Project

Auditorium, University of Zurich

A new, large auditorium that seats 500 people was constructed under the terrace on the valley side of the university building designed by Karl Moser in 1913/1914. The space serves both as a new auditorium and a second assembly hall. On weekends and during semester breaks it can also function as a conference hall for third-party rentals.

The auditorium is accessed via the former sculpture gallery on the ground floor. This space was previously used as an institute library and can be directly approached from outside and inside the university. The open gallery now functions as a lobby, with stairs in the alcoves of the vaulting leading down to the auditorium. Another wheelchair-accessible entrance and an elevator are located on the cafeteria side of the building.

Inside the auditorium the walls and ceiling are faced with colored panels, analogous to the spirit of the original interior design of the Moser building. The panels provide acoustic absorption and cladding for ventilation and electrical services. The artist Adrian Schiess designed the color scheme for the auditorium, consisting of light and dark pink, as well as tones of light blue and gray-green. To emphasize the festive quality of the space, the glass of the interpreters’ booths is printed with golden reflective patterns.

A skylight above the white projection wall provides the space underneath with daylight. Outside, both the raised skylight and a pool centered on the terrace indicate the presence of the auditorium below. The strong color of the basin contradicts conventional expectations of a natural green, which is used for the ponds in the neighboring gardens of the university. The basin with its reflective surface and artificial color resembles an independent, horizontal sculpture.

The walls facing the Künstlergasse consist of concrete poured in successive layers of various hues, from dark to light, which also references the ‘spacecontaining’ nature of the base. The top layers of the wall are only faintly pigmented, and the concrete surface of the terrace and the concrete rim of the basin are left in their natural tone. These thus form a contrast with the pure, strong color of the basin.

G/G, December 2011
Credits

Project: Auditorium, University of Zurich

Address: Universität Zürich Zentrum
Künstlergasse 12
8001 Zurich, Switzerland

Spatial Programme: Underground auditorium for the University of Zurich with 500 seats; projection space, storage and technical spaces; remodelling of the existing lobby on the ground floor as access to the auditorium; coloured water basin on the terrace above the auditorium hall.

Commission: 1996


Client: Building Office of Canton of Zurich

Architecture: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich

Collaborators: Christian Brunner (Project Manager), Stefan Gasser, Michael Bucher

Construction Management: Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich

Collaborator: Thomas Hochstrasser

Cost Planning: Othmar Brügger, Davos

Gross Floor Area (SIA 416): 2'545 m2

Landscape Architecture: Hager Landschaftsarchitektur AG, Zurich

Structural Engineer: SKS Ingenieure AG, Zurich

Colours: Adrian Schiess, Zurich and Mouans-Sartoux, France

Photography: Heinrich Helfenstein, Zurich