

Rob Krier, Cité Judiciaire, Luxembourg

With contributions by Ann Holyoke Lehmann and Dankwart Guratzsch. 1136 pp. with 1020 illus., 120 x 170,9 mm, hard-cover, German/English
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With the »Cité Judiciaire« Rob Krier, perhaps the only urban-planning artist among Germany's architects, has, for the first time in 30 years, completed a major urban project in his home country of Luxembourg. With regard to its authorship, this is a true »family project«. With the significant contribution of his brother Léon to the masterplan for the site, which is situated opposite his parental home, Krier has, in his own words, fulfilled a »youthful dream«. Krier's son-in-law and office partner, Christoph Kohl was involved in the execution, as was his distant relation and Luxembourgian contact architect, Jean Herr.

The concept reaches far beyond Luxembourg's borders in its significance, as Krier's crew has formulated something of a manifesto for classical European urban architecture. Rather than a further high-rise for this European city, an entire quarter has been created with public roads, lanes and squares in which the various judicial departments are distributed across eight buildings. The plot structure, small-sized units and traditional plasterwork façades with their three-dimensional sculpted details all enhance the quarter's vitality, as does the masterful treatment of spatial divisions.

This new approach is decisive in solving an ever more complex construction problem in contemporary urban planning: the integration of major administration complexes into the existing make-up of the city. In Luxembourg, the Kriers have succeeded in providing model evidence that, even today, this task can be achieved by means of top-quality architecture, without having to forfeit anything in terms of the modernity of equipment, the parsimony of economical execution, the reduction of energy consumption, or in the basic demands of public proximity.

With this publication, Rob Krier has created a novelty in architectural literature. It is the first volume in sketchbook format of a series which document the design process from the first hand-drawn sketches, right through to realisation. Here, the entire spectrum of the creative process and its irrepressible joy for variation are revealed.

Rob Krier is an architect and influential theorist for architecture and urban planning. Born and raised in Luxembourg, he moved to Vienna after having studied in Munich and worked for Oswald Mathias Ungers and Frei Otto. Today he resides in Berlin and Liguria. After teaching posts in Stuttgart and Lausanne, he was a professor of architecture at Vienna Technical University from 1976 to 1998 and, in 1986, held a guest professorship at Yale University in New Haven, Mass. Besides his work as an architect, Rob Krier creates sculptures and statuary arts primarily for public spaces.

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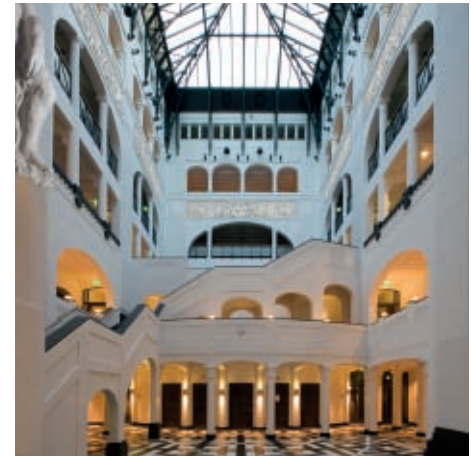
Rob Krier
Cité Judiciaire, Luxembourg

Menges

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Cité Judiciaire Luxembourg

1991–2008



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With contributions by
Mit Beiträgen von

Ann Holyoke Lehmann
Dankwart Guratzsch

Edition Axel Menges



For my brother Leo
Für meinen Bruder Leo

He was decisive in moulding the urban form of the Cité. Our lifelong professional dialogue nourished a shared passion for the rediscovery of a classical architectural language.

*Er prägte maßgebend die städtebauliche Anlage der Cité. Unser lebens-
langer fachlicher Dialog nährte die gemeinsame Leidenschaft der
Wiederentdeckung einer klassischen Architektursprache.*

I wish to express my gratitude to

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the pages of technical drawings and sketches and
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This work would not have been possible without the
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Christoph Kohl as my Junior Partner
and
Jean Herr as my contact architect in Luxembourg

Roland Seidel, project manager, and his team,
at Krier Kohl Architekten
and
Patrick Mayer, project manager 2001–2006,
and Barbara Hémon, project manager 2006–2008
at A&E, Architecture and Environnement

Their persistence and professionalism in terms of technical implementation,
and their patience and talent for working with the authorities, made it possible
for the majority of the design ideas to be transformed into reality. —R. K.

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Foreword

Vorwort

The world of construction professionals is witnessing an unprecedented deluge of glossily-attired publications.

No time has looked as fruitful for architecture as this. In fact, there has rarely been so much construction activity in a single era, as has been seen in the past 150 years. Never before have such extravagant structures been designed and completed. Rather than is the case in buildings with purely technical functions, governed by rationality, cost and benefit, today's architecture distances itself ever further from the classical disciplines of balancing utility, material deployment and the discovery of their corresponding form.

Die bauende Fachwelt wird wie nie zuvor von glanzvoll aufgemachten Veröffentlichungen überschwemmt.

Die Zeit scheint für Architektur fruchtbar wie nie. In der Tat, selten wurde in einer Epoche baulich so viel umgesetzt wie in den letzten 150 Jahren. Noch nie sind so extravagante Bauten konzipiert und realisiert worden. Anders als bei Konstruktionen mit rein technischen Funktionen, die von Rationalität, Aufwand und Leistung beherrscht sind, entfernt sich die Architektur heute immer mehr von der klassischen Disziplin des Gleichgewichts zwischen Nutzen, Materialeinsatz und entsprechender Formfindung.

The beginnings of modern construction in the 20th century saw themselves as duty-bound to this tradition. Today, the addiction to extravagance courses through prestige architecture, whilst the majority of ordinary buildings are banal and undignified.

The dazzling publications which exist on the few outstanding monumental structures, seldom delve into the workshop atmosphere of the architect. The drawing-board, pencil and eraser have now vanished following the emergence of computers. In my office, I am the only one who draws freehand. The architectural drawing, as an original work, has now become an exotic product. It is now almost a rarity next to sterile and lifeless computer simulations. Strangely, however, it has recently become unusually popular again. Clients feel once more that they convey

Die Anfänge des modernen Bauens im 20. Jahrhundert sahen sich dieser Tradition noch verpflichtet. Heute durchdringt die Sucht nach Extravaganz das repräsentative Bauen, während das Gros der Normalbauten banal und würdelos ist.

Die glanzvollen Publikationen zu den wenigen herausragenden Monumentalbauten tauchen selten in die Werkstattatmosphäre des Architekten ein. Seit dem Einsatz von Computern sind Reißbrett, Bleistift und Radiergummi verschwunden. In meinem Büro bin ich der einzige Freihandzeichner. Die Architekturzeichnung als Original ist zum exotischen Produkt geworden. Neben der sterilen und leblosen Computersimulation ist sie fast schon eine Rarität. Seltsamerweise ist sie seit kurzem wieder ungewöhnlich beliebt. Bauherren trauen ihr wieder mehr Ehrlichkeit in der Vermittlung räumlicher Visionen zu als der verblüffend realitätsnahen Dar-

spatial visions with much greater honesty than astonishingly realistic computer-generated depictions. A good sign for the old craft!

Freehand drawing enables greater technical flexibility and speed in finding alternatives during the conception phase. A scrap of paper containing a wayward sketch of my thoughts disappears without complaint into the waste paper basket; it doesn't require electronic memory. The format of my drawings has shrunk to no bigger than DIN A4 as it fits into any fax machine and every scanner. Along with the telephone, dialogue with my team is limited to these two media. The technically very simple fax still works quickest and surest. It eases archival work and the retrieval of old documents, something which cannot be claimed of the computer.

stellung von Computerzeichnungen. Ein gutes Zeichen für das alte Handwerk!

Während der Konzeptionsphase ist das Freihandzeichnen technisch flexibler und schneller bei der Variantenfindung. Ein Fetzen Papier mit einem mißratenen Entwurfsgedanken verschwindet klaglos im Papierkorb und benötigt keinen elektronischen Speicher. Das Format meiner Zeichnungen ist auf maximal DIN A4 geschrumpft und paßt auf jedes Faxgerät und auf jeden Scanner. Der Dialog mit meinen Mitarbeitern beschränkt sich neben dem Telefon auf diese beiden Medien. Das technisch einfache Fax funktioniert noch immer am schnellsten und sichersten. Es erleichtert die Archivarbeit und das Wiederfinden alter Dokumente, was man vom Computer nicht behaupten kann.

Neulich ließ ich im Büro nach einem zehn Jahre alten Projekt

The other day, I asked someone to dig out a ten-year-old project for me which had been processed entirely by computer. It had been backed-up onto tapes we were no longer equipped to replay. No great loss, one could say here. What will architecture museums do with these electronic documents in the future, given that they must be repeatedly transferred to the latest data medium at short intervals?

My architectural journal will mark the beginning of a series of publications documenting a very personal style of working. The choice of pocket-book format should reflect the intimacy of the broad strokes approach and counteract the trend of many architectural publications towards show business.

Many sketches capture ideas that could not be realised – and this was not always down

suchen, das ausschließlich am Computer entstanden war. Es war auf Bändern gespeichert, die wir nicht mehr abspielen konnten. Nicht schade drum, kann man da sagen. Was werden Architekturmuseen in Zukunft mit diesen elektronischen Dokumenten machen, die in kurzen Zeitabschnitten immer wieder auf die aktuellsten Datenträger überspielt werden müssen?

Mit meinem Architekturtagebuch beginne ich eine Serie von Veröffentlichungen, die einen sehr persönlichen Arbeitsstil dokumentieren. Die Wahl des Taschenbuchformats soll die Intimität des skizzenhaften Vorgehens wiedergeben und dem Trend vieler Architekturveröffentlichungen zum Showbusiness entgegenwirken.

In vielen Skizzen sind Gedanken festgehalten, die nicht verwirklicht werden konnten – und dies nicht immer aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen. Die Einsprüche der

to economic reasons. The objections of public clients were often unfathomable and can only be ascribed to personal animosities. In recent years, the project lacked the constructive ministerial support it had received from two former ministers.

Neither my architectural language nor my stance on legible and comprehensible art for this building complex has been supported with any commitment. Without homogeneous interaction between designers and clients, however, high-quality architecture will have great difficulty in thriving.

Even though a lot was accomplished on the whole, many errors occurred in the detail, which could have been avoided had the architect's authority over artistic management been safeguarded. Out of mistrust, the public building authority did not appoint us to carry out

öffentlichen Bauherrenschaft waren oft unergründbar und nur auf persönliche Animositäten zurückzuführen. In den letzten Jahren fehlte dem Projekt die konstruktive ministerielle Unterstützung, die es von zwei früheren Ministern erfahren hatte.

Weder meine Architektursprache noch meine Haltung zu einer lesbaren und verständlichen Kunst für diesen Baukomplex wurden mit Engagement unterstützt. Ohne ein homogenes Zusammenwirken von Planern und Bauherrenschaft kann qualitätvolle Architektur aber nur schwerlich gedeihen.

Wenn auch insgesamt einiges durchgesetzt werden konnte, so sind im Detail viele Fehler passiert, die bei der Wahrung der Autorität der künstlerischen Oberleitung des Architekten hätten vermieden werden können. Aus Mißtrauen hat die öffentliche Bauverwaltung uns nicht mit der Ausschreibung, Bauleitung und

the tender procedures, site management or project coordination. The proverb, “Too many cooks spoil the broth”, fits in here wonderfully.

Only the inventor of a work is in a position, to describe his work in all its finer points and to respond in a timely manner with feasible solutions, when contractors encounter difficulties in construction. If this natural interaction has to be relayed to third and fourth parties and then interpreted by these, misunderstandings and problems will occur time after time. Not to mention the accrual of unnecessary additional costs.

Projektkoordination beauftragt. Das Sprichwort “Viele Köche verderben den Brei” trifft hier wunderbar zu.

Nur der Erfinder eines Werkes ist in der Lage, dasselbe bis in alle Feinheiten zu beschreiben und bei Realisierungsproblemen mit den Firmen zusammen rechtzeitig zu reagieren und machbare Alternativen anzubieten. Wenn dieses natürliche Zusammenspiel über Dritte und Vierte weitergeleitet und von diesen interpretiert werden muß, kommt es immer wieder zu Mißverständnissen und Problemen. Außerdem entstehen unnötige Mehrkosten.

Das Mißtrauen uns gegenüber ging so weit, daß man uns ver-

This mistrust towards us went so far, that we were prohibited from entering into direct contact with the contractors. These were difficult conditions for dealing with a challenge of this complexity. We feel a certain sense of satisfaction that we were able, with the tireless support of our contact architects in Luxembourg, Jean Herr and his staff, to remain significantly below the stipulated construction budget.

bot, mit den ausführenden Firmen direkt in Kontakt zu treten. Dies waren schwierige Bedingungen für die Bewältigung einer derart komplexen Aufgabe. Es erfüllt uns mit einer gewissen Genugtuung, daß wir es mit der tatkräftigen Unterstützung unseres Luxemburger Kontaktarchitekten Jean Herr und seiner Mitarbeiter geschafft haben, das festgesetzte Baubudget um einiges zu unterschreiten.













