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HERZOG & DE MEURON, ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON

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Herzog & de Meuron's architectural office was established in Basel in 1978 and is one of the pioneers of architecture. They have designed a wide range of projects, from small-scale private houses to large-scale urban plans and many public buildings, such as museums, stadiums, and hospitals. They have won many awards, the most important of which is the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2001. Over time, the office has grown to 600 architects dispersed in different cities, but the main office is still in Basel, the hometown of the founders.

In October 2023, Herzog & de Meuron organized an exhibition of works from their office and *Kabinett* archives, which is a rare occasion. The exhibition took place in London at the Royal Academy of Arts and was supplemented by this catalogue. Herzog & de Meuron's exhibition catalogue provides an approachable picture of the fundamentals, sequence of thinking, and their approach to each project. The catalogue consists of six essays written by seven authors (Ila Bêka, Louise Lemoine, Ricky Burdett, Marc Forster, Vicky Richardson, Henrik Schødt and Beate Söntgen) in which different topics are analysed. Herzog & de Meuron's analysis of human movement and perspective, collaboration between architects and artists and architecture's presentation play a pivotal role in their design process.

Starting with an interview with the founders, the first essay "**Making Windows in Sandcastles**" leads us through the making of the *Kabinett*. The *Kabinett* serves as an archive, laboratory, studio, display, and documents of more than 450 out of 600 projects designed since the office opening in 1978. The *Kabinett* is located on the lower floor of their office building in Basel. The aim is to document a large part of their past and future dossier with drawings, models, etc.

The second essay, "**Emotion of Space**", is a conversation with Jacques Herzog in which he explains his relationship to photography and whether architecture can provoke emotion. Herzog concludes that emotions can't be stimulated by a specific form of architecture. Therefore, their architecture does not have a unique signature style. Emotional per-

ception of a place exists, and architecture plays a significant role in this perception. When we enter a new space, we absorb everything, from light, smell and sound to materials, colours, shapes and forms, all of which are part of the exterior and the interior of the space. Together they give rise to some emotion. Herzog & de Meuron believe that people play a key role in the creation of architecture. It doesn't exist at its full potential if there's no movement in it, human movement creates architecture. Their architecture represents a human performance stage. These behavioural patterns are known as *architecture des gestes*. According to Herzog, *architecture des gestes* does not rely solely on past reference memory or education, but directly appeals to gestures that people learn from personal experiences and the way they live, similar to how children learn. This instinctive and gestural approach has been implemented in two projects: Autobahnkirche and Calder Gardens.

"**Spaces of Potential**" the third essay, elaborates on the understanding that if architecture is intentionally designed, it becomes a by-product, a stage for people. It can be seen in their Battersea campus building project for the Royal College of Art, where they planned vast studios that were later transformed into an organized mess of student work. They are contemplating their artistic influences and collaborations with Donal Judd, Rémy Zaugg, Joseph Beuys, Gordon Matta-Clarke and Dan Graham. It was particularly important when Herzog & de Meuron designed Tate Modern in 2000, which coincided with their long-term relationship with artists and the idea that the creative industry could become a key part of British economy. They became one of the main architects of public cultural buildings. The design of the interior was also influenced by observing people's movement; it was a successful attempt to re-categorise public and private spaces by dimming the membrane between the two spaces. Herzog & de Meuron won the Pritzker Prize for Architecture in 2001 after the completion of Tate Modern.

Movement was also the subject of "**Different Takes**". This study discusses how architec-

ture directs a person's movement and perception of the city. Different epochs have different approaches to movement. Baroque architecture had only a visual impact as it represents the owner's status. In Modernism, the movement is very precise, because every interaction has a social consequence. The perception of a building by a user is crucial, creating a different interpretation of architecture. Are you looking at it from a distance, or are you moving through it? Are you looking at it from a higher or lower level? Similarly, are you seeing it in real life or in photographs and movies? Presentation is important for the outcome of the experience.

The essay "**Envisioning Unimaginable Architecture**" further reflects on perception and how space, light and the absence of light can affect one's emotional well-being. The author juxtaposes architecture with the film. Numerous directors (Hitchcock, Michelangelo Antonini, etc.) used architecture as a storytelling tool. Herzog & de Meuron also imbued architecture as a tool for storytelling, creating emotions, not directly, but as an unspoken word.

The sixth essay, "**Building for More than Healthcare**", explains the process of architectural design when movement is prohibited, in this case due to illness. As mentioned above, movement is essential in the design. Herzog & de Meuron doubted the institutional understanding of what a hospital is. By focusing on non-movement factors, they envisioned and designed healthcare institutes using innovative typologies. The horizontal perception of a patient who is unable to move prompted them to think about what he sees all the time: the ceiling, reinterpreting what a ceiling can be and consequently creating new hospital layouts.

Their designs affect the way we use public spaces, the way we perceive them, and how we behave. They have an unusual angle on the relationship between architecture and society, creating buildings according to humanistic principles with a focus on the urban fabric, social spaces, and users of buildings.

To summarise, Herzog & de Meuron's architecture answers the following question: How do people perform?