

PRESS KIT

## ole scheeren : spaces of life

December 10, 2022 – June 04, 2023



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December 2022

**Exhibition**  
**ole scheeren : spaces of life**

Exhibition opening  
**Fri, 09.12.2022**

Exhibition period  
**Sat, 10.12.2022 – Sun, 04.06.2023**

Location  
**Atrium 8+9**

**Press contact**  
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## PRESS RELEASE

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe is presenting a major solo exhibition on the internationally renowned architect Ole Scheeren

## New Exhibition

**ole scheeren : spaces of life**

10.12.2022 – 4.6.2023

Opening: 9.12.2022 at 7.30 p.m.

*The ZKM | Karlsruhe is opening Ole Scheeren's first major solo exhibition on December 10, 2022, which presents a spatial experience of his sculptural architecture in large-scale installations in the museum's tall atria spaces. Under the title **ole scheeren : spaces of life**, Peter Weibel has curated an exhibition in close dialogue with the architect that explores the concepts behind his designs and showcases the historical significance of his work. Furthermore, the exhibition provides view into the effects of the digital on the future of architecture as reflected in Scheeren's work.*

In the high atriums of the ZKM | Karlsruhe, visitors can experience an architecture exhibition that translates the sculptural character of Ole Scheeren's buildings into a unique spatial experience. Around 100 3D-printed architectural models line up along the approximately 42-meter-long timeline. The models locate each individual project in time and space. The Media Dump invites visitors to experience the media reception of Scheeren's architecture through the endless stream of social media posts and pop quotes.

Through Augmented Reality (AR), visitors are transported into the urban spaces and the interiors of the buildings on the large-scale models. This exhibition offers a series of AR experiences that can be activated in front of the sculptures in the atriums of the ZKM. By scanning the corresponding QR code next to the models, the building is embedded in its real environment and allows a glimpse into the interior spaces.

»The Interlace« allows visitors to explore one of Ole Scheeren's most famous buildings from anywhere. All apps are based on Snap AR technologies and require Snapchat and a cell phone.

**ole scheeren : spaces of life** is a multimedia exhibition that offers its visitors a multi-faceted approach to Ole Scheeren's and thus to the

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fundamental questions of social coexistence, which is a central challenge of our time.

### Organizations / Institutions

The exhibition is a collaboration between ZKM | Center for Art and Media and the OS ARCHIVE, in partnership with KME Karlsruhe Marketing und Event, City of Karlsruhe.

Scan for the AR experience »The Interlace«



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## ABOUT OLE SCHEEREN

Born in Karlsruhe in 1971, Ole Scheeren has gained worldwide recognition for his designs for innovative high-rise buildings, residential projects and hybrid art spaces. His landmark projects shape the way we interact with our cities, creating new social narratives through a bold vision of architecture as a highly connective and inclusive environment.

For him, architecture is a kind of body or stage on which human life can unfold. Beyond their mere functionality, his buildings activate the imagination, fantasy and emotions of the people who live and work in them, true to Scheeren's motto "form follows fiction". With his stacked horizontal buildings and their many openings to nature, as in the residential complex "The Interlace" (2013), Scheeren explores new perspectives on vertical thinking and building in today's urban environment, designing new living spaces for people and their needs.

In 2010, Scheeren founded his architectural practice, Büro Ole Scheeren, with offices in Hong Kong, Beijing, Berlin, and London, where he is chief designer and responsible for managing the firm's business, creative vision, and strategic development. His projects have won numerous awards, including the CTBUH Urban Habitat Award 2021 for DUO in Singapore, the World Building of the Year Award 2015 for The Interlace in Singapore, and the CTBUH Best Tall Building Worldwide Award 2013 for the CCTV Headquarters in Beijing.

Ole Scheeren emphasizes the need to find transformative solutions to the challenges of today's society. His architecture is distinguished by a 30-year commitment to translating his creative visions into highly successful projects, including the completion of three major projects in 2018: MahaNakhon in Bangkok, DUO towers in Singapore, and the Guardian Art Center in the historic center of Beijing.

Ole Scheeren's ongoing work includes the 398m Empire City Towers Complex in Ho Chi Minh City, 'Fifteen Fifteen by Ole Scheeren', a branded high-end residential tower in Vancouver, Abaca Mactan Resort in the Philippines and the new headquarters of ZTE, one of China's largest tech giants in Shenzhen, among many others.

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## QUOTE FROM PETER WEIBEL

“The end result of Ole Scheeren’s architecture is that it shows us how architecture in the age of the Anthropocene must no longer just create living spaces, but spaces for living with new neighborhoods that fuse nature and building complexes. Augmented reality applications therefore provide insights into life inside these buildings, which due to their horizontal orientation are built terrestrial manifestos.”

Peter Weibel, Artistic-scientific Chairman of ZKM | Karlsruhe

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## INTERVIEW EXCERPT WITH OLE SCHEEREN

*"We need the spectacle." // An excerpt from an extended interview conducted with Ole Scheeren by the art magazine Monopol in the summer of 2022 and published in the issue Monopol 11/2022.*

**Ole Scheeren, among other things you have built an award-winning residential complex in Singapore, a skyscraper in Bangkok, and the new headquarters of Chinese state television in Beijing; you have designed flagship stores, theaters, and recently an auction house near the Forbidden City. A simple question: What is a good space?**

Space is a functional entity, but also an emotional one, an experience. Architecture has always focused on functionality. There is, after all, the well-known principle of "form follows function." However, we should also ponder what happens when form follows fiction instead — when we think about how space is alive, works, does things. With this in mind, how can we create spaces that create an inspiring world of experience for us? That is exactly the opposite of *form follows function*, so I prefer to speak of *form follows fiction*. A vertical tower block in which apartments are simply stacked on top of each other and accessible by elevator may work, but it only creates stacked isolation. A high-rise doesn't create any interpersonal connections, nor does it create spaces that allow for any modulation of the spectrum between the individual and the collective or community. "The Interlace" is a very large project, 1040 residential units, 170,000 square meters. The clients' expectation was actually that I would build twelve towers. But I found it a tremendously interesting opportunity to develop a large communal complex starting from the idea of community rather than isolation and fixation on the individual. The horizontal elements are stacked on top of each other in such a way that creates courtyards with gardens in between. The entire system of access functions via these gardens, which are social spaces where people meet. Some are more public, others a bit quieter and more private.

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## From a purely ecological point of view, does the high-rise still have a future? Doesn't it consume too much resources and energy?

We must vehemently question the notion of the high-rise as a mere multiplication of a small plot of land. The high-rise as a tool of densification still plays a major role in reality. It may not be perceived that way in Central Europe, but elsewhere in the world, in Asia and other places, it cannot be avoided. It also has many advantages: densification also means the shortening of distances or reduction of transportation systems. And if you do these things really intelligently, you can save a lot. Of course, you need material to build, and you have to look at what materials you use and how efficiently. I think it's very important not to reduce the idea of sustainability to a simple formula. Because in addition to ecological sustainability, social sustainability must not be neglected. Saving resources on paper ultimately doesn't help if we construct a building in which people don't enjoy living and working in the long term.

## With the "Riverpark Tower" in Frankfurt on the Main, you are now reconstructing an existing building for the first time. Is that the future?

I think it's an important aspect of the future. We really have to be proactive about rethinking existing structures. I say rethink on purpose, because it's not going to be enough to say that we'll just take the facade off and stick something else on to make it look more contemporary. You have to look at the core values of a structure and identify its qualities. In Frankfurt, it's a 1970s office building that we're converting into housing. What's interesting about it is that it has completely cantilevered floors that rest on only four piers. That makes for wonderful panoramic views, but it would be far too expensive to do that today. I have reinforced this quality and, at the same time, intervened in the core of the building, made it more efficient and saved 400 square meters there, which can now be used for apartments.

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## How can we ensure that sustainability is implemented in a more uncompromising way in construction?

You can set up rules that enforce it. Or you can create incentives. If you buy a piece of land in Asia, you are allowed to build on a fixed number of square meters there. But if you tell a developer that they can build more if they do certain things, then opportunities arise. That's how you could create intelligent sets of rules. Since the late 1990s, there is a polarization taking place today that is vehemently opposing our dreams. My generation grew up during the Cold War and then saw great opportunities in global networking. The focus was not so much on the merging of economies, but on exchanges, on an artistic, cultural, personal, as well as on a work level. I am an extreme example of this generation. I have lived in ten different countries and worked in many more. For a long time, I didn't live permanently anywhere at all, but simply traveled back and forth between cultures. The idea of what connects was always a key factor for me. This has been realized in the buildings themselves, as well as in the process of making them. In my company, the workforce has always been diverse, comprising at least 25 different nationalities; we are an international think tank. Now we live in times when various forms of nationalism are rolling this back and questioning a lot of it. That is a challenging situation.

**For the time being, your native city of Karlsruhe is a frequent destination: in December, your first major exhibition will start there at the ZKM. The title is *Spaces of Life*, what is the objective?**

It's about imagining what could be done in architecture. How can we imagine the possibilities of life, the emotional spectrum, the things that can take place? How can we create spaces that follow our ideas, but that can also be there for the different ideas of those who live there? We don't create the buildings just to be constructed and photographed, but for people to live in them and for that to function. When we built "The Interlace" nine years ago, a lot of real estate was being constructed that people weren't buying to live in, but to sell again after three years for as big a profit as possible. That has had a devastating effect on architecture. If no one lives there anyway, no one cares if it's good or bad. "The Interlace" had

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an occupancy rate of over 95 percent from the start. Why? Because people wanted to live there. People live there because they have recognized a quality in it. We want to make these qualities experienceable at the ZKM.

The full version of the interview can be found in Monopol 11/2022 and online at [www.monopol-magazin.de](http://www.monopol-magazin.de).

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The ZKM | Center for Art and Media is a cultural institution that is unique in the world. With its art collection, publications, archives, and artistic, scholarly and scientific research on the electronic arts, the ZKM stands for a program of interdisciplinary projects and international collaborations. In its exhibitions, symposia, concerts, and workshops, the ZKM communicates the theoretical discourses of philosophy, science, technology, politics, and economics from a contemporary artistic perspective.

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Wednesday-Friday	10 am – 6 pm
Saturday & Sunday	11 am – 6 pm
Monday & Tuesday	closed

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