Awarded practices:

AHS CXA. **Arquitetura ME,** Asociación Semillas para el Desarrollo Sostenible, atArchitecture, Aziza Chaouni Projects, **Dhammada Collective, Esfahk Mud Center, Espacio Común PE,** Floating e.V., gaupenraub+/-, Gladiola Camacho Estudio, **Karlsruhe Institute of Technology,** La Cabina de la curiosidad, Laboraterra Arquitetura | Alain Briatte Mantchev. Limbo Accra, LUO studio, NMBW Ptv Ltd. o+h, Paraa, Robida Collective, SHAU. Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha, Sustainable **Mountain Architecture,** Terrachidia NGO. **Urban Rivers**, WM Re-Lab. **1to1 - Agency of Engagement**

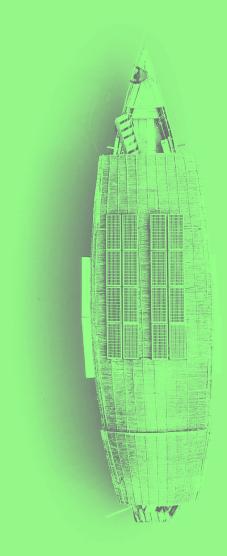
AMMODO AWARD

ARCHITECTURE 2025

KoozArch, in collaboration with Ammodo Architecture Award, presents a publication on the 2025 awardees.

2025





Floating Schools, Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.

Dear Ammodo and Kooz friend,

We are delighted to present this short publication, created by KoozArch for the Ammodo Architecture Award 2025. This collection is a celebration of the inspiring voices of the awardees and the extraordinary projects they bring to life. Each contribution reflects a deep commitment to architecture that is thoughtful, socially engaged, and ecologically aware.

Through these pages, we hope to share the richness and diversity of the work recognized this year—projects that not only respond to the world around them but also imagine new possibilities for how architecture can connect communities, nurture environments, and enrich lives. The awardees featured here demonstrate how architecture can be a force for care, curiosity, and meaningful change.

This booklet is an invitation to pause, reflect, and appreciate the many ways architecture can touch both people and planet. We hope it inspires you to see the world through the attentive and generous lens of these remarkable practitioners.

We hope you enjoy, Kooz team

Ammodo Architecture Award 2025

The goal of the Ammodo Architecture Award 2025 is to recognize the most exemplary socially and ecologically responsible architecture worldwide from the past years (2021-2024). The quality of the project, the applicant and the plan for how the award money will be spent are of primary importance. During the judging process, the Advisory Committee considered the criteria outlined in 'What We Value' and the 'Award Regulations 2025'.

Process

Building on the experience of the previous edition, the 2025 Award adopted an invitation-only submission process. In addition to the Ambassadors, a new network of Nominators was established – acting as extra eyes and ears on a global scale – to invite makers to submit their projects. This new system introduced an additional filter to ensure both higher quality and a manageable number of eligible submissions. Between 24 February and 18 April, a total of 168 entries were submitted by architects from over 60 countries.

After the call closed, the Ammodo Architecture team verified all submissions for eligibility according to the award criteria and prepared the selection process for the Advisory Committee. The judging took place in two rounds. The first round was conducted online, with each committee member evaluating projects individually through the project management platform. The final round was held in person in Amsterdam from 23 to 25 June, where 57 shortlisted proposals were discussed in depth.

Advisory committee

The members of the Advisory Committee for the Ammodo Architecture Award 2025 reviewed all submitted projects with great interest. They were impressed by the overall quality of the entries and pleased with the large number of submissions received for this second edition, representing a wide geographical and thematic diversity. The Committee praised the Award's growing international significance and its positive impact on the field of architecture.

Journana El Zein Khoury (Chair)

Executive Director World Press Photo Foundation

Andrés Jaque

Architect, Dean, and Professor at Columbia University GSAPP New York

Anupama Kundoo

Architect and Professor at TU Berlin

Mariam Issoufou

Architect and Professor at ETH Zurich

Floris Alkemade

Architect and former Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands

Loreta Castro Reguera

Architect and Profesor at UNAM Mexico City

AWARDED PROJECTS

Asia I 9 awards

Nepal

Pakistan

Bangladesh India China Iran

















Africa | 5 awards

Marocco 2 Ghana 1 South Africa 1 Egypt 1











Europe | 4 awards

Germany 2 Austria 1 Italy 1









South America | 4 awards

Peru 2 Brazil 1 Ecuador 1









North and Central America | 2 awards

United States
Mexico





Southeast Asia and Oceania | 2 awards

Indonesia 1 Australia 1







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Chaki Wasi, La Cabina de la curiosidad / winner in the award category 'social egagement'.

Winning the Wide Angle: awards that extend agency

by KoozArch

Perhaps all of us today are experiencing the sensation of "everything, all at once", to some extent. In particular, the practices of design and architecture professionals have expanded to acknowledge the social, political, cultural and economic impacts of producing space. Spatial interventions that affect its immediate users; buildings that transform the identity of a location; urban programmes that require labour and materials to be transported; elements that require extraction from the planet or fabrication from multiple sources: in this way, architecture connects the intimate scale of a dwelling to concerns at the scale of the planet. In such a context, architectural designers and spatial practitioners find themselves addressing problems of varied scales, both intentionally and as part of complex systems. Indeed, a large multinational project will likely have notable micro impacts and local effects; small projects, on the other hand, can act as paradigms in functional, cultural and social terms, so as to become globally recognised for their innovation.

We share a mission with our collaborators, partners and contributors: to build networks of practitioners and thinkers who would claim the right to imagine, propose and create architecture and design with meaning and purpose. We are therefore encouraged by a growing cohort of awarding bodies that would seem to celebrate transformative and generous forms of spatial practice, particularly when awards allow for a redistribution of capital and acclaim towards approaches underlined by spatial, social and environmental justice. Through monetary awards, funds can be transferred directly to the hands of actors on the ground, producing genuine uplift as well as remunerating those driving design innovation across the globe.

Within the pantheon of architectural awards — historically, at least — the focus of attention has much to do with aesthetic beauty and technical performance; client satisfaction and response is also considered, especially in terms of costs versus measurable returns. By contrast, a number of generously funded awarding institutions — including the relatively fledgling Ammodo Architecture Award — purport to recognise a universal widening of architectural agency, acknowledging the expanded scope of social and ecological responsibility borne by the discipline.

In this model, architectural interventions and acts of spatial design become genuine transformative forces, addressing the local environment and its users — both human and non-human. Such factors distinguish the Ammodo Architecture Award and what they recognise from their own markers of merit; while its scope is international, focus is held for local or

regional impacts, as well as levels of participatory practice and social engagement. Ammodo's recognition of the societal and ecological concerns in architecture underlines the growing breadth of the discipline, beyond the design of objects produced to serve a particular function or a client.

This award therefore acts as a beacon, as a means to encourage talented designers to pursue socially and ecologically responsible design at all scales. One of the factors which enables a model to keep its focus on the innovative, the emergent and the transformational is the way that it composes those people, guiding the principles of the organisation, as well as how it selects participants and those invited to share their work. Across all categories, applicants are required to propose the intended usage of any funds awarded. The emphasis on financial accountability speaks to the nature of architectural responsibility that Ammodo would seek to nurture.

The advisory committee for the Ammodo Architecture Award is made up of practicing architects, academics, urban designers and cultural programmers. Unlike many other juries, this advisory group convenes not only to judge projects, but rather to discuss the values that are being recognised and the possible uplift provided through the awards. Importantly, the committee is not solely composed of those with decades of experience and prestige under their belt. Rather, the advice comes from a variegated and diverse mix of established practitioners, at diverse stages of their career. This ensures the struggles and challenges faced by emergent architects or in varied geographies are recognised in award-winning projects, from an empathetic panel.

Magdy El Khouly Street Renovation, AHS CxA / winner in the award category 'local scale'.



In other words, the realities of practice at all stages of accomplishment are recognised and acknowledged by a diverse panel of international practitioners. Then too, a large and diverse group of Ammodo "Ambassadors" are seeded across the six continents in order to remain connected to global swathes of emerging talent. Oftentimes, the recognition granted by architectural awards can be somewhat esoteric; particularly for a public audience, it can be hard to see what is being rewarded. This is especially the case when recognitions are justly given for technical aesthetic and technical achievements. By contrast, the Ammodo Architecture Awards - with their focus on societally-minded, ecologically conscious and ameliorative works - is perhaps easier to comprehend. Therefore one of the important functions of the award, intentionally or not, is to inspire a broad audience with the idea that architecture is and can indeed be a relevant and transformative discipline. Which is, of course, an opinion that we hold too.

The method of finding potential projects to award is an unrushed

process. Rather than an open call - often a culvert into self-aggrandisement

- the impressive wider network of Ammodo acts to source, select, share and

discuss the projects and authors that appear to respond to the award values:

namely ecological responsiveness, design aesthetics, exemplary processes

and plural practices. Various protocols are deployed to ensure the inclusion

of diverse architectural practices from six regions; Africa, Asia, Europe,

North & Central America, South America, and Southeast Asia & Oceania.

with measures taken to represent and highlight projects fairly across the

globe. The Ambassador network also allows for an informed preselection

of projects to awards, as this network is composed of well-informed

Left Rural primary school, Mandi, Dhammada Collective / winner in the award category

'local scale'. Right

Prototype Anti-seismic

House, Aziza Chaouni Projects / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.





professionals - already embedded in the field of socially and ecologically responsible architecture - to identify projects in three categories, while in the interest of avoiding any whiff of nepotism, utmost care is taken to avoid conflicts of interest between awardees, scouts and the judging committee.

The categories of awards defined by Ammodo reflect a particular and stated set of values, celebrating architectural success in social, ecological and planetary terms. As such, the trifecta of award categories retains its own harmony at various scales of impact. A brief breakdown would illustrate this.

At the widest level of distribution, a dozen awards are given to each of two categories: local scale and social engagement. Both categories outline their openness towards projects that are either self-initiated or supported by nonprofits, as well as commissioned works - therefore including causes that tend to be underrepresented or marginalised. As suggested by the name, projects nominated for Local Scale are awarded €10.000 and selected for their local impact - by the ways in which they benefit a specific area or community. Fittingly, projects can be nominated by community groups, artists - the broadest spectrum of people impacted by good design. Though small in scale, this category allows for the recognition of emergent and minoritised practices, often shining a light on early-career and under-represented practitioners. They demonstrate the potential that architectural works can have in impacting space, not only within but also beyond their boundary walls.

Scaling up, the Social Engagement Award - also given to a dozen recipients, but this time with a value of €50,000 - is earmarked for those projects that involve diverse local actors and engender social engagement at various levels. Accepting applications from architects, urban planners, landscape architects or multidisciplinary design teams, this category underlines a particular aspect of architectural 'purpose', namely that of engaging publics. Involving communities in the act of producing space naturally fosters accountability and equity - it means that a broader section of people are quite literally invited to shape their collective visions together.

At this point, it's worth noting some of the stated 'values' that Ammodo seeks to foster across all awarded projects, regardless of scale. As well as more established qualities such as design aesthetics and ecological response, other values - such as experiential beauty, the fostering of mutual respect and engendering new vocational directions - would seem hard to quantify. Yet these elusive forms of impact are precisely what the committee places in its sights, which is commendable in itself; at a time where metrics and monetisation reign supreme, it is well to recognise the more humane, if ineffable, forms of affect.

At the larger end of awards sits the Award for Social Architecture, which Ammodo endows on two projects: this weighty recognition honours established practices, practitioners and projects. Lest this seem too similar to the previous categories, the financial reward itself is hefty enough to distinguish it, at a grand total of €150,000. What justifies the generosity of this award could be described as durational impact, in terms of the stated intentions for utilising the award funds. The scale of the Award for Social Architecture is such that its impact allows for a substantial step up in the operation or development of projects that demonstrate innovative and paradigmatic practices in socially and ecologically responsible architecture.

Commendable in this award is the wide-angle emphasis that would focus not on the built object alone, but also on the long standing commitments made by practices to their respective project missions.

In the case of recent award winners, a large programme of urban acupuncture in Yogyakarta, Indonesia proposed to use the funds to support a microlibrary designed for the disabled community, as well as the enhancement of several existing facilities. Without a large injection of capital, such improvements may not be attempted. Another recent recipient of the Award for Social Architecture in Austria will invest in specialist support and the establishment of a supportive housing project for formerly homeless people. In both cases, and indeed across the Ammodo Architecture Award, the primary value is accountability - not only recognising these in a project's initial conception, but for how it projects itself into the future.

Such considerations mean that designers and architectural firms are

Architecture Award, we spent time considering the very existence of 'design' awards' and their function. We live in a moment when accountability and responsibility must - we feel - be shared; where boundaries between

incentivised to think in the longer term, making extra steps to consider the ongoing design impact, maintenance and longevity for best practice within communities. Indeed, taking the approach of capacity building, one might hope that projects in receipt of the Award for Social Architecture are never 'completed'; the amelioration of spatial contexts can be baked into the project before it returns to the hands of its users.

In providing an overview of these considerations for the Ammodo Sanders Place, NMBW Architecture Studio / winner in the award category 'social

Jardín Naturalista Colibrí at

in the award category 'local

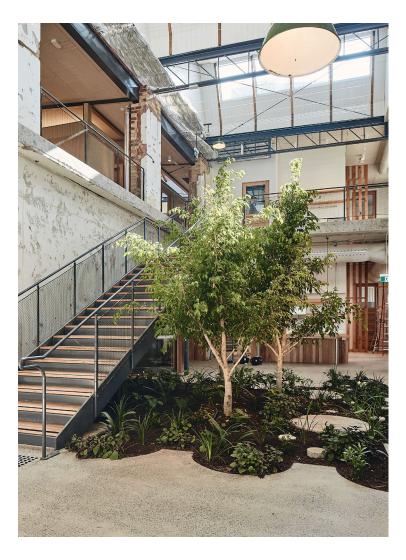
scale'.

Right

Canal Constitución, Gladiola Camacho Estudio / winner



innovation and impact should be lowered, and where agency can find its operational field. As such, our regard for such bodies is not only in celebrating and rewarding those examples of works where the above has been achieved, but also in inspiring future generations of practice to consider a disciplinary approach more bold, more planetary and more generous in its disposition.



A broader commitment to action: Andrés Jaque and Loreta Castro Reguera on the 2025 Ammodo Architecture Awards

with Andrés Jaque and Loreta Castro Reguera / Ammodo Advisory Board



The Ammodo Architecture Award recognises practices that redefine architecture as a form of social and ecological engagement, embracing both the global architecture community and local practitioners. As members of the 2025 Advisory Committee, Loreta Castro Reguera and Andrés Jaque reflect on a discipline in transition — where architects no longer wait for commissions but initiate projects rooted in context, urgency, and care. Across 168 submissions from 64 countries, the award foregrounds architecture as a tool for reparation, memory, and collective agency: from ecological retroactivity to domestic justice, from acupunctural urbanism to pedagogical infrastructures.

Rather than scaling through replication, the selected projects demonstrate a patchwork ethic — locally embedded yet globally resonant. They challenge extractive development through reuse, reframe participation as expertise, and treat architecture not only as object but as process. For younger generations, these works offer a model of practice that is mission-driven, politically inventive, and structurally generous.

This conversation traces how architecture, when platformed through awards like Ammodo Architecture Awards, becomes a framework for transformation — where design aligns with difference, and the architect becomes a catalyst for change.

Federica Zambeletti / KOOZ Let's begin with a broad question that considers today's social, cultural, and environmental context. What role can architecture awards play and what responsibilities do they carry?

LORETA CASTRO REGUERA That's a very relevant question. What kind of architecture are we celebrating? Is it still the same kind of work that was being awarded, say, 40 years ago, when these awards really started gaining traction? Architecture has always responded to its social and economic context, and what's interesting now is how the shift in how architecture needs to perform is starting to influence the awards themselves.

Floating University, Floating e.V. / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.

You can't just award architecture for its beauty anymore — although of course, we all deeply appreciate beautiful buildings. But we've reached a moment where it's equally important to consider how architecture can reduce its environmental impact. It's not just about building something beautiful, but about building intelligently — so that it leaves a lighter footprint on the planet. The Ammodo Architecture Award is quite recent, but it builds on a shift that's been developing since the early 2000s — the idea that architecture shouldn't be awarded solely for its beauty as an artistic object, but also for its capacity to transform.

We've reached a point where the architect is increasingly seen as an agent of transformation. Architecture becomes not just a product, but the result of a broader commitment to action.

That shift has really shaped how awards are being given. The Ammodo Architecture Award is one example, but there are many others — the OBEL, the Holcim Foundation Awards, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture — all of them are increasingly recognising architecture that remains beautiful while also addressing the impact on the built environment.

ANDRÉS JAQUE Il believe the Ammodo Architecture Award is quite exceptional — they've already made a significant contribution to the ecosystem of architectural recognition. And they're exceptional for two key reasons

First, the award's focus is very precisely defined. It's not given to an architect as a solo author or to an office as a whole. It's awarded to a project. And more than recognition, the assessment of each project can extend to grants to help that project — or in some cases, to the designer themselves — to move forward, to reach the next phase. That's incredibly important. It shifts attention toward what can be achieved collectively, and the award supports both visibility and development. The amount of funding is also remarkable — Ammodo provides substantial resources to help projects evolve, which is rare compared to most other awards.

Second, there's the notion of the social. Twenty years ago, when architecture began reconnecting with ethics, the idea of the social was often borrowed from philanthropy — doing good, with good intentions. That's admirable, of course, but doing good is not so simple. Today, the social is understood differently: as architecture entangled with communities, ecosystems, infrastructures, and processes that extend beyond the building itself.

The Ammodo Architecture Awards recognize how architecture — through buildings, public spaces, infrastructure, even furniture — can rearticulate relationships between different forces. It's not about helping the humble; it's about actively composing the social through architectural actions and devices. If you look at the awardees, you'll see that in every case, there's a deep contribution to reshaping how things relate to one another. These two aspects — the project-based grant and the expanded notion of the social — make theAmmodo Architecture Awards a powerful force in the field of architecture.

KOOZ I think what's especially compelling is how these projects are designed to have a social impact: to transform territories, engage communities, and improve conditions on the ground. So I'd like to ask — what criteria do you use to evaluate the impact these projects have already had, and how do you assess the potential of the Ammodo grant to enhance that impact over time?

AJ The way the Ammodo Architecture Awards are organized involves a long and rigorous process. It begins with extensive documentation, presented in very specific formats. Jury members are expected to dedicate significant time to reviewing all of it. There are also follow-up rounds, where the jury can request additional information. We've done this in past editions, and it allows us to scrutinize not only what the architects claim, but also how the project is perceived and how it has affected others — not just people, but neighborhoods, communities, ecosystems.

Architecture always has an effect. It has real agency in transforming societies and ecosystems. The question is: what kind of impact does it have? And how can that impact help produce more inclusive societies, or expand ecological possibilities? These are the criteria we look at. Sometimes that means engaging in ecological restoration; other times, it's about adapting to conditions that aren't ideal, but still offer potential.

Take, for example, the Floating University, a project by Floating e.V. It's a monumental contribution. The project offers an experimental process through which an entire city — and even a global network — has learned to adapt to toxicity, to repurpose leftover infrastructure, and to respond to public agencies that may have misunderstood the site's potential. It shows how Ammodo supports projects that don't just restore ideal conditions, but help us imagine how to live — and live well — even in less-than-ideal ones.

LC I think the process is very thorough in many ways — not only because we look at the project itself, but also at how the project has been funded. The goal isn't necessarily just to build a piece of architecture. Well, maybe that's part of it, but it's also about how that architecture contributes. I really like SHAU's microlibrary project. It's been an ongoing effort for probably more than 15 years. They've received awards, but what's important is that the effort has been consistent. The project keeps growing — there are more libraries now, and they're also working on urban design and even the idea of a possible bridge.

So these prizes are somehow supporting the idea of how to reimagine or make a city more livable. That's the case with the library project. And then there was another beautiful project in Bangladesh, the Machan Korail Community Platform. It was a playground, a building made of cinder blocks and concrete, painted in bright colors. The idea was to create a public



Machan Korail Community Platform, Paraa / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.

playground for children, and that project entered the competition.

Another beautiful thing is that projects are nominated — they're not submitted by their own authors. That means there's recognition coming from another perspective, not just from the architect wanting to be recognized as an architect. And I say this bold, because in many cases, that's a kind of line in architecture. I'm really happy to be part of a process where what's being evaluated is the effect of the architecture, not just the architecture itself.

KOOZ It's interesting that you mention opportunity — especially in the case of the Floating e.V, where an award was given not just for what the project is, but for what it makes possible. From a toxic wasteland, something regenerative and nurturing can emerge. Looking across the more than 168 submissions, I'm curious: did this theme of regenerating toxic landscapes appear in other projects as well? Was the idea of architecture as a tool for education — like the micro-library — something you saw echoed elsewhere? What other threads or opportunities emerged as you reviewed the submissions? And how do these patterns speak to where architecture needs to have agency today — or where it already does?

LC We evaluated several libraries and educational spaces with very adverse conditions — places where the school becomes a catalyst for transforming the surrounding environment. So yes, education was definitely a recurring theme.

Another strong thread was urban design through acupunctural interventions — small-scale projects that improve deteriorated areas. Some were in waraffected regions, where the community itself initiated the intervention to begin reshaping the atmosphere of the place.

Ecology was also central: many projects explored how to build less, how to restore what already exists, and how to reuse materials and structures. That approach – working with what's there – appeared across many submissions.

And finally, there was the theme of health. Some projects focused on creating spaces for healing in communities that are far from urban centers or formal healthcare infrastructure. These threads — education, acupunctural urban design, ecological restoration, and health — really stood out across the submissions.

AJ To build on that, I found four threads that feel especially fresh — maybe not surprising, but emerging with such clarity and strength that they're genuinely energizing.

Historically, architecture's social contributions have centered around community engagement and urban activation. But today, there's a different energy.

First, ecological reparation. It's not about restoring pristine conditions — it's about adapting to toxicity. Much of the world now faces the need to repair and live within compromised environments. Architecture has the capacity to support that adaptability, and failing to do so would be irresponsible.

Second, specialized knowledge. In the past, the social was often framed around general participation — opening the black box of design. Now, we're seeing the rise of highly specialized knowledge: how to build with low-impact materials, how to work with natural or recycled components, how to predict structural behavior with variable inputs. This kind of expertise is essential for

Bankatta Community Initiative, Madi Valley, Sustainable Mountain Architecture / winner in the award category 'local scale'



transitioning to sustainable paradigms.

Third, memory and accountability. In places marked by violence — geopolitical, corporate, environmental — architecture is being used to bear witness, to create spaces that hold memory and demand accountability. That's a powerful shift, and it requires new forms of architectural invention.

Fourth, a challenge to real estate hegemony. Many projects are confronting the logic of profit-maximization and addressing homelessness and domestic justice. This reflects the global housing crisis, and we saw some extraordinary examples. I wish we could have awarded more of them — but we did manage to recognize a few.

KOOZ Since you mentioned homelessness, I'd like to return to the Social Architecture Award, which was given to gaupenraub+/- — who've dedicated over 20 years to this issue. What's remarkable is their deep, ongoing engagement: they become stakeholders in the communities they work with. It's a lifelong commitment, rooted in their reality in Vienna. That raises a question: is this kind of work inherently tied to its local context, or is there potential for others to follow suit in different cities or regions? When evaluating projects like this, how important is scalability? Is it enough to recognize a practice for its sustained commitment, even if it remains local? Or do we always need to ask how the work can be scaled up? I wonder if our obsession with scalability might sometimes be counterproductive.

LC From my point of view, scalability can be desirable — but it's not necessarily the goal of the award. These practices are often very specific, responding to particular conditions. For example, gaupenraub+/-'s work is deeply tied to the issue of homelessness in Vienna, and to the unique possibilities that context offers for reusing certain types of buildings.

What I do think is scalable, though, is the concept of reuse. While the solution itself is tailored to a specific context, the principle of reusing existing structures has broader applicability. That's something the award highlights: not everything needs to be homogenized.

What we saw in this cycle were many specific solutions to very precise conditions — and that's the beauty of it. It's a global award, but it responds to local, social and cultural realities. There's a degree of replicability, but not wholesale replication.

Ultimately, each community needs to develop its own responses. There won't be a universal solution to housing, for instance — but there will be context-specific responses. And one principle that should be universally embraced is reusing the existing fabric. That's essential right now.

AJ We're dealing with projects that are deeply situated. As you said, this isn't about submitting a competition entry and executing it if you win. These are lifetime commitments, almost without exception.

Normally, we might assume that something so context-specific couldn't offer strategies or tactics useful elsewhere. But in fact, that was a key part of our discussions: selecting projects that, while rooted in particular realities, have the capacity to help others.

Take the Vienna project you mentioned. It responds to a very specific condition, and *gaupenraub+/-* were clever in building trust with developers and investors to make it happen. But when you look closely, the strategies they

used — repurposing obsolete infrastructure — can be applied globally. Across the world, we're left with abandoned remnants of luxury architecture: ski resorts without snow due to climate change, empty high-end developments.

Finding ways to transition these structures to address today's needs — and to reverse the culture of segregation and inequality that produced them — is incredibly powerful. It takes different forms in different places, but the underlying idea is strong and transferable.

This points to a different notion of scalability — one that benefits from specificity and difference, yet still retains the capacity to grow. Ammodo isn't scaling through uniform replication; it's building coalitions. It's what Carolyn Steel might call "patching" — connecting experiences across contexts, where each piece builds on the last.

What you described, Federica, really captures the essence of Ammodo's model: a shift from globalization to a kind of planetary patchwork of action.

LC Retroactivity. Affecting places where things have already happened, and trying to change, modify, or adjust them to the current situation as it begins to unfold.

KOOZ Something that emerged during our time in Vienna was the potential of teaching – not necessarily in terms of scalability, but in terms of sharing. So I'm curious: what is the potential of platforming these projects for the next generation of architects? What happens when they look at the Ammodo awardees and say, "That's the kind of architecture that carries responsibility"? What kind of impact can that have on how they approach the discipline?

LC I think there's something beautiful in the idea of the architect not waiting for a client to commission a project, but actively seeking out the project themselves. Many of these awarded works emerge from research — understanding a condition and using design knowledge to address or mitigate it.

In terms of architectural education, that's a powerful shift. It positions the architect as an active agent, rather than someone passively waiting for the "great project" to arrive. Instead, this is an architect who looks for the trouble and responds to it — proposing solutions through architecture.

Design becomes a tool for transforming how we inhabit space and how we imagine the future. That's what's so inspiring about these awards: in every case, the proposals respond to difficult conditions in a specific moment.

Take, for example, the fruit-processing factory in Africa. It's not just a factory — it's also a community center, a space for children while their mothers work, and it's resilient to flooding. It shows how architecture can have many arms, many functions, when the architect is fully embedded in the problem and responds from within.

AJ We had a long conversation about what an awards ceremony should be — what would actually make sense. And we didn't imagine it as a big party where people just mingle over coffee. Instead, we thought it would be far more meaningful to bring the awardees together in conversation, to allow them to meet one another, and to connect them with others. That way, it becomes an opportunity to learn from each other and to collaborate in the future.

The word you used - platform - is perfect. That's exactly what we were

Above

Main Stage of MuyunaFest, Espacio Comun PE / winner in the award category 'local scale'.

Below

Terrachidia Oasis Campus, Terrachidia NGO / winner in the award category 'local scale'.





aiming for. Drawing from Bruno Latour's Science in Action, if we want to create change or help it gain momentum, it's far more effective to connect different experiences, foster collaboration, and build mutual understanding than to simply confront what's not working.

Creating alternative networks and platforms – spaces where things can be reimagined differently – is probably the most powerful way to support the change we need.

KOOZ What's especially compelling, Loreta — and something you've both reiterated — is this idea of going beyond the commission. Some of the projects we've seen are self-initiated, while others, like SHAU, are formally commissioned by institutions such as the Ministry of Public Works. But in both cases, the work of the spatial practitioner clearly exceeds what's

required or expected.

So when we return to the idea of criteria, it seems the focus is on architecture that treats its role as a mission - not just a service. That's where the tension lies today: architects must find ways to sustain their practice financially, while also responding meaningfully to social and ecological urgencies.

Often, that response comes through non-commissioned work – through extra time, extra energy, extra commitment. Awards like the Ammodo Architecture Awards help sustain that effort, offering the economic support that allows architects to go that extra mile.

But I wonder: how can we build an infrastructure where that extra mile is no longer "extra," but simply part of the practice itself? Can architecture fully embrace that expanded role and what part can awards play in making that shift possible?

> **LC** I think it's absolutely possible – because it's already happening. Ten years ago, even five, there weren't awards recognizing this kind of work, But now there are, and that's a major shift. These practices are gaining visibility, and they're being placed in front of younger generations who will look to them as reference points.

> I can speak from personal experience: a large part of my practice is made up of self-initiated projects. We're not waiting for commissions – we're actively exploring how architecture can respond to different contexts. That kind of work wasn't recognized before, and now I find myself on a jury that does recognize it. That's a powerful change.

> There are also foundations – not philanthropic in the traditional sense, but committed to supporting architecture that carries social and ecological responsibility - not just through awards, but through funding the process itself.

> It's still emerging, and it may not offer the same financial remuneration as government or private commissions, but the space is being carved out, And that alone is a fantastic development. It's a very different landscape than it was 20 years ago.

> **AJ** We're reacting to decades of architecture being reduced – reduced in scope, in ambition, in its relationship to society. I think we're still waking up from the nightmare of autonomy: the idea that architects should only speak to each other, avoiding the mundane, operating through isolated competitions with massive budgets and little accountability.

> Loreta and I are part of a network pushing for an alternative — a vital one. This alternative sees architects not as isolated voices, but as part of larger societies with real needs and capacities. Opportunities arise when we show ways of working that align with those needs, that bring people together around shared problems and possibilities.

> Architecture, in this sense, becomes an alliance, It might not even look like architecture in the traditional sense - it becomes a collective tool for transitioning toward futures that matter to people. That, to me, is the future of architecture. How could it not be?

> We're returning to a kind of normality, where architecture makes things happen by aligning agendas, expectations, and needs. That's why I named my practice the Office for Political Innovation. I believe architecture is about

articulating difference – bringing it together, negotiating it, and building the collective.

The collective is always built in difference. And architecture's DNA is about caring for the polis – for the public, for the shared. We're entering a postsolicited age, where architects must actively build opportunities. And that means aligning with difference.

That's what makes this moment so exciting: there's so much that can be achieved through negotiation, collaboration, and shared invention.

LC I think it's incredibly important. I've heard, in different contexts, this idea that architecture is disappearing, or that the architect is becoming irrelevant. But I believe that now, more than ever, architects have the opportunity to reinforce their profession.

This is the moment when architects truly become architects – not by waiting for someone to validate them or hand them a commission, but by actively engaging, by initiating, by responding.

And that's the beauty of this prize: it celebrates architects who are being architects in the fullest sense. It's recognizing those who step into the world and shape it – not just through buildings, but through commitment, imagination, and action.

BIOGRAPHIES

ANDRÉS JAQUE an architect, writer and curator and received his LORETA CASTRO REGUERA is an architect based in Mexico PhD in Architecture from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. His practice explores architecture as an entanglement of bodies. at the Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP) and the founder of the New York- and Madrid-based architecture practice Office for Political Innovation (OFFPOLINN). Established in 2003, OFFPOLINN and the Reggio School in El Encinar de los Reyes, Madrid (2022), which in 2023 won the 65th FAD Award for Architecture, the most important design award in Spain and Portugal. In 2016, Jaque was 14th Venice Biennale.

City. She holds a bachelor's degree from UNAM, a Master's in Architecture from the Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, and technologies, and environments. Jaque is Dean and professor a Master's in Urban Design from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Her work focuses on integrating the water cycle into daily urban life through infrastructural public spaces. As a professor at the School of Architecture UNAM, Loreta coordinated the design of La Quebradora Hydrological Park, which won the Regional works at the intersection of research, architectural design, and and Global Gold Prizes at the Holcim Awards for Sustainable activism. Notable recent projects include the Ocean Space for Construction in 2017. In addition to her teaching at UNAM, she the Thyssen-Bornemisza Contemporary Art Collection (TBA21). has been invited as a professor to teach at several universities Venice, the Babin Yar Museum of Memory and Oblivion, Kiev worldwide. Co-founding Taller Capital in 2010 with José Ambrosi, she emphasizes designing projects that stitch the territory together through contextual observation. The firm has gained national and international recognition, winning awards such awarded the 10th Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the as the MCHAP Emerge 2022 and the Emerging Voices award Arts, and in 2014 he won the Silver Lion for the Best Project at the from the Architectural League of New York, Their work has been featured in prominent publications, including Casabella. The Architectural Review, Arguine, and A+T.



Left
Territorio de los saberes,
Asociación Semillas para
el Desarrollo Sostenible /
winner in the award
category 'social
engagement'.

Right
The Slovo Hall Project, 1to1
- Agency of Engagement /
winner in the award
category 'local scale'.





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Jackfruit Processing Unit and Community Centre, atArchitecture / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.

After Icons: the intentional ethics of the Ammodo Architecture Award

by KoozArch

The 2025 Ammodo Architecture Award offers a compelling portrait of contemporary architecture's shifting priorities — one that moves decisively away from singular authorship and spectacular form-making towards a more distributed, process-oriented practice. Across its three categories — social architecture, social engagement, and local scale — twenty-six projects, from Ecuador to Indonesia, reveal an emerging architectural sensibility: one rooted in repair, participation, and the patient work of attending to what already exists.

The Tyranny of the New and the Practice of Reuse

Perhaps the most striking thematic arc, across all the award categories, is an almost defiant rejection of tabula rasa development. Whether it's gaupenraub+/-'s transformation of former luxury amenity Hotel Hanner into VinziRast am Land in Austria to a home for unhoused people, or Limbo Accras's phased activation of an abandoned Brutalist shell in Accra, these projects demonstrate what the advisory committee repeatedly describes as architecture that reuses, repairs, and redefines the existing. This is not simply pragmatic recycling driven by budget constraints, but rather a fundamental repositioning of the architect's role: from master builder to careful physician, from creator to custodian.

The distinction matters. When SHAU develops Kampung Mrican Phase 1 along Yogyakarta's Gajah Wong River, the practice doesn't impose a singular architectural vision but orchestrates what the committee calls 'acupunctural interventions' — strategic, small-scale moves that work with existing urban fabric. Similarly, Robida Collective's work in Topolò imagines restoration not as a radical metamorphic transformation but rather "a slow, continuous practice of inhabiting communally." Here, architecture becomes less about decisive intervention and more about sustained attention: a durational practice rather than a punctual event.

This temporal recalibration appears repeatedly. The Floating University in Berlin, organised by Floating e.V., transforms a rainwater retention basin on a site formerly toxified by industrial use; the goal here is achieving metamorphosis through what it calls "ongoing, collaborative acts" rather than the provision of a finished design object. Similarly, the Slovo Hall Project in South Africa has evolved over fifteen years through what its representatives describe as radical participation and tactical design. Even smaller-scale projects like AHS CxA's Magdy El Khouly Street Renovation in Cairo explicitly build upon earlier work, including the 2019 Dawar El Ezba Cultural Centre — demonstrating how trust and familiarity accumulated over time enable





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Limbo Museum, Limbo Accra / winner in the award category 'social engagement'.

Right

Village as House, Robida Collective / winner in the award category 'local scale'. deeper transformation.

The Architecture of Vulnerability

A second consistent theme emerges around architecture's relationship to precarity and marginalisation. Rather than designing for abstract users or idealised publics, these projects engage specific communities facing concrete challenges: formerly homeless individuals (VinziRast am Land), flood-affected populations (Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha's Floating Schools in Bangladesh), earthquake survivors (Aziza Chaouni Projects' Prototype Antiseismic House in Morocco), informal settlement residents (Limbo Museum, Slovo Hall Project, Paraa's Machan Korail Community Platform in Dhaka).

What distinguishes this work from conventional "social architecture" is its refusal of paternalism. The projects don't simply deliver services to vulnerable populations; they create platforms for agency. SHAU's Kampung Mrican interventions are "co-developed with the community." Remarkably, the Slovo Hall Project has been built, maintained, and adapted entirely by the community — without any financial support from the government or even external NGOs. Territorio de los Saberes in Peru's Amazon emerges from collaboration between "sages, students, teachers, artists, and architects." The recurring descriptors are "co-designed," "co-created," "collaborative"—this is architecture as facilitation rather than provision.

This collaborative ethos extends to construction itself. Projects repeatedly emphasise participatory building processes, hands-on workshops, and skills transfer. Terrachidia NGO's work in Morocco's M'hamid Oasis combines "architectural preservation, contribution to local development, and training." Dhammada Collective's rural school in Himachal Pradesh used 1:1 scale AR models on-site to help local masons and villagers visualise the spatial experience. The Adobe Vault in Iran's Esfahk village involves volunteers in constructing the largest mud-built vault in the world.

Material Indigeneity and Ecological Intelligence

The awards reveal an architecture deeply attentive to material provenance and ecological impact. Earth – whether as rammed earth, adobe, compressed earth bricks, or taipa – appears with remarkable frequency. So do bamboo, salvaged timber, locally sourced stone, and what LUO studio

describes as "minimal yet beautiful use of local materials."

But this material choice isn't simply vernacular nostalgia. Works like Aziza Chaouni Projects' anti-seismic CEB house demonstrate how traditional techniques can be adapted with innovation, engineering compressed earth bricks specifically for seismic resilience whilst maintaining cultural continuity. The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology's TerraTimber research "merges reclaimed materials with digital design and fabrication," using 3D scanning and augmented reality to transform waste wood's "material irregularities" into design assets.

What emerges is neither pure traditionalism nor uncritical technological optimism, but rather what might be called a calibrated hybridity — approaches that weave together inherited knowledge, contemporary techniques, and future-oriented thinking. The Casa de Sementes Jucão in Brazil's Atlantic Forest uses rammed earth walls stabilised with minimal cement, balancing structural necessity with material recyclability and hygrothermal performance.

Infrastructure as Commons

Several projects reimagine infrastructure not as mere technical provision but as social infrastructure—spaces that cultivate collective life. Urban Rivers' The Wild Mile in Chicago transforms an industrial waterway into a "floating eco-park." La Cabina de la curiosidad's Chaki Wasi in Ecuador creates tourism infrastructure that seeks to strengthen community dynamics while preserving ancestral cultural legacy. atArchitecture's Jackfruit Processing Unit and Community Centre in India's Meghalaya combines production, administration, and community gathering, serving "as a cultural hub and disaster refuge."

These projects refuse the modernist separation of technical and social functions. The microlibrary in Kampung Mrican — elevated on stilts — accommodates community events, like weddings, political gatherings and even parking, without taking up extra space." Floating e.V.'s campus in Berlin integrate rainwater filtration, biomass processing, and educational programming into single infrastructural assemblages. Infrastructure becomes not a backdrop but an active participant in collective flourishing.

Pedagogy and Knowledge Production

Many awarded projects explicitly foreground education and knowledge transmission. Territorio de los Saberes connects ancestral knowledge with the Peruvian national curriculum, developing a unique intercultural approach — mirrored in the design and materiality of the building. o+h's COPAL in Japan creates "a living platform for educational transformation." while LUO studio's Zheshui Natural Library also positions architecture as a tool for learning, both in its function and production.

This pedagogical dimension operates at multiple scales. Some projects create physical learning spaces (libraries, schools, community centres). Others function as living laboratories — the Floating University as "openair laboratory" in the grounds of Berlin's Tempelhof airport; TerraTimber as research into circular construction methods, and the Wild Mile as site for environmental education and research. Still others transmit craft knowledge:

Lof

Adobe Vault, Esfahk Mud Center / winner in the award category 'local scale'.

Right

TerraTimber, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology / winner in the award category 'local scale'. for example, Terrachidia NGO's workshops on earthen architecture, Dhammada Collective's work with local masons, and NMBW Architecture Studio's attempt to address decolonisation in and through design.

The implication is that architecture itself becomes a form of knowledge production; not simply applying existing expertise but generating new understandings through material engagement, community collaboration, and sustained inhabitation.

Scale, Ambition, and Architectural Humility

What the Ammodo award ultimately celebrates is not monumental ambition but what might be called "strategic modesty." The Local Scale category explicitly champions projects like WM Re-Lab's Play-Pause-Ponder in Pakistan — a 30m^2 playscape for flood-affected children — or Gladiola Camacho Estudio's Jardín Naturalista Colibrí at Canal Constitución, which sees a neglected median strip in Monterrey converted into a native plant sanctuary.

Yet modesty does not signal limited impact. The advisory committee repeatedly praises projects for their replicability and the possibility to scale up their effects. SHAU aspires to no less than one hundred microlibraries by 2045, whereas 'The Wild Mile' serves as a "model for restoring degraded waterways worldwide." These are prototypes in the truest sense; not necessarily as perfect exemplars but tested proposals that others might adapt.

What connects projects across categories is not an aesthetic coherence but rather an intentional and methodological alignment: participatory processes, material circularity, integration of traditional and contemporary knowledge, attention to existing conditions, creation of flexible infrastructures, and architecture conceived as ongoing practice rather than finished product.

The Ammodo Architecture Award 2025 thus documents – and celebrates – not a style, but rather an ethics: one that positions architecture as careful stewardship, collective endeavour, and patient repair of the social and ecological fabric. Here is architecture that knows how to wait, how to listen, and how to work with what's already there. At a moment of compounding crises, such patience might be architecture's most radical gesture.







SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

The Ammodo Architecture Award for social architecture encourages outstanding architects by rewarding excellent socially and ecologically responsible architecture.

Award | 2 awards x € 150,000

Project | Completed buildings or spatial projects; selfinitiated or commissioned. Completed between January 2021 and December 2024.

Applicant | Outstanding talent, established architect, urban planner, landscape architect, collective or multidisciplinary design team who can present an oeuvre which showcase a strong dedication and involvement in the field of socially and ecologically responsible architecture.

Plan | The prize money is to be used by the applicant to fund a plan in the field of socially and ecologically responsible architecture, which is detailed as part of their application. The plan has to be carried out under the administrator's



Kampung Mrican Phase 1

Location: Southeast Asia & Oceania. Indonesia

Applicant: SHAU

Commissioned by: Indonesian Ministry of Public Works

Gross area in m2: 4353.0

Stretching 1.2 kilometres along the Gaiah Wong River. the project exemplifies 'urban acupuncture': a network of small, strategic interventions collaboratively designed with local residents. Situated near major universities, the densely populated. low-rise neighbourhood has been revitalized to address safety, sanitation and flood resilience while introducing educational and playful public functions - a microlibrary, playground, flood-control post, waste management centre, and a bridge and sidewalk system that connects the community through accessible, multifunctional spaces.



VinziRast am Land

Location: Europe, Austria Applicant: gaupenraub+/-

Commissioned by: Vinzenzgemeinschaft St. Stephan

Gross area in m2: 4300.0

SOCIAL ENGAGMENT

The Ammodo Architecture Award for social engagement encourages talented architects to take the next step in pursuing socially and ecologically responsible architecture.

Award | 12 awards x € 50,000

Project | Completed (medium or large scale) buildings or spatial projects; self-initiated or commissioned. Completed between January 2021 and December 2024.

Applicant | Mid-career, talented architect, urban planner, landscape architect, collective or multidisciplinary design

Plan | The prize money is to be used by the applicant to fund a plan in the field of socially and ecologically responsible architecture, which is detailed as part of their application. The plan has to be carried out under the administrator's



Zheshui Natural library Location: Asia. China

Applicant: LUO studio Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: -

Village lies in the Taihang Mountains of Shanxi Province, where architecture and landscape are inseparable. Many homes are built directly into the mountain, and the Zheshui Natural Library continues this tradition by anchoring itself into the rock face, blending with its natural surroundings. The project gives children a place to read and learn while integrating architecture, community and landscape. Rooted in the existing stone wall of a mountain village, the design honours local building traditions while addressing urgent social needs. The Applicant: Limbo Accra children's library creates a meaningful public space that fuses the ecological with the Gross area in m²: 695.0 social, and the inside with the outside.



Limbo Museum

Location: Africa, Ghana Commissioned by: -

museum models. Housed in an unfinished Brutalist complex in Accra's Labone embraces incompletion as potential, transforming a neglected concrete shell into a dynamic public space for art, performance, design, and community. Open to the elements and adaptable, Limbo has no permanent collection, façade, or hierarchy between artist, visitor, and builder. The building itself becomes both exhibit and experiment, shifting the museum's focus from preservation to participation.

Limbo

traditional

defies

Museum

Western

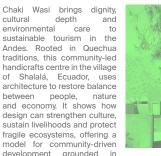


Chaki Wasi

Location: South Am., Ecuador Applicant: La Cabina de la curiosidad

Commissioned by: Shalalà's Comunity

Gross area in m2: 320.0



ancestral knowledge.

Located in Mayerling, Austria,

VinziRast am Land transforms

the former luxury Hotel Hanner

- once a retreat for the wealthy

- into an inclusive residential

and working community for

people on the margins of

society. The project addresses

the urgent issue of affordable

housing in a direct and deeply

humane way, providing both

shelter and opportunities for

reintegration. By combining

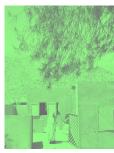
reuse, social participation

and local knowledge, its

architecture tackles complex

ecological and societal

challenges with honesty and



The Anti-Seismic Prototype House is a communityled housing model that integrates seismic resilience with ecological design. cultural continuity and local empowerment. Developed after the devastating 2023 earthquake in Morocco's Haouz region, the project tests compressed earth bricks (CEBs) for their structural strength, affordability and environmental performance. while offering hands-on training and co-design Prototype Anti-Seismic House workshops with residents.

Location: Africa, Morocco

Applicant: Aziza Chaouni Proiects

Commissioned by: Moroccan Ministry of Interior, Reconstruction Program

Gross area in m2: 140.0



Floating Schools

Location: Asia, Bangladesh

Applicant: Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha

Commissioned by: Mohammed Rezwan through Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha

Gross area in m2: 285.0

The Floating Schools initiative in Pabna District, Bangladesh. addresses the recurring challenge of education and healthcare access in floodprone riverine regions. Developed by architect Mohammed Rezwan, the project combines architectural design, cultural continuity and climate adaptation through a fleet of five solar-powered floating structures, including two schools, a library, a training centre and a health clinic. These boats serve floodprone communities along the Gumani River in the Faridpur and Bhangura subdistricts of Pabna. The initiative began as early as 2002, evolving over two decades into a mature system that became fully operational in 2021 along an 8-km stretch of the river.



Jackfruit Processing Unit and Community Centre

Location: Asia, India

Applicant: atArchitecture

Commissioned by: Anant Foundation, Government of Menhalava

Gross area in m2: 465.0

Located in the remote South Garo Hills of Meghalava, one of India's most isolated and ecologically sensitive regions. the Jackfruit Processing Unit and Community Centre strengthens local livelihoods while celebrating community life. Funded by the government and developed for a farmers' cooperative, it addresses the needs of a dispersed agrarian population. By linking production. processing, training and gathering in one place, the building serves both an economic and social hub for a dispersed agrarian population.

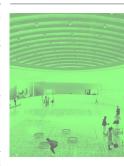


Floating University

Location: Europe, Germany Applicant: Floating e.V.

Commissioned by: Association: Floating e.V. Gross area in m2: 2860.0

Floating University, located in Berlin, is an experimental campus and research project that serves as a platform for transdisciplinary learning, urban practice and ecological research. It explores new forms of collective learning and living by creating a shared space for exchange, reflection and collaboration among students, scientists, artists and local actors from around the world. Set within a rainwater retention basin near Berlin's former Tempelhof Airport, the project challenges conventional architectural thinking while drawing inspiration from its unique landscape. Once a polluted and inaccessible site, it has been transformed into a testing ground for new relationships between the built environment, water and the city.



Shelter Inclusive Place Conal

Location: Asia, Japan Applicant: o+h

Commissioned by: City of Yamagata (Yamagata-shi)

Set on the outskirts of Yamaqata City, surrounded by rice fields and the Zao mountain range. COPAL addresses a clear social gap. Across Japan, few playgrounds welcome children with physical or cognitive disabilities, leaving families with limited access to safe public recreation. COPAL changes this by creating one of the first inclusive play environments in the country a space where children of all abilities and backgrounds can gather throughout the year.



Territorio de los saberes

Location: South America. Peru Applicant: Asociación Semillas para el Desarrollo Sostenible

Commissioned by: Selfmanaged project

Gross area in m²: 91.0

Territorio de los Saberes is both an architectural and pedagogical initiative that transforms education by situating it within the forest and nature. Co-created with the Nomatsigenga community. the project demonstrates how architecture can act as a tool for healing, identity and resilience in territories historically marked by exclusion and ecological pressures. The project combines an open classroom and a medicinal plant laboratory with a teaching model that bridges The Wild Mile Indigenous knowledge and the national curriculum. Through participatory design and construction, it has become a living experiment in how architecture can integrate culture, ecology and education. Gross area in m2: -



Location: North & Central America, United States

Applicant: Urban Rivers Commissioned by: -

The project transforms an industrial river in Chicago into a thriving eco-park. Built as a floating network of wetlands, walkways and educational platforms, the Wild Mile restores biodiversity while creating inclusive public space. Remarkably, it unites disciplines and communities around environmental repair, cleaning a river with a troubled history while redefining how cities coexist with nature. A bold and beautiful example of ecological urbanism at work.



Sanders Place

Location: Southeast Asia & Oceania, Australia

Applicant: NMBW Architecture Studio

Commissioned by: Tripple Gross area in m2: 1385.0

Located on the edge of an industrial and residential zone in Melbourne, Australia, Sanders Place reimagines a two-storev brick factory as a coworking hub that encourages interaction, wellbeing and environmental responsibility. Through acts of both removal and addition. NMBW Architecture Studio turned an inward-looking, windowless structure into a light-filled, porous building that breathes and grows. The introduction of five courtvards cuts through the former factory's solidity, creating new spatial, atmospheric and circulatory logics. These openings invite sunlight, ventilation and plant life deep into the interior, while connecting the occupants with the street and surrounding laneways.



Machan Korail Community Platform

Location: Asia, Bangladesh Applicant: Paraa Commissioned by: -

Gross area in m2: 332.0

Machan is part of the wider Korail: City of Culture initiative. which promotes art and participation as tools for community building. Built collaboratively with residents of Korail, the largest lowincome settlement in Dhaka, it reclaims a former dumping ground as a cultural and social commons. The project shows how young, diverse teams can create spaces that are socially meaningful and architecturally restrained. What emerges feels like 'playground architecture' open, adaptable and deeply rooted in everyday life.

LOCAL SCALE

The Ammodo Architecture Award for local scale encourages self-initiated socially and ecologically oriented spatial projects that have a local impact.

Award | 12 awards x € 10,000

Project | Completed or partially completed (small) buildings or spatial projects; community driven, self-initiated or nonprofit supported. Completed or being under construction in the period between January 2021 and December 2024.

Applicant | 'everybody can be an architect'. Communities, collectives, artists, architects, urbanists, landscape architects or other individual(s).

Plan | The prize money is to be used by the applicant to fund expenses related to the award-winning project or put towards a subsequent phase of this project.



Main Stage of MuyunaFest Location: South America, Peru Applicant: Espacio Común Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 40

Located in the amphibious neighbourhood of Belén. Iquitos, in the Peruvian Amazon, the Main Stage of MuyunaFest - Floating Jungle was conceived as the heart of Muyuna Fest - an international floating film festival that pays tribute to the world's rainforests and their Indigenous peoples. The project creates a temporary floating hub that responds to the climatic realities of Belén. The stage brings culture to river communities and creates a social gathering space, with residents watching films from their boats in a 'boat-inn' setting, turning a neglected urban condition into a vibrant, shared experience.



Location: Europe, Germany Applicant: Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 12.5

TerraTimber integrates technology with vernacular traditions through innovative use of natural materials. project investigates circular construction methodologies merge reclaimed materials with digital design and fabrication to address and ecological responsibility in the built environment. Developed at the Department of Architecture at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the project explores the structural and aesthetic potential of hybrid systems made from reclaimed wood and earth. The result is a modular system of columns, beams, slabs and walls that demonstrates how waste materials can be transformed into architectural resources.



Adobe Vault Location: Asia, Iran Applicant: Esfahk Mud Center Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 425

In Esfahk, Iran, Adobe Vault revives ancient earthen building traditions for modern use Part of the Esfahk Mud Center's initiative to study and preserve local clay techniques, the vault-built by volunteers from Iran and abroad-will host concerts and gatherings, celebrating Do-Tar music and reuniting the community. Once complete, it will be the world's largest pure-earth structure, showcasing how historical knowledge can inspire sustainable, locally rooted solutions to today's ecological and social challenges.



Rural Primary School, Mandi

Location: Asia, India Applicant: Dhammada Collective

Commissioned by: SEEDS Gross area in m2: 576

In Kuklah village, in the Himalavan district of Mandi. the original primary school was destroyed by landslides in 2023. leaving children without a safe place to learn. Commissioned by SEEDS and designed by Dhammada Collective, the reconstruction became more than a replacement building. Conceived as a prototype for resilient rural education. it adapts to local conditions. honours community knowledge and offers a replicable model for similar fragile landscapes. The aim was to build minimally yet meaningfully - using what already existed and leaving room for the school to evolve as the community changes.



Jardín Naturalista Colibrí at Canal Constitución

Location: North & Central America Mexico

Applicant: Gladiola Camacho Estudio

Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 2.000

What began as a master's thesis on the loss of green spaces in Monterrey has grown into a living example of ecological restoration and public engagement. The Jardín Naturalista Colibrí at Canal Constitución reimagines a neglected canal median as a vibrant ecological and social space, replacing ornamental models with a naturalistic approach. Designed with neighbours and gardeners, the project reintroduces native plants to regenerate soil, cool the city and attract pollinators. It's not only a green space but also an open-air laboratory and a new community place that shows how urban nature can restore both ecology and belonging



Jucão Seed House

Location: South America. Brazil

Applicant: Laboraterra Arquitetura I Alain Briatte Mantchev Arquitetura ME

Commissioned by: -

Gross area in m2: 42

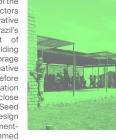


such as passive humidity and

temperature control, with

cultural continuity and local

building traditions.



The Slovo Hall Project

Location: Africa, South Africa Applicant: 1to1 - Agency of Engagement

Commissioned by: Slovo Park Development Forum

Gross area in m2: 1.500

Located in Slovo Park, Johannesburg, The Slovo Hall Project is the result of more than 15 years of collaboration between the Slovo Park Community Development Forum (SPCDF) and 1to1 -Agency of Engagement. By reclaiming a neglected space that might otherwise have remained under institutional control, the project redefines civic architecture from the ground up, with residents leading every phase of its transformation. Architecturally. it is highly responsive to the local climate and context, employing strategies of ventilation, shading and material reuse to create a comfortable, adaptable and dignified public environment.



Village as House

Location: Europe, Italy Applicant: Robida Collective Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: -

The Village as House project redefines what restoration can mean in a rural context. Rather than a singular architectural intervention, it is a collective, long-term process of inhabiting, caring and coexisting. Robida Collective imagines the restoration of Topolò through the everyday act of dwelling - using spatial, cultural and artistic practices to reimagine the future of a fragile mountain village. Public cultural programmes, publishing experiments, renovation works and learning moments all Terrachidia Oasis Campus contribute to the same goal: restoring the relationship between the place and its Applicant: Terrachidia NGO people. The project combines architecture, maintenance and care into a single, ongoing Gross area in m2: 10.000.000 practice of living together.



Location: Africa, Morocco Commissioned by: -

Located in the old village of M'Hamid El Ghizlane, at the edge of the Sahara, Terrachidia Oasis Campus combines an architectural preservation training programme with the local knowledge of traditional construction methods and materials. The collective of architectural heritage experts and local collaborators carefully navigates the balance between external expertise and local agency. Their method not only draws on local knowhow but actively encourages and transmits it to future generations.



Bankatta Community Initiative, Madi Valley

Location: Asia, Nepal Applicant: Sustainable Mountain Architecture Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 400

In southern Nepal's remote Madi Valley, the village of Bankatta lies within Chitwan National Park's buffer zone. surrounded by the park and bordering India. Home to the Bot people, whose language and cuisine are unique, the village has faced cultural fragmentation due to migration. The Bankatta Community Initiative aimed to reverse this through community-driven eco-tourism and sustainable design. Led by the Bankatta Women Committee with Sustainable Mountain Architecture (SMA) and Connecting Spaces, the project built a community hall and two eco-cottages, forming the Madi Eco-Village. Using local materials, vernacular knowledge, and collective labor, the community designed and constructed the project themselves



Magdy El Khouly Street Renovation

Location: Africa, Egypt Applicant: AHS CxA Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 350

Located in Ezbet Khairallah. home to nearly one million residents, the addresses urban and social challenges at their most local level. The area has long suffered from the absence of public amenities, unplanned construction and a lack of safe spaces for play or gathering. Building on the success of the Dawar El Ezba Cultural Center - an earlier initiative that introduced a cultural and educational hub to the neighbourhood in 2019 - this project deepens trust between the architects and residents, evolving into a broader process of participatory urban renewal.



Play- Pause-Ponder Location: Asia. Pakistan Applicant: WM Re-Lab Commissioned by: -Gross area in m2: 30

Located in Taiser Town, Karachi, Play-Pause-Ponder is an action-based research and design project initiated by WM Re-Lab in 2023, Developed through a participatory process with local residents. it responds to the absence of safe, playful spaces for children in marginalized communities. Originally part of an academic residency titled Critical Futures, the project redirected its exhibition budget to build a real, functional installation on the ground, turning an artistic inquiry into an act of civic engagement.



SECTION 03 I ON THE SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE AWARDS

Strength in Flexibility: Kampung Mrican's urban acupuncture by SHAU

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with SHAU (Florian Heinzelmann and Daliana Suryawinata), Pauline Boedianto, Indah Swastika Purnama Sari, Sahid Fahrudin

They Have Scratches. I Have Scratches. VinziRast on reuse, hybrid living, and community-led design

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with gaupenraub+/- (Alexander Hagner and Ulrike Schartner), Doris Kebler, Andrea Kornfell and Robert Korbei

Kampung Mrican Phase 1, SHAU / winner in the award category 'social architecture'.

Below

VinziRast am Land, gaupenraub+/-/ winner in the award category 'social architecture'.

Kampung Mrican Phase 1

Project Details

Location: Southeast Asia & Oceania, Indonesia

Applicant: SHAU

Commissioned by: Indonesian Ministry of Public Works

Study area in m²: 211600 / Built intervation area in m²: 4353



SHAU has received the Ammodo Award for Social Architecture in recognition of its exemplary urban approach and enduring commitment to community-driven projects. A standout initiative is their microlibrary program, bringing books and educational resources to underserved areas across Indonesia. By establishing small, accessible libraries in villages and urban neighborhoods, the project nurtures a culture of reading and lifelong learning among children and adults with limited access to books. Beyond promoting literacy, it helps bridge educational gaps, empowering individuals with knowledge and critical thinking skills that can drive personal and community development. In a diverse, geographically dispersed country like Indonesia, such grassroots efforts are vital for making education more equitable and inclusive.

The award particularly honors the Kampung Mrican Phase 1 project, commissioned by Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works and Housing under the RPIP programme. Near two major universities in Yogyakarta, Kampung Mrican is a densely populated urban kampung with narrow alleys and a close-knit community. SHAU's revitalisation strategy applies "urban acupuncture"-small, targeted interventions that yield broader social and ecological benefits while preserving the neighborhood's identity. Participatory engagement was central: SHAU and partner Pauline Boedianto collaborated with residents, women's groups, farmers, and local eco-enzymers through meetings, mapping, and consultations, ensuring the project reflected community aspirations.

Key interventions included a riverside setback with green space and flood infrastructure, upgraded sidewalks and bridges, waste management facilities, and a thriving community farm producing vegetables, mushrooms, and eco-enzymes. Anchoring the project is Microlibrary Pringwulung, a flexible public space and learning hub complemented by a renovated pendopo for daily and festive life. The project has revitalised the neighborhood, fostering cleaner rivers, greener surroundings, active women's groups, and vibrant communal spaces.



Film Park

Location: Bandung, Indonesia Year: 20

Revitalisation of an abandoned space beneath a flyover into a tiered seating landscape, functioning as a movie park and informal urban living room.



Microlibrary - Bima

Location: Bandung, Indonesia Year: 201

A pilot, raised "floating" box above a community stage with a façade made from ~2,000 reused ice-cream buckets.



Microlibrary - Lansia

Location: Bandung, Indonesia Year: 2016

Single-storey, floating concrete box with PVC pipes as a prototype for parks featuring a musholla, kiosk and toilets.

musholla, klosk and tollets.



Microlibrary - Selasar

Location: Bojonegoro, Indonesia Year: 2018

A shaded park library that wraps a covered 'selasar' (walkway) around a tree with a textile facade made of folded white banners.



Alun Alun Cicendo

Location: Bandung, Indonesia Year: 2018

Open-air plaza with contemporary artworks, a skatepark, art market, basketball court, amphitheatre, lookout pavillion, seating stairs, and street vendor kiosks, unified by rusted steel

ribbon design.



Microlibrary - Hanging Gardens

Location: Bandung, Indonesia Year: 2019

Stepped green terraces offer urban gardening, a slide, and a rooftop lookout, with the library tucked

below.



Microlibrary - Warak Kayu

Location: Semarang, Indonesia Year: 202

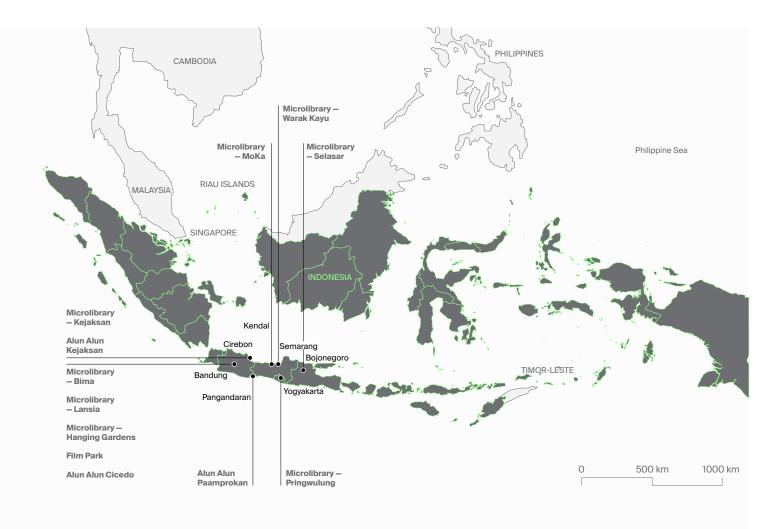
An elevated, passive-design FSC-timber library with a Zollinger façade evoking the scales of the local warak dragon, complete with a net and swing



Microlibrary - MoKa

Location: Kendal, Indonesia Year: 2021

A flat-pack FSC-timber modular microlibrary designed for cost-effective prefabrication, quick and easy on-site assembly.





Microlibrary – Kejaksan

Location: Cirebon, Indonesia Year: 20

A library integrated into a public square, featuring stepped seating, a rooftop viewing deck, and constructed from locally sourced red bricks.



Alun Alun Kejaksan

Location: Cirebon, Indonesia Year: 2021

Public square featuring a memorial plaza, pavilion, library, hawker centre, and playground, all unified by red brick stepping forms reinterpreting the local gapura gate.



Alun Alun Paamprokan

Location: Pangandaran, Indonesia Year: 2021

1.8-hectare public square by the beach featuring an outdoor gym, a playground, a pavilion, street vendor market, and a viewing tower designed as a series of pocket spaces interwoven into an existing field of coconut trees.



Microlibrary - Pringwulung

Location: Yogyakarta, Indonesia Year: 2024

An integrated element of an urban village revitalisation programme, a library on stilts with a 'batik' terracotta-shell façade crafted locally.



Strength in Flexibility: Kampung Mrican's urban acupuncture by SHAU

with SHAU (Florian Heinzelmann & Daliana Suryawinata), Pauline Boedianto, Indah Swastika Purnama Sari, Sahid Fahrudin



SHAU's work in Indonesia redefines architecture as an instrument of social and environmental engagement. Through microlibraries and kampung initiatives, the practice explores how small-scale, community-driven design can catalyse broader urban change. Founded by Daliana Suryawinata and Florian Heinzelmann, SHAU operates between experimentation and pragmatism — pairing architectural invention with participation, craftsmanship, and climatic intelligence. Each project emerges from its context: terracotta shells made by local craftsmen, reused ice cream buckets as façades, passive cooling strategies that create spaces of respite within dense tropical cities. Rather than fixed objects, their buildings are conceived as adaptable frameworks — open to transformation by the communities that inhabit them. SHAU's Kampung Mrican Phase 1 was awarded the Ammodo Architecture Award for social architecture, recognising how thoughtful design can reinforce social bonds and enhance spatial resilience.

Collaboration with ministries, municipalities, and kampungs demonstrates how design can bridge top-down policy and bottom-up initiative, fostering local ownership and resilience. SHAU's architecture thrives on improvisation and shared authorship, testing how built form can nurture literacy, public life, and collective agency across Indonesia's urban fabric.

This interview traces how SHAU's process — experimental, iterative, and open-ended — reframes architecture as both a learning tool and a living laboratory for collective transformation.

KOOZ What drew you to the project for the revitalisation of urban kampungs like Mrican?

A public square formed by the pendopo, the street, and Microlibrary Pringwulung. **FLORIAN HEINZELMANN / SHAU** When we started the Microlibrary project, our first client was Dompet Dhuafa, a foundation supporting low-income communities. Back then, we didn't have a specific site, but it was always clear to us that we wanted to work within kampungs. Kampung is a Malay word, originally meaning 'village'; the term has since evolved to evoke urban communities or enclosures, and the culture associated with such settlements. The basic DNA of the Microlibrary series was, from the start, about bringing literacy into these urban villages.

We carried out several studies in kampungs in Jakarta to understand how we could intervene as a form of urban acupuncture, inserting these small libraries into the existing fabric. In that sense, revitalisation was already embedded in the project's DNA. Over time, we built a few Microlibraries, but with Mrican, the scope and impact of the idea expanded significantly.

DALIANA SURYAWINATA / SHAU As SHAU, we're interested in a broad range of projects — both commissioned works and those we initiate ourselves. These self-initiated projects often relate closely to kampungs, because we see them as a vital and unique part of Indonesian cities — an urban fabric that is original and complementary to the development of the more generic city. For us, the kampung is endlessly fascinating. We keep asking: what can we do within this existing fabric, and what can we learn from it? For example, around 2014, we organised workshops with colleagues and architects from both the Netherlands and Indonesia to explore the question, what is the future of the kampung? We'd been waiting for an opportunity to actually work in one, and that chance came with Mrican. In 2022, we were commissioned by the Ministry of Public Works, who happened to be developing a kampung project. They approached us because they already knew our work — we'd been active with exhibitions, public space projects, and community initiatives — and that's how we became involved in Kampung Mrican.

KOOZ Could you expand on these community-driven interventions and how they negotiate both the social and ecological urgencies of the site?

DS When the ministry first approached us, nothing was clearly defined yet — and that's the beauty of their program. We were able to discover things together and, in a way, create the brief collectively. We started by looking at the wider context — almost like regional planning, but at a city scale — to understand what surrounds the area, its proximity to universities, and then spoke with residents and other stakeholders to identify what could be done where.

The microlibraries were our own initiative, not a commission. We asked ourselves, as architects, how we could respond to social issues — specifically literacy and reading interest, which is a challenge in Indonesia. We developed a model for a library under 200 square meters that combines community space, complementing city and mobile libraries. From the start, it reflected both our social agenda and our design approach, creating gathering spaces that are climatically comfortable through passive design.

KOOZ You mentioned that when the ministry approached you, the project was very much crafted together. With what ambitions did they come? Did they simply say, "We want to revitalise this," or how did that initial conversation begin?



DS There was an area that was substandard — lots of garbage, narrow streets, and flooding issues. They said we needed to intervene, but beyond providing basic infrastructure like street drainage, they wanted to do more. They wanted to introduce design so that the administration could see the potential of the space.

FH It all is research-based. You go there, evaluate the site, and see what has potential for improvement. We talk with people, listen to what they wish for and identify the existing strengths. There's some urban farming that could be enhanced, a pendopo — an open multi-purpose pavilion — and on the opposite side we placed the new library, also on stilts. This allows us to expand the space underneath, above, and over the street, so it becomes one connected, hanging space.

Essentially, it's about going there, observing how people use the space, and identifying areas for improvement. It's a very organic process.

PAULINE BOEDIANTO When we first stepped into Mrican, it was immediately clear: this was never just about fixing a building. It was about renewal of space, of identity, of collective memory. The task ahead was not merely architectural, but deeply human. It required a process of co-creation, working alongside the community to mend more than infrastructure: to reweave the kampong's social and ecological fabric.

Our approach was rooted in the belief that architecture must go beyond form where it should support life. Not just as shelter, but as a system that holds community, culture, and the environment together. In Mrican, this translated into a process where design became a tool for participation, for care, and for collective authorship.

This multi-sectoral coordination was essential. It enabled genuine participatory planning, where residents weren't just consulted, they were decision-makers. Through this framework, we built solutions that were not

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Aerial photo showing the acupunctural interventions at Kampung Mrican Phase 1.

Right

Flood control post by the riverbank, part of Kampung Mrican Phase 1.



KOOZ Could you expand upon how the RPIP programme's framework is structured and how this enables a more integrated approach compared to conventional housing projects?

INDAH SWASTIKA PURNAMA SARI The RPIP (Settlement Infrastructure Development Plan) is implemented through a structured, multi-level approach. At the macro level, it assesses overall conditions, constraints, opportunities, and policy frameworks; at the meso level, it identifies key priority areas; and at the micro level, it specifies concrete infrastructure components. The plan adopts an integrated approach, aligning priorities and planning documents across central and local governments, sectors, and stakeholders, while also embracing participatory processes through focused group discussions and public consultations with communities and organisations.

Kampung Mrican was selected for RPIP revitalisation by the Central Government due to its strong performance across multiple criteria: it met most readiness requirements (including documentation and land ownership), aligned with the seven slum indicators reflecting urgent need, demonstrated high potential for community collaboration, and received robust support from the local government, particularly the City of Yogyakarta.

Phase 1 of Kampung Mrican's transformation has shown that slum upgrading extends far beyond physical infrastructure improvements. The initiative not only enhanced livability but also fostered a cultural shift, promoting environmental awareness and a stronger sense of shared responsibility among residents. Covering 5.58 hectares, Phase 1 represents a significant initial milestone; however, 15.58 hectares of slum area remain to be addressed in the next stage.

Phase 2 will build on the principles and strategies established in Phase 1. Its success will depend on sustained collaboration between national and regional governments, coupled with active engagement from the local community. This multi-stakeholder approach is crucial, as slum revitalisation is inherently complex and multidimensional, requiring coordinated action across sectors and levels of governance.

PB The RPIP programme gave us the structure to move beyond traditional, top-down models of urban improvement. Instead of limiting interventions to hard infrastructure or unit delivery, RPIP allowed us to work across systems, connecting housing, sanitation, mobility, public space, and ecology.

KOOZ You mentioned flooding as a main ecological issue to address. Were there other environmental challenges as well? And socially, what kinds of opportunities were you asked to offer and to brainstorm with the community?

DS Yes, there were many issues. Compared to Europe, where a residential quarter often already has proper drainage and a network of pedestrian pathways, these elements were lacking here, which contributed to water not draining properly.

The main brief was to increase the livability of this kampung region. This included preventing flooding or adding the necessary infrastructure to

manage it. At the same time, we were asked to insert public spaces wherever possible. This gave us the freedom to be imaginative — not just providing spaces, but also introducing initiatives like literacy and reading into the urban village.

That's how the idea of the microlibrary and playground emerged. These concepts were brainstormed and refined through several workshops with residents and other stakeholders, and then designed and implemented. It truly was an organic process. Each implemented element has a clear purpose, responding to specific needs within the community and the site.

FH Coming back to flooding, the challenge is that the space is relatively limited and the problem is largely infrastructural. Keeping it clean and functional is key. For example, in Singapore, there's a shift away from hardscape canals toward landscapes with bio-swales, like in Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park — a more affluent solution.

Here, we had to consider what could realistically be executed within the dense urban fabric. Basic improvements were the priority. Sidewalks were often missing, so widening them was essential to allow continuous movement along the canal. We weren't aiming for high-level landscape integration; the interventions needed to work within the constraints, improve living conditions immediately, and be maximally effective. There wasn't space to create elaborate green edges or bio-swales, so the solutions had to be straightforward: managing water while maintaining accessibility, circulation, and integration of public space.

PB If one takes the river walkway, it's not simply a path, but a multifunctional space. It serves as a buffer, protecting homes from flooding while also creating a communal spine through the kampong. What looks like a linear promenade is, in fact, a resilience infrastructure, a meeting place, and a shared backyard. Similarly, the community gardens and urban farming spaces serve layered roles. They absorb stormwater, cool the microclimate, and produce food. But perhaps more importantly, they create ownership and daily rituals, a reason to gather, to share skills, and to reimagine self- sufficiency.

KOOZ It's interesting that the microlibraries also work as climatic devices, beyond their educational mission, but also as moments of environmental respite within the city.

FH This is actually one of the core principles of our designs — to use passive climatic strategies. We are, in a way, relatively fortunate that even though it's hot in a tropical country and relatively humid, it's not like 40 degrees. It's maybe 32–34, and as long as you provide shade and ample cross ventilation, the comfort is quite good, especially paired with light clothing.

This means these buildings can operate without large energy investments. They don't need to be hermetically sealed; sometimes just a fan is enough. That's the idea behind our envelope design: on one hand, it represents the site—like in Pringwulung and Mrican, where a batik pattern was needed—and on the other hand, it screens sunlight while enabling cross ventilation and keeping some rain out. The design strategy includes covering, ventilation, rain protection, sliding doors, or curtains.

We work with these elements in a low-cost but creative way. All the libraries we've done experiment with materiality and construction: one uses reused ice cream buckets, one is FSC-certified timber, another is a concrete brutalist

'KM Phase 1' wins the AAA for Social Architecture for its exemplary urban approach: a series of acupunctural interventions codeveloped with the community of the dense village Kampung Mrican, using existing urban structures with sustainability and social values at its core. Praised for working across scales—from micro-level building renovations to macro-level infrastructure—SHAU has delivered socially engaged architecture grounded in residents' needs and existing programs. Ecological values are addressed in an effective and nuanced way: from a womenled community farm for self-harvesting and the use of locally produced materials, to floodresilient interventions and a waste management center. At the heart of the project is the Microlibrary—a new, award-winning typology. Elevated on stilts, this public building acts as a landmark, gathering space, and learning hub. Together with the renovated Pendopo (Javanese pavilion), it forms an informal public square with shaded, open-air space that enables larger community events—creating a highly flexible, comfortable, multi-programmatic space.

- Ammodo Advisory Board

building with breeze blocks, and one uses textile elements in the facade. It's a big learning process for us while also trying new things.

KOOZ What defines the material you choose? Do you select it based on the site – for example, why use ice cream buckets in one place and breeze blocks in another? Is it due to availability or local industries?

FH For instance, with the plastic buckets, we initially wanted to use jerry cans, which are liquid containers. However, when we arrived, we saw that street vendors were selling them, and there weren't enough available. So we looked around and found ice cream buckets as an alternative. Plastic is an issue, so using these also raises awareness about plastic waste, but it also reflects how, in Indonesia, anything useful and of sufficient quality tends to get reused. These buckets were available online, and we used them as a façade material — they're very nice, about one millimeter thick.

DS In the case of the Microlibrary Pringwulung, we noticed there were plenty of local craftsmen working with terracotta bricks, blocks, or roofing materials. So if we choose a half-cylindrical terracotta shell, we can give work to them — they get hired locally to produce and install the shells. It's a local material, made of earth, which suits the place in a way.

FH We learned this from the Alun-alun Cicendo 'Steel Plaza' in Bandung, with its self-made rusted steel bands. There are lots of motorcycle spare parts and metal workers in the neighbourhood. Construction companies usually hire local people, so we thought, if you work with steel and welding, the locals from scooter repair shops could contribute. That became a design strategy — finding materials or construction methods that give jobs, at least during construction. And in Pringwulung, the terracotta became the facade material. Potentially, when people feel associated with the building, the project can start weaving a community.

KOOZ How do you juggle all of these elements together? It seems challenging to create something that works, keeps costs down, and engages local craftspeople. How do you manage and balance all these different needs – especially delivering a project that functions immediately?

ISPS Kampung Mrican presents a compelling model for the revitalisation of urban kampungs, especially those located in dense riverside areas. Its development showcases how adaptive infrastructure can be thoughtfully tailored to the socio-cultural and geomorphological characteristics of





the community. Key interventions highlight this integrative approach: the construction of a river embankment, along with an inspection road and flood control post, effectively mitigates water fluctuations and minimises flood risk; the inspection road itself has been transformed into a lively waterfront space that enhances both functionality and livability; planter pots and urban farming initiatives incorporated along the route promote community-based food production; and open public spaces, together with a micro-library, provide inclusive facilities that foster social and educational engagement across generations. Ultimately, Kampung Mrican embodies a Blue-Green sustainability concept — harmonising water-sensitive design with verdant community spaces — that serves as a replicable model for sustainable urban transformation.

FH You have to be flexible. You design and propose something, but that's never the end of the story. Often, during execution, plans change, and you have to react quickly and make the best of it. You need to let go of the idea that an architect's plan is executed 100% as drawn — the plan should be seen as a starting point, also for negotiation. Things will change along the way, and you have to be flexible enough to incorporate that.

In the beginning, especially for me coming from a German background, I expected plans to be executed very precisely. But in Indonesia, we had to rethink the role of the architect and design — letting the process be openended, responsive to the input, capabilities, and capacities of local people, and integrating what they can build and contribute along the way. It's all part of the organic nature of design and execution.

DS This kind of work isn't attractive to most architects because working in an urban village is complicated. You have to listen to everyone's needs — everyone is a stakeholder — which makes flexibility essential. You can't force your design; you have to navigate how it will actually be delivered.

As architects, we aren't living there — the residents know better what they need. But we still have the responsibility to provide the best technical advice and design solutions. Projects like this wouldn't be possible without the ministry team trusting our design. This trust is crucial, because often architects or consultants would just deliver a design without being involved in its implementation or adaptation.

FH Usually, architects deliver a design to the ministry, and then the ministry executes it with a contractor. Often, communication with the architect stops early, and what gets built may diverge from the original design. If you want to have a say in the execution, you have to go the extra mile and accompany the project until it's built.

In Indonesia, the process sometimes cuts architects off early, meaning designs become subject to interpretation. We have to negotiate — wanting longer engagement for greater oversight, while also staying flexible to integrate changes as effectively as possible. Our team in Bandung, led by our Associate Partner Aditya Kusuma, was on-site frequently, attending numerous meetings, negotiations, and presentations. It involved constant back-and-forth, translating what residents need and want into the design — a lot of 'ping-pong' to make it work.

Left

Microlibrary Bima with the ice cream bucket facade, part of the Microlibraries project, not part of Kampung Mrican.

Right

Microlibrary Pringwulung with a Batik facade of locally-made terracotta shingles.

DS At the Microlibrary in Pringwulung, we researched and surveyed the site carefully. The ground area had been used for various activities, like weddings, and it also accommodates street vendors with their carts — an important part of the informal economy. So the design had to preserve this functionality while placing the library volume above it.

When it came to designing the façade, it went back and forth far beyond a normal government project. Consultants usually do the minimum — tendering and handing off. In our case, we requested the ministry have the contractor provide the rebar mesh, the clay shells in different curves and consistencies, so we could study the details together with the craftspeople and the contractors.

The second example is the manhole story. There is a plaza where we had an earlier design approved, but one day we found out the contractor had already started work — not according to the plan. The plaza had to be carefully integrated with a manhole used for the wastewater treatment program, so that it could be opened and closed as needed.

FH The manhole was originally in a different position, but the contractor placed it right in the middle of the plaza, where we had planned a playground. We had to decide quickly what to do. We took the circular shapes of the manholes and drew hopscotch-like graphics on the ground, with numbers and one-leg, two-leg jumping games. Since the forms were circular, we embraced that and expanded the idea, designing something playful for the kids. We integrated the circular lines into the ground pattern and added a

Playground combined with a wastewater treatment plant, hosting multiple uses daily.



small carousel, turning the manhole — which could have been a disruption — into a design feature. This is the kind of flexibility needed on-site: instead of being frustrated, we adapt, think creatively, and use unexpected challenges to inspire playful and functional design. What began as a problem became a design language that structured the entire playground plaza.

KOOZ Sahid & Pauline, I'm interested in hearing your perspective and experience in regards to the participatory process through which the project was developed?

SAHID FAHRUDIN In 2022, the Pringwulung Village was included in Phase I of the Mrican Area Improvement by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing. From the start, residents — both in Pringwulung and Pringgodani Mrican — were committed to improving their environment, aiming for a cleaner, safer, and better-organised community.

For decades, much of the area faced incomplete infrastructure: river contours, sanitation, roads, and buildings were inadequate, and waste and wastewater management were poor. Residents repeatedly coordinated with each other and with local authorities to plan improvements, with support from the village, sub-district, PU Sleman, the Kotaku program, and other institutions.

Residents actively participated in planning, creating a shared vision that was recognised by PU Sleman. The river program applied the 3M principle — mundur (setback), munggah (move up), madep (facing the river) — turning the river into a front-facing feature and improving cleanliness. The Ministry managed design, permits, and logistics, and no residents were displaced — only reorganised — with full community involvement.

PB Ultimately, the most resilient infrastructure isn't made of concrete, but it's built through trust. In Mrican, safety isn't defined by fences or patrols, but by relationships: between neighbours, across generations, with place. When mothers lead clean-ups, when children grow up surrounded by books, when youth take ownership of rivers, a different kind of security emerges. One that doesn't rely on external enforcement, but on collective care. On presence, pride, and participation.

What held the entire process together was an integrated, ecosystemic mindset. Environmental issues like flooding and waste pollution weren't tackled in isolation, but they were met with layered, community-driven responses. Eco Enzyme became one such tool. Made from kitchen waste, this simple, affordable solution improves water quality and helps restore microbial balance in rivers. But more than its technical value, Eco Enzyme served as a catalyst for local leadership, especially among women.

We worked closely with PKK groups, mothers and homemakers often overlooked in development discourse, supporting them to lead environmental education, waste sorting, and flood mitigation. Their work reshaped not only the riverbank but the social dynamics of the kampong. From domestic roles to public leadership, a quiet but profound transformation took root. Meanwhile, youth groups were trained in water testing, data collection, and community workshops, linking science with lived reality and building a generation of local environmental stewards.

KOOZ Is there also a commitment to stay involved over the next three to five years, to observe how the projects are used, how the community responds, and how the interventions can evolve? I mean, given that the strategy of urban acupuncture could potentially be ongoing, where does your commission or interest stop – and where does it continue?

FH With other microlibraries — like Bima and Warak Kayu — there's always the question of ongoing community engagement. Who is staffing the library? These people sometimes need supervision or training to ensure the activities continue. Then there's the matter of funding and maintenance, which requires ongoing attention. Sometimes local youth organisations manage the microlibrary, but that can go off track — in one case it turned into a café, with people smoking inside. Then we have to step in and diplomatically get things back on course. So we remain actively involved.

DS This is also the question we ask ourselves — to what end are we doing this without being paid? Sometimes we even contribute financially, donating not only our hours but also energy and design resources. We want to see how the building is used, how the community thrives. We feel proud when it works well, and if something doesn't, we want to help make it right.

For the Mrican project, recently completed, we are observing how it functions. Did we make the right choices? What could be improved? We stay connected with the people around the site — many students and visitors come to see the project — so we continue to learn and respond as the community interacts with the space.

FH There's potentially a phase two where the project can be extended. With phase two, we would have the opportunity to revisit the existing interventions, see how they are performing, and refine them. Basically, it's a continuation of this organic process. As phase two unfolds or the team within the ministry changes, we just need to find the right angle to step in again and continue making it happen. I'm actually quite positive that it's possible.

KOOZ How do you evaluate performance? And perhaps going back to your methodology, which relies on workshops and what you describe as "express participation," how do you define performance, and what role does the community play in understanding and shaping it?

FH We evaluate by talking with the people using the space — does it work for you? Are you happy with the function? For example, with our microlibraries, we designed an envelope to block the sun, doors that can open, and planter pots behind the facade. It was the first time we included planter pots like this, and we're observing how they perform. If the plants survive, great; if not, or if they're too much effort to irrigate or don't get enough daylight, we rethink the solution. Step by step, we assess both detailed elements and the larger scale.

Earlier this year, during the end of Ramadan, we observed something interesting: people were gathering underneath the library and across the street under the pendopo, effectively connecting two spaces separated by the street. This suggested design potential for future projects — even streets with light traffic can be activated by community activity. By being on-site, observing, and talking with users, we evaluate what works and what doesn't, then improve it immediately or apply the lessons to upcoming projects.

DS The residents also shared their testimonials. One of the most interesting

examples was how, with the new street, the back of their house became the front. They could start selling porridge — a form of micro-economy and empowerment. The space is clean, pleasant, with greenery along the railings where people can sit and buy from them. This is one way to measure success: residents generating small income from the renewed space. There's also culture embedded — for instance, batik patterns on the railings. Another indicator is recognition: awards and publications show international acknowledgment of the project. This helps everyone involved feel that the place is well-designed and a good space to live in. Publications and awards thus also serve as meaningful success criteria.

FH It's fascinating to see how something you design gets executed and then used — whether as intended or in unforeseen ways. In other projects, this happened often. For example, in Alun-Alun Cicendo in Bandung, we designed a park with rusted steel ribbons and a dry sand garden. We imagined people sitting there, but instead they used it as a reflexology path. Similarly, curved and long benches were rearranged by children into tunnels or seesaws.

Observing how people reinterpret the space is incredibly insightful. These moments inform future design: many play elements in our micro libraries emerged from noticing how children engaged with prior spaces. We realised that to make a library successful, it's not enough to provide a reading container — you need to activate children and invite them in. Keeping your eyes open, observing usage, and responding to it allows you to adapt and evolve your design strategies accordingly.

Microlibrary Pringwulung interior view of the reading space



DS And one more thing is that design plays a role beyond the immediate users. The head of the village told us that all the architecture departments from universities in Yogyakarta have visited the kampung because of the publication and recognition of the project. They study it as a reference, using the kampung as a case study for urban design in practice.

FH I think one of the rare things about this project in Indonesia is that it actually allows the idea of urban acupuncture to be realised. It becomes almost like a living laboratory. Sometimes things work better than intended, sometimes differently, sometimes not at all — but people are forgiving if you rectify it. You don't have to know everything in advance, so the process remains organic.

For example, we designed a microlibrary as a helicoid — a double spiral. We were able to explain that it's an integrated library with stairs, a slide, and a playscape, where you can overlook the whole space. People were engaged with the model and enthusiastic, saying, "Yeah, cool. Let's do it."

There's no prejudice toward design, even if it's unfamiliar. People are open to experimentation, which makes the process playful for us as architects as well.

PB I would like to reflect on the Microlibraries project in particular. Indonesia's reading interest is second lowest among 70 countries, but Indonesians are the highest users of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In many kampongs, you see even small kids holding on to iPads and HP, but books are rare. Even where digital access is high, deep reading habits are in decline. Microlibraries are an attempt to close the gap between media consumption and critical literacy. By embedding Microlibraries into daily life, adjacent to schools, markets, and public spaces, we bring books into the flow of everyday activity. Children don't need to make special trips to read. Books are simply there as a normal, accessible, part of the landscape. The result is not just improved literacy, it's a shift in how knowledge is valued, shared, and experienced.

KOOZ Could you elaborate on how the residents' daily lives have changed since the project's completion? Beyond physical improvements, how has the project affected community pride and identity?

SF Community participation has strengthened, with residents managing sanitation, public facilities, and maintenance collectively. Cultural and recreational spaces along the riverbanks have been organised, supporting sports, social gatherings, and traditional arts. Economic activity has increased, with MSMEs, women's PKK initiatives, food stalls, and tourism emerging. Health and safety have improved, with fewer disease outbreaks, reduced flooding, and a more secure environment. Access to religious and educational facilities has become easier and safer, and the area's image has transformed from one associated with crime to a respected, vibrant neighbourhood. Though contextual factors complexify such a reading, poverty has decreased, with the estimated proportion of local households under the poverty line falling by over 25% between 2020 and 2024.

Challenges remain, including boosting the local economy, expanding urban agriculture, and optimising Integrated Waste Processing Facility operations, but coordination continues to ensure sustainable development. Thanks to the dedication of residents, local authorities, and the Ministry, the Mrican

area is now cleaner, safer, healthier, and culturally vibrant.

KOOZ Going back to the scale, I understand that maybe this is the first time you're working at such a scale, in terms of urban acupuncture with the ministry. What do you see as the potential for scaling this approach — both within your own office and as a model for other offices in Indonesia to follow?

FH We had a mayor in Bandung — later governor of West Java — who scaled up public space programs. You often need a local champion, because unfortunately, in some aspects, Indonesia isn't resilient enough for a project like this to continue on its own; the administration needs to be motivated and willing. Interestingly, champions can often be found. Once a project is successful and people see the results, it can be scaled up. Back when we worked with the mayor in Bandung, we improved a few public spaces, like the Steel Park, and he scaled it up across West Java. Suddenly, many towns and cities got involved, and more architects participated. It would be fantastic if other cities or kampungs picked up the idea and created their own interpretations.

DS In a way we've been the test bunnies in another city to upscale a public space project. As Florian said, we did one public space, it was successful, and then it scaled up with other architects. The same could happen here with urban acupuncture: more architects could be recruited and work together — not necessarily with the ministry, but with cities or communities. There are many possible roles. Of course, we are not the first. There was a priest and architect, Romo Mangun, who studied in Germany and worked in Indonesia in the '70s and '80s. He delivered charismatic and very thoughtful architecture, especially in kampungs. It's not widely published, so the world doesn't fully know about it, but it serves as a precedent that such work has been done before.

FH He went so far as to live in the kampung and became, in a sense, the kampung elder. He refurbished the community completely, entirely bottomup. So there are references, precedents for this kind of work. In that sense, it doesn't always have to be top-down. Perhaps the truth lies in between—a mix of bottom-up and top-down. If there is a strong, engaged community, as in our case, and supportive people within the ministry, then projects like this can happen. And not just what we did, but also with other people and other communities.

KOOZ For a project like this to be truly successful, it always requires continuous engagement, which clearly demands a lot of energy. I wonder if we need to rethink the relationship between the commissioner and the architect — not a one-time handover, but as an ongoing sustained collaboration.

FH Ideally, at some point, the project would no longer need our engagement, and they could continue without us. There are examples worldwide, like in PREVI, Lima, Peru, with social housing from the 60s and 70s — Aldo van Eyck and a team of 25 other national and international architect teams designed a framework for housing. If you look at it today, the houses have changed: people painted them, added small attachments, altered windows. But the public spaces in between — the core structure — remain. The architects provided a bare-bones framework that evolved entirely differently. That's quite interesting. We hope people don't change our architecture too much, but it can also serve as a stepping stone, inspiring residents to integrate their

own ideas while weaving the framework into the kampung fabric.

PB Mrican is not a blueprint, it's a living, breathing example of what happens when architecture listens. When design is not delivered, but co-created. When communities are seen not as recipients, but as partners, leaders, and storytellers of their own future. This is not just about kampong improvement. It's about the possibility of a different kind of development, one rooted in craft, care, and community. And that story is still unfolding.

Community garden and mushroom farm run by the residents.



BIOGRAPHIES

SHAU is an architectural and urban design practice founded by INDAH SWASTIKA PURNAMA SARI is a seasoned public architects Daliana Survawinata (ID) and Florian Heinzelmann (DE) in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Bandung, Indonesia. Recognised for performance-driven environmental and societal design agendas with built works across Indonesia and Germany, SHAU has received numerous awards, including the ARCASIA Gold Award 2024, the Good Design Award Japan 2023, the ArchDaily Building of the Year 2021, the Architizer A+ Awards in 2025, 2020. and 2017, and the Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction Asia-Pacific 2017, among others, Besides Kampung Mrican Phase 1, SHAU's recent projects include Jakarta's upcoming Performing Arts Centre and the Vice Presidential Palace in the New Capital of Indonesia, both under construction, alongside other private and public developments. SHAU regularly participates in exhibitions and lectures worldwide and has been featured in publications including Monocle, El Pais and The Guardian.

FLORIAN HEINZELMANN (Germany, 1976) is a co-founder of SHAU and serves as an Associate Professor in Practice at the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore. He is a licensed architect (SBA) with a doctorate from Eindhoven University of Technology on Design method for adaptive daylight systems for buildings covered by large (span) roofs. Florian studied architecture in Germany and graduated in 2003, with his graduation project winning an award at the international Archiprix. He received scholarships to work in Japan and undertake postgraduate studies at the Berlage Institute. graduating in 2006. He worked at UNStudio in Amsterdam for three years and as a researcher at TU Delft, Florian has taught. researched, and spoken at conferences worldwide. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Venice Biennale and the London Design Museum. Florian was a judge for the 2023 World Architecture Festival.

DALIANA SURYAWINATA (Indonesia, 1980) is a co-founder of SHAU and a licensed architect (IAI). She studied architecture at Tarumanagara University in Jakarta and the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam (2005). Her early career included working for OMA (Rem Koolhaas), MVRDV, and West8 on high-profile projects across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Daliana has taught Master courses at the Berlage Institute, Rotterdam Academy of Architecture, and The Why Factory at TU Delft. She has lectured. exhibited internationally, and served as a critic at ETH Zurich. NUS, and UPenn among others. She was recognised as one of Globe Asia's 99 Inspiring Women (2019) and RIBA's 100 Women graduated with a Master of Architecture from TU Delft, The Architects in Practice (2024). Daliana was a jury member for Netherlands, in 1997 with a thesis focused on the restoration of EUMies Awards for Young Talents 2025 and Holcim Awards for rural slum areas in Kenya. Sustainable Construction 2023

official with nearly 20 years of professional experience in human settlement development, urban planning, and landscape architecture. She is dedicated to advancing sustainable urban environments through the promotion of green infrastructure and renewable energy initiatives. Currently serving as Head of the Division of Monitoring and Rehabilitation at the State-Owned Asset Management Bureau, and as a Commitment Officer at the Ministry of Public Works, she leads the formulation of policies and information systems for state asset management, as well as the coordination of asset recovery and regulation at the national level. Throughout her career, Indah has managed and delivered key urban development programmes across Indonesia, including strategic projects such as Kampung Mrican Phase 1 and Labuan Bajo. She has published and obtained certifications in green building and public-private partnerships. She holds a Master's degree in Urban Planning from Tarumanagara University and a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Trisakti

SAHID FAHRUDIN is the Hamlet Chief of Pringwulung in Condongcatur, Mrican, Yogyakarta, where he oversees neighbourhood development and leads community programs with local youth and residents. Deeply committed to sustainability and social resilience, he actively promotes green initiatives and inclusive participation in village activities. Between 2022 and 2025, he was an anchor person in focus group discussions organized by the Ministry of Public Works and the City of Yogyakarta administration. Together with his wife, Umi, he co-leads the community garden and urban farming program. enhancing nutrition and local food security.

PAULINE BOEDIANTO is recognised as both a slum restoration architect and a skilled conflict-resolution negotiator. Her career spans collaborations with governments and institutions dedicated to uplifting marginalized communities. She began with Delft Municipality, working on the rehabilitation of deteriorated urban mass housing and later partnered with the Government of Kenya to empower street children in Nairobi's urban slums. More recently, she contributed to the Government of Jakarta. facilitating conflict resolution at the Muara Angke Integrated Fishers Village, and served as an advisor to Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works & Social Housing on the eradication of extreme poverty in Medan Belawan Bahari, North Sumatera. Pauline

VinziRast am Land

Project Details

Location: Europe, Austria

Applicant: gaupenraub+/-

Commissioned by: Vinzenzgemeinschaft St. Stephan

Gross area in m²: 4300.0



gaupenraub+/- is recognised with the Ammodo Award for social architecture for its unwavering commitment to addressing homelessness-not merely as a social challenge, but as a moral imperative-through an innovative approach that repurposes existing architecture and urban structures to provide housing for vulnerable communities. By developing programs that offer both immediate shelter and long-term pathways to secure housing, the organisation seeks to restore stability and dignity to those living without a home while actively integrating them into the social fabric of the neighbourhood. Their approach prioritises community inclusion. offering not only safe and supportive spaces but also access to resources that empower residents to regain independence. Through this dual focus on shelter and empowerment, gaupenraub+/- exemplifies a profound dedication to transforming lives and fostering hope for society's most vulnerable members.

The award specifically honors the VinziRast am Land project. Situated on the site of the former Hotel Hanner, the transformed building now serves as a housing and employment initiative run by the Vinzenzgemeinschaft St. Stephan. Covering 2.7 hectares, the project provides 77 beds within 3,500 m² of usable space, including communal areas, small residential units. workshops, and seminar rooms. Outdoors, a 700 m² glasshouse, a 100 m² stable with 50 m² aviaries for poultry, and a permaculture garden allow formerly homeless individuals to engage directly with the soil. This process is supported by both full-time and voluntary staff.

By converting a former hotel into a space of inclusion, the project redefines architecture's role in social engagement. Through radical gutting, circular reuse of dismantled materials, and adaptive transformation of existing structures, the design emerges not from a preconceived form, but from process-auided by the principle of "form follows resource" and shaped by available materials, collaborative effort, and climate-conscious choices. Building, living, and working are interwoven in a processoriented approach rooted in participation, care, and reuse. Architecture here becomes not a finished object, but an ongoing, collaborative act.



VinziRast Notschlafstelle

Location: Vienna, Austria Year: 2004

A low-threshold emergency sleeping place for homeless persons who for various reasons cannot be accommodated in conventional facilities. Provides nightly beds, simple dinner, washing facilities, and a safe stay without resocialisation demands.



VinziRast-Wohngemeinschaft: Wilhelms WG

Location: Vienna, Austria Year: 201

An adaptive reuse project converting a former commercial unit in Vienna's 12th district into a shared-living community (WG) for formerly alcohol-dependent homeless persons, supported by the Vinzenzgemeinschaft St. Stephan.



VinziRast-mittendrin

Location: Vienna, Austria Year: 2013

A pilot inclusive-housing project where students and formerly homeless persons live together in small shared flats. The building includes communal kitchens, workshops, a restaurant, roof terrace, etc.



VinziRastHOME

Location: Vienna, Austria Year: 2016

A co-living / refugee housing project.



VinziDorf Vienna

Location: Vienna, Austria Ye

A low-threshold village-style housing project for long-term homeless men (especially those who cannot accept conventional facilities). Located in a former orchard, with 16 wood-modules and a refurbished former estate building providing additional 8 homes.



VinziRast am Land

Location: Mayerling, Austria Year: 2023

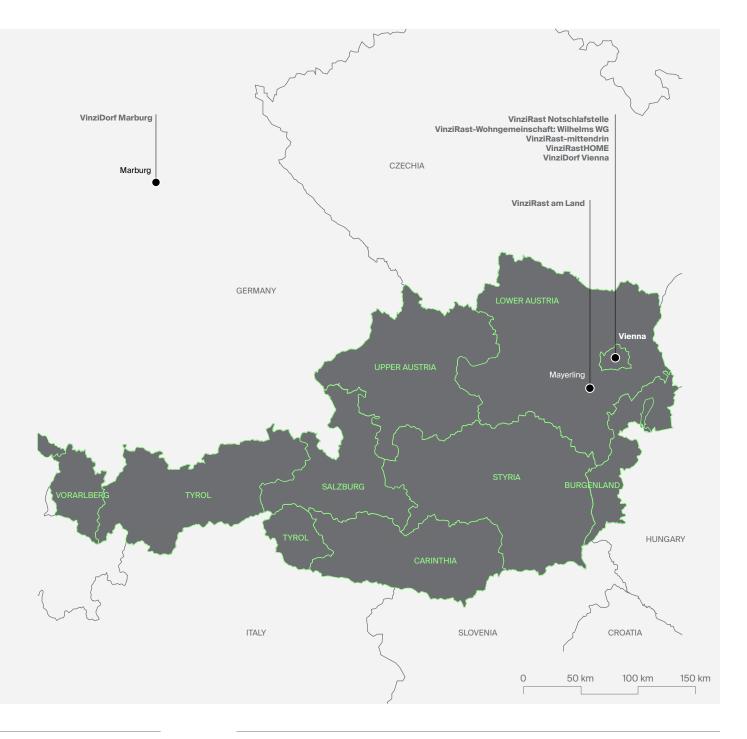
A transformation of a former luxury hotel into an inclusive living & employment community for formerly homeless people; central is an agricultural / market garden / social enterprise component.



VinziDorf Marburg

Location: Marburg, Germany Year: In planning

A new "VinziDorf" village planned for around 15 housing modules plus a community building for homeless people, in collaboration with the local housing company (GeWoBau Marburg) and strong volunteer involvement.



They Have Scratches. I Have Scratches. VinziRast on reuse, hybrid living, and community-led design

with gaupenraub+/- (Alexander Hagner and Ulrike Schartner), Doris Kebler, Andrea Kornfell and Robert Korbei

VinziRast explores how built environments create belonging for people who have never had a home. Anchored in adaptive reuse, hybrid living, and community-led construction, the projects examine relations between space, care, and inclusion. Winner of the Ammodo Architecture Award for social architecture, VinziRast is more than buildings—it is a laboratory for rethinking how we inhabit, share, and transform space.

Led by Vienna practice gaupenraub+/-, whose commitment to architecture as a social and ecological endeavour frames each project as a human rights question, the initiative partners with the VinziRast Foundation — committed to independence and the belief that there is no single solution to homelessness. Together they test spatial and social models — from village-like clusters to hybrid houses where students and formerly homeless cohabit — not as fixed answers, but as evolving prototypes shaped by context and community.

Participation is central: residents, volunteers, and neighbours shape the place through flea markets, workshops, and construction. Salvaged materials, donations, and reused buildings reduce environmental impact while bearing marks of time — scratches that echo the histories of their inhabitants. This conversation unpacks how architecture, entangled with care and community, moves beyond shelter to become a framework for dignity, integration, and possibility.

KOOZ I'd like to start from the beginning and ask how the VinziRast project began.

DORIS KERBLER The project started when Cecily Corti met Pfarrer Wolfgang Pucher, a priest who had built a village for homeless people — the VinziDorf in Graz. In Vienna, however, it was nearly impossible to find land for something similar. Then Cecily received a large private donation, which allowed her to buy an apartment building in the 12th district of Vienna. The basement there was available.

ALEXANDER HAGNER / gaupenraub+/- That's when we started the overnight shelter.

KOOZ So you started as an architecture office, working pro bono. Why focus on the homeless rather than helping other groups in society?

AH Cecily had been working with a women's house in Paris, so she already had experience with these kinds of initiatives. For me, I came across the project in a newspaper article and thought: we are architects, we do roofs, and there are people without roofs. I saw the connection immediately.

DK From the very beginning, we knew we wanted to rely only on volunteers and private donations because this gives us a certain freedom — the freedom to set up our own framework, not to follow the municipality's rules. In our view, those rules create a structure where it's easy to fall through the cracks. On this independent path, the economic support of Hans Peter Haselsteiner has been key.

KOOZ What inspired you to support the VinziRast project and their commitment to providing alternative housing models for the homeless?

HANS PETER HASELSTEINER In my view, those who are fortunate in life carry a moral responsibility to support those who are less fortunate. This perspective naturally extends to the homeless. The project VinziRast stands as a remarkable example of this principle in action, made possible by the dedication of hundreds of volunteers. The founder, Cecily Corti, along with Veronika Kerres and their committed team, truly deserve all the support we can offer for their tireless efforts.

ROBERT KORBEI It's surprising how much these projects cost, and how much cheaper it would be if society simply took care of marginalised people. But we live in a world where this isn't possible. In state-funded projects there are so many barriers — benchmarks, goals, timeframes — and if you don't meet them, you fall out. That's how society works today: benchmarks. But that doesn't reflect the reality of how people actually function as human beings.

ANDREA KORNFELL I'm a social worker and have been involved in these kinds of projects for a long time. There's so much bureaucracy, so many rules. It's about documentation, about responsibilities — who is responsible, who isn't, who gives money, how much and for what. But in all this, the people are no longer at the center.

DK From the beginning, we wanted to do things differently. We wanted to be a space where everybody could come — even with their dogs, with their partners, even share a bed. Moderate alcohol consumption was allowed. It was really important to accept people, to avoid judgment about their faith, and not to have expectations. Everyone who came to us is a guest, and that makes a psychological difference. We started with the shelter, the VinziRast-Notschlafstelle, which opened in 2004. Soon after, wanting to offer more permanent solutions to some of our guests, we built the VinziRast-CortiHaus in 2008, which houses around 30 people in 16 residential units.

ULRIKE SCHARTNER / gaupenraub+/- Having a house, an address, is fundamental to being seen in society. In Austria, you are legally required to register an address — it's essential for accessing services like getting a social security number and other basic needs. Without registration, you can't properly connect to the Austrian system, and that means you can't fully participate in society.

AH For a homeless person, the question is: what can I accept? The one who refuses a traditional shelter offer — whether Housing First or the Caritas model —is asking exactly that. If we are individuals, the homeless are even more so. And if your housing offer doesn't reflect that, many people will be left out. That's when we started thinking about VinziRast-Mittendrin.

DK The Mittendrin project started when a group of students came to us about an abandoned house they had found. They wanted to activate it for a group of homeless people who had supported them during a university strike. At first, they thought about occupying the building. But then one student, who knew about Haselsteiner and his involvement with the association, proposed the idea of a co-living house for students and homeless people. He agreed to fund it.

KOOZ The house is in the ninth district, which is quite a wealthy neighbourhood. How did the community respond? And what steps were needed to turn this idea into reality?

AH It was the first time we tried the tactic of a flea market as a way to engage with the neighbourhood and build consensus. The point wasn't economic but to have one-on-one conversations with neighbours and connect on a human level. We handed out pamphlets two weeks before, and people came with a lot of interest. We learned it was important to communicate with the neighbourhood in a private setting, and that the mix of functions really helped – it took away their sense of danger. Another big advantage was that the district mayor at the time was supportive, which is unfortunately not so common. For example, the VinziDorf project faced strong opposition from both the mayor and the community, not so much because of the homeless, but because of the fear that such projects would lower property values. That project was in a middle-class neighbourhood where people had invested their savings in homes through mortgages, and that was a big factor.

US This mix between students and homeless was key.

AH Because the community was involved, we were even allowed to add two floors to the building, one of them despite the building regulations. With VinziRast-Mittendrin, we learned to think of students much more as partners in these housing initiatives. Since then, I think every student home that isn't mixed is a waste for society.

DK To make the project successful, it was important to understand how it could be both socially and economically sustainable. You have to work on social integration — you can't just say everything is free. That's why it was important not to limit the building to apartments but also to include other functions, like the restaurant and workshops on the ground floor, to create exchange with the wider community. We also decided that students and homeless residents would pay the same rent. Everyone pays a very low fee, now around 450 euros — the same you'd pay for a student room in a cohousing initiative.

KOOZ Could you expand on this idea of integration? And how is it tied to the economic factor of paying for one's apartment?

DK In all of our projects, guests are supported by social workers. We've found that keeping busy with activities reduces the impulse to drink, and that there's real empowerment in completing a task and being paid for it. At Mittendrin specifically, guests can work in the building — in the restaurant, cleaning, taking care of the plants. This is very important for integration.

AH It's a step toward building a network. I remember one of the first residents of Mittendrin, who was also working there. Later, a neighbour hired him to look after their plants and garden during a sabbatical. He would never have been offered that job if he had been sitting on the street. That kind of connection is essential, and it's really at the core of the project — the cohabitation of homeless people and students.

KOOZ So how do the students and homeless live together? Is it in the same apartment or



Resident cultivating greens at the Vinzi Rast am Land greenhouse. Products are then sold at the farm shop and also used at other VinziRast projects.

on the same floor?

AH At first, we thought about dedicating one floor to students and another to homeless people, but we quickly realised that wouldn't work. To build a real community, they had to live together. So in these apartments, students and homeless people of different genders and ages share the space of an apartment with either two or three single rooms. The key is making sure there isn't a majority of one group — otherwise, the other group loses interest. Usually, it's one homeless person and one student per apartment, plus a third person.

DK Coming back to integration, the workshops on the ground floor were designed to give refugees seeking asylum something meaningful to do while waiting for their documents. In these spaces, we supported them with German lessons and taught practical skills, like how to repair a bicycle.

KOOZ Every project builds on the experiences and lessons of the previous one. How were these learnings translated into the VinziRast Am Land project, and how was it conceived as a natural follow-up to the earlier pilot projects?

RK The two main drivers behind VinziRast Am Land were, first, that we didn't want to start another project in Vienna. We understood that many homeless people end up there not by choice but because they can't survive on the streets in the countryside. And second, we wanted to focus on work as the main path to integration.

AH The project began during the pandemic, and from the very start we involved volunteers from the VinziRast community in building the chicken coop and the greenhouse. Unlike with Mittendrin, where once the construction company began the volunteers couldn't really participate, at Am Land they were able to work alongside professional builders. That was very empowering for them.

KOOZ The whole project is essentially a 180-degree turn – from a luxury Relais Chateaux

hotel to a house for the homeless. Could you tell us more about the project?

AH Our original idea when looking for a countryside space was to find a smaller, barn-like structure and retrofit it. We found such a place, but then, as it too commonly happens, that project fell through. That's when Haselsteiner, who had bought the bankrupt hotel, approached us and was willing to give it to us for the project.

KOOZ It's quite a spacious building. What is the hybrid function here and how does it support the success of the project?

AH Today the building can host 15 permanent guests and 45 hotel guests. So it was important to work with a balanced hybrid solution in terms of functions, residents, and people who come and go. Homeless people often struggle to find their place in a bigger group. That's why for us it's key to work with projects that can accommodate a maximum of twenty-five permanent guests – the size of a classroom. We frequently hear, "Oh, it's only for twenty-five people," and we say yes – and that's important. It's not debatable, and it's not because we are a small office. It's about designing inclusivity, and you don't get that with a project of two hundred-plus people. It's about having a classroom of residents and then inviting people in who can come for a cup of coffee or for a longer stay. Hotel guests vary from pilgrims on the pilgrimage route that passes nearby to companies coming for team meetings and to student groups on weekly countryside getaways.

At the beginning we tried to maximise the number and types of opportunities — the bakery, the greenhouse, the shop, the chicken shed, the hotel, the catering — but we failed: it was too much work for this structure. You need to start slowly and see who will come, activating the project step by step. Right now the project does not yet stand on its own economically, but that is the aim, and we know we will get there.

KOOZ Although the buildings vary typologically, all of the projects start from the adaptive reuse of existing structures. Why is that?

AH With an existing building you have the chance to involve people from the very beginning — cleaning the place, organising a flea market. In our architecture bubble we talk so much about participation, but most of the time it's just charts, PDFs and post-its. That's not it. You need to speak eye to eye, far away from plans and charts ... or even better, you need to start doing something together.

US It's also easier economically, because these buildings aren't under the pressure of a developer — they're somehow off the market. We could never build something from scratch; we couldn't afford the land. With an existing building, you have a starting point that everyone can relate to and help reshape. It also connects to the fact that the people who come here carry heavy baggage, and these buildings carry deep histories. They have scratches. I have scratches.

AH Look at new buildings today – how do they look, how do they feel? They're disconnected from us. They're synthetic. How can one identify with that?

KOOZ Keeping with this idea of scratches, the projects are also retrofitted through donations

from material suppliers - but also through your own scavenger hunts around Vienna...

AH Working on these projects is always about salvaging, from individual materials to entire structures. At VinziDorf, for example, we used windows from a window seller who was changing his showroom — he had sixteen windows he had to let go of, which were perfect for the sixteen houses we were building. We also used facade cladding from a manufacturer changing colours, bricks from a brick maker, or a kitchen salvaged from a hotel that was closing down.

Timelapse showing the deconstruction of an old barn and its reconstruction as a chicken coop, carried out together with students from HTL Mödling.

At VinziRast Am Land, we managed to salvage entire structures, like the chicken coop and the greenhouses. It requires adaptability and constantly revisiting the project. It's also very time-consuming and laborious, because





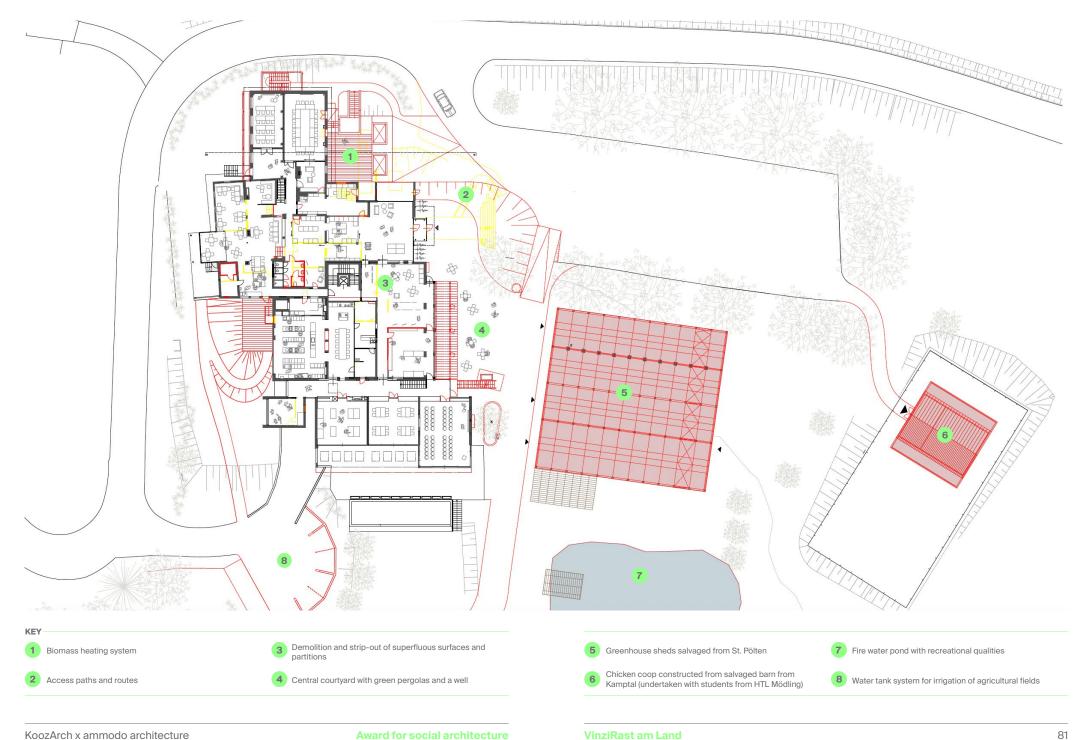


most of these projects turn into projects within projects. And it's especially challenging when you need to present the project to the municipality, because the plans are continuously changing.

KOOZ Mittendrin was a former residential building, here it was a luxury hotel, and Dorf is a village. How do you then work with the architecture to ensure that someone who hasn't had a home or roof for a long time can call these places home?

AH How do we achieve this feeling of home through design? The underlying principle is designing with different levels of permeability and privacy. Each inhabitant has their own space to retreat to, and communal spaces where they can gather and socialise — both with other residents and with exterior guests. These communal spaces are often the living and dining areas.

Orientation is also key — people need to be able to navigate the spaces easily and leave when they need to let off steam. In the village, we used colour to help with orientation and to personalise individual houses, so each house



has its own colour. At Am Land, which was previously a luxury hotel, it was important to create more generous spaces — removing partitions and all the fake finishes. The space had to feel real.

Breakfast room at VinziRast am Land, where guests and visitors come together to enjoy breakfast or just a cup of coffee.

There's a difference between designing in the urban and the rural: in Vienna, if you have a problem with the group, you can leave. At Am Land, you can't. If you leave the building, you're alone — or you're with your problem. So we work with gradients of privacy, ranging from being completely alone in your room to being with 200 people. For all projects, there is still a lot of work to be done.

KOOZ It's interesting because as architects you are continuously engaged well beyond the "completion" of the project. Could you expand on this ongoing relationship and its importance?

AH Every project starts and thrives based on the learnings from previous projects, and every project is deeply rooted in relationships. That's why both Ulrike and I are either members of, or on the board of, the association – so we can continue to fuel the project with our experience and knowledge.

AK Living here, working here, is like a mirror of life — nothing is ever finished. We continue building relationships, both with our "permanent" guests and with all the people who pass through. There's an underlying structure — we meet every day at 9 a.m. to set the tasks for the day — but after that, it's all very free. People generally come together to eat, then go off to do their tasks and live their day.



"VinziRast am Land' wins the AAA for Social Architecture for its innovative approach to housing vulnerable groups in society, such as the homeless, while reusing existing architecture and urban structures. The project addresses the urgent problem of affordable housing in a unique, honest, and humble way, and shows the implicit work that needs to be done by architects when no commercial business case is involved. The subtle way in which gaupenraub+/- transforms existing architecture to build a community facilitating both housing and opportunities for reintegration and inclusion—is an example of the new and necessary orientation in the profession of architecture. The oeuvre of gaupenraub+/- has, for over 20 years, addressed the housing crisis in the European context in a socially grounded and careful manner. By combining reuse, social participation, and local knowledge, their architecture shows how to address complex ecological and societal challenges—quietly but powerfully."

- Ammodo Advisory Board

KOOZ What would you say are the defining factors that determine whether a project fails or succeeds?

AH At the core, it's an economic question. The three main factors for a project to succeed are: an affordable cost of land, low construction costs, and establishing a business model that can keep the project running — standing on its own two feet. Political support is also key. But to move society forward, we need to experiment. Society is changing so rapidly, and we need to try hybrid approaches. The problem is that politicians are focused on success — experiments scare them, and the failure of public money is terrifying.

KOOZ Beyond the economic aspect, what kind of regulations enable or hinder the realisation of such projects, and what policy changes — at city or national level — would be needed to support them?

US Our work often involves changing or challenging existing building regulations. For example, in VinziDorf Wien, the regulations prescribed the construction of an individual building block, not the single houses that worked in Graz. We asked ourselves, what defines a house? A continuous pavement, a roofing structure, and a connecting wall. We took these elements and, within that framework, constructed a village of smaller, individual detached houses, each measuring six and a half square metres.

The village is so important because the people we serve — chronically homeless, often twenty years on the street — are not used to social contact, sharing, or living with others. For them, going into a sleeping dormitory with thirty other people is out of the question. That was a big realisation at the beginning: yes, Vienna offers these shelters, but there are people who are physiologically incapable of sleeping and feeling safe there. And why should they then die on the streets? What are we doing for those people?

AH There are no incentives supporting these kinds of projects — rather, a lot of legislation hinders them. That's what we're fighting against. We need a grey zone between formal and informal constructions. Informal constructions are forbidden in Austria, yet when you try to provide a home for these people, you enter a tunnel of regulations for "regular" buildings — which are expensive and often use superfluous synthetic materials. There are also no incentives for adaptive reuse, which makes no sense, because we take on buildings that would otherwise be environmental burdens. Most building regulations are designed for new constructions, which makes working with existing buildings much harder and discouraging.

US And what's crazy is that if we wanted to add insulation, solar panels, or heat pumps, we could be subsidised by the state — but implementing these things is so far beyond our budget and the scope of a social project. We need to start changing regulations at both the city and regional levels. It's quite unbelievable — such a small country, yet nine different building regulations, four chambers of architects, and everyone operates differently.

KOOZ What systemic changes do you think are needed to more effectively reduce homelessness?

HPH I believe a public-private partnership model, where up to 50% of the total cost is funded by the public sector and the remainder—including organisation and operations—is managed by the private sector, could prove to be a highly promising approach.

KOOZ Despite the hardships, policy and collaborations between sectors seem to be key for scaling out rather than scaling up – yet that requires a critical mass of voices to support such initiatives. How are you working to inspire others with your vision? What role can younger generations play?

AH We've been lobbying for a long time. Lobbying is normally highly paid, but that's not the case in architecture, especially when advocating for marginalised groups. That's why we work a lot with students. The academic side is key — we always try to involve students in our projects.

At VinziDorf, for example, we worked with students from a nearby school who helped prefabricate the walls of the houses off-site, which were then assembled on-site by the contractor. These exchanges are crucial — both for learning how to build and for connecting with people to reduce stigma.

For the IMPULSHOUSE project, where we also worked with students from my professorship in Carinthia, we were recognised with a Human Rights Award. That was powerful, showing the students that they aren't just designing structures — they are empowering people. That's why we're often hesitant to accept prefabricated container houses. They represent a sleek, finished aesthetic that we don't think is welcoming, and they deny a crucial pedagogical tool for life.

The kitchen at VinziRast am Land: once serving a Michelin-star restaurant, now the place where their own produce is processed and prepared together.

US Many students and universities reach out to us with inquiries and interview requests, and it's impossible to dedicate time to all of them. We're now considering developing a lecture series and an open-access platform



for students, universities, and other associations — a place where they can download materials and learn from our experience. Hopefully, this will free up our time for key exchanges while ensuring our knowledge is still shared and can be built upon by younger generations.

AH For us, it's important to understand how far we can reach. That's why we focus on projects in our neighbourhood. We can talk about how the world could be better, but what we really need is to change what we can in our lifetime. We have a few more years, and then we need to rely on the next generations. That's why we both enjoy teaching.

One of two workshop spaces at VinziRast am Land: a place to repair, reuse, and upcycle.



BIOGRAPHIES

gaupenraub+/- is an architecture and design office based in Vienna, founded in 1999 by Ulrike Schartner and Alexander Hagner. Rooted in a view of architecture as relational and inclusive, the studio emphasizes the human connection to the built environment-understood broadly to include site context, neighboring structures, ecosystems, and the lives of people, animals, and plants. Their work spans a wide spectrum: renovation and adaptive reuse, new housing, urban design, furniture and product design, and social-architecture interventions. One of their signature approaches is "form follows resource"-a design philosophy that advocates leveraging existing materials, salvaging building elements, and working creatively within constraints. Notable projects include VinziRastmittendrin, a mixed-use building combining housing for formerly homeless persons and students: the VinziDorf Wien, a supportive housing project: public and social infrastructures in low-resource contexts; as well as exhibitions and furniture projects. Over the years, gaupenraub+/- has earned recognition for their socially engaged and resource-sensitive architecture, contributing to discourse around affordable housing, inclusion, reuse, and the role of architecture in social justice.

ALEXANDER HAGNER is an architect and co-founder of gaupenraub+/-. He began his career with a carpentry apprenticeship before studying architecture at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, spending three years in Johannes Spalt's master class and five with Wolf D. Prix, graduating with distinction and receiving a Federal Ministry award. After professional experience in Germany and Switzerland, he returned to Vienna in 1997 and, in 1999, co-founded gaupenraub+/- with Ulrike Schartner. Since 2000, Hagner has taught at TU Wien, including a stint as university assistant in 2008–09, and has served as a guest critic at Linz, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, TU Graz, and NDU St. Pölten. In autumn 2016, he was appointed Professor of Social Building at the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences.

ULRIKE SCHARTNER is an architect and co-founder of gaupenraub+/-, working between Vienna and Stockholm. She trained at HTL Mödling (College for Interior Construction and Furniture Design) and studied architecture at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, including a semester at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Following her work with Atelier Johannes Spalt, she passed the Austrian charter exam in 1999 and co-founded gaupenraub+/- in Vienna with Alexander Hagner. In Sweden, she co-founded schartner & schartner HB (2002–2005) and, in 2005, omniplan AB. She has taught at TU Wien, KTH, TU Graz, and NDU St. Pölten, and since 2022, has served on the regional board for Affordable Housing of Austria's Chamber of Architects and Chartered Engineering Consultants (ZT).

VINZENZGEMEINSCHAFT ST. STEPHAN - VINZIRAST is a Vienna-based non-profit supporting people experiencing homelessness, marginalization, and social exclusion. Rooted in the Vincentian tradition, VinziRast provides shelter, housing, and community programs that foster dignity, inclusion, and self-determination. Its initiatives range from a year-round night shelter and mixed living communities to support for asylum seekers and social-agricultural projects. VinziRast's mission is to offer practical help while building community and empowering those in need.

VINZENZGEMEINSCHAFT EGGENBERG - VINZIDORF is a Graz-based non-profit operating the VinziDorf in Vienna and Graz

DORIS KERBLER is a trained food and biotechnologist who currently works as a project developer. In 1993, she operated a small hydroelectric power plant in Upper Austria and transformed an old factory into a residential building with 31 apartments, adhering to high ecological standards. As a member of the VinziRast board, she has contributed to several renovation projects. Representing the building owners, she received the Austrian Building Owners' Award in 2015 for the VinziRast project "Mittendrin" on Währinger Straße in Vienna.

ANDREA KORNFELL is a qualified social pedagogue specializing in life skills and independence training. She has previously worked in a residential home for children and adolescents affected by environmental damage, as well as in an assisted living community for people with physical and intellectual disabilities. As deputy manager of VinziRast am Land, she combines handson experience in working directly with residents as well as planning and coordinating community events on the grounds of VinziRast am Land.

ROBERT KORBEI is the managing director of the Verein Vinzenzgemeinschaft St. Stephan, the parent association of which VinziRast am Land is a part of. Robert is an economist with a master's degree in natural sciences, and has lectured at the University of Vienna and served on the board of directors of a major Viennese political party. Since 2016, he has led VinziRast as managing director, serving as the central point of contact for staff, volunteers, residents, and external partners across the organization.

HANS PETER HASELSTEINER began his career as an auditor and tax consultant before joining ILBAU AG, launching a distinguished path in construction and infrastructure. He served as a Member of the Austrian National Council for the Liberal Forum and as Chairman of the Management Board of BAUHOLDING STRABAG AG (1998–2013), leading its transformation into STRABAG SE. Since 2013, and again from February 2025, Dr. Haselsteiner has been Chief Representative of STRABAG SE. He is also active in philanthropy and education through CONCORDIA Social Projects, the VinziRast Charitable Private Foundation, the Tyrolean Festival Erl Foundation, and the Association for the Promotion of Carinthia University of Applied Sciences.



SECTION 04 I APPENDIX

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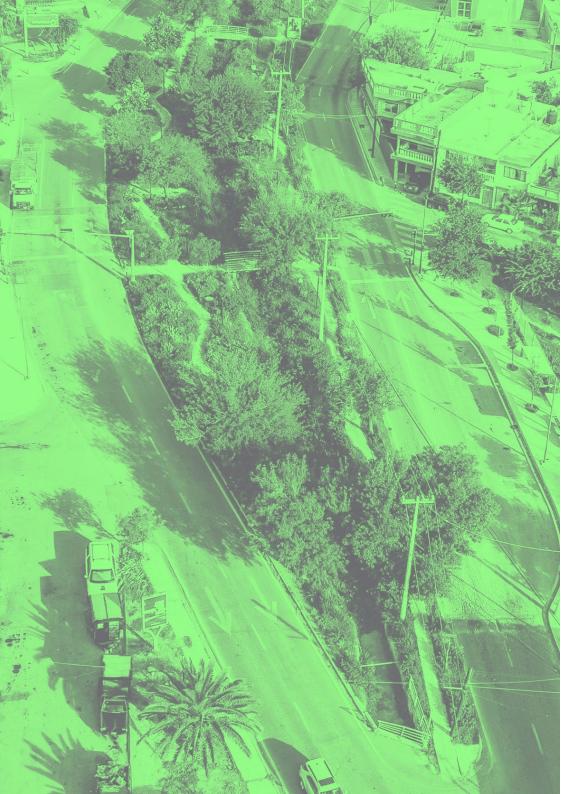


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