

## DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE

VENICE BIENNALE  
9th INTERNATIONAL  
ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION  
VENICE 2004

GERMAN PAVILION

COMMISSIONER:  
FRANCESCA FERGUSON

REALIZED BY:

**URBAN DRIFT**

URBAN DRIFT e. V.

[www.biennale2004.de](http://www.biennale2004.de)

## DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE Epicentres at the Periphery

DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE – the German contribution to ‘Metamorph’ the 9th architecture exhibition at the Venice biennial may confound preconceived notions of the contemporary architecture scene in Germany. The fresh overview of over 38 built projects throughout Germany dating between 2000 and 2004 is a deliberate shift in focus away from metropolitan urban centres to the more peripheral areas on the urban fringe.

DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE is an assemblage, a hybrid scape, and one that provides a variable frame for a wide selection of architectural projects that undertake to reactivate spaces within the urban sprawl, suburban and de-industrialised zones. These are residual, often overlooked spaces, the amorphous in-between spaces which evade description, or which have outlived their former usefulness.

The aesthetic ambivalence of the diffuse outlying urban landscape with its storage warehouses, malls and business parks interspersed with housing estates is such that architects rarely leave their mark here, and yet the sheer banality of such architectural vernacular becomes – within the DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE – a basis for architectural intervention and transformation.

In their collective argument, the projects exhibited within the DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE seek to open up a broader discourse – the scape moves us away from the reassuring density of the metropolis to exposure on the fringe, within the featureless landscapes of the urban margins and the provincial towns. In this sense, the focus of the Deutschlandscape confronts a wider malaise that makes itself felt throughout Europe. How to influence this ever-spreading and indistinct terrain, and in what way can architecture take on this task?

The periphery therefore becomes identifiable not simply as a place but also as a condition – one lying beyond the bounds of cognition, out of the focus of the architectural mainstream, and yet one which provides fertile ground for an architectural avant-garde prepared to confront such problematic areas.

Epicentres at the periphery represent architectural flashpoints. They reveal that it is possible to generate paradigmatic shifts by administering architecture in homeopathic doses in areas seemingly impervious to change. They show how the urban margins have become significant fields of architectural experimentation.

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With ironic self-reflection, architectural norms and conventional typologies are reworked and given a new aesthetic twist. The built projects by a critical young generation of German architects reveal a highly innovative use of new materials, generate suburban 'plug-ins' - temporary and mobile architecture, and alter the familiar with skill to create solutions which are both provocative and enigmatic. Existing structures are 'implanted' with new functions, creating surreal juxtapositions and architecture that profoundly influences its surroundings in spite of its small or moderate scale. The most effective architectural strategies here tend towards the micropolitical –incorporating the everyday, or appropriating and reworking what is already there. Rejecting elitist aestheticism and taking risks, the exhibited architectural statements represent a spirit of invention within a profession beleaguered by economic constraints.

### **The DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE**

The DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE will take the form of a 90m long photographic panorama. The panorama reveals a deliberate interplay between reality and fiction. Projects are embedded within a collage of motifs denoting the incidental and everyday architectural vernacular in outlying areas. Stretching throughout the German pavilion, the panorama is a metamorphous scape and a carrier for transformative architecture. A central area in the pavilion constitutes a seating landscape where projects are identified and expanded upon and the extensive dialogue with architects and planners can be viewed on video screens.

The graphic representation of the DEUTSCHLANDSCAPE is the result of a collaboration involving the award-winning Berlin graphic design firm Cyan and Professor Joachim Brohm's master class in photography at the Leipzig Academy of Visual Arts. The Berlin based architects Burger Koch are responsible for the design of the "seating landscape", produced by the furniture manufacturers Sedus Stoll AG.

### **The Catalogue**

The bilingual Catalogue (German/English), 256 pages in length, is published by Hatje Cantz. Expanding upon the themes and projects within the exhibition, it includes images, interviews and essays by several participating architects, Omar Akbar (Bauhaus Dessau Foundation), Peter Wilson, Peter Cook, Stefano Boeri and others.