Project

Detached House, Küsnacht, Switzerland

The tree-framed garden of an old villa forms the building site of the new family home. The geometry of the garden plot, the existing trees including a magnificent cedar, and the steep terrain dictate a polygonal structure which rises in tiers up the slope. The entrance and garage form the basement level with terrace, topped by two stories and an attic level.

A generously proportioned multi-angular staircase with a wide wellhole links all four levels not only physically, but also optically and acoustically: from the entrance hall to the children’s rooms, the living area, and the parents’ bedroom. The living/dining room is on the second floor and benefits from its elevated position, while the children’s rooms on the first floor have direct access to the garden, and the parents’ bedroom on the top level has its own large rooftop terrace.

In collaboration with the artist Harald F. Müller and the family, certain internal surfaces have been painted in strong colors. The ceilings in the children’s rooms are bright orange and gold, one wall of the parents’ bedroom is light blue, the wall beneath the skylight in the living room is black, and the ceiling above the large stairwell is an orangey-red.

The dark terrazzo floors throughout the house give the various rooms an overall muted coloration and establish a correlation with the concrete used for the support structure, whose load-bearing external concrete shell forms the façade. Internal masonry walls are not load-bearing and conceal the insulation.

Due to the texture of the vertical rough planking used as formwork and the deep reveals of the window openings, the exposed concrete façade gains a striking physical presence. This underlines the structure’s sturdiness against the slope. The white scumble on the surface of the concrete emphasizes with delicate tonal nuances the play of shadows across the surfaces and perforations. The glazed parapet has a slightly reflective finish to afford privacy while also mirroring the trees in the garden.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

Project: Detached House, Küsnacht
Address: Küsnacht, Switzerland
Spatial Programme: Single Family House
Commission: 2005
Client: Private
Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich
Collaborators: Marjana Sigrist (Project Manager), Caspar Bresch, Florian Isler
Construction Management: Ruoss Witzig Architekten, Zurich
Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 430 m2
Landscape Architecture: Robin Winogrond Landschaftsarchitekten, Zurich
Structural Engineer: Dr. Lüchinger + Meyer Bauingenieure AG, Zurich
Electrical Engineer: Elkom Partner AG, Chur
Building Services Engineer: 3-Plan Haustechnik AG, Winterthur
Building Physics Engineer: Wichser Akustik & Bauphysik AG, Zurich
Colours: Harald F. Müller, Öhningen, Germany
Photography: Harald F. Müller, Öhningen, Germany
Lucas Peters, Zurich
Filippo Simonetti, Brunate-Como, Italy