Abstract

Cities have always been built near water. About 90% of the world’s 100 biggest cities are built on or near rivers. River cities display an intimate and complex relationship with water, which was once considered as a hindrance but rather as an extension of the urban fabric. Moreover, during the industrialization, river valleys were not built by monarchs or benefactors. Ever since the last of the river in the battle of infrastructure, river cities have seen a weakening of their functional relationship with water. This is evident in today’s global cities; it is a legacy of industrialization and maritime commerce and typically an insular and non-functional one.

The original functions of a river and its riverfront were assigned resulting in the weakening of relationship between the city and its river. Instead of a communication space, the river has developed into a physical barrier dividing the city and its public realm into pieces.

The river needs to be redefined in today’s river cities; it requires a radical re-arranging of its meaning, use, and its occupants. This graduation project explores the potentials of today’s neglected European urban riverfronts as an active and productively used public space and provides a new design for Vienna’s riverfront.

Graduation project the resilient river

Explorelab XIII

D.J. Klinkhamer

In the core project consisted of a ‘re-weaving’ of the urban fabric of Vienna in order to re-consider the city’s role in the meaning of tourism, mobility, function and landscape. The weaving of urbanism, architecture and landscape (UMAL) the weaving of Urbanism, Architecture and Landscape (UMAL) is a result from the existing. It improves both the function and the new position of the urban river.

With this intervention the river is embraced and tightly woven in the urban fabric of Vienna. The city design is thus as another top-down city planning but a result from the existing. It improves both the functioning of the river and the river environment. After 130 years after the construction of the Ringstraße finally a continuous riverfront in Vienna, the river reclaimed its right to exist by being connected to the city: the riverfront is physically and visually connected to the city.

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The exploration of both the masterplan and the building has resulted in a project that consists of a series of thematic interventions on the previous quality of the existing urban fabric and the new river environment. The salztorbrücke J. Stübben.

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