

A10



#33
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Start

- Mixed-use building, Laives
- Sports hall, Kuřim
- Park and exhibition pavilion, Zenica
- Office tower, Istanbul
- Polish History Museum, Warsaw
- Grand café, Emmen

Ready

- Housing complex, Kranj
- Elementary school and sports hall, Budapest
- Office building, Riga
- Biotechnical Faculty, Ljubljana
- Housing, Vienna
- Rehabilitation of a printing house, Bucharest
- School, Ponzano Veneto
- Two houses, Enschede
- Office building, Kiti

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- Interview: Joseph Smolenicky
- The end of two glorious decades of Dutch architecture
- Architecturally interesting budget hotels in Europe
- Home: Martin Rauch's Earthen House

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Green systems**

The dream of a small Finnish parish

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Non-vernacular architecture

HANS IBELINGS

Whereas an estimated 95 per cent of what is built worldwide can be regarded as vernacular, Europe has an exceptionally high percentage of architecture made by professionals. In Europe the proportion of non-vernacular is certainly higher than the global average of five per cent, even though Europe, too, has its share of architecture without architects, to borrow the title of Bernard Rudofsky's book. That the proportion of architecture with architects, which might also be called professional, academic or representational, is much greater in Europe than elsewhere is a *raison d'être* for magazines like A10. Even so, the architecture that reaches the editorial pages of magazines such as this is more often the exception than the rule, in both quantity and quality.

Vernacular architecture is found everywhere, but everywhere it is different, depending on culture, climate and the available materials and techniques. For professional architecture the reverse is true: it does not appear all over the place in large

quantities, but at any one moment in time it can be more or less the same everywhere. This may well be one of the clearest distinctions between vernacular and what for simplicity's sake is called architecture with architects – that the first is tied primarily to a particular location and the second primarily to a particular time. As such, these two kinds of building find themselves in different universes, the one a fairly static universe in which place is invariably the most important dimension, the other a mobile universe in which time is the determining factor. The first scarcely changes at all over the course of time, or only very gradually, the second is characterized by simultaneity.

Almost anywhere in Europe it is possible, given a little background knowledge of architectural history, to date architecture within a margin of a few years, even architecture with the most contextualist intentions. But for most architecture critics – for this one at least – the same is not so easy to do with vernacular architecture. Despite all the genuine efforts to take account of place and context, architecture is almost by definition more strongly linked to time than to place. ←

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Axel Simon and Oliver Elser talk with Joseph Smolenicky about diversity in architecture, and his ambition to do 'something brutish'. Smolenicky: 'Until now, all my projects have focused on beauty. I would really love to work on a dramatized project – based on the crime genre, mind you, not a love story.'



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Christian Welzbacher examines a Bavarian example of the previous wave of iconic buildings. The Hypo-Vereinsbank in Munich, designed by Bea and Walter Betz (1972-1981), is a fine example of corporate architecture in which form is pushed to the point of spectacle.





School, Ponzano Veneto

C+S associati have designed a school with a low budget and high ambitions.

ITALY — TEXT: LUIGI PRESTINENZA PUGLISI, PHOTOGRAPHY: ALESSANDRA BELLO, PIETRO SAVORELLI

This secondary school designed by Carlo Cappai and Alessandra Segantini from *c+s associati* is located in Ponzano Veneto, a small town in the province of Treviso, close to the building designed for Benetton by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando and the nursery school by Spanish architect Alberto Campo Baeza. Faced with two such important projects, the architects reacted in the right way: they were not intimidated and rejected a copycat or mimetic approach. And in avoiding the rigorism and classicism of

Ando and Baeza, they showed that it is possible to do much better. A school, moreover, is not a monument and must be treated with vitality and lightness in order to be pleasing to children who prefer bright colours to white or grey, transparency to opacity, and light music to classical music or opera.

To elucidate their different design philosophy, Cappai and Segantini utilized six vignettes featuring Alice and the White Rabbit, the main characters in Lewis Carroll's famous children's book. In the first vignette, Alice tells

the White Rabbit how to go about constructing the building: 'We must stitch the roof to the ground to make it secure'. This alludes to the system of inclined columns that support the roof that projects from the facade and shades the classrooms. Columns so slender that they resemble thread rather than structural elements, whereas Tadao Ando's concrete columns for Benetton appear to have been borrowed from a Greek temple.

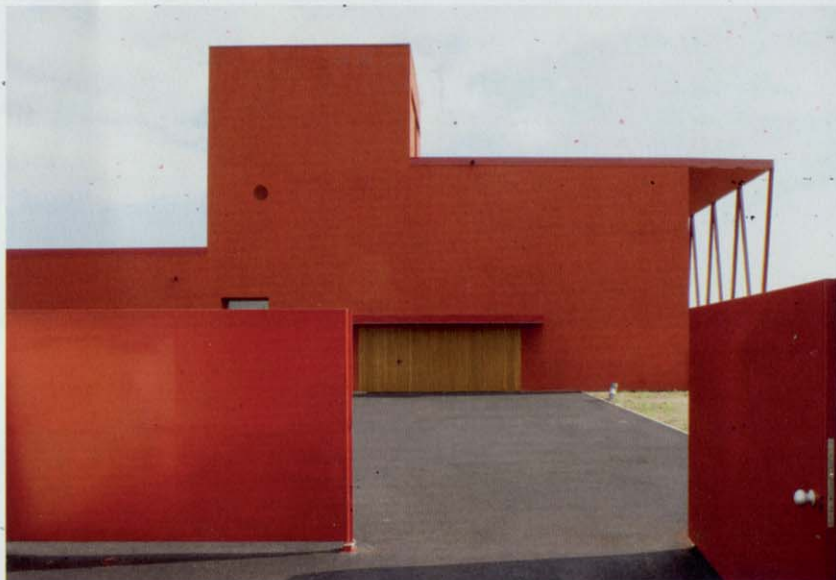
In the second vignette, Alice pours light, wood and colours into the schoolyard and

mixes them together. In the third she moves inside the central court to show her rabbit-friend the large oak planted there. In fact, while all the classrooms face the exterior, the building is organized in such a manner that it gravitates around a central courtyard: a defined and controlled space that lends itself perfectly to the role of symbolic heart of the building and, in functional terms, a playground or space for outdoor educational activities. The reassuring presence of the oak planted in the courtyard alludes to the slow passage of time and is a fragment of nature in an otherwise highly artificial landscape. In the fourth vignette there is an allusion, undoubtedly guilty of excessive optimism, to the possible social implications of transparency. 'Everyone,' she says, 'will grow up together

↓ The overhanging roof shades the classrooms from the summer sun.



↓ Main entrance



↓ The green roof plays an important role in the building's energy performance.





and become friends' because they will be able to look at one other. There is also a mention of the idea of partially burying the gymnasium in order to reduce its external volume. A move that limits its impact on the surrounding landscape and benefits the courtyard which receives direct natural light for much of the day, with no dark shadows along its perimeter walls. The gymnasium can be easily accessed even when the school is closed. In this way, similar to a sports centre, it can be used by the neighbourhood and function as a point of reference for the entire town. The fifth vignette shows the work on the service spaces and connections, designed to favour the dynamic use of the structure and non-conventional teaching methods that are also made up of informal moments. This is an important approach in Italy where many schools are, on

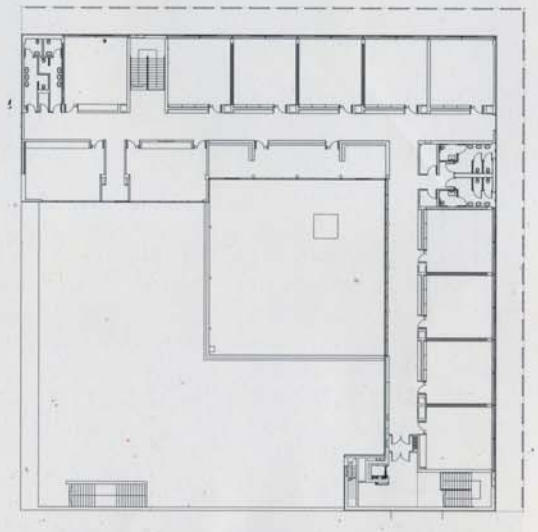
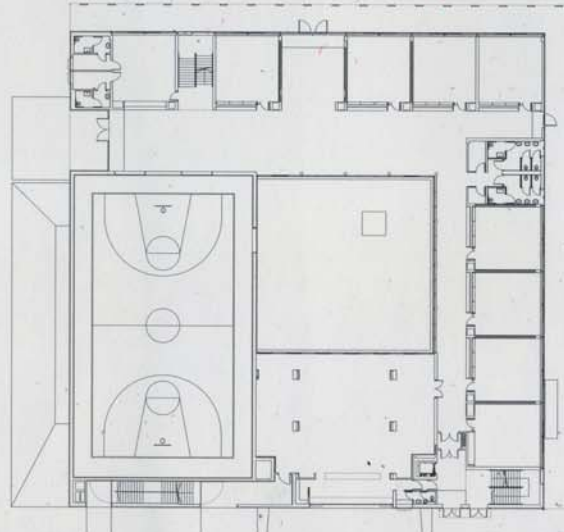
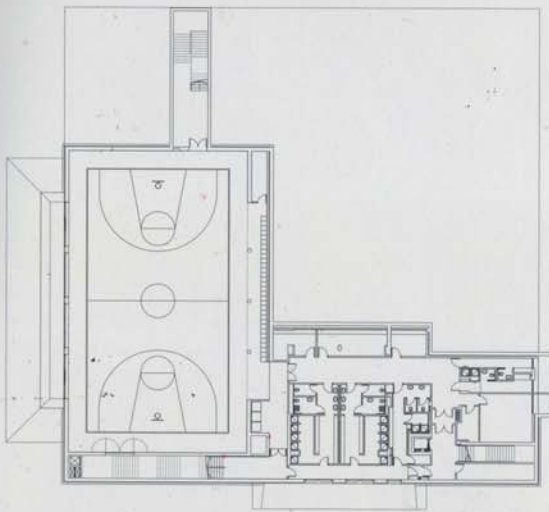
the contrary, centred exclusively on the classroom, understood statically as the space for the transmission of knowledge: one thinks, for example, of the starched schools designed by Aldo Rossi and his numerous followers. The last vignette, finally, speaks of the building's energy performance: from geothermal heating to natural ventilation to the reuse of rainwater. The objective is twofold, to reduce energy costs – in fact, the building has a Class A rating – and to teach young children respect for nature, developing awareness through best practice.

Is everything that these vignettes recount the truth? I would say yes, even though a few qualities have obviously been exaggerated with a hint of rhetoric in order to highlight them more strongly. However, that the school is a miracle is demonstrated by another partic-

ular, namely the cost of construction: 1,000 euros per square metre. Almost nothing if we consider that Zaha Hadid's MAXXI Museum in Rome cost over seven times as much: 7,500 euros/m². Or that the ugly homes constructed after the earthquake in Abruzzo cost an estimated 2,700 euros/m². High quality architecture at reasonable prices, Cappai and Segantini show, can co-exist, uniting creativity and conceptual rigour. ←

PONZANO PRIMARY SCHOOL, 2007–2009

Architects: c+s associati
 Client: Comune di Ponzano
 Address: Via dei Diritti dell'Infanzia 1,
 31050 Ponzano Veneto, Treviso
 Info: www.cipiuesse.it



↑ From left to right: lower floor, ground floor and upper floor

↓ Sports hall



↑ Upper floor ↓ Ground floor with the oak tree in the courtyard

