

Project

Extension and Alterations to the Oskar Reinhart Collection “Am Römerholz”, Winterthur

With the addition and alterations to the ‘Römerholz Villa’, the building once again undergoes a transformation. In 1915, the Geneva architect Maurice Turrettini, commissioned by then-owner Heinrich Ziegler-Sulzer, erected the building in the style of a French Renaissance country house. In 1924 Oskar Reinhart purchased the house and commissioned the same architect to build a gallery addition to accommodate his growing art collection. After his death in 1965, Oskar Reinhart bequeathed the building with its internationally prominent collection to the Swiss Confederation. After extensive alterations in 1970, the ground floor of the residential part of the building and the gallery spaces were made accessible to the public as a museum. The most recent alteration and renovation work can be traced to changing requirements with regard to lighting, operations and security that are required of contemporary museum spaces. Priority is laid therein upon the improved presentation of the high-quality works of art.

The architectonic means used to satisfy the varied requirements range from the replacement of two existing exhibition spaces with newly constructed ones, to simple renovation work, up to near-complete restoration of the historical spatial disposition and materials. Hence, the commission divides itself into a plethora of differentiated interventions. This includes, for example, the spatial separation of the entrance space from the cloak room, in order to create more space for receiving guests; the restoration of the spatial arrangement in the former dining room; the reconstruction of former windows in order to illuminate certain sculptures; the reconstruction of the earlier parquet flooring in the gallery spaces; as well as the addition of etched panes of glass hung before the lantern skylight of the large gallery and the installation of sensor controlled louvers to regulate the light intensity.

The most far reaching changes are the three new exhibition spaces that mark the transition between the former residence and the gallery area. Corresponding to the works on display, the three spaces possess various sizes and proportions. The larger room is to house oil paintings, while the two smaller rooms are planned to display light sensitive graphic works. All three spaces are naturally lit; electronically regulated louvers lessen the intensity of the light. The skylights on the ceiling have the appearance of glowing lit panels and distribute light evenly into the space.

On the exterior, the new exhibition halls with their recessed skylights appear as closed, step-tapered volumes in concrete. Akin to a joint placed between the residence and the gallery wing, they terminate the entrance court on its shorter side. Like the existing gallery wing, the roof surfaces are covered with copper sheet. Large, pre-fabricated concrete elements form the cladding of the walls and the recessed skylight lanterns. Jura limestone and copper, two of the primary materials of the existing villa, were mixed into the concrete as powdered ingredients. The limestone and the copper powder in combination lead to a quick acting oxidation and to a green shift in colouration of the concrete. As water, enriched by copper ions, drains from the roof, the colouration process of the façade will increase over time. By virtue of this accelerated patinisation, the new building should make a kind of “journey through time” towards the two, older, historic building elements – in the sense of an “alchemistic” adaptation of the new building to the genius loci.

Credits

Project:	Renovation and Extension Oskar Reinhart Collection "Am Römerholz", Winterthur
Address:	Sammlung Oskar Reinhart Haldenstrasse 95 8400 Winterthur, Switzerland
Spatial Programme:	Renovation and remodelling of the existing Villa "Römerholz"; former residence with gallery addition, for the exhibition of the Oskar Reinhart Collection of Art; the differentiated interventions range from the remodelling of the entrance area, exhibition rooms and café, to the restoration of the historical spatial disposition, materials, and the construction of three new exhibition spaces.
Competition:	Spring 1993, 1st Prize
Planning/Construction:	January 1995 – December 1998
Client:	Bundesamt für Bauten und Logistik, Bern
Architecture:	Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich Collaborators: Competition: Raphael Frei, Michael Widrig, Judith Brändle Planning/Construction: Andreas Sonderegger (Project Manager), Markus Jandl, René Kümmerli
Construction Management:	Annette Gigon / Mike Guyer, Architects, Zurich Collaborator: Peter Steiner
Gross Floor Area (SIA 416):	136 m2 (three new build exhibition spaces) Net Internal Area (SIA 416): 1'000 m2 (total renovated exhibition space)
Landscape Architecture:	Kienast Vogt Partner, Zurich
Electrical Engineer:	Elkom Partner AG, Chur
Building Services Engineer:	Waldhauser Haustechnik AG, St. Gallen
Daylighting Consultant:	Institut für Tageslichttechnik, Stuttgart, Germany
Artificial Lighting Consultant:	Lichtdesign Ingenieurgesellschaft mbH, Cologne, Germany
Graphic Design:	Trix Wetter, Zurich
Photography:	Andrea Helbling, Zurich Harald F. Müller, Öhningen, Germany