3 design products in the context of 3 built projects

eindhoven university of technology

www.ppag.at
PPAG into NL

PPAG, the Viennese architecture firm run by Anna Popelka and Georg Poduschka, presents three new pieces of furniture in the context of three recently completed architecture projects during Dutch Design Week 2015. The presentation will take place in Vertigo, the Eindhoven University of Technology's Built Environment Department building. In recent months PPAG has surprised many with their spectacular rise to the top of the international ranking of architecture firms (according to Baunetz in Germany): in the spring of 2015 they rose from 84 to 9 (and have maintained their top 10 position).

What has impressed the world of architecture critics and lovers in particular is PPAG's alterations of the Steirereck restaurant in Vienna. They were able to mobilize the budget for an experiment in architecture with windows that slide upwards (above the roof) thus creating in good weather what looks like an installation while inside a world of comfort is given form in which each table and a hemispheric rear wall form its own world in order to enjoy the cuisine (made by a restaurant which is ranked number 15 in the world). A form of luxury expression has been found here which is playful and adventurous. An eye catcher in the exhibition is the furniture which has been specially designed for handbags, placed next to the table, and when stacked can also serve as a room divider.

What links PPAG to the Dutch tradition of architecture is a school complex in which the legacy of 'structuralism' has mutated and been updated. The school complex in Vienna surprises with an entirely new concept of learning, complete with a new type of table. Both the school complex and the table have been developed by PPAG in collaboration with Ali Seghatoleslami and Lilli Pischl.

PPAG is chiefly known for their street furniture, Enzi, which was developed for Vienna's museum quarter. Since then this piece of furniture has been placed in public spaces of many cities including, for example, on a square in front of a theater in Rotterdam. PPAG has since developed a new furniture model, the 'Twins': like Enzi, this furniture invites one to sit upon it in an informal way. This variant is more suited for places which do not per se need to appeal to the allure of metropolitan squares: they also work very well near schools and in residential areas. The school complex in Vienna and the residential area D8 in Aspern are examples of context in which the Twins are placed.

Photographs and ground plans of the three built projects are shown along with the furniture in the exhibition and this catalogue.

Jos Bosman

Casa Vertigo VRT 7.17
Eindhoven University of Technology
Postbus 513 5600 MB Eindhoven
ISBN 978-90-386-3960-4
Handbag bench

Restaurant Steirereck always had a special bench for handbags. The newly designed variant will also be used in the pavilion at the back of the large hall as a room-divider which when placed among tables – in some configurations – can provide a rear wall.
Steirereck

The Steirereck has been considered one of the world’s best restaurants for decades. Although reestablished at this location in 2004, a change in generations has led to a greater level of sophistication in the kitchen such that ambiance and culinary art were no longer in harmony. The culture of hospitality developed over the years was woven into the restaurant’s details, but had to become completely formulated anew. A competition was held in 2012 and PPAG Architects’ design won first prize. The Reitbauer family, who run the Steirereck as a family business, commissioned this competition. Mrs. Reitbauer runs the services and Mr. Reitbauer is the chef de cuisine. PPAG’s goal was the complete identification of the owners with the design. In order to achieve this the team fused virtually irreconcilable demands with the inimitability and elegance, timelessness and innovation of the new building.

When one reserves a table at Steirereck, that table is yours and yours alone for the entire evening. It does not matter how long you stay, the table will not be used by any other guests. In order to place the table most ideally, a subtle, finger-shaped, branched pavilion has been developed in place of the former terrace which now abuts a lively city park. Each table lies along the outer line of the finger in its own protrusion and is connected to the outside and to what is happening at the other tables via multiple lines of sight. Large, electric sash windows tied to the tarnished, weakly reflective aluminum façade create closeness. Façade and window create a barrier between the goings-on within and outside, or prevent noise from outside from penetrating the interior. Weather permitting, guests enjoy an unobstructed view and drink in air freshly cleaned by the trees.
Manta Table

Rather than miniature tables, tables of regular height are utilized. Height differences between children are equalized by chairs whose footrests are adjustable. Each child gets their own chair, but not their own place at the table. The teacher who moves from table to table no longer has to get down on his knees but sits — everyone at eye-level — in a normal chair at the table.

Material: while searching for a resilient material we came across a powder-coated medium-density fiberboard. That is actually a contradiction as powder-coating only functions with an electrical charge and this is not normally possible with wood-based materials but metal cuttings in the fiberboard makes this possible. A simple steel construction was employed for the table frame ending in four slender feet two of which are outfitted with wheels.

In the garden area, where the same tables are used, a phenol resin table suited for outdoor use is employed and the table frame is galvanized. As a space-saving measure up to five tables can be stacked.
Education Campus Sonnwendviertel

Yellow spots, green snakes, black pies, and bright blue UFOs show the way through the education campus of Sonnwendviertel ("Solstice Quarter"). For adults the orientation system made by Design Studios Bleed is too complex, but for school-aged children it is child’s play. Eleven hundred children from four to fourteen years old visit the education campus. This student body is one-third each kindergarteners, grade schoolers, and junior high school students. Normally these schools are separate, but here they are united under a single roof. Gym, library, film and theater with a screen that can be lowered, multipurpose auditorium, band rehearsal room, etc. are all used communally. This is economically efficient and the barriers between the educational levels are dissolved. Children of different ages learn from one another. The campus is open for all children and young people the entire day.

The Vienna campus is oriented toward the most recent educational science. This means that instructive lessons play a subordinate role and the emphasis is on free learning and projects. In addition to the teachers, architecture is considered a "third educator" for the students; feeling comfortable plays a central role. All fields of study, spaces and details are orientated toward the pedagogical vision of independent, self-activating, and exciting learning experience in which the individual development of each child is promoted.
Twins

The Twins is a multifunctional chair. They have been manufactured using a rotomolding technique. That means that they were made using a large piece of aluminum as a mold from powdery granulate heated to 150 degrees Celsius until fluid under constant three-axis rotation. The fluid plastic is pressed into its form by the rotation and then cooled under constant rotation. It hardens progressively. The Twins are removed from the mold when the plastic is as soft as wax, but hard.

Polyethylene is then employed. It is completely recyclable, can be reground, and used in secondary quality arenas where color is not of importance.

The Twins have holes at each corner to permit tying on customary cables.

The form of the Twins is due to its combinatorics. Both identical parts can be combined with one another in two different ways: as ‘duck’ or ‘swan’. Several can be put together in an almost unbelievable variety of possibilities.
Slim City

As a possible response to the dawning of a new “Gründerzeit” age, Aspern will see the creation of a new city covering 240 hectares, including a lake for 20,000 residents and 20,000 working people within the next twenty years. One logical reason for this is that people can reach the city centres of Vienna and Bratislava in just 15 minutes. Naturally, such an undertaking requires strong identification points right from the start and architecture can contribute hugely in that sense. This is where Slim City comes in. Thirteen slender towers of different heights form a unique and independent quarter on the construction site – a City in the city, as it were.

Although precisely calculated, these buildings appear to have been placed by chance. They form units comprising 2 to 3 buildings linked together by exterior elevated walkways which have the same address as the street from which they are accessible. Consisting of 178 dwellings in all, these buildings obey a whole canon of formative rules. While standard floor plans prevail as long as external conditions remain more or less the same, new circumstances require an immediate response in the form of new floor plans. The ground floor gradually becomes a space for general use, instead of just for living purposes, by introducing unusual living designs, small offices, commercial street use, a cafeteria-cum-party basement and a spacious community room with FM services.

As a rule, these 13 tower blocks contain two units per floor. Nearly all units are triple-aspect, thus offering views in different directions and situations. Each apartment boasts at least one vista. While each single building’s position will determine how far people can see, or whether they overlook a little plaza or not, their overall arrangement prevents residents from seeing their neighbours to an unusual or interfering extent. Window positions and dimensions follow an algorithm of brightness, with a tendency to diminish in size from bottom to top, as well as a viewing algorithm, with a tendency to increase in number from bottom to top. Accordingly, each floor has differently arranged windows.

All of the open space in and around the complex is a playground and place for recreation. Activity zones invite children and youngsters to climb, run, slide and balance on them. Different kinds of walkways are ideal for venturing out with scooters, going for a run, biking, using inline skates, or just walking. There are decentralised bicycle stands alongside the garden walls and directly near the five entrance areas.

The two lowest floors are arranged as maisonettes. In addition maisonettes are situated on both uppermost floors with the intention of reducing accessibility areas, except when an exterior elevated walkways has been installed for other reasons. The units on the floors between the maisonettes on the two lowest floors (ground floor and first floor) and those on the two uppermost floors are standard apartments with one floor. Multi-purpose rooms (ceiling height >3m) required for functional, mixed use were inserted into the overall structure in such a way so as to form coherent, non-residential areas on a lower and medium level.
PPAG – 1995 founded by Anna Popelka and Georg Poduschka – are great explorers with boundless enthusiasm, always thrilled about anything new. In order to fathom the immanent potential of the three-dimensional, PPAG use logics, science and the game as a matter of course and without any inhibitions. With a great deal of curiosity and ingenuity, they push algorithms, mathematics and aleatoricism to the extreme, applying many elements from their own living environment as tools in the sense of Method Acting, be it dolls, cooking recipes or even their own dwelling as an experimental laboratory – everything can be used for architecture.

Maik Novotny


the presented pieces of furniture in this publication are for sale: www.enzis.at