

Press Release

saai | Archive for Architecture and Engineering

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)

present an exhibition on the Multihalle Mannheim on the occasion of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale

Sleeping Beauty

Reinventing Frei Otto's Multihalle

On the occasion of the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, which will take place from 26 May to 25 November 2018, the saai at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) will present Frei Otto's Multihalle in an exhibition in the context of this year's biennial theme, "Freespace."

"Sleeping Beauty" follows on from the successful exhibition "Frei Otto – Thinking by Modeling," which was hosted by the ZKM in Karlsruhe from November 2016 to March 2017. The show in Venice focuses on the Multihalle and will be the first exhibition in the world dedicated to this fascinating building.

The project's initiators and curators are the Berlin-based urbanist and curator Sally Below and Georg Vrachliotis, professor of architectural theory and director of saai, who also curated the previous Frei Otto exhibition. Both are long-standing advisors to the City of Mannheim on the development of the Multihalle preservation strategy. The exhibition architect is Marc Frohn, who is also a professor at KIT, and his architecture firm FAR frohn&rojas.

The exhibition

The exhibition gives visitors a double view of the Multihalle. Looking back at the past, it presents original archival material to relate the building's experimental history. The exhibition also looks toward the future. Today, after several years of vacancy and 40 years after the construction of the Multihalle, which was originally planned as a temporary building, the City of Mannheim is working together with a dedicated group of artists, architects, local residents, concerned citizens, engineers, and universities on a new sustainable concept aimed at ensuring its long-term preservation. This open and collectively designed process is unique in Germany.

The title of the exhibition makes reference to this current process following a period of standstill. Its aim is to embed the Multihalle into the city's social landscape, reframe the discourse, which was previously more technical in nature, and develop a new interpretation of the building as a platform for an "open society," as Frei Otto originally intended. The Multihalle has gone from being a built object to becoming a subject of discourse.

The exhibition in Venice introduces the Multihalle and its future prospects to an international scene – and tells more about it to those already familiar with the structure. A portside building on the island of Guidecca, an authentic Venetian location, will serve as the exhibition space.

The Multihalle in Mannheim

The multipurpose hall, built by Frei Otto and Carlfried Mutschler for the 1975 Bundesgartenschau (federal garden exhibition) in Mannheim, Germany, is held to be the largest timber lattice shell structure in the world to date. With its experimental history, open spatial qualities and integration into the urban topography and its greenery, the Multihalle embodies an “open space” for an “open society.”

Frei Otto’s embrace of experimentation was not based on a systematic analysis of architecture in the narrow sense of the natural sciences, but on its artistic interpretation. He tirelessly experimented with models in order to investigate spatial qualities and mechanisms. Frei Otto thus laid the groundwork for an experimental culture that remains relevant today – one that straddles scientific observation and artistic skill, in a form balancing craftsmanship and intellect, where modeling can spark individual insights as well as collective discourse on the future of architecture. The Multihalle embodies this approach like no other building of the 20th century.

Exhibition facts and figures

Location:

Gondolieri Bauer Servizi, Giudecca 211, 30133 Venice
Vaporetto Station Redentore, lines 2, 4.1, 4.2 — 15 minutes from Giardini/Arsenale

Exhibition duration:

Preview: 24 May and 25 May 2018
Exhibition: 26 May to 29 July 2018
Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 1 pm to 7 pm

Curators:

Sally Below and Prof. Dr. Georg Vrachliotis

Exhibition architecture:

Prof. Marc Frohn, KIT Institute of Architectural Design, Art, and Theory, FAR frohn&rojas

Event organizer:

saai | Archive for Architecture and Engineering, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Patrons:

City of Mannheim, Commissioner for Building Culture, Tatjana Dürr

More information to follow shortly:

www.mannheim-multihalle.de

About the curators:

Sally Below is an urbanist, curator, and communications expert. One focus of her work is the design of exhibitions and interventions on urban topics. Among other things, she developed the open-air exhibition “Märkisches Viertel: 3.2 km² LEBEN” for the 50th anniversary of the large Märkisches Viertel housing estate in Berlin. The exhibition “München: Quartier beziehen” on the transformation of urban redevelopment areas was also created under her direction in 2013. In addition to her firm sbca in Berlin, she co-directs with Dr. Sven Sappelt the CLB Berlin, an

independent project space for urbanism, contemporary art, and cultural studies at Aufbau Haus at Moritzplatz in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Sally Below has worked as a consultant, concept developer, and communicator for a number of German contributions to the International Architecture Biennale in Venice, including the exhibition “Reduce Reuse Recycle.”

www.sally-below.de

Georg Vrachliotis is Professor for the Theory of Architecture at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). Before, he lectured and conducted research at the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture (gta) and the Institute of Technology in Architecture (2005 to 2011) of ETH Zurich. Vrachliotis studied architecture at the Berlin University of the Arts and was conferred his PhD at ETH Zurich in 2009. He worked as guest scientist at the Universities of Freiburg and Bremen as well as at the Department of Architecture of the University of California at Berkeley. From 2006 to 2010, he was guest lecturer for the theory of architecture at Vienna University of Technology. From 2012 to 2014, he was visiting professor for the Theory of Architecture at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). He also curated the exhibition “Frei Otto – Thinking by Modeling” at ZKM Karlsruhe

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