

AC Meeting October 23. – 25. 2010 Berlin

Visited Projects

Radialsystem – New space for the Arts in Berlin



In September 2006, RADIALSYSTEM V was opened as a new creative space for the arts in Berlin.

Formerly a turn of the century pumping station for the Berlin Wasserwerke (Berlin Water Services), RADIALSYSTEM V – situated in the urban centre of Berlin between Friedrichshain, Mitte and Kreuzberg – currently functions as a cultural centre where new ideas 'radiate' out in all directions, attracting artists and the public from within as well as beyond the city limits of Berlin.

The House:



The conceptual direction of RADIALSYSTEM V is closely connected to the structure and aesthetics of the building. Particular importance is ascribed to the architecture: It allows the simultaneous use of the facilities by artistic productions, venue hire and gastronomic services.

The building follows the principle 'form follows function', revealing a clear and simple use of space. Using the empty rooms as a starting point, all areas can be used flexibly and can be transformed as needed.

For example, the entire building can be quickly turned into a temporary exhibition space, a concert venue or a dance labyrinth, and then quickly be rearranged in order to make room for congresses, trade shows, symposia, media events and receptions.

History:

Built on Holzmarktstrasse in 1905, Radialsystem V was Berlin's largest pumping station for a new system of wastewater management for the city, replacing a smaller station from 1881. The building is typical of the

industrial architectural style found in this region at the time, also seen in the Charlottenburg power plant (1900) and the Oberbaumbrücke (1896). Using decorative elements of the so-called "Märkische Backsteingothik" (Brick Gothic from the region of Mark Brandenburg) the architect Richard Tettenborn (1857-1923) designed the pumping station with large windows allowing a view from the street into a large, bright room filled with powerful machinery. Tettenborn's plan most likely followed the ideals of James Hobrecht, the engineer responsible for the design and construction of Berlin's sewer system who stressed the necessity of cleanliness and elegance in industrial architecture and technology.

With one-third of RADIALSYSTEM V destroyed in World War II (the damage still visible just behind the bar in the foyer), what remained of the building was hastily repaired and set back into operation. Until the new pumping station next door took over in 1999, Radialsystem V served the districts of Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain.

In 1999 RADIALSYSTEM V was put on the historical preservation list.



Pumping station of Radialsystem in 1925

The Architect:

Gerhard Spangenberg studied architecture at the TU in Berlin and has worked as a freelance architect since 1968. His inspiration draws upon the roots of creative modernity, his conceptions quietly focusing primarily on function as well as fundamental study of architectural possibilities. In the rebuilding of RADIALSYSTEM V, Spangenberg once again expressed his affinity for stages and theaters.

Back in 2001, the city of Berlin commissioned for him to draw up plans for the restoration and rebuilding of the "Staatsoper Unter den Linden".



Other projects of Spangenberg have included the editorial office of die tageszeitung

(1991), Allianz Treptowers in Berlin (1993-1998), the wastewater treatment plant in Waßmannsdorf near Berlin (1992-1998), the logistics building in Berlin Siemensstadt (1991-1994), the exhibiton architecture of "Palast der Götter" at Indisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem (1991-1992), and the restoration of the Altes Stadthaus in Berlin (1994-2001).

The conversion:

Starting with the original structure, »[Gerhard Spangenberg](#) in 2004, was confronted with the task of redesigning the building so that the original facade would remain visible. Not only did the two halls have to be modernized, but the war-torn west side also had to be completely redone.

Gerhard Spangenberg developed a concept that combined the historical part with a modern addition. The financing of the project was made possible by the investment group TELAMON Vermögensverwaltungsgesellschaft.

The west side of Radialsystem V was closed off with a glass extension and to the Spree side of the building a similarly transparent extension was placed over the former boiler room. Similar to the historical part of the building, this modern element was built with limited materials- concrete, steel, and glass- focusing on function and simple elegance. The new addition not only contrasts, completes, and complements the older part in its multifaceted, transparent and closed quality, it also triples the amount of available space for the entire building.

The reconstruction was completed within one year, with the house reopening as RADIALSYSTEM V - NEW SPACE FOR THE ARTS in September 2006.

The machine hall and boiler room of the former pumping station were transformed respectively into a main hall of 600 square meters and a smaller hall of 400 square meters. The new addition provided the building with a foyer for visitors and artists, as well as wardrobes, office space and three studios facing south onto the Spree river: Studio A with 400 square meters, and Studios B and C with 200 square meters of space each. Also, there is a two story cube with a glass facade facing southwest, a 400 square meter

covered deck and a large terrace on the Spree River with a boat landing. All of this makes RADIALSYSTEM V an extremely attractive place during the entire year.

The building represents a successful symbiosis of old and new, and of tradition and modernity, its concept of dialogue serving as an architectural metaphor for the artistic concept of RADIALSYSTEM V.

Concept of dialogue:

The concept of dialogue plays a key role at RADIALSYSTEM V: the combination of apparently opposed concepts leading to a result that exceeds the sum of its parts is reflected in the architecture of the building - its balanced synthesis of old and new elements, as well as the house's involvement in the interaction of culture and economy.

It is also mirrored in the artistic programs of the house, where early music interacts with contemporary dance, classical concerts are combined with new media and visual arts meet with live performance.

The basic thought of the concept of dialogue is: openness instead of restriction.

The potential of this idea is mirrored in the establishment of RADIALSYSTEM V in the diverse cultural scene of Berlin: within just one year it is well known as a place for innovative art performances of high quality. This success is reflected in the heavy demand of the venues by institutions from politics, economy, science and media to host different events at RADIALSYSTEM V.

Operational Concept

Development: achieved during the rehearsal phase of productions, through research, the creative process and individual work

Education: by means of seminars, master classes, and the training of dancers, musicians, choreographers and children

Networking: achieved through partnership with other cultural institutions, as well as with the political and business community, cultural industries, and direct contact with artists and the public

Consolidation: through the conceptualization and integration of events and the combination of fine art with modern, more popular art forms. This is made possible through the flexibility and versatility of the building and its rooms, as well as through the buildings varied and frequent use

Marketing: the house, active in the marketing of artistic productions, also uses the building as a rental space for trade shows, symposia, as well as film and television productions. It is also active in catering and gastronomy for all events held in the building.

Artists



The main artistic idea of the house is reflected in its diverse, quality programming. For the opening program „Dialogue 06 - Radiale Systeme“, produced by Sasha Waltz, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Vocalconsort Berlin and musikFabrik, works by such artists as Helena Waldmann, Luc Dunberry, Yasmeen Godder, William Forsythe, Mathilde Monnier and Nasser Martin-Gousset were presented.

Since the opening in 2006, ensembles and performers such as RIAS Kammerchor, Rebecca Saunders, Ictus Ensemble, Arditti Quartet, Elbipolis Barockorchester Hamburg, Christine Schäfer, Barbara Sukowa, Wir sind Helden and Kim Kashkashian have performed at RADIALSYSTEM V.

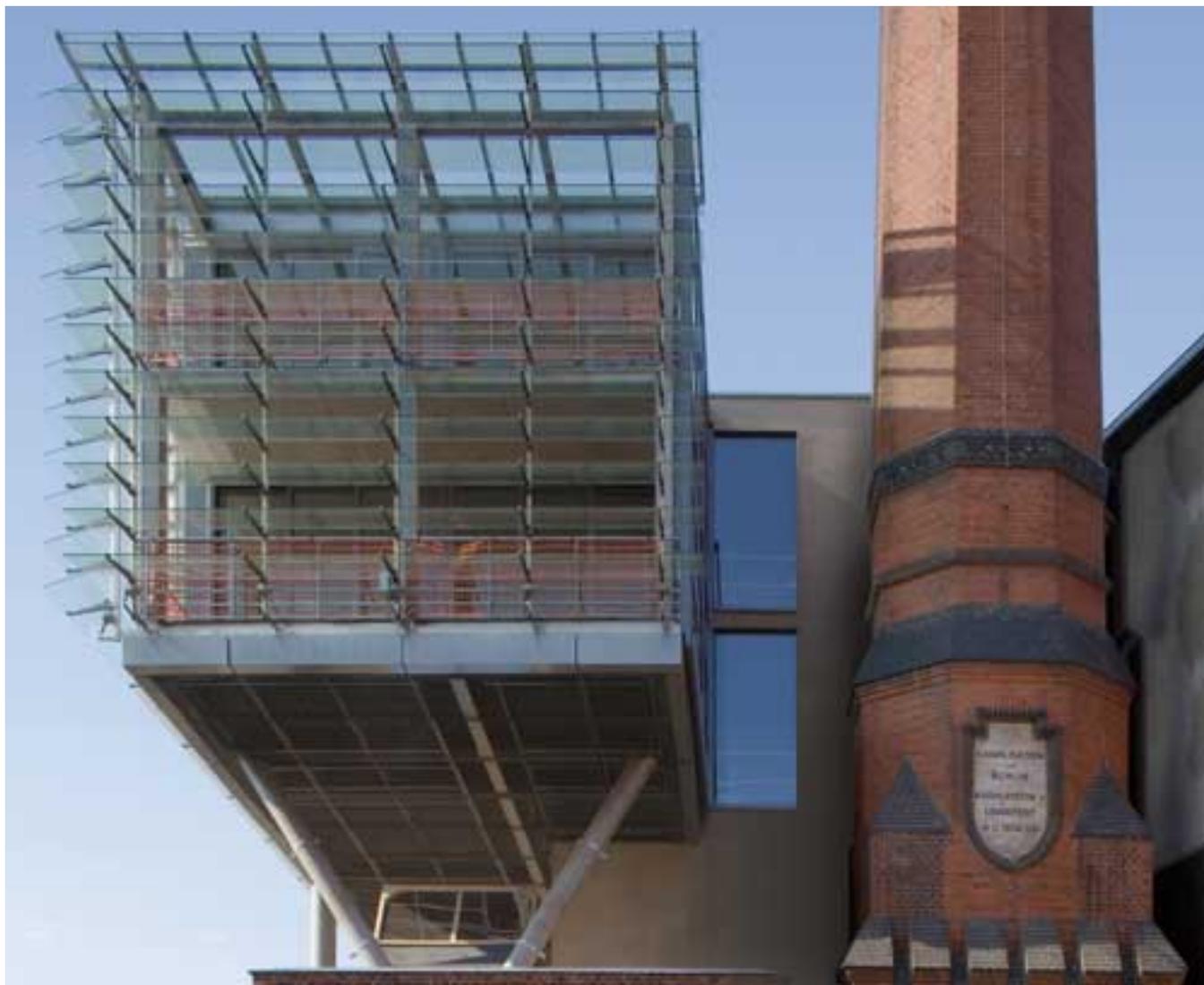


In 2007 RADIALSYSTEM V has been working with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester and Rundfunkchor Berlin,

Zentrale Intelligenz Agentur, the television channels ZDF and 3Sat,

Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon, musikFabrik, Splintergroup, ensemble ascolta and the American Academy in Berlin.





By adding additional volumes of Steel, concrete and glass available volume was tripled.

Radialsystem faces the river Spree.



Radialsystem V

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Foto credits:

Radialsystem

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