

The Building of the School

The Heinz-Galinski-Schule was designed in the form of a flower as a gift to the children of Berlin. The sunflower's celestial construction seemed most suitable for planning the school since its seeds orbit the sun and the sun rays illuminate all of the classrooms.

Berlin accepted the gift and entrusted us with the work. To begin with, calculations had to be made of the sun's orbits and the length of all the sun rays. When these were completed construction could begin. Bricks were brought and laid one over the other. Walls rose and the building began to emerge.

In time it became evident that the school, whilst under construction, was gradually transforming into an intricate city. Streets and courtyards followed the paths of the orbits and the infinitesimal traces of the sun's rays. The school's exterior moulded the city's interior into a mirror of the universe, a place where light and shadows intersect. Children loved it and the work continued.

The building was nearing completion when an uncertainty arose. By now the construction resembled neither a sunflower nor a city but instead a book whose open pages carry the load of the construction. Building an open book was not our guiding principle and experts had to be consulted as to the cause of the continuously mutating images.

Following a lengthy Talmudic debate, the school was eventually found to be built correctly. It was acknowledged that the sunflower, when transplanted from the Holy Land to Berlin, evolved naturally into a book. The experts declared that the transformation was unavoidable since the Book represented the only lot Jews were allowed to cultivate in the Diaspora.

The theory of natural evolution was further reinforced by an account from the Old Testament. *Beth-Sefer*, the Hebrew word for school, when translated, literally means "House of The Book." This important piece of biblical-etymological evidence restored confidence in our work and paved the way for the completion of the construction.

Only the school children were oblivious to these transformations. They had to discover for themselves how the sunflower absorbs the light into its deeply cut canyons and reflects it upon the pages of an open book, and how in turn the House of the Book becomes a city of streets, courtyards, and places to hide in.

It seems inevitable that the rapid pace of transformation will come full circle upon completion. Finally, what many have suspected will be revealed: that the House of the Book is not the building of a school, but the landscape of our childhood dreams.

The squares and spirals merge into a geometry of concentric circles and a stream of rays radiating from the center. This new pattern accommodates various demands of the school program while providing a structural system.