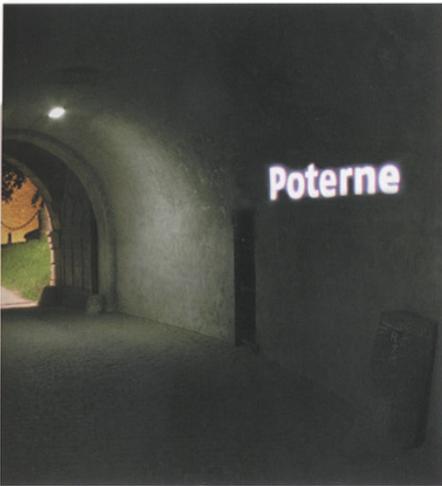


ORIENTATION IN HISTORY

The job is as fascinating as it is complex – developing an information, signage and orientation system for the state-owned castles, palaces and monuments in the Rhineland-Palatinate region. That's 72 different buildings in all – each with its own unique history and setting.



Neue Wege gehen: Das bei einem europaweit ausgeschrieben Wettbewerb siegreiche Orientierungskonzept für die staatlichen Burgen, Schlösser und Altertümer des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz wurde von Adler & Schmidt in Kooperation mit Meuser Architekten BDA entwickelt. / **New directions:** The winner in the European-wide competition to design an orientation concept for the state-owned castles, palaces and monuments in the Rhineland-Palatinate was Adler & Schmidt. They developed this concept in cooperation with Meuser Architekten BDA.

In 2002 the region of Rhineland-Palatinate launched a Europe-wide competition from which a winning design emerged in 2003. Work on implementing this design has now begun. The winning concept came from the Berlin agency Adler & Schmidt, whose harmonisation of architecture and information design on projects for IDZ Berlin, BUGA Potsdam, SiemensForum, BDA and the Federal Ministry of Construction, virtually predestined them for the job in the Rhineland. »Our basic idea was to go for a »no-signs« approach. We are not dealing with an airport here; these are places where people have time to discover things and find out about the place.« Place and architecture speak for themselves – the historical spaces should remain free of excessive information.

This conscious reduction also applies to the graphic elements themselves. By choosing Fago, they had opted for a sans serif font which although distinctive, does not dominate. The lettering on the objects themselves is achieved with individual, raised metal type, which unlike signs, does not hinder visual contact with the historic background. The choice of colour is also very distinctive, but also unobtrusive and therefore suitable both for information on site and on the print products. A special function is given to the pictograms about the various facilities, which are designed to give fast, language-independent information. Type, colour and pictograms form the visual constants in the various information media and thus ensure a flexible, but consistent visual image for all the buildings.

One unusual feature are the »orientation stones«, which are three-dimensional steel plans, mounted on stones at key points around the building, to enhance the visual and haptic experience of the space. A credit-card-sized folding information sheet replaces the entrance ticket; it contains a plan of the site or building, plus short explanatory texts about its history. Pictograms give additional information on facilities, guided tours and suggested routes. Foreign-language versions are possible. The information-sheet-cum-ticket obviates the need for too much explanatory text around the building itself. //

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