

Downtown Denise Scott Brown

Exhibition: 22.11.2018 – 18.03.2019 | Exhibition hall 2

Press conference: Wed 21.11, 11:00

Opening: Wed 21.11, 19:00

Denise Scott Brown is both a monument and a mystery. She helped to lead a revolt against architectural late Modernism with the aim of saving Modernism. Welcome to the world's first extensive solo exhibition on the work of this today 87-year-old architect, urban planner, educator, and writer.

Since the 1960s, Denise Scott Brown — together with her partner and husband Robert Venturi — has inspired generations of architects worldwide. She redefined the relation of architecture and urban planning, the rules of architectural design, social consciousness, photography, the analysis of everyday culture, and the possibilities of joint creativity. Her research studio on Las Vegas resulted in the groundbreaking book *Learning from Las Vegas*, whose impact is still felt today.

Scott Brown has been a staunch critic of 20th century Modernism that ignored context, communication, and history. Working with existing systems, with the "city as a palimpsest", is central to her urbanist and theoretical work. As a younger generation of architects embraces and expands on this complexity, Scott Brown's undogmatic formal vocabulary, her modest urban interventions, her illuminating photographic analyses, her Mannerist escapades, and her post-heroic humour are ripe for rediscovery.

Denise Scott Brown's achievements have often been overlooked or marginalized. In 1991, the Pritzker Prize was awarded to Robert Venturi alone for their joint work. This was never corrected despite a high-profile petition years later. Scott Brown has retained her interest in the struggle for the recognition of women in architecture but also for a better understanding of joint creativity. Ironically, however, her status as a feminist icon has distracted attention from her work as an architect. This is why the exhibition at the Architekturzentrum Wien is dedicated equally to the life and to the work of this Grande Dame of architecture.

Today, Denise Scott Brown continues to write and explore her ideas from her home "mini-university" in Philadelphia. Sadly, Robert Venturi passed away in September.

On the exhibition — Vienna's New Downtown

The unusual form taken by the exhibition *Downtown Denise Scott Brown* corresponds to the architect's unique architecture and urbanism, which embraces commercial and popular culture while exploring aesthetic and social conflicts. Downtown is both an exhibition and an urban place. Under the vaulted brick sky of the Architekturzentrum Wien, Downtown reveals a monumental and mysterious fountain within an ersatz urban square, surrounded by shops, a café, and a marketplace. Visitors can immerse themselves in Denise

Scott Brown's fascinating life and work through original objects, photographs, collages, extensive quotations, plans, and videos. The exhibition spans her entire life, from her childhood in Africa and extended travels around the world – from her photographs, writings, and ground-breaking studies like *Learning from Las Vegas* – to her architectural design and urban planning on four continents. Visitors to *Downtown Denise Scott Brown* are invited to stroll past storefront windows and delve into surprising concepts, to discover "Little Big Ideas" and "Eyes that Do Not See!", to play hide-and-seek around the fountain with their children, or even to turn themselves into 'monuments' using an interactive photo-booth projecting images onto the fountain. Hang out with coffee and cake from Cafe Nkana, read the local newspaper, and bring home a gift from Venturi Fruit and Produce marketplace. Downtown Denise Scott Brown is Vienna's new downtown.

Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue is published in the form of a guidebook, *Your Guide to Downtown Denise Scott Brown*. It explains the genesis of the exhibition while leading readers through Denise Scott Brown's life and work, accompanied by an extensive and previously unpublished conversation with the architect herself.

Available at the Az W Shop and from selected stockists. In English.

Ugly Instagram Game

Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi played *I Can Like Something Worse Than You Can Like* while discovering the Las Vegas Strip. "This became our best worst thing, our supreme 'found object'".

When you visit Downtown, become part of the exhibition: photograph what you find ugly or beautiful or surprising then post your own best worst thing to Instagram and Facebook with #uglyinstagram_azw. And then visit the exhibition's "I Can Like Something Worse Than You Can Like" storefront for a surprise!

Accompanying programme for the exhibition: www.azw.at

Concept and Design: Jeremy Tenenbaum with Denise Scott Brown

Curators: Angelika Fitz, Katharina Ritter

The press release as well as high resolution, rights free press photographs are available for download at www.azw.at/press

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