



Special Theme
Top 3 Austrian Architects

querkraft

Architecture between poetry and pragmatism

Architecture is both precise and visionary. It is all around us and impacts our living experiences and practical functions. Good architecture can work as a social catalyst, underpinning peoples' aspirations, their activities, joy, and life contexts.

TEXT: ELISABETH DOEHNE | PHOTOS: QUERKRAFT

Embracing this philosophy, the Austrian architectural firm designs spaces for people to enjoy, live and work in. "We want to give people spaces," is the credo of the firm. In other words, they focus on how the built environment connects to peoples' quality of life. The starting point for their designs are people and their environments; their scales, interests and engagement in their communities.

"We build around the needs of people. They are at the centre of our designs. Our approach – a balance between poetry and pragmatism – is always a new challenge for us," explains Jakob Dunkl, one of the three querkraft owners. He adds: "We never

give up. We are excited about new, challenging projects. And, we are told that we stay cool even under pressure."

Poetic and pragmatic solutions
 querkraft embraces the duality of poetic ideas and pragmatic solutions. With refer-



ence to a Werner Herzog movie, in which the protagonist wants to build an opera house in the jungle, art critics have labelled querkraft's museum in Carinthia the "Fitzcarraldo on the Drau".

Through their strategic approach and by focusing on the needs and goals of customers, users and other stakeholders, the firm's design solutions have always proved to be innovative yet effective. This also epitomises querkraft's approach to look at things in their context and to employ this



Main image & above: Museum Liaunig, Museum for Contemporary Art, in Neuhaus, Suha, Carinthia, Austria
 Portrait: The three querkraft owners Jakob Dunkl, Peter Sapp, and Gerd Erhartt
 Below left: querkraft headquarters in the historic Vienna stock exchange
 Right: Technical Museum Vienna
 Citygate Tower, a residential highrise in Vienna
 Leopoldt Tower, a residential highrise in Vienna
 Residential passive house

contextual knowledge to build onto it; philosophically and practically.

querkraft - approach and history
 Located in Vienna, Austria, and founded in 1998, querkraft provides design services in corporate architecture, urban design and interiors for a wide variety of public and private clients and industries. Together, the three owners Jakob Dunkl, Gerd Erhartt, and Peter Sapp head a team of approximately 30 multicultural, dynamic and highly qualified architects. After getting their start more than 17 years ago, the partners have successfully established querkraft as one of the most respected and integrated design firms in Austria.

The architectural office has completed award-winning projects in Austria and

other European countries. Each year, they take on a selected number of clients, and querkraft has been commissioned with the construction of prominent projects ranging from commercial and apartment buildings, private residences, residential high-rises, to museums.

Life - spaces - joy - work
 The firm's focus is working with their clients to create mutually beneficial relationships between people's quality of life and their built environment. A recent example of their work is the conversion of a huge lobby in the historic Vienna stock exchange into their new office headquarters.

In order to make more qualified decisions about how to design, conceptualise and change environments, querkraft architects take the time to understand people's use of public spaces. Through this creative process, which is beneficial for everyone, they actively improve the quality of life of individuals, communities and cities.

Past and present projects
 From the on-set, querkraft has been recognised for their modern, innovative and puristic design. "We won the first big, international competition that we took part in – the Adidas Brand Center in Germany. Similarly, we also won our first competition in France recently – with an apartment complex in Paris," states Dunkl.

In 2013 querkraft won the state prize for architecture and sustainability for their housing project U31 in Vienna. While querkraft has great expertise in constructing housing buildings, they have also realised museums. The most prominent example is the Museum Liaunig in the Austrian province of Carinthia. "In fact, the Museum Liaunig was declared part of the Austrian cultural heritage, only five years after we finished construction," explains the querkraft's owner.

Contextual design for people
 Having worked in many segments and successfully mastered a plethora of diverse projects, querkraft is confident and excited about future projects. The firm states: "We



look forward to bigger projects that combine both creativity and building quality. We want to continue to build for people – and to bring more joy to people. We want to grow and advance qualitatively and as well as in quantitative terms."

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