

The Az W Programme 2026

What does architecture want? The Architekturzentrum Wien is launching its annual programme for 2026 with this question. The exhibition 'Global — Neutral' presents architecture as part of a shared, albeit conflict-ridden world that has been restructured since 1945. It draws on the extensive holdings of the Az W Collection, spanning from Baghdad and Tehran to New Delhi and Kathmandu, to São Tomé. A second major exhibition, 'Temporary. Structures of Necessity', sheds light on those often overlooked and indispensable buildings that keep our cities running from day to day.

From April 2026, the exhibition **Global — Neutral** goes on the trail of Austrian architects working in Africa and Asia between 1955 and 1989. Shaped by the nation's self-proclaimed image as a neutral state without a colonial past, they place Austria's ostensibly marginal position firmly at the centre of the global context. Plans, photographs, and models from the Az W Collection showcase completed projects and unrealised plans by around 25 Austrian architects, including Hans Hollein, Eva Mang-Frimmel and Karl Mang, Roland Rainer, and Anton Schweighofer. With 'Global — Neutral,' the Az W continues its work of making the social dimension of architectural history visible.

From autumn 2026 **Temporary. Structures of Necessity** focuses the limelight on everyday utility buildings — the majority of which usually go unnoticed. A rapidly changing layer of makeshift and provisional structures is instrumental to building, maintenance, orientation and preservation. The exhibition asks what we can learn from these flexible and resource-saving structures. Temporary construction is presented here as a laboratory for architecture that responds directly to social and environmental changes.

The Az W's presence also extends beyond Vienna, with two successful exhibitions on tour in Austria in 2026. **Toourism** is already entering its second year on tour, and from March it will be at the House of Architecture in Munich to show just how much our vacation dreams shape the built environment. **Suburbia. Built Dreams — The Future Single-Family House** engages with the ongoing popularity of the single-family home despite the climate crisis, consumption of land and rising construction costs — on show at both the Offenes Haus Oberwart (Burgenland) and at the Museum Wattens (Tyrol).

The permanent exhibition on Austrian architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries, **Hot Questions — Cold Storage**, continues to be a favourite with the public, with its seven Hot Questions on ways of living, capital, tools, identity, the environment, infrastructure and participation. During the Lange Nacht der Forschung (Long Night of Research) at the end of April, it manifests as a Jukebox of Questions.

As always, the exhibition is accompanied by an extensive program of events and educational activities: discussions, symposiums and hands-on workshops for all ages and all of the senses, as well as excursions tailored for international groups, events for schools, and inclusive formats. The **Architecture.Film.Sommer** — now one of Vienna's most successful summer film festivals — is dedicated to the theme **Building Democracy**.

The Az W Collection Goes Online!

The launch of the Az W Collection online represents a major milestone in 2026. As the only architecture museum in Austria, the Az W has the most comprehensive collection of Austrian architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries anywhere. After several years of preparation, the databases of objects, photographic archives and encyclopaedia of architects have all been combined in one unique online tool. With the Az W Collection online Austrian architectural history becomes accessible worldwide around the clock, providing both researchers and the general public with clear search options and useful insights.

In total, around 60,000 documents – plans, sketches, photographs and photographs of models, as well as the Achleitner Archive and its legendary collection of index cards – will all be accessible in digital form. The platform is being expanded on an ongoing basis and augmented with additional holdings.

The Online Collection promotes women. Together with the Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky Center, the Az W has launched the research project Pioneering Female Architects in Vienna, the results of which are to be incorporated into the Az W Collection online. More than 200 women had already attended Austrian institutions of higher education prior to 1938, and one of our long-term research objectives is to provide visibility for female architects.

Collaboration on research is continuing to expand in 2026. An innovative network for research, teaching, and education is being developed for the Research Center of the Az W Collection. To this end, the Az W is working in collaboration with the Art History research department at TU Wien. The aim is to study Austrian architectural history of the 20th and 21st centuries using original sources, also providing students with practical insights into museum and academic work, and for their theses and dissertations.

Director of the Az W

After ten successful years, for health reasons Angelika Fitz is stepping down from her position as Director of the Az W at the end of 2026. **Hannes Swoboda, President of the Az W**, expressed his sorrow at this decision and his gratitude to Angelika Fitz for her outstanding work: "The Az W has become one of the most influential institutions for architecture and building culture worldwide. At the same time, with its broad programme, a younger audience and close cooperation with stakeholders and public authorities, it has become a key local player."

Angelika Fitz expressed her delight that, "together with the team, we have been able to expand the communication of architecture to include environmental, planetary and feminist perspectives. We can hand over a well-established institution, in both an international and a national context, one that is among the most proactive architecture museums in the world."

So, too, Executive Director **Karin Lux** would have liked to continue their collaboration and hopes that such a successful course will be maintained. In light of the upcoming challenges, she is appealing to public partners not to add to the burden of the already gravely underfunded Az W.

The new Director of the Az W is to be selected from 45 applicants of various nationalities in the coming spring.

Exhibitions 2026

Global – Neutral. Architecture from Austria in Africa and Asia 1955–1989

16.04.–07.09.2026

Opening: Wed 15.04., 19:00

The exhibition Global – Neutral examines the era of global political upheaval between 1955 and 1989, when many countries achieved independence from colonial occupiers and international cooperation was shaped by Cold War tensions. It pieces together clues about the Austrian architects who had commissions in African and Asian countries.

In the second half of the twentieth century, architecture increasingly became part of the global context. Political upheavals and new alliances changed the world – many newly founded states in Asia and Africa became important venues for international architecture and urban development projects. Architecture and urban planning also reflected political attitudes in a newly emerging world order. Austrian architects operated from a unique position in this context: due to their country's political neutrality, they did not act as representatives of an ideological bloc, but as seemingly independent partners without a colonial past. Yet their projects – in countries such as Burkina Faso, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Nepal, and Tanzania – were also interwoven with political, economic, and cultural interests: they were part of development programs, served as symbols of diplomatic rapprochement, and were venues for transnational cooperation.

Plans, photographs and models from the Az W's extensive collection shed light on these multi-faceted connections. We're presenting projects – some were built, while others remained on paper – by about 25 Austrian architects, including, for example, Carl Auböck, Djamshid Farassat, Eugen Gross, Eva Mang-Frimmel & Karl Mang, Norbert Heltschl, Hans Hollein, Helene Koller-Buchwieser, Shahrzad Seradj-Kraupp, Hannes Lintl, Carl Pruscha, Roland Rainer, and Anton Schweighofer. By placing the projects within the broader context of the political, cultural, and globalized force fields in play, the exhibition Global – Neutral opens up new perspectives on Austrian architecture.

Curators: Monika Platzer, Susanne Rick

Exhibition and Graphic design: Steinbrener/Dempf & Huber

Publication:

The exhibition catalogue, Global – Neutral. Architecture from Austria in Africa and Asia 1955–1989, edited by Monika Platzer, Susanne Rick, and the Architekturzentrum Wien, will be published by Park Books.

With contributions by: Esra Akcan, Reza Alirezaieyan, Camilo Antonio, Warebi Brisibe, Roberto Fabbri, Berthold Molden, Clara Neuhold, Monika Platzer, Susanne Rick, Biresh Shah, Setiadi Sopandi

Temporary. Structures of Necessity

01.10.2026–01.03.2027

Opening: Wed 30.09., 19:00

The exhibition highlights structures that form an essential yet often overlooked part of our urban infrastructure. This temporary layer keeps countless processes in the city running: from building and demolition to maintenance and guidance, all the way to protection and security. Labeled as temporary, such constructions blend into their surroundings and often remain below the threshold of perception. The exhibition makes this necessary background visible and brings it into focus.

The fascination with temporary utilitarian structures has accompanied the members of KOSMOS architects since their student days. For many years, they have collected examples of these ephemeral architectures – built for a limited moment, yet full of lightness, precision, and strength. A research project that takes temporariness seriously as an independent architectural category has emerged from this passion. They refer to these anonymous technical infrastructures as "tectures," as the "constructed self" beyond "authorial" architecture.

What can we learn from temporary structures? Conventional building methods are often too slow and inflexible to respond adequately to changing challenges—social, economic, political, ecological, technological, and climatic. Temporary structures arise from specific needs. They are functional, quickly available, and designed for easy assembly, adaptation, and dismantling. This is precisely their quality: They respond immediately to change and reveal what is truly needed in a given situation. As snapshots of reality, they are direct reflections of societal demands—and a laboratory for an architecture that learns to deal with resources, time, and conditions in new ways.

Concept and design: KOSMOS architects

Abundance Not Capital. Anupama Kundoo

Until 09.03.2026, Exhibition hall 2

What if architecture were not an instrument of capital? What if there is enough for everyone? How can anyone even dare to say such a thing out loud? The architecture of the Indian architect Anupama Kundoo shows that a different way of building is indeed possible. Using local resources, Kundoo designs structures of extraordinary beauty that care for the needs of people and the planet.

All around the globe, natural resources and labor are being exploited by the construction industry. At the same time, many people can no longer afford their homes, which have turned into investment products. How did building become so destructive to humans and nature, and what can architects do to counteract this? For the two curators, Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny, Anupama Kundoo's work exemplifies a different kind of architecture: an ecological, material, and spatial embodiment of abundance that resists the imperative of "never enough" – or as Anupama Kundoo says: "What's the point of doing efficiently things that don't need to be done at all?"

Anupama Kundoo was born in Pune in 1967 and grew up in Mumbai, where she studied architecture in the late 1980s. As globalized urbanization took command of India, Kundoo decided in 1989 against the architectural dictate "form follows money." She moved to the experimental town of Auroville in South India, where she established her office, Anupama Kundoo Architects, at the age of twenty-three. Kundoo has taught at renowned universities around the world. She has exhibited multiple times at the Biennale and has received numerous prizes. She is currently operating offices in Berlin, Mumbai, and Puducherry, but the vast majority of her architectural work can be found in Auroville and Puducherry in the southern Indian coastal state of Tamil Nadu.

Wealth lies in Anupama Kundoo's projects not in expensive materials and perfect industrial products, but in the innovative use of materials and techniques that are locally abundant. She achieves this by combining high-tech and low-tech, further developing traditional building techniques, new lightweight construction methods, natural cooling, and regional material cycles. Kundoo defies the narrow confines of either/or. Her architectural practice is at the same time technological and spiritual, modernist and ecological, traditional and innovative, social and beautiful.

The exhibition draws on the architect's oeuvre spanning more than three decades and shares her curatorial research on eight dimensions of wealth and abundance: knowledge, materials, solutions, aspirations, differences, generosity, nature, and regeneration. The exhibition design by Anupama Kundoo and her team follows the floor plan of her own home, the Wall House. With a variety of models, material samples, and full-scale installations, the exhibition enables visitors to experience wealth and abundance in all their dimensions.

Curators: Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny

Project coordination and curatorial assistance: Agnes Wyskitensky

Exhibition Design: Anupama Kundoo Architects

Exhibition Graphic Design: Alexander Ach Schuh

Publication

Abundance Not Capital. The Lively Architecture of Anupama Kundoo

Edited by Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny, and Architekturzentrum Wien

272 pages, € 38

The MIT Press, 2025

ISBN: 9780262553124

In this publication, Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny introduce the concept of abundance to call for a paradigm shift in architecture. Using as its example the extraordinary work of architect Anupama Kundoo, this richly illustrated book demonstrates that non-extractivist and non-exploitative architecture is undeniably possible. Photographs and texts from Fitz and Krasny's curatorial field research, along with material from the architect's office, develop a novel framework for the analysis of architecture. Essays by international authors explore the issues of architecture and capital, CO2lonialism, working conditions in the construction industry, modernist utopias in urban planning, architectures of care, and offer insights into Indian architectural discourses.

With contributions by: Shumi Bose, Jordan H. Carver, Peggy Deamer, Madhavi Desai, Angelika Fitz, Rupali Gupte, Ranjit Hoskote, Elke Krasny, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Shannon Mattern, and Laurie Parsons

Exhibitions on Tour

Suburbia. Built Dreams – The Future Single-Family House

Why do single-family homes remain so popular despite the climate crisis, land consumption and rising construction costs? And what will happen in the future to the 1.5 million houses built in Austria? The exhibition curated by Az W is going on tour and will stop in Oberwart and Wattens in the spring.

Using historical materials, the exhibition traces the history of an ideal way of life that conquered the world and also successfully established itself in this country. Graphics and statistics illustrate the impact of the single-family home on humans, animals and plants. However, the focus of the exhibition is on the potential of existing houses. Thirteen projects show how existing houses can be transformed into a sustainable future through renovation, transformation and conversion.

Curators: Lene Benz, Katharina Ritter, Agnes Wyskitensky (Az W)

Exhibition design: Nicole Six & Paul Petritsch

The book Suburbia has been published to accompany the exhibition. Available at the Az W Shop or online at the e-shop!

Exhibition dates:

03.02.–27.02.2026

Offenes Haus Oberwart

Opening: Fri 06.02.2026

13.03.–07.04.2026

Museum Wattens

Opening: Thu 12.03.2026

Toourism

The successful exhibition Toourism, curated by the Architekturzentrum Wien, will be presented in Munich starting in March.

More and more people are travelling more often, further and for shorter stays. What is the impact of our holidays on the built environment, the social fabric and climate change? And how can we envisage tourism that does not destroy the basis of its own existence? Tourism has created added value, prosperity and cosmopolitanism in even the most remote regions, so halting migration. While there is also a downside, which includes crowding, major interventions in local ecosystems, and rising land prices. Tourist hotspots suffer from the onslaught of visitors, while other places are being left behind.

The exhibition looks at the potential for transformation. Local and international examples present pioneering solutions and create an appetite for holidays that are no longer based solely on consumption and the growth paradigm.

Curators: Karoline Mayer & Katharina Ritter, Az W

Exhibition architecture: ASAP – Pitro Sammer

Exhibition graphics: LWZ & Manuel Radde

The book Toourism has been published to accompany the exhibition. Available in the Az W Shop or online in the e-shop!

Exhibition dates:

04.03.–29.05.2026

Haus der Architektur, München

Opening: Tue 03.03.2026

The press release, as well as high-resolution press photos, are available free of charge for download at www.azw.at/press.

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