

Tatiana Bilbao Estudio

19.08.2021–17.01.2022 | Exhibition Hall 2

Opening: Wed 18.08.2021, 19:00

Press conference: Wed 18.08.2021, 11:00

Tatiana Bilbao: architect, a representative of the next generation, an insider tip, or simply part of a new understanding of an architect's role in the 21st century? The exhibition provides, for the first time in Austria, an insight into the working methods and philosophy of Mexican architect Tatiana Bilbao and her eponymous studio, which she founded in Mexico City in 2004.

Latin America, like many places, is in the midst of political upheaval. The ever-widening wealth gap between the super-rich and the disenfranchised is causing a rift in society, along with persisting issues of political, social and economic exclusion. Local architects work in a field between these extremes, as can be seen in the work of Tatiana Bilbao, with her architecture office in Mexico City. Tatiana Bilbao Estudio stands for sharing knowledge and experience in projects ranging from large institutional projects to social interventions or ephemeral experiments. Bilbao embraces social responsibility and intentionally reflects current issues in her designs.

"It's all about the architecture we can do, and not about us being the architect," explains Tatiana Bilbao in an interview with Jacques Herzog on the younger generation and the collaborative approach she takes to her work. Bilbao's highly diverse projects are often completed in collaboration with other architects, landscape architects, artists and residents, too. For Bilbao, exposure to different approaches and ideas is essential in order to remain open to development and in keeping with the context rather than singular clients (or egos) in the foreground — as is shown in projects such as a pilgrimage route in Mexico, the Jardín Botánico de Culiacán and numerous housing projects. "Her work is driven by environmental and social thinking, but also by great poetry," says Az W Director Angelika Fitz.

Tatiana Bilbao Estudio researches and interprets the historical culture of Mexico and traditional Mexican building techniques, such as the use of rammed earth or low-cost everyday materials. The basic concept is for the architecture to become a platform for everyone, for creating their own existence. As Tatiana Bilbao says: "When you come from a country where many people have very little in the way of economic resources, you are used to not wasting them".

Since it is not common for the general population to imagine spaces based on traditional architectural plans and sections, the studio developed creative approaches for representational purposes. Tatiana Bilbao Estudio has long relied on collages and hand-drawn sketches to convey design concepts and as a tool of imagination and development to communicate with clients and users, but ultimately as a tool that allows the other to be represented as well. Renderings — i.e. realistic looking digital visualisations — are not used because they not only hinder the creative process, but mainly because they limit the imagination, and they halt the everlasting evolutionary process of a project.

The show at the Architekturzentrum Wien presents about 25 projects from around the world – including cultural and educational buildings, master plans and mixed-use projects as well as residential buildings ranging from single-family houses to social housing developments. With an analysis of the landscape and the social conditions, the immediate context is central to every project. The exhibition explores various dimensions of the landscape – ranging from the Mexican countryside through urban scenes to social and cultural landscapes that can be found at each geographic location.

The exhibition includes a wealth of models stretched across the space on a hand-drawn landscape, flanked by 'curiosity cabinets' filled with samples of raw materials, working models and sketches illustrating the processes. Included in project descriptions are photographs by Iwan Baan. Large installations inside and outside illustrate the materials and dimensions involved. Landscape collages by Tatiana Bilbao Estudio show the totality of the context – which also includes those things that are not visible as the sum of location, the geography, economy, politics, society, history and culture of the location. These collages enter into a dialogue with selected objects from the Architekturzentrum Wien Collection and its 25 years of exhibition history.

The exhibition is a cooperation with the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark.

Exhibition catalogue

The comprehensive and richly illustrated catalogue "Tatiana Bilbao Estudio" published by the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art will be available at the Az W.

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

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