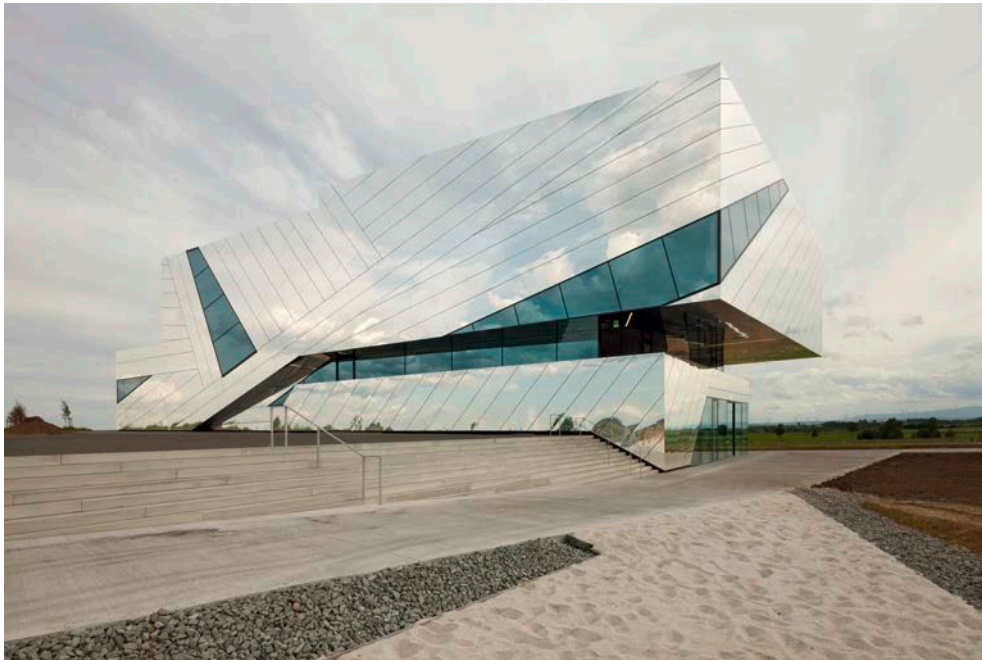


Press Release June 2013

# PALÄON

## RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE CENTRE SCHÖNINGEN SPEARS

Holzer Kobler Architekturen, in collaboration with  
pbr AG, Generalplaner and Topotek1, Landschaftsarchitektur



© Holzer Kobler Architekturen, Photo: Jan Bitter

## PALÄON

Research and Experience Centre Schöningen Spears

Dating back some 300,000 years, the Schöningen Spears are the oldest completely intact hunting weapons discovered to date. The impressive paläon research and experience centre is located on the major archaeological site where they were discovered, at the edge of an open-cast lignite mine. The building designed by Holzer Kobler Architekturen forms a landmark in this undulating landscape, which is mirrored in the structure's reflective exterior. At the heart of the architectural brief was the presentation of the original finds in an impressive interactive archaeological exhibition.

### Architecture

The paläon building emerges impressively from its hilly surroundings, jutting into the landscape of woods and meadows. The three-story structure and the angular paths extending from it present interesting views from many perspectives while their vectors partition the landscape. A second, curving path system integrates these features into the surrounding landscape. The building appears as a kind of camouflage, as a hyper-realistic abstraction of the landscape.

The paläon seems almost to be a part of the surrounding meadows, woods and sky, as the trees, grass and clouds continue seamlessly in its reflective surface – a perfect visual integration. The large, angular openings in the building's exterior afford extensive and fascinating views over the excavation site and the lignite mine as well as the nearby woodland and the Przewalski's horses grazing on the meadow. These "incisions" into the building shell evoke spears piercing the horses' skin, thus incorporating these living, moving animals into the architectural language. The building also makes reference to the more abstract idea of the cuts made in the landscape to dig the adjacent mine. The resultant expressive architecture thus reflects on both the surrounding artificial and natural landscape features, making the structure an eloquent landmark for Schöningen.

### Exhibition

The interactive exhibition of the original excavation finds from Schöningen is at the heart of the structure. The dramatic, arresting images address the senses and emotions of visitors as they learn about our ancestors, Homo erectus, and their everyday lives, and how the flora and fauna here looked some 300,000 years ago. The exhibition also considers current hot topics like climate change and sustainability.

The tour through the exhibition starts and finishes in the three-story atrium in the middle of the building, a convergence point for all the sight lines to the exterior. From this high-ceilinged space, visitors can peek into the research and exhibition areas on the second and third floors while also gaining a view of the lignite mine. The atrium marks the entrance and exit to all the different facilities – the exhibition, educational spaces, offices, restaurant and gift shop. It also takes visitors into the area's prehistory with its display of soil profiles of the geological and archaeological layers in the mine.

The white sculpture inspired by the skeleton of a horse is central to the exhibition's staging. This enlarged, abstract sculptural element forms a Gesamtkunstwerk with the other objects in the room, interacting visually with the juxtaposed theme cabinets and large-format artworks. The highlight of the exhibition is the Speerekapelle, where Schöningen's unique Stone Age wooden spears are on display. The panoramic movie theater towards the end of the exhibition tour portrays a dramatic hunt as it would have taken place on the lake here 300,000 years ago.

After passing through the main exhibition space and crossing the spacious, light-filled atrium, visitors can gain insight into the ongoing archaeological excavations and research work in Schöningen. The visitors' laboratory gives laymen the opportunity to

solve an archaeological riddle using modern methods, while the archaeologists' own, professional laboratory and work spaces are situated alongside the exhibition route and can be viewed by visitors. The paläon and adjacent excavation site thus make the archaeological adventure taking place here every day accessible to laymen and specialists, children and adults, allowing them a first-hand experience of archaeological research.

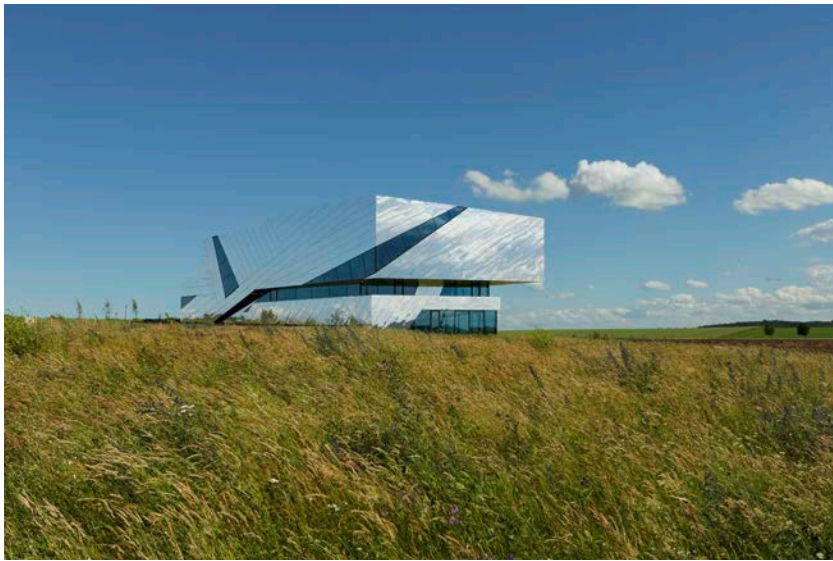
## Landscape

The two different areas of landscaping outside the museum complement and enhance its exterior appearance. Each has a different form and function – one is a natural park landscape created during an interglacial period, the other is the architecturally designed space in the immediate vicinity of the building. To the east, thick forest occupies almost half of the site. To the west and surrounding the paläon are low-density woodland, meadows and a lake. The enclosure for the Przewalski's horses is also here. A system of curving paths guides visitors to special viewpoints and attractions as well as establishing the necessary connections. A slight elevation by the lake affords visitors views of the area where the wild horses live. The design of the children's playground was inspired by extinct prehistoric animals.

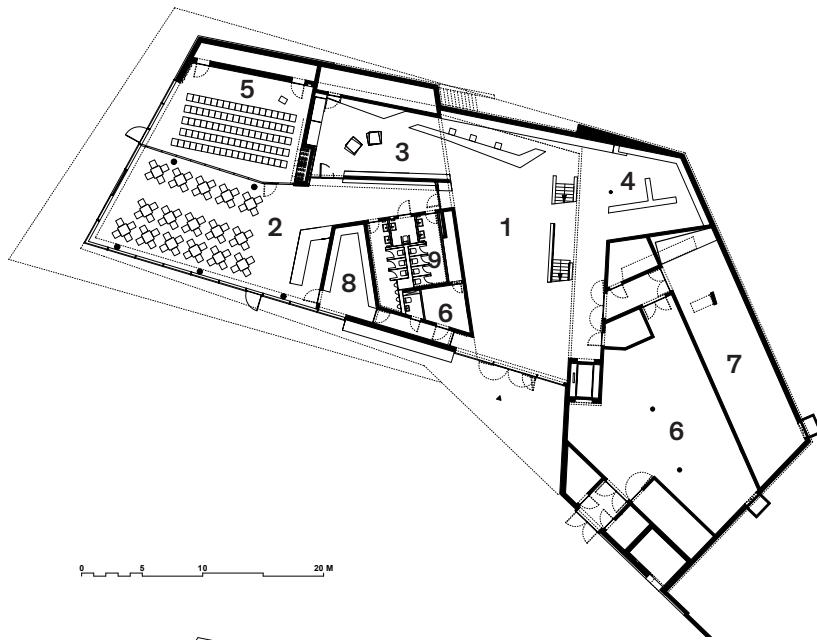


Site plan, © Topotek 1

# Holzer Kobler

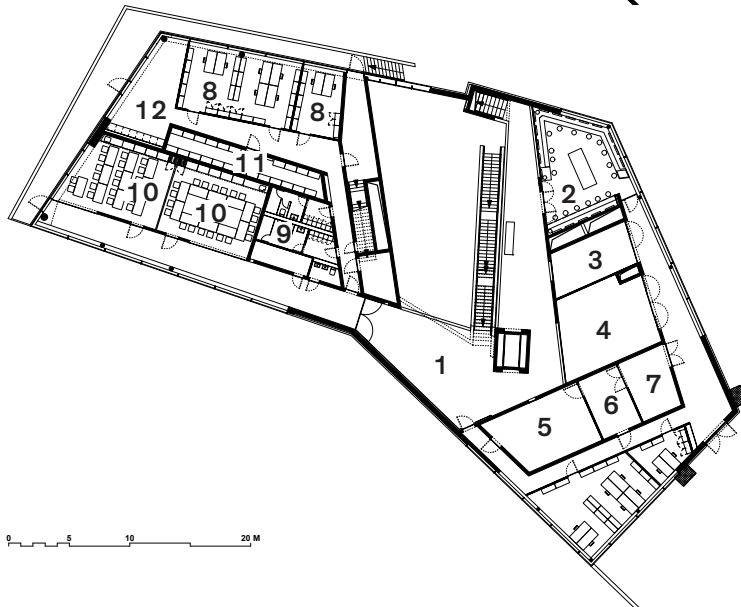


© Holzer Kobler Architekturen, photos: Jan Bitter



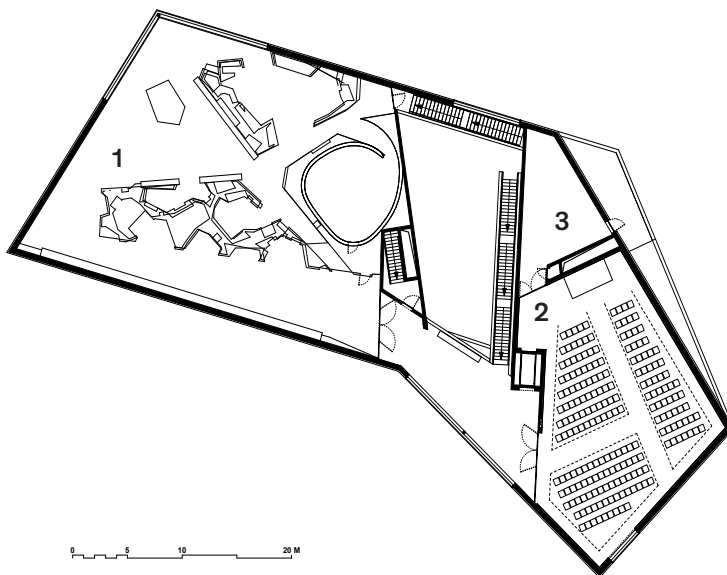
**Floor plan Ground Floor**

1. Foyer
2. Caf teria
3. Shop
4. Cloak Room
5. Lecture Space
6. Storage
7. Technical Space
8. Kitchen
9. Toilet



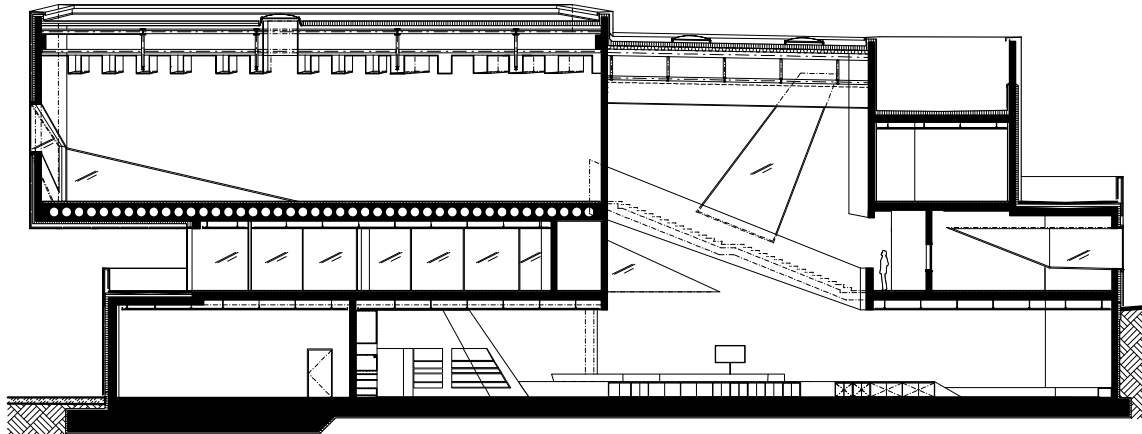
**Floor plan 1st Floor**

1. Galery
2. Visitors`s Laboratory
3. Work Space
4. Restauration
5. Magazine Archaeological Finds
6. Storage
7. Magazin Incoming Finds
8. Office
9. Toilets
10. Museum Educational Service
11. Archive
12. Kitchenette



**Floor plan 2nd Floor**

1. Permanent Exhibition
2. Changing Exhibitions
3. Storage



0 5 10 20 M

Section

## Facts / Imprint

**Location:**

paläon  
Forschungs- und Erlebniszentrum Schöninger Speere  
Paläon 1  
38364 Schöningen

[www.palaeon.de](http://www.palaeon.de)

**Opening:** 24. Juni 2013

**Floor Space (Total):** 4.090 qm  
**Floor Space Exhibition:** 600 qm  
**Total Area incl. landscape:** 240.000 qm

**Client:** Stadt Schöningen  
**Occupant:** paläon GmbH  
**Curator:** Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege

**Architecture:** Holzer Kobler Architekturen, Zürich/Berlin, in collaboration  
with pbr Planungsbüro Rohling AG, Magdeburg  
**Landscape architecture:** Topotek 1, Berlin

**Exhibition design:** Holzer Kobler Architekturen, Zürich/Berlin

**Graphic design exhibition:** Holzer Kobler Architekturen, Zürich/Berlin  
**Graphic production:** PIGMENTPOL Sachsen GmbH, Satz und Reinzeichnung Kerstin Hübsch  
**Media planning:** Jangled Nerves, Stuttgart  
**Light planning:** Lichtvision Design & Engineering GmbH, Berlin  
**Implementation exhibition:** Seiwo Technik GmbH, Bel-Tec Gesellschaft für Film-, Theater- und Ausstellungsbau mbH  
**Fittings exhibits:** id3d-berlin gmbh

**Artists installations:** Jens Najewitz, Stephan Hüsch, Misha Shenbrot, Alexej Tchernyi, Ekkehard Runge  
**Illustrations:** Benoit Clary, Wu Zhio, Christian Meier zu Ermgassen, Simon Schede

## Holzer Kobler Architekturen

Holzer Kobler Architekturen was formed in Zurich in 2004 by Barbara Holzer and Tristan Kobler. The studio operates internationally, covering a broad spectrum of activities from urban planning to architecture, from scenography to exhibition curatorship. A multidisciplinary team comprising architects, designers, graphic artists and curators shapes its special approach to projects. Close collaboration with clients in both public and private sectors is integral to Holzer Kobler Architekturen projects, as is a tightly knit network encompassing business, academia, research, arts and culture. A second studio in Berlin was founded in april 2012.

Holzer Kobler Architekturen thrives on its fascination for a wide variety of visual fields, including architecture, exhibitions and design. In fact, architecture itself is not approached as a single entity but as a plurality of architectures opening up and extending the processes of architectural thought, action and research. Among these architectures, from the smallest exhibitions to vast urban planning projects, unifying elements, common ground and synergies are sought. The visual diversity of the projects the company has worked on stems from its claim to find a solution specific to each task and location that brings together past, present and future and reinterprets the whole. Holzer Kobler Architekturen has never taken an interest in propagating a particular design language as its own trademark style, preferring instead to focus on approaching each design afresh and creating new styles that enrich our society.

**Press contact:**

pr@holzerkobler.com

Holzer Kobler Architekturen  
Ankerstrasse 3, CH-8004 Zürich  
T +41 44 240 52 00 F +44 240 52 02

Holzer Kobler Architekturen Berlin GmbH  
Köpenicker Str. 48-49, Aufgang F, D-10179 Berlin  
T +49 30 24 62 81 70 F +49 30 55 87 72 94

**[www.holzerkobler.com](http://www.holzerkobler.com)**

## WORKS – SELECTION

### Architecture / Urban Planning

- 2019 Corporate Design, **Humboldt Forum**, Berlin Palace, Germany
- 2016 Five Star Hotel, **Zhong Fang Blue Globe Hotel**, Jiande, China
- 2015 New university complex with boardinghouse, **Campus Messestrasse**, Vienna, Austria
- 2015 Two residential buildings, **Schönberg Ost**, Bern, Switzerland
- 2014 Student village Plänterwald, **Frankie & Johnny**, Berlin, Germany
- 2014 Three pavillions, **Under One Roof**, with Kengo Kuma and Associates, EPFL – Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 2014 Retail and office center, **Inside**, Volketswil, Switzerland
- 2014 Mixed Use Development, **Max Rex**, Thun, Switzerland
- 2013 New research and experience centre, **paläon**, with pbr and topotek 1, Schöningen, Germany
- 2013 Site Development, **Suurstoffi**, Risch Rotkreuz, Switzerland
- 2012 Residential building, **Wasserschloss**, Vogelsang, Switzerland
- 2012 Interior & Furniture Design, **Penthouse S17**, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2008 Mixed-use Development, **Cattaneo**, conversion and new buildings, Dietikon, Switzerland
- 2007 Visitor Center and Observation Tower, **Nebra Ark**, Nebra, Germany
- 2006 **Shopping Center Schönbühl**, renovation and redesign, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2005 Transformation of a Commercial Building into Lofts, **Eichstrasse 25/27**, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2004 Interior Design, **BarRouge**, bar and lounge, top floor of the Exhibition Center Tower, Basel, Switzerland
- 2002 Architecture and Landscape, **Arteplage Yverdon-les-Bains**, with Extasia, Expo.02, Switzerland
- 2002 **Mondial Theatre** and **BarRouge**, Expo.02, Arteplage Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland

### Exhibition Design

- 2014 **Grimm-World**, permanent exhibition, Kassel, Germany
- 2013 **paläon**, permanent exhibition, Schöningen, Germany
- 2013 **Qin – the Eternal Emperor and his Terracotta Warriors**, History Museum, Bern, Switzerland
- 2013 **Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon**, permanent exhibition, Dresden, Germany
- 2012 **Sasso San Gottardo**, Sasso da Pigna, San Gottardo, Switzerland
- 2012 **Protest. Mediation. Dialog.** Frankfurt Aiports, the region and its people, permanent exhibition, Information Center, Kelsterbach-Frankfurt, Germany
- 2012 **Glücksfälle – Störfälle. Facets of intercultural Communication**, Museum for comunication, Berlin / Frankfurt, Germany
- 2011 **Warning: Communicating is dangerous.** exhibition architecture and design, Museum of Communication, Berne, Switzerland
- 2011 **Army Museum of Military History Dresden**, permanent exhibition with HG Merz, Dresden, Germany
- 2011 **First Beijing International Design Triennial – Ren: Good Design, GOOD GUYS**, National Museum, Beijing, China
- 2011 **Die Bourbaki Armee in der Schweiz**, permanent exhibition, Museum Bourbaki Panorama, Lucerne, Switzerland

- 2010 **REALSTADT. Wishes Knocking on Reality's Doors**, with Heller Enterprises and Angelika Fitz, Kraftwerk Mitte-Berlin, Germany
- 2010 **Time and the Worlds of Messel**, permanent exhibition at the Visit or Center Messel Pit, an Unesco-World-Heritage-Site, Messel, Germany
- 2009 **History of Switzerland and Collections Gallery**, permanent exhibition, Swiss National Museum, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2009 **focusTerra**, permanent exhibition of the Swiss Natural Sciences Collection, Department of Natural Sciences ETH Zurich, Switzerland
- 2007 **All we need**, Lux 07, Culture Capiat Luxemburg, Esch-Belval, Luxemburg
- 2005 **The Wall**, permanent exhibition, Alpinarium Galtür, Austria
- 2004 **10+5 = God**, Jewish Museum Berlin, Berlin, Germany
- 2003 **Shadow casting Weapons**, Swiss National Museum Zurich, Switzerland
- 2002 **SWISH\*, Biopolis and Heimatfabrik**, Expo.02, Arteplages Biel, Neuchâtel, Murten, Switzerland

### Awards

- 2011 **Swiss Design Prize**, nomination with Realstadt and with Building for the 2000-Watt-Society
- 2011 **State Award for Exemplary Architectural Design**, awarded by the State of Hessen, Germany, special recognition for Messel Pit Visitor Center
- 2009 **Swiss Design Prize**, nomination with focusTerra
- 2009 **Hannes Meyer Prize**, awarded by the Association of German Architects (BDA), Regional Association Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, for Nebra Ark Visitor Center
- 2009 **World Architecture Community Awards**, winner with Nebra Ark Visitor Center
- 2008 **Grand Prix Design 2008**, awarded by the Swiss Confederation for the complete works
- 2008 **Tourism Award Saxony-Anhalt**, Germany, awarded for Nebra Ark Visitor Center
- 2007 **European Museum of the Year Award**, Alpinarium Galtür
- 2007 **Architecture Award of the State of Saxony-Anhalt**, Germany, awarded for Nebra Ark Visitor Center

### Publication / Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 **Common Ground - A Kaleidoscope of Perception**, installation at "Traces of Centuries & Future Steps", Palazzo Bembo, Architecture Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2010 Holzer Kobler Architekturen, **Spatial Narratives**, monography chinese – englisch, Architecture & Journalism, Beijing/Shanghai, China
- 2010 **Mise en scène ex.545**, Holzer Kobler Architekturen at Architektur Galerie Berlin, Germany
- 2010 **Holzer Kobler Architekturen. Mise en scène**, Monograph Niggli Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland

### Teaching

- since 2011 **HEAD Haute école d'art et de design, Geneva**, Switzerland, Professorship, Tristan Kobler
- since 2010 **Peter Behrens School of Architecture**, Düsseldorf, Germany, Professorship, Barbara Holzer
- 2010 **ECAL Haute école d'art et de design, Lausanne**, Switzerland, Professorship, Tristan Kobler
- 2009 **Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich**, Switzerland, Guest Professorship, Barbara Holzer and Tristan Kobler
- 2002 - 2004 **Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts**, Lyon, France, Professorship, Tristan Kobler