SCULPTING SHELLS

An Immersive Shell Reconstruction

Heinz Isler (1926–2009) was a Swiss structural engineer and architect renowned for his pioneering work in thin concrete shell structures. Inspired by natural forms and experimental techniques, Isler developed innovative methods to design elegant, efficient, and structurally sound shells.
During the seminar week, we will focus on restoring the partially destroyed 1:10 model of the Bellinzona shell that stands in the garden of Isler's atelier near Bern. The model was used to understand the structural behavior of Isler's first unoptimized shell. The Bellinzona shell is a landmark example of Isler's innovative approach to thin-shell concrete architecture. This elegant canopy, built in 1963 for Migros Genossenschaft, showcases his mastery in creating visually stunning and structurally efficient forms, inspired by natural geometries and optimized through experimental modeling techniques.
Heinz Isler's methods for thin concrete shells are relevant for their material efficiency and sustainability, addressing modern concerns about resource conservation and carbon emissions. As architecture seeks energy-efficient and eco-friendly solutions, Isler's techniques provide timeless lessons in minimizing waste while achieving bold designs.

17–21.3.2025 | 12 Participants | Cost Frame A (150.-)
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