

Rhine stages

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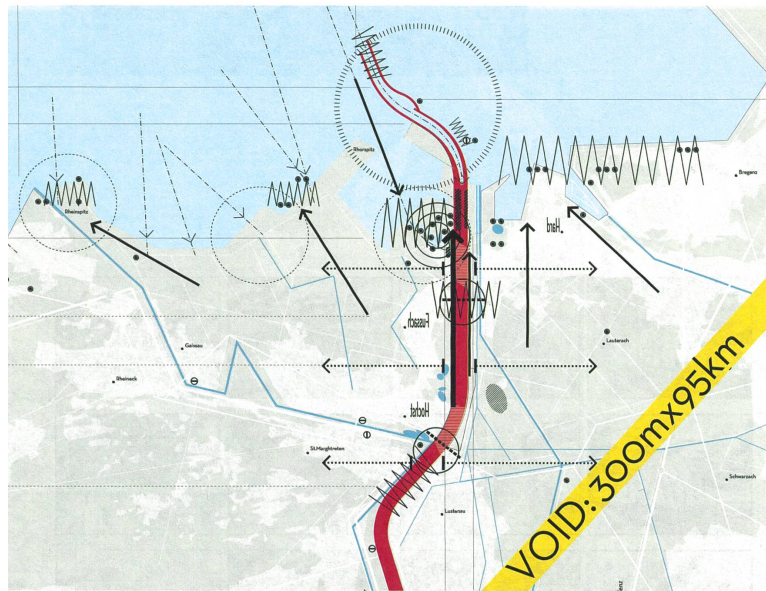
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site plan



RHINE STAGES

Martina Tomsic

Territorial scale

The Rhine canal is a 300 meters wide and 95 kilometers long void space that completely disengages the river from the landscape. The protection requirements regarding flood precautions will always demand more or less clearly defined transitions in the form of controllable edge conditions but, nevertheless, the canal mass could be constructed in a manner that is better integrated with its surroundings. In so doing, it would be able to transcend its bare engineered underpinnings and suppress those harsh associations with others more fitting to the river's ambience.

A first step in this direction came with efforts to physically drift public space through the canal. To make the inner 'auditorium' more accessible, a number of paths that traced this territory's history were reintroduced, which also complement the existing road network very well. Heavy traffic and visitor parking facilities were removed from the nature reserve and placed in the strip to the west of the canal, which is well-integrated into the transportation system and offers room for further expansion. The nature reserve, water cleaning fields, and other scattered open areas start to form a complex system linked by the vertebrae of the canal, complementing the open space of the canal itself.

The stages of the Rhine

The urban side of the canal becomes an important activator of social life. The new wall houses promenade and collective spaces in the form of different platforms, whose spatial setting has a catalytic effect on social contacts and is targeted to different activities, including ornithology. From this attractive slice of public space, unexpected and surprising views are offered to the river below and the completely

contrasting riverbank on the opposite side. Here the layers of the river come to light. Formed in part by the dynamic nature of the river, this wide platform makes a vigorous contrast to the now desolate perspective of monotonous fields. This space becomes a stage in itself, offering a unique spatial experience as well as harboring more intimate places where people can gather undisturbed. In addition to functioning as sediment collectors, linear groins inserted along the river's edge also establish a place to experience the threshold where the river enters the lake. By moving the river to its western edge, the transformed space of the New Rhine becomes a transitional zone: merged components create a whole new perspective on the transformations that had previously been staged across the entire delta.

