



Mehr! Theater am Grossmarkt, Hamburg Opened March 7, 2015

Berlin, March 27, 2015. **Situated inside Hamburg's historic wholesale market, the Mehr! Theater am Grossmarkt offers new, diverse possibilities for public gatherings. The multipurpose venue intertwines cultural and industrial processes into a novel, symbiotic relationship.**

Project Details

Architects: **F101 Architekten** (<http://f101architekten.com>)

Location: **Hamburger Grossmarkt, 20097 Hamburg, Germany**

Architect of Record: **Ir. Franciscus Dikmans**

Project Team: **Juan Carlos Alvarez Laube, Benjamin Busch, Aline Calmet Papanicolau, Christian Gauss, Anna Kostreva, Daniel Jo Krüger, Tristan Lannuzel, Naomi Kay Maki, Revekka Merson, Uwe P. Voigt**

Client: **Mehr! Entertainment GmbH**

Structural Engineer: **Helmut Wiemer Ingenieurgesellschaft für Bauwesen mbH**

Acoustics: **Akustikbüro Krämer & Stegmaier GmbH**

Lighting: **jack be nimble - De Schutter, Erlemann, Klees & Partner**

Fire Safety: **Sachverständigenbüro Sander / Donislowski and hhpberlin Ingenieure für Brandschutz GmbH**

MEP Design Engineer: **Ingenieurgesellschaft Zimmermann mbH**

MEP Engineer of Record: **Heinze-Stockfisch-Grabis + Partner GmbH**

Construction Management: **HOCHTIEF Hamburg GmbH**

Project Area: **6,000 sqm**

Project Year: **2012 – 2015 (Completed March 7, 2015)**

Photographs: **Andreas Meichsner** (<http://www.andreasmeichsner.de>)

Project Description

The Mehr! Theater am Grossmarkt, a multipurpose venue situated inside Hamburg's historic wholesale market for fruits, vegetables and flowers, offers new, diverse possibilities for public gatherings. By redefining underutilized space within the market hall, the venue breathes new life into the modern, prestressed concrete structure. Operating in a dormant phase of the building's daily rhythm, the theater intertwines cultural and industrial processes into a novel, symbiotic relationship. Like a scenography, the Mehr! Theater is a demountable structure: its flexibility of use is mirrored in its temporary, inserted nature within the landmarked building. Just as the nearby harbor receives international shipments, the versatile venue invites cultures from around the world to set anchor in cosmopolitan Hamburg.

The Hamburger Grossmarkt

Built from 1958 to 1962 under the direction of architect Bernhard Hermkes, the historically protected Hamburger Grossmarkt with its iconic wave-form roof stands out as one of the few remaining experimental concrete structures in Hamburg. Expanding upon the nearby Deichtorhallen dating from 1911-1913, now a center for contemporary art and photography, the Grossmarkt set a new scale for wholesale markets at the time of its construction. In recent years, wide-reaching changes in wholesale logistics have threatened the longevity of the building's original purpose. In 2012, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg agreed to allow the construction of a new theater in a partition of the 40,000 sqm market hall. Without disrupting the daily flow of produce through the building, which takes place in the small hours of the night, the theater makes use of the industrial grounds at showtime.

Demountable Structure

Working closely with Hamburg's office for historic preservation and taking into account the market hall's functional demands, the new cultural venue was designed to join harmoniously with the existing wholesalers at the Grossmarkt. Planned within the framework of a temporary lease, the demountable, freestanding steel structure of the theater exists on similar terms to its neighbors, yet adapting the building for an entirely new use was highly complex. Serious changes were made to the existing structure while maintaining the building's historical integrity. For example, the building's central air ducts, necessary for ventilating traffic exhaust from the basement, were rerouted for the construction of an understage. In a gesture of openness to the city and to provide natural light in the foyer, generous portions of the stone façade were replaced with glass, all the while preserving its character.

Adaptable Use

The visionary new venue offers diverse opportunities for theatrical and musical productions, shows, events, rock and pop concerts as well as exhibitions. Befitting the size of its context, the theater is dimensioned for up to 2,400 seated guests, with the possibility of combining up to 3,500 standing and seated guests. With a ceiling up to 20 m high, the playable stage surface is scalable from 320 sqm to 1440 sqm, offering viewpoints from one to four sides. The hall, foyer and bars are generous and open in their designs, and the aesthetically reduced interiors forego disruptive partitions and false ceilings. A stage technical grid extends over the hall, unabashedly exposing behind-the-scenes processes to the audience and enveloping the hall within the performative space of the stage. The lingering scent of produce intermingles with the refined perfumes of the Grossmarkt's new guests, sensationally fusing culture and industry in a moment of urban renewal.