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Management changeover at ILEK – Successor announced for Werner Sobek

Werner Sobek has left his desk well organized - Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini is the new Director of the Institute for Lightweight Structures and Conceptual Design



Who shall replace Werner Sobek when he leaves? The charismatic architect/engineer and founder of the Institute for Lightweight Structures and Conceptual Design (ILEK) passed the ILEK managerial baton to his student Lucio Blandini in the spring of 2020. After more than 25 years of building up the Institute, Sobek will still be continuing his research and academic teaching roles at Stuttgart University, as well as acting as spokesman of the Collaborative Research Centre SFB 1244 until the end of the year. Prof. Dr. Blandini worked on his doctorate at ILEK, for which he constructed the iconic Stuttgart Glass Shell ('Glashaus'). After studying architecture in the USA, Blandini returned to Stuttgart where he has been a board member of the Werner Sobek design company since 2018.

Pioneering research and development in the design and construction of the man-made environment – whilst ensuring sustainability and keeping energy and material consumption to a minimum – have become synonymous with ILEK under the leadership of Werner Sobek. The same objectives will continue to define the future direction of the Institute under its new management.

Passing on the legacy

Werner Sobek created ILEK out of two pre-existing institutes of which he was also a director: the Institute for Lightweight Structures and the Institute for Design and Construction II. Under Sobek's direction, the institute has achieved wide recognition over the course of many years throughout the world. Werner Sobek officially handed the managerial reins of ILEK over to Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini on April 1, 2020. Blandini has studied under Werner Sobek and is now also following in the footsteps of Frei Otto and Jörg Schlaich as his successor in his role of the new ILEK director. The Sicilian-born designer first came to ILEK to work on his doctorate, after which he made a name for himself early on in his career with groundbreaking research on structures made entirely of glass. Prof. Dr. Blandini has worked for Werner Sobek for a considerable period in managerial roles. Over the years he has systematically applied and expanded his knowledge in various innovative collaborations including with the Enzo Ferrari Museum in Modena and the House of European History in Brussels. Blandini intends to continue the groundbreaking lightweight construction research at ILEK, also incorporating life cycle analysis and the systematic integration of digital tools with the aim of further promoting an urgently required modernization in the construction industry. Besides his role as professor, he will also continue in his role as Executive Chairman of Werner Sobek AG (with a reduced pensum).

Werner Sobek to continue giving fresh impetus and ideas to Stuttgart University
Werner Sobek is internationally recognized as a pioneer of lightweight construction and sustainability. He will continue to furnish innovative ideas, shaping the design of the constructed environment of the future with a wealth of expertise. Sobek will retain his role as research fellow at Stuttgart University as well as remaining the official spokesperson at the Collaborative Research Centre SFB 1244 and Chairman of the Supervisory Board at Werner Sobek AG. Sobek has been awarded many

prestigious prizes and accolades for his achievements, including the Fritz Leonhardt Prize, the Order of Merit of Baden-Württemberg and the Auguste Perret Prize of the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA), as well as honorary doctorates from the Graz University of Technology and the Technische Universität Dresden. His work has also been recognized in numerous exhibitions throughout the world.

About the Institute for Lightweight Structures and Conceptual Design (ILEK)

ILEK is an institution of the University of Stuttgart. The institute works on the conceptual and cross-material development of all types of construction methods and supporting structures on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach. The range of different projects extends from the use of textiles and glass in construction to the creation of new structures in reinforced and prestressed concrete as well as ultra-lightweight construction using adaptive systems.

About Werner Sobek AG

Founded by Werner Sobek in 1992, the company is internationally synonymous with engineering, design and sustainability and employs over 350 employees with offices located in Berlin, Buenos Aires, Dubai, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Istanbul, Moscow, New York und Stuttgart. Every Werner Sobek project is characterized by a winning combination of outstanding design and premium engineering, incorporating ingenious concepts to minimize the use of energy and material resources. Werner Sobek AG is run under the management of Roland Bechmann, Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini, Stephen Hagenmayer and Prof. Dr. Thomas Winterstetter. Prof. Dr. Werner Sobek acts as Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

For further information please visit: <https://www.wernersobek.com/>

Stuttgart, May 2020

Publication free of charge / Specimen copy requested



The institute's creator will carry on providing inspiration. Werner Sobek is transferring the directorship of ILEK to the capable hands of his student Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini, who worked on his doctorate at ILEK and has held a managerial role at Werner Sobek AG for many years. Image: René Müller.



Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini worked on his doctorate at the ILEK in Stuttgart before moving to the USA to study architecture. The iconic Stuttgart Glass Shell ('Glashaus') – still to be found in the Institute grounds in Vaihingen – formed the subject of his doctorate thesis. Image: René Müller



Lucio Blandini and Werner Sobek together with the three other Board Members of Werner Sobek AG: From left to right: Prof. Dr. Thomas Winterstetter, Roland Bechmann, Prof. Dr. Lucio Blandini, Prof. Dr. Werner Sobek, Stephen Hagenmayer. Image: René Müller



View of the iconic Stuttgart Glass Shell from below – visible in the background: the ILEK building on the university campus in Stuttgart-Vaihingen. Image: ILEK, Stuttgart