

# A memorandum on the future of International Building Exhibitions

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# IBA



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# A Memorandum on the future of International Building Exhibitions



// Entrance to the Zollverein complex, 2013 //

Over the course of 100 years, International Building Exhibitions have evolved into an experimental field for urban and regional development and have become the special hallmark of the planning culture in Germany that has gained worldwide recognition as "IBA" and continues to attract growing interest. International Building Exhibitions have changed over the years, expanding their focus from the aesthetic and technological aspects of architecture to include social, economic and environmental aspects, as well as public participation and the quality of processes.

An IBA deals with living environments, housing and building in cities and regions in a way that seeks to engage more widely with content, organisation and presentation. It sets new standards for the day-to-day practice of planning authorities and freelance planners and provides important impetus for politicians, businesses and academia. Each one of the IBA carried out to date acquired a significance beyond its time and place.

Having developed from a combination of factors – the need for action in a specific place, the particular constellations of local actors, quality standards that exceed the norm, and innovative instruments and formats – International Building Exhibitions have taken on a programmatic character.

IBA is an internationally unique planning, urban and regional policy instrument. Unlike world

exhibitions, biennials and capitals of culture, IBA have to date not followed a fixed calendar or been bound by pre-defined rules or standardised quality criteria. There is no binding convention defining what an IBA is, what issues it should tackle or what organisational form it should take. It is precisely because each IBA has to invent itself from scratch that continuous quality assurance is essential, consolidating its value for architectural culture and for urban and regional development and making the experience gained useful both for day-to-day planning practice and for each subsequent IBA.

To ensure this happens, the "IBA brand" must first be re-examined in a context that goes beyond the historical significance it has achieved and then taken forward. This is not the exclusive responsibility of each new IBA but must also be tackled by Germany's individual states, local authorities and the federal government, with critical support from independent experts. Despite the differences in the issues dealt with, the success of former IBA is based on similar qualities. It is important to preserve these qualities, develop them further and in this way ensure there is a clear distinction between them and other urban and regional planning formats.

The criteria for this are derived from the achievements of former IBA. And they, in turn, point to the following ten recommendations for future IBA.

# 10 recommendations for staging an International Building Exhibition



// Semi-detached house by Le Corbusier in the Weissenhof Estate in Stuttgart, Werkbund Exhibition 1927 //

## 1

Each IBA focuses on the pressing challenges in architecture and urban and regional planning that arise from local and regional problems. One of their main characteristics is that they are forward-looking, **exploring questions of social change** and focusing on those aspects that can trigger regional developments and be influenced by the design of spaces in urban and rural contexts.



// Mont-Cenis Academy, Herne, IBA Emscher Park //

## 2

IBA are more than just exhibitions of architecture. They propose social blueprints for future ways of living and offer answers to social problems, not just through the design of buildings, but also through new ways of **appropriating urban and rural spaces**. It is through the experience of memorable places that IBA convey their messages.

### 3

IBA arise from specific challenges: while the central themes of IBA are of necessity based on **a specific issue and location**, their relevance extends far beyond the local context. Each IBA was preceded by locally or regionally focused initiatives and events that served as stimuli for programmes, which they then framed in more precise terms and translated into reality. Formal and informal preparatory discussions among experts and with the public serve as important tools to help identify and define the relevant issues.

### 4

IBA strive to develop **model solutions to current or future problems** – be they architectural, economic, environmental or social. By demonstrating the relevance of the issues, challenges and strategies on an international scale, they set in motion an ongoing debate on the future of our cities and regions in the context of wider social developments.

### 5

The actual buildings and projects are at the core of any IBA. However, IBA draw attention not only to the buildings, but also to the conditions in which they were created and the quality of the processes that contributed to them. By **qualifying instruments and formats**, each IBA aims to contribute to a new culture of planning and building that manifests itself in a spirit of cooperation and in the interplay between the quality of the process and the results.

### 6

IBA must be created with an international dimension from the outset. The determining factors include the international relevance of their central issues and the resulting model projects, the involvement of external experts, outstanding contributions from abroad and the fact that their public relations and networking activities have international reach.

### 7

The concentration of intellectual, artistic and financial resources for a limited period of time makes IBA unique **showcases for the exceptional**. They are experimental research and development laboratories in which intense collaboration between experts and stakeholders, combined with their experience and success stories, can stimulate projects elsewhere, have a lasting impact on local planning practice and motivate people to get involved.

### 8

IBA call for the **courage to take risks**. They are experiments with open outcomes that generate new ideas. They sometimes use provocation as a way of doing that, which can create dissent. Contentious issues and productive controversies are important aspects of planning culture. All stakeholders – especially public servants, politicians and the public – must be aware of this from the outset to facilitate initiatives that step outside the realms of standard practice and to generate widespread interest in the projects.

### 9

Each IBA needs **sufficient autonomy and appropriate operative framework** to be able to produce exemplary, generalizable solutions that can act as beacons of excellence. In place of established processes and tried-and-tested courses of action, IBA call for imaginative programmes, designs and organisational approaches, coupled with a degree of improvisation and the agility to respond quickly to unforeseen events.

### 10

IBA thrive on sharing their themes, ideas, projects and images of their built results with the world. They are both a **forum and a stage** for their participants, presenting their contributions and commitment to a national and international audience. Modern communication and presentation strategies are essential to their success. It is vital that each IBA uses and drives forward the latest, most effective forms, formats and channels of communication.

## **Remit:** knowledge transfer and quality assurance



*// Building site photography in May 2013 – the Energy Bunker, IBA Hamburg //*

The quality of each IBA must be reviewed on the basis of the process and each individual project to make it possible to further strengthen this format, including at international level.

The **transfer of experience from one IBA to another** plays an indispensable role in affirming and critically questioning its aims and approach within an overarching IBA network with regional, national and international participation.

It is also helpful for IBA to be supported by independent experts. To this end, the German government has appointed an Advisory Board on the Future of International Building Exhibitions to offer its support. Previous IBA have always been learning processes for architecture that had a broad-based influence and at the same time offered the opportunity to showcase national achievements on an international stage. It is also in the interest of the German government to assure the quality of IBA and develop them further.

The German Government contributes to consolidating the IBA-to-IBA exchange of experience within the **IBA meets IBA network**. This forum is meant to enable the key stakeholders to reach mutual understanding and make a commitment to improving the quality that International Building Exhibitions have achieved to date.

The German Government will continue to support evaluative and results research in order to enable national urban development policy and international discourse to benefit from the architectural and participatory learning processes of past IBA.

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**The IBA Advisory Board was set up in 2009 by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.**

# Guidance notes on the Memorandum



// Art installation "organ", opening event at St Anna's Chapel, Krobitz //

More and more cities and regions are exploring the IBA format. Their initiators have to confront numerous questions concerning content and organisation and issues that differ greatly depending on the urban and regional context but are nevertheless very similar in terms of the essential underlying question. To provide support for the operational application of the Memorandum's recommendations on carrying out an IBA, the Advisory Board has reviewed these issues and made its findings available in the technical guidance notes set out below.

## 1

IBA agencies: **formal and operational dimensions**

## 2

IBA projects: **calls and qualification**

## 3

Presenting IBA: **IBA as a stage**

## 4

IBA format: **IBA in relation to other urban and regional development formats**

## 5

IBA orientation: **the international dimension as a mark of quality**

## 1 IBA agencies: Formal and operational dimensions

IBA both monitor and influence exemplary urban and regional developments. To meet its own quality standards, an IBA needs to have an **appropriate organisational body**, which is designed to be innovative and capable of achieving acceptance for its ideas – throughout all its phases. A temporary showcase for the exceptional, which ultimately produces presentable results, can only be created if the **IBA companies are independent financially and in terms of organisational form and content throughout all their process phases**.

The ongoing work on processes and projects involved in an IBA needs **professional management**. As a rule, a specially-created body takes on this management function as soon as a town, city or region has made a declaration of intent to carry out an IBA. It often takes the legal form of a limited company (GmbH) that is independent of the public administration. But other organisational forms, such as a registered association or linking into existing institutions, may also be appropriate in individual cases.

### Formally integrating relevant actors to implementation

It is important to ensure that **IBA companies are formally linked** to those actors that are crucial in terms of implementation. Any specific formal integration into an IBA organisation must be based on the implementation resources it needs, e.g. public and private sources of financing or land and properties needed for its work. It is essential to weight the need for an IBA organisation to occupy as neutral a position as possible outside the traditional public administration against the need to ensure the continuity and reliable collaboration of actors

relevant to implementation. Thus, it is important that **ownership of IBA companies** or of shares in the companies is always defined **in direct relation to the actors essentially needed to implement the IBA in question**.

It is essential that the city or region in question, represented by the regional and local authorities, and possibly – depending on the issues dealt with – additional actors involved in structural policy (e.g. state governments, academic, scientific and research institutions) have a shareholder role. It may become necessary during the course of an IBA to expand this circle (see the section on phases); the necessary organisational provisions should be put in place to deal with this eventuality. Official bodies of the IBA companies, such as boards of trustees and advisory boards, allow for the involvement of other external and local partners who are of importance for support and implementation.

Locating key actors solely in boards of trustees or advisory boards that are not directly involved in managing the process entails a risk that they may not be sufficiently committed to the process and projects throughout the entire course of an IBA.

In Germany the **commitment of the Länder (states)** is decisive, particularly when it comes to allocating the necessary resources. The states largely channel or pool EU and federal government innovation and structural funds, which means they play a key role in the implementation of an IBA (within Germany). A state declining to participate or, in a worst-case scenario, actively distancing itself from an IBA would be a severe handicap.

### Phases of an IBA: consistent professional attitude in managing and communicating processes and projects

An IBA goes through several phases: in the **pre-IBA-phase** stakeholders agree on objectives and implementation. They identify a clearly outlined key theme. In the **start-up phase**, the company is set up and structured in a way that will enable it to perform its work. After that comes the **phase in which the content of the work is defined more closely** and the broad issues outlined. This is followed by the **qualification and implementation phase** as the projects are put into practice.

It is important to communicate the key theme right at the outset and describe the process and projects in context. In the **presentation phase**, it is important to address and provide evidence of the impact on the structure of the city or region (either in terms of leverage or demonstration of best practice). With the ongoing IBA, the ambivalence between the aim to create a temporary showcase for the exceptional (the relevance of the key issue and the limited time frame) and the expectation that they will have a long-term, sustainable impact as an exemplary structural programme for the city or region is being increasingly addressed. This ambivalence is not necessarily a contradiction. Ideally the final presentation and statements will have sharp definition and thus consolidate the main themes, projects and stakeholder-related responsibilities in a **post-IBA phase**.

### Curational remit and management

The **role of curating the content and managing** an IBA is crucial to its success and it is therefore essential that the right person is appointed. He or she must have the professional authority to credibly represent its substantive and operational objectives to the city and/or region and through their personal commitment make them a living reality within the process.

### An enabling approach to project development and project qualification

IBA companies must, on the one hand, manage the participatory approach to qualifying and planning the innovation-oriented spatial development of the city or region. This will be primarily manifested in specific projects. On the other hand, they must create the cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary stakeholder networks needed for this, which should be tailored to the individual theme of each IBA.

### The core task of each IBA is to actively oversee the projects

in terms of their focus on the key theme, the planning phase, the quality of their implementation and their function of demonstrating good practice. To ensure **independent and ambitious project qualification**, IBA companies should avoid implementing projects itself. An IBA company can only uphold its aim to be an impartial and critical partner to the projects if it does not carry out projects of its own in direct or indirect competition with third parties. What it must do is set the themes itself, get them up and running, and monitor them critically.

### Funding instruments and attracting funds

Ongoing IBA are increasingly **relying on professional fundraising**. Very few IBA currently have their own budgets with which to directly implement projects or in some cases they do not have an adequate budget to carry out the project qualification themselves. For the ongoing IBA the whole area of strategic acquisition of public and private-sector funds involves a workload that must be taken into account.

The fact that IBA projects are integrated into existing funding programmes and instruments managed by the EU, the German government and/or state (or canton or province) governments can pose a problem because it means



// Weissenhof and region, IBA Stuttgart //

accepting the catalogue of criteria associated with the funding programme in question. Under certain circumstances, this may change the criteria and objectives for the projects set by the IBA themselves.

### Skills and profiles

The **skills and profiles** of the employing of an IBA company should be drawn up on the basis of its remit. **Process control, project management, fundraising, vertical communication, horizontal communication and moderating role** vis-à-vis those who work in networks and specific projects dealing with the IBA topic **are essential for the success of an IBA.**

In order to provide curational and operational assurance for the ambitions of each IBA it is essential to allocate capacity for processes and projects and for their implementation and communication. Consequently, experience across the entire project management cycle (ideas, formats, fundraising, implementation support and monitoring) must be included. A recurring core task within the project qualification process is the use of appropriate, quality-enhancing instruments such as competitions or other procedures with a competitive element.

Ultimately communication skills are needed for interim and final presentations and for the exhibition formats that accompany the process.

### Financial budget of IBA agencies

Secure funding for the entire process and its phases that is defined as a function of the tasks set out is directly related to the IBA company's formal and operational dimensions. This also implies a balanced use of funds for **human resources, internal and external project qualification** (e.g. workshops, competitions, multiple commissions, feasibility studies, legal reports), and **overheads/technical costs/communication** (vertical and horizontal communication, use of different media technologies, event management, professional dialogues, public dialogues).

An ideally balanced relationship between the three areas would be: 40% of the total budget for human resources, 40% for project qualification and 20% for over-heads/communication. It is particularly important to ensure that an adequate budget is available for project qualification. The IBA company must provide an appropriate level of support, above all at the beginning of an IBA. The idea that an IBA company should grow over time does not fit with the need for it to provide a high level of support at the start of an IBA, which is crucial for the process of building trust in the entire process among the stakeholders. The volume of work on the projects decreases only slightly during the course of an IBA. At the end of an IBA, special communication tasks – including interim and final presentations in forms of Expos – arise, which require additional budgets.

## 2

## IBA projects: calls for projects and qualification



// French-Swiss Rhine promenade St Johann Basel –  
Huningue, IBA Basel //

Each IBA is a huge challenge because it is meant to address problems that standard practice has not been able to resolve. An IBA provides the **impetus** to systematically shake up familiar routines and ultimately create solutions under exceptional conditions that can also work under everyday conditions. Ideally an IBA provides exogenous impetus with the aim of activating endogenous potential. The **projects** themselves play a central role here. They can be defined and compiled in two ways: either new projects can be generated deductively as a result of the theme of the IBA in question or existing projects that fit with the theme can be collected. Consequently, this interplay means that IBA projects and their development are **hybrid strategies**: they are a way of mobilising bottom-up local initiatives

while at the same time carrying out an external intervention resulting from the theme set. Thus, an IBA ideally combines a **bottom-up strategy with a top-down strategy**. The projects also have a dual focus in terms of their relevance: they have to produce tailor-made projects to fit the **local situation** and at the same time serve as an example that will trigger **international discourse**. Over the course of time, it has also become apparent that not only buildings and urban design and landscape design concepts constitute an IBA; the complexities of standard planning practice and everyday life are also gradually becoming an important factor in IBA. Furthermore, public participation processes, new procedural models and academic, artistic and performance projects are beginning to characterise the image and spirit of an IBA.

**IBA projects are of necessity committed to addressing its key theme.** This results in both a curatorial briefing to instigate and define the profile of IBA projects and in a possible basis for **a call for projects**, which – if launched at the right time using clearly developed **IBA criteria** – can facilitate the selection of project ideas.

In the course of an IBA, the project ideas are more precisely honed on the basis of these criteria until they result in exemplary IBA projects. The presentation of the projects is a pivotal moment for an IBA and requires continuous **quality assurance**, for which each IBA develops its own process. It is of fundamental importance that **adequate funding to cover the search for and qualification of IBA projects** is budgeted for. The qualification process is managed by the **IBA company**, which in this way takes on the two key tasks of **project management and moderation**.

### Criteria

In addition to the specific criteria that each IBA develops on the basis of its specific theme, more general criteria are also needed to define the fundamental characteristics of the IBA projects:

Each IBA project – both in its objective and in its development – must aim to set an example for **“next practice.”** Simply by virtue of the fact that an IBA is embedded in the context of changing conditions and new challenges, it becomes a laboratory in which it constantly adapts its “toolbox.” An IBA project cannot be developed solely on well-trodden paths. On the contrary, an IBA uses its character as a temporary showcase for the exceptional to vary the common procedures, question them or

even turn them upside down, and to try out new procedures – with the result that they continue to influence architectural and planning cultures far beyond the actual term of an IBA.

IBA projects are not only inextricably dependent on the theme and rationale of the particular location; they are also beacons of excellence in the international arena. They demonstrate **international relevance while being locally and regionally rooted**. Since an IBA is always set up to be, among other things, a **research laboratory**, then it has to be possible to adapt the results – i.e. the projects – to other places, other cities and regions and thus other countries and contexts. But, nevertheless, IBA projects always have a powerful local effect, since they were developed and tested with a very precise local focus.

### Qualification

The fact that IBA are a **temporary showcase for the exceptional** and have the character of a **laboratory** is crucial to their ability to facilitate **innovation**. Thinking outside the box is possible in an IBA in a way that other formats do not allow. An IBA is open and **experimental**. But, as is always the case with experiments, an IBA needs an explicitly designated **protected space** and conducive conditions in order to succeed. This includes continuity in staffing as well as secure funding and **financial independence**.

A **constructive dialogue** between different administrative levels, on the one hand, and creative thinkers and committed stakeholders, on the other, allows new things to develop. Only if all stakeholders meet the others with an open attitude to their roles can the projects truly succeed in having **IBA quality**. For IBA projects to



// Design for a heat storage facility, IBA Heidelberg //

achieve a broad-based impact and acceptance, good **networking** with local, regional and national partners is essential. This must begin in the project development phase and is particularly important in the post-IBA phase. An IBA project is a **beacon of excellence** but does not stand in isolation. **Networking with policymakers, civil society and the business community** is essential if it is to have a permanent effect. The town or city, region and state (or province, canton etc.) are intensively involved in the IBA process.

Quality in the built environment is largely the result of working with variants, **comparing possible solutions** and engaging in a **controversial debate** that reveals the range of arguments. IBA make use of design competitions, along

with other transparent competitive procedures, as a way of striving to find the best solution. In this way, they create architectural benchmarks and **set a positive example for how to design procedures**.

The projects are IBA's most important most important **public relations and communications tool**. They have a high demonstration value and are the best way of conveying the goals, questions and responses of an IBA: **the projects are the essence of the whole process. An IBA is as strong as its projects**; a good, innovative leitmotif underpins and initiates the necessary **narrative** that is associated with an IBA in the long term, but it the projects themselves that tell the story.

## 3

## Presenting IBA: IBA as a **stage**



// "Park macht Platz", IBA Vienna //

An IBA is a temporary showcase for the exceptional. Informality, a special organisational form and a limited time frame are intended to increase the chance of innovation. An IBA does not usually have its own investment funds or legal power. IBA is powerless in formal terms. This is why an IBA's **public relations work** is of crucial importance.

It has **three target groups**: first, the local actors from civil society and the architecture and business community; secondly, the relevant figures in the worlds of politics and the public administration – at all levels from local authorities to the EU – and, thirdly, professionals and the public – at local, national and international level. It is important to ensure ongoing information and public relations work that is also aimed at politicians and civil servants. The start and

completion of each project should be celebrated with all the parties involved; it is important to take action to include representatives from the political arena.

Guided tours of the planning site can be offered, and it is important to support the public in their role of "hosting" an IBA by enabling them to show guests, friends, and any other interested party around the IBA.

As an informal planning format, an IBA essentially has **three options for achieving something special and outstanding**:

**First of all** – through the **persuasiveness** of its ideas, projects and the people who represent them

An IBA's preparatory phase is of decisive

importance here. It is helpful to communicate early on with other completed and ongoing IBA. This is then followed by a discourse with external experts, who will be able to take an outsider's view and question and expand the IBA's own definitions of the problems and the quality criteria it has set. IBA's Advisory Board can also be of help and can pass on important experience from the preparatory phase onward. This could include experience with the relationship between IBA's remit and the resources needed to achieve it; it can avoid the themes being too broadly or narrowly defined and prevent overlaps with other initiatives. Finally, large-scale events, discussion forums etc. are valuable in enabling the public to feel a sense of identification with the IBA themes from the very outset.

**Secondly** – through their character as a **showcase for the exceptional that facilitate exceptional achievements**

As a "showcase for the exceptional" an IBA offers local actors the opportunity to work beyond the bounds of daily routine and in collaboration with international experts and create something new and outstanding. To that end IBA organise workshops to facilitate a local/international exchange of ideas, international competitions and forums and comparative exhibitions with international participants.

**Thirdly** – by offering a **stage**

IBA offer a stage on which exemplary solutions to key urban and regional development problems can be presented to an international audience. IBA's **stage character** is valuable not only in disseminating results. It is above all an **important instrument** for awakening **endogenous potential** and motivating extraordinary efforts. Attention, especially international attention, is an extremely scarce commodity. IBA provides a stage which attract **international attention** and gain recognition among professionals but also among the general public

(tourism). The opportunity for people to be able to demonstrate what they are capable of to a national and international audience and to show the extraordinary potential within a region or city is a decisive reason for actors who tend to otherwise stay in the background to become involved in an IBA. Spectacular buildings are, by their very nature, visible from afar. Their architects are often internationally well-known and do not have any great need for an IBA itself.

**A special effort** should therefore be made to **showcase local actors** and draw attention to the usually less visible projects that address social, economic and environmental problems. It is more difficult to present them effectively, but it is particularly important to do so to ensure an IBA continues to have an effect even after it is officially over.

In addition to the measures already mentioned, regular **site visits** and **events with internationally renowned experts** also help to strengthen an IBA's stage function. Furthermore, outsiders and participants should be encouraged to **publish** articles about IBA in international newspapers and journals. This also includes critical articles, because all discussions attract attention. Critical reports also offer the opportunity to publish corrections and are, at any rate, preferable to a lack of interest. **Artistic interventions** also draw attention to IBA projects but beyond that the "alienating" view associated with any artistic intervention is conducive to reflecting on the meaning and purpose of an IBA's activities. Last but not least, the opening and interim and final presentations must be celebrated with high-profile events that include high-ranking guests.

**The success of an IBA is directly related to the extent to which it is able to make a city, landscape or entire region into a stage on which to presents sustainable solutions and future options for the city and countryside.**

## 4

IBA format:

**IBA in relation to other urban and regional development formats**



// Self-Construction Experiment Wohnregal, Admiralstraße, IBA Berlin //

Their unique features – such as independence in the choice of organisational set up, the linking of top-down and bottom-up approaches, giving free reign to experiments, and openness to innovation and different goals – mean that IBA are now drawing increasing interest. To say that the **IBA format** is currently attracting a great deal of attention would be an understatement: IBA are experiencing an absolute **boom**. They are also clocking up record export figures, as can be seen in Europe, for example, at the first international IBA at Parkstad in Limburg in the Netherlands and the first tri-national IBA in Basel.

The long history of international building exhibitions means that their level of ambition and complexity has increased. At the same time, the growing number of IBA puts them at risk of losing their originality, significance and public interest.

Other urban and regional development formats are also enjoying a similar boom. The **reasons for the exponential increase in urban and regional development formats** are many and varied: ambitious and innovative urban and regional development seems hardly feasible in everyday practice because the complexity of planning tasks is increasing, financial resources are dwindling, and public funding is shifting its focus from physical projects and buildings to injecting social and societal impetus. It is usually easier to secure funding for future-oriented projects in the context of formats. Furthermore, the establishment of new organisational structures, such as an development agency has created an administrative basis that promotes the operationalisation and implementation of projects and thus makes it possible to concentrate on tackling problems over a longer time frame. Structural policy instruments, in conjunction with focused financial support and adaptation of the legal framework, provide the capacity needed to initiate new formats.

In day-to-day practice it is difficult to introduce and implement quality standards. **New qualification methods**, such as competitions or competitive

tendering procedures, are easier to argue for and implement within a special format. The principle of providing a showcase for the exceptional, which is one of the key IBA criteria, is adopted by many formats because it helps to generate interest. In a similar way to the IBA format, a stage is created, even if it is mistakenly thought to be a smaller stage because the audience is regional. At the same time, an expectation of visible results on completion of the formats has been created and has increased the **commitment to success**.

With its strategy and successes, the International Building Exhibition itself has made a significant contribution in recent years to triggering a wide range of urban and regional development formats that have explicitly built on IBA's experience and principles, such as the commitment to quality agreements, carefully prepared competition procedures, and participation processes.

It seems to be necessary to **differentiate** between IBA "king size" and the numerous other urban and regional development formats. The **urban and regional development formats can be categorised as follows**:

#### Standardised formats

These formats tend to be characterised by a project development and implementation rationale that is based on a particular standard. Within this framework, they have to follow different, but nevertheless pre-defined and standardised, processes ranging from certification of the application through to awarding the implementation contract. Examples include a number of garden exhibitions – Internationale Gartenschau (IGA), Floriade, Bundesgartenschau (BUGA), Landesgartenschau (LAGA) – plus the European Capital of Culture, European Green Capital, Olympic Games, Expo and many others. In individual cases, references to IBA are visible, with formats building on the content of past IBA. An example of this is the conversion of sites at BUGA Mannheim.

### Formats based on IBA

Formats in this category are basically those which adopt certain procedures and organisational structures used by IBA. Financing and implementation of projects do not usually follow any prescribed rules but are trialled on the basis of the individual conditions. This category includes neighbourhood development formats such as "Innovation City Ruhr" or "nordwärts" in Dortmund, whose toolboxes include some individual aspects (e.g. project families and quality assurance) that are based on IBA, urban development formats such as "Documenta Urbana" in Kassel, regional formats such as StadtUmland.NRW and the Internationale Naturausstellung I.N.A.

### The REGIONALE as a special case

The REGIONALE exhibitions in North Rhine-Westphalia, also known as "little IBA", use a format that is directly based on the Emscher Park IBA. They use virtually the entire IBA toolbox but do not aim to have international relevance and reach. They employ competition and qualification procedures to attract private and public funding and also some IBA elements such as calls for projects, project families and presentation years. Thus, there are similarities in objectives, procedures and organisational forms. They can also be said to have the same high level of ambition as an IBA in terms of process and project development. REGIONALE 2025 will use this format for the first time in an international context in Limmat Valley, near Zurich, in Switzerland.

What all format categories have in common is the fact that they are limited both in terms of time and location and generate interest over a defined period of time. This is also one of the reasons for establishing the appropriate format. Many of these processes

– like IBA – combine ambitious planning and building with soft site-profiling strategies, using culture, art, communication or events. At the same time, the approaches have an identifiable regional character.

**Transferring IBA principles and qualities** to other urban and regional development formats is desirable because it increases the probability of a high-quality planning process that produces compelling results. To ensure the IBA format does not become two-dimensional, nothing more than an ordinary urban and regional development format under a different name, it is more important than ever to give it a clearly defined profile.

The following issues are key in **differentiating the IBA format** from other formats:

The **quality standards** of an IBA must be more robustly defined and the bar set higher to make the unique quality of an IBA stand out more clearly from other formats and make it easier to communicate. The **objective** of an IBA as reflected in its key themes (such as improving urban infrastructure, social housing and education opportunities, driving forward the energy transition, etc.) must surpass the statutory responsibilities that local authorities and regions deal with as part of their urban and regional development remit. The **process structure** of an IBA in relation to its top-down and bottom-up structures must be clearly distinguished. This linkage is of crucial importance for the anticipated system innovation. Thought should be given to how to achieve and systematise a **transfer of expertise** from an IBA for the benefit of urban and regional development formats. In this way, the profile of the IBA format can be defined more precisely, while at the same time triggering the



// “Leisure Lane”, IBA Parkstad //

desired learning process. The different priorities and spatial levels of the different IBA demonstrate the uniqueness of each IBA. And, in that **uniqueness**, **each IBA** invokes **new themes**, triggers a change of **perspective**, leads to **new working and organisational structures**, and stimulates ways of planning and thinking outside the box that produce results in new spatial configurations such as cooperation across local authorities or innovative methodological principles.

After comparing the formats, it can be concluded that the IBA format is a highly **ambitious and effective format**; not least for that reason it will be copied,

modified and adapted. Despite the numerous attempts to integrate its qualities into standard practice, it is crucial that IBA retains its function in setting an example, being an inspiration and injecting new impetus into urban and regional development. The fact that its procedures and tools have spread to other formats is one of IBA's lasting successes. But this generalisation of IBA principles forces each new IBA to distinguish itself from the other urban and regional development formats. It does this by virtue of the very high standards of all the IBA criteria, in particular those relating to its **international relevance**, the **quality of its processes** and, especially, through its **outstanding projects**.

## 5

## IBA's orientation: **the international dimension** as a **hall-mark of quality**



// Entrance to Interbau in the Hansa district, Berlin 1957 //

International reach and reception characterise the IBA brand's core values.

Its international dimension is crucial to the brand's success and, in order to be able to attract wide interest outside Germany as well as within the country, each IBA **must include this international dimension** from the very outset. It goes without saying that this assumes that an IBA has an **internationally relevant issue** to tackle from the word go, an issue that **exemplary projects** and solutions will enable other countries to recognise as relevant to their specific problems and which will be able to attract great attention there.

The **preparatory pre-IBA phase, which is designed to clarify key issues**, and corresponding **flagship projects** should be accorded considerably more importance in view of the international relevance of the issues and the profile of an IBA. This should include identifying clear **links between the themes and flagship projects that create the profile**. Every effort should be made to avoid an overly complex number of themes, fragmentation and loss of focus as a result of calls for projects that often tend to produce random results.

In order to explain and emphasise the exemplary **importance of local projects** in comparison with others within and beyond Germany, the genesis, development and results of similar projects elsewhere should be presented and discussed in lectures and symposiums **involving external experts**. An external perspective and an exchange of experience make it possible to try out new ways of looking at things and open up new prospects.

A way of **qualifying projects** and communicating them to a broad-based international audience that has proved to be particularly valuable is to run a **competitive procedure** with additional **invitations** issued to practices from abroad with relevant experience who, on the basis of their own achievements under different conditions, are able to identify new approaches and make surprising contributions to the specific brief in its specific context. It is recommended that the work on projects be accompanied by **lecture series with international speakers, symposiums, comparative presentations and discussions and competitions with the participation of foreign experts**.

Compared to the lectures and symposiums that focus on a theme and, as a result of the expertise and pos-



// Apartment building by Egon Eiermann, Interbau Berlin 1957 //

sibly also the celebrity of the participants, are able to attract an audience from beyond the region to take part in events and discussions, the **results of competitions** that are characterised by **visually striking designs** are ideal for gaining international media coverage that is not restricted to professional publications. **The public presentation** and discussion of the competition entries combine a regional response with international reach, reinforced by international **publications**.

This requires **close cooperation and networking** with cultural institutions and initiatives abroad as well as continuous maintenance and expansion of **internationally focused public relations** work which provides up-to-date information on IBA's activities and interim results, delivering it digitally to ensure an even wider reach.

# A retrospective: How international was each 20<sup>th</sup>-century IBA?



**A** // Opening of the Artists' Colony Exhibition  
with an inauguration play on 15 May 1901,  
Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt //

The following retrospective shows that each future IBA must also set its own priorities in terms of the issues it addresses, its projects, participants, procedures, presentations and resources in order to demonstrate their international character in the best possible way. Innovative digital communication technologies have now opened up new presentation possibilities – especially to an international audience – but they are not yet being fully exploited.

**A** The European **Life Reform Movement** was the inspiration for and basis of the first permanent international building exhibition. The quest for a new **unity between art and daily life, urbanity and nature** set the direction of travel and the frame-work for the first IBA to be held in Germany. It incorporated the philosophy of the English **Arts and Crafts Movement** and the **Vienna Secession**. The publisher Alexander Koch wrote a **memorandum** establishing an **artists' colony** as a *gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art, comprising houses, workshops and exhibition halls for the young Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig in 1898. This resulted in an early form of **media partnership** because Koch was the publisher of an international journal entitled "Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration," which reported on the latest trends in arts and crafts and home interiors. The magazine had a worldwide circulation and covered the latest **trends in architecture and the fine arts**. From 1900 onwards, it included coverage of the latest projects at the artists' colony in Darmstadt.

Initiator and organiser of the 1901-1914 IBA was **Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig** of Hesse and by Rhine, grandson of Queen Victoria. Part of an international dynastic network, he had a cosmopolitan outlook and was au fait with the latest cultural developments in Europe. Peter Behrens from Munich, Hans Chris-



**A** // Wedding tower with exhibition halls and plane tree grove, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt //

tiansen from Paris, and Joseph Maria Olbrich from Vienna were just three of the first seven members he appointed to the artists' colony that had been founded in 1899.

In the years that followed, the architects succeeded in moving away from all vernacular traditions and creating an ensemble of houses with functional layouts. Their comparatively simple design was based on the Art Nouveau style of the time. From May 1901, the houses, which were fully furnished with specially made pieces to **illustrate a new modern lifestyle**, were presented to an international audience. The exhibition was accompanied by numerous publications by Koch and also enjoyed international press coverage.

A new exhibition hall was built for the next major exhibition on **Mathildenhöhe** in 1908. With its striking Wedding Tower, which was meant to be a "city



**A** // Workers' housing, now at Hofgut Oberfeld, Darmstadt (translocated) //

crown" visible from afar and to this day is still used to great effect in the city's international marketing material, **it is Darmstadt's hallmark** and also a significant building in architectural history, marking the transition to Expressionism. In addition to the artists' colony, **model houses for working-class families** were exhibited in 1908, addressing the **discussion of the housing question** that was important at the time. In 1914, rental apartments in multi-storey buildings with spacious balconies and front gardens were built to demonstrate new **ways of creating high-density housing** that offered a real alternative to the squalor of the tenements. The belief was that all classes of society should have a right to enjoy buildings of a certain architectural standard. However, the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 put an end to this first IBA, which had reached an international audience and set new standards for housing of the future.

**B** The first **provisional appraisal of the Neues Bauen style** was presented in **Stuttgart from 1925 to 1927** to look at the question of appropriate contemporary housing and interiors. It was accompanied by an exhibition entitled **Internationale neue Baukunst (new international architecture)**, which presented a panoramic review of contemporary reference projects ranging from the United States to the Soviet Union. In 1925, the Stuttgart authorities had joined forces with the Deutscher Werkbund, a driving force behind European reform movements



**A** // Haus Behrens, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt //

since 1907 and decided to make a large hillside site outside the city available for an estate that would use the latest materials and construction methods and technology to create built examples that would demonstrate the latest **housing trends**. This IBA, which was headed by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, made explicit reference to the example set by Darmstadt.

In spite of significant differences between the individual buildings, the specifications for simple shapes and flat roofs at the **Weissenhof Estate** were intended to create a strikingly uniform appearance. It was no longer the curved lines of Art Nouveau that were presented to the public in 1927, but austere sobriety; entitled **Die Wohnung (The home)**, the **Stuttgart Werkbund Exhibition** presented examples of modern architecture designed by prominent **architects from different European countries**, including Le Corbusier from Paris, Josef Frank from Vienna, and Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud from Rotterdam. At the same time, the exhibition **New International Architecture** featuring examples from the USA, the Soviet Union and European countries was held in a large hall in the centre of the city; it was documented in a richly illustrated catalogue. In addition to extensive coverage in the daily press and trade journals and in the book that accompanied the experimental estate, **which** had been commissioned by the Deutscher Werkbund, other publications included a manifesto written by Le Corbusier on **Five Points Towards a New Architecture** and the much-acclaimed

pamphlet **The Victory of the New Building Style** by Walter C. Behrendt. In Stuttgart a debate designed to provoke controversy was launched on the potential, risks and future of modern architecture.

The rise to power of the Nazis put an abrupt end to the burgeoning Modern Movement. Instead of the International Style, the revival of vernacular architecture was promoted, instead of modernisation and industrialisation of architecture, crafts methods and respect for regional traditions were called for. The protagonists of Modernism either left the country or went into what became known as “inner emigration.” It was not until after the West German state had been founded that international building exhibitions could once again be staged here.

**Constructa 1951** in Hanover was a show for the construction industry, at which new builds from housing estates in the area were presented and compared with international projects in France, Spain, the Netherlands, other European countries, Japan and the USA. In the same year, to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1901 exhibition, Darmstadt presented a series of **master buildings** intended to provide inspiration for post-war Modernism in the context of an international debate on the future of building entitled “Mensch und Raum” (people and space). The two exhibitions provided impetus for the third International Building Exhibition, this time in West Berlin, which was known for short as **Interbau Berlin 1957**.

**C** Held between **1953 and 1957 in Berlin**, it presented the latest trends in post-war Modernist housing. The key issues were the **plurality of housing forms** and the **aesthetic differences** in these discrete buildings set in a park-like landscape. These issues were vividly depicted in the buildings designed by prominent architects from all over the world and communicated in discussions on the **future of cities** which were part of a special exhibition entitled **the city of tomorrow**.

On top of the rubble of a neighbourhood that had grown up in the late 19th century and had been destroyed in the air raids of the Second World War, an **urban landscape** was created by extending the Tiergarten park. It was a low-density development interspersed with green spaces, designed to present an alternative to the densely built up “city of stone.” With its wide variety of design styles, layouts and building types ranging from terraced houses and apartment buildings to slender high-rises, it also



**B** // Corner house by Hans Scharoun, Weissenhof Estate, Werkbund Exhibition 1927 //



**C** // Visitors to the Hansa district during Interbau, new building by Pierre Vago in the background, Berlin 1957 //



**C** // Venue of the special exhibition “the city of tomorrow”, presented as part of Interbau, Berlin 1957 //



C

// Nine-storey residential building by Walter Gropius, Interbau Berlin 1957 //

aimed to be a symbol that would stand out against the return to national traditions that could be seen in East Berlin in the form of large-scale ensembles of monumental, historicist buildings based on Stalin's **doctrine of socialist realism**. As **an alternative cultural model during the Cold War**, the new **Hansa district** in West Berlin, which was headed by Otto Bartning, enjoyed worldwide recognition, demonstrated a **plurality of lifestyles** and design freedom. As a result of the extensive worldwide coverage it attracted, it was attentively registered within the competing political systems.

About a third of the participating architects came from outside Germany, among them celebrities such as Alvar Aalto, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer; landscape architects from abroad were also invited to design the open spaces. Germany's President Theodor Heuss, Interbau's patron, stressed the connection to the 1927 IBA in Stuttgart: "*Interbau* once more repeated this wonderful decision rooted in freedom to include architects of different nationalities in its invitation to participate. The opportunity to compare [different projects] and approve or reject them can be very informative. And it has made one thing certain: all the bleating for a return to "tradition" has fallen on deaf ears."

In a demonstrative gesture against the compact buildings on Stalinallee and in other East German towns and cities, the Interbau buildings were interspersed in the open space on the edge of the Tiergarten park. However, Interbau also made visible the

**limitations of the paradigm** of an **urban landscape** divided into neighbourhoods with low-density building development.

So it was no coincidence that some of the young architects from Berlin who took part in Interbau in 1957 and even then had called for **higher-density building development**, took the initiative two decades later and proclaimed that the **city centre [must be reclaimed] as a place to live** by preserving and modernising the existing building stock in the long-neglected districts so that they offered a new quality of life. Instead of the usual mechanics of demolishing old buildings and replacing them with new housing that would incur higher rents for the tenants, the idea now was to carry out careful urban renewal with the participation of the residents and help preserve and increase the availability of affordable housing.

In **IBA Berlin 1977-1987**, the **concept of urban repair** (IBA Alt), which was supported and carried out by numerous local initiatives, was complemented by the **principle of critical reconstruction**, which involved constructing new builds on brownfield sites in the innercity. The original street pattern was retained and the buildings reflected the spatial qualities of the pre-war buildings in terms of scale and massing and typologies such as block and courtyard (IBA Neu). Using contemporary and sometimes post-Modern architecture, spectacular projects demonstrated by example what urban design based on tradition could look like.

In addition to the participation in both IBA divisions of prominent architects from abroad such as Peter Eisenman, Daniel Libeskind, Rob Krier, Aldo Rossi and Alvaro Siza, extensive media coverage and **numerous publications by IBA** itself ensured a high degree of international interest. They ranged from project reports and recommendations for action to more academic anthologies, which injected important impetus into international discussions in the architectural and urban design world.

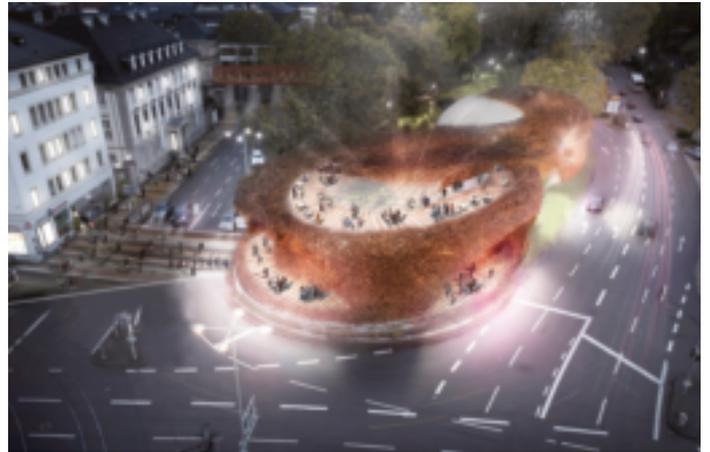
This IBA Berlin marked a **paradigm shift** in architecture and urban planning in the 20th century: given the **limits to growth**, it can no longer be taken for granted that the latest development is bound to be the best; on the contrary, the worldwide success with conserving, refurbishing, adding to and transforming existing buildings based on the **principle of recycling** has been promoted as a better alternative. Key ideas and principles of this IBA were incorpo-

rated into the next **Emscher Park International Building Exhibition, 1988-1999**, in which environmental, economic and housing measures were precisely defined and linked up. The reconstitution and renaturing of the Emscher River and surrounding landscape was part of a large-scale **transformation of this industrial region in decline** designed to create an attractive 70-kilometre-long **leisure and landscape park**, accessible to everyone living in the region and to an international audience.

With the aim, on the one hand, of **preserving the cultural identity** of this region that dates back to the industrialisation era while, on the other hand, demonstrating that it is **fit for the future** on the threshold to a service and information society, the conservation and modernisation of historical workers' housing, which has a special quality in its access to and use of open spaces, took on a very important role in this IBA. The **invention of new landscapes**, including conservation of industrial monuments which after their conversion were used as spectacular **venues for education, culture and leisure**, met with a widespread international response, especially since the **participation of artists and artists** such as Christo and Jeanne Claude, Dani Karavan and Richard Serra attracted the interest of other sectors of an audience interested in art.

In addition to the exemplary refurbishment and modernisation of old workers' housing estates, new-build projects such as the Küppersbusch estate set an example for an environmentally responsible approach to transforming urban wastelands. Through this IBA, the international debate on the **conversion of industrial land** acquired a forward-looking dimension, in particular when the 1996 interim report entitled **“Wandel ohne Wachstum? Stadt-Bau-Kultur im 21. Jahrhundert“ (Change without Growth? Sustainable urban development for the 21st century)**, which had numerous references to examples outside Germany, was published at the **Venice Architecture Biennale**.

This IBA achieved a new quality of thematic diversity, geographical reach and media coverage and set the bar high for the subsequent building exhibitions in the 21st century **in terms of international standards**. The success of future IBA will essentially depend on whether these standards continue to be achieved or possibly even surpassed. For ongoing IBA see: [www.open-iba.de](http://www.open-iba.de).



// IBA candidate “Forum Adenauerplatz”, IBA Heidelberg //



// F60 visitors' mine, conversion of an overburden conveyer gantry, IBA See //



// Gateway to the World Educational Centre, 2013, IBA Hamburg //

# Members of the IBA Advisory Board

**Sonja Beeck**, born in 1965, studied architecture at RWTH Aachen and completed a doctorate on the topic “Theming as a method for semantic programming of space” at Karlsruhe University. For IBA Stadtumbau 2010, an international building exhibition on urban restructuring, Beeck spent eight years developing scenarios and projects for and with 19 shrinking cities and towns in Saxony-Anhalt. Following a visiting professorship in urban design and regional planning at the University of Innsbruck (2006-2009), she taught as an interim professor at the University of Kassel in urban and regional planning (2010-2013). In 2011, Beeck helped create a plan for the international building exhibition in Berlin in 2020 for the Berlin Senate Administration for Urban Development, working with Martin Heller and the IBA prep team. Since 2013, she has been managing partner of chezweitz GmbH in Berlin, an office for urban scenography; since 2015, she has been head of FRIZZ20 GbR in Berlin.

**Werner Durth**, born in 1949, studied architecture and urban planning at TU Darmstadt and sociology and philosophy at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. Following his doctoral studies, Mr Durth was a research associate at the Institute of Sociology at TU Darmstadt. He was professor of environmental design at the Gutenberg University Mainz starting in 1981. From 1993 he worked as a professor in the principles of modern architecture and drafting at the University of Stuttgart. From 1998 to 2017, Mr Durth was professor in the history and theory of architecture at TU Darmstadt. He is a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts, the Saxon Academy of Arts in Dresden, the Kyiv Academy of Architecture and the German Academy of Urban Development and Regional Planning (DASL).

**Karl Jasper**, born in 1953, is head of the group on integrated urban renewal and urban development assistance at the North Rhine-Westphalia State Ministry of the Interior, Municipalities, Construction and Equality. He studied law in Bielefeld. From 1991 to 1997, he was head of division for matters related to the Emscher Park International Building Exhibition in the State Ministry. From 1997 onward, as division or group head, he has been responsible for topics including urban renewal, the social city programme, the Ruhr region, conservation of urban architectural heritage, city centre development, network and working group cooperation among municipalities, and the REGIONALE programme. He has been chair of the Stiftung Industriedenkmalpflege und Geschichtskultur, a foundation for industrial heritage, since 2009 and is also chair of the expert commission for urban design of the Conference of German Building Ministers.

**Reimar Molitor**, born in 1968, is managing partner of Region Köln/Bonn e.V., a regional management organisation. He completed a degree in geography at the University of Münster. Mr Molitor earned a doctorate on the topic “Sustainable regional development in Europe”. From 2000 to 2003, he worked in the regional management of the 2006 REGIONALE programme in the Bergische region in and around the cities of Wuppertal, Solingen and Remscheid. He then had a managing role in the 2010 structural REGIONALE programme in the Köln/Bonn region from 2004 to 2012. Mr Molitor is member of numerous advisory boards, structural policy organisations and committees related to urban and regional development.

**Reiner Nagel**, born in 1959, is an architect and urban planner and has been the chair of the Federal Foundation of Baukultur since May 2013. Prior to this position, he headed the department for urban development, urban and landscape design in the Senate Administration for Urban Development in Berlin (from 2005). Before that, starting in 1986, Mr Nagel worked for the City of Hamburg in various capacities at district and senate level, most recently as the managing director of HafenCity Hamburg GmbH (from 1998). He is a lecturer in urban design at TU Berlin, a member of the German Academy for Urban and Regional Planning (DASL), and an associate member of the Association of German Architects (BDA).

**Christa Reicher**, born in 1960, has been a professor and chair of the department of urban design and land use planning of the faculty of spatial planning at TU Dortmund since 2002. She is a co-founder and director of RHA reicher haase architekten + stadtplaner, a planning office with an international profile based in Aachen. From 2010 to 2016 she chaired the scientific advisory board of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR). Her membership in advisory boards includes Baukollegium Zurich (2010 to 2014), Baukollegium Berlin (2012 to 2017) and advisory board of Seestadt Aspern in Vienna (chair). Ms Reicher is also a member of the National Urban Development Policy Board.

**Walter Siebel**, born in 1938, is a doctor and professor emeritus for sociology at Oldenburg University. From 1989 to 1995 he was scientific director of the Emscher Park International Building Exhibition. From 1991 to 1992 he held a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Essen. He received the Fritz Schumacher Award in 1995 and the Schader Award in 2004. Mr Siebel is a member of the German Academy for Urban and Regional Planning (DASL), the German Sociological Association (DGS), the Academy for Spatial Research and Planning (ARL) and various advisory boards. His most recent book publications include: Die europäische Stadt (2004); Stadtpolitik (2009, with H. Häußermann and D. Läßle); Polarisierete Städte (2013, with M. Kronauer); Die Kultur der Stadt (2015).

**Kunibert Wachten**, born in 1952, is professor and chair of the Institute for urban and regional planning at RWTH Aachen. Until recently, he was responsible for the UNESCO Chair in World Cultural and Urban Landscapes. Prior to this position, he was professor for urban and regional planning at TU Wien. During this period, he also served as chair of the Land Advisory Board (Grundstücksbeirat) of the City of Vienna. He was a member of the board of trustees of the Hamburg International Building Exhibition in 2013 and is currently chair of the Advisory Committee of the Vienna International Building Exhibition in 2022.

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