ended with a compromise. They managed to retain their rooflight nozzles in the upper floor, but the money ran out and the intended reflective surfaces within the nozzles were omitted, leaving only the black painted structure, so there is hardly any reflection of the restricted amount of light that enters. Adding insult to injury, in a move to revive the nozzles’ intended prominence under artificial light, spirals of naked fluorescent were placed within their volumes, creating an effect that is much too harsh. The lower gallery depends mainly on artificial light, but here too the number of windows to the outside world was reduced, and the intention of retreating the edge of the intermediate floor so that the outer skin could unfold into the upper level had to be scotched due to fire risk.

Gallery spaces are therefore less impressive than one had hoped, but the first exhibitions have probably not shown them at their best. The relationship between art and architecture is in any case fraught with problems, for any kind of purposely designed art-container is bound to seem institutional, and the currently widespread use of old factories and warehouses is liberating for artists precisely because they carry memories of another time and are therefore ambiguous in their framing of the work. The amorphous shapes of the Kunsthaus are better than a so-called neutral box which cleanly imposes a strong frame, and the diagonal travelators add some drama, but it remains for the curators and artists to discover ways for the work to interact significantly with the building. The side-lite photographic gallery in the first floor of the Eiseerner Haus is less problematic. It works well in a traditional manner and makes a fruitful contrast with the others.

The technical demands on the building were considerable. The concrete structure is unobtrusive, and the cantilevers of the needle, fabricated like a box-girder bridge, remove the need for props or struts that would have threatened the building's clarity. Beneath the ground is a car park on four levels, well below the river surface and requiring constant (and intended) pumping of its sump. With its limited free room above ground, there are also substantial workshops for building exhibition stands and for creating or uncrating works, services by a very large lift and fully enclosed loading dock at street level. The north end forms the access point for cars and servicing, and the forms created by the comings and goings happily inform the logic of the building’s plan.

A slight drop in street level away from the front corner produces a broadening flight of steps along the east side to separate people from vehicles, and this helps differentiate front from back. Heating and ventilating services are also largely in the basement, requiring ducts and service cores which must pass through the open ground floor. These are successfully reinterpreted as curved bodies rather than ship’s funnels, a parallel mode more explicit in places by marine details apparent in air-outlets and ventilation grills.