

## **Roland Rainer. (Un)Disputed A New Look at the Work (1936–1963) SammlungsLab #3**

**Exhibition: 20.10 – 10.12.2018, Gallery**  
**Press conference: Fri 19.10, 11:00**  
**Opening: Fri 19.10, 19:00**

**At least since the study commissioned by the City of Vienna of person-related street signs, where Roland-Rainer-Platz is categorised as "a case requiring discussion", issues have arisen around the gaps the architect himself left in his biography during the Nazi period.**

Roland Rainer (1910–2004) numbers among the most notable Austrian architects of the 20th century. His buildings are key to the identity of modern democratic Austria. Rainer's housing estate concept for the "structured and dispersed city" is still considered the most important model of space-saving, low-level housing. During the Nazi period, Rainer acquired his knowledge of fundamental urban research at the Deutsche Akademie für Städtebau, Reichs- und Landesplanung, which served him after 1945 as the basis for a series of theoretical publications. The continuity of the concepts in Rainer's work and his professional career suggest his flexibility in adapting to different political systems. He left only a rudimentary commentary on the Nazi years in his own biographical accounts, and many questions open. The acquisition of Roland Rainer's estate by the Az W in 2015 has provided an opportunity to re-examine his oeuvre and his biography. The focus is on the period from 1936, when Rainer left for Berlin, until 1963, the year he resigned his position with the City of Vienna planning department.

In the third edition of the SammlungsLab series of exhibitions, in cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the first findings of extensive research in archives in Austria and abroad are presented and discussed in an accompanying international symposium. Always seeking a transnational perspective, questions are posed that go beyond the biographical details of Roland Rainer's life to engage with the political context of his architecture production.

The Nazi regime's expansion policy and the wartime destruction triggered a push to streamline and modernise the building sector. The call for the planning and new settlement of the Eastern Territories and the rebuilding of towns and cities destroyed by bombing was followed by many architects. New spheres of activity were opened up and disciplines like urban and spatial planning, land use development, sociology, demographics and geography gained in significance. For many of the protagonists this meant access to large financial resources, promoting their work and laying the foundation stone for their professional careers after 1945.

### **The Exhibition**

With the aid of new sources on Roland Rainer's life and work, presented for the first time in the exhibition, a more nuanced view can be taken of Roland Rainer's activities under the Nazis and his professional aspirations as an architect. Light is shed on the networks of institutions and stakeholders, the scientific discourse and his clients' political objectives.

### **Interrelationships**

#### **Protagonists, Institutions and Contexts**

The topic opens with the controversy fraught discussions of Roland Rainer's Nazi past held since the 1990s. The juxtapositioning of Rainer's biographical details with the newest findings shows the discrepancies between his account and a narrative based on research into source documents. The curators Ingrid Holzschuh, Waltraud Indrist and Monika Platzer provide the context with new documentation of Roland Rainer's life and work and his biographical traces in the Nazi period. By mapping sources, they outline the complex web of interrelationships in which Rainer moved between 1936 and the postwar period, between the stakeholders, the institutions, discussions of content and historical events.

### **One Text – Two Versions**

#### ***Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt* (the structured and dispersed city), 1945 and 1957**

With the publication of the book *Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt*, by Johannes Göderitz, Hubert Hoffmann and Roland Rainer, the architects demonstrated their flexibility and elasticity in the adaptation of their concepts to suit the prevailing political system. The text, published in 1957, is based on an earlier research project commissioned by the Akademie für Städtebau, Reichs- und Landesplanung during the Nazi era. In the comparison of both versions (1945 and 1957), the issue of deletions, neutralised language or insertions is explored using one chapter as an example. Freed from ideological superstructure, the structured and dispersed city became a polemic pamphlet for the new urban development regulations after 1945.

### **Building Continues After 1945**

Rainer's theoretical works in the postwar years, such as *Die Behausungsfrage* (housing issue, 1947) or *Die städtebauliche Prosa* (the prose of urban development, 1948), were characterised by the hope of playing an active role in the redesign of the towns and cities. That Rainer was anchored in the international discourse is demonstrated by his engagement with the field of housing and urban development. Roland Rainer's professional success as an architect with a modern outlook began when he won the competition for the Wiener Stadthalle in 1953. His architecture was key to the identity of the "cosmopolitan city" of Vienna, which strove to rejoin the international community. The City of Vienna sought solutions for a "city of the future" and appointed Roland Rainer as its urban planner in 1958. After several disagreements, Roland Rainer resigned this post in 1962, although he continued to crusade for his ideal of humane living conditions in an "organically structured and dispersed city". Rainer was able to realise his concept for housing in densely populated low-rise buildings in Puchenau Gartenstadt near Linz, among other places.

**Curators: Ingrid Holzschuh, Monika Platzer, Waltraud Indrist**  
**Exhibition design/graphics: Waltraud Indrist**

The **press release** as well as high resolution, rights free **press images** are available for download at [www.azw.at/en/articles/press/](http://www.azw.at/en/articles/press/)

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## **PROGRAMME**

### **Symposium**

#### **Roland Rainer in Context**

Supporting programme for the exhibition „Roland Rainer. (Un)Disputed. New Findings on the Work (1936–1963)“

Sat 20.10.2018, 09:30–20:00

To understand the current design and political function of the city it is essential to know the historical background and to understand developments in their historical context. To accompany the exhibition 'Roland Rainer (Un)Disputed' The architect and urban planner Roland Rainer has had a lasting impact on the development of Vienna and on Austrian architecture. His unwavering pursuit of his career under changing political conditions testifies to an elasticity and readiness to adapt that should not remain undiscussed. Because of his private and professional network, his life and work must be viewed beyond the borders of Austria and in a European context. At the symposium "Roland Rainer in Context", qualified experts on the subject make an important contribution to placing Rainer's work in a supra-regional and transnational context during the Nazi years and after 1945. Also to be addressed are Rainer's sphere of activity and the socio-political responsibility he bore as a representative of his profession. Both his personal involvement with the network of Hitler's architects and then later the German urban planners of the reconstruction years, as well as the continuity of his planning concepts before and after 1945 are worth reinvestigating. In doing so, above all the political dimension of the leitmotifs of urban planning in the democratisation after 1945 requires investigation.

## Programme

Sat 20.10.2018, Az W Podium 9:30–10:15

Welcome address: Angelika Fitz, Eva Blimlinger  
Introduction: Ingrid Holzschuh and Monika Platzer

### 1. Theme: The Life and Work of a Functional Elite before and after 1945

10:15–11:30

Waltraud Indrist (Vienna): Gaps in the Biography of Roland Rainer. New Sources (1936–1963)

Ingrid Holzschuh (Vienna): Unknown Projects from the Early Work of Roland Rainer

11:30–11:45 Break

11:45–13:00

Ralf Dorn (Darmstadt): Continuity and Breaks – The Architect and Urban Planner Rudolf Hillebrecht before and after 1945

Ulrich Höhns (Hamburg): Architect Cäsar Pinnau (1906–1988): Rich Façades. On the Work of a Traditionalist Modernist

Moderated by Monika Platzer

13:00–14:30 Lunch break

### 2. Theme: Urban Development and Architecture as Applied Political Policy

14:30–15:45

Gottfried Pirhofer (Vienna): Roland Rainer, or Where Rejecting The City Led

Monika Platzer (Vienna): On the Trail of a Delayed Publication: Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt (The Structured and Dispersed City)

15:45–16:15 Break

16:15–17:30

Jörn Düwel (Hamburg): Deutsche Akademie für Städtebau, Reichs- und Landesplanung. Commissions, Projects and Stakeholders

Hartmut Frank (Hamburg): Comments on Urban Development Prose

Moderated by Ingrid Holzschuh

Followed by Panel discussion: Learning from the Past?

Eva Blimlinger, Wilfried Posch, Rudolf Schicker, Martha Schreieck, Eva Rubin, Snezana Veselinovic

Moderated by Angelika Schnell

Concept: Ingrid Holzschuh, Monika Platzer

## **Guided tours by the curators:**

Wed 24.10., 17:30

Wed 07.11., 17:30

Wed 05.12., 17:30

Wed 14.11., 17:30