

ZOO OF THE FUTURE – 7000 SQUARE METERS OF ROCK ART

Close to nature designs for visitors and residents

„Gondwana“ – as scientists call the prehistoric supercontinent of the southern hemisphere. Based on this, the tropical adventure world „Gondwanaland“ has opened in the Leipzig zoo. The indoor jungle in the centre of the city is the largest tropical hall in Europe, covering 16,500 square meters. This was a fascinating project for all involved parties, such as KaGo & Hammerschmidt GmbH, one of the leading companies for artificial rock in Europe, who were responsible for the complex design of the compound. The man-made landscape with deceptively real looking artificial rocks, tree replicas and waterfalls accommodate more than 300 animals and shelters around 17,000 tropical plants.

The landscape was created to meet specific requirements so that the inhabitants will have no trouble adjusting to their new homes. With the stonework in various shapes, colours and designs, the animal biotopes can be perfectly replicated. Whether it is sandstone, slate, granite, or any other type of rock there is no difference to the viewer's eyes. The advantage of replicas is amongst others their weight: there are less statically challenges due to fewer kilograms; in addition, reconstructions as well as new developments are easier and thus cheaper to implement. Therefore, KaGo & Hammerschmidt's replicas are more than just an alternative to their heavyweight natural counterparts.

The first schemes for „Gondwanaland“ were already presented in 2000, as a general concept for the „zoo of the future“. The initial ground breaking ceremony was in November 2007. There was much to do until the official opening ceremony on 30th June of this year. Beside the artificial rock work, the company from Upper Franconia designed several caves, passages, watercourses, as well as detailed tree replicas and a large tree bridge. KaGo & Hammerschmidt provides a special highlight in Leipzig with a 300 meter themed tunnel, whose construction began in 2009. The visitors are sent to an underground adventure in a derelict mine shaft, passing terrariums and aquariums with inhabitants like from another world. In addition, the visitors - of which up to 2500 can simultaneously set off on an expedition through „Gondwanaland“ - have the option of a boat trip to admire the strikingly authentic bank slopes and rock prominences.

Overall, the Bavarian company had a team of 17 specialists including civil engineers, technicians, foremen and concrete workers. „Gondwanaland“ has been a „hunk“ as Klaus Gohl, one of the two managing directors calls it. Despite numerous major projects such as the „Karl- May-Spiele“ in Bad Segeberg or the „Ronja, the Robber's daughter-themed world“ at Astrid Lindgren Park in Sweden, „Gondwanaland“ proved to be an extraordinary, albeit exciting, challenge due to its size and complexity.

The job of the creators of artificial worlds has ended with the move in of the inhabitants and first attendees, *„As managing director of KaGo & Hammerschmidt I am primarily thrilled by the technical challenges especially of such a large construction site. However, to finally see the "new world" to be filled with life and be discovered by its future residents is always a very moving moment“* says Klaus Gohl on the greatest reward on this project of superlatives.

The reconstruction and expansion of the Leipzig Zoo as one of the most innovative zoos in the world should be completed by 2015. With a 60 million EUR investment „Gondwanaland“ is an important element in the concept „Zoo of the Future“ liquidated by zoo director Dr. Jörg Junold. KaGo & Hammerschmidt is proud to have contributed to such kind of project.

Photos:



Topics tunnel design sketch
Topics tunnel after completion
Overview of top
Artificial river with rock wall
Tree fungus
Waterfall
Klaus Gohl (CEO)

Short Profile

KaGo & Hammerschmidt GmbH was founded in 1992 by managing directors Klaus Gohl and Kai Hammerschmidt. The medium-sized company had its origin in the design of living space habitats with artificial plants, rock imitations, water and light effects. The leader in the field creates zoos and complete bath and sauna landscapes with its products. In 2010 the company received for the second time the award „Mittelstandslöwen“ for product innovation.

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