

MONIKA FIBY
Diplomingenieur
Master of Landscape Architecture



Monika Fiby studied landscape ecology and landscape planning in Vienna and got her master degree (Diplomingenieur) in 1992. During her studies she specialized in zoo design. The topic of her thesis in 1992 was "Evaluating Zoo Design - The Importance of Visitor Studies". A second edition of the resulting book was published in 2007. Between 1992 and 1998, Fiby worked as a landscape planner at Zoo Schönbrunn in Vienna for several months and in road planning and construction for the City of Vienna for almost five years. From 1998 to 2000, Fiby studied at the University of Georgia, School of Environmental Design, by means of a scholarship from the Austrian Ministry of Science. Her research was on evaluating zoo exhibit design and resulted in a pilot project for the ZooLex website.

In 2000 Monika Fiby founded the ZooLex Zoo Design Organization and introduced the ZooLex website. This is the only scientific website on zoo design. The ZooLex website became very popular with zoo professionals within a short time. In 2006 ZooLex became a service of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums which also holds an archive of ZooLex publications.

Since 1992 Fiby has given presentations at various international zoo conferences in Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States and published articles in special magazines. She has supervised students' thesis, such as „The Use of Plants in Zoos“ (HASLINGER Ulrike, 1995, Pflanzen im Zoo. Thesis. University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences. Vienna, Austria.) and „Zoos as Adventure Worlds“ about staging principles in zoos (MAIER Gerhard, 2003, Der Zoo als Erlebniswelt. Thesis. University of Vienna, Austria). Monika Fiby has visited more than 150 zoos worldwide and published more than 100 exhibit presentations in the ZooLex Gallery. These activities have led to excellent personal relationships with zoo experts world wide.

In 2003, Fiby began to organize and moderate interactive design workshops for zoo practitioners and to get involved in zoo design projects. Most of her work is related to developing masterplans for new and existing institutions. These masterplans serve as guidelines for physical developments of a time horizon of 10 to 20 years.

Monika Fiby has a strong theoretical background and a sound philosophy about zoo design. She knows about the complexity of interactions between animals, visitors and staff in a zoo, the special needs of these user groups and how to reconcile them in design. Her mission is to assist zoos in fulfilling their tasks regarding education, recreation, conservation and research.

Fiby follows four principles in zoo design:

- **Attractiveness:** Aesthetical experiences create positive minds. Designing attractive zoo environments sets the ground for rewarding zoo visitor experiences.
- **Effectiveness:** Designing with natural processes in mind is sustainable. Sustainability is cost effective in a long run.
- **Flexibility:** Requirements for ex-situ conservation are rapidly evolving. Designing for flexibility is an answer to changing animal management needs.
- **Timelessness:** Nature is always attractive. Natural landscapes are the benchmarks for zoo design.