

Graz 2003 - Cultural Capital of Europe: Final Report

THIS WAS THE CULTURAL CAPITAL YEAR

Event visits

Overall, the 108 projects of the Cultural Capital programme with approx. 6,000 individual events counted **2,851,060 million** visitors. Those events and projects that were conceived as audience magnets from the beginning, exceeded all expectations, breaking several visitor records on the way. "**The Tower of Babel**" in Eggenberg Castle had 116,000 visitors, the contemporary history show "**Mountain of Memories**" had 100,255. But even so-called minority programmes benefited from the Cultural Capital's drawing force: For example the citizen's participation project "**17 cultural districts**" attracted almost 40,000 people. Equally high was the frequency in the feminist network initiative "**WOMENT!**", in the children's project "**MINICOSMOS 03**", with 25,195 visitors in a specially set up children's headquarters, and in various events organised as part of the 03 youth projects "**project pop culture**" and "**access.all.areas**", which totalled 70,000 visitors. The p.p.c. even became a real meeting point for young people. Moreover, readings of foreign-language authors in the framework of "**transLOKAL**" registered visitor numbers (1,760), which nobody would have thought possible in the years before. Some of the 2003 projects were also honoured with distinctions: "**Begehren**" for example was elected "world premiere of the year", "**Chorphantasie**" received two "Nestroys" as "best play of the year" and for the "best actor of the year" (Markus Hering).

Tourism

In the first ten months of the Cultural Capital year, from January to October 2003, providers of accommodation in Graz registered 728,473 overnight stays, representing a spectacular increase in overnights stays of 145,987 (+24.8%) compared to 2002, the tourism record year so far. Other Austrian cities, such as Vienna, Salzburg, Linz, or Innsbruck saw only marginal increases or even suffered setbacks.

Media coverage

Since 01.01.2003, a total of **9,291** media reports on Graz 2003 - Cultural Capital of Europe have been published in various print media. **5,686** articles appeared in Austria alone, **3,405** articles in international media from a total of 37 different countries. Approx. 100 TV stations reported on Graz 2003. When adding the media coverage in the run-up to the Cultural Capital year, of which only **about 3,000** articles have been clipped so far, around **12,100** articles on Graz 2003 were published in the period from 1999-2003.

Website

The immediate PR work of Graz 2003 also includes the website which registered **22,948,439 page requests** (situation as of 1 Dec 2003) since 01.01.2003.

Delegations

Over 120 national and international delegations have visited the Cultural Capital so far. These included delegations from the UK, France, Italy, Japan, Croatia etc., among them many future Cultural Capitals and candidates to the title who wished to benefit from the know-how gathered by Graz 2003.

Marketing

The marketing effort for Graz 2003 - European Cultural Capital was the biggest arts and city marketing communications project in Austrian history. It included promotions and presentations in 17 different countries and over 1,000 ticket sales offices selling all Graz 2003 tickets. Graz 2003 has received 20 prizes for its marketing efforts, more than 2,000 arts enthusiasts were gained as 03 club members.

Visitor numbers

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Cultural Districts of Graz attracted almost 40,000 people. Equally high was the frequency in the feminist network initiative **WOMENT!**, in the children's project **MINICOSMOS 03**, with 25.195 visitors in a specially set up children's headquarters, and in various events organised as part of the 03 youth projects **project pop culture** and **access.all.areas**, which totalled 70,000 visitors. The p.p.c. even became a real meeting point for young people. Music and scenic arts also have excellent results to show. For example, the concert series **Icons of the 20th Century** sold **80%** of the venue's overall seating capacity; the performances of Beat Furrer's **Begehren** reached a sold-out figure of **104.56%**. Musical performances within the framework of **Psalm 2003** sold **81%** of seating capacity and the unusual theatre spectacle **Acconci on the Mur** reached **97%**. The project **Scenic Art** at the steirischer herbst festival brought a swarm of **9,638** visitors to its performances, and thus attained an overall percentage of **94.75%** of visitor capacity (**insideout 95%**, **Theatre of Repetitions 93.13%**, **Lost Highway 108.79%** and **Dry Clean Show 82.09%**)

[Visitor Numbers - Project Overview, as of 3 February 2004 \(pdf file\)](#)

TOURISM FIGURES

Overnight stays in the Cultural Capital year

In the first ten months of the Cultural Capital Year, from January to October 2003, hotels in Graz registered a total of 728,473 overnight stays. This is a spectacular **increase of 145,987** overnight stays (+ **24.8%**) compared to 2002, which was the record year in tourism so far.

The statistical values should also be seen in the light of the figures reached by other Austrian cities: while Graz was happy about the mentioned increase in the period from January to October, figures in the other regional capitals did not go up as high or even declined in some cases. For example, Vienna's tourism balance for the first ten months shows an increase of + 2.4%, Salzburg of + 2.2%, Linz a plus of 0.7% and Innsbruck a minus of 2.7%. See the table on the following page for the tourism success of Graz 2003 - Cultural Capital of Europe.

The most successful month of all was October: A new peak of 84,120 overnight stays even exceeded last year's record around the Kalachakra meeting. The highest increase was registered in the months of February (+ 50%), July (+ 37.1%), and August (+ 34.6%).

The highest increase in the flow of visitors from January to October 2003 came from Slovenia (+ 87.5%, in August the stream of visitors from our neighbouring country even went up by 378.1%), followed by Germany (+ 48.9%), France (+ 28.7%), and Spain (+ 25.6%). By the way: the Viennese were also curious about the Cultural Capital, which attracted 79.2% more visitors from the city designated as "the nicest suburb of Graz" than in the previous year.

The increase in daily visits to Graz is even greater and clearly exceeds the plus in overnight stays. According to estimates from tourism organisations, this segment has more than doubled. This assumption is based on **tourist guide bookings (plus 111%)**, and **higher visitor frequencies in the tourism information services of Graz 2003 and Graz Tourism (overall increase of more than 110%)**.

[Changes in Market Figures by Cities \(pdf file\)](#)

[Relative Market Growth by Country of Origin \(pdf file\)](#)

Buildings & Infrastructure

Graz has with its contemporary architectural movement, in a surrounding determined by tradition and historical inheritance, carried out an exemplary development on aesthetic as well as cultural-political planes: the so-called "Graz School of Architecture" and its well known representatives, stand for an architectural scene which has received great international attention and which, since the 60s, has enriched the city with expressive formal experiments.

But not only do Graz architects plan and build in Graz - on the contrary, the city has attracted an increasing number of foreign architects, who win the contracts at international invitational competitions.

Now Graz has set itself to the task of realising the long planned cultural building and urban development measures, with which, on the one hand, the city is fundamentally increased in value, and on the other hand, the quality of life of the inhabitants is significantly raised.

The following projects are currently under construction, or have already been completed:

- >> Island in the Mur
- >> Kunsthaus (Exhibition Hall)
- >> Helmut List Hall (Music Hall)
- >> Literaturhaus (House of Literature)
- >> Kindermuseum (Children's Museum)
- >> Hauptbahnhof (Main Railway Station)
- >> Flughafen Graz (Graz Airport)
- >> Stadthalle Graz (City Arena)
- >> Hauptplatz Graz (Main Square of Graz)
- >> Hauptplatz Andritz (Main Square of Andritz district)
- >> In and around the Schlossberg
- >> City Lighting System

THE ISLAND IN THE MUR

The Island in the Mur

Article on [the opening of the Island](#)

KUNSTHAUS GRAZ

A new centre of exhibition culture

Project description Kunsthaus Graz

www.kunsthausegraz.at

HELMUT LIST HALL

Unique synergies of science, high tech and culture

The Helmut List Hall (Wagner-Biro-Strasse 98a) offers perfect acoustic quality. Throughout Europe it can serve as both an ideal venue for performances and recordings of classical music as well as for the experimental force of great temperaments of contemporary music.

This has all been made possible by the construction of the hall (architect: Markus Pernthaler) and by the competence of the AVL corporation in the field of acoustics. Helmut List, CEO and major shareholder of AVL, co-designer and initiator of the hall, sees this as a vision which, as it turned into reality, enabled entirely new forms of artistic production and technical development to be achieved. This hall is by both the "steirischer herbst", the festival of contemporary art and the "styriarte", the music festival with Nikolaus Harnoncourt as well as by Graz 2003 and the AVL List GmbH. In 2003, many Cultural Capital events took place here.

The central auditorium, holding 1200 seats, a stage and an orchestra pit, covers an area of approximately 5000 square metres. With the world premiere of Beat Furrer's piece "Begehren" (Desire) at the start of the Cultural Capital year, the Helmut List Hall was opened on 9 January 2003 and positioned as a site of permanent innovation right from the very start.

LITERATURHAUS

A Centre of Language

With its numerous literary institutions and magazines, Graz has also made a name for itself as a city of literature; but what was lacking until now, was a place in which to find a central "interface" for all these initiatives.

Now, the former cultural house at Elisabethstrasse 30 has been converted into a house of literature: the Franz-Nabl Institute for Literature Research and a library are housed in the existing building, and in the three-storied, expanded courtyard building, two event halls and an exhibition archive have been built. With this building project, Graz architects Florian Riegler and Roger Riewe succeeded in making a sensitive symbiosis of old and new, in view of all of the conditions one must meet for the protection of historical monuments. The new Literaturhaus was opened on 9 May 2003.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Interactive architecture for children

An "interactive architecture" in glass, steel and wood by Hemma Fasch und Jakob Fuchs forms the structural basis of the Children's Museum in the Graz Augarten Park. It is an invitation to both children and grown-ups to experiment and interactive play involving all the senses on a 1200 sq. metre area.

The architecture of Hemma Fasch and Jakob Fuchs convinces through its open-mindedness and a playful correspondence made between the structure and the outside world.

It is characterised by a naturally optimal use of light, spatial variability, the clarity of the materials and the construction, the reduction of the building to its functional content and the taking of the special location into full account, plus the inter-action of art and the natural environment.

Special attention was given to "warm" materials and to the place itself as a location for experiment and opportunities for a holistic comprehension of the structure in itself.

Top priority was given to opportunities to experience, learn by example and to participate. Interaction, experimenting, trying things out, touching, changing, were allotted pride of place all freely under the motto "trying it out instead of studying it". Permanent dialogue, the involvement of children, participation, the inclusion of child-like concepts, form the basis for putting this into effect and implementing the Children's Museum concepts.

The implementation of the Children's Museum is a great success for the efforts Graz is making to become a child-friendly city.

HAUPTBAHNHOF (Main Railway Station)

The project "train station modernisation" at the Graz Hauptbahnhof

The project "train station modernisation" at the Graz Hauptbahnhof has been realised over the last few years in stages according to the plans of Viennese architects Zechner and Zechner; first, a passenger tunnel adapted to the needs of the handicapped, the ascents to the platforms (flights of stairs, lifts, escalators), platforms and platform roofs were newly manufactured. The last construction phase has then been realised in the framework of the so-called "train station offensive."

In the train station hall, a new, larger travel centre has been built with multi-functional ticket windows; the waiting area has been enlarged and furnished better. On the ground floor, shops and a new gastronomy area have been constructed. A new shopping mall contains an extensive mix of types of businesses on two floors, to cater to the consumer needs of both travellers and inhabitants.

The right wing of the train station was completely pulled down and replaced by a new construction, in which a modern shopping line is built on two floors and on an area of around 4,300 m². In the left wing, a coffeehouse and a bicycle station have been opened on the ground floor; the existing façade of the Hauptbahnhof has been partly covered over with a new façade of glass.

FLUGHAFEN GRAZ (Graz Airport)

The gate to the world

Graz airport has also prepared for the Cultural Capital 2003, in order to be able to give arriving guests a modern greeting: the groundbreaking took place in May 2001 for the construction of a forty-meter high tower made of specially tinted glass in a cylindrical form, which has gone into full operation in autumn 2002. In the arrival and departure areas, new advertising areas have been set up which, among other things, give an account of the current programme of Graz 2003.

Moreover, in 2003, the installations by the artist Flora Neuwirth have transformed the airport area into a multimedia artistic zone.

STADTHALLE GRAZ (City Event Hall)

A hall for everybody in current design

On the area of the Graz Messe (Trade Fair), according to the plans of renowned architect Klaus Kada, a multi-functional hall has been built, which, with its 150-metre long roof and the nine-storied transparent office tower, has become a symbol of urban development.

12,300 m² of usable floor space offer room for music, art and culture, television shows, sporting events, congresses, fairs, exhibitions, receptions and galas. The Stadthalle has, with a column-free area of 6,500 m² and three foyers, suitable room for top events of all kinds; moreover, the area is expandable, by means of the adjacent halls, by 14,000 m².

The hall has been opened in October 2002 with the Buddhist world congress "Kalachakra for World Peace."

Get more information at <http://www.stadthallegraz.at/>

HAUPTPLATZ GRAZ (Main Square of Graz)

A place of urban encounter

The new Hauptplatz - main square - in the centre of Graz has been officially opened on 15 November 2002.

The 11,500 m² square, whose reshaping was already decided upon in 1991 during the course of an urban architecture competition, has been brought up to date by the Graz architect Markus Pernthaler. The market stalls, like on Jakominiplatz and Lendplatz, have been subjected to a uniform design and are reduced to a number of twelve, so that the part directly in front of the Rathaus (city hall) is made more open and roomy - suitable for temporary installations and events of different kinds. Due to unexpected archaeological findings and the subsequent excavations in the area around the Erzherzog Johann fountain, the time schedule - defined in summer 2001 - had to be modified for a period of time, but the project managers have succeeded in opening the square for the public in November 2002, as originally planned.

HAUPTPLATZ ANDRITZ (Main Square of Andritz)

"Hanging gardens" in a new urban centre of the city

The Andritz Hauptplatz (main square) has also been altered according to an architectural competition which took place in 2000. Already in the spring of 2002, the new, redesigned square in the northern part of Graz has been opened, designed according to the plans of the Graz architect Herwig Illmaier, who died a tragic death in the summer of 2001. The most characteristic elements of the plan, besides the technical traffic solution - the shifting of heavy traffic to the centre of the square, and the introduction of a second set of streetcar rails and a new bus lane - is the urban building conception, which lends to the previously heterogeneous open square, a uniform, urban character, through the building of vertical support structures and gate openings for the streetcars and busses. At the same time, the importance of the location for the change of transport for numerous daily commuters is accentuated as the "Gate to the City." The four meter high, vertical frameworks embracing the space of the square, have been landscaped with a mix of domestic climbing, tendril and creeping plants precisely matched to the blossom-times. This allows a mosaic of blossoming fields to emerge in a weekly, monthly and yearly rhythm.

In the eastern half of the square, where the covered Farmers' Market and a place for events are also located, a central

roofed shopping arcade with covered waiting areas for the transfer passengers has been built; on the western side of the square, optically separated through the frameworks, a garden-like part is set up, with lawn and flower areas, groups of trees, benches, a fountain and some playground equipment.

BUILDINGS IN AND AROUND THE SCHLOSSBERG

From the Dom im Berg to the Schlossberg elevator

Construction was also going on outside and inside the Schlossberg whose interior once offered refuge to the residents during times of war. Graz thus celebrated the transition from the 20th to the 21st century with art and peace projects set up in locations with a special symbolic character. The Graz Schlossberg with its Clock Tower is one of the landmarks of the city and both its position and history (ransomed by the Graz citizenry in the 19th century from the French occupying power to save it from destruction) are of great significance for Graz and its cityscape. The so-called "Dom" within the hill was erected for the regional exhibition "comm.gr2000az" in the year 2000. Today it is used by Vereinigte Bühnen Graz as a performance location. Another important step toward increased visitor attraction was the elevator with wheelchair access, allowing also disabled persons to access the Dom im Berg (admits 600 persons) and the casemates under the Clock Tower (admits 120 persons). Overall, an immensely important project for the city, as one of the most visited sites in town gains even more significance as an attraction.

CITY LIGHTING SYSTEM

A "distinctive lighting design" will illuminate the city centre

The lighting of square and street spaces is, on the one hand, a fundamental design element, and on the other hand, decisive for the security and the well-being of the user in the darkness. For these reasons, the city of Graz has commissioned the Bartenbach LichtLabor with an artistic light concept for the city centre area, for the space around the Mur, the Schlossberg and the Stadtpark.

Its functional and aesthetic goal is to create an integral impression of space and, through a specific light milieu, to accentuate the individual character of the representative cultural buildings.

The user is supposed to be offered a visual orientation and to receive a positive impression, through the lighting of important buildings, landmarks, church towers and riverside walks. The concept, which is supposed to be transplanted into the city centre areas by 2003, also contains "dynamic" lighting effects for special occasions.