architectural scene. The Porsche Museum in Stuttgart, the Dutch Film Institute in Amsterdam and the Festspielhaus in Erl in Tyrol as well as many residential and other buildings are highly regarded both in Austria and abroad.

As a nation with a strong tradition, Austria’s participation in the Biennale di Venezia is very important. The diversity of the contributions to the exhibition offers an appropriate context for presenting our artistic and architectural work to an international public.

With her contribution „Places for People“, Curator Delugan-Meissl is responding to the general theme of Alejandro Aravena – “Reporting from the Front” - while at the same time addressing a subject that we will all have to address in the next few years in a variety of ways: the integration into our society of refugees displaced by war. The approach of Elke Delugan-Meissl and her team deals with the notion that art and architecture can and should deliver answers. A range of participants examines the decisive question of how we can create buildings in such a way that they offer protection, can be efficiently designed and built and still become a home for these people.

Yes, architecture is about more than just building buildings. This is clearly and emphatically demonstrated by the contributions to the Architecture Biennale. Architecture is ideally the realisation of an idea, a mental image, that reflects our society, its challenges and its future and offers suitable spatial and aesthetic answers. An openness towards the transition of space and the support of the process of familiarisation with new perspectives are important features of the interface between architecture, science, art and everyday life.

The fact that Austria is making this valuable contribution to the international architectural debate for an eleventh time reinforces its excellent international reputation in this area. The Federal Ministry in the Federal Chancellery is once again providing 400,000 euros for the design and execution of the Austrian exhibition.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the participants in this year’s Architecture Biennale and look forward to high visitor numbers and broad acceptance in Austria and internationally.

Dr. Josef Ostermayer  
Federal Minister in the Federal  
Chancellery

Places for People

Austria's Contribution  
to the Architecture  
Biennale in Venice 2016

[www.placesforpeople.at](http://www.placesforpeople.at)

Starting point and objective

Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary measures. The current wave of refugees, which will probably continue for some time, represents an enormous challenge not only for Europe's public institutions but also for civil society. Offering protection, creating humane places to live and establishing the basis for good social coexistence have always been amongst the central roles of architecture. In the face of this situation, Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale in Venice seeks to make productive use of this special architectural expertise by highlighting concrete measures for improving the living conditions of those seeking refuge in Austria.

The "Places for People" initiative has set itself the task of combining the know-how of selected Austrian architects, the public forum and prestige of the Biennale, the related production budget, the expertise of NGOs and the support of sponsors and then to use the widest possible range of architectural tools in order to adapt broadly suitable buildings in such a way that they offer people civilised accommodation and ongoing support. However, while "Places for People" is about concrete people and concrete places, it makes no sense to develop solutions which fail to address the broader context. On the contrary: the specific task addresses general questions of vital importance. These include nothing less than how we want to live together in the future, how our cities, homes and public spaces should be designed and used and, not least, how architecture can continue to fulfil its civil role and remain relevant to society as a whole.

Participants and ways of working

In the context of "Places for People" three Austrian architectural and design teams are addressing three different buildings which are already accommodating – or which are earmarked for the accommodation of – refugees, in close cooperation with the NGOs responsible for managing the properties. The participants were selected on the basis of their experience of similar tasks and in the expectation that a range of approaches would lead to a broad spectrum of ideas and proposed solutions.

Due to the huge importance of the social, cultural, psychological, economic and legal context, the teams are working in an interdisciplinary manner and are in constant contact with involved experts. This approach should make it possible not only to improve the situation in the short term but also to develop models which focus more on the opportunities than on the limitations offered by these new realities.

The projects are being documented and will be presented in the Austrian Pavilion in Venice – and will also continue to be accompanied by the participants after the closure of the Biennale.

Aside from these interventions, the public forum of the Biennale should also be used as a means of highlighting the many other initiatives in Austria which are both exemplary and full of promise for the future. To this end, the "Places for People" website also includes an area dedicated to the presentation of models of best practice.

Places for People

Austria's Contribution to  
the Architecture Bien-  
nale in Venice 2016

[www.placesforpeople.at](http://www.placesforpeople.at)

Reference and inspiration

The title of Austria's contribution is a reference to the Austrian-American architect, designer, author and exhibition organiser Bernard Rudofsky (1905-1988), whose nomadic life and visionary work are also a source of inspiration.\* Rudofsky was an architect who dedicated his life to travelling while also experiencing a period of involuntary exile. His writings, buildings and exhibitions focussed on such elementary aspects of life as eating, sleeping, sitting, lying and washing, together with the question of how architecture can meet these needs in a dignified way. Here, provisional, improvised and temporary solutions (etc.) also play an important role. Rudofsky's conviction that primarily, a new way of living is needed was partly based on his analysis of the popular architecture and everyday practices in the Arab world.

In establishing "Places for People" the curator Elke Delugan-Meissl has established an initiative that she sees as currently necessary and whose objectives are perfectly aligned with the general theme of the 2016 Architecture Biennale and its title "REPORTING FROM THE FRONT".

As a result of their spatial and atmospheric qualities, the installation created by Heimo Zobernig for the 2015 Art Biennale and the landscape design by Auböck+Kárász for the 2014 Architecture Biennale will be retained for the presentation of "Places for People".

\*Bernard Rudofsky: Strassen für Menschen. Residenz, Salzburg; Wien -1995 (Original: Streets for People: A Primer for Americans (1969), translated by Berta Rudofsky und Brigitte Herberstein)

[La Biennale di Venezia](http://www.labiennale.org)

15th International  
Architecture  
Exhibition in Venice

[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)  
[www.labiennale.at](http://www.labiennale.at)

La Biennale di Venezia

15th International  
Architecture Exhibition

“REPORTING FROM THE FRONT”

Curated by Alejandro Aravena

28th May to 27th November 2016  
(Previews 26th and 27th May 2016)

Press conference and opening of the  
Austrian Pavilion, 26th May 2016

Since its establishment in 1980 the Architecture Biennale in Venice has developed into the most significant exhibition for contemporary architecture worldwide. In 2014 its duration was extended for the first time to six months - the length of the Art Biennale - and record numbers were reported: 228,000 visitors, 3,357 accredited journalists and 65 participating countries, each presenting their own national contribution.

Entitled “REPORTING FROM THE FRONT” the 2016 Architecture Biennale, which is under the overall direction of the Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena, seeks to address architecture’s scope for action. In doing so, the focus is on projects, ideas and buildings which address the needs of today and tomorrow as a means of achieving concrete improvements for their inhabitants and for society as a whole, regardless of all obstacles. The title of the Biennale demands a journey to the limit, to the origins and showplaces of current processes of demographic, social and cultural change, as a means of demonstrating the potential and influence of architecture and the built environment on the people living in them and for improving their quality of life.

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„There are several battles that need to be won and several frontiers that need to be expanded in order to improve the quality of the built environment and consequently people’s quality of life.“

Alejandro Aravena

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Architectural & Design  
Offices

Caramel Architekten

[www.caramel.at](http://www.caramel.at)

Full-length versions  
of the interviews from  
which these quotations  
are taken can be found  
on the website:  
[www.placesforpeople.at](http://www.placesforpeople.at)

Breaking new ground with every project is one of the objectives of the office founded in 2001 by Günter Katherl, Martin Haller and Ulrich Aspetsberger. In the event, the trio and their currently twelve employees have spent the intervening years realising an impressive number of buildings - from self-built projects to university buildings – and have never ceased to surprise with their unorthodox approaches and clever concepts, powerful forms and unusual materials. A lack of respect for convention coupled with an absolute respect for the needs of users, a distinct eagerness to experiment and deep personal and political commitment are further characteristics of an active and sometimes actionist architectural understanding that the team also convincingly shares in their publications, lectures and teaching.

The latest example of Caramel's cleverness when dealing with limitations is the Cj-5 House in Vienna which was completed in 2014 and in which the ingenious spatial programme and subtle detailing enabled them to obtain five times as much usable space as the surrounding residential buildings despite the minimal area of the site. The team readily uses convincing counter examples as a means of criticising existing relationships. Caramel's energy and clear social agenda together with the consistently innovative character of their work led to the invitation to participate in "Places for People" and the 2016 Architecture Biennale.

social dimension and the relationship with the community are central to our work. Naturally this also applies to the issue of refugees. If we only worked for the 'happy few', we would hardly have the expertise that we are now able to employ. For us, the opposite question applies: if we had nothing relevant to offer now, would we ever have anything relevant to offer?"

Martin Haller, Caramel Architekten

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"For us, there is no time limit. The Biennale may have a time limit but for us the project will then continue. In contrast with classical residential building which is regarded as finished as soon as it is handed over, our heartfelt desire with this project is to remain engaged in a form of fieldwork over the longer term. We envisage a project lasting two or three years during which we will be able to support and accompany this building and these people in some way. Only then will the learning process be complete and the time be right for a revival of the Biennale which will enable us to show what we can really do."

"We have the expertise to offer many solutions, social and architectural, but we have a real problem with the fact that we are almost always faced with buildings which should be filled to the rafters with refugees. This reflects a political approach which we refuse to accept because we find it wrong in principle, regardless of the scale at which it is applied."

Günter Katherl, Caramel Architekten

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"We see ourselves not as architects who - ignoring the needs of the broader population - primarily create beautiful architecture for very few people in a self-contained luxury segment. Even when we are designing single family houses or offices, the

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EOOS

[www.eoos.at](http://www.eoos.at)

The design studio was established in Vienna in 1995 by the three partners Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann and Harald Gründl. With around ten employees and a prestigious, international clientele EOOS is currently one of the most productive and prominent design teams in Europe. Central not only to EOOS' design language but also to its self-image is a research and design approach which the designers themselves describe as "poetic analysis" and which they apply to the entire spectrum of their activities – from the creation of products, furniture and interiors to social design.

As the name suggests, this is an approach which combines strict analysis with poetic imagination. The results are reduced, highly functional and technologically innovative products which are not only anchored in a long cultural tradition but which also embody this same tradition in their form and purpose.

The latest result of EOOS' intense examination of both the cultural and social dimensions of design and new and sustainable technologies is a mobile toilet which, as it requires connection to neither a water supply nor a drainage network, is especially suitable for use in developing countries.

The "Institute of Design Research Vienna" which was initiated by Harald Gründl in 2008 is also particularly devoted to the social and ecological aspects of the discipline.

Projects such as the "Blue Division Toilet", together with the reflexive design approach which is embodied in all their work, formed the basis of the decision to invite the design team EOOS to participate in the 2016 Architecture Biennale and to develop a concrete intervention for "Places for People".

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"The way in which we will address this challenge is based on our skills in the design field - one of which we explicitly see as 'social design'. Firstly, we have to clearly explain to our counterparts – whether these are the municipal authorities or an NGO - what we can actually contribute. That appears to be our first task. As we have been told, 'hanging up pictures is something that we can do alone'."

"In any case, we will very carefully examine every immaterial phenomenon – everything that is described as 'service design'. Because such situations and relationships that are not principally related to specific objects can generate enormous disorientation and frustration. The 'immaterial' dimension – the 'software' – is essential, and this term naturally also hints at the new technologies which also have a central role. As an object, the camp bed has existed for hundreds of years and, today we have access to new technology. The project should be seen in the creative space between these two phenomena."

Harald Gründl, EOOS

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Architectural & Design Offices

the next ENTERprise  
architects

[www.thenextenterprise.at](http://www.thenextenterprise.at)

An explicitly experimental and exploratory approach and the close relationship between theory and practice, architecture and art are trademarks of the Vienna architectural office which has been run by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt and Ernst J. Fuchs since 2000. The body and the city are key areas for research and sources of inspiration for the continuous development of an approach that understands architecture to be, above all, the adventure of the conquering of space. In keeping with this, the buildings, exhibition design and installations produced by the, currently, six members of the team reject any predictable and clear functional logic. With their complex spatial dramaturgies, dramatic correspondence between interior and exterior, volume and void and a wealth of surprising details, the works of the next ENTERprise are also invariably a self-confident expression of architecture as an autonomous cultural force.

In the “Wolkenturm” (Cloud Tower), a sculpturally-shaped outdoor pavilion in the grounds of Schloss Grafenegg in Lower Austria, the next ENTERprise was able to apply its performative understanding of architecture to a concert and event space and transform this into a catalyst for synaesthetic experiences between space and music, art and nature. The numerous experiments and ongoing research by the team into subjects of particular relevance to the project “Places for People” including temporary, flexible and multifunctional architecture and city use were central reasons for inviting the next ENTERprise – architects to participate.

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“When we, as architects, address this situation, our main focus must be on public space and infrastructure, because both factors have enormous meaning for our ability to live together. In addition to this, however, there is the general issue of communication, because integration is ultimately based on comprehension. The dissemination of hate-filled messages naturally has a huge influence upon how public space is used. That is why the subject ‘Places for People’ is not only about place and the urban realm but also about language.”

“A basic concern is to signal to people that they are worth something. Just as I want our children to be taught in high-quality spaces, I feel that it is important that people who come to us can also enjoy appropriately aesthetic and atmospheric experiences.”

Marie-Therese Harnoncourt,  
the next ENTERprise

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Portrait

Elke Delugan-Meissl

As a founder and partner of Delugan Meissl Associated Architects Elke Delugan-Meissl is one of few women playing a leading role in the, until now, strongly male-dominated Austrian architectural scene. Together with her partners, the University of Innsbruck-trained architect runs an office whose, currently, 25 employees produce a strikingly large volume of work. Although Elke Delugan-Meissl is directly involved in all of DMAA's projects, she continuously devotes some of her capacity to teaching and jury roles in Austria and abroad as a means of making an active contribution to the architectural debate and promoting the commitment to quality which runs consistently through her work.

The oeuvre of DMAA has received many awards and regularly features in international exhibitions. Elke Delugan-Meissl's highest honour to date was the Grand Austrian State Prize which she and Roman Delugan received in 2015 for their "complex and, sometimes, radical work in the field of architecture." The prize-winner felt equally honoured to be appointed the Austrian Curator at the Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2016, a task to which she is dedicating herself intensely with her typical level of commitment.

Portrait

Delugan Meissl  
Associated  
Architects

[www.dmaa.at](http://www.dmaa.at)

Established by Elke Meissl and Roman Delugan in Vienna in 1993, the office practices architecture as the radicalisation of that relational logic in which it recognises the DNA of the discipline itself. In the understanding of the team, which became DMAA Delugan Meissl Associated Architects in 2004 upon the appointment of Dietmar Feistel and Martin Josst as partners, architecture itself is also structured like a language in which meaning is derived from the relationship between its individual elements.

In contrast with other influential architectural approaches of recent decades, DMAA is not satisfied with the mere application of this principle in the form of hermetic linguistic games but rather uses its works to establish the maximum possible number of relationships between architecture and its environment, with a focus on context and the ability to physiologically experience a building. The architectural approach of DMAA demands that conventional spatial boundaries are rejected - both inside and outside its buildings - in favour of sequential experiences with smooth transitions. Despite this emphasis on the physical presence and physiological effect of architecture the works of DMAA constantly create situations in which the immaterial becomes perceptible beyond traditional gestures of pathos. This extensive, original oeuvre, which stretches from such iconic cultural buildings as the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart, the EYE film museum in Amsterdam and the Winterfestspielhaus Erl to numerous innovative residential buildings, led to the award to DMAA of the Grand Austrian State Prize in 2015.

The concept for Austria's contribution to the 2016 Architecture Biennale was developed by the curator Elke Delugan-Meissl in cooperation with Liquid Frontiers and DMAA.

Portrait

Liquid Frontiers

[www.liquidfrontiers.com](http://www.liquidfrontiers.com)

Liquid Frontiers is a think tank, design studio and production office with a strong cultural background and a base in Vienna's Museumsquartier. As well as the conception of exhibitions and publications in the areas of art, design and architecture, concrete cooperative projects with architects and designers are a key focus of the work of the company which was formed in 2000 by Sabine Dreher and Christian Muhr. Constantly interested in new creative line-ups and areas of activity, the two-person team has, over the years, assembled a network of excellent partners who can be mobilized as required by each project.

The ongoing collaboration with Delugan Meissl Associated Architects began in 2002, when Liquid Frontiers organised the first exhibition of the work of the architectural office in the Kunsthaus Meran under the title "State of Flux". Another important joint project was the 2009 book about the Porsche Museum which was published by Springer Verlag and conceived and produced by Liquid Frontiers. Amongst the current results of the cooperation is the "Pflegetwohnheim Donaustadt". Liquid Frontiers has developed a concept for a programme of artistic interventions in this DMAA-designed building based on the special needs of the residents.

Shortly after her appointment as a curator at the 2016 Architecture Biennale, Elke Delugan-Meissl invited Liquid Frontiers to initiate a shared working process and then to act as a co-curator of Austria's contribution.

Quotes

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“With her concept for the Biennale Elke Delugan-Meissl is addressing a subject that we will all have to intensively address in the next few years: the integration into our society of refugees displaced by war. In ‘Places for People’, Delugan-Meissl is putting her faith in the mission and power of architecture in this area.”

Josef Ostermayer, Federal  
Minister for Arts and Culture,  
Constitution and Media

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“Due to the ongoing crisis I feel that it is legitimate to use the intrinsically antiquated format of a biennale to contribute to the solution of a current problem. One key reason for this is the public nature and prestige of this event which allows us to motivate various players to get fully involved and to open up new approaches. In this way it should be possible, despite the limited time available, to present potential solutions which are a true alternative to the status quo. Ideally, ‘Places for People’ will result in concrete pilot projects which set new standards that make it impossible, after the Biennale has ended, to return to business as usual.”

Christian Muhr, Liquid Frontiers

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“It is important for me to focus on the social role of architecture and to show this at work outside the protected environment of an Architecture Biennale.”

Elke Delugan-Meissl, Curator  
of Austria’s Contribution to the  
Architecture Biennale 2016

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Press Contact and  
Accreditation

### Contact

Susanne Haider, Sarah Hellwagner  
art:phalanx, Kunst- & Kommunikationsagentur

E: [architekturbiennale@artphalanx.at](mailto:architekturbiennale@artphalanx.at)

T: +43 (0)1 524 9803 – 11 or -17

F: +43 (0)1 524 9803 – 04

[www.placesforpeople.at](http://www.placesforpeople.at)

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### Press text and photos

[presse.artphalanx.at/en/architektur-biennale-2016](http://presse.artphalanx.at/en/architektur-biennale-2016)

Portraits and concept text: Christian Muhr, Liquid Frontiers

### Accreditation in Venice

Press Office La Biennale di Venezia  
Ca' Giustinian, San Marco 1364/A  
30124 Venezia

E: [infoarchitettura@labiennale.org](mailto:infoarchitettura@labiennale.org)

T: +39 (0) 415 2188 46

F: +39 (0) 415 2188 12

[www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/press](http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/press)

Press photos

All press images are free for use in connection with coverage of “Places for People” / Architecture Biennale 2016 and are available for download in print quality:  
[presse.artphalanx.at/en/architektur-biennale-2016](http://presse.artphalanx.at/en/architektur-biennale-2016)



Team „Places for People“  
left to right: Martin Bergmann, Gernot Bohmann, Harald Gründl, Lotte Kristoferitsch, Christian Muhr, Sabine Dreher, Elke Delugan-Meissl, Günter Katherl, Ulrich Aspetsberger, Martin Haller, Marie-Therese Hannoncourt & Ernst J. Fuchs  
Credit: Christian Redtenbacher



Elke Delugan-Meissl  
Credit: DMAA



Liquid Frontiers –  
Sabine Dreher & Christian Muhr  
Credit: Raimo Rudi Rumpler



Curators „Places for People“ –  
left to right: Christian Muhr, Elke Delugan-Meissl, Sabine Dreher  
Credit: Christian Redtenbacher



Caramel Architekten – left  
to right: Günter Katherl,  
Martin Haller, Ulrich Aspetsberger  
Credit: Andreea Cebuc



E00S – left to right:  
Martin Bergmann, Harald  
Gründl, Gernot Bohmann  
Credit: Udo Titz



the next ENTERprise –  
architects – Ernst J. Fuchs,  
Marie-Therese Hannoncourt  
Credit: Christian Redtenbacher



Austrian Pavilion (Montage)  
Credit: Archive HZ Georg Petermichl  
Visualisation: grafisches Büro