

### **The island in the Mur as a creative hotspot**

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The city of Graz is divided into two parts by the river Mur. As a sign of overcoming this cultural separation, an island made of glass and steel was built in the river according to the designs of the New York designer and artist Vito Acconci for the European Capital of Culture 2003. In the meantime, the Murinsel has developed into one of the tourist hotspots, but the visitor frequency by the residents themselves has been very limited.

Therefore, after the general renovation of the island from September 2016 to February 2017, the municipally owned company undertook new efforts to anchor the artificial island more strongly in the hearts of the people of Graz. For this purpose, the City of Design Coordination has developed an entertainment concept that aims to anchor the island as a place of cultural appetizers. In addition, a summer cinema series (outdoor) was launched and cooperations were initiated with almost all of the well-known Graz festivals (Design month Graz, Diagonale, Springfestival, grazerzählt, Klanglicht, AIMS, steirischer herbst, etc.).

In the interior of the island there is a café (which is now operated by the city-owned company itself) and a newly outfitted design shop, which presents and sells the products of local creative talent.

All these efforts are already having an effect after the first year: the island is becoming the city's creative hotspot. Young artists are increasingly discovering the island and want to present themselves there. This growing diversity should be taken advantage of, however the City of Design coordination responsible for the program is striving to create a clearly recognizable profile. It does not want to be blinded by the quotas and fall into arbitrariness.

Due to its central location, the Murinsel is virtually the pulse of the city and as such also lies at the heart of the inner-city pilot zone. In this zone, the city would like to present itself as self-confident, innovative and also courageous and a bit cheeky: Graz is a medium-sized European city known for its universities, cultural and design attractions that is growing fast, with a rich cultural heritage that looks to the future with courage.