

Portfolio

Jan Zachmann



Physiotherapy practice, Basel 2022-23

This cost-efficient transformation repurposed a 250-square-meter open plan into a physiotherapy practice by adding only three dividing elements. The project draws inspiration from an in-depth exploration of body culture, highlighting the ambiguity between exhibition and intimacy through a mix of reflecting surfaces and cocoon-like pockets. (in collaboration with Andrew Mackintosh)





Agora - A New Town Hall for Romanshorn Competition, 2024

Following its programmatic distribution, the new town hall is subdivided into three volumes, arranged around the existing 19th-century building. The first two floors, housing the publicly accessible functions, are connected by a central void, which serves as the new city forum. Illuminated by a generous skylight, this multifunctional space becomes the public heart of the city, creating a vibrant meeting place for its population.





The Golden Dust Collector, London Open Call, 2022

Climate Art - A Public Art Commission for Somers Town

Pre-selected Proposal: https://www.instagram.com/unomasocho_projects/

In collaboration with Danae Santibañez

Somers Town was the home of Charles Dickens and the inspiration for his last novel, 'Our Mutual Friend', which featured a wealthy dust contractor nicknamed 'The Golden Dustman'. In the 19th century, 'dust' was a valuable material composed of ashes and street rubbish. Private dustmen contracted by the parish collected the dust, which was then separated into smaller piles of sellable goods. Due to its proximity to the canal, Somers Town was home to some of London's largest dustheaps. However, with the advent of the sanitation movement, dustheaps, an early example of municipal waste management, slowly disappeared.

Two centuries later, Somers Town continues to suffer from high levels of pollution with Euston Road, its southern border, ranked as one of London's worst air quality spots. Several long-term construction projects, including HS2 and Crossrail 2, also have an adverse impact on air quality in the area. Chalton Street and its southern section in particular, located between Euston Road and the planned footpath connection between Euston Station and Kings Cross-St Pancras, forms the communal heart of Somers Town with its shops and street market. The dense urban nature of the site restricts views into the street and creates an effect of enclosure. This creates a shelter from the surrounding traffic for local residents but also prevents people unfamiliar with the area from attending the street market.

Our proposed intervention will focus on the two entrances to the southern section of Chalton Street and aims to give it a physical presence within the adjacent streets to reflect its importance as the public centre of Somers Town. Taking the image of the dustheap as the conceptual starting point, our intervention aims to raise awareness of the area's precarious environmental conditions and its main sources of pollution. The metaphor of 'The Golden Dust Collector' thereby functions in a dual sense: The collection of dust in its Victorian meaning represents a sustainable method of reusing material waste, while controlling air pollution.

Building on the local tradition of community-led self-build structures like Plot 10, our proposal combines these two readings by using salvaged materials from local construction projects to create a material archive, out of which the design proposal will be developed in a community-based workshop. The workshop will use the 'Phyto-Sensor,' a tool-guide developed by the Citizen Sense Research Group, to show local residents how to choose pollution-effective plants for their homes and develop a place-specific design that functions as a clean oasis for the area.

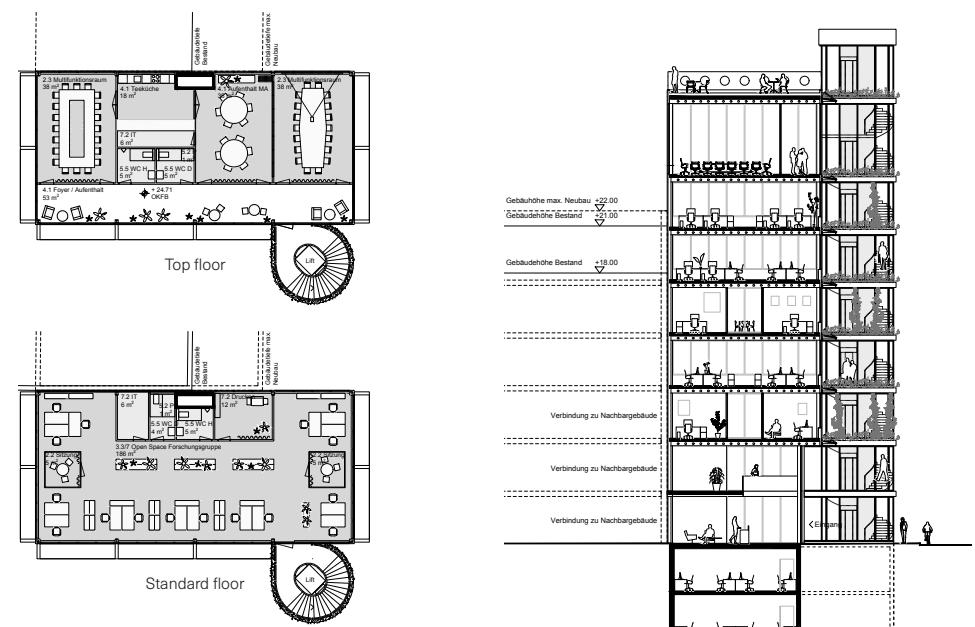
The collaboratively developed design will create a physical landmark covered with pollution-effective plants that actively reduce or 'bioindicate' air pollution by changing appearance. The structure will work as a selective green screen that contributes to a healthier environment for Chalton Street's residents while simultaneously attracting new visitors and helping to revive its market.

Picture: E H Dixon, 'View of the Great Dust-heap near Kings Cross', 1837



Research centre for child health, Basel Competition 5th Prize, 2021

The proposal for the Research centre consists of two complementary parts: a steel frame construction providing flexible office spaces and a glazed vertical circulation tube that connects the individual floors and promotes interdisciplinary exchange. Here, the interplay of the different parts becomes visible: city and building, science and the public, architecture and ecology. (in collaboration with Andrew Mackintosh)

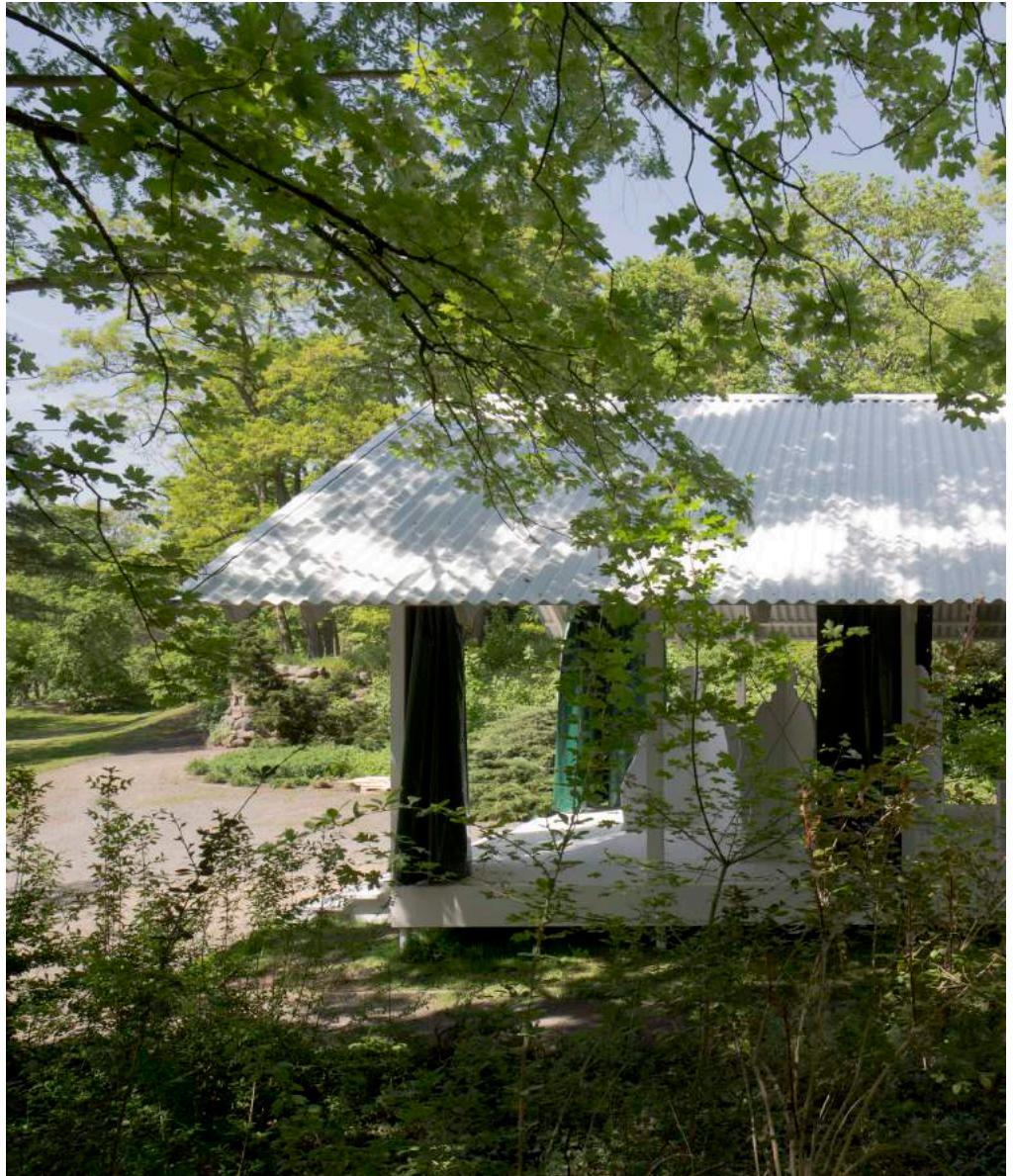




Rooftop extension, Basel Christ & Gantenbein, 2017-21

The existing attic is replaced by a generous space under a pitched roof, whose primary structure is formed by a steel bridge construction. A lightweight skin of alternating aluminum sandwich panels provides the insulated shell, and a layer of phase-change material absorbs excess internal heat. The roof above the dining room can be opened, adapting the house to seasonal needs by transforming the interior into an exterior space.

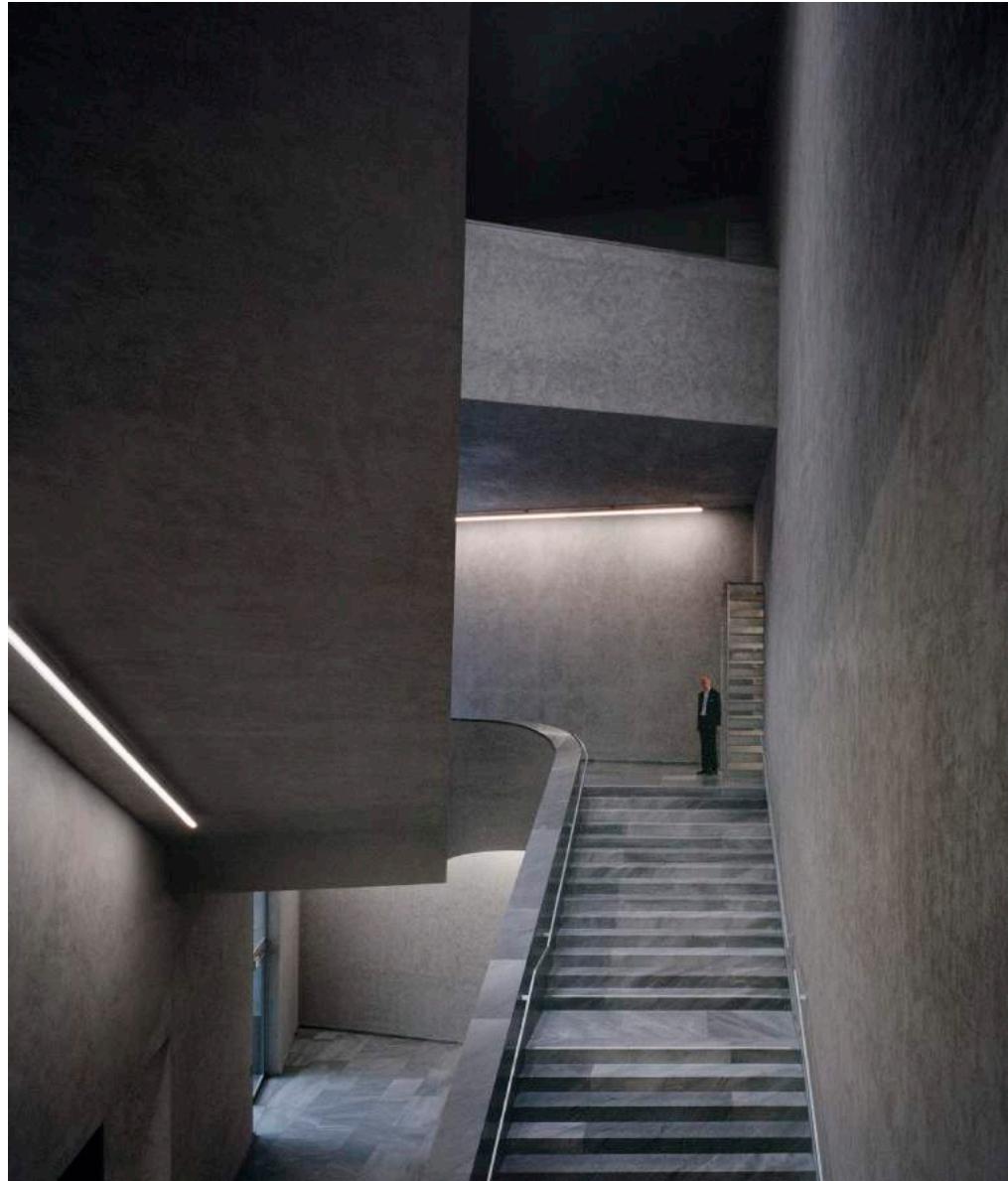




Swiss reformatory pavilion, Wittenberg Christ & Gantenbein, 2016-17

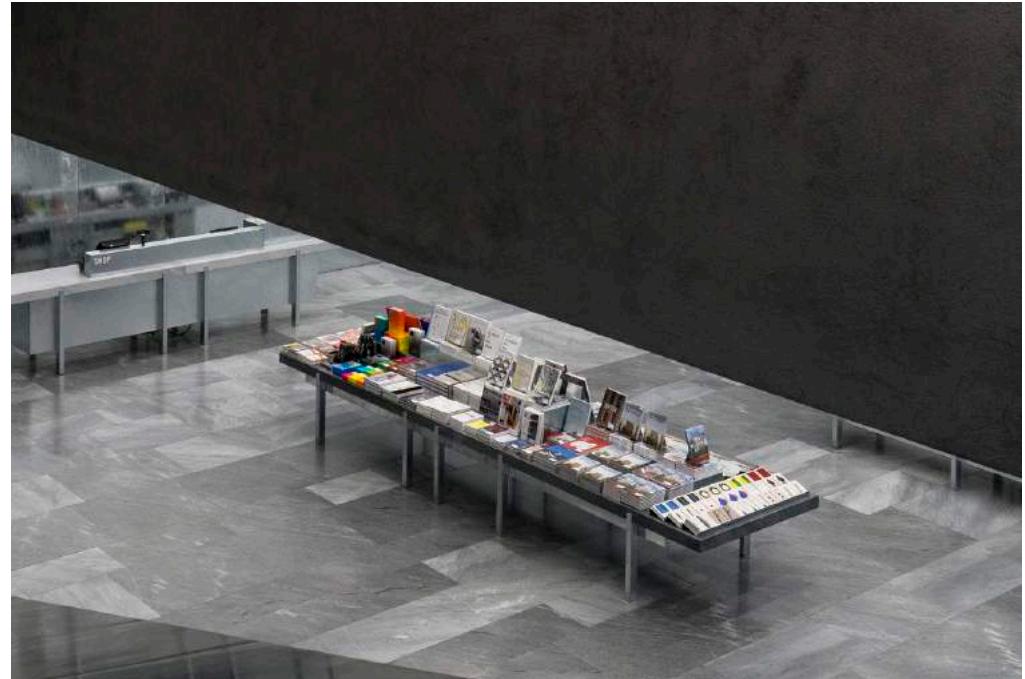
Built in the Luthergarten city park, the pavilion is divided into four spaces, each dedicated to a different aspect of the Reformation in Switzerland. Its light construction is painted white, with a pitched roof supported by thin wooden beams. A heavy-coated green fabric offers protection from the elements and blends the building within the vegetation, reflecting the primary dwelling and suggesting a place of production.

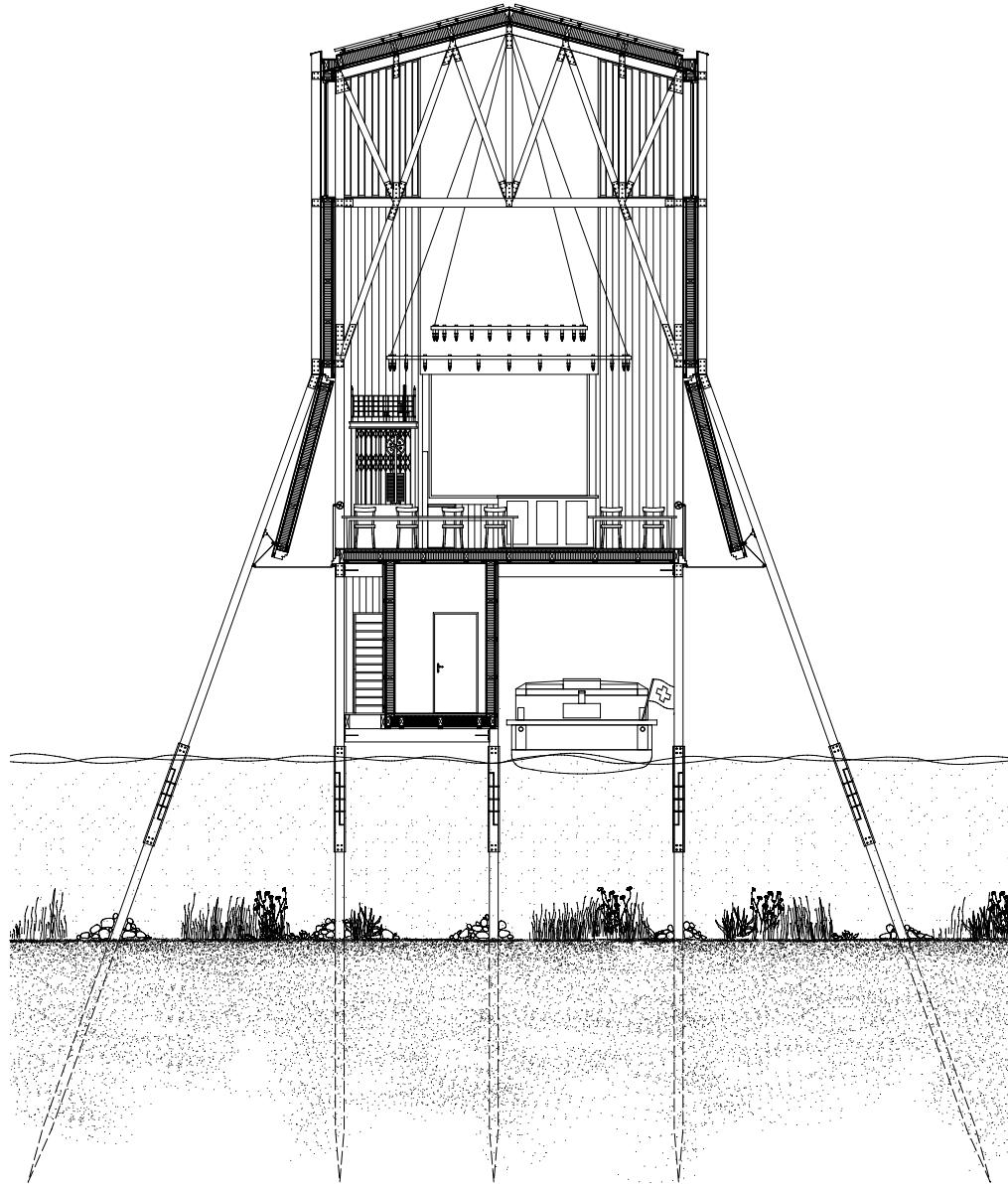




Kunstmuseum extension, Basel Christ & Gantenbein, 2014-16

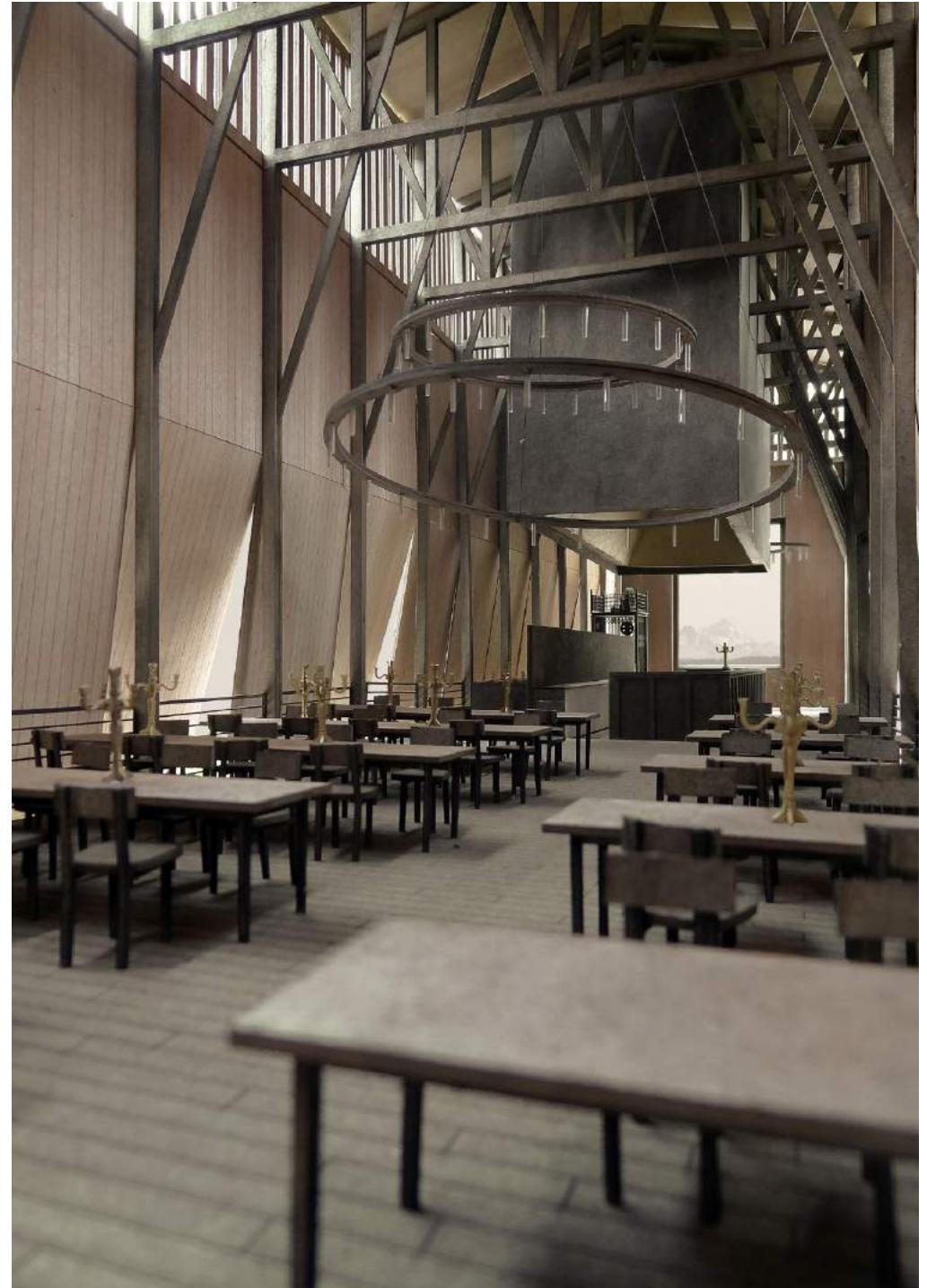
Two orthogonal lungs of exhibition spaces are set within a complex decagon, leaving the monumental staircase to modulate the resulting areas. Prefabricated ceiling beams span over white plastered exhibition spaces with an industrial wooden floor. The public path and the stairs are faced with grey Bardiglio marble, providing a sharp contrast to the industrial aesthetic of galvanized steel furniture and fire doors.





Fish & Ships, ETH Zurich Diploma Studio Tom Emerson, 2013

The lake of Zurich can be identified as a park, a "Stadtallment" as depicted in an old city map. The design of the restaurant relates to the typology of follies. Located on the Hafner, a shallow area of the lake, the wooden building is a structural reflection of prehistoric pile dwellings found nearby. Its closed character is inspired by maritime protective structures and offers permanent views of the city and alpine landscape.





Above and below: the continuous deck at Park Hill 1. Note the squares of lime placed at the individual front doors by the tenants
Below right: inside the communal laundry



Representations of the Street The role of the architectural journal page in the critical debate around Park Hill's streets-in-the-sky

Park Hill ... looks like the building by which 1961 is destined to be remembered.
Peter Reyner Banham

Dissertation MAAH, The Bartlett School of Architecture, London 2022

The term streets-in-the-sky describes an external circulation typology for high-rise housing blocks. Compared to access balconies, streets-in-the-sky are considerably wider, allowing room for social interaction, and are less frequent, usually on every third floor. The first implementation of streets-in-the-sky on a significant scale was Sheffield's Park Hill in 1961. The estate was celebrated as a great success and its critical acclaim led to a boom of deck-access estates throughout the country.

Nevertheless, the cheap construction and low maintenance of many of the subsequently built estates and the promotion of critiques that directly associated streets-in-the-sky with anti-social behaviour led to the demise of the typology during the Thatcher government.¹ The lively debate that developed around this new proposition of space turned streets-in-the-sky into one of the most contested inventions of 20th-century architecture in Britain. Several, sometimes contradictory, studies have been conducted about its social value and the history of its rise and fall has been told numerous times.²

What has not received extensive attention, however, is the role of the architectural print media page in the critical debate around this new spatial invention. Journals like *The Architectural Review (AR)* and *Architectural Design (AD)* fundamentally shaped the debate at the time and both magazines covered the opening of Park Hill with lengthy articles. *The AR* published a criticism by Reyner Banham and *AD* dedicated an entire issue to the city of Sheffield with illustrations by Roger Mayne. With the listing of the estate and the controversial decision to sell it to a private developer, a new critical discussion has re-emerged in recent years. 50 years after its first appearance in the architectural press, Park Hill has demanded its attention again with its first redeveloped phase in 2011.

As the first built and first listed streets-in-the-sky structure in the United Kingdom, Park Hill simultaneously exemplifies the historic value of this typology, as well as its present relevance. With the assessment of its streets-in-the-sky through their portrayals on the journal page instead of its built manifestation, this study provides an alternative theoretical comprehension of this typology through the 'method of theorising architectural history from the archive of journal publishing'.³ It unveils a different reading of the history of Park Hill and its streets-in-the-sky by using the journal article not only as a source of information, but as a site of construction of the contested discussion itself.

Through in-depth study of the articles as a whole, this study investigates, how these representations in text, drawing, and image have constructed a certain image of streets-in-the-sky. It reveals the fundamental role that these articles played in the classification as a Brutalist working-class typology and highlights the antithetical agendas behind these representations. The comparison between the historic and contemporary articles further draws attention to the changed role of the critic within the close entanglement of the journals with the industry today and discloses, how this commercial bias precipitates a marginalisation of Park Hill's Brutalist ethos in its contemporary media representations.

¹ Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and Reality in Planned Housing* (London: Hilary Shipman Ltd, 1985).

² Christopher W. Bacon, *Streets-in-the-sky: The Rise and Fall of the Modern Architectural Urban Utopia* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 1982).

³ Robin Wilson, *Image, Text, Architecture: the Utopics of the Architectural Media* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2015), p.9.