



Portrait

Hans Ulrich Imesch, born in 1940, spent his childhood in Zurich district 4. He started his career in 1957 by studying to become an overground construction draughtsman. He built his first house in the 2nd year of his course. He taught himself autodidactically to become an architect from 1960 - 1970. His credo was (and still is) learning by doing. His training was practice-oriented work in the design departments of well-known architects in Zurich, Geneva, Paris and London. He was taken up in the CH Register of Architects in 1970 and became a member of SIA and SWB, later he became an honorary member of BSA. He was a lecturing and research assistant under the professorship of Walter Custer at ETH Zurich from 1970 – 1980. He initiated and organised a series of lectures at ETH, which presented interdisciplinary methods of problem solving on the theme of “system thinking.” He then initiated and led a practice-oriented course of draughting for town planning in the countryside in EL. Research work followed, primarily conducted in situ, on the subject of “Traditional forms of habitation in the Sahara.” His actual interest in architecture was and is, as he says, “its spiritual dimension.” He views architecture (indeed, all the environment built by the hand of man) as a manifestation of mental and spiritual states. In order to find out more about this (and himself), he studied depth psychology at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich from 1978 until 1986. His thesis earned the attribute “Masterpiece of applied Jungian psychology.” He became a member of the Swiss and International Association for Analytical Psychology SGAP/IAAP. He opened his own depth psychology practice in 1986. At the same time, he assumed management of the structural engineering department of the City of Zurich. He organised trips to the Sahara for small groups for a meditative, contemplative self-experience from 1986 – 1993. He founded the IGGZ, Institute for Holistic Design Z in 1993. The IGGZ works on commissions for cities and communities in Switzerland and abroad that are connected with the desire to enhance the design of public spaces in an aesthetic, functional and experiential manner. Here, he developed a concept that he calls holistic design and that is intended to boil his holistic philosophy of design down to an essence, which is Z. As from 2006, he withdrew from the firm, apart from taking on special consultancy remits, and moved to a mountain village, which calls itself the end of the world. From there, he journeyed - so to speak – into the “cosmos” (expanded explorations of mental and spiritual inner worlds, lonely walks in the mountains, active imagination and the study of astrology). In one of his seances, he heard the voice of his lecturer, who at that time assessed his case reports (she actually said then): “You write well. Architecture and psychology are possibly only preparations.” He therefore turned everything inside out again (2017), in order to, as he says, “conclude my life’s work with writing.”

Imesch is a lone wolf, has been married several times, has two children, has practised tai chi for 40 years, is friends with an Indian Swami and sleeps on the floor on a sheepskin mat.

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- On his Mandala Monument of Peace draft, Imesch says: “When the right people come together, the project will be built. Where? Somewhere in this world. I hope that it is opened on 9/11-26.”