

Press Release

# The Great Viennese Café: A Laboratory. Phase I

<b>Press Preview</b>	Tuesday, 1 March 2011, 11:00 a.m.
<b>Opening</b>	Tuesday, 1 March 2011, 8 p.m.
<b>Exhibition Venue</b>	MAK DESIGN SPACE Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
<b>Exhibition Term</b>	2 March – 21 August 2011
<b>Opening Hours</b>	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed
<b>Part of</b>	design <sup>&gt;</sup> new strategies A cooperation of MAK and <i>departure</i>

“Coffeehouses encourage their guests to develop and spend time cultivating their own habits. These are mechanisms that offer us time and space, channeling our attention,” explains the architect and designer Gregor Eichinger, who has assumed direction of “The Great Viennese Café: A Laboratory,” a project initiated by the MAK and *departure*. The objective is to redefine the coffeehouse in its role as a culturally and socially significant urban node in the 21st century. The visionary approaches to design generated by this project will be put to an immediate, publically accessible test.

2011 will see the collaborative program “design<sup>></sup> new strategies,” run jointly by the MAK and *departure*, the Creative Agency of the City of Vienna, continue with a new focus on applied research. The successful interplay of guest contributions by design experts from London, Milan and Vienna will now be augmented by new input from Berlin and New York. This year-long research project, which consists of exhibitions at the MAK DESIGN SPACE and modules consisting of lectures, workshops and presentations of both research and works-in-progress, can be followed as a publicly accessible design laboratory. The whole range of activities will culminate in the “Experimental Design,” a testable prototype-coffeehouse incorporating the workshops’ most convincing innovations. Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, managing director of *departure*, remarks that “the Viennese coffeehouse has always fascinated me as a central location of art, of the culture of contemplation and of intellectual life in general in this city. In order to keep doing justice to these roles—which truly do go above and beyond societal conventions and tourist idylls—in the digital age, as well, the coffeehouse needs fresh conceptual impulses. ‘The Great Viennese Café: A Laboratory’ presents the opportunity to rediscover this specifically Viennese institution in a very open and creatively curious way, and to reclaim it as an inspiring place between the private sphere and the public realm.”

Taking its cue from Eichinger's lecture "An Abstract of an Essay on the Origin of Coffeehouses and Varieties through Artificial and Natural Selection," a work-in-progress exhibition showing the present state of the Viennese coffeehouse will serve to kick off Phase I of the project at the MAK DESIGN SPACE. Julia Landsiedl, 2011's MAK Designer in Residence, will make observations and conduct interviews around the coffeehouse scene, collecting

examples from actual practice while also sifting through the MAK collection in search of helpful thematic clues. On exhibit will be a three-dimensional mind map—a cognitively compiled and annotated collage of historical and current sketches, posters, photographs and objects having to do with coffeehouse culture. "The inclusion of Julia Landsiedl in the project is meant to help break through typical museological thought patterns and to test out artistic and scholarly methods of research," explains Thomas Geisler, MAK Curator Design.

These will include early examples of coffee-to-go and digitized ordering systems, as well as designs for coffeehouses (some of which no longer exist) ranging from ones by Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos and Oswald Haerdtl to more recent prototypes by the studios POLKA and dottings. The exhibition will provide impulses for the three "Design Labs" and will be added to as the project progresses. The lab modules will begin with a public guest lecture and conclude with a public presentation at the MAK. In between, there will be an intensive workshop for ca. 20 participants: under the research direction of Gregor Eichinger, approaches and ideas are to be developed for the future of the coffeehouse. Interested parties from the fields of architecture, design and visual art may apply to participate ([kaffeehaus-experiment@MAK.at](mailto:kaffeehaus-experiment@MAK.at)).

The guest for **MAK Design Lab.01** will be **raumlaborberlin** (lecture: 8 March 2011 [MAK Lecture Hall], workshop: 9/10 March 2011 [participation limited to selected applicants], presentation: 28/29 April 2011 [MAK Columned Main Hall]). This Berlin-based group of interdisciplinarily focused architects and urbanists works on the topics of public space, cities in transformation and the boundaries between public and private. raumlaborberlin aims to discover and develop up-to-date urban infrastructure solutions—of which the coffeehouse is undoubtedly one. Subsequent Design Lab guests will be Antenna Design (New York) and Andrea Branzi (Milan).

Gregor Eichinger, born in Wels, Upper Austria in 1956, studied architecture at the Vienna University of Technology. He was a founder and partner of "eichinger oder knechtl" (1984–2005) and now heads "eichinger offices" in Vienna. His projects and teaching activities—including at the Vienna University of Technology, at the Vertical Studio at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles, and at both the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna—led to an associate professorship for architecture and design at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (2004–2010).

Julia Landsiedl, born in Vienna in 1976, followed her law degree with studies in industrial design at the University of Applied Art in Vienna and product and process design at the Berlin University of the Arts. She has lived and worked in Vienna since 2009, before which she spent periods working in Germany, the Netherlands and the USA. The focuses of Landsiedl's work are research, conception and scenography/storytelling.

### **Project calendar**

"The Great Viennese Café: A Laboratory" – Phase I: 2 March – 21 August 2011; Phase II: 5 October – 13 November 2011 at the MAK DESIGN SPACE.

MAK Design Lab.01, raumlaborberlin, Berlin:

lecture: 8 March 2011 (MAK Lecture Hall), workshop: 9/10 March 2011 (registration required), presentation (MAK Columned Main Hall): 28/29 April 2011.

MAK Design Lab.02, Antenna Design, New York:

lecture: 10 May 2011, workshop: 11/12 May 2011 (registration required), presentation: 2/3 June 2011.

MAK Design Lab.03, Andrea Branzi, Milan:

workshop: 15/16 June 2011 (registration required), presentation: 7/8 July 2011.

The "Experimental Design" (5–16 October 2011, MAK Columned Main Hall), a temporary coffeehouse of sorts, will allow guests to test various built scenarios taken 1:1 from the laboratory modules' most promising results. This project's outcomes will also be made available as a print publication.

### **About *departure***

*departure*, the Creative Agency of the City of Vienna and an enterprise of the Vienna Business Agency, supports entrepreneurs and founders of new creative-industry ventures—specifically in the fields of design, fashion, the art market, architecture, music, audio-visual, multimedia and publishing—who want to shake things up in the urban realm. *departure* was founded in the autumn of 2003 as Austria's first independent business sponsoring and service center for the creative industries. [www.departure.at](http://www.departure.at)

All press materials are available on our site at [www.MAK.at/press](http://www.MAK.at/press)

Press Data Sheet

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<b>Research direction</b>	Gregor Eichinger
<b>Curator</b>	Thomas Geisler, MAK Curator Design
<b>MAK Designer in Residence 2011</b>	Julia Landsiedl
<b>MAK Admission</b>	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 Free admission on Saturdays <sup>®</sup>
<b>Opening Hours</b>	Tue MAK NITE <sup>®</sup> 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed
<b>Part of</b>	design <sup>7</sup> new strategies A cooperation of MAK and <i>departure</i> Concept development: Elisabeth Noever-Ginthör ( <i>departure</i> ), Sebastian Hackenschmidt (MAK)
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Vienna, 1 March 2011