

# Contemporary Architecture along the Danube

Austria – Slovakia – Hungary



International Architectural and Urban Design Workshop

Waterfront redevelopment: Izola-East

24-28 September 2012

Emiel Lamers Architectures









# Budapest's new beauties

Emiel Lamers has selected 25 discreet but remarkable contributions to the Hungarian capital's fabric by a new generation of architects.

HUNGARY — TEXT: EMIEL LAMERS, ILLUSTRATION: MENNO WITTEBROOD

Outside Hungary, late twentieth-century Hungarian architecture is known chiefly for the organic works of Imre Makovecz and his followers. This idiosyncratic style was pushed into the background by the political and economic changes of 1990. In no time at all it seemed, big, bland shopping centres were popping up all over the capital, while vacant sites along the city's motorways were colonized by the familiar corrugated iron boxes housing international retail chain stores. As a rule there was little time and concern for the quality of the architecture, let alone innovation.

Recent years have seen an interesting development in the field of architecture, this time of a more modest, retiring character. Scattered here and there around the city are renovation and new-build projects that put Budapest on the architectural map of the 21st century. No high-rise projects, which are still not permissible under current building regulations, but mostly small-scale interventions tucked away in the city's various districts. The search for this new generation of buildings begins on Vörösmarty Square in the centre of the Pest district. In the very first issue of A10, I wrote about a shopping centre (1) that was to be built here. Since then, the 1960s building has been demolished and work has commenced on the renovation of the 'Vigadó' building behind. The mock-up on the corner of the building site already offers a foretaste of what the complex's diamond-shaped glass facade will look like.

A stroll through the recently spruced-up park on Erzsébet Square brings us to the corner of Sas utca and the Kartell shop (2). The interior design by Döm Architecture is an interplay of light, shadow and reflection in which the detailing is as airily designed as the plastic furniture on display here. At one end of Erzsébet Square is a shallow pool that is simultaneously

the glazed roof of the Gődör Klub (3). In 1998 construction began on this site for a new National Theatre to a futuristic design by Ferenc Bán. When the Fidesz party assumed power, the plan was cancelled and a design competition for a club to fill the already excavated pit was won by a group of young architects. A new National Theatre was eventually built at the so-called Millennium Centre on the Danube, but to a neo-classic design by Mária Siklóds.

From the Gődör Klub we walk along the tree-lined Andrásy út. Number 9 was once the headquarters of ING Bank and Nationale Nederlanden (4). The conversion and extension of the 1883 Brull Palace by EEA architects dates from 1994 but it is still one of the most progressive designs in the capital. Sadly, the whale-shaped conference room on the glass roof of the atrium is not open to visitors. But it's worth walking around the corner to number 12 Paula Ede utca, from where the centred rear elevation can be seen. Back on Andrásy út and opposite Miklós Ybl's 1884 National Opera at number 27, is Caprice Jewellers (5). The oak and imitation leather interior was designed by minusplus with great attention to the detail-

ing of the display cases where all the hinges and fixings have been carefully hidden from view.

Past Oktogon Square, on the left side of Andrásy út, stands the controversial House of Terror (6). For twelve years its cellars were used as a prison, first by the Nazis in 1944-1945 and subsequently by the communist state security police. In sunny weather, the word 'terror' is projected onto the facade via cut-outs in the deep steel awning. The slow descent by lift to the torture chambers is an experience in its own right.

The journey to the next building on the itinerary can be pursued underground by means of the 111-year-old, superbly refurbished metro line. Exit at Hősök tere (Heroes Square) and there on your right you will see the prestigious new ING Bank headquarters (7). The curved metal lines running horizontally across the backward-leaning vertical facade are intended by architect Erick van Egeraat to set up a relation with the adjacent former trade union building, which was also built by his firm. On the north-east side of the city park in the leafy suburb of Zuglói, stands the Snooker Centre (8) (see A10 #9). There was no money for doing up the exterior and the budget for the interior was far from generous, but the architects still managed to create a good-looking, chic interior. As in the Caprice shop, the painted walls were decorated using an old-fashioned roller stencil. Above the snooker tables hang luminaires made from orange sun blind material, designed especially for this project.

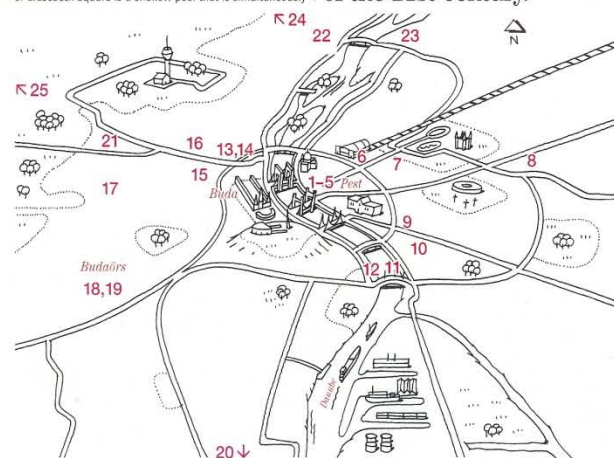
From garden café to No House

A fascinating phenomenon that is particularly evident in the 7th and 8th districts is that of the temporary open-air cafés — dilapidated courtyards that have been turned into allusive garden cafés with a minimum of means. The oldest (2003) and best known is the Szimpia kert (garden) at number 14 Kazinczy utca.

At the end of the vast swathe of cleared land behind the Corvin cinema (the future site of the Corvin shopping promenade) is the new, temporary location of the fashionable Nagy West-Balkan club (9). In a garden decked out with coloured lighting, sculptures and a projection screen, stands a little building made of polycarbonate sheeting; from here a short tunnel of the same material delivers you into an unexpectedly big covered courtyard where there are often shows in the evenings. A contemporary arts centre is located on the upper floor of the same complex. On the other side of the busy Üllői út is the Holocaust Memorial Centre (10), built in 2002. The eight-metre-high walls surrounding a courtyard are engraved with names of the 600,000 Hungarian-Jewish victims of the Second World War. The museum itself is below ground level and takes the form of an affecting promenade that ends in the restored synagogue.

The new Millennium Centre beside the Danube is also worth a visit, if only because of the enormous scale. Hungarian/Canadian developers Trigiránit are building a lot of offices and high-end apartments here. Close to the bridge stands the Palace of the Arts (11) (see A10 #6). Given this project's high aspirations, the finished facade is a bit of a disappointment, but inside the architects pulled out all the stops in terms of design and materials. The bookshop boasts an interesting collection of art and architecture books!

On the other side of the Danube, close to the Petőfi Bridge, is a 1960s Ukrainian cargo boat that has been moored →



**1 SHOPPING CENTRE**  
Architects: György Fazakas and Paul Viguler  
Completed: 2007-2008  
Address: Vörösmarty tér (5th district)



**2 KARTELL SHOP**  
Architects: Döm Architecture Studio  
Completed: 2000  
Address: Sas utca 2 (5th district)



**3 GÖDÖR KLUB**  
Architects: Fikla Építész Stúdió  
Completed: 2002  
Address: Erzsébet tér (5th district)



**4 ING BANK & NN HEADQUARTERS**  
Architects: EEA Erick van Egeraat associated architects  
Completed: 1994  
Address: Andrásy út 9 (6th district)



**5 CAPRICE JEWELLERS**  
Architects: minusplus architects  
Completed: 2006  
Address: Andrásy út 27 (6th district)



**6 HOUSE OF TERROR**  
Architects: A. F. Kovács, J. Sándor, K. Újszászy  
Completed: 2002  
Address: Andrásy út 60 (6th district)



**11 PALACE OF THE ARTS**  
Architects: Zsóka, Demeter and associates  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Komor Marcell utca 1



**7 ING HEADQUARTERS**  
Architects: EEA Erick van Egeraat associated architects  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Dózsa György út 84/b (6th district)



**8 SNOOKER CENTRE**  
Architects: GEHÉ Építészstúdió Kft.  
Completed: 2006  
Address: Szégyen utca 65 (14th district)



**9 NAGY WEST BALKAN**  
Architects: Gábor Arad  
Completed: 2006  
Address: Futó utca 48 (8th district)



**10 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTRE**  
Architects: Imre Márty, Attila Gáti  
Completed: 2004  
Address: Péva utca 39 (9th district)



**15 VILLA BARABÁS**  
Architects: Péter Baisa, Borbála Parizán, Ádám Reisz  
Completed: 2003  
Address: Városmajor utca 44 (12th district)



**16 SCANDESIGN SHOWROOM**  
Architects: Éva Csáspár  
Completed: 2006  
Address: Trombák utca 11 (2nd district)



**17 HEGYHÁT HOUSE**  
Architects: Döm Architecture Studio  
Completed: 2000  
Address: Normafa, Hegyhát utca 21 (7th district)



**18 BUDAÖRS TOWN HALL**  
Architects: László Kalmár, Zsolt Zsuffa  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Szabadság út 134, Budaörs



**19 PÁDÁR HOUSE**  
Architects: Zsuzsanna Fekete  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Sárköz utca / Zichy Péter utca 29, Budaörs



**14 GLASS CONCRETE PAVILION**  
Architects: Zsuzsanna Fekete  
Completed: 2005  
Address: Kis Rókus utca (2nd district)





21 buildings from the 21st century

# CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN HUNGARY

KORTÁRS  
ÉPÍTÉSZET  
MAGYARORSZÁGON

Written by  
Emiel Lamers

Photography by  
Tamás Bujnovszky

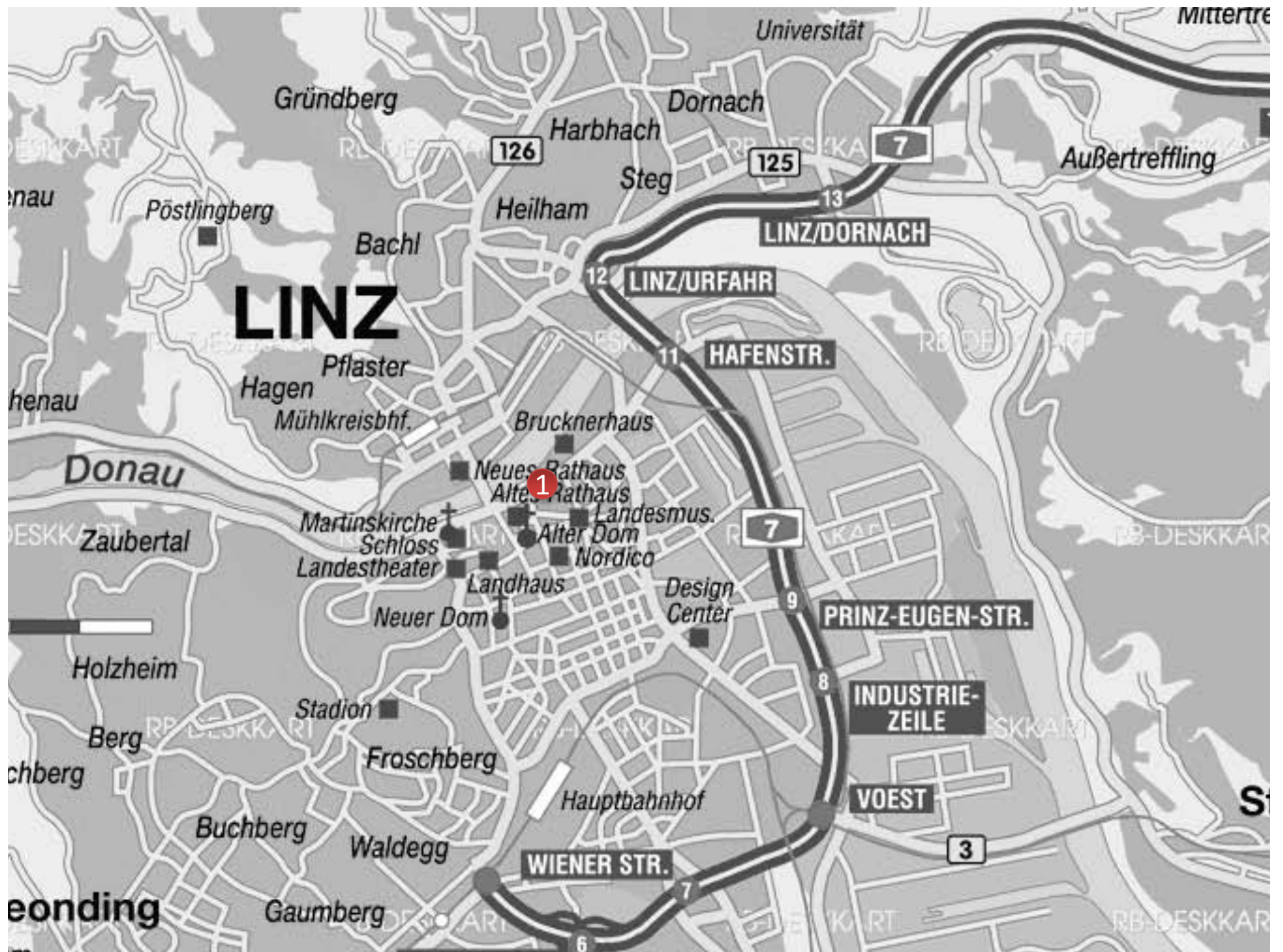














# Lentos ART Museum 2003



Weber & Hofer architects







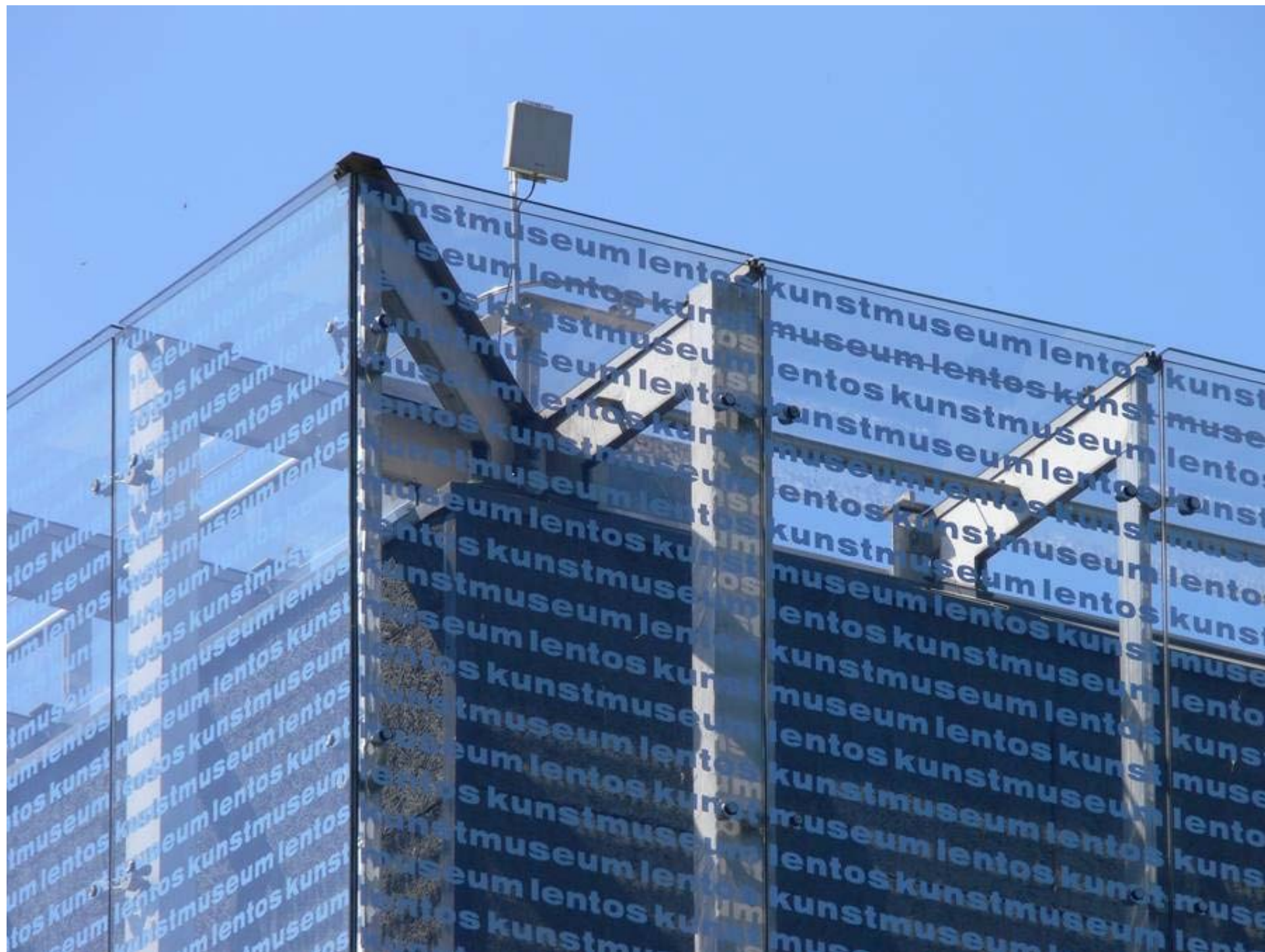










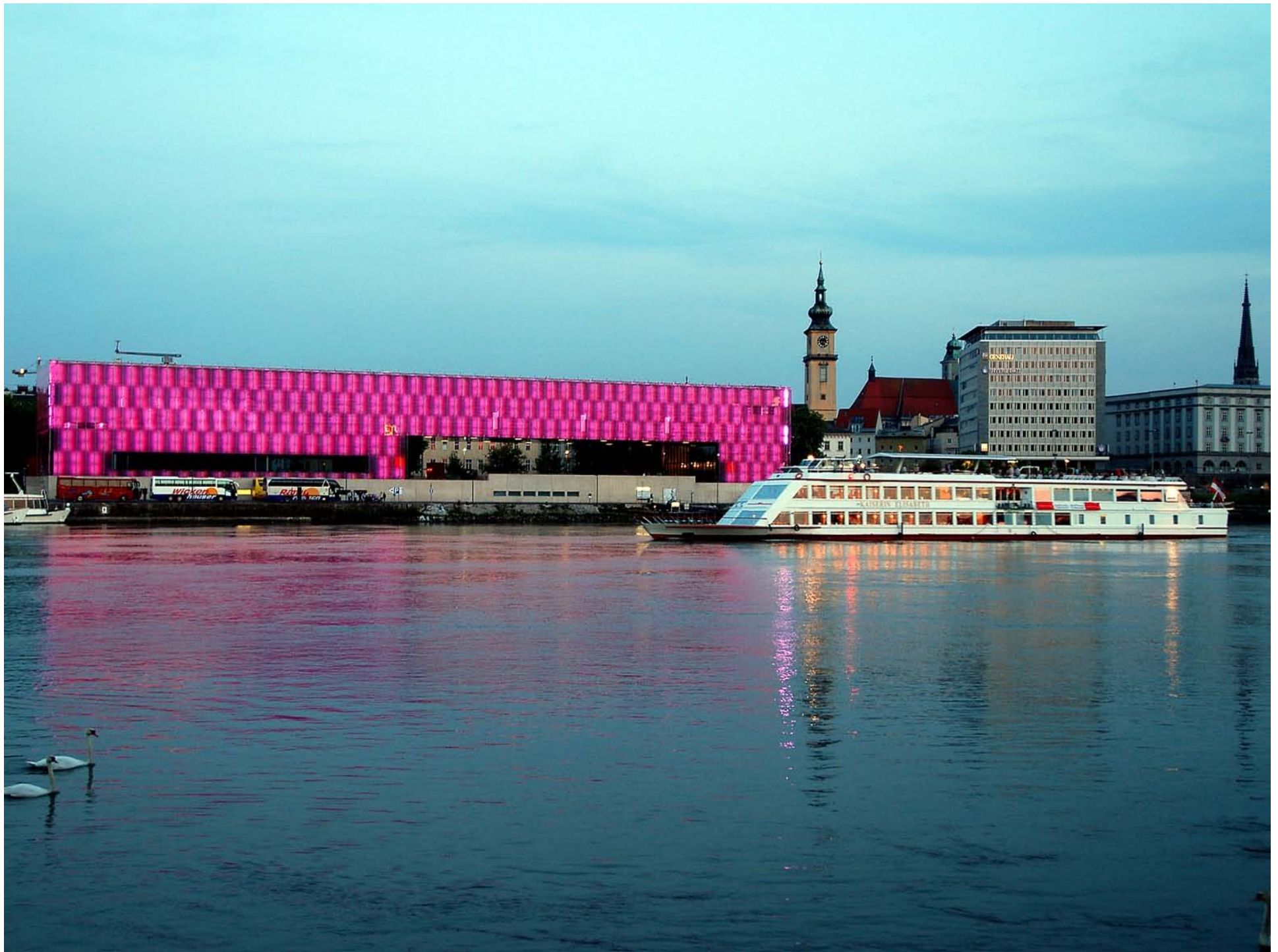




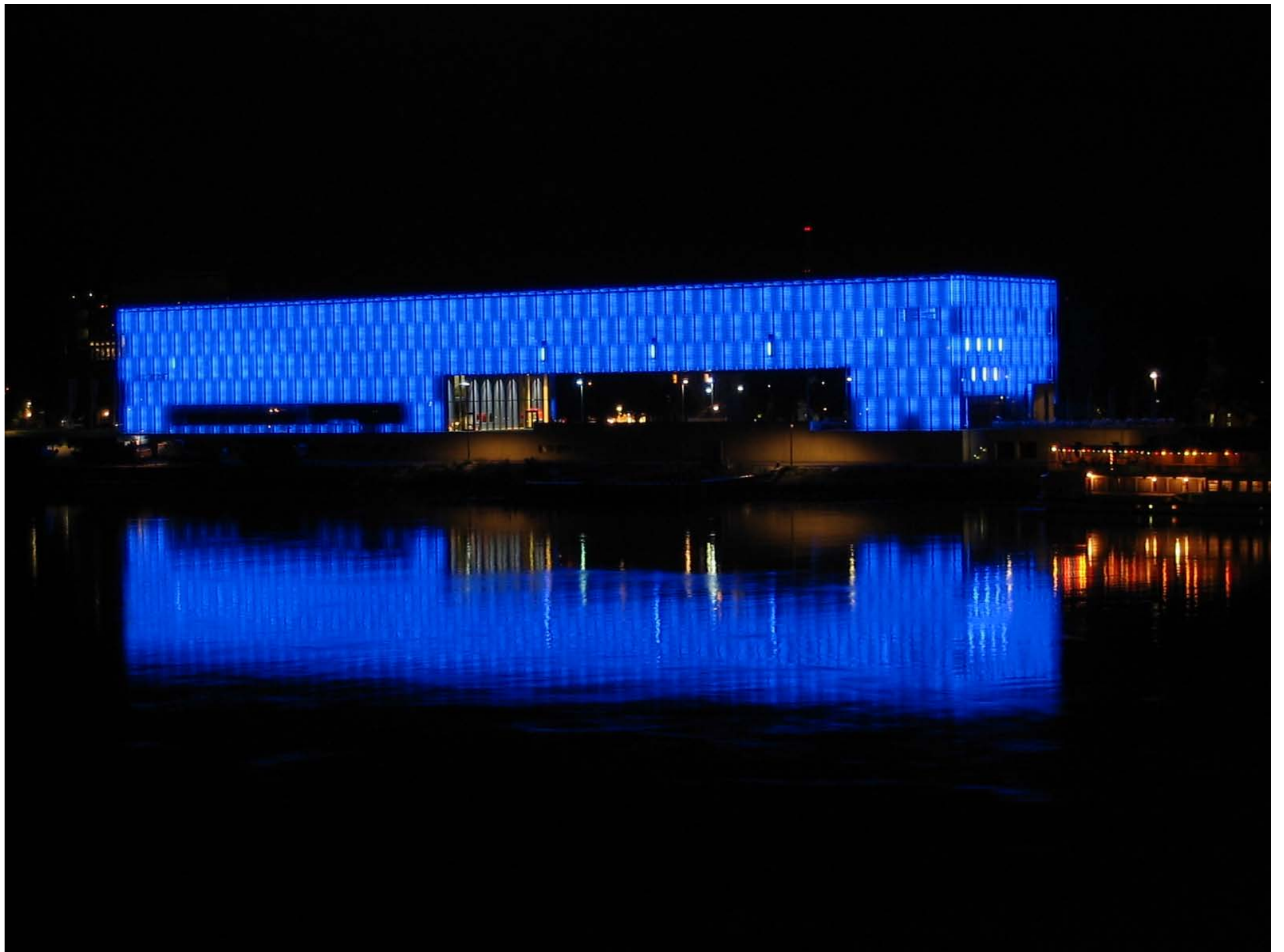




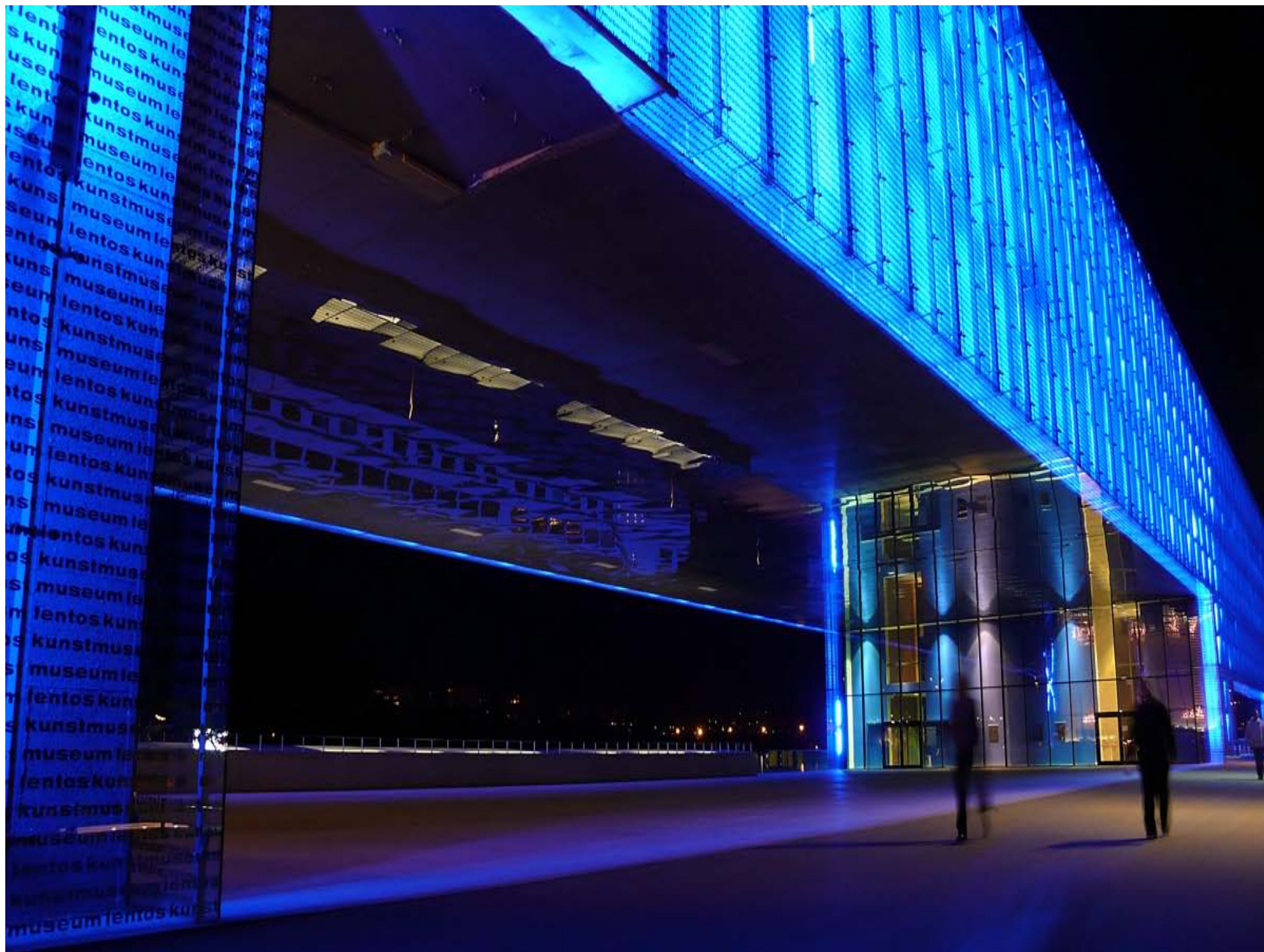




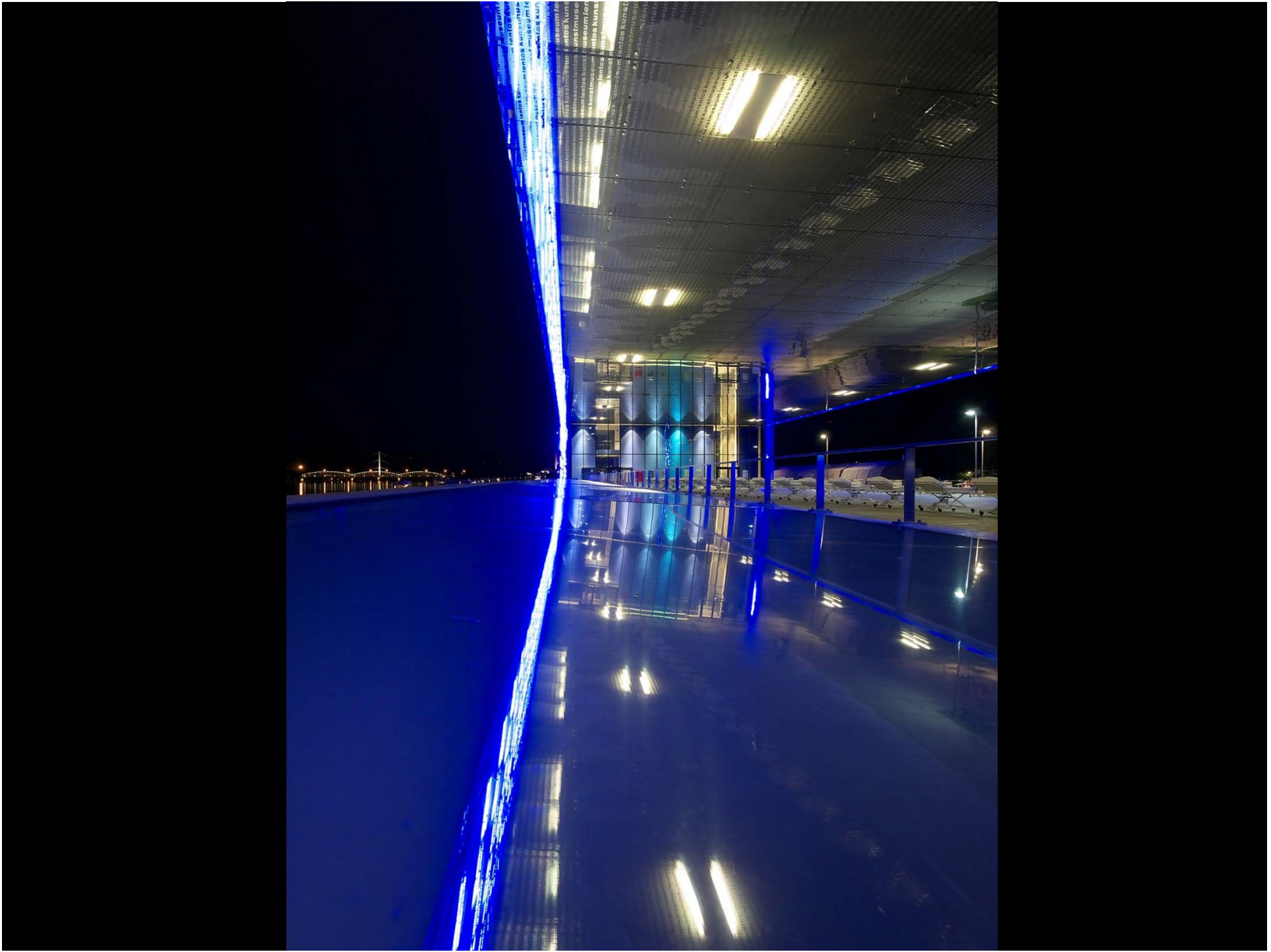










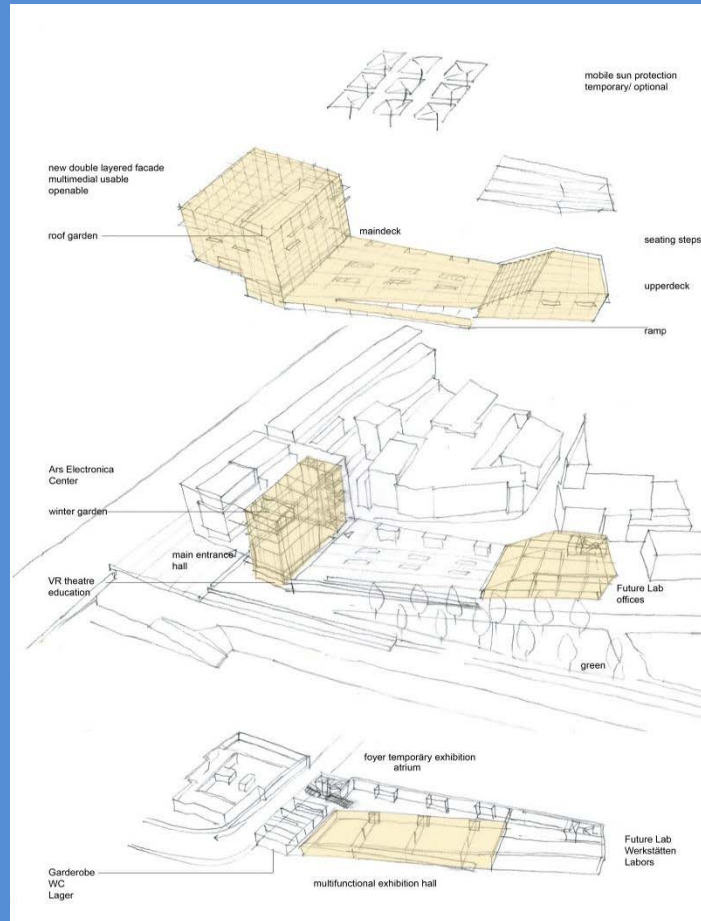








# ARS Electronic Centre 2009

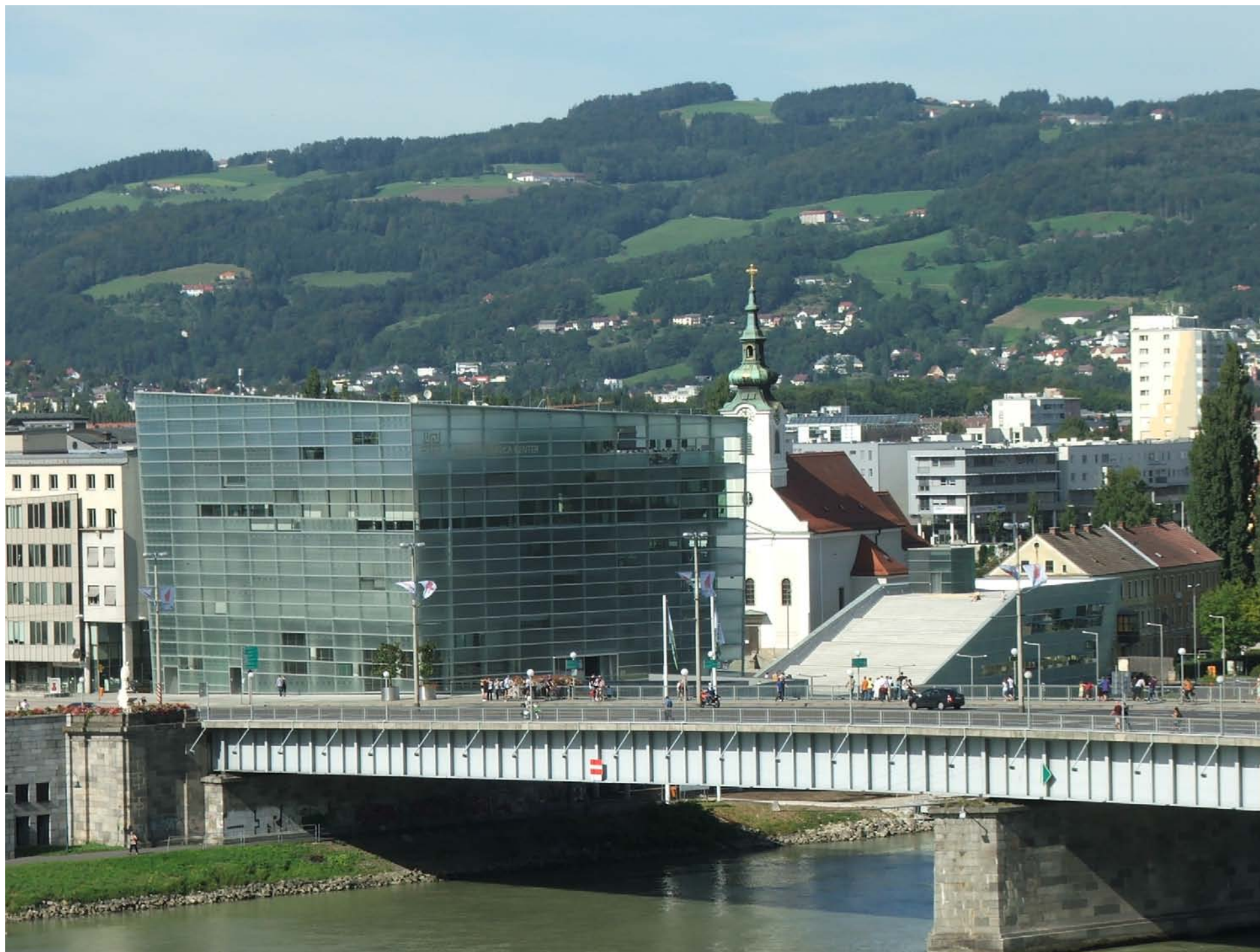


Treusch Architecture



























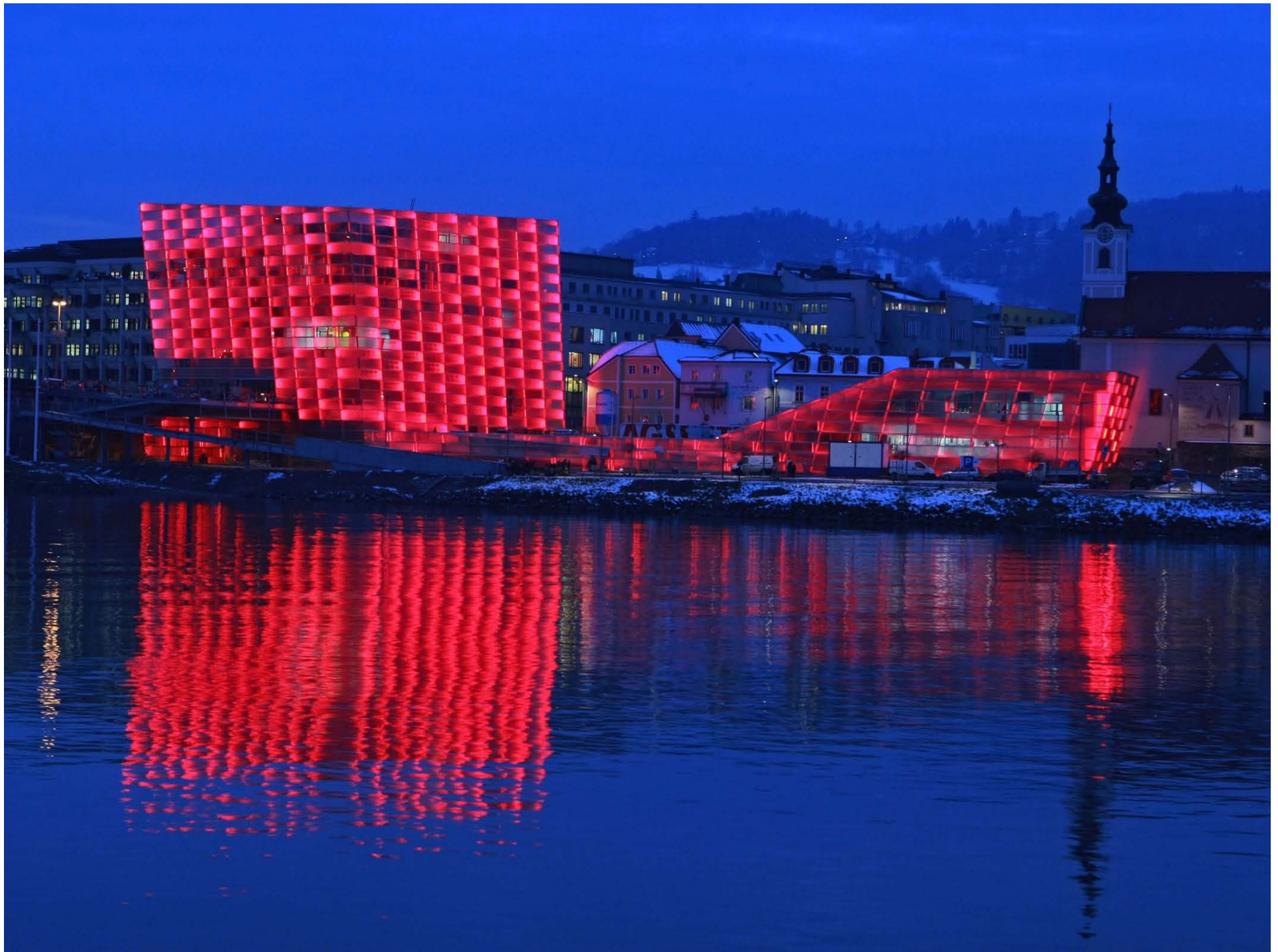
TREUSCH  
architecture



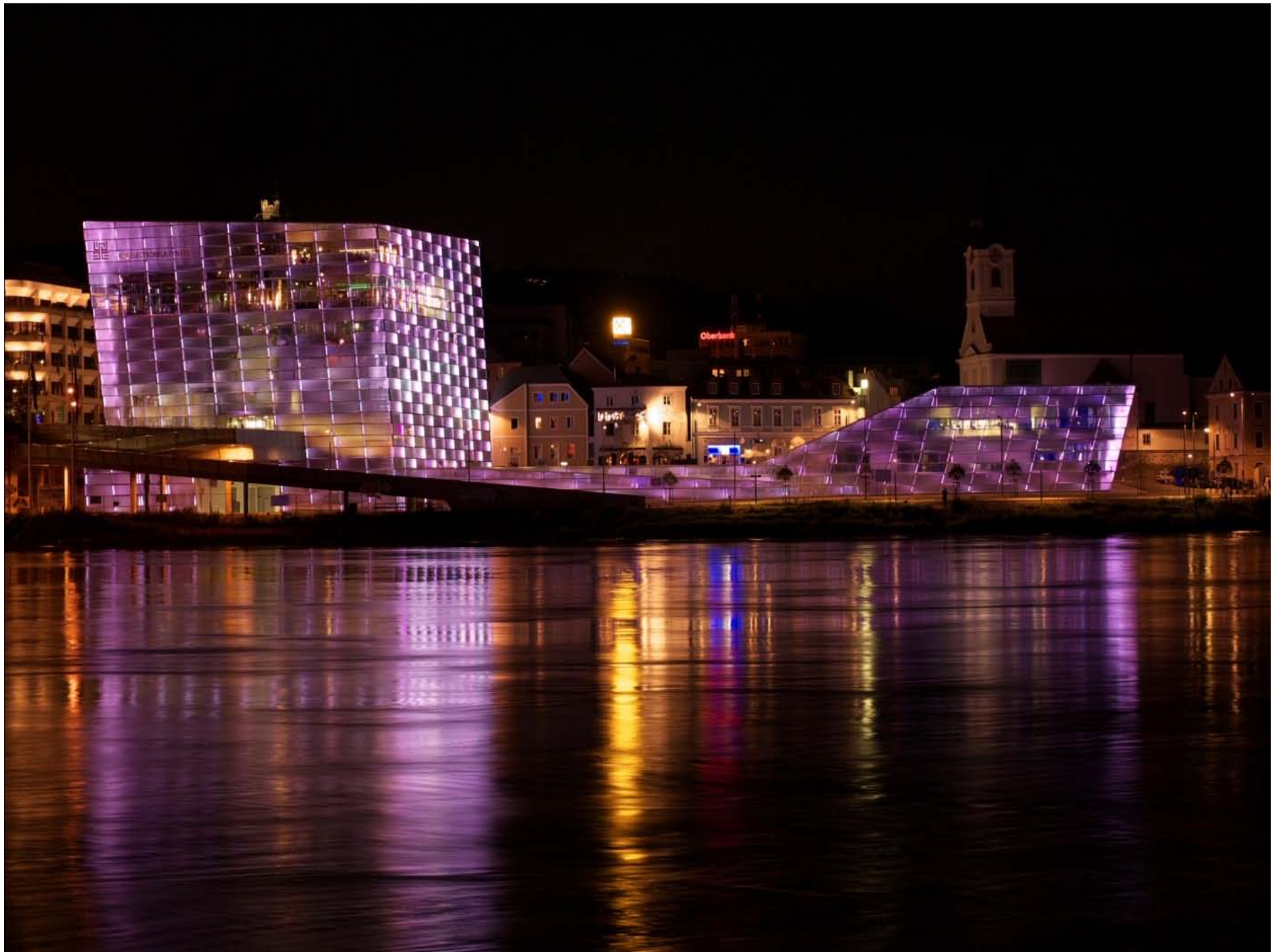


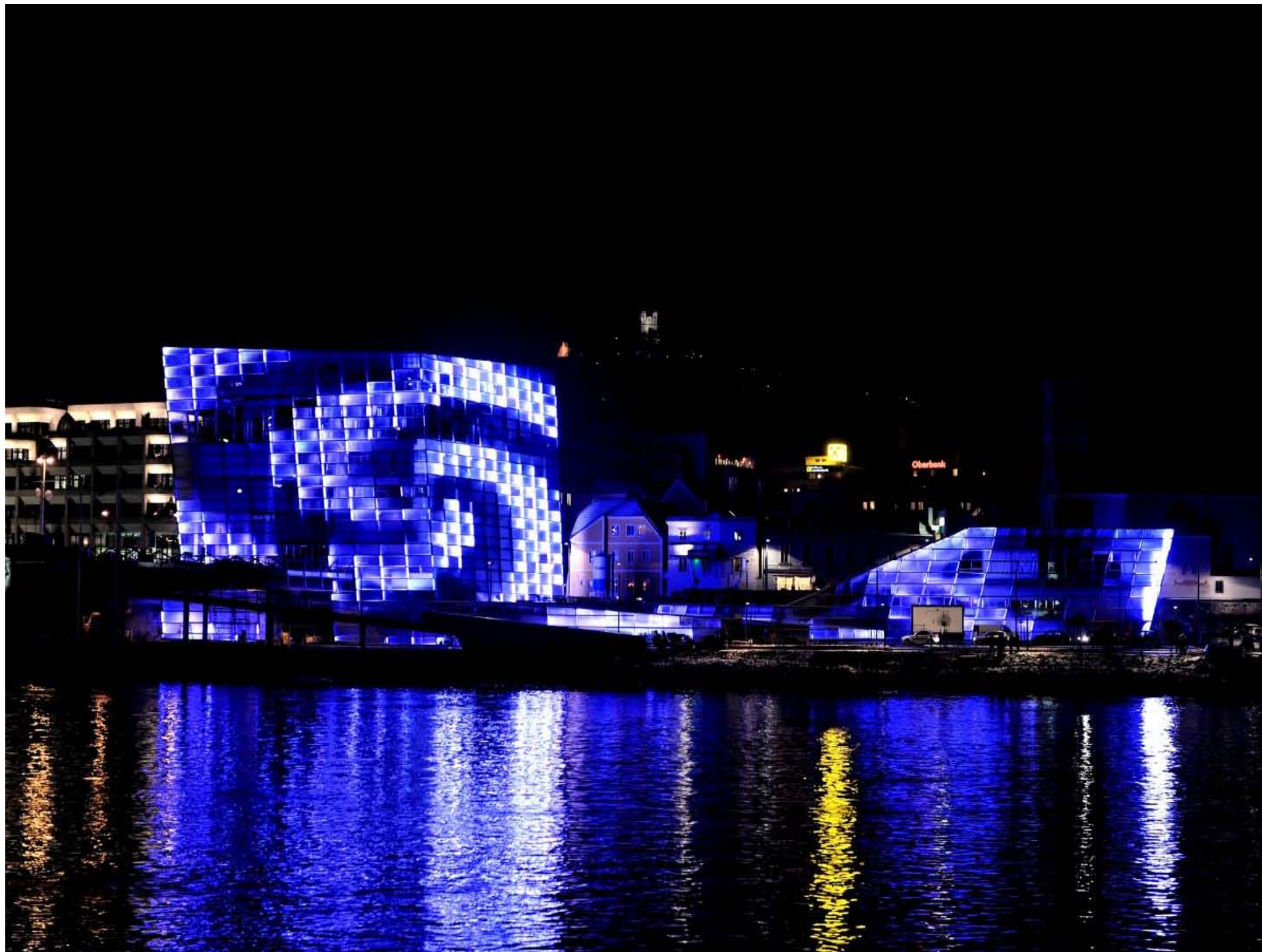
















# Danubiana Art Museum 2000



Architect: Peter Zalman



















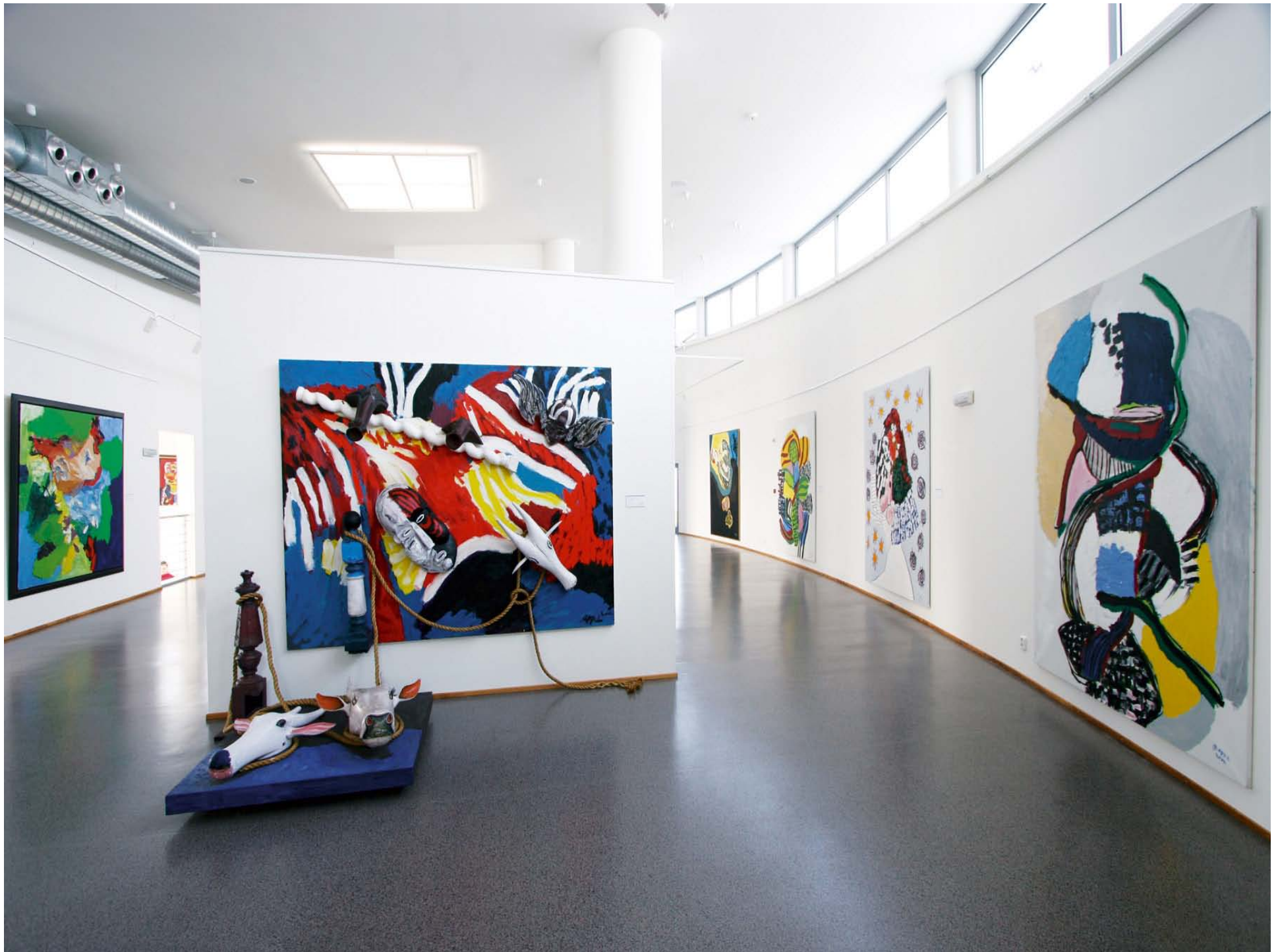












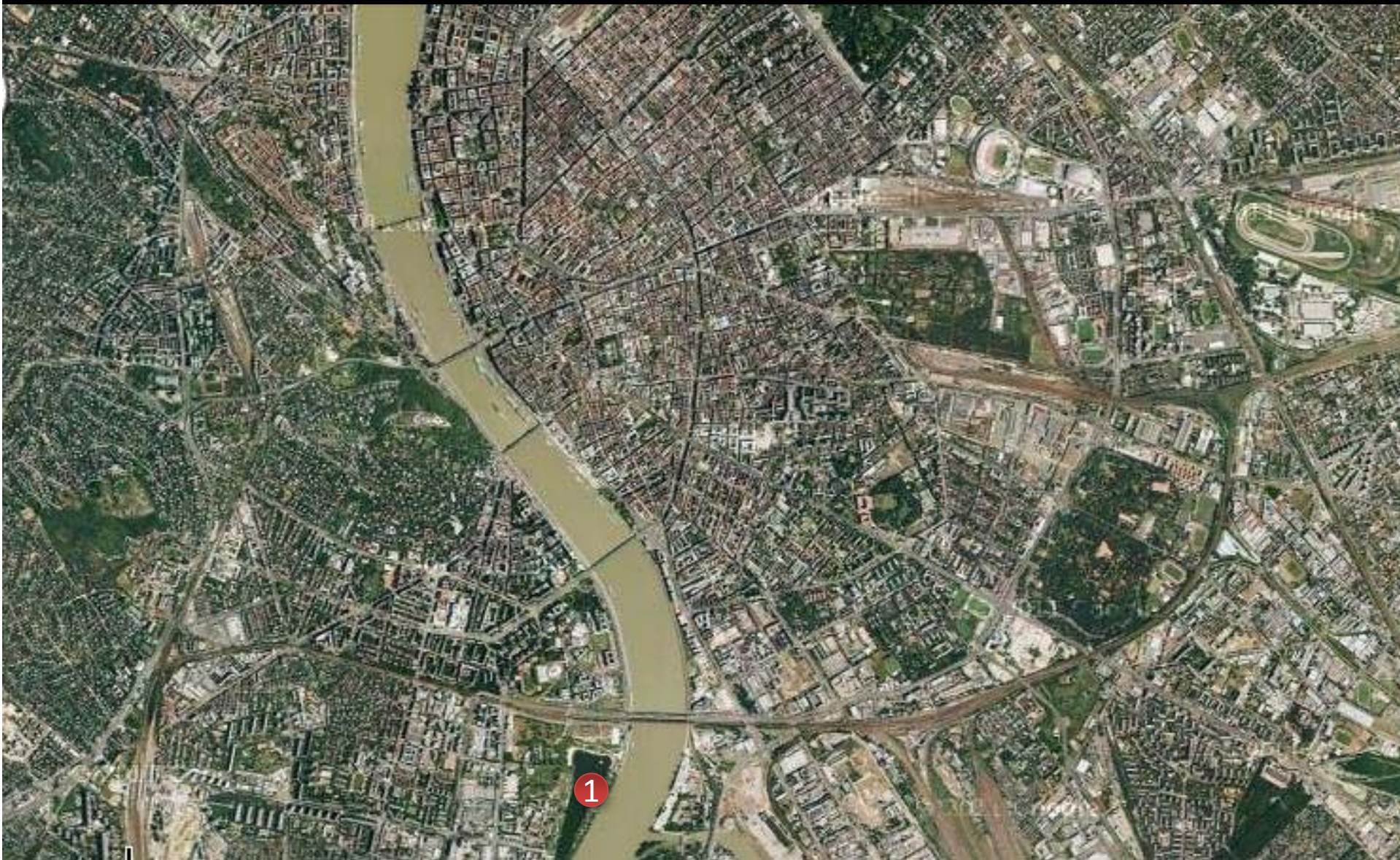
























A38 culture boat  
2003



Architect: VMüvek



















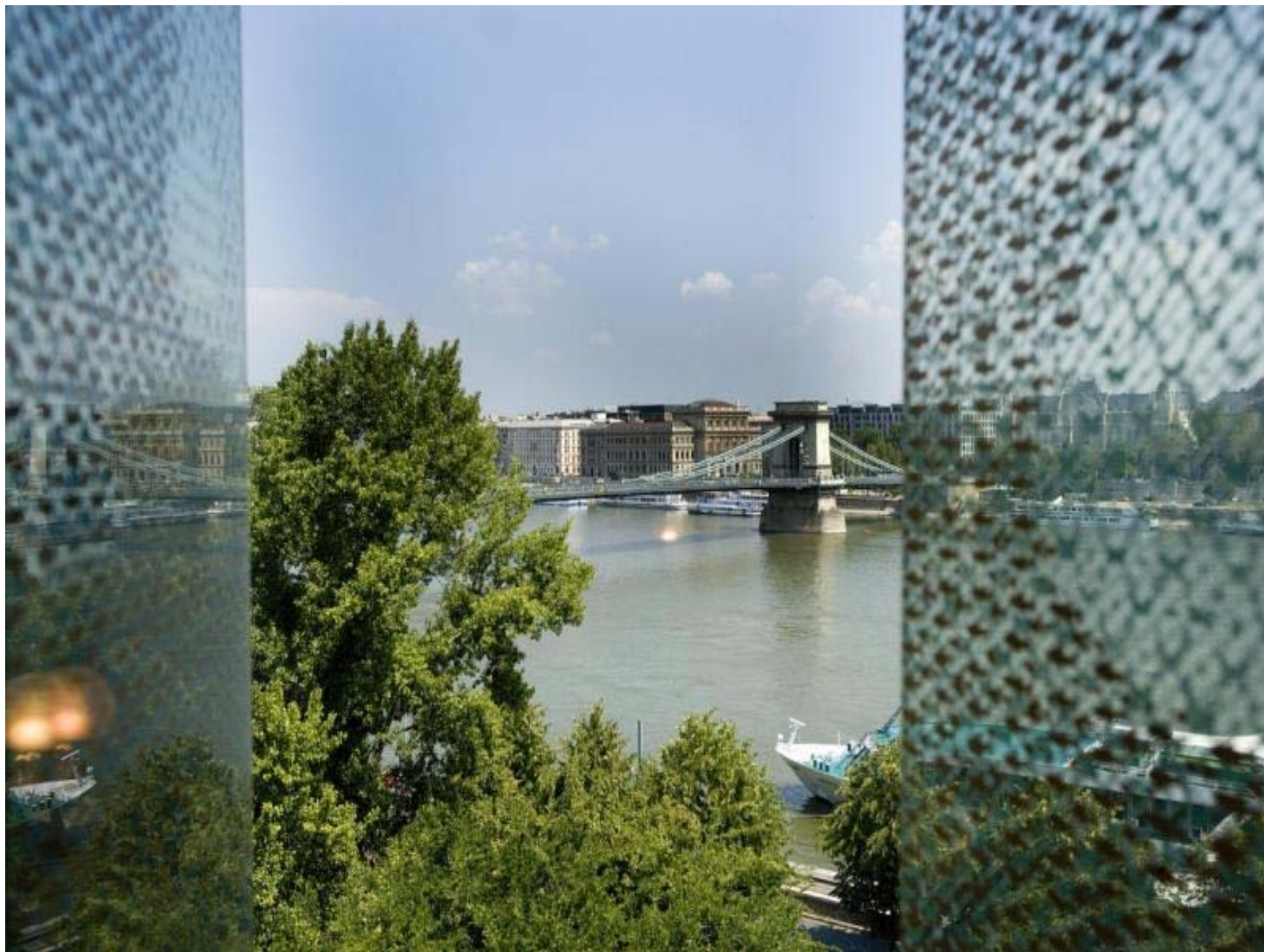
# Design hotel Lanchíd-19 2007



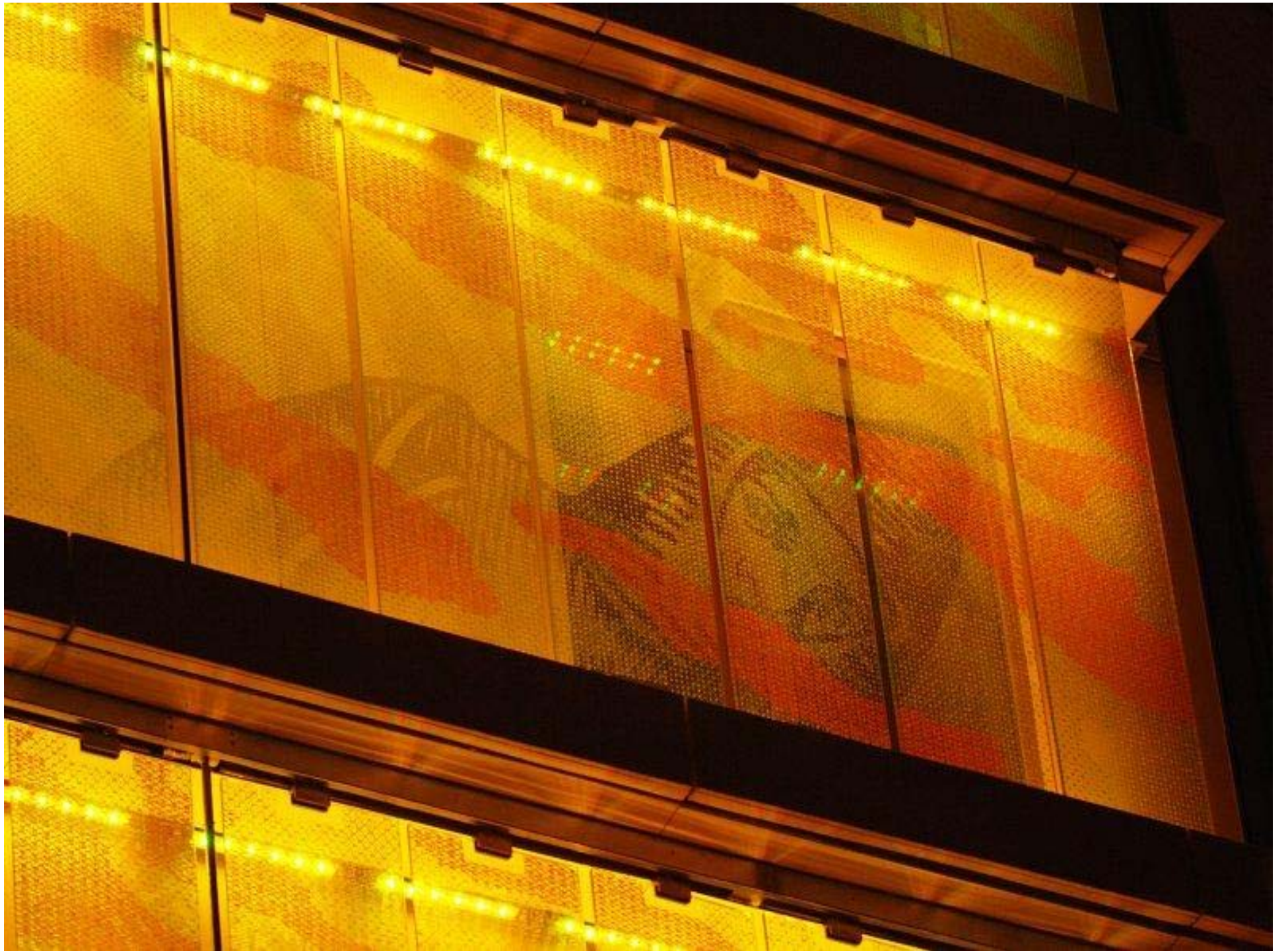
Architects: Benczúr, Sugár, Kara















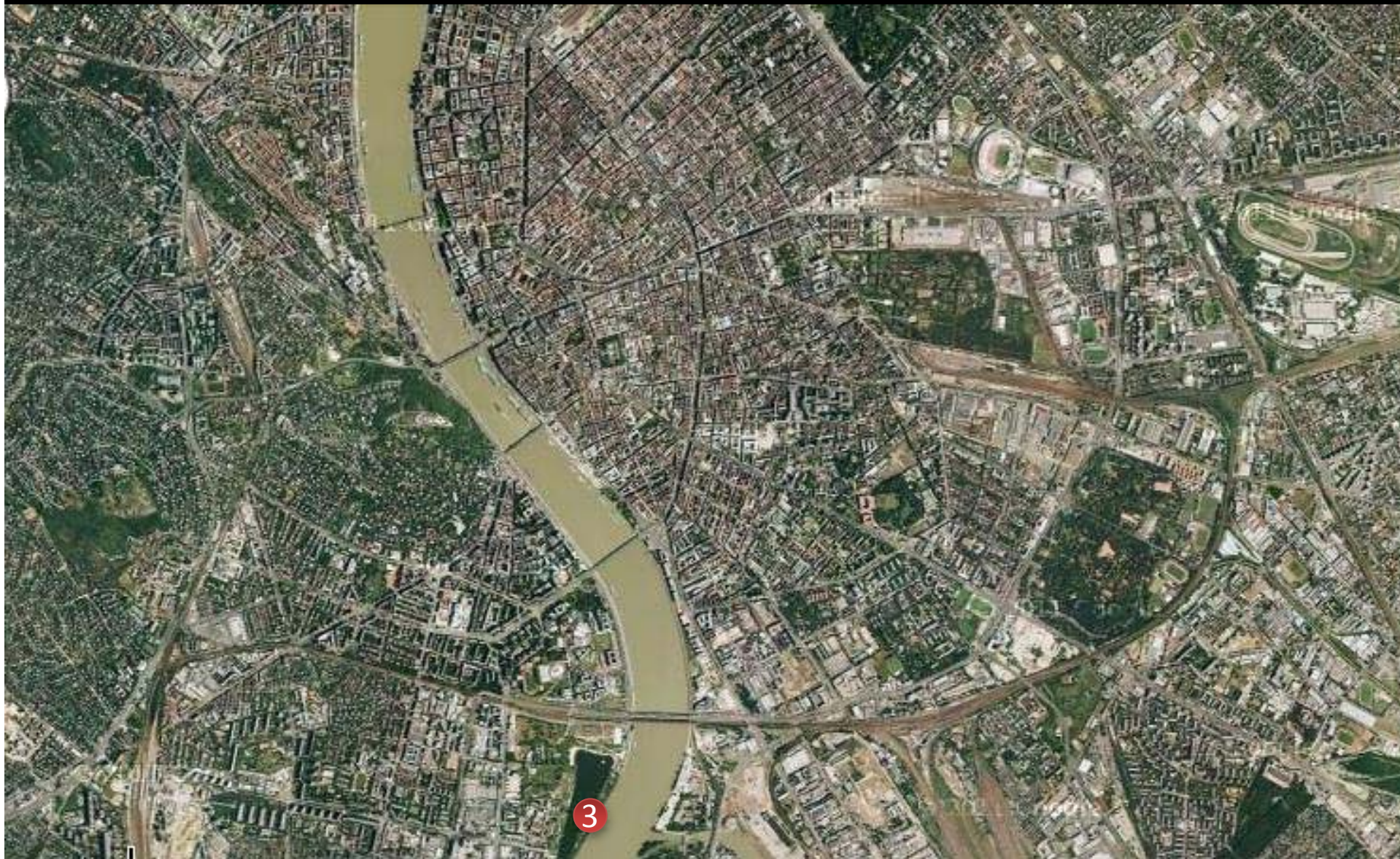














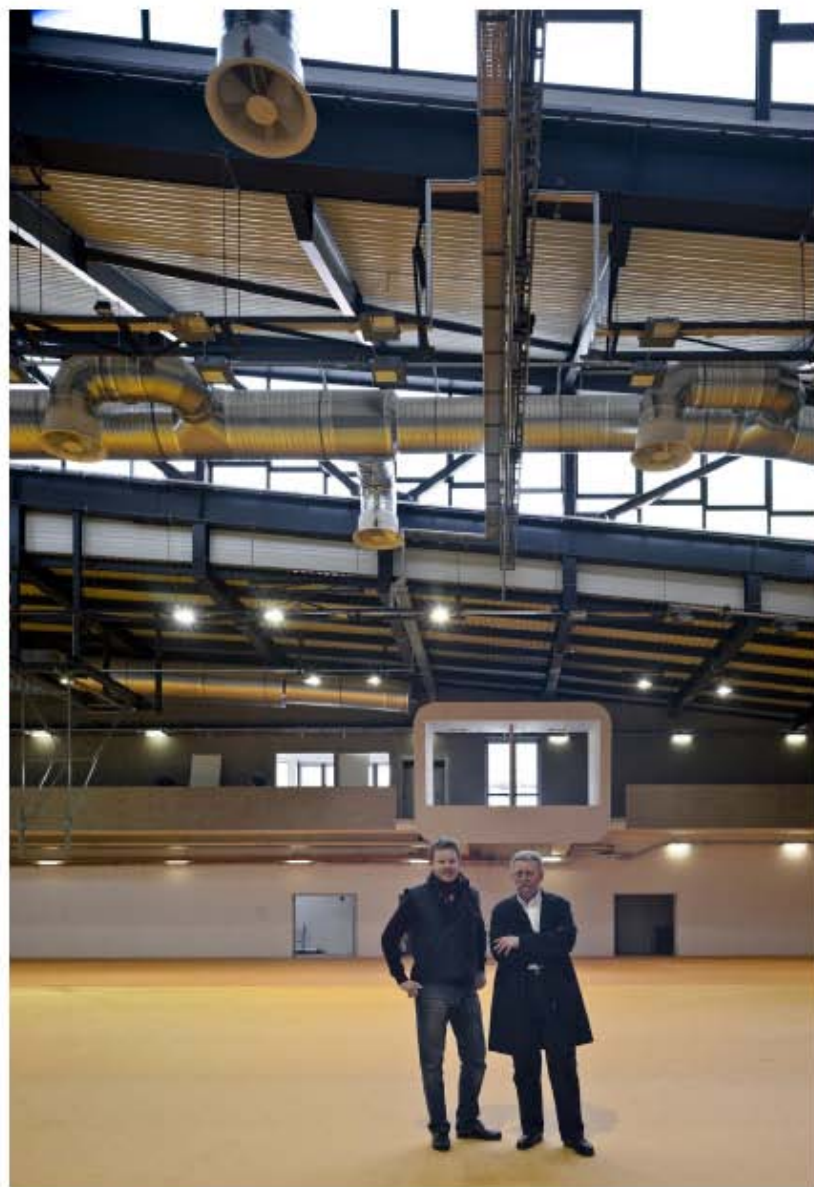
# Kopaszi dam 2007



T2a Architects Gábor & Bence Turany



Father Gábor Turányi is 1949, double as a doctorate in liberal arts from the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) in 1974 and set up his own practice in 1978. In addition to his architectural work he teaches at the BME and writes articles on architecture. Gábor Turányi is 1974, also studied at the BME and spent one year studying in Marseille, France. After obtaining his diploma in 2001, he went to work for Turányi and Szűcs Ltd where his father was one of the partners. In 2003 father and son set up their own practice, Turányi & Turányi Architects, in T2a.



Two architects from different generations, one educated before, the other after the fall of communism in Hungary; together they head T2a, the practice they established in 2003. What unites **Gábor** and **Bence Turányi** is not the pursuit of a single recognizable architectural style but a flexible approach to architectural design and an open working relationship. This has resulted in a wide range of 'natural' buildings that appear to have grown out of their immediate surroundings. No 'starchitecture' but contemporary 'popular' architecture. A10 correspondent Emiel Lamers interviews father and son Turányi.

— HUNGARY — TEXT: EMIEL LAMERS, PHOTOGRAPHY: JESSIE SMITH

## Father and son

**Emiel Lamers:** Can you tell us how you started your office together? Was it a conscious decision by the two of you or did the situation evolve gradually?

**Bence Turányi:** We have always talked about architecture since I was 20 years old. When I was a little kid, I accompanied my father on site inspections, later on I helped to colour plans and computer drawings. During my university years, I was given the opportunity to work on different projects. With this opportunity of course came a considerable amount of responsibility, but I always had someone to turn to. I think the experience of my father's teachings helped a lot in the development of our professional relationship. We understand each other without words, which makes things work really efficiently and enables us to focus on the important things. I like to work with my father as long as possible, but things do not always depend on our own decisions. One of the most important things I have learned from him over the years, is that it's not always a good thing to cling to what we think is right. The world is constantly changing, as is our position within it, so we need to be flexible.

**EL:** Have you divided tasks in the five years you've been working together?

**Gábor Turányi:** We don't officially divide the tasks. We discuss everything and we both do all sorts of work to the degree that we have the time and energy for it. But things are changing. I have to admit that my son Bence is more and more concerned with office management and architectural style.

**EL:** It is true that in the last years I have consciously tried to take care of the management, concentrating on assigning tasks to the right people. Of course, we still make decisions together about important or strategic questions. But this has changed slightly since I started working on some projects by myself. Nonetheless, I still find it most inspiring when we have a conscious dialogue about our work. My father's views often provide a broader perspective.

**EL:** What are the positive aspects of a father-son architectural practice and is there also a reverse side?

**Gábor Turányi:** I would just say, we appreciate being able to work in a trusting and amicable atmosphere. The reverse side? Well, as a father I strongly object to Bence's occasional long working hours.

**EL:** I have to say that I see only the benefits of this situation, which is unique. However, I think my father has taken many conscious decisions to get the office where we are now. I'm quite sure it hasn't been easy for him to withdraw from some areas and to yield them to me. Luckily, at the time I was not fully aware of this process.

**EL:** Do you manage to strictly separate your private and professional lives?

**Gábor Turányi:** Naturally, there are disagreements sometimes, because this is inherent in the process of working on a project. But there is an unspoken rule between us: not to take any office problems or conflicts back home.

**EL:** Some years ago there were some strained office situations which sometimes did affect our relationship. Today this no

longer happens because we have learned a lot from the past. In the family, architecture is more or less always a subject of conversation, but we don't discuss office matters at home anymore.

**EL:** Do you have a particular working method for all projects, or does it differ from one project to the other?

**Gábor Turányi:** The first steps are always very emotional. Even after all these years I still start a new project as if I had never planned a house before. For that very reason, every job needs different methods; sometimes the starting point is a vision, sometimes a construction or a material, but it may also happen to be a colour.

**EL:** The most important thing is to grasp the essence of a particular situation and formalize the right answer. There has to be a balance between functions, location, the client and our own ideas. This is a subtle balance; if anyone aspect dominates we are in trouble. After agreeing on the basic concept, every job is assigned its own project designer who coordinates day-to-day work. But we continuously follow what's going on.

**EL:** Gábor, could you tell us in what way architects' working methods have changed in Hungary since the political events of 1990?

**Gábor Turányi:** The basic working method has changed because of the transition from centralized state socialism to privately owned architectural practices. Architects who had worked for the state were suddenly able to go freelance. This liberated our souls. The new assignments and technologies, which hadn't been available to us until then, brought new possibilities too. Before that time we lacked structural and material resources, but today we can build almost everything from anything.

**EL:** What is your experience of construction in Hungary over the past 15 years? Is there a greater emphasis on architectural quality nowadays, or are clients more concerned about money and quantity?

**Gábor Turányi:** Many clients only care about their own profits. But these days there are at least an equal number of clients who recognize that more money can be achieved with a good architect and better architectural quality. There are even clients who think about architecture as part of their culture. We meet more and more people like this.

**EL:** Generally speaking, I am positive about the post-1990 changes. We have incomparably greater possibilities today. I think many people are just starting to realize what a big gap we have to fill and that progress is possible only with great efforts and conflicts. This developing awareness is taking place at many different levels, and architects are not accepted. In my view, it is the most frustrating. At least their premises are clear and simple. Sometimes it's the poor organization and inefficiency of projects which negatively affects the architectural quality.

**EL:** Has Hungary's admission to the EU in 2004 had any effect on your practice's method of working and commitments?

**Gábor Turányi:** We haven't noticed any direct effects in the contracts, however because of the EU procurement regulations we are more involved in international competitions. Technical aspects are more easily resolved now that we have access to other markets, and it is also to be said that the broader horizons have given us greater self-confidence. For example, we participated quite successfully in the 2006 competition for the new National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague.

**EL:** What, in your view, could be considered to be typical Hungarian architecture?

**Gábor Turányi:** Hungarian architecture is the anatomy of built and demolished buildings of the last thousand years. In between, there have been three periods: such as Socialism, Socialism and Bauhaus, which have influenced Hungarian architects. Also exciting, but not very well known, are the beautiful, functionalist brick buildings of the 1930s. For us the most important source of inspiration is Hungarian folk architecture and anonymous, spontaneous local architecture. A thorough knowledge of this accumulated architectural wisdom could invigorate today's architecture.

**EL:** These days, 'national character' is not as present in Hungarian architecture as it used to be in, say, the 1960s and early 1970s. The signs of change are noticeable here, too, and in this respect I feel some hesitation among Hungarian architects. A lot of people think that keeping traditions alive is equivalent to being old-fashioned and un-European.

**EL:** What do you consider to be the main issues facing architecture in Hungary at this moment and what are the challenges of the future?

**Gábor Turányi:** A change of direction or even a change of paradigm is in the air. Architects are anxious and in a hurry to find the right direction. Some architects are promoting a certain direction, but I think the strength of Hungarian architecture has always been its diversity. The challenge is to find our own way. In business terms, however, we do need to persevere at an international level.

**EL:** I also think the greatest challenge is to be connected in the right way to the European and international scene. For this we have to clarify our relations with our heritage, our historical values, and to strengthen relations with the rest of Europe. I have been impressed by recent outstanding work by Czech and Irish architects. I think they have been particularly successful in clarifying their position in the international arena.

**EL:** How does Hungarian architecture relate to architecture in the rest of Europe today?

**Gábor Turányi:** 'We have to clarify our relations with our heritage, our historical values, and to strengthen relations with the rest of Europe.'





















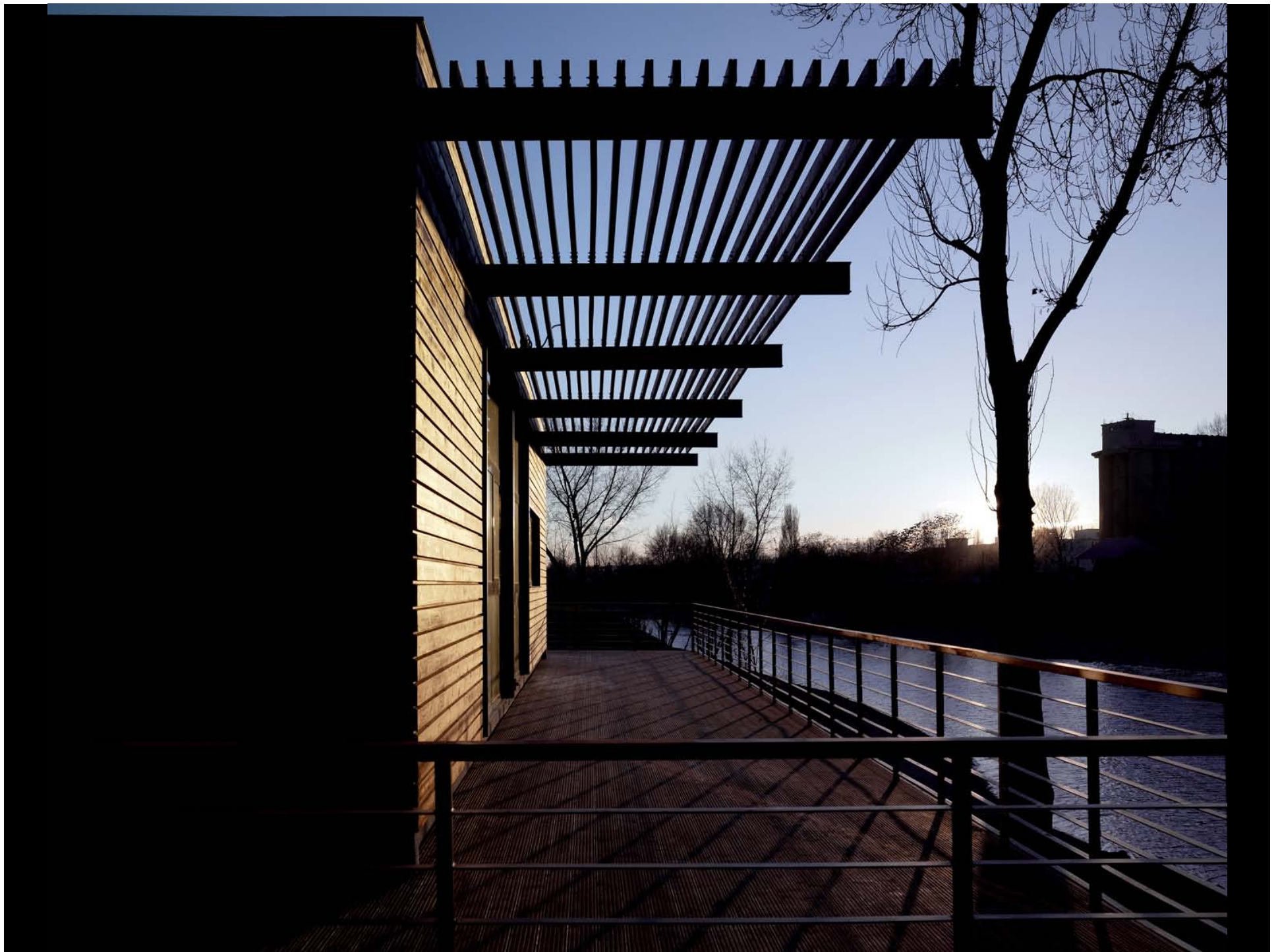
















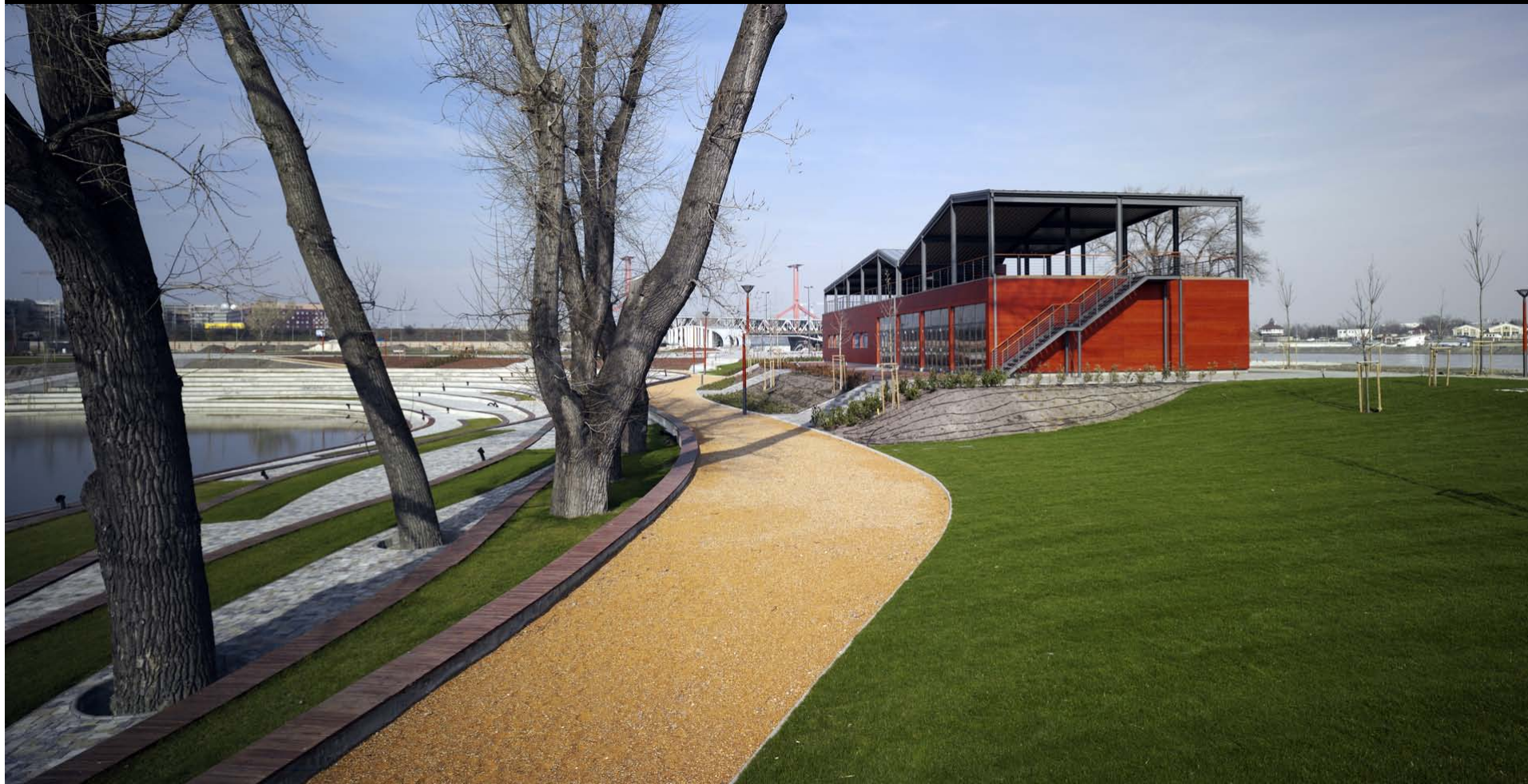
















































# CET 2011



ONL    Kas Oosterhuis



homologue











homologue













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Austria – Slovakia – Hungary



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