

Translation and translocation

le Croissant

La Défense, Nanterre/Paris in progress, will be completed in 2018

Redevelopment of public spaces (80,000 sqm),

collaboration with OGI Engineers and

Les éclairagistes associés

La Défense is one of Europe's largest business districts, west of Paris. Directly adjoining its big towers and high-rise parking garages is the neighbourhood of Le Croissant. It is in the process of being redeveloped in order to improve neighbourhood quality of life.

Part of a greater plan is Topotek 1's redesign of the neighbourhood's public spaces. There will be a more elegantly designed section, as a transition from the business district, and areas with asphalt and green for diverse activities and social events, and finally, a landscape park. As with *Superkilen* the concept for Le Croissant is inspired by the tradition of garden design – which has always appropriated elements from different cultures. The objects to be installed in Le Croissant's new spaces are selected according to three qualities: novelty (e. g. a round ping-pong table from Singapore), being out of context (although elsewhere common, e. g. outdoor gym equipment from California), and objects ordinarily used indoors (now transferred to outdoor use, e. g. hat racks).

Out of context

Inflatables

Temporary installation, movable and inflatable objects, various shapes, sizes and places, since 2004

Pink is their outstanding eye-catching characteristic. Wherever they are installed – either sitting in the grass or on the pavement, floating or hovering, or hung from a ceiling – the Inflatables appear as a surprise. You cannot categorise them. Depending of the context they may give the impression of giants' toys or something that has deliberately been oversized like a pop art-sculpture.

The Inflatables were first produced for the State Horticultural Show in Wolfsburg and have been reproduced and shown ever since in differing contexts from Berlin to Shanghai: in gallery and museum exhibitions, at the Architecture Biennale of Venice, or on the occasion of festivals.

They were used as playground equipment, park furniture, backdrop decoration, or as disturbing elements provoking contrast. In all cases, they communicate with their surrounding. And with the viewers, visitors, or passers-by they always trigger spontaneous and affective responses.

artistic collaborations

As Topotek 1 are interested in commuting across different disciplines and landscape-typologies their work is drawing on neighbouring disciplines such as architecture, art, design, or scenography. Guided by a critical evaluation of one's own field, they often invite artists from different fields to contribute to their projects. Thus, over the years they have formed reliable partnerships. Some works of these artists are presented in the exhibition.

Iwan Baan

Superkilen, 2012

(3 C-prints on Dibond)

Topotek 1 and their collaborators invited photographer Baan to document the public park they created together. Baan focused on the various ways the different zones of *Superkilen* are used. His photos present the park as an urban stage, played on by different actors who lay claim to the public space.

Iwan Baan was born in 1975, he lives and works in Rotterdam.

Hanns Joosten

Paris, 1981

(gelatin silver print on Ilford; vintage)

Paris illustrates the emergence of a pictorial language that Joosten has pursued since the early 1980s. It is an image composed by an urban perspective: partly shot straight through a pane of glass, the view is divided by architectural lines and edges that are softened by the movement in the street.

Femme Fatale, 1995

(3 Polaroid prints, Typ 100/Hasselblad)

The photographs originate from a shoot Joosten did in collaboration with fashion designer Caren Sielaff in a vacant 'Stasi' building in East Berlin. The glamorous dresses contrast the stuffy atmosphere of the office building which is transformed into a dreamy setting by the artificial colours.

Hanns Joosten is born in Haarlem, Netherlands. He lives and works in Berlin.

Rebecca Saunders

Bite for bass flute solo, 2015/16,

(3 sketches, pencil on paper, score booklet, published by Peters Edition)

This composition is inspired by Samuel Beckett's "Texts for Nothing". Like in Beckett's pieces, with its several disembodied voices, there is a variety of sounds and key words that are repeated like an endless echo. The different stages of the composition process are displayed in the handwritten notes, timbral sketches, and the finished score.

Composer Rebecca Saunders was born in London in 1967. She is professor at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media and lives in Berlin.

SUPERFLEX

Euphoria Now / Swiss Franc, 2015

(poster design in collaboration with Rasmus Koch Studio; digital print with manual imprint, edition)

The poster was developed for a Basel gallery show dealing with psychedelic, happy states of mind and their effects on perception. "Euphoria Now!" is a call for exuberance. Yet, as the background reflects the colour scheme of the Swiss banknotes, it makes one feel that it is primarily money that stimulates passion and hilarity.

The Danish artists' group was founded in 1993 by Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger, and Rasmus Nielsen. They are based in Copenhagen.

Rosemarie Trockel

Für Freunde und Förderer (For Friends and Supporters), I–V, 2004

5 helio engravings, (Loan: Stiftung Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig)

The work is based on historical photographs from the 1950s. At first glance, the series displays three figurative and two abstract motifs. Yet, the abstract ones are versions of the same figurative image, which was made unrecognisable in the artistic procedure. Trockel thereby dissolves the historical references of the original.

Rosemarie Trockel was born in 1952. She is a professor at the Arts Academy of Düsseldorf and is based in Cologne.

Jun Yang

Somewhere, 2015

(C-print, framed)

The work is based on an AP press photo by Emilio Morenatti which shows a balloon seller in the outskirts of Kabul – his funny balloons flashing a moment of hope in a war zone. Yang took up its motif and multiplied an image that highly differs from the currently predominating media images of Islamic countries and radiates a touch of optimism.

Jun Yang was born in 1975 in Qingtian, Zhejiang, China. He lives in Taipei, Vienna, and Yokohama.

creative infidelities

TOPOTEK 1

landscape architect, Berlin

EN

arc en rêve centre d'architecture bordeaux

Creative Infidelities, TOPOTEK 1

Barbara Steiner, curator
Oliver Klimpel, scenographer
realisation for arc en rêve centre d'architecture
Michel Jacques, architect and artistic director
assisted by Alexia Menec, architect

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14 09 2017 → 14 01 2018

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Since 1981 arc en rêve centre d'architecture has elaborated a cultural awareness-building strategy focusing on contemporary architecture and extending into city planning, landscape design and object design, aimed at broadening perceptions of a changing world. Its internationally recognised programme features exhibitions, lectures, public discussions, publications, workshops for children, seminars for adults, visits to buildings, city tours, and planning experiments.

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arc en rêve centre d'architecture presents the exhibition **creative infidelities TOPOTEK 1** devoted to the Berlin-based architecture and landscape design studio Topotek 1. The show takes place within the stimulating context of a contemporary urban society that is increasingly eager to embrace nature.

Topotek 1 designs and carries out projects in a way that is both intelligent and playful. Their work draws skilfully and mischievously from the vocabularies of architecture, planning, design and graphic design, and is characterised by a determined quest for hybridisation that can be seen in the form, the function and the image of the projects, including their choice of materials (for example, artificial grass or plastic flooring for a public square).

Topotek 1 is a two-sided enterprise: on the one hand it is emotional and passionate; on the other, it is realistic and pragmatic.

The originality of what they produce lies in this tension between control and lightness, seriousness and fun. Their work in urban and rural settings in Europe and Asia is underscored by local cultural references that resonate with references from further afield, and also introduces unusual and unexpected features.

The work of Topotek 1 is truly astonishing. At once pertinent, precise and unsettling, it sparks an emotional response.

The exhibition has been designed to inflect the way we look at things in a similar way. Drawing from both art and design, Oliver Klimpel has created an installation that interprets the work of Topotek 1. This design approach highlights the importance of storytelling for Topotek 1, offering visitors a spatial experience.

The exhibition **creative infidelities** provides an opportunity to see and feel the Baroque aesthetic of Topotek 1's work, which skilfully cultivates a sense of ambiguity by deliberately playing with artifice to create landscapes to be used as public spaces. Topotek 1's cheekily poetic creations are sharply sensitive to the complexity of the world and invite us to take part in truly fabulous and unexpected experiences.

Francine Fort director, arc en rêve centre d'architecture

On the Landscape Architecture of TOPOTEK 1

The title “Creative Infidelities” makes reference to Jorge Louis Borges, whose observations on translation and interpretation have had a significant influence on Topotek 1’s approach. Borges understands mistranslations and fragmentary translations as a chance for displacement and regional transpositions: a situation enriching the original rather than diminishing it. Taking inspiration from this very concept, Topotek 1 deals with compositions, forms, and content in an open and liberating manner. The exhibition itself can be seen as a response to Borges as well: Topotek 1’s work has been translated by Oliver Klimpel into a narrative interior landscape. The designer has developed a new immersive installation that is inspired by a selection of Topotek 1 projects – re-contextualising their different localities in new views and surprising combinations.

The exhibition is curated by Barbara Steiner.

contemporary

Topotek 1’s approach to the landscape is architectural: a place must be solid, legible and visible.
Topotek 1 want people to understand that “nature” is being created.
Topotek 1 is opposed to the romantic myth—still current today—of the English garden that imitates, blurs and creates illusions.
Topotek 1 prefers to reference the Baroque garden, which involves a more honest concept of space.
Topotek 1 seeks to create hybrid spaces that express our contemporaneity.
Topotek 1 works with the materials that surround us, such as polished stainless steel, floor paint, or artificial grass.
Their aim is to create a sense of surprise, ambiguity and confrontation within a necessarily artificial landscape.

Karine Dana

profile

The task central to our office is the design of urban open spaces. Throughout design, planning, and construction we offer solutions for new parks, squares sportsgrounds, court-yards and gardens, whose designs answer to requirements for variability, communication and sensuality. The manifold experiences through a broad spectrum of German and international projects meanwhile capacitate an efficient realization, finely tuned to respective necessities.

background

Topotek 1 is a landscape architecture studio that specializes in the design and construction of unique urban open spaces. Founded by Martin Rein-Cano in 1996, the studio’s roster of German and international projects has ranged in scale from the master plan to the private garden. Each project strives to respond to site conditions and programmatic necessities with a compelling concept, high quality of design and efficient implementation.

how we work

In the early stages of a project, the design teams search for conceptual approaches based on a critical understanding of the task. With digital drawing and physical models we test, revise, and communicate the initial design intent.

collaborations

Topotek 1 often collaborates with other creative consultants such as artists, lighting designers, and video programmers to enrich the experiential potential of a project. In parallel, we work closely with technical consultants such as civil and traffic engineers early in the design process to integrate site solutions with design innovation consistently throughout the project.

Topotek 1

projets

Mapping the past

Post-industrial Park

Eberswalde, Brandenburg, 2002
State Horticultural Show (170,000 sqm)

Eberswalde once was an important industrial centre. When the State Horticultural Show was to take place there, Topotek 1 transformed the former industrial site into a landscape park by maintaining the connection to the past. Fragments of history are still there: the rolling mill, a horseshoe factory, an old crane. A layout of sheet steel strips on the ground remind you of the metallurgic tradition in general and the rolling mill’s production in particular. The strips are mapping the territory which had been shaped by the factory works. Subterranean canals are inviting for pedal boat tours – the former cooling system of the mill thus was transformed into something adventurous and romantic. The theme gardens of the exhibition were situated at the entrance of the show. Some of them, e. g. the medicinal garden, were more or less classical. But amongst them Topotek 1 planted newly invented “genres”, such as “The Heavy Metal Garden”. They thought of these gardens as a curiosity cabinet – to add to conventional concepts of garden shows.

Garden revisionism

Castle Park

Wolfsburg, Lower Saxony 2004
Landscape garden (230,000 sqm),
on the occasion of the State Horticultural Show

When the park of Wolfsburg Castle was enlarged and redesigned Topotek 1 refurbished its English landscape garden and accomplished a contemporary interpretation of the same. Whereas the English tradition strives to create the impression of a natural landscape – concealing that it is nevertheless man-made – Topotek 1 followed a different approach by keeping their own interventions clearly distinguishable, either in the choice of materials or in rather outlandish colouring. Yet, they took up the traditional ideas of illusion and amazement in adopting the 18th and 19th century, then popular, follies (ornamental mock buildings typical of landscape gardens): here they feature as polished stainless steel structures housing miniature gardens and arranged in circles so that they mirror the environment in multiple views. As the mirrored images change according to the stroller’s position you are reminded of another aspect of the traditional landscape garden – moving through it, walking from scene to scene that is, you perceive moving pictures.

Interlinking building and garden

Kindergarten Griechische Allee

Berlin 2007
Kindergarten outdoor area (3,600 sqm),
collaboration with Behles & Jochimsen Architects

A building from the GDR in grey colour – at first glance, not much of a surprise. This is why the colour concept is key to the project. With its restructuring by Behles & Jochimsen (building and interior) and Topotek 1 (exterior) everything built aboveground has been kept in different shades of grey: the building’s façade, the bridge and ramp and its parapets,

the outer wall and its extensions. They all form an ensemble where from the ramp evolves a bridge and wall.

In contrast to these structures, on the ground, you will find grass, sandy areas and the pink surface of the entrance zone. The pink marks the physical interface between the public and private space of the ensemble thus referring to the public mission of the kindergarten and the privacy of the children beyond this zone. The fixed playground equipment (seesaw, swing, climbing net, tyres) are black and white only. It is the mobile toys (tricycles, sandbox equipment etc) and the children themselves who bring in the vivid colours.

Functional Duplicity

Market / Parking, KAIiAK

Berlin 2007
Market place & parking space (1,020 sqm),
in the context of KAIiAK (Kunst und Architektur in Alt-Köpenick)

The context of the competition was a larger project for the neglected East Berlin district of Alt-Köpenick. The neighbourhood was designated as redevelopment area in order to reduce vacancy and to stimulate housing investment. *Market / Parking* was one of the temporary projects which were to launch this process. In response to the permanent lack of parking spots in the district’s historic town, Topotek 1 suggested to turn an informal parking ground into an official one and to connect the same space with a second function: a market place. At first the parking place needed to be clearly defined. This was effected by painting the asphalt ground in red, with purple lines and white numbers marking individual parking spots. The “special features” are a red caravan, used as a ticket booth, and – outstanding – a giant red parasol. The parasol is a most simple and effective device to indicate whether on a special day the place can be used as a parking lot (closed parasol) or whether it is market day (open parasol).

Mise en scène(ry)

Railway Cover

Theresienhöhe, Munich, 2010
Recreation space & play ground (16,800 sqm),
collaboration with Rosemarie Trockel
and Catherine Venart

The brief was to transform an elongated residual space, connecting two newly developed residential areas, into a place for play and recreation. Yet, this spacious terrain is no ordinary piece of land. It consists of reinforced concrete and covers the railway tracks beneath, like a huge bridge. Topotek 1’s idea is inspired by what is going on under this construction: trains are heading towards the Alps which from Theresienhöhe you can catch a glimpse of and which might make you long for travelling. The result of their work is not a sculptured landscape, but a landscape sculpture including artificial hills and beaches. It consists of sand (fine gravel), rubberised dunes, and natural as well as synthetic grass mounds with abstract grazing animals (pommel horses). There is playground equipment like individually designed climbing structures and miniature trampolines sunk in the dunes’ grounds.

An orange ridge frames the green and beige sculpture like a tiny wall. Beyond this enclosure lie the beach showers, the walking and cycling paths, and a small pine grove.

Patterns of perception

Evergreen, Heerenschürli

Zurich, 2010
Sports facilities & neighbourhood park (97,000 sqm),
collaboration with Dürig AG

The sports ground Heerenschürli, which has existed since the 1970s, is used for professional tournaments and open to local sports clubs. With Topotek 1’s redesign it has been renamed as “Evergreen”. Besides seven fields for different sports, you will find skate parks, cycle tracks, and walkways to connect the adjacent neighbourhoods. As the paths intersect from north to south and east to west between the rectangular fields, the layout appears like a city grid. The high fences enclosing the playing fields add to this impression – their three-dimensionality may feel like city blocks when you move through the alleys in between. Most striking is the overall impression of green. The central building, the fences, spectators’ stands, pillars and posts, and every other item made of steel or plastic is coloured in shades of green. It seems to mimic nature’s green, whereas the organic green consists of artificial components (consider the synthetic turf). Thus, “Evergreen” makes the relation between nature and artificiality a central theme, motivated by Topotek 1’s interest in the perception of nature.

Foreign familiar

superkilen

Copenhagen, 2012
Public park, (27,000 sqm)
collaboration with BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group –
and SUPERFLEX

The stretched space of *Superkilen*, which is part of an urban development project, is organised in three spatial zones, kept in different colours. You move from the “The Red Square”, an activity zone with lots of events, to the “The Black Market”, a popular meeting point, to “The Green Park” leisure area. The zones are equipped with different kinds of seats, swings, or sports items to be used, but also decorative, aesthetic elements which may have emotional value for the residents using the park. The furnishing was chosen after public discussions with the locals – who have very different ethnic and social origins – according to their wishes. Thus, icons and significant everyday items from public space all over the world have found their way to *Superkilen*. They have either been imported or reconstructed on site. You will find a Moroccan fountain, a Kazakh bus stop, a Japanese octopus play structure, a Thai boxing ring, a Qatar dentist’s sign, and the Spanish Osborne bull.

Orchestrating the void

Lorsch Abbey

Land de Hesse, 2014
Southern Hesse, 2014
UNESCO World Heritage Site
Abbey and Altenmunster of Lorsch” (52,000 sqm),
collaboration with hg merz architekten

The World Heritage Site comprises the fragments of the Abbey’s complex from the 8th century and the traces of the preceding smaller monastery called Altenmunster – a large green space with very few remains. The landscape design was to follow the regulations of monument preservation and resulted in an unobtrusive layout respecting topography, architecture, and archaeological findings. Topotek 1 concentrated on accentuating what had once been there by creating a “stage” or scenery for the site to show itself. They remodelled the glacial sand dune where the Abbey was built. After purging the terrain, they created lines of sight from different points of view for the visitors strolling along the walkways between the Abbey and the Altenmunster’s site. The former footprint of the monastic building structures have been remodelled and covered with a lawn-like protective carpet. By imprinting it onto the ground Topotek 1 succeeded in making the absence of the ancient monastery felt.

Drawing on tradition

Scenographical Punctuation

Porte Jeune, Mulhouse, 2013
Urban intervention (500 sqm)
collaboration with Mutabilis Landscape Architects

The city of Mulhouse was a renowned centre of textile industry in the 19th century. For Place de l’Europe, which is a tram and traffic junction in front of the Porte Jeune shopping centre, Topotek 1 designed a two-dimensional intervention drawing on the city’s tradition of textile production. Therefore, they examined various design samples, colours, and patterns at the local *Musée de l’impression sur étoffes*. They decided upon the colour red for accentuating Place de l’Europe as red alludes to the Mulhouse city arms colour, Antigone Red. Topotek 1 used three shades of red inspired by the museum’s collection, firstly for ground marks across the intersection and secondly for a flag to be hung on a high pole. Red stripes in different shades were applied to the pavement – they may be perceived as traffic signs, like coloured zebra crossings, or abstract art. From the flagpole three fabric designs are fluttering by turns, just like insignia of imaginary nations or as proud testimony of the city’s history.