

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

Building Texture

HERZOG & DE MEURON, GWATHMEY,
RICHÄRD + BAUER, ENDO





ended, allowing the duo to pursue multiple design disciplines. Moreover, she says, "We like to build dreamlike worlds. It's about exaggeration: too much, too beautiful, too ugly, too many."

Frankander makes the point that projects are not just exercises in surface decoration but interior landscapes in which hyperbole generates form. For the second Weekday store, in Malmö, Sweden, Electric Dreams imagined planting an abstract yet Brobdingnagian tree within a two-story store. Giant roots, sporting a compressed honeycomb geometry, swerve through the downstairs space, and chrome-plated hangers are the branches that suspend from the upstairs

ceiling. Equally important, Frankander likens the project to an urban plan writ small, "with different destination points and nodes and centers."

The two Monki concepts also support Frankander's claim that excess and architecture are not mutually exclusive, and show how Electric Dreams' practice seamlessly fuses spatial and industrial design. For the first Monki, Electric Dreams created component volumes that, like otherworldly Legos, could be configured differently. A vision of a postapocalyptic city yielded Monki 2: Giant molecular structures are sliced open to reveal lighting, and a vegetated shoe display suggests Mother Nature's reclaiming a chemical spill. "For a space to have value, it's better that it provokes some kind of emotion," says Frankander. "Even hate is better than indifference." *David Sokol*



Weekday, Malmö, Sweden, 2006

This store's layout concept was an abstract tree, with its root system at the entrance level (left), and its branches as the chrome-plated giant clothes hangers on the upper level (far left).

For additional photos and projects by Electric Dreams, go to architecturalrecord.com/archrecord2/.

Work

B+U: Envisioning a city of sound



Talk about frozen music. Herwig Baumgartner and Scott Uriu, partners in the nine-year-old, Los Angeles-based architecture firm B+U, have found a way to turn sound into buildings. The two architects, along with a software engineer from MIT, created Soundplot—software

developed to analyze and transform sound waves into three dimensions.

Baumgartner and Uriu met while working for Gehry Partners. Inspired by their own separate backgrounds in electronic music, Baumgartner and Uriu decided to take their fascination with sound to the next level—they see the ephemeral qualities of sound translated to built structures as a unique way to connect people to their environments. The architects' first foray into actualizing their idea is Sound City, an urban development study for the 12 city blocks that make up Broadway Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles. B+U's concept is to create a variety of public spaces and mixed-use developments determined not only by zoning regulations, sight lines, and the city grid, but also shaped by on-site recordings. The architects recorded ambient sound along a series of longitudinal and cross sections through the site. They then mapped the sound waves through Soundplot, transforming the waves into a 3D wireframe that can then be developed into a structure.

While the sound waves inform the shape of the building, Baumgartner and Uriu say the structure obviously has to work within the usual architectural constraints of any building—budget, program, site, materials, and so on. "But sound is a tool to begin the design process," says Baumgartner. "It's a point of departure."



For Sound City (above left and top right), and the announcement system for the Museums Quarter in Vienna (above right), Uriu and Baumgartner recorded sound and transformed it into three dimensions with proprietary software they created called Soundplot.



According to Baumgartner and Uriu, translated sound can act as a unique, attention-getting design tool in many public venues, as evidenced by B+U's announcement system for the Museums Quarter in Vienna. The unbuilt structure

is an information system designed to draw street traffic to the quarter. B+U recorded and analyzed the phonetics of the words "museums quarter" and translated the analysis to 3D. The 3D billboard draws passersby in with its unusual form and LED graphics—a physical and subliminal lure.

While the architects admit that without explanation, buildings translated from sound come across as simply curiously shaped structures, they also think there's something wonderful about a new skyline shaped by street noise and other urban sounds. "It was Plato who said that the visible

is just a shadow of the invisible," says Uriu. Baumgartner concurs. "This research has changed how we look at the city," he says. "We'd hope it would do that for others, or at least sharpen their awareness of acoustical space." *Ingrid Spencer*

For a visual exploration of B+U's process of going from sound to structure, go to architecturalrecord.com/archrecord2/.