

The new location of the University of Performing Arts Ernst Busch in Berlin-Mitte unites all the institutions that have been scattered throughout the city before. The property is surrounded by new buildings in the interior of a typical Berlin Block on Zinnowitzer Strasse and once hosted the opera workshops. The university is a lively place for improvisation, where you can see how theatre works.

The old building from the fifties has been supplemented by two new buildings. A striking feature is the new 24-meter-high, wood-clad stage tower, which makes the University recognisable from afar as a public place. The rehearsal stages are stacked on top of each other and are open to the public on various occasions. The existing building was cut open at its front side and the stage tower is laterally latched into this interface. The new theatre café is pushed as a light box towards the west side of the old building. Together with the stage tower, it flanks the entrance, which widens inwardly as a spacious foyer and leads on the first floor as a working street past the shop-window-glazed theatre fundus and the workshops. A new staircase was added to the existing building and connects all floors as a sculpture made of exposed concrete. A library as well as rehearsal and seminar rooms on the upper floors blend into the existing room layouts of the former workshops. As before the offices are located in the west wing.

The entire building is characterised by a studio atmosphere of experimenting. A unique architectural language was developed from the limited budget. Wood as a classical theatre and building material plays a major role, it is the basic material that makes all improvisation possible. The meeting of the old and the new can be seen in the interior along a line that runs through the building at a height of 2.30 metres. As a kind of *water line* it limits and defines the design interventions. All surfaces below this height are refined. The walls are clad in wood and made writable with board lacquer. They offer the students an endless wall newspaper. The components above are left in their found or raw state.

Competition	2010
Construction start	2014
Completion	2018
Gross floor area	16,200 m ²
Client	Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen Berlin
User	Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch
Architect	O&O Baukunst
Partners	Roland Duda, Manfred Ortner
Project architect	Tobias Ahlers
Project team	Pascal Dworak, Bernd Gotthardt, Frank Illing, Markus Lemcke, Markus Müller, Nora Noack, Lars Riebschläger, Nino Schiddel, Jessica Seidel, Magdalena Schwalke-Sauer
Competition team	Manfred Ortner, Tobias Ahlers, Frank Illing

University of Performing Arts Ernst Busch, Berlin
2010 – 2018







