



**CENTER**

EMAIL: OFFICE @ MAKCENTER.ORG  
WWW.MAKCENTER.ORG

835 N. KINGS ROAD 323 651 1510  
WEST HOLLYWOOD FAX 651 2340  
CALIFORNIA 90069

Press contacts:

Katie Klapper  
(323) 874-9667  
[kklapper@earthlink.net](mailto:kklapper@earthlink.net)

Sara Daleiden  
(323) 651-1510  
[sdaleiden@makcenter.org](mailto:sdaleiden@makcenter.org)

**GÜNTHER DOMENIG: STRUCTURES THAT FIT MY NATURE**

**MAK Center Exhibition Focuses on Key Works by Austrian Architect**

(West Hollywood, March 1, 2005) *Günther Domenig: Structures that Fit My Nature* offers an exceptional opportunity to explore the work and creative process of one of the world's most distinctive contemporary architects. On view at the MAK Center for Art & Architecture from March 31 through June 26, 2005, the exhibition focuses on two key projects by the Austrian architect: the Steinhaus (Stone House), the architect's own home, still in process; and the prize-winning Nuremberg Documentation Center (Dokumentationszentrum), completed in 2001, a historical archive that transforms Albert Speer's Nazi coliseum into a memorial. Exemplary artistic statements, both projects may be seen as gestures of architectural liberation, the most important and personal examples of Domenig's uncompromising search for an individualized language of expression.

The exhibition concentrates on the personal "think space" of Günther Domenig (b. 1934) by presenting the drawings, models and texts through which these projects evolved. Photographs by Gerald Zugmann and Joachim Brohm offer dramatically different interpretations of the structures. The exhibition is curated by Charlotte Pöchlhammer, founder/director of the Biennial for Media and Architecture in Graz, Austria, and MAK Center director Kimberli Meyer. A free opening reception is scheduled for Wednesday evening, March 30 from 7 to 9 p.m. and Günther Domenig will be in attendance.

**Steinhaus**

Domenig began working in the 1960s, trying to radically expand notions of architecture. His utopian and exhibition projects of this period, developed with Eilfried Huth, are now part of the renowned Frac Centre collection of experimental architecture in Orléans, France. Between 1966 and 1969, the pair developed *Graz Ragnitz*, an urban construction project for which they garnered the Grand Prix International d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture in Cannes. But Domenig grew dissatisfied with theoretical work and rededicated himself to building his ideas. "I want to dream in reality" became his motto. His first independent project, the *Zentralsparkasse* in Vienna (1975-79), encountered strong public resistance, a constant theme in his career.

Domenig's began thinking about the Steinhaus in 1977. Built on family property on Lake Ossiach near Austria's border with Italy, he investigated the rocky topography and local building types, and explored "architectural smashings" in drawings that attempt to capture the force of geometry. He

MAK

CENTER

EMAIL: OFFICE @ MAKCENTER.ORG  
WWW.MAKCENTER.ORG

835 N. KINGS ROAD 323 651 1510  
WEST HOLLYWOOD FAX 651 2340  
CALIFORNIA 90069

first created the *Holzsteg* (wooden landing stage) in 1979, a complex construction he describes as an "object to climb onto or fall down from."

Günther Domenig created a net of interwoven relationships on the Steinhaus property. The landing stage – an oscillation from the beach into the lake – connects earth and water. In its dramatic physicality and poetic introspection, the house itself is a private cosmos that gives radically new architectural form to deep human relationships and interactions. Concrete, riveted steel panels and glass are molded into idiosyncratic, highly sculptural geometries, which are united by a spiral theme, tracing the route of rainwater as it descends from a lookout tower several levels to be transformed into groundwater. A central architectural sculpture, the *Nix Nuz Nix* from 1983, centers the composition with the angular, pointed, sharp and elegant elements of a bird. Still evolving, the Steinhaus has allowed the architect "to see how far I can go with my ambitions."

### Nuremberg Documentation Center

The Documentation Center — housing the archives and history of Nazi Germany — is a giant birdlike wing thrust clear through the deteriorating U-shaped coliseum built to Hitler's grandiose specifications. Domenig's challenge was to spiritually and architecturally transform the disturbing site, internationally renowned through the films of Leni Riefenstahl, into a memorial of hope. His stellar achievement was recognized with a Golden Lion award at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennial: "By radically deconstructing the intimidating regularity of the existing Nazi structure, Günther Domenig has succeeded in transforming a symbol of a dreaded past into a structure of a critical memory."

Designed as a display of despotic power, the Nazi Party Congress halls and rally grounds were organized around a strong axis. Domenig breaks this "violent force" with a diagonal light construction of glass and steel. What was once buried in granite, brick and concrete is carved open: Domenig's glass slab penetrates several of the gigantic halls and provides exhibition spaces that allow the original architecture to be seen. In other public spaces and the education forum, the architect uses disentangled, deconstructive angles to diminish the monumentality of the historic structure.

Although commissioned for the most public of purposes, the Documentation Center conforms to Domenig's quest for a personally meaningful language of forms. As the son of an "extreme Nazi" — his father was a judge who was ultimately executed by partisans in Trieste — the architect, too, had a need to exorcise a painful legacy.

*Günther Domenig: Structures that Fit My Nature* will be on view at the MAK Center for Art & Architecture from March 31 through June 26, 2005. The MAK Center is located at the Schindler House, 835 N. Kings Road in West Hollywood. Public hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is \$7; free hours are Friday afternoons from 4 to 6 p.m. Parking is available at the public structure at the northeast corner of Kings Road and Santa Monica Boulevard. For further information, the public may visit [www.MAKcenter.org](http://www.MAKcenter.org) or call (323) 651-1510.

# # #

**PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.**