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Quart Publishers **Anthology 14**

Anthology 14 – Notat

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Unplugged is a common term used since the 1960s on the pop and folk music scenes. It is an English colloquialism that refers to “pulling the plug” on the amplifier and playing music in an “unrefined, true, raw” fashion. To me, the term has remained an image of this publication as I work my way through the manuscript.

One of the first projects by the Locarno architects Nicola Baserga and Christian Mozzetti, who are hardly 40 years old, was the Christallina Alpine cottage in the Bedretto valley. A simple, cuboid wooden volume, unspectacular and pure, sits upon a base that smoothly grows out of the steep, stony valley. On closer inspection, one can detect distinctive details and nuances. The position of the building beneath the mountain peak, cowering on the side of the slope, respects the demands of the weather and climate. The punctuated façade is not strictly ordered, while the different window sizes and intervals exactly follow functional requirements. The façade surface is divided into four horizontal zones, each overlapping the other beneath it by a few centimetres to provide additional weather protection. And viewed as a plan, the building receives its visitors at its narrow end on the lower storey, on the same level as the surrounding terrain where the path runs by, providing a functional alignment of rooms through the entire building. Perhaps that is where the unplugged image can be explained: in the real and uncontrived that follows requirements rather than formalism or the fashions of the time, thereby creating a kind of poetry to which we have long become accustomed from the Tessin architects.

Lucerne, February 2010

New Capanna Cristallina, 2575 m altitude, Bedretto

Competition 2000

Implementation 2001–2002

The new Alpine cottage is no longer situated at its original location, where an avalanche destroyed it. Instead, the new building is higher up in the zone of the Cristallina pass. The location fulfils the demand for avoiding construction upon the fragile topography of the pass summit and favours a slightly elevated Alpine terrace nearby, which faces south. The building refers to the impressive landscape surrounding the location and also recalls the mountain farmers' houses and barns embedded into the mountainous landscape. The minimalist design of the building highlights the dialectic mutual existence of nature and human artefact, while the construction tradition of the Alpine huts is reflected in the simple, elongated forms with flat roofs and the materials used – natural stone and wood.

Stone blocks – which come from the excavation of the former cottage – form an underlying base and become a south-facing terrace. The residential section was produced from prefabricated wooden elements and assembled on-site. The slight overhang marks and protects the main entrance.

Restoration, Palazzo Celesia, Locarno

Implementation 2003–2010

The project plans the complete restoration of the building complex dating back to the 15th Century, which is situated in Via Bossi at the north-eastern end of the Piazza Grande in Locarno. The intervention consists of several stages: The first focuses on the restaurant Locanda Locarnese. The aim of the restoration was to preserve the first salon, which is characterised by a 15th Century wooden panelled ceiling and a fireplace.

The idea is to place another salon with modern aspects beside this historical salon. The new salon is characterised by oak panelling and a large ceiling lighting fixture made of brass, materials that are used for a range of purposes in the room's interior decoration.

Restoration, Villa Lamparter-Herzog, Minusio

Implementation 2004–2005

The villa in Minusio, which was built by the architect Ernst Bechstein in 1929 was marred in subsequent years by a number of interventions. It was our intention to restore the figure and aura of the original building in the Modern style of the 1930s, taking the contemporary requirements of its owners into account. The villa's architecture also provides selected themes of Modernism such as the specifically plastic treatment of the façades, combined with the traditional use of materials and the constructive approach with raw plaster and natural stone. The pillars (pilotis) made of granite from the region are an example of this combination. Our work focused on the removal of additions and edging added in the 1970s. To fulfil new requirements, small "Corbusier-inspired" volumes clad in aluminium set themselves apart from the original body, while seeking a linguistic dialogue with it. A new car park also gave us the chance to redesign the path to the former auxiliary entrance and give it a new fence front along the road. The beautiful garden around the villa was also restructured and restored with preservation in mind.

Extension, Capanna Michela Motterascio, 2172 m altitude, Aquila

Competition 2004

Implementation 2005

The extension is a simple volume with a vertical nature that defines the identity of the building itself and seeks the complimentary horizontal nature of the existing hut. The tectonic complexity and use of different materials found locally are preferred to any formal abstraction for the building or a reduction of the materials used: The façades are completely clad in copper, while the dimensions of the room windows conform with the façade cladding module. The large opening in the corner of the lounge and the surface of the solar panels at the end of the façades make the volume appear to have a larger scale and connect it with its surroundings. An entrance is inserted between the two main volumes on the ground floor, aligned along their new vertical connection. The reception rooms for guests, utility rooms and depots are organised on that level. On the first floor, a new room welcomes arrivals and provides access to the new lounge. New bedrooms are accommodated on the second and third floors.

Mozzetti house, Gordola

Implementation 2006

The property is situated in a vineyard on the slope overlooking the centre of Gordola village and faces south. The new building with one residential storey follows the curvature of the vineyard slope itself. The form and orientation of the building allow a minimum intervention in the vineyard and preserve the topographical characteristics of the location. A new supporting wall serves as a base, upon which the residential floor is positioned, looking down onto Lago Maggiore ahead and the vineyard behind. A single room can be divided by secondary elements and is surrounded by a central patio. The concrete base beneath the house accommodates a dry garden as a Hortus Conclusus that is surrounded by the vineyard. The space seeks precise relationships with the surrounding landscape and gives the small house a surprising entrance. The residential area provides large openings thanks to the structural concept of main façades with Vierendeel girders, allowing the modulation of light, transparency and intimacy using large sliding panels. The façade, roof and floor surfaces are solid larch wood.

Massera house, Biasca

with Ingegneri Pedrazzini, Locarno

Implementation 2008–2009

The house is situated in a slightly sloping residential area in the north of Biasca's centre. The work is characterised by the intention of creating a horizontal, slightly elevated level that defines the private space of the garden, with its relationship to the public space of the street. The building stands on concrete layers, between which there is enough space for cellar rooms. The residential area is organised on a single level, with openings along the length facing eastwards and westwards, representing the building's day and night zones. A sophisticated steel construction provides the maximum number of openings in the façades and also structures the two main fronts. The building is made of prefabricated wooden elements, clad with eternit boards on the outside and plywood boards for the interior.

Melchiorretto-Bourgoin house, Gordevio

Implementation 2008–2009

The house is situated in Gordevio at the entrance to the Maggia valley. The plot at the end of a street in a residential quarter is characterised by a dense front of chestnut and nut trees.

Due to its particular position and the limited sunshine, a vertical building volume with three storeys was planned that uses its openings and plasticity to create relationships with various elements of the landscape at different times of the day and year, reflecting the altering light conditions. Unlike standard uses, a garden terrace in the shade of the trees and a studio room on the roof were created. They highlight the specific landscape conditions for the location.

Single family home, al Ronco, Pregassona

Study contract 2007

The project was born on a day with a great deal of snowfall and was the result of euphoric, instinctive creativity, coming to light itself and yet also following the given development of a sketch. It is perhaps a square, but a special square because it breathes and sees. An open square to receive light, water and landscape, as if the building were a garden... and the garden a house with several floors... so that inside is outside and outside is inside. The space is light and air, allowing the new resident to feel it in many different ways and moments.

The influence of work by great role models (Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Oscar Niemeyer) cannot be overlooked.

Double gymnasium, Chiasso

Competition 2007

Implementation 2009–2010

The placement of the new double gymnasium in the context of the school campus and museum at the centre of Chiasso allows various relationships with these important urban planning elements. The main volume of the sports hall is built on a square floor plan and has a partially protruding base. While the sports hall has no privileged orientation and assumes the character of a public space, the

base reacts to the different situations and topographical divergences. To highlight the duality of the base and the visible volume of the sports hall, the latter is detached from it and hovers on all four sides upon a pointed bearing. The detachment of the main volume provides the lighting for the interior and connects it with various urban and landscape elements in the vicinity.

Extension, Bern Art Museum

with Ingegneri Pedrazzini, Locarno

Competition 2007

Design

The narrow property and the desire to maintain the urban planning character of the existing museum led to the design of a building that is almost completely sunken into the terrain. The measure can be clearly seen through the slim glass connecting wing that defines the size of the open space. It preserves the strong presence of the existing building in the urban context and creates an external exhibition space that is visible and reachable from the connecting wing. The exhibition court provides varied, flexible use and extends the presentation facilities of the museum complex.

Access to the new building begins in the first basement via the existing stairs of the foyer at the current ticket office. The walkway to the exterior area of the existing building allows visitors to see the Aar landscape and the façade of the existing building, while also aiding their orientation in the museum context. The extrovert character of the connecting walkway adds a surprising impulse compared to the introverted exhibition rooms of the existing and new buildings. The load-bearing structure becomes visible through a girder spanning the entire length, which is suspended at the stairs. The clear gesture and the reduction of the building structure in the interior rooms presents a precise architectural character in the vertical connecting zone and guides natural light into the depths.

3 bridges over the Flaz, Samedan

with Ingegneri Pedrazzini, Locarno

Competition 2001

Implementation 2003

The three new bridges are embedded in the expansive plain of Samedan, providing a spectacular view of the surrounding Engardin mountain peaks. The special character of the location suggests a discreet measure that sensitively takes into account the specific topographical characteristics. The three bridges have the same form. The fine, low-lying structures do however differ depending on their location on the plain and the precise topographical conditions. The decision to shape the road surface plate in a slight arch and to assume and accompany the relevant incline of the access ramps allowed the constructions to be built at the lowest possible level. It thereby maintains the spatial continuity and visual relationship with the landscape. The choice of reinforced concrete as a construction material for all elements gives the bridges the necessary homogeneity and clarity. In addition to purely constructive and economic considerations, the material choice deliberately refers to the construction tradition of concrete bridges in the Canton of Graubünden.

Bridge over the Melezza, Moneto

With ingegneri Pedrazzini

Competition 2007

Implementation 2008–2009

The new bridge is placed parallel to the existing, now demolished bridge. Fascinated by the idyllic landscape, we proposed a discreet presence, while maintaining a dialectic relationship with the surrounding nature. Linearity, adequate references between the structural interrelationships and the formal abstraction, as well as a minimal, symmetrical form for the bearings are all attempts to find the right balance between nature and artefact. The choice of a single, central, narrowing girder with few supports is a special way of creating a relationship between the length and breadth of the bridge, accentuating its length and lightness.

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