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AN EXCURSION INTO UN-  
CHARTERED TERRITORY,  
THE STORY BEHIND MAK-  
ING HEIMAT, THE GERMAN  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
2016 ARCHITECTURE BIEN-  
NALE IN VENICE

Oliver Elser, Peter Cachola  
Schmal, Anna Scheuermann

Making Heimat is growing. We feel delighted that our exhibition at the German Pavilion in Venice has inspired Charta to do this special edition. But how did it all getting started?

The idea for Germany's contribution to the Architecture Biennale originated during the turbulent weeks of autumn 2015 when, every day, thousands of refugees were arriving at stations and while the German Chancellor was sticking with an iron will to a policy of no upper limit for the number of refugees coming into the country. "Wir schaffen das" (We can do it). This unexpected openness became the Leitmotiv for the German Pavilion at the Biennale. Months later, the borders are again closed. By contrast, the German Pavilion is open. Four large new openings have been cut into the heritage listed façade.

Together with Something Fantastic - a Berlin based design office - and Clemens Kusch - an architect whose practice has for years now super-