

Press Release

MICHAEL WALLRAFF

looking up. vertical public space

Press Preview	Tuesday, 4 October 2011, 10.30 a.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 4 October 2011, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Gallery MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	5 October 2011 – 4 March 2012
Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

The Viennese architect Michael Wallraff's visions of urban planning represent a clear break from tried-and-true scenarios of horizontal city development. Wallraff has spent years delving deeply into both the use of vertical spaces in the city's fabric and ways of creating new dimensions of social interaction via prototypical open public spaces situated within densely populated urban structures. A broad sampling of his experimental projects and ideas can be seen starting on 5 October 2011 in the MAK exhibition *looking up. vertical public space*.

This is the first time that the MAK has invited Wallraff to present his conceptual mode of working in a solo exhibition. For the MAK Gallery, he is developing an irregular structure which condenses the central principles of his experimental practice and simultaneously functions as a vehicle and "tableau public" for his designs pertaining to vertical public space. The lion's share of the works to be displayed were created as part of the project *Der Vertikale öffentliche Raum* [The Vertical Public Space], for which Wallraff was awarded a grant by *departure*, the creative agency of the City of Vienna, in 2008. His presentation at the MAK Gallery will include the release of *Michael Wallraff. Vertical Public Space*, a joint publication of the MAK and *departure* which will serve to document his many years of research.

In the context of present-day technological developments such as those currently transforming the fields of communication, mobility and ecology, Wallraff conceives of the city as a dynamic structure with a great deal of creative potential. Taking up ideas of the 1960s urban planning avant-garde such as innovative concepts for architectonic mega-structures oriented toward mobility and flexibility, Wallraff has explored vertical resources within the existing urban structure and sketched out forward-looking scenarios of city planning.

Traditional urban planning concepts define the city in a two-dimensional manner, with public spaces ordered horizontally. In Wallraff's thesis, on the other hand, urban development becomes vertical when the existing city is made usable as a building site in its full three-dimensionality, with collective functions transferred both to new (living) spaces situated on previously unused building surfaces and to previously unused spaces between buildings.

With prototypical interventions in real urban situations that include features such as multifunctional landscapes on roofs and façades, Wallraff creates open spaces that are publically accessible and vertical. In doing so, he provides important impulses for the reinterpretation of urban density while also generating a new quality of life.

The present MAK exhibition *looking up. vertical public space* presents Wallraff's designs and plans for new works of architecture—including his studio's project for the Province of Styria's new vocational school center in Graz-St. Peter, which prevailed in a two-phase, EU-wide competition thanks to its vertically folded roof and façade-landscape (completion in 2015)—as well as interventions in historical building stock and three-dimensional experimental forms. All these works offer food for thought not only in terms of the architectonic potential of vertical spatial resources and the integration of landscape-like qualities in urban planning, but also with regard to the social and cultural effects that vertically renewed infrastructure can have.

Michael Wallraff, who participated in the MAK Schindler Scholarship Program at the Mackey Apartments in Los Angeles in 1999, has worked in Vienna, Munich and Los Angeles as a freelancer since 1997. In 2004 he established his architecture studio in Vienna, via which he works in a diverse range of fields including city planning, adaptations, conversions, additions and new structures, as well as on stage spaces, exhibitions, furniture and objects of everyday culture. His architectural projects stand out by virtue of the innovative strategies employed and their exploration of the interplay between idea and execution, function and aesthetics.

Images relating to the exhibition are available for download at MAK.at/press.

Press Data Sheet

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Curator	Bärbel Vischer
Publication	<i>Michael Wallraff. Vertical Public Space</i> , edited by MAK Vienna, with contributions by Klaus Bollinger, Brigitte Felderer, Bart Lootsma, Christoph Thun-Hohenstein and Bärbel Vischer as well as with programmatic and project texts by Michael Wallraff Architects, German/English, ca. 176 pages, ca. 190 illustrations, MAK Vienna / Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg 2011, € 28. Available at the MAK Design Shop.
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 Free admission on Saturdays®
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