



Opus 44

Alfredo Arribas, SEAT Pavilion, Wolfsburg

With an introduction by Ralf Lange und photographs by Frank Hülsbömer and Hisao Suzuki. 60 pp. with ca. 65 ill., 280 x 300 mm, hard-cover, English/Spanish
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In 2000 the Autostadt, a show park for the Volkswagen group and its subsidiaries from Seat via Audi to Bentley and Lamborghini, opened in Wolfsburg. Alfredo Arribas designed the Seat Pavilion, and has brought off the brilliant trick of making an essentially reticent building into the focal point of the Autostadt. The structure is like a snail shell, forbidding and closed with the exception of a band of windows that seems to rise directly out of the surface of the lake on the Autostadt site. The irregular curve of the ground plan is reminiscent of a leaf or other forms borrowed from nature. Access is via two elegant ramps floating over the water and the site and thrusting straight into the centre of the pavilion: a homage to the old master, Le Corbusier. And then inside we are confronted with a surprise-packed exhibition landscape: a dazzling synthesis of acoustic and visual impressions that cast their spell over visitors as they walk round.

Alfredo Arribas was a provocative newcomer on the architectural scene in Barcelona in the late eighties and is now an international success. He was probably predestined for this job like no other architect. He showed a highly personal flair for presenting spaces and goods from the outset, attracting early attention with his designs for discotheques and bars like the enormous Louie Vega (1998) discotheque, or the Torres de Avila (1990). The expressive tower for the Marugame Hirai Museum (1993) is also part of this creative phase, where forms did not necessarily have to be justified by functional logic. But Arribas's architecture changed into its business suit for the very next commissions. For example, even bankers in their pin-stripe suits feel perfectly at home in the cafeteria he designed for Norman Foster's Commerzbank headquarters in Frankfurt. Arribas is working on two large projects at present: a family entertainment centre in Bari and the Cité des Musiques Vivantes in Montluçon.

Ralf Lange, an art historian specializing in architecture, is already represented in Edition Axel Menges by his *Architekturführer Hamburg*. After a long stay in New York Frank Hülsbömer has worked in Berlin as a photographer since 1995. Hisao Suzuki lives in Barcelona and is one of the most sought-after architectural photographers in Spain. One of his projects was the photographs for the Opus volume on the Palau de la Música in Barcelona von Lluís Domènech i Montaner.

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