

## **Die Baupiloten have magically transformed a Kindergarten in Berlin**

The refurbishment of the Kindergarten Traumbaum ("Tree of Dreams"), Dessauer Str. 27, Berlin

### **Experimental**

*Die Baupiloten*, a group of student architects from the TU Berlin, have completed their second project: the kindergarten Tree of Dreams in Berlin. (Start of planning 2004, completion July 2005, total building costs 47.000 €)

When the kindergarten got new management in 2004 the somewhat perfunctory post-modern building (completed 1990) received a new, more poetic name, "Tree of Dreams". Reason enough for *Die Baupiloten* to take up this imaginative thread and follow on from there. The sombre corridors and the central atrium were transformed into a light, airy and phantastic world for children. The aim has been to encourage the children to communicate and interact spontaneously and experimentally.

### **Sensuous**

*Die Baupiloten* designed a colourful and abstract tree-like structure that is taken over by giant life-size inhabitable flowers. The blossoms offer a sanctuary and hideout for the children aged 2-11.

At the entrance to the kindergarten the children are welcomed in 14 languages reflecting their multi-ethnic backgrounds. The architectural intervention by *Die Baupiloten* concentrates on bringing daylight into the inner core of the building, namely the atrium. Depending on the seasonal position of the sun each season has its own dedicated set of reflective steel panels, the so-called "leaves" conducting the sunlight deep into the building.

The tree of dreams acts like a sensor to the seasons and the time of the day. The low Winter sun sets off a mysteriously bright winter a-sparkle that permeates the formerly gloomy corridors on the ground floor. During the Summer a soft and bright summer a-glow generates a bright and welcoming atmosphere. In Spring and Autumn the leaves positioned at the back wall of the atrium enable the sunrays to meander through the halls and trigger off a spring and autumn a-glistening. Six further reflecting season leaves at the edge of the glass roof redirect sunlight onto the floor of the atrium during the entire year.

On the ground floor the so-called Trunk World of inclined dry walling sprawls along corridor walls. Some trunks are inhabited by the Dream Blossoms – round metal baskets covered with a non-inflammable translucent textile backlit in subtle colours

The tree of dreams appears like a fabulous beast that has turned into reality. It can shine, move and make sounds. There is even a tree telephone, which conveys mysterious messages.

### **Socially Engaged**

As part of the design process *Die Baupiloten* encouraged the children, aged between two and eleven years from diverse cultural backgrounds, to express their ideas of a tree of dreams in paintings and three-dimensional form. The tree was intended as a living object, which even communicates audibly with the children.

The transformation of the kindergarten helps to improve the quality of life in the building and its immediate neighbourhood, a socially disadvantaged area of Berlin. It actively succeeds in stimulating the children's imagination and communication, offering them opportunities for interactive play.

Currently *Die Baupiloten* are planning their second kindergarten in Berlin, which will be completed in 2006.

### **Die Baupiloten**

*Die Baupiloten* carry out building projects as part of their architectural education under the guidance and supervision of the architects Susanne Hofmann, AA Dipl. and Dipl. Ing. Martin Janekovic.

The Baupiloten-course has been set up at the Technical University of Berlin as a "Studienreformprojekt" to support a stronger interface between academic and professional experience.

In 2004 the first project of *Die Baupiloten*, the refurbishment of the Erika-Mann Elementary School in Berlin received an honourable mention at the ar+d Emerging Architect Award. Furthermore, the prize of the Socially Integrative City was awarded to *Die Baupiloten* in 2005.

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