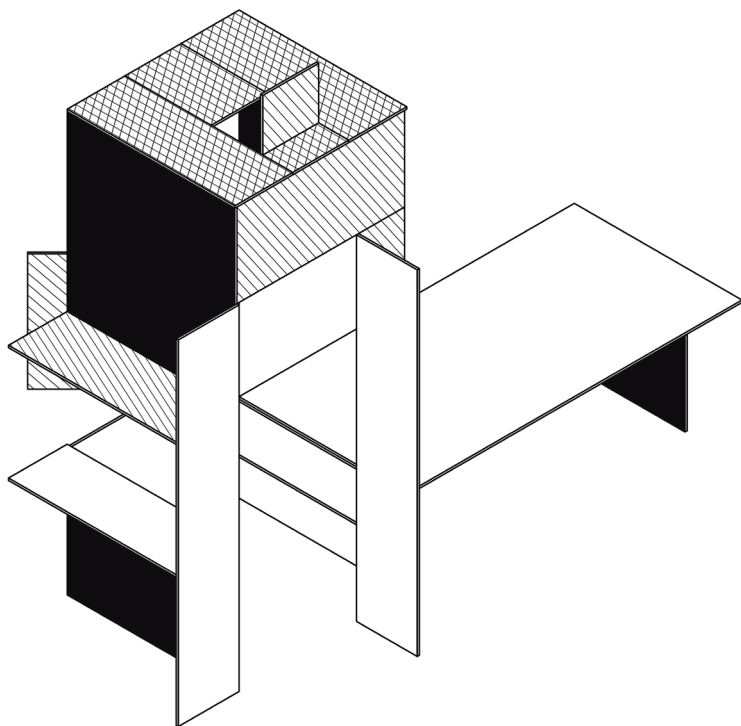


kiosk

landmark



open

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A brief history of a ‚Kiosk‘.

The architectural type of the kiosk migrated to Europe as part of the orientalist fashion and the enthusiasm for landscape gardening of the 18th century. The Persian word *kūšk* (turkish: *Köşk*) designated a freestanding summer house or garden pavilion, whose roof usually was supported by pillars with screened or totally open walls. These occur in India, Persia and the Ottoman Empire since the 13th century. With its use as a representative and recreational building in Europe, the French word *kiosque* emerges and continues to migrate to other European languages. The first kiosks selling newspapers and flowers are located in the public parks, later on the boulevards of Paris, the capital of the European 19th century, and are part of its invention of the modern urban lifestyle in the Western world.

Different countries, often even individual cities, have created their own forms of kiosks that sell everything imaginable, from newspapers and flowers to haberdashery, lemonade, ice cream, beer, beach accessories and fast food: the *Späti* of Berlin, the *Würstlstand* in Vienna, the *chiringuito* in Spain or the classic urban newsstand in Paris, Milan or New York. Highly regulated and standardized forms coexist with rather informal and improvised sheds that form a fluid continuum to hawker's trays and newspaper boys. Modern kiosk architecture has certainly created some iconic forms: For example the green, rectangular *kiosque à journeaux* with a decorative frieze and cupola, designed by Gabriel Davioud for the Baron Haussmann in 1857. Or the modular system K67 created by Sasa Mächting in 1967, which made it directly into the MoMA as well as – thousands of times – to the countries of the Eastern Bloc.

Nevertheless, kiosk architecture is strictly speaking never 'great' or 'high' architecture. The site of a kiosk is always a possible site for something else. Kiosks have an arbitrary and nonchalant way of occupying free spots, they are looking for niches and gaps to nest in, for passageways, staircases or arcades to crawl into. The urban kiosk is usually something secondary, like an architectural afterthought, or something parasitic: Kiosks tend to seek out the streams of passers-by and tap them, like the bloodstream of a host animal.

The closed kiosk may look sculptural or monolithic, if it is freestanding, or merging with and disappearing into its architectural background. When it opens - usually incredibly early in the morning - it folds up like a medieval altarpiece, multiplying its sacred scenery for the eager eyes of the faithful. This area enlargement by unfolding and fanning out does not only serve to present a maximum of stocked goods to the eye of the customer. It also aims at the maximization of affect: It seems necessary to make as much of a glaring spectacle as possible. The spatial principle of the tabloid press (or German 'Boulevardzeitung' - a reference to the place where it is sold) has its analogue in kiosk architecture and organization: a big mouth on the front and further information management by folding. A shutter, turned down, may serve as a counter for the exchange of money and goods. Yet, especially at night and from a distance, the kiosk may shine from within as a pure promise of happiness. The kiosk is a democratic place. This entails more than the noble contribution of the newspaper kiosk to a 'structural change of the public' (Habermas) and the emergence of liberal democracies. 'Democratic' means: The kiosk is a place for everything and its opposite. It thus follows the principle of montage, which film and novel

of the early 20th century discovered to be the aesthetic principle of any metropolitan experience. There are no 'leftist' or 'right-wing', no 'conservative' or 'progressive' kiosks: as any such limitation would be bad for business, you will find the whole spectrum. At the kiosk, the stock trader meets the bum – as, generally, those who go to a kiosk, have either too little or too much time at hand. The kiosk is a place for teasing, the quick glance, curiosity and innuendos, and a point of anchorage for all people who are uninformed, disoriented or unemployed. The political argument, which always finds a willing sounding board here, cannot be separated from the lust for the (real or invented) scandal, from populism and public disorder, and overall the kitsch, junk and bric-à-brac. Pulp literature (as well as comic books before the invention of the 'graphic novel') is kiosk literature - the serious book trade would never touch it. A piece of coloured candy for 5 cents - there is no lower, cheaper satisfaction.

The visual spectacle of the kiosk is never as distanced as the fetishizing commodity aesthetics of the well-lit shop window. Its merchandise is bright and cheap and at the same time still overpriced. Everything is in the spitting and cursing radius of the kiosk operator, who - since he is often confined to the interior - engages in verbal harassment of unwelcome guests and (sometimes more, sometimes less successful) issues bans on them. The kiosk operator is an authority as it were. He sits enthroned above the action like a castle guard, or, as with a saintly figure overloaded with staffage, only a small rosy face is remotely visible. He is always a first point of contact, a conveyor of messages and keeper of keys. This makes him or her a dispositive of monitoring or surveillance – yet a relatively gentle and harmless one. No one knows more about the habits and secrets of his customers – the kiosk is a hub for the entire gossip of a street.

'Kiosk' by chmara.rosinke.

'Kiosk' by chmara.rosinke provides the fictional urban space of the Biennale INTERIEUR 2018 fair with such a hub. Architecturally it is developed from the basic form of a cuboid. This is cut in rectangular patterns which allow for unfolding. This creates entrances and openings, as well as extensions that provide the kiosk with additional functions such as a counter and a table. All further constructive details and support structures are attached on the outside. This can be read in different ways: While it makes the constructive logic of the kiosk visible it is also reminiscent of the provisional and improvised character of many kiosk structures. Finally – in addition to the bright inside – it may allude to the way kiosks inhabit the urban landscape like some kind of shelled animal: They may open up, expose themselves to daylight for foraging, and later curl up into a ball again, hiding their soft inside while putting up defences on the outside. In its opened form, visitors are invited to use it as a stage set or scenery for their own pastime: to sit down and rest, loiter or start a political argument on the outside; or to go inside and take the role of the manager, watch the scene, give directions and advice or engage in bickering and quarrels with the patrons.

Text passages from Alfred Döblin: 'Berlin Alexanderplatz' (1929)

'Franz Biberkopf strolls down Invalidenstrasse, his new girlfriend, Polski Lina, is with him. On the corner of Chausseestrasse there's a newspaper kiosk in an entryway, and people standing around, gabbing. 'Move along now, no loitering.' 'Surely we'll be allowed to look at the pictures.' 'Then make a purchase. Don't block the entryway.' 'Idiot.'

'Finished reading, then?' 'What do you mean?' 'Would you like me to take the paper of the hook for you? I had a gentleman once who accepted my offer of a chair, so that he could read in comfort.' 'But the reason you hang out your pictures is so that-' 'never mind why I hang out my pictures. You don't rent my kiosk. Spongers are no good to me, they just keep away honest customers.'

'Always those spongers. Now there's two more. I've half a mind to put up a wire screen. Was that my stomach growling. Franz Biberkopf marches up in his stiff hat, with blowsy Polish Lina on his arm. 'Lina, look right, into the entrance. The weather's no good if you're unemployed. Let's look at the pictures. Pretty pictures, but there's a draught. Hey there, mate, how's business. Doesn't the chill get to you.' 'Well, it's no community hall.' 'Would you want to stand in a thing like that, Lina?' 'Let's go, the man's giving us dirty looks.' 'I'm just thinking some people might like that, to have you standing in an entryway, selling newspapers. You know, the feminine touch.'

closed

