

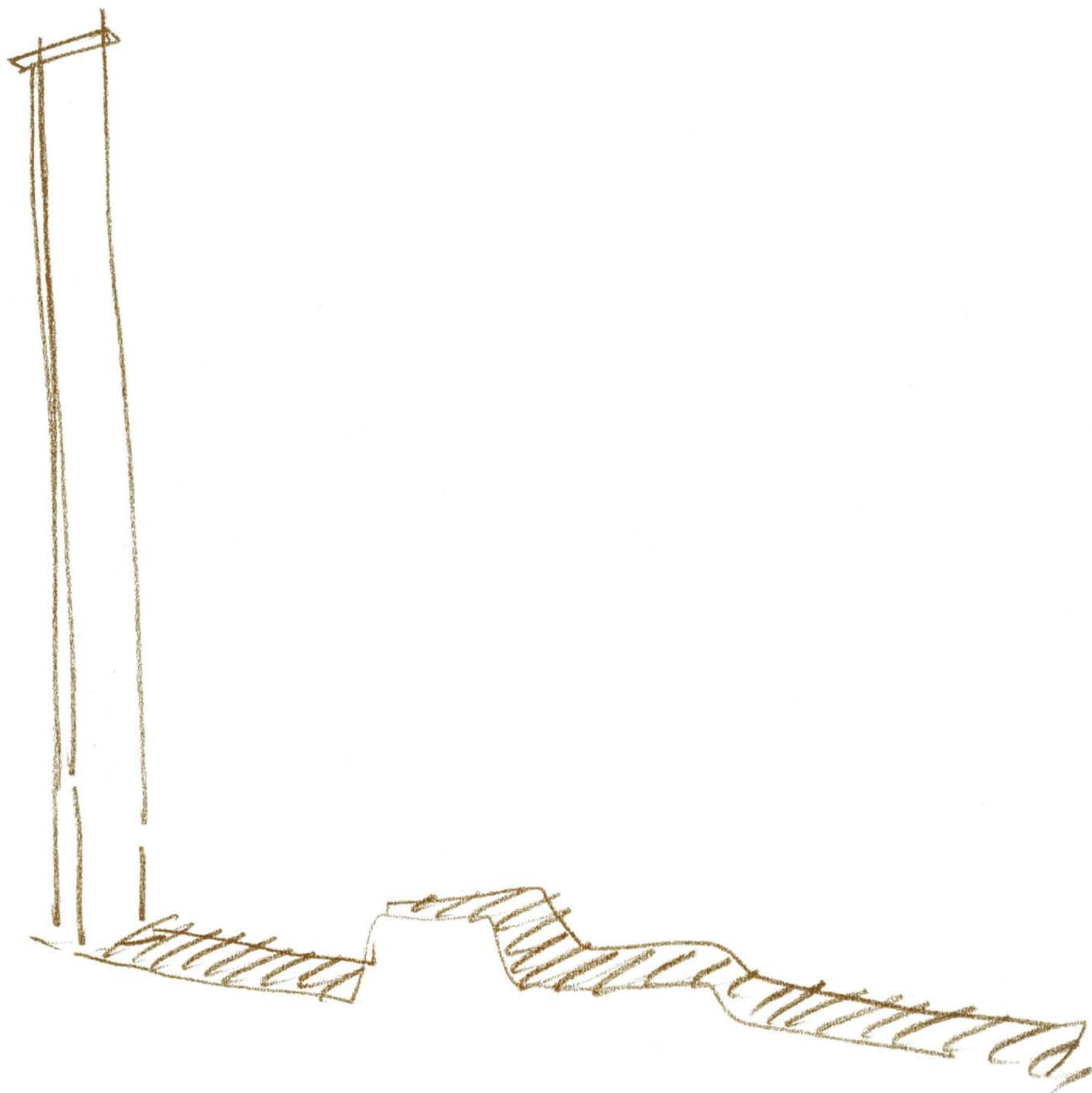


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Investigating for you ...

... [ark] talked to three renowned architects on your behalf in different European countries: Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria. The question we put to Krzysztof Ingarden from Krakow, Petr Fuchs from Prague und Klaus Baumgartner from Villach for you is:

The theme of this year's world Expo in Aichi, Japan is "Nature's Wisdom" – a term used to describe a well-balanced relationship between mankind, urban and natural environments. How far do the architecture and contents of the pavilion you designed for your country go to reflect this theme - and in your opinion, how far is it reflected by the Expo as a whole? Is a World Expo compatible with the ideal of sustainable development at all?



Polish Pavilion at the Expo 2005 in Aichi, Japan

Krzysztof Ingarden, Krakow, PL

Krzysztof Ingarden, born in 1957 in Wroclaw in Poland, joined colleague Jacek Ewý with whom he had cooperated since 1987 to establish the architectural bureau Ingarden & Ewý in Krakow in 1991. Primarily in Poland but also in Japan, the partners have completed projects from a wide range of fields, including embassies, museums, churches and public buildings. Krzysztof Ingarden lived for a number of years in Japan after graduating in Krakow, and since 2003 he has been a Professor at the College of Art and Architecture in Krakow.

For our design, the main theme "Nature's Wisdom" was interpreted in conjunction with the sub-theme "Notice the Beauty". We have been searching to create a metaphor for contemporary Poland – as a country applying the latest technology during its rapid transformation over the last few years, a country which has a rich cultural and artistic heritage, beautiful nature and a country understanding the idea of sustainability on its way to modernisation.

One of the main inspirations during the design process was the music of Frederic Chopin and its empathy with the Mazovian landscape. Chopin was born in Zelazowa Wola near Warsaw. For many Poles, it is natural to associate his music with a romantic vision of the countryside landscape, with willow trees growing along field roads. His monument in Warsaw Lazienki Park portrays him under a willow tree. For this reason, it was an obvious choice for me to try to explore this association and express the relationship between music, landscape and architecture in our design. For the pavilion's facades, I decided to experiment with wicker, a kind of willow that forms dynamic, bi-directionally curved surfaces. It is a perfect material for such a purpose: light, semi-transparent and bendable. The computer-



Competition-winning design for the New Mediathek in Krakow, Poland

Krzysztof Ingarden

generated shape of the facades helps create a symbolic image of contemporary Poland as a country of fast technological development, whilst the white wicker mesh is hand made in a low-tech manner by Polish artisans from villages near Rudnik. In effect the wicker facade plays a metaphorical role – pointing directly towards the idea of sustainable development of the country, and at the same time trying to recover the recently forgotten relationship between man, music, nature and architecture. Inside the building, below the wicker cloud, we designed a symbolic cross-section of Poland. The amphitheatrically formed space above it is dedicated to multimedia presentations regarding nature and culture in Poland. The section itself unfurls from the Baltic Sea, north to the mountain tops and then down south, with the 14th C. Wieliczka underground salt mine chamber located underneath. A lift takes visitors underground, where they can experience the dramatic space of this historic cave. The theme “Nature’s Wisdom” as the leading idea of the Expo points towards ecology and sustainability. It is very ambitious and costly to attempt to locate the Expo site in the centre of a park, with the prospect of dismantling all the buildings and infrastructure and

recultivating the land after the exhibition, in order to turn the site back into a park. We may think of course that the tremendous amount of effort and funds put into such a big Expo project could be directed towards other tasks and areas, such as some of the devastated post-industrial zones in Nagoya. In my opinion, such an aim would be closer to the idea of sustainability, understood as the well balanced development of cities and communities. However, the answer to how successful the current project has been will only be known several months after the end of the exhibition when people can see the new park where the Expo site stood.

Another question is how the participating countries understood the main theme and represented it in the design of their pavilions. It seems that only some countries focused attention on this idea – including Japan, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Mexico and Morocco, to name but a few. Others tried to interpret the main subject of “Nature’s Wisdom” by including it among other attractions exhibited inside their pavilion. Sending a clear message using architectural language was achieved only by a minority of participants.