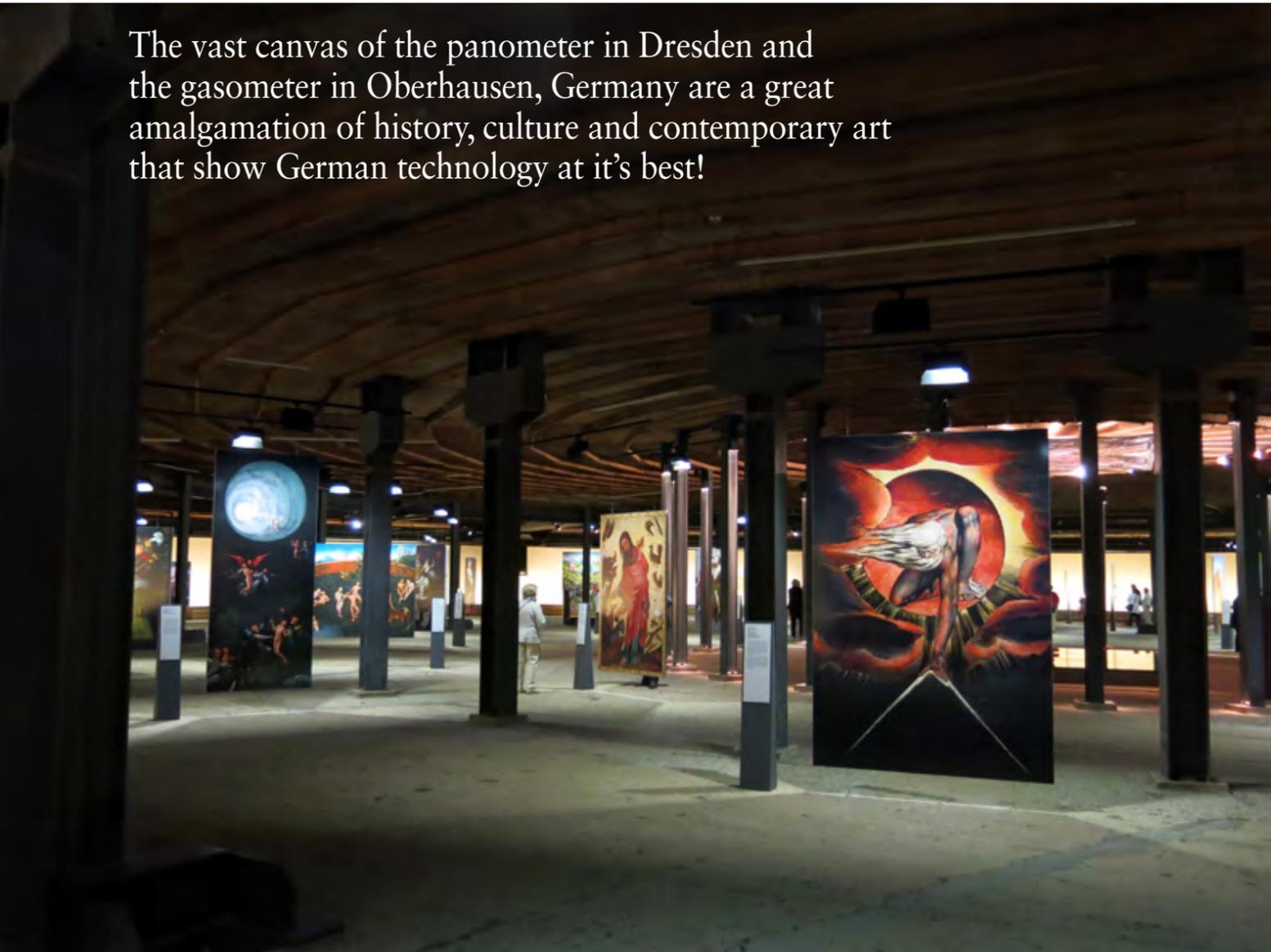


# APanoramic Art

TEXT AND PICS: ARUNA RATHOD

The vast canvas of the panometer in Dresden and the gasometer in Oberhausen, Germany are a great amalgamation of history, culture and contemporary art that show German technology at it's best!



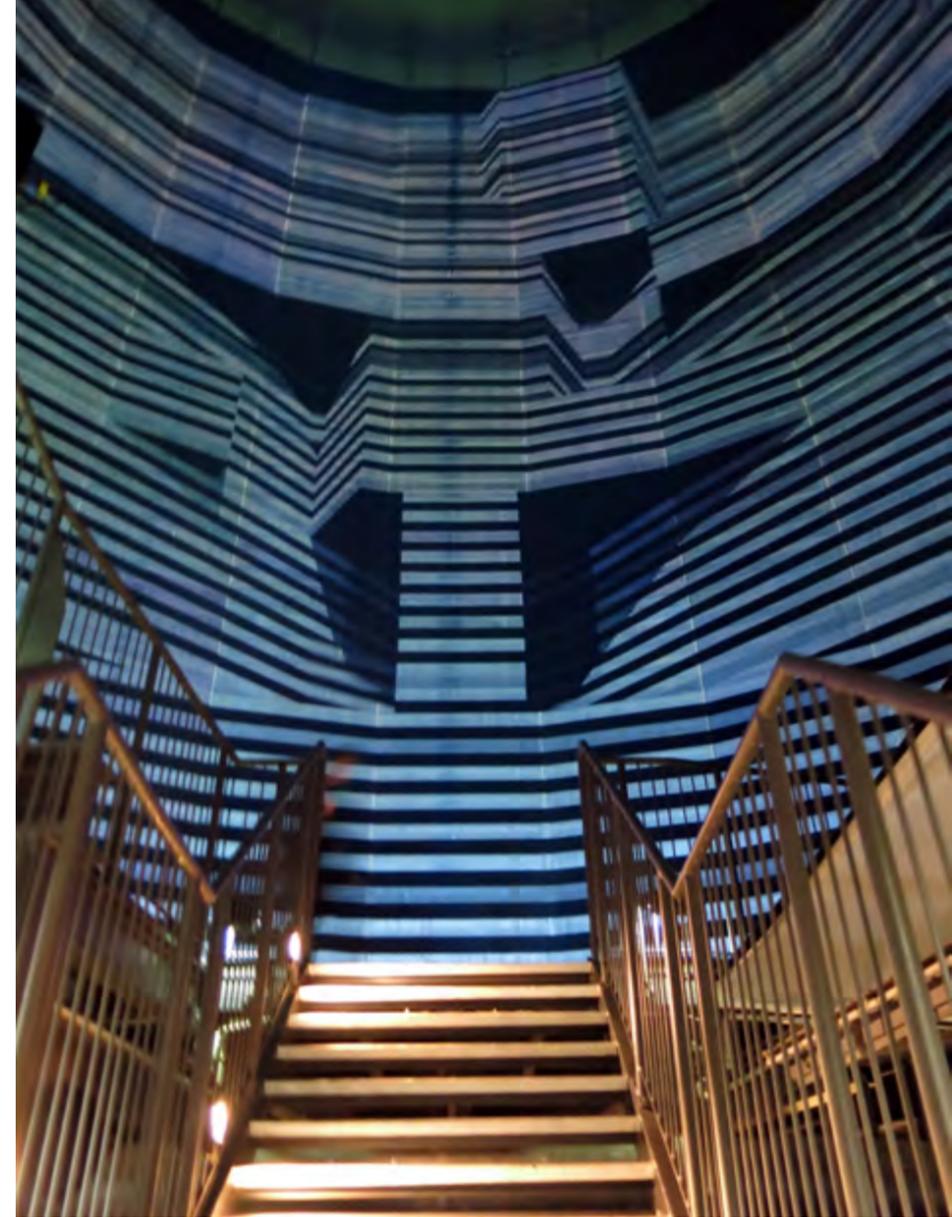
As we drive to the famous panometer in Dresden, I spot a tall circular building from afar, a dull yellow and brown tower, with some window panes broken. As we near it, I spot a pressure indicator on the outside that resembles a clock, a painful reminder of the past. Dresden was bombed in the Second World War (1945) and most of its glorious buildings were reduced to rubble. This building remains on its site from 1945 and a much shorter building, also circular, next to it is now converted into the famous panometer of Dresden which showcases the city's glorious past.

After we buy our tickets, from a counter in the art exhibition area, we walk up a few flights of stairs located in the centre of the circular building. The interior of the building is in darkness with just enough light to find your way. As we reach the platform gallery, the panorama lights up and we are mesmerized. Austrian artist Yadegar Asisi made a real life painting that spans across 360 degrees making it a larger-than-life presentation. The inner wall of the circular storage tank for natural gas is a canvas for the Dresden exhibit – the skyline of the city as it looked in 1756 with detailing so fine and accurate (reproduction of the architectural style, the Elbe river that extended far into the horizon before constructions restricted it and even the birds) that it's like going back in time. Tourists are rooted to their spot, as they lift their heads and find themselves going back in time into the three-dimensional canvas around them. It took me almost 20 minutes to 'read' into the visual and I was totally stupefied at the efforts of the artist.

The "panometer" (combination of two words –gasometer and panorama is popularly known as the Dresden panometer and was unveiled in 2006. The music of Belgian composer Eric Babak assists is perfectly synchronised. Soaking in the city on the screen for almost half an hour, we walk down into the sunshine and indulge in a coffee.

Gasometer at Oberhausen, West Germany

At the extreme western end of Germany lies the Ruhr region, named after the river Ruhr. Once upon a time this was a totally rural region, which then became the most prosperous regions because of its coal and



iron industry. The town of Oberhausen is a great example of the successful economic restructuring of the region, and retaining its industrial heritage.

The town's landmark, the Gasometer stands at 117.5 metres tall and was decommissioned about 20 years ago. Now besides housing art and light-show exhibitions, visitors can take the elevator up to the roof to enjoy the view! The gasometer just goes to prove once again German engineering at its best., making it a high-visibility landmark for the Ruhr Area, and is one of the most impressive exhibition venues in Europe.

The gasometer looms up above the trees as we walk towards it from the tram station. A mammoth grey metallic structure, it is used to advertise the events being held inside its hollow premise. Once I walk inside, it takes a while to get used to the darkness and silence.



Then the light display begins on the circular inside of the cylinder. A set pattern that changes every second, the lights perform a symphony for 23 minutes, and it spills from a thin line to spots all over in a sophisticated gentle display.

Mesmerized by the lights, I then take the glass lift that moves fast over the light display, sometimes suspending the lift in total darkness as the lights change their patterns. We disembark at the roof at a height of 117 metres into the strong wind to get a panoramic view of the region. Since October 2006, the Gasometer has, in addition, been part of the 'European Route of Industrial Heritage' (ERIH) linking approximately sixty milestones of industrial history of particular interest to tourists, in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg and Germany.

Today the Gasometer provides the unique

frame for cultural experiences of various kinds. It is a great venue for exhibitions, theatre and music to be discovered and experienced with all the senses. So it's art, culture, heritage and a viewing gallery at the gasometer. Concerts, lectures and other events are regularly held here.





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- THE HIGHLIGHT - A 20 METRE LARGE TERRESTRIAL GLOBE IN  
THE GIGANTIC INTERIOR

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### Where to stay:

- ▲ At Dresden, the Swissotel is a good bet. It overlooks the various towers in Dresden, is a minute's walk from the Residenzschloss Dresden palace and 1.5 km from Dresden Hauptbahnhof train station.
- ▲ The QF hotel is located in the heart of the pedestrian square, has a contemporary design and right next to the famous Frauenkirche (church of our Lady), that was rebuilt after WWII. It was reduced to a heap of rubble and in the 1990s a unique rebuilding project started which was supported by people from all over the world.
- ▲ AT Oberhausen
- ▲ Just a few minutes from the tram station, this contemporary hotel overlooks the König-Pilsner avenue, the Gasometer and the Centro Avenue (a huge mall with an amazing array of restaurants)

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