



Der Rede wert

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Austria Under Construction

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History

Roman Emperor Nero commissioned a splendid domicile to be built for him next to the hills close to the Colosseum. Later, Emperor Trajan, one of his successors, following a clear strategy built his new extensive thermal baths and gardens exactly on top of it on the roof of the Domus Aurea and, thus, caused the (former) domed ceiling to collapse.

Trajan above Nero.

Trajan above Nero.

Welcome to the 12th Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Dear Mr. President,
Dear Mr. State Secretary,
Dear representatives of the Provincial Government,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, Austria's contribution to the Biennale "Austria under Construction" is opened. We are delighted to welcome the commissioner of our contribution, Mr. Eric Owen Moss from Los Angeles.

Eric, a cordial welcome to you.

The theme of this year's Biennale is "People meet in Architecture." It is about the connection of people and architecture.

Connection of people and architecture; of traditional structures and the present.

It is about rooms, people, orientation, future, optimism, change, and, I add, reforms.

Eric Owen Moss often talks about the oracle of architecture; an antagonistic, contradictory, binding present dismantles a once binding past and in so doing reveals a future perspective.

New replaces old.

Traditional structures are overcome. Former powers – and power relationships are overthrown.

Trajan above Nero.

Architecture is the engine and mirror of society.

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If we say:

Respect for history inhibits architecture.

Then, referring to the current internal political discussion in Austria we can say: too much respect for existing federal-feudal structures is blocking reforms.

We have to overcome existing structures to create opportunities for the future.

Architecture, and not just architecture, moves dialectically: thesis – antithesis.

Renewals require determination, preparedness for confrontation and endurance.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Eric Owen Moss is the first curator of the Austrian contribution in Venice who is not Austrian.

I have taken this decision and, in doing so, I have consciously broken the tradition.