

DIE ERDE – EINE GUTE WOHNUNG
An architectural symphony in four parts

Ewan Forster & Christopher Heighes/HAU

7th 8th 9th September 2007

7.30pm

Hufeisensiedlung Britz

U7 Parchimer Allee

Fritz Reuter Allee

Berlin Neukoelln

Tickets €4

Dear Sir or Madam,

based on architect **Bruno Taut's** extraordinary architectural stage drama "**Der Weltbaumeister**" which was written in 1919 but never realised in his lifetime, **DIE ERDE – EINE GUTE WOHNUNG** is a major international collaboration between London based site-specific artists **Ewan Forster & Christopher Heighes** and film makers **Tapio Snellman** and **Christian Grou** - a re-working of Taut's architectural fantasy using the vocabulary of contemporary Berlin.

The site for this outdoor film and performance event is Taut's masterwork **The Hufeisensiedlung in Berlin Neukoelln**. Nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it was designed as an urban amphitheatre of 96 apartments; its azure balconies facing inwards as if expectant of an imminent drama.

Although Bruno Taut was Weimar Berlin's most productive architect, he is still seen by many as the most unfairly neglected of modern architects. His visionary world of writing, painting and building sets him apart from the luminaries of the Modernist Movement. His experiments with form and colour on the Hufeisensiedlung and elsewhere in the city remain as important civic monuments to utopian structural design.

The Hufeisensiedlung was the first trade union and co-operative sponsored low cost housing scheme of Weimar Berlin. The estate was Taut's first opportunity to experiment with mechanised building techniques and to compose with colour on a scale unimaginable in the rest of the city. Colour for Taut was no mere decoration it was a construction material in its own right. On the Hufeisensiedlung the colour schemes he devised were intended to have powerful emotional effect on residents and visitors alike.

As a contemporary journalist put it when the estate was completed, *'although these houses alone do not bring happiness, they do invite one to be happy'*.

At a time when Berlin struggles to establish a new ethics of architecture as it rapidly constructs the new monuments befitting its status as a leading European capital, it is perhaps pertinent to highlight the fact that dotted throughout the city, and now emerging in newly restored colours, the estates of **Bruno Taut** and **Martin Wagner** offer a clarity and sincerity of design from which all cities can learn.

Although working in the field of architecture Taut always retained a fascination with experiments in theatre. His expressionist architectural drama "Der Weltbaumeister", offers a glimpse of the extraordinary thought processes that underlie his building projects.

Described by Taut as an architectural symphony its graphic complexity belies a simple architectural philosophy – namely that every atom of the world contains within it an irrepressible tendency towards creation and self-adornment. It is out of this philosophy, that the striking forms of the Hufeisensiedlung, its proportions, colours, volumes and details emerged between 1925 and 1930.

Theatre makers Ewan Forster & Christopher Heighes have developed a reputation over the last fifteen years for animating significant architectural sites in the UK by identifying within them the theatricality of architectural features - the dynamic of two doors and one path, the atmospherics of a cobalt blue balcony, the playful nature of a strip of attic windows, a street of cherry trees contrasted with a street of birch. DIE ERDE – EINE GUTE WOHNUNG which includes a contemporary version of “Der Weltbaumeister” by leading digital animators Tapio Snellman and Christian Grou, is an attempt to demonstrate what Taut believed, that through a imaginative synthesis of human, aesthetic, functional and constructive elements the lives of ordinary people could be transformed.

We would be very obliged if you were interested in this project. If you need further information please do not hesitate to ask for under 0049 (0)30-259004 38 (Kirsten Hehmeyer) or 0049 (0)30-259004 54 (Nino Medas).

Best wishes,

Nino Medas

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