



12. Hans Hollein and Inken Baller, Vienna, Austria, 1984.  
13. Günther Domenig, 27. Bezirk, Vienna, 1975.  
14. Max Perle and Günther Domenig, residential house 'Schulhaus', 1986.  
15. Hans Hollein, annual conference building, Vienna, 1987.  
16. John Hejduk, House 13, 1962

and valleys, and even be permitted to build in a poorer suburb of the city, so long as the world at large didn't know. Visitors were not told about the building for a long time. In the end, however, architectural mafias and politicians (who are notoriously oblivious of things usually) are doomed to fail. So it is that, eventually, Berlin's Umlaufbank by Ludwig Leo and Fraenkelufer Housing by Hinrich and Inken Baller have seeped through the net with Günther Domenig's 'Z' bank as pieces of noticeable, intriguing and distasteful architecture. Moreover, his enjoyment of the international scene has caused Domenig to pitch his latest University buildings for Graz up to the levels of refinement that are more characteristic of American college buildings, without their formal sterility. He has become the hero and spokesman for the 'Graz Schule' despite the inevitable Austrian predilection for bitching between friends. Interestingly, it is with the two Viennese, Prix and Swiczinsky, that he can talk most freely. They in turn acknowledge the fellow feeling with the Grazers, perhaps because they themselves had enjoyed years and years of studied indifference from an edgy Viennese scene.

Not for the first time do I have to make direct comparisons between Vienna and London. The differences first: that London is infinitely more international and suffers from the feeling that 'everybody comes through at some time' which can easily lead to complacency—and that London does have more work for architects ('It's just that they're the wrong architects', etc. etc. . .). But the similarities are more intriguing: the shared cynicism, the shared amusement at two or three different drinkers in the bar being intellectual enemies but social friends (impossible in New York), the feeling on the part of the most outrageous innovators that whatever they do is merely part of the inevitable metamorphosis of the city. It breeds at

best that foreknowledge that architecture is a very wide and resilient old territory and that the rise and fall of power, status, monarchies, empires, traditions—can be ascribed to the discussion of architecture itself. Certainly in the 1960s and early '70s we felt that only in Vienna and Tokyo did they really share our optimism that architecture could and must extend its territory and vocabulary—devouring from other territories if necessary—and thrusting forward (metaphorically, technologically and literally) into space. Perhaps Raimund Abraham would be embarrassed that I mention his early designs for rooms and space suits. John Hejduk, head of New York's Cooper Union, often talks about the essential isolation of really new architecture and about power; in this he is not referring to the mandate enjoyed by Philip Johnson but the issue of trajectory. As he points out, a certain naivety is necessary—perhaps a boyish enthusiasm which certainly links many of the people I am discussing. I can still recall it in the atmosphere of the Archigram Group. Somehow we were conscious that forward-thrust architecture could only come about by pitching it against the general status quo. 'This'll upset them' was often said as a phrase of encouragement to one's companion. The 'them' was known and understood to be the polite, acquisitive, wanting-to-be-seen-to-be-all-right architects of London town. We knew that a studied indifference would be the inevitable reception to our work . . . but there were unknown allies scattered here and there. The Archigram publicists set off the chains. 'We are a small group in Prague, we call ourselves the "Continualists"', (Dalibor Vesely) . . . 'Perhaps you might be interested in the catalogue of my

often indifferent German mainstream consciousness as foreign—but (as Austrians) not very foreign, as artistic but not aggrist; as weird—but in the end perhaps not weird enough; so that their handsome exhibition at the National Galerie in Berlin two years ago seemed to be saying 'here we are in Mies' basement . . . now will you take us seriously.' The seeming opportunities of Düsseldorf (money, buildings, energy) have also been his trap. In London or Vienna they wouldn't have built much either, but they would have had tougher rivalries, stranger conversations and, perhaps, that curious brotherhood that eventually emerges between creative rivals who are aware that the architectural world at large (maybe 200 000 or 300 000 people) is hardly interested in any of them.

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exhibition at the Nächst St. Stephan' (Hans Hollein) . . . 'I am from Floren but teaching alongside your friend Mike Webb' (Adolfo Natalini), later of course they became real faces, friends, sometime allies, but the first contact was very important seen against the studied indifference which could of course demoralise. At this moment I feel the spirit of alliance once more towards and between the young English who depicted perilously hung or scrawled shapes that resemble butchers' offal more than they do the Parthenon, and Austrians whose buildings resemble punk hair-dos, and Japanese who live inside beached oldlurms with tasteful triangles sticking out, and Americans who place gawky legs up against quilted hangars.

As might be expected, the most relaxed coleria within this total scenery has existed for some time now in Los Angeles. That city still has a useful tradition for eccentrics and eccentricities, with Hollywood's dreamworld as some sort of general cultural legitimiser. It has meant that your own theories, however loopy, could find their slot and that somewhere up there on the hills there would be a couple of allies. Archigram first landed there in 1968, backed by a bunch of AA students who later became Chrysalis and later still became the core of Rogers' Pompidou team. In the same department of UCLA there arrived a small group of tutors and students from

Graz. The most eccentric of them, Heidulf Gengross, made the buying of a mattress and the continual sleeping on it in the middle of the school into a simultaneous piece of both conceptual art and opportunism. The humour, though much more perseverance too, remains in his design for the Königspeder house, somewhere nearby was lurking the embryo Thom Mayne, Eric Moss, Coy Howard and the already known Craig Hodgetts. And busy with his prais output—before the great exciting flip—was Frank Gehry.

For some years there was an inevitable suspicion of the English and Austrian combination of seriousness about language (both formal and verbal) and about drawing. Moss himself has perhaps parodied this period best in a beachside remodel that with its curved corners and pipework excrescences and, essential, lemon-yellow walls, is a source of embarrassment to both him and his Archigram friends. Anyhow, the exuberant and formally inventive series of buildings that are now recognised as the 'Los Angeles Thing' could only evolve directly from the beach, the frame and plywoods, the observation of John Lautner's extraordinary houses, the glamour of Frank Lloyd Wright's son Lloyd when on form, and perhaps the return home to America after a year at the Harvard Graduate School for these young architects. Michael Rotondi of Morphosis declares—quite aggressively—that it was essential to make an American architecture. From London, though, one recognises another aspect of the positiveness of Los Angeles—for here too the companions at the bar make very different buildings from each other and yet feel themselves allied in the face of the disdain from New York. And whilst that city laid down the lines of succession and the new formal rules, the Angelinos felt more and more like running free with bits of

wood, sheets of almost anything flat that could be bent at will, and tacky materials like bitumen tiles and staples. Frank Gehry took inspiration directly from his artist friends and did with whom rooms and edifices what they might have done with gallery installations and driftwood—and better. Moreover, he was prepared to go and live in them. This more than anything else gave impetus to young architects, who were suspicious of four-square surfaces and impermeable substances, to go out and collage-together buildings in space. The politics of the situation have

17. Mike Webb, Home & Wall project, 1980.  
18. Eric Moss, Home, 7th House, Pacific Palisades, L.A., 1968.  
19. Peter and Roger, Pompidou Centre, Paris.  
20. Richard and Gregorius, Königspeder House, Königspeder, Austria, 1969.  
21. Eric Howard, Thom Mayne, California, 1986.  
22. Stephen Auer, Heidegger House, Los Angeles, 1977.



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