

Claus Bury – *In Line of History*

In Zaragoza, on the northern bank of the Ebro River, the sculptor Claus Bury has created a fantastic metamorphosis of traditional architectural forms. Designed and built for EXPO 2008, his walkable architectural sculpture testifies to a sensitive orientation on the aspect-rich topography and history of the chosen location. Bury's idea is explorative: Why not build a new bridge on the tracks of a bridge that disappeared long ago? – As it were *In Line of History*, as the Frankfurt artist calls his functional artwork. It starts out from 4-meter-high historic bridge foundations and juts out into the air as a 28-meter-long footbridge designed in the tradition of canopied bridges. Five meters above the waterline, it comes to an end as a kind of balcony. Halfway there, the “gangway” cuts through a row of poplars bordering a lower-lying path on the embankment which creates the impression of a gray “pergola” protruding from behind a curtain of vegetation. Bury's whole unconventional bridge sculpture is characterized by its visual lightness. Thus its horizontal footbridge construction made of Douglas fir planks, steel and shading aluminum lamellae is kept aloft for two thirds of its overall length by two delicate steel archs. Their linear curves remind of daring bridge constructions, their reclining position, however, of the contours of a ship's hull swaying in the water. In some spots, the archs rest on concrete foundations leading down to the river in steps. Established rules of harmony and statics are enlivened by attention-catching irritations. The materials used have been chosen with deliberation. The open skeleton structure, the moderate incline, and the fleeting diagonal bracings of the pergola as well as its corrugated-iron balustrade visibly contribute to the impression of floating and to the esthetic dialog with the reflecting water surface. The grey shades of the various kinds of metals intensify the atmosphere. Similarly stimulating the imagination and subtly opening the horizon of the passer-by, the roofed-over viewing bridge with its lamellae, hence transparent, that is initially 2.70 meters wide, gradually fans to a width of 4.40 meters. Numerous spectators find room on its pulpit-like lookout in order to, inspired by other bridges of Zaragoza worth seeing, complete in their imagination the still missing part of the lost bridge. Eyes and thoughts fly across the Ebro to the world-famous panorama of the old part of town – and beyond.

Gerhard Kolberg