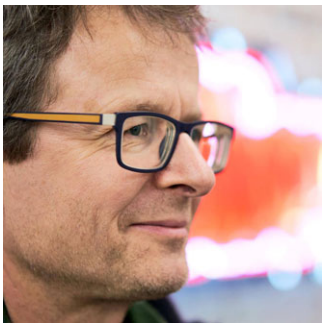
PANEL 1: AVIATIONAL LOCATIONS

Prestige buildings of aviation. Airship hangars as a global phenomenon

From 1908 onwards, the airship established itself as an important military and civil aircraft, especially in Germany. Zeppelin airships had to be moved to protective airship hangars after the end of their journeys because their aluminum structure made them much larger and at the same time more fragile than non-rigid airships. The Treaty of Versailles reversed the airship hangar building boom until 1918. It also forced the hitherto unprecedented demolition of almost all airship hangars in Germany. Nevertheless, the rigid airship reached its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s: in civilian use in Germany for transatlantic passenger traffic, in the USA by the Navy for maritime reconnaissance. New airship hangars of unprecedented dimensions were built as prestige buildings. The shape of the doors and hangars now followed the aerodynamics and streamline design of the “roaring twenties”. However, the sheer size of the few remaining airship hangars makes their subsequent reuse and conversion a challenge.



Roland Fuhrmann was born in Dresden in 1966. He studied fine arts in plastics/metal at the Burg Giebichenstein Art Academy in Halle/Saale. In Paris he continued his studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Since 1998 he has been working as a freelance visual artist in Berlin, primarily in the building-related art and art in public spaces sector, often with a connection to history and natural sciences. He has given lectures on this subject, including at the University of Antwerp, the Muthesius Art Academy in Kiel, the University of Wismar and TU Dresden.

At the same time, he has been working on the history of the construction of airship hangars since the 1980s. In 2018, Roland was awarded a doctorate in engineering at the Institute for Building History, Architectural Theory and Monument Preservation at TU Dresden. His research on the history of the construction of aero-dynamically shaped airship hangars received the Kurt Beyer Prize 2019 and was published by THELEM Verlag Dresden.