

OOS

Quart Publishers **Anthology 13**

Anthology 13 – Notat
Heinz Wirz

Three of the four founders of OOS graduated almost simultaneously from the Technikum Winterthur, while the fourth founder completed an apprenticeship. The apparently lineal careers of these four architects reveal a different story if one takes a closer look at their biographies: During his studies, Andreas Derrer participated in competitions on a freelance basis and subsequently worked in renowned architectural offices, while also being an Assistant at the ETH Zürich. After his apprenticeship as an electrician, Lukas Bosshard studied Law for three years and subsequently worked for an IT company. Christoph Kellenberger founded his own company in 1999 and was an Assistant in two departments at the ETH Zürich. And Severin Boser initially worked for an internationally operative exhibition design studio after graduating.

In fact, the four Zurich architects combined to create an exciting mixture of experiences that drives them forward from project to project with a great deal of energy and dynamism. Their projects, which not only include architectural tasks, but also interior design, way-finding, signage, urban planning and open-air design, are as diverse and experimental as their varied early careers. They are all new fields in an urban environment, urban sceneries that are increasingly at the focus of attention in contemporary architecture. Such new impulses in architecture can only be solved by experimenting. As the German philosopher Wilhelm Weischedel said: “We must come to terms with the fact that mankind’s path through history is and will remain one of constant experiment.”¹

Lucerne, November 2009

¹ In: Wilhelm Weischedel: Philosophische Grenzgänge. Stuttgart, Berlin: W. Kohlhammer Verlag 1967 (quote translated)

Fragmentary thoughts

Method or process

A method provides a structured process. As soon as several people are involved in a creative process, different approaches to a solution emerge. The aim is interpreted differently. It is necessary to maintain an openness towards the developed product. New images must be discovered or invented in an unprejudiced way.

Methods help make decisions and find the ideal process to achieve the best results. They are never self-serving.

Methods are not immutable. Changing conditions require differing approaches. Short cuts and deviations are permitted. Distance and breaks are as welcome as proximity and intensity.

The method is always the basic framework for a process. The structure of the process determines the quality of the result. The method can be subversively used against itself, can mislead or surprise. Anything goes!

Innovation or advance

Regarding what exists in a critical way, asking questions differently; thinking on. What exists today will be different tomorrow.

Advance means motion: Forward movement? Back stepping? Move away!

The joy of mutation, developing further what is already known – the curiosity that drives innovation, allowing oneself to be surprised.

What is the purpose of the new creation? The unprejudiced search for a convincing answer.

Drawing innovative power from experiences and influences. Loving and hating. Shifting and breaching boundaries. Discovering! Opening oneself up and allowing oneself to be amazed by false categories. Allowing creative misunderstandings. Reassessing conventions. Risking ridicule and suddenly inspiring admiration. Daring to be adventurous.

Haus Schudel, Feldis

2002

The building uses the property's maximum potential to provide an ideal view of the Alps. The form is derived from the subtle manipulation of a simple volume that is transformed into a wooden sculpture. Depending on the perspective, the building's monolithic appearance can seem slim and light, or broad and weighty. The residents change the building's expression by opening and closing the large window shutters. Inside, the cascading stairs that follow the line of the slope lead to the large open living room. Rooms with highly varying sizes and geometries maximise the experienced spatial atmosphere. Equally, each window frames a precise view of the landscape.

Aquantiss Aqua Fun Parc, St. Prex

Competition 2002, 1st prize

The largest aqua fun park in Europe: The themed landscape includes every imaginable attraction from the world of water. Sports, adventure, action and wellbeing are all accommodated under a single 36,000 m² roof. A 3 metre high stationary wave and the longest water slide in Europe (320 metres) are only two of the aqua park's highlights. Various catering facilities are available to visitors, as well as other programmes such as a cinema, conference rooms, a theatre, a disco and shopping amenities to round off the aqua park's facilities. The additional services and the ability to present sports events at the Aquantiss become "news values", allowing the variable use of space and a more economic fulfilment of its commercial potential. The design combines architecture and attractions in a permanent scenographic event.

Maag Recycling, warehouse for recycling materials, Winterthur

2004

The building's volume presents itself as a sculptural, integrated piece of urban planning. The new building's expression and form is a subtle reaction to the urban planning situation as it has evolved, as well as a clear interpretation with respect to the distribution of the five programmes – recycling yard, warehouse, workshop, park, car park – with simultaneous maximum use of the perimeter. Making waste disposal tangible means presenting recycling in an attractive way. A new programme for urban society called "reverse shopping" was created to reflect the zeitgeist. The tension between the various conventionally and industrially prefabricated materials characterises the building's volume. It is a relationship between raw, prefabricated concrete – the primary structure – and a fine enveloping negligé of a zinc coated mesh that adorns the body. The gown fulfils various functional and aesthetic aspects and requirements. It provides protection from intruders into the hall, which contains valuable old materials, prevents collapsing and also creates the individual character of the new building. Depending on the perspective, the negligé is either fully transparent, revealing the pure, raw structure, or transforms the volume into a fixed, shimmering body.

Bar Rossi, bar/café/restaurant, Sihlhallenstrasse 3, Zurich

2004

To allow the gastronomy and culture to flourish in a contemporary atmosphere, a lighting and spatial concept was developed that "reacts" to the different requirements (café, restaurant, bar). The changing daylight and artificial light creates a changing atmosphere in the interior at different times of the day. During the day, the café and restaurant form a fresh, angular and clear spatial continuum. At night – as a bar – the space becomes an intimate, multifaceted living room. Dark parquet flooring, a bar and furniture made of coppery shimmering glass, and chairs, wallpaper and

colours in warm, metallic and beige tones give the Bar Rossi its individual, warm atmosphere. 35 seats, 8 bar stools and a small lounge combine with striking bar furniture and a platform that can also be used as a stage for concerts and performances to create the framework for the Bar Rossi area. The two large front windows, which become mirrors for the interior at night, can be completely opened outwards, allowing the street area to become part of the Bar Rossi.

Christmas lights, Uster

Competition 2007, 1st prize; 2007, 2008, 2009, ...

The USTER constellation brings light to the darkest season of the year with a poetic interpretation of the Christmas theme, addressing its citizens on different levels. Orb-shaped lights in varying sizes hang in the sky above the street in the centre of Uster. At six points, the lighting elements gather to create well known constellations that can actually be seen in the sky above Uster during December. The lights consist of a round framework to which highly reflective aluminium plates are attached. The centrally fitted light source above a prismatic glass radiates in all directions and makes the aluminium plates glitter. The wind causes the sound elements to ring according to a composition by the musician Nik Bärtsch, making the USTER constellation a synthesis of different experiences.

Pöyry Infra office, Zurich

2009

The international company employs 230 engineers at its headquarters in Zurich, which requires 4,500 m² of office space. The task of reflecting the corporate values and culture of the company and also increasing the efficiency of the used space was approached by diversifying the space available. In addition to the open plan office with individual workplaces and conventional meeting rooms, there are also focus rooms, open documentation zones, separate material and printer areas and a newly conceived recreation area. These additional zones structure the open plan office and give the workplaces good lighting conditions. Ceiling panels with a textile spanning and a mineral wool filling ensure suitable acoustics for the workplace. Focus-rooms and installations on the ceiling are set apart in a longitudinal direction, thereby releasing themselves from the strictly functional grid of the existing building. The minimal measure of revolving one side of the glass focus-rooms away from the orthogonal grid leads to broken light reflections on the glass surfaces. They break up the stringency of the existing building, making the space more visually complex and dynamic. The colours of the newly introduced elements create a clear spatial identity, adding an inspirational freshness to the technical engineering environment.

Exhibition design, new hall for road transport

Verkehrshaus der Schweiz, Lucerne 2009

The permanent exhibition in the hall for road transport at the Swiss Museum of Transport (Verkehrshaus der Schweiz) in Lucerne presents the history and future of mobility. The individual themes of the exhibition are interpreted as design metaphors and can be recognised in spatially insular, individually designed exhibition buildings, giving the different themes their own identity and autonomy. Various exhibition experiences and their spatial overlapping take both the museum's cultural interests and the commercial interests of the sponsors and funding partners into account. From graphic illustrations to large-scale media projects, different media address a diverse target audience, which equally consists of car enthusiasts, families, small children and elderly people. Seating areas, play areas, discussion forums, staged exhibits that address the visitors, entertaining media presentations, large scale graphics for people seeking information and interactive exhibits for visitors who enjoy experimenting all overlap in the exhibition hall and can be simultaneously experienced. The reserved light and colour concept accords with the museum location and creates a uniform atmosphere in the exhibition hall. The colour coding for the text graphics, interactive exhibits and media stations are derived from the environment on the street. The diversity and complexity inspires the visitors' imagination, encourages associations and leaves room for interpretation.

Swiss pavilion, Expo 2010, Shanghai

Competition/Study contract 2007

Everything is based on comparisons. What is Switzerland? What is China? What is typically Swiss about Switzerland and what is Chinese in China? In an increasingly globalised world, there is an increasing desire to compare and distinguish "one's own" world with "the other". At the same time, it is increasingly difficult to make clear distinctions. The cultural differences of the past are now no more than museum exhibits or have become popular souvenirs. In the daily exchange, common elements outweigh differences. The Swiss pavilion at the 2010 World Fair presents Switzerland as a globally networked country with a long tradition of exchange in science, research and culture. In a playful comparison between the countries of Switzerland and China, the mainly Chinese visitors are introduced to the little known country as a remarkable location for ideas and inventions in the heart of Europe. For foreign, European and Swiss guests, the presentation creates a link with the historic achievements of Chinese culture and the economic success China enjoys today. Swiss experience shows: Cultural and economic progress is always based on intensive exchange and mutual encouragement. In that sense, China plays a central role.

Liip office, Zurich

2008

A new tailor-made corporate environment was designed for the new headquarters of the Web development firm, providing 22 workplaces, two meeting rooms and a common room covering an area of 400 m². The workplaces are aligned along the window, not just for lighting purposes, but also to generate a large open area at the centre of the room, to accommodate various movable pieces of furniture and allow different room configurations. The main room, where the workplaces are located, leads all the way to the entrance area and is characterised by a black reflecting floor and a special approach to the wall surfaces. The wall tapestry creates agreeable acoustics in the office and is the main expression of the company's identity. The tapestry's pattern - which was generated using a specially developed parameter software - consists of overlapping layers (location, light incidence, noise, corporate colours) that have a direct reference to the company. By contrast to the colourful working area, the meeting rooms are designed in a brighter, calmer fashion. The silver sprayed ceiling is a connecting element for all the rooms.

Engadin Airport, Samedan

Competition 2008, 3rd prize

The characteristic light of the Engadin valley, the soft valley trough, the jagged mountain peaks, the ice cold water of the rivers Flaz and Inn, bluish white glaciers, and the clear sky all form the backdrop for the architectural project that is locally grounded and yet oriented by the modern style of the "wide world". Nature and the environment provide inspiration for the architectural themes. The building unites and interprets contrasts both directly and in a figurative sense. The benefit is clear for the airport's heterogeneous target group: The new building is not a boring "Disneyfication" of Alpine architecture on an overgrown scale. Instead, it is an authentic interpretation of the local environment. The aesthetics of the airport interpret the local environment in a discerning way, thereby adding a new perspective on the existing beauty of nature, without using clichés or tourist motifs. The airport and its surrounding area form a defining element of the valley trough and sets itself apart from all the other Engadin architecture through its scale. It has become an important symbol of the Engadin region, serving as a welcoming gate for arriving guests, an attractive sight-seeing element in the region for local residents and tourists, as well as an employer.

My Stop – A4 motorway services, Affoltern p

2009

The unique task of developing a brand for a motorway service area in the Knonau-ramt region on the A 4 was developed on several levels. The brand was developed on three levels in three steps:

In a first step, brand values were developed in a target-group specific demand analysis: individual, intelligent, tailor-made. The next step was to develop the brand name: “My Stop” reflects the service-oriented approach of the motorway services. It is highlighted by the brand’s own font. In a third step, the concept for the exterior spaces, the facade, the interior (connections/retail/catering) and the way-finding were developed and the brand values were applied to the spaces. The homogeneous concept is tangible in its interior implementation, since the design of the brand and the spaces are based on the same design concept: The motorway service area is a place for stopping and meeting, including individual recreation offers aimed at a wide range of requirements. Graphic artists, catering specialists, lighting planners and noise and aroma experts worked closely together to organise and present the interior space. The implementation focused on completing the interior and entrance areas, the My Stop shop, take-aways, the My Stop zone, the restaurant with its office and storage rooms, as well as the way-finding in the interior. Planning for the interior, its materials and colours, was tested using models and photomontages, and adapted to changing interior atmospheres. To fulfil the overall planning aims for the atmosphere and the market presence, such considerations were gradually merged with the design of the corporate identity.

Andermatt tourist resort, Andermatt

Competition 2008, 1st prize

The newly created Andermatt village centre in the canton of Uri has a similar density and atmosphere to an old town centre and consists of seven islands with terraced basements and buildings situated in each of the three island corners. Adaptations from traditional building methods combine with modern approaches to create an unmistakable building type. The massive, homogenous wall on the weather-facing side is entirely covered with story-telling scraffiti. Towards the south, slidable wooden shutters provide sun protection and shade. Loggias behind them provide protection from the snow, wind and cold temperatures. The cooking island at the centre of the apartment with its oversized fume hood recalls the cooking area in traditional farmhouses. The effect of the full glazing towards the south is strengthened by other small apertures inside the apartment. The walls are made usable by means of niches and bulges and become part of the apartment’s inventory. The room-high oriels in the extended kitchen area provide space for

a bench and table, as well as a view of the village activity and the mountains. The fireplace near the living area and the library along the facade create an intimate atmosphere.

OOS headquarters/Exil, Zurich

2009

The headquarters of OOS transforms the former industrially and commercially dominated location into a place of new use and a representative “white space”: The rooms have an abstract feel. The targeted use of colour gives them a hint of glamour. In the white room, the persons and different projects, their plans, models and material samples, create an inspiring melange. The colours of the staircase radiate outwards, highlight the entrance and attract attention from the street area. Gold particles sprinkled onto the floor make it shimmer in the incident light. On the upper storey, the central workspace contains a table that is so long it resembles a catwalk. Smaller meeting rooms are suited for different types of discussions. The ground floor also accommodates the room with the most privacy: It can be transformed into a creative cavern by means of a black curtain.

The live music club Exil is conceived as a “black box” and can be staged in different ways depending on the event or concert. The sequence of rooms on the ground floor already begins in pitch black. The only differences are the materials of the surfaces: The fleecy carpet contrasts with the shiny, smooth surface of the artificial resin, while the relief surface of the matt walls is covered in a shiny varnish. The differently coloured, exchangeable curtains define the stage area, which is ideally aligned towards the audience. The bar made of massive oak beams sets the tone. Behind it, the metal curtain creates unexpected light reflections. All conversion measures on the ground floor address the spatial acoustics and create excellent, harmonious sound conditions. The smoking room adds a contrast with its Bordeaux coloured carpet. From the mysterious, dark world on the ground floor, one descends to a surprising array of bright, neon-coloured rooms one floor below, with monochrome abstractions that create a completely unexpected spatial experience.