

Momentary Monuments

Wilfried Kuehn

I translated at Momentary Monuments not Current Monument, but we can discuss this, it's an interesting question, what does momentary actually mean. Is it momentary or current, maybe it will become clear when I have spoken about the projects, that the one project especially.

I will show today. I think the idea of momentary here is not only indicating the fact that it's right now, or nowness of it, but also a certain essence ephemeral (43,3) and I would like to stress that. We will see it a little bit later. So, maybe the Momentary is also important as an idea.

The "House of One" in Berlin is -some of you might know- a project we are working on since a competition we won in 2012 and which soon to be build a Foundation works underway now and of course this is a project that would seem to have a lot to say about monumentality and it is close about the sacred spaces, three of them in here, a church, a synagogue and a mosque all together.

This program was already points towards an idea of the monumental. And of course, our design also stresses the certain ideas that we might have a common place of monumentality. Lack of openings in the façade, height of the building, all of that maybe read in such the way, there is a certain view from that building, hopefully over the city It is 44 meters high, stands out a bit. There were five preceding churches on that side and this is the oldest side of Berlin.

So, you might argue that's is monumental in the sense of this historical side and importance of this side. The building actually also works

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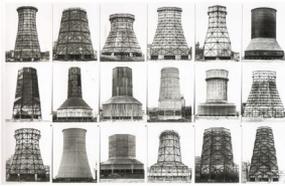
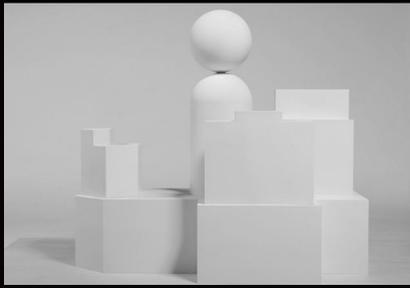
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as an archaeological museum on its lower part. So, all of that is true, the building at the same time is not been built yet. It has been exhibited many times. So, and what comes with the exhibition of this building is always a discourse on architecture. Not so much because it's being built but because it's a discourse maybe and because you can speak about certain aspects of it. We exhibited in Paris, this is the Saint Cadre there we show it as a one-to-one floor plan on the ground of the big hall of the Saint Cadre in Paris. Then we exhibited in the WNA in London when they bought the model for the model collection that was shown in a more classical way. It has been shown in volumetric model is on show right now with the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Thüringen ministry.

And it has been under the Chicago Venue. And in all these occasions we actually understood that the model is attracts and we made very different models because it some through the model that we can discuss different aspects of the project. This model particularly was the competition model. It is very small actually and still attracts a lot of attention here and still maybe monumentality is not about bigness after all. Maybe it could be very small, it could be not physical, it could be in affect rather than an object, could be somehow, could have to do with distribution, with frequency, with presence, with impact in the public sphere. Maybe that's also a way of understanding monumental before we even think about it been built or been big. So, I would like to start my argument from here from this point of view and go to some arguments starting from

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the art world. You all know a specially in this region Hilla und Bernd Becher, now in the west of Germany, in the Siegerland specially have collected typologies and every day local buildings, very extensively taken picture of them, cataloged them, exhibited them.

I find that this a very monumental work although what at shows is not monuments. So, it is somehow for me similar to what happens, in the teens of the twentieth century, when Gropius first and then also Le Corbusier showed this grain elevators from the United States at that time, the left one being shown by Gropius the right one by Le Corbusier. Corbusier took away they gable roofs when he published it, but it's the same elevator. And this were perceived rather monumental. But not because they are big, but because they are archetypes I think. And this is something that then returns after the fifties, after the world war two, in the fifties with people like Raimund Abraham, who published this book that you know "Elementare Architektur", where we see gable buildings. There just as an anonymous the grain elevators.

Just as utilitarian, just as normal -quote on quote- and I would argue they have very monumental aspects. The same I would argue for this hut or grain elevator published by Aldo Rossi in his Autobiografie Scinetifica (1981) where he also uses certain archetypical model-like spaces on buildings to illustrates his discourse. And of course, Rudofski with Architecture without Architects made a very morphological approach to this theme, actually not showing even buildings so much but also let say urban fabric. Tissue, were actually

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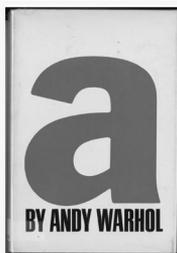
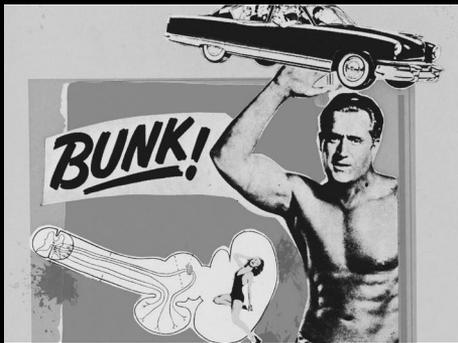
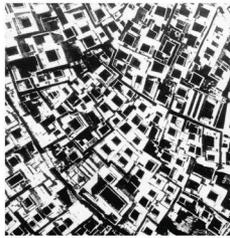
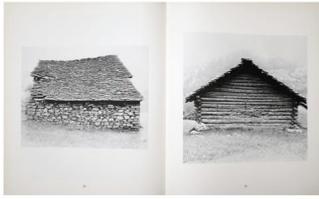
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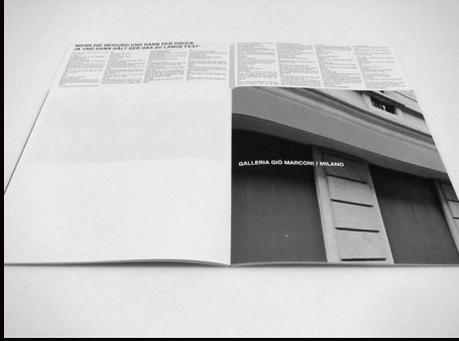
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GALLERIA GIO MARCONI / MILANO

noch weiter das ist zu hoch
 warte ein bisschen gehe ich da noch run-
 ter warte weil das war doch zu hoch
 warte mal würde das vielleicht helfen
 ja probier mal mache mal jetzt
 ja gut oh Scheiße das ist
 ja sauber was ist denn das schon wieder
 ey was ist denn da passiert
 darf ich mal stören
 was schließt du denn
 ich gehe jetzt dann nach Hause
 ja
 brauchst du mehr Leute Leute hier für
 Zeichenband nein
 auch
 oder macht ihr heute keine mehr
 doch doch wir rüsten hier noch werden
 wir sehen wie weit wir da kommen
 weil die Frage wäre weil die Leute ja
 gleich nichts haben da müssen die trotz-
 dem warten
 ja ja
 oder soll Egon noch nachher runter wie
 viel Leute sind denn hier
 na Egon auf jeden Fall ich brauche ich
 brauche einen der verrückt zur Hand ist
 oder andersrum wenn wenn wir nachher
 zwei für das Zeichenband einen da also
 vier Leute
 kannst ja nachher aufnehmen dann brä-
 che ich nicht zehn Leute hier lassen kann
 ja Egon dann nachher mit wasser Truppe
 kommen
 ja kann er machen
 das sind drei
 ja
 Egon und zwei Männer
 ja genau
 würde ich dann nachher auch nehmen ja
 genau
 dann nicht das
 ja dann können die Frauen nach Hause
 gehen
 kannst du machen ja und Montag wieder
 einladen
 die sind eh
 ach so gut okay
 ja noch ein bisschen aber hinten ist das
 noch ein bisschen arg wenig
 hat mir gesagt na hat es alleine gemacht
 aha was heißt das was meinst du alleine
 ja einfach das Stechen und da sagt er
 und war es schön da sage ich nein alle-
 ne sage ich alleine
 zähle nach
 aus einfachen Stichstellen
 auf gar keinen Fall
 ich habe ich habe so
 schön
 ja mit so was kann man
 ja
 ja war es schön nein
 es nicht so schön
 ja
 mein dann machen
 zusammen
 ja ich weiß
 warum blöb der da
 hallo oh Gott
 wo
 hier oder was und oh
 vergessen
 nein das mache ich
 was hast du denn Kull
 tm
 wie viel na du bist ja
 das habe ich dir doch
 ja ich weiß
 ja nein weil weil er will
 und im Prinzip hat der
 er braucht dafür jetzt
 ja ich muss mal guck
 finde ey was sagst du



we transcend the object. And the monumentality comes out of the fact that so many people would built exactly in the same way, typologically and actually creates something like a collective space made out of private spaces. So, there is a discourse starting here and then I would like to quote Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson who wrote Gropius and you all know this quote, of course, but I have to do that'. Gropius wrote a book on grain silos, Le Corbusier one on airplanes at Charlotte Perriand brought in your object to the office every morning but today we collect ads. We must get the measure of mass production advertising if we are to match its powerful and exciting impulses with our own. So, the Smithsons who then together with Paolozzi and Henderson made these spectacular exhibitions with the independent group in London in the nineteen fifties. They do address the question of the monumental without mentioning the word but this is very monumental what they do: cutting out ads from the American news magazines that came across the ocean after the world war, introducing this kind of monumental consumerism in two European post war culture. That was probably more astir at the time still and. And I would like to make an argument out of like this, because I think that the monumental that comes from here could also be a very good way of understanding monumentality today we should think then of social media, we should think of twitter and what that means if that Donald Trump has 100 million people following on twitter. This is also monumental and this is the question what is the role of architecture in relation to that.

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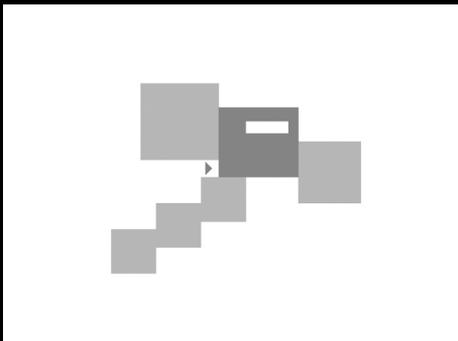
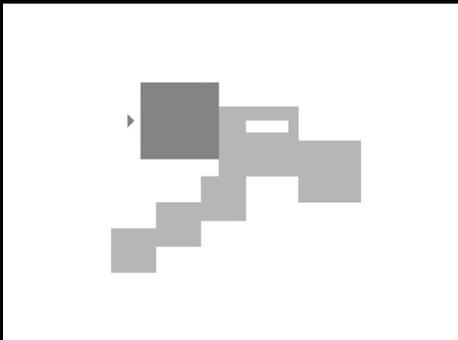
So, this was our starting point when we founded our office in the early 2000s and we had the first exhibition at gallery aedes and the Berlinische Galerie and also in Milan Gio Marconi where we exhibited our first work 2004 and 2005 and we called it "Momentary Monuments". The same title that are used today and the idea was to actually to speak about our work not by showing models and by showing the work but actually by discussing somehow an inherent monumentality that for us was derived more from easy and temporary use of things but from a certain form of distribution. And I would say from the everyday and here we go back to the discourse about the archetypes. So, we will ask to exhibit 'and we asked actually a colleague Michael Riedel' who is an artist, to help us exhibit, because we felt somehow us architect we would not want show our work in an arty way, we would not also want to show just a documentation. So, we spoke to Michael Riedel 'and Riedel how at the time considered himself to be also a writer specially made a lot of reference to Andy Warhol and the famous novel Andy Warhol wrote called "a". A novel which is basically a transcript of a tape recorded everyday life - experience of two weeks in New York with Andy Warhol and his friends and it's basically a novel just transcribed from reality. So, that was the starting point. You don't invent, you transcribe reality very much like the Rudowski picture of the flat houses. You just have the tape recorder, you have this ongoing text, text that just speaks of the everyday. So, what Michael Riedel did for the exhibition. We started from the catalogue,

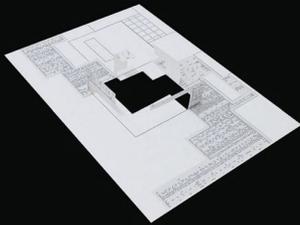
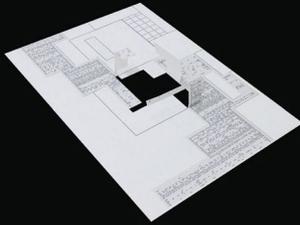
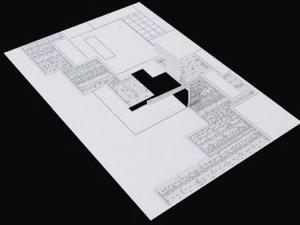
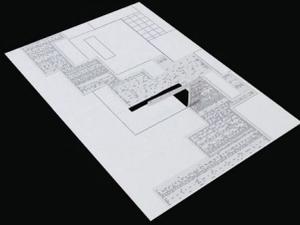
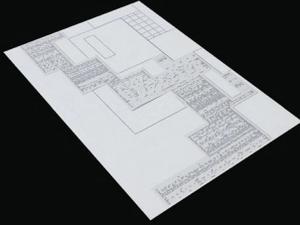
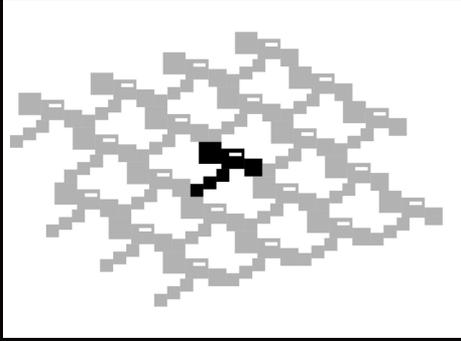
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Bauwelt
39-40.11

Versagen in Saarbrücken
Erweiterungsbau für die Galerie der Gegenwart





because we were fascinated with was making this Aedes catalogue, there was this Aedes catalogue some of one remember, most architects have done an exhibition there at least in this country. So, it was first a great honor to do it, but we actually wanted to avoid this space. So, we won a space of the publication to be our space of showing, because we felt architecture is architecture without there and here it is something else.

But Riedel then tape-recorded all the production processes of the catalogue in out of that in large the format at the catalogue printed at in extra edition that was a fore format made it square into rectangle and had an extra text on top. This extra text told the story of the production of the catalogue staring at the designer, the graphic designer, then the printer, the bookbinder and the bookseller. So, he recorded original situations and he also made an installation. This is one of the for where he 'this is Francis and the Eiermann table' it's all made in wood: white, model like and it was the selling situation at Bücherbogen at the time, next to Aedes, it was one of four installations. And on this table the book was available in the exhibition, his book of course, the one with the extra. So, we talked about the momentary here, the temporary, the ephemeral in the mediatic, both in the way we show the projects themselves and I think what we wanted to say is even of our projects were very small and temporary at the time, what they wanted to be is monument in the sense to relate a collectivity, to relate a publicness, to the commons. So, the exhibition somehow translated this aspect. And Riedel

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who you see here in the image with this little tape-recorders and machinery always worked on that level. Now, some years later, ten years to be sure, we were asked to do a competition in Saarbrücken in the Saarland, where we again work confronted with the situation it seemed to very messy and for us somehow impossible to deal with alone.

And we asked Michael Riedel - the same college from the time before - to work with us on a competition and we participated together, but first of all, what we found was there was a building ruin. In Saarbrücken there was a competition that was held, the building that was done and then stalled and this reminded us of the situation basically it was facade competition at that point at seemed - and that remind us very much of the question we were confront in 2008 when we took part in the competition for the Berlin Palace called Humboldtforum, where we made a contribution, where we actually try to challenge the idea of the monumental reconstruction in this case by saying it is not so much about reconstructing the image of the building as it is about the substance and you can actually read through the substance a time in a way. So, we wanted to make a finished brick shell construction. It could be later on decorated.

So, to speak, with historical reproductions of barock ornaments and according to the process, how much private money would actually flow into this, it would be more or less complete. So, this idea of the incomplete which you see here in Alberti's façade of Sant Andrea in Mantua which has always had a great impact on me when I was studying in Milan

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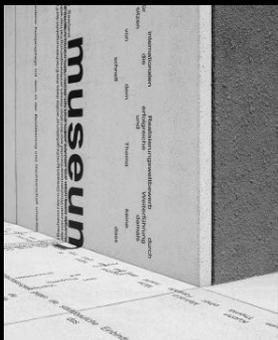
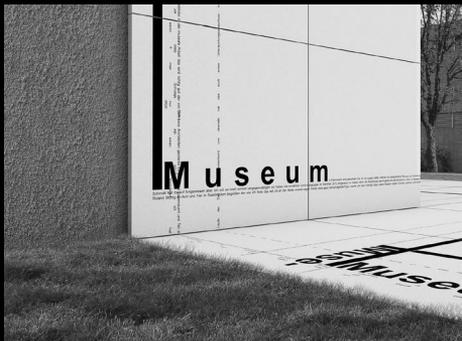
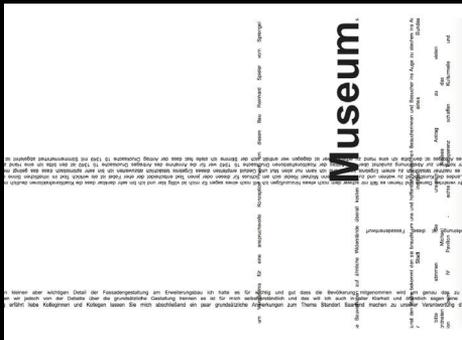
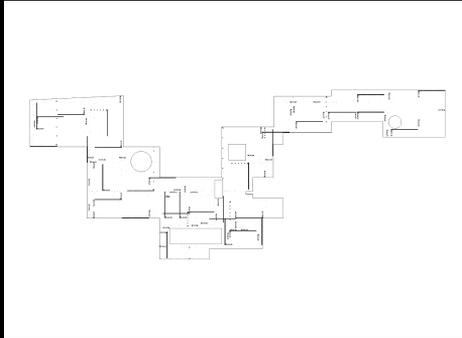
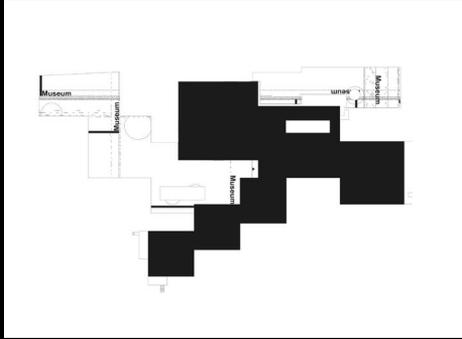
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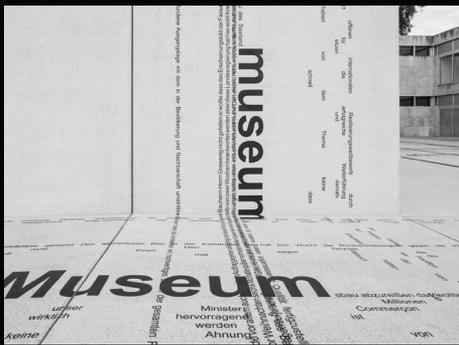
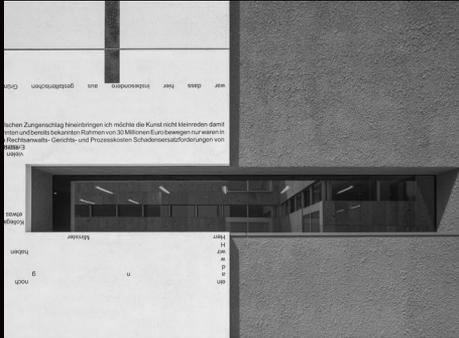
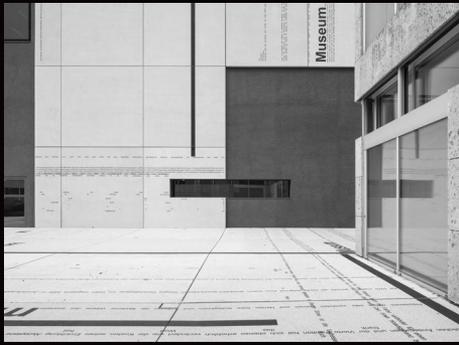
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and we went in the weekends, this idea of the facade, it is a side façade, the lateral façade. It is finished and unfinished at the same time. It's a brick relief, of course it could have been clad and stone and probably that would have been, that would have happen had everything gone wright, but as it is, it doesn't go always everything right and is still a collective memory here and the collective memory that speaks about the power relation, that speaks about the catholic church, the merchants, the rich, enriched bourgeoisie of the time, the citizens at large - and I think that all of this is a manifest on architecture and it is a very beautiful relief, that shows us, that can be read as a book, as an open book and it is collective memory. For me it is very monumental, not because it's big, not because it's built but because somehow, I can read it. I can read the contradictions in it, too.

So, now go back to Saarbrücken, we were somehow facing a building that was left over, an architect that had left, the museum director that was fired, a politician that had to step down, because it was a scandal and the question was, what can we do with this. It is a very beautiful complex: three pavilions plus two big pavilions and this is the exception in front of it. It's a building that started with the first pavilion 1968 and we have to remember this is the time when also Mies did the Neue Nationalgalerie and when Phillip Johnson did the Kunsthalle in Bielefeld not far from here. So, it is the time they was ready somehow a late modern turning point. But Schönecker, Hans Schönecker an architect from Saarbrücken, not so known, won the competition with this

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pavilion concept because you could actually build it year after year enlarged and so it had been enlarged for so many times and the last pavilion for the contemporary art was to be built and was already there as a steel contraction. This was what we found and what is also interesting he used this Nagelfluh stone that looks like concrete because he couldn't use concrete, exposed concrete at the time, because it was not yet agreeable to make an exposed concrete building, but he wanted to do that initially.

So, the situation was this, as I said everyone had left and they made a new competition and it was not so easy to participate because we thought you can only get into the mess and then probably not out again but we kind of felt together with Michael Riedel. We could actually give answer to this problem and we would actually try not to start from the overcoming the problem but actually, start from the problem itself, from the problem that was imbedded in the extension as it was planned it should have become like a new entrance to the museum. We discarded that idea and brought the entrance back to the central pavilion that was built in 1968, the very first one, the nucleus of the whole ensemble and the upper new pavilion does becoming an extension just like the others, so actually going back to Schönecker and his original idea. But this of course creates also the question, what happens then in between all this pavilion in the landscape, because all of a sudden its important that actually the entrance is to be found because it's also hidden now by the new building. So, it created a new kind of attention for

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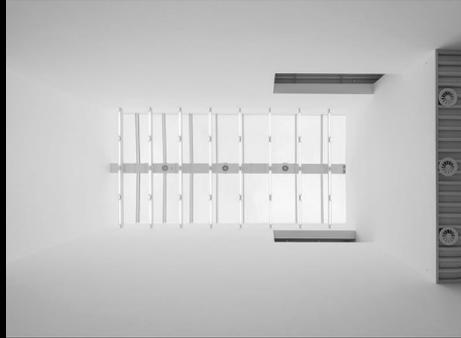
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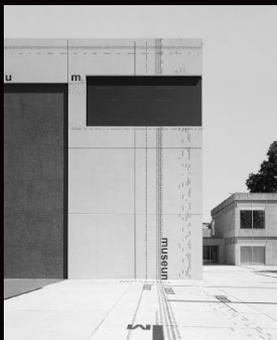
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the exterior, of course the competition was completely ignoring the fact even an exterior existed. It was only an architectural competition. We brought an artist and we brought a landscape idea. Because I think, you have to think a whole, we have to think this space as a whole and what Riedel did he actually used the Schönecker footprint and somehow transformed it into a shape mirrored it and made it at as basic square footprint that then could become like an infinite textile drawing and from this he developed a model, which is our basic presentation model now. It's just paper and you can fold it up. So, when you folded it up on the fore side then actually it becomes a building. What do you fold up? You folded up basically the square that is like an animal skin on the ground and this skin carries a text. But what text? This was now the question. We wanted the work with the transcribed text just like in 2005 and just like Andy Warhol did.

That actually related this whole architectural experience now back to the political and social event of a failure and its overcoming.

So, the question was what text, first wanted to ask the competition at the procedure itself to actually make into a text, to actually have a tape recorder with us at the presentation. Then we had the whole competition and a decision process to be tape recorded of course, it is not possible legally, especially the jury cannot be tape recorded, which would have been the one interesting for us. So, we had a legal problem there and then we proposed actually use

the text of the parliamentary debate that ac-

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tually then to over this project, once we have presented once we won the competition and once everything had to be decided politically, it went in to the parliament. In Parliament were also the culprit set of the time before, the whole idea, the whole process was being somehow redigested and in that sense what happens: this whole debate now is written actually one the façade and, on the floor. Every one, every name of all the politician, of all the people fired, all reappears, but reappears as an ornament. You cannot literary read it, but it's still there. I was a big discussion with the politicians themselves, of course, if this is possible. They were all against of course, but they in the end approved it and it became a somehow pattern all on its one. Riedel composed it in two directions. He had it flow in to an InDesign file then at became all the time the museum appeared he mad it bigger.

So, he somehow created this kind of hierarchy and for the rest, this is our rendering we did only rendering we did for the whole project. This is the printer coming actually and doing the print with its really printed on, because Riedel usually works with prints, it's really print making on the for by for meter on the terrazzo slabs and this is the final result as it looks, still very much like a model, like a rendering and is a process basically now the way it come about but it is also a process that is being printed and somehow it had a cathartic effect. Everyone in the end reembraced the museum. It became a used successful the people in Saarbrücken especially, they overcame the political crisis not by removing it from the conscience but actually looking at it eve-

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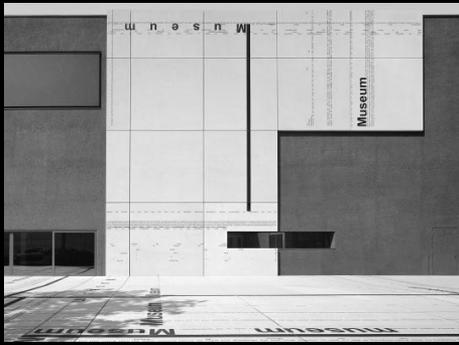
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ry day. So, this is a quite interesting thing that actually by reading also failure by reading the past by really not removing things from our eye but showing it, actually, even if it becomes ornamental, it becomes somehow part again. It can be reintegrated into to the live of people and his has a monumental aspect as it speaks of the collective history.

And somehow it is very funny to read, by the way, you are standing there and some people find their names. So, this is how it looked in the end. And then one more word, it's a museum after all. We know the museums have the problem of being very sheltered, museums are not most transparent buildings, that has to do with the condition of exhibiting.

Exhibits are very fragile, exhibits require a lot of care and also of protection, both in terms of climate, light but also in terms of security.

And the process of doing that is usually making buildings very opaque this is true and also this building is very opaque. So, for us museums cannot be transparent in by being glassed probably this true for also parliaments and for other buildings is well.

And again, the facade can speak and there can be transparency at another level and I think that is what we are trying to achieve, but then you have also the art inside but first was important here that the art inside and the art outside somehow come together again. The whole museum actually is from the inside and from the outside now a place exhibiting art and basically you can read also the intervention of Riedel as an applied art work, you can basically read it just like a work in the museum that applied on the walls. You can read it as a

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work outside and applied to the museum as a display. We also like to think the museum in that sense is a big frame or patterment. And I think this is a way we wanted to show the collecting the collected is really what is the monumental.

And to finish, I show you just a very short sequence of images by Hans-Christian Schink, how took pictures, you probably know him as a photographer. He took pictures before and after. First of the building ruins and then of the finished building. There are also many aspects of detail of course that I didn't talk about and they don't matter today for instance the screen element of cut hedges he made in the center of the outside spaces is actually mirroring a space from Hans Schönecker, patio in the inside that will you see in a second. So, we kind of sort together the old and the new here. It is also about, how to respectfully integrate with the existing by adding certain elements. I would read the whole now as a monumental complex, not just a building, but actually its all the space, all the square going towards the old building and reintegrating at into the new. And this is Hans Schöneckers patio in the very first pavilion that is actually mirrored to the outside as a negative of course in the pattern of Riedel.

Thank you.