



MEDIA RELEASE

A glass jewel

Underground station in Düsseldorf combines art, craft and processing technology

Ulm, April 2016. *The new 'Werhahn line' opened by the city of Düsseldorf in February this year is more than just another underground line. An all-embracing architectural and artistic concept elevates it to the standard of independent work in the public space. Passengers access this subterranean 'continuum' at six stations that were designed with the help of six different artists. At Graf-Adolf-Platz station, artist Manuel Franke created the semblance of a glazed agate rock, exploiting the possibilities offered both by glass as a material and company EUROGLAS in his design.*

The new Düsseldorf underground line, known as the 'Werhahn line', reveals the city's commitment to art. The call for tenders on the EU-wide architectural competition a good fifteen years ago already stipulated the objective to combine architecture and art in the urban space in a way that can be appreciated by anyone. Then as now, the design concept of a subterranean 'continuum' developed by netzwerkarchitekten in Darmstadt in cooperation with artist Heike Klussmann managed to hold sway in the face of strong international competition. The outcome of this all-embracing idea for the 3.4-kilometre section of tunnels can be seen in the distinctive design of the platforms. A recurring relief structure comprised of finished concrete elements covers the wall surfaces. Its basic form is a diamond that constantly expands and contracts, thus creating a strong sense of three-dimensionality and movement.

Six new stations connect the Werhahn line to the urban space. Bright and generously dimensioned, they do not lead passengers into a dark shaft, as is so often the case, but extend the outdoor space into the depths. Within the overall concept, they were interpreted as independent 'incisions' between levels and also treated as such from an artistic perspective. On an art competition organised by the city and architects, Heike Klussmann was chosen alongside five other artists, all of whom devised creative transitional spaces for the entrances and exits – each with their own unique identities.

Clear sightlines at the heart of the city

Graf-Adolf-Platz station is located at the heart of Düsseldorf's city centre. Whether it's to access nearby office buildings or act as the starting point for pleasant shopping trips on the popular Königsallee, which starts here, the underground station is used by several thousand passengers every day and represents the keystone of the new transport network.



The stairways initially lead from different points of access to a transfer level within the station. Just like at the other five stations, this gallery level with its open layout was an integral part of the architectural design at netzwerkarchitekten. The platforms are fully visible, ensuring both clarity of orientation and, supported by bright lighting, safety when accessing the concourse. At Graf-Adolf-Platz station, the gallery level overspans the tunnel of the Werhahn line and leads passengers down to the platforms on two broad staircases each 2.40 metres wide. Artist Manuel Franke fully exploited the surrounding forms of the urban environment for 'his' incision. With meticulous artistic precision, he created underground structures with a glass surface.

Natural thread of lines in strong colours

'My aim in designing Graf-Adolf-Platz station was to create an immersive journey underground. Just like an agate rock that obtains its unusual depth and exciting variety of shapes through many layers of deposits, the thread of lines accompanies passengers to the platform while at the same inviting them to immerse themselves in the wall design,' says Manuel Franke on the artwork he created over a wall surface of around 1,000 m² of coloured glass sheets. In bright green, interposed by pulsating, sweeping violet lines, he created an accessible colour space. One of these colour expanses begins at each of the three entrances. Installed on the outer staircase walls, the agate rock thus extends throughout the station and unleashes its effect from the street via the transfer level down to the platform. The dynamically designed wall panels, with their many nuances and strata, find their smooth counterpart in the monochrome green colour plane that is just as much part of the artwork.

In a similar way to agate, whose colour is not set but displays a unique diversity dependent on its site of discovery, the choice of bright green was also directly related to its spatial function. Its intensity rebuffs the darkness of the underground and relieves it of its claustrophobic nature. The violet used in the thread of lines ideally complements this green. Containing a high proportion of grey, it is far more subdued but at the same time intensifies the intended play of depth and shadows. The artwork was created using an analogue process specially developed for the project that engages with the industrial production of the glass wall covering made of laminated safety glass.

Made by hand in an industrial environment

The development of the production process to ideally bring the artistic concept to fruition was preceded by a long, intense creative process. Back in 2010, netzwerkarchitekten made initial contact with EUROGLAS, requesting that Manuel Franke be allowed to work on various samples panels at the company for testing purposes. Without knowing what the outcome would be, the company agreed to these tests and opened its doors to the artist. After trialling the method,



several colour samples were produced, as was a careful revision of the thread of lines. When the project was finally due to be executed, Manuel Franke spent several weeks at the factory. 'It was a long and sometime arduous process. But even at critical junctures we worked together to find solutions, and the result clearly shows that the work paid off,' says Daniela Buck, an architect at EUROGLAS who assisted the artist in an advisory capacity over the years.

Because the panes of glass could not be placed next to each other as a full wall system, the artistic design was completed in sections, each involving the processing of six panes. The thread of lines traverses the joints between the panes, sized at 0.95 x 1.70 metres, and with its overriding sense of motion makes them appear to coalesce. Glass processed to form laminated safety glass, i.e. two panes connected by PVB film, formed the ideal substrate with its multilayered nature. The green paint was applied to the entire back of the front pane. While still liquid, the thread of lines was created by subtracting the colour layer, i.e. prior to burning in the ceramic coating, on 170 of a total of almost 750 glass sheets installed at the underground station. The artist used solvents, compressed air, brushes, trowels and other tools in this process. Once the colour layer had dried, the sheets were again processed using trowel knives and bare hands. The 'ruptured' areas afford a view of the second, all-violet colour plane that was applied to the back of the rear pane. Between these two colour planes, the glass thickness of ten millimetres provides space for rich shadow patterns. Only following this complex manual process was the glass united to form the laminated safety glass. A fixed-point mounting system on the back pane of glass, developed with Glashandel Pritz for the project, enables concealed attachment of the wall panels.

Graf-Adolf-Platz underground station clearly shows that good communication and the close cooperation of architects, artists and industry can open up new vistas and give rise to exceptional projects.

Construction sign

Completion: February 2016

Developer: City of Düsseldorf

Architect: netzwerkarchitekten, Darmstadt

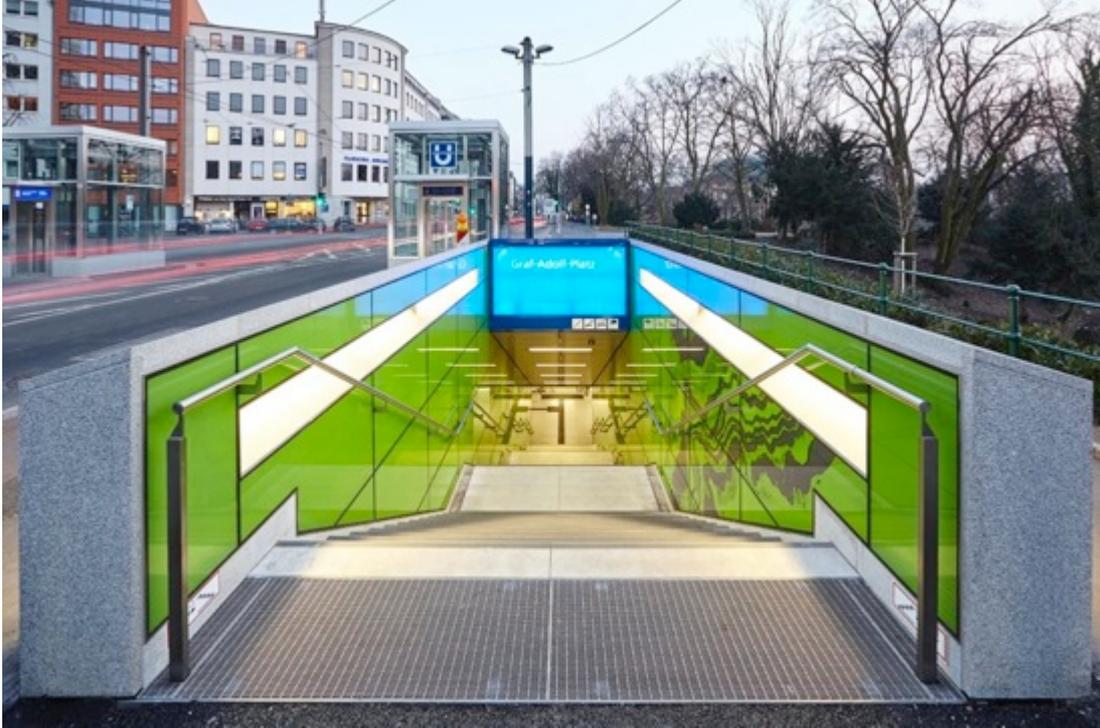
Artistic concept, 'continuum' Werhahn line: Heike Klussmann, Berlin

Artistic concept, Graf-Adolf-Platz station: Manuel Franke, Düsseldorf

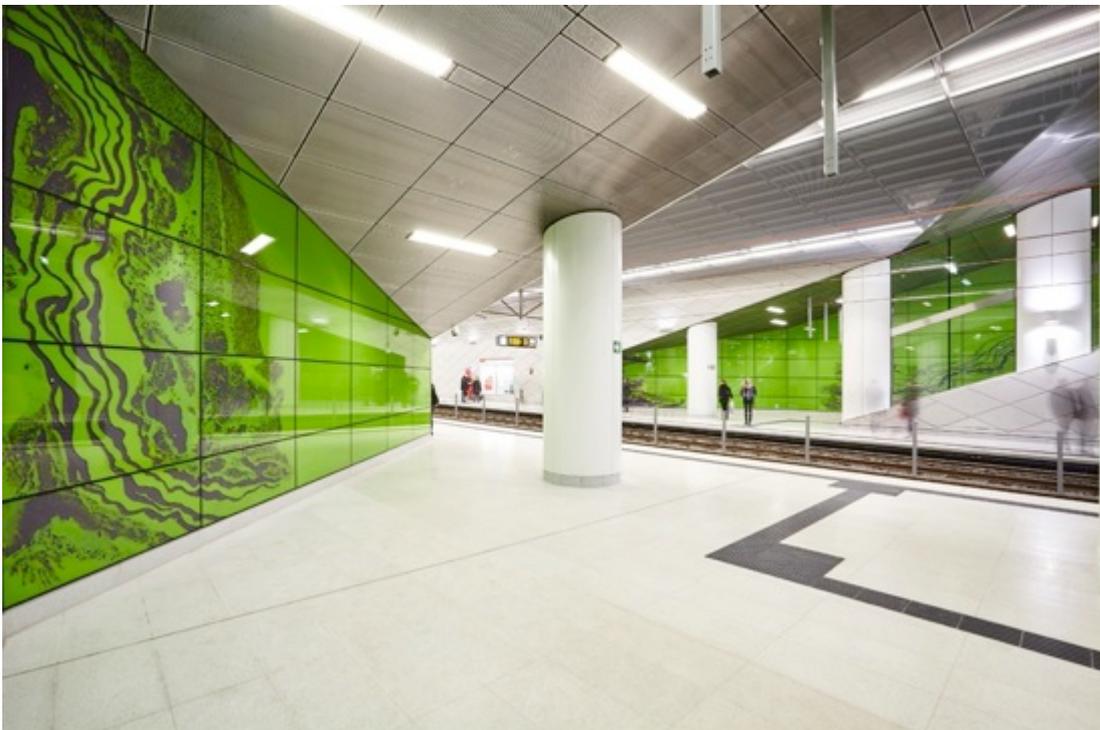
Artistic execution, Graf-Adolf-Platz station: Manuel Franke, Leni Hoffmann, Düsseldorf

Contractor: Glashandel Pritz (planning and installation), Engelskirchen

Images (copyright: EUROGLAS)



A thread of lines that accompanies passengers down to the platform begins at every entrance.



Shining green, punctuated by a violet thread of lines, creates an accessible colour space.



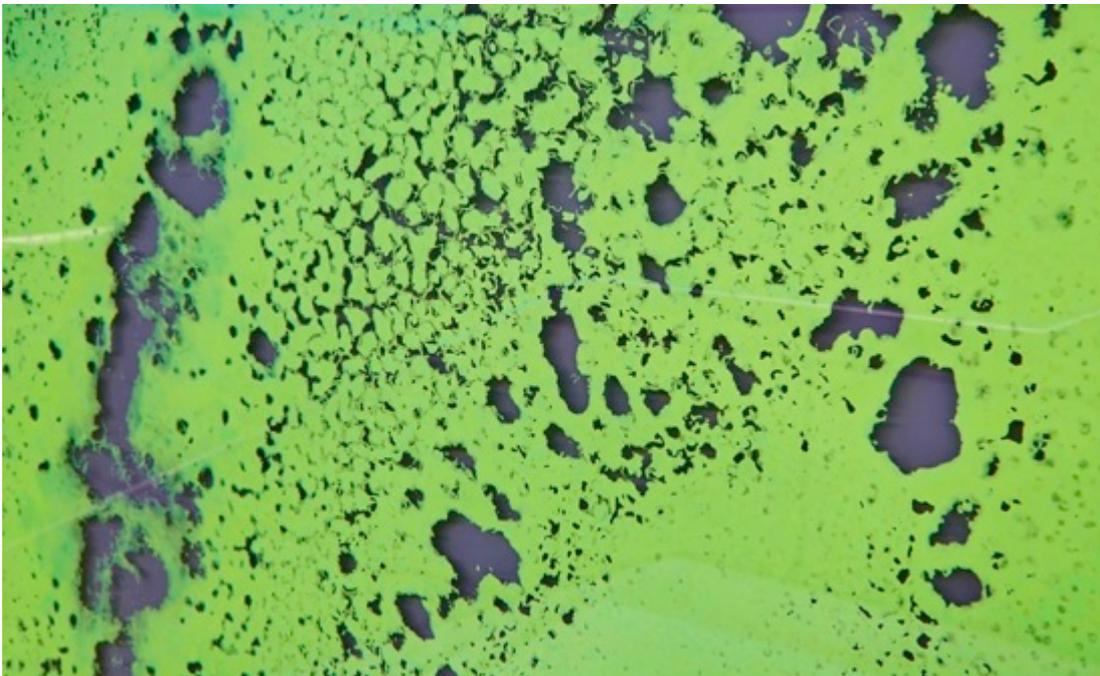
The underground station incision also overspans the tunnel and was fitted with specially designed glass sheets.



Intense colour and brightness contrast with the darkness of the underground.



Just like an agate rock, the wall design reveals natural diversity of form and depth.



The glass thickness between the colour planes creates space for detailed shadow patterns.



The Düsseldorf-based artist Manuel Franke at work in the factory.



While still liquid, artist Manuel Franke works on the applied colour layer.



More Information:

Evelyn Krause | Glas Trösch Beratungs-GmbH
Marketing and Communication
Benzstraße 13 | D-89079 Ulm
Tel. 0731-40 96 211 | Fax 0731-40 96 320
e.krause@glastroesch.de | www.glastroesch.de

Press queries:

Matthias Mai | mai public relations GmbH
Leuschnerdamm 13 | D-10999 Berlin
Tel. +49 (0) 30-66 40 40-560 /-555
mm@maipr.com | www.maipr.com