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Creativity functions as the inner drive in the design of automobiles much as it does in architecture. **Michael Mauer**, director of Style Porsche, and **Roman Delugan** of the Vienna-based firm Delugan Meissl Associated Architects, which created the design used for the Porsche Museum, discuss the art of combining tradition and innovation. Where? In the restaurant Christophorus at the Porsche Museum, of course.

Michael Mauer: I really have to say that whenever I come up into the exhibition space from the escalator in the foyer, my heart starts beating faster. What a great entry!

Roman Delugan: I'm glad to hear you say that. We worked to convey a certain sense of sublimity on entering the museum. The escalator is the sole connection to the exhibition level, so the first thing it does is fulfill its transportation function. On arrival there's an emotional element as well—when the space opens up you can experience expanse, motion, and dynamism, but also peace and stillness.

Mauer: Porsche stands for sportiness and functionality. In my opinion, that combination is the key to success, because compared to our competitors we're more suited to everyday use. In the meantime, though, func-

tionality—especially in discussions on new developments—has been assigned somewhat too much weight for my taste. How far can one reduce functionality?

Delugan: For me as an architect, functionality is the basis for every project. Above and beyond implementation of the spatial agenda as such, the design process has to culminate in a sequence of spaces that both makes rational sense and resonates on an emotional level. The Porsche Museum fulfills its original purpose, and in addition to that takes up the dynamism of the sports-car theme in its spatial geometry. Changing the spatial sequences subtly determines the visitors' course of movement.

Mauer: Porsche attains its dynamism by means of proportions. Its cars are a little broader and a little flatter than others. An-

other important aspect is the lateral acceleration. How do I shape the car's longitudinal curvature? So, just as you play around with opening up angles, we play with surfaces.

Delugan: That's surely a delicate process, recognizable in the 911 to this day. Whereas architectural projects are constantly subject to different demands, the 911 has remained true to its basic form, with slight modifications, for decades—yet is still always cutting-edge. I find that fascinating.

Mauer: We always have to weigh how to proceed. We have our design strategy, namely, elements that have traditionally defined Porsche. We make our way along these guidelines, hand over hand, working out physical models; and then the discussions with the Board begin. The most important

topic in that process is brand identity. And if we're talking about a 911 successor model, then the question becomes: Is it still a 911? For me it very clearly has to be a 911, but it also very clearly has to be a *new* 911. Quantum developmental steps of this type take time.

Delugan: You're taking the words right out of my mouth. New ideas take time to ripen, and content has to be constantly redefined in its respective context. It can be difficult to communicate this to clients.

Mauer: Development runs through three stages for us. The first consists of finding the proportions—we're also talking about the vehicular architecture. That is the vision. If I don't work cleanly in this stage, I'm doomed in the next two, which focus on styling and refinement. In my opinion, this

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initial stage of developing ideas is underestimated by many car companies.

Delugan: The development process in architecture is similar. But while cars as objects are subject to very specific demands, architecture forms an integral part of its surroundings. It has to respond to the respective features and topographies and meet a broad spectrum of requirements with respect to functionality and use. If a building ultimately elevates the existing qualities of the location where it is built, then the project is a success.

Mauer: Another example is our show car that we presented in Paris. It has a car-body variant based on the Panamera. It's the first plug-in hybrid in this sector that can go 30 kilometers [over 18 miles] on purely electrical power, and it also takes functionality

a step further. We had the idea for it a year ago at the IAA in Frankfurt. We've needed most of the time since then for the creative phase, which I intentionally kept very open. You can't shorten this process endlessly—even if people who work with numbers most of the time expect you to.

Delugan: I'd agree with that one hundred percent. But in contrast to architecture, technical developments in the automobile industry move considerably faster. In our sector, innovations in functionality and materials proceed haltingly. Independent of this, however, the creative space that you mention is absolutely necessary for development. Everything else is stasis.

Mauer: A nice metaphor just occurred to me in this respect. I have a river with two banks, and a bridge that has to be replaced.

“There has to be creative leeway to advance. Anything else is stasis.”

ROMAN
DELUGAN

Roman Delugan (49) is cofounder of the successful firm Delugan Meissl Associated Architects (DMAA), which has won international acclaim for such projects as the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen (2008) and the EYE Film Institute Netherlands in Amsterdam (2012).

MICHAEL
MAUER

Michael Mauer (50) has directed the design department Style Porsche since 2004, and is responsible for the design of the Cayenne, the Panamera, and the new 911.



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MICHAEL
MAUER

There are two possibilities. I can say that I'll build the most beautiful bridge in the world. Or I can see the demolition of the bridge as an opportunity to completely rethink the situation. The point is to get from one bank to the other. And a bridge is one possible solution. Perhaps it's the best. But the best might also be a tunnel or a funicular. As a designer one should give oneself this type of conceptual leeway.

Delugan: We've got to fight all the more for leeway regarding content, for that is precisely what enables innovation and architectural quality. In light of the growing challenges that we architects and designers will be facing in the future, this leeway will become increasingly important. The key notion to keep in mind here is sustainability.

Mauer: Another important issue for me is user-friendliness—which in addition to form is a major factor in purchasing decisions. Cars today are often totally overloaded. When I look at vehicles that teem with design elements from three or four generations—that's crazy! Instead one should reflect on a basic form, develop a clean model,

and make everything more streamlined and pure. I predict that automotive design will undergo a major overhaul over the coming years.

Delugan: Yes, a reduction to essentials would indeed be a worthy aim in architecture as well. A building's energy and supply systems alone make you feel like you're on Spaceship Enterprise. Thousands of devices and possibilities. Suddenly you're a slave to the technology, like in hotels, for example. Do you travel a lot too?

Mauer: Goodness, yes!

Delugan: It starts with the room key. In which direction does the magnetized card work? How do the lights go on? A nightmare! That'll have to be simplified in the future.

Mauer: Some technology is definitely helpful. I was skeptical, for example, about proximity radar. But in fact it's wonderful. I don't have to worry about anything in stop-and-go traffic anymore. But I miss seriously analyzing and questioning these types of innovations to figure out what is truly desirable.

"Another important issue for me is user-friendliness—which in addition to form is a major factor in purchasing decisions."

Delugan: Isn't it great that we can participate in this process as designers? I view it as a privilege.

Mauer: Have you ever designed a car?

Delugan: No, unfortunately not. We're certainly active in the fields of engineering and product design, so it would be very appealing to be involved in an automotive design process. Although it's not my area of expertise, it would be a dream. What do you dream of?

Mauer: By virtue of working at Porsche and being just the fourth head of design to be permitted to lay hands on the 911, a great dream has already come true for me. And it fills me with pride to see that the newcomer has found its place on the road. My dream is to design my own house. To sit in front of a blank piece of paper and to zero in on ideas—like I do every day in designing cars. Mr. Delugan, would you help me? Maybe this is the start of a marvelous working relationship.

Recorded by Valerie Hühne.

*"An idea first has to be born.
We need time for that,
as architects or designers."*

ROMAN
DELUGAN