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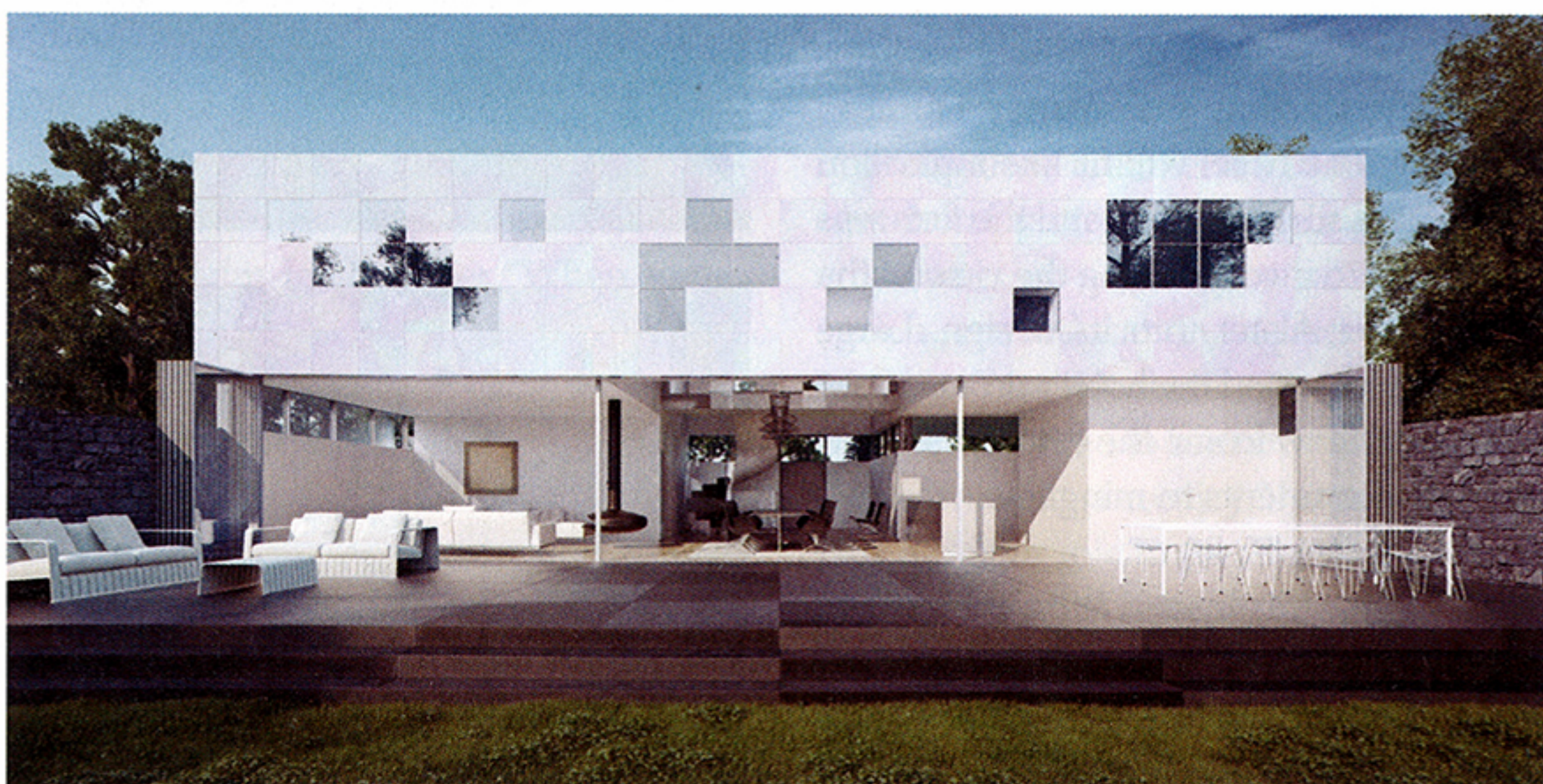
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# Where form follows the project

**CHRIST. associated architects** is one of the oldest architecture firms in the world but with every new generation, a fresh perspective is integrated into the company's philosophy. Roger Christ, youngest partner and great-grandson of the original founder, talks about how architecture is personal and influences the way we live.

TEXT: MARILENA STRACKE | PHOTOS: CHRIST.CHRIST. ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



The architecture office goes as far back as 1898 when Karl Christ senior founded it in Wiesbaden. From then on the family business kept flourishing and can proudly look back at its impressive credentials.

Before joining the family business in 2006, Roger Christ studied at the Technical University of Graz and worked at the prestigious Norman Foster architecture office in London. On returning to Wiesbaden, Christ started working on his own projects straight away. He remembers: "I never worked with my father on the same project. He acted as a consultant in a way, which was very helpful, as he is very experienced. I guess it was the same with him and his father. Our profession is very dependant on the individual person. More or less a new office emerges with each generation."



The architects' experience together with the appreciation of the next generation's influence seems to play a crucial part and is maybe one of the reasons for the company's on-going success, both in its past and present work. "We do not have a special design credo. For me it's important to have an open-end design approach unhindered by preconceived notions of forms and aesthetics," explains Christ further.

#### Turning obstacles into inspiration

The architecture office designs a great variety of different building types, from commercial to private but it also does not shy away from transport infrastructure projects, energy consulting and interior design. Every construction task is interesting for Christ, who does not believe in specialising but maintains a generalised exposure to architecture as a whole. Sustainability and ecological construction methods are an integral part of this.

Supervising the entire process from start to finish, enables Christ to see the bigger



picture of each project as well as keeping a close eye on the details. Understanding the client's individual requirements is crucial to a project's success.

Christ says: "First we get as much information as possible about what the clients want, even information they think is not that important. Then we visit the site and its surroundings. We try to understand and identify what the design task really is. Most of the time the inspiration comes out of an obstacle or problem, which we try to solve."

#### An impressive past, a promising future

Buildings by CHIRST.CHRIST. associated architects have received many awards and nominations. The conversion House S in Wiesbaden, in particular, received a lot of praise and was awarded the best architects award 13, Iconic Award 2013, International architecture Award 2013, SAIE Selection 2012 and the German Design Award 2014 amongst others. House H and the project for Eckelmann AG are currently nominated for the German Design Award 2015.

Of course the awards are exciting but Christ is more enthusiastic about his current projects. One of them is the refurbishment of an old stable in Mainz, which is as interesting as it is challenging due to preserving old elements such as brick walls, vaults and the iron framework. Christ reveals: "Regarding design language and materials, the new components form a radical contrast to the existing elements. Through this contrast and the resulting dialogue between the elements, a completely new experience of space is created."



Aside from a challenging project in New York, Christ is also working on a big residential project with 16 housing units: "On the ground floor there are only parking lots, cellars and entrances, which means the upper levels and the connected gardens with their trees are seemingly floating above the area. That way every flat has a view over a lot of greenery."

#### The influence of architecture

Christ believes that the quality of our surrounding architecture plays a major part in our daily lives. Therefore he tries to bridge the gap between client needs and social responsibility, never forgetting to ask critical questions in order to find a conclusive solution.

Perhaps the foundation of his philosophy and the understanding of the impact a building can have, is rooted in Christ's upbringing as he recalls: "I was influenced by the building I grew up in, which was built when I was born. It was an experimental steel construction that everybody hated at the time. Our family was referred to as 'The Christs in the devil's box,' as the building is totally black. With that building I realized very early on that architecture can be a very provocative thing and influences its surroundings and inhabitants very much."

[www.christ-christ.cc](http://www.christ-christ.cc)

Opposite page top: House S, Wiesbaden

Opposite far left: House H, Wiesbaden

Left: Eckelmann AG, Wiesbaden

Top from left: House R, Karlsruhe

House O, Wiesbaden

Apartment building Heiligenstock, Wiesbaden

Photos: Thomas Herrmann, Stuttgart

