

Press Release of the Salzburg Festival 2020

“Dreaming of a Fairies’ Temple”

Artistic Interventions on Festival Theatres Never Built

(SF, 28 July 2020) A crumpled piece of paper by the wayside, a huge white table in a beech grove, stamped poles in the rhinoceros enclosure of the Hellbrunn Zoo, and a gold-varnished portal frame in Mirabellgarten – starting today, these open-air artworks remind us of abandoned ideas and plans to build a Festspielhaus in Salzburg. From the very beginning, the idea of a festival was closely linked to the notion of building a festival theatre. During the past 130 years, numerous sites and plans have been devised for this undertaking. Four of these historical sites are now being revived through artistic interventions as part of the Salzburg Festival’s centenary.



Artist Esther Stocker crumpling her sculpture. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

Esther Stocker (Vienna), *Three-Part Wrinkle Sculpture for Mönchsberg*

Intervention on the Mozart-Festspielhaus project on Mönchsberg, 1890 (Atelier Fellner & Helmer, Vienna)

The oldest of these designs was the work of the architects Fellner and Helmer in 1890. On Mönchsberg, a Mozart-Festspielhaus would have offered a counterweight to the temple of Wagner worship erected in Bayreuth, far from the noise of the city. The artist **Esther Stocker** has created a three-part wrinkle sculpture in this very location. Like carelessly crumpled paper, the aluminium sculptures lie on the grass; they depict the large-scale floor plan of the Festspielhaus design, another page from the brochure of the Action Committee “Das Mozart-Festspielhaus in Salzburg” of 1890 and its cover page. “I played with this utopia and this visionary idea in an artistic manner. I was mainly interested in the question of what remains from this idea today, and what has been passed on,” Esther Stocker says. She was particularly intrigued by the passion with which the manifesto was written, by the architects’ international outlook and their wish to invite the world to Salzburg, even at this early point in time. The sheets, as she calls the sculptures, are made of aluminium, with a top layer of printed canvas cover. The wrinkles represent the fact that these ideas were elaborated, yet ultimately discarded. Like remnants, they now lie on the meadow as if by accident, inspiring pedestrians passing the spot to thought and reflection.



Right to left.: Margarethe Lasinger (Director of Dramaturgy, Salzburg Festival), Festival President Helga Rabl-Stadler, the artist Esther Stocker and the architectural historian and project initiator Norbert Mayr. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner



Three-Part Wrinkle Sculpture for Mönchsberg. Photo: SF/Lukas Pilz

Maria Flöckner & Hermann Schnöll, Norbert Mayr (Salzburg)

Intervention in Hellbrunn on the Festspielhaus project in the palace gardens, 1922 (architect: Hans Poelzig, Berlin)

Even in his 1917 *Manifesto on the Construction of a Festival Theatre in Hellbrunn*, the theatrical genius and Festival founder Max Reinhardt waxed enthusiastic about the location “far from the bustle of daily urban life”, yet easily accessible via tram. In the southernmost curve of the Hellbrunn park, today people take walks or exercise. Had the plans of the Berlin-based architect Hans Poelzig been implemented, they would be standing in the orchestra pit of the Festspielhaus. Architects **Maria Flöckner and Hermann Schnöll** joined project leader

Norbert Mayr in creating a very concrete intervention, illustrating the dimensions of the projected building in a direct manner. More than 1,000 poles have been hand-stamped and placed to mark the dimensions of the building, which would have been 160 m long and 110 m broad. The poles feature quotes from a speech by Poelzig to the Festspielhaus Association in Salzburg. Intriguingly, the poles may be taken away as souvenirs. The architects' concept assumes that the project will disintegrate gradually over the course of the years, so that only the main axis remains in our memory.



1,000 such poles have been hand-stamped by the architects. They mark the dimensions of the Festspielhaus planned for Hellbrunn. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner



On the longitudinal axis, so-called “place-keepers” inform visitors where in the building they would have been. The iron curtain is visualized by a 24-metre pile of boards, inviting visitors to sit and stay as a bench would. “We wanted to show the dimensions of this building, and illustrate the effects such a structure would have had on the premises of the park here,” says Hermann Schnöll. “The project uses elements which might be found on construction sites, for example measuring posts used to get a first measurement of a building’s dimensions,” Maria Flöckner adds. At the time, a cornerstone was laid and funds were raised, but ultimately inflation meant that the project could not be implemented. The yellow place-keepers not only lead visitors through the southernmost part of the Hellbrunn park, but reach as far as the

rhinoceros enclosure of the Hellbrunn Zoo. Where today rhinoceroses, gazelles and zebras live, the entrance and foyer of the Festspielhaus would have been located.



Right to left.: Maria Flöckner, Hermann Schnöll and Norbert Mayr. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner



Intervention in Hellbrunn on the Festspielhaus project in the palace garden. Photo: SF/Lukas Pilz

Werner Feiersinger (Vienna), Panel, 2019–20

Intervention on the Festspielhaus project on Kapuzinerberg, 1942/43 (architect: Otto Reitter, Salzburg)

The point of departure for the intervention by **Werner Feiersinger** is the plaster model for the Festspielhaus by architect Otto Reitter – a building which would have been part of the megalomaniac Nazi “Gauforum”. The model is part of the collection of the Salzburg Museum,

showing the penultimate state of the project in 1942. Regarding the envisioned “Gauforum” on Salzburg’s Kapuzinerberg, Adolf Hitler had decided in 1942 that a new location for the Festspielhaus would have to be found. It was to have its place across from the “Gauhaus” designed by architect Otto Strohmayer, on the south-eastern perimeter of the massive building complex. Otto Reitter aligned the building’s axis towards the castle Hohensalzburg in order to heighten the presence of the Nazi dictatorship in the urban landscape. “I wanted to counter this gigantesque, megalomaniac design with a model that was as small as possible,” says Werner Feiersinger. By choosing a simple and reduced form, he has tried to express his critical exploration of the project while avoiding the trap of legitimization. The table gives the model an appropriate space while also inviting visitors to linger. The surface plays a major role in his work, the artist explains: nothing is smooth and perfect, rather, he speaks of a dimpled skin, to which nature will adhere in due course as well.



Photo: SF/Werner Feiersinger

“I didn’t want to present my work at the most striking point,” says Werner Feiersinger. “I walked up the Kapuzinerberg several times before I felt able to decide upon the most appropriate place.” Continuous experimentation, back and forth – that is how he describes his working methods. Neither the question of where the table should be located nor the question where upon the table the model should be placed were answered by intellectual considerations, but by continuous experimentation. His goal was to create a work which is critical but also attractive, an open work enabling various intuitive approaches.

Isa Rosenberger (Vienna), *Portal Frame for Mirabellgarten*

Intervention on the Festspielhaus project in Mirabellgarten, 1950/51 (architect: Clemens Holzmeister, Ankara)

The design for the artistic intervention on Rosenhügel in the Mirabellgarten park recurs to Clemens Holzmeister's considerations on the unity of stage and auditorium and on overcoming the limits between nature and architecture. With her three-part, gold-varnished portal frame, artist **Isa Rosenberger** offers an abstract view of the three large backstage portals of Holzmeister's design for the festival theatre at the Rosenhügel: the view over Mirabellgarten to the castle Hohensalzburg is "framed". The city itself thus becomes a stage, as Festival founder Max Reinhardt always wished it to be.



Isa Rosenberger putting the finishing touches on her portal frame in Mirabellgarten. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

The Rosenhügel would have had to be razed for the construction. Isa Rosenberger factors this into her artwork: her frame is 19.5 m wide and 7.5 m high; the Holzmeister building would have been 9.5 m high (minus the 2 m of the Rosenhügel elevation). It is thanks to the company Stahlbau Ziegler, a long-standing partner of the Salzburg Festival, that the portal frame could now be implemented in the original dimensions (corresponding to Holzmeister's design). Holzmeister's Festspielhaus would only have been 10 m from Mirabell Palace; from the portal frame, the building would have stretched back for 110 m towards Auerspergstraße.

"The portal frame is meant to be an invitation to visitors to stage themselves,' the artist says. She has chosen its position so that it frames the classical Salzburg image, hoping to enable different perspectives on the city.



Isa Rosenberger with her portal frame in Mirabellgarten. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

This portal frame will also be combined with an audio play available for downloading on the Salzburg Festival website. The audio play begins with the laying of the cornerstone for the Festspielhaus in Mirabellgarten, an event Holzmeister called “tragicomic”. During the further course of the audio play, the three portals “speak” about different viewpoints and perspectives on the past, present and future of the Festival and the city as a “stage space” in a fictitious dialogue. The text of the audio play is based on original quotes by Clemens Holzmeister.

The artistic interventions are on public view until the end of 2020; they are accompanied by informational steles.



A portal frame for Mirabellgarten. Photo: SF/Lukas Pilz

Further information is available at: <https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/feentempel>

Press photos can be downloaded at: <https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/presse/fotoservice>

Biographies of the Participating Artists

Esther Stocker

Born in Schlanders, South Tyrol, in 1974. Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan and at the Art Center College of Design in California between 1994 and 2000. Since 2000 she has been a freelance artist working in the fields of painting, installations, sculpture and murals. Numerous international solo and group exhibitions as well as permanent murals/installations. In 2020 Esther Stocker receives the Prix Aurelie Nemours.

Maria Flöckner & Hermann Schnöll

Maria Flöckner studied in Vienna with Anton Schweighofer, Hermann Schnöll with Hans Hollein. Their architectural and artistic work has received numerous awards, including the Austrian Building Owners' Prize and the Architecture Award of the State of Salzburg in 2000 and 2008. They were nominated twice for the European Mies-van-der-Rohe Prize and were featured in the Architecture Biennial in Venice in 2008. In 2018 they won the international competition for the expansion of the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

Norbert Mayr, HTBLA, studied art history. Architectural historian, urbanist, author (architectural history and theory, urban development, landmark preservation). Managing director of M2plus since 2012.

Werner Feiersinger

Born in Brixlegg in 1966. Studied sculpture at the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna from 1984 to 1989 and at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht from 1991 to 1993. In 1999 he was a guest lecturer at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon, from 2002 to 2006 university lecturer at the TU Vienna and from 2006 to 2008 guest professor at the Vienna University of Applied Arts. Numerous exhibitions and sculptures in the public space in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria.

Isa Rosenberger

Born in 1969. Studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. Her artistic works in media such as video, photography and installations explore the interface of art and politics (of commemoration). Since 1999 she has taught at the TU Graz, the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and the TU Vienna, among others. Numerous exhibitions, festival participations and awards, including the Otto Mauer Prize (2008) and the Outstanding Artist Award for Video and Media Arts (2012).

Kind regards,
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