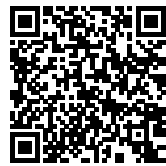




EDUARD-WALLNÖFER-PLATZ: A CONTEMPORARY URBAN TRANSFORMATION

Posted on February 6, 2025 by Dima Fadel



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Recontextualizing History Through Design

The transformation of Eduard-Wallnöfer-Platz (Landhausplatz) aimed to create a contemporary urban space that mediates between the site's various contradictions while establishing a dynamic setting for diverse public activities. The realized project consists of a 9,000-square-meter concrete floor sculpture, redefining the square as a versatile and engaging public realm. Eduard-Wallnöfer-Platz, once the largest yet neglected public square in the heart of Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria, held symbolic significance due to the presence of four memorials. A subterranean garage, constructed in 1985, further influenced the site's spatial constraints.

Before its transformation, the square was dominated by the imposing facade of the Tyrolean provincial government building from the National Socialist era and a large-scale memorial that, despite its fascist appearance, actually commemorates resistance against and liberation from National Socialism. The intervention sought to correct historical misconceptions while reinforcing the monument's significance. The new topography provides a contemporary and dynamic foundation for the memorials, making them more physically accessible and enhancing their perception. By reshaping the terrain, the design introduces a landscape-like counterpart to the surrounding architecture while remaining distinctly urban through its materiality and function.

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ISSN : 2575-5374



Multi-Functional Public Space

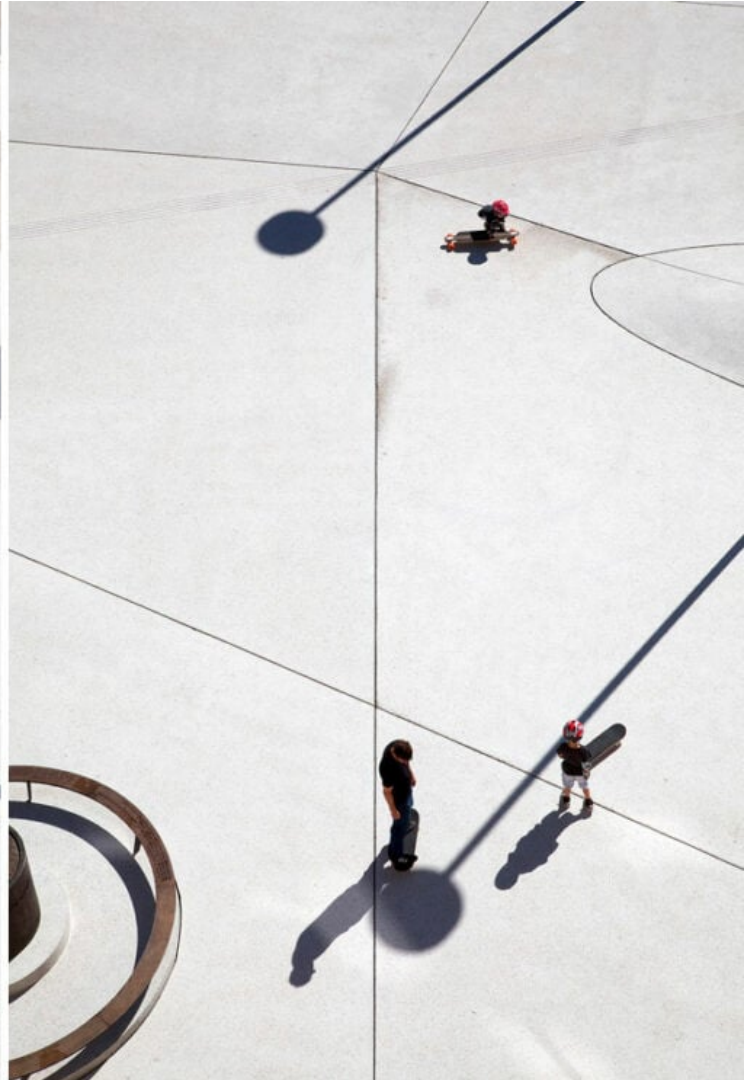
The accessibility and layout of pathways result from the strategic modulation of the surface, accommodating spatial constraints, functional needs, and morphological considerations. The square is envisioned as an open forum between the main station and the old town, inviting pedestrians and visitors to interact with the space and its memorials as active participants in the city's public life. The bright concrete surface serves as a three-dimensional projection field, casting dynamic shadows from trees and people throughout the day, while at night, indirect light reflections enhance the ambiance. This interplay of light and shadow highlights the seasonal changes and reinforces the square's evolving character.

In the northern part of the square, a spacious flat area in front of the Landhaus serves as a flexible event space equipped with the necessary infrastructure. A large-scale fountain activates the space, providing cooling relief in the summer. South of the liberation monument, the undulating topography offers diverse spatial configurations for various uses. The concrete surface texture varies based on geometric configurations, seamlessly transitioning into seating areas with a polished terrazzo-like finish beneath many of the trees. One of the memorial sculpture groups is integrated into a newly designed fountain basin, where water cascades down steps carved into a gentle slope. The shallow fountain and water features in front of the Landhaus serve as playful elements for children and contribute to localized climate cooling. Additionally, drinking fountains at different heights accommodate both children and adults.

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Innovative Construction and Sustainability

The square's surface is composed of precisely modulated in-situ concrete slabs, connected by bolts to accommodate shearing forces. Infrastructure elements for organizing events are seamlessly integrated within slab fields of up to 100 square meters. A discreet yet effective drainage system ensures that surface water, including that from the fountains, is efficiently managed through open joints between the concrete slabs. This innovative buffer system allows for complete on-site water absorption, even with the presence of the underground garage, eliminating the need for visible drainage pits.

The intervention at Eduard-Wallnöfer-Platz successfully transforms the site into a contemporary, flexible, and engaging urban space. By balancing historical awareness with modern usability, the project reclaims the square as an essential part of Innsbruck's urban fabric, fostering interaction, reflection, and diverse public life.

