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Vienna URBION

Wien, Austria

Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH

Realisation

1996 - 2000

Vienna URBION

City-wide revitalization of the Vienna Gürtel, implementing new urbanistic uses to transform the image of a previously derelict zone. URBION is one of the five key projects of the EU URBAN program.

The Vienna Gürtel is the transportation backbone of the city with ten municipal districts bordering its busy lanes. For years, its traffic chaos, lack of street life and menace of social degradation were subjects of inconclusive planning projects and controversies. The historic railway "Stadtbahn" project by Otto Wagner (today the Vienna Underground), which runs along the highway, is the primary means of access to the entire URBAN zone. At the core of the Gürtel concept was the preservation of the architectural heritage of Otto Wagner and how to address the conflicting demands of public space versus high traffic volumes. By designing transparent and connective architecture for the Gürtel median, the area re-emerged as a pivotal space of interaction that once again links the outer and inner districts.

URBION developed a comprehensive set of measures for a new, low-cost design of the median strip that would respect existing structures and could be implemented in consecutive phases.

Fundamental to the "image transposition" strategy was the general improvement of the Gürtel with green landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle zones, and populating the "Stadtbahn" brick arches with cultural and entertainment facilities, restaurants and music clubs. Thus, the lively Gürtel provides daytime recreation as well as a progressive nightlife destination.

Kubus Export, Exhibition Room

A part of the URBION Master Plan and co-funded by the European Union, this intervention was designed with artist Valie Export. "The Glass Body" is an autonomous, transparent space, set underneath a railway bridge. Constructed solely from glass, the cube showcases diverse art exhibitions and performances. The permeability of the bridge between both sides of the Gürtel is emphasized by the absolute transparency.

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