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Pre-fabricated one-family Houses

by Erwin Mühlestein

The appearance of pre-fabricated houses on the market is an entirely new phenomenon for Switzerland. This is the supply side of the picture: we do not know as yet how great the demand will be. The advantages adduced by the manufacturers in their advertising are by no means the qualities which we expect of the pre-fab house. What is offered is simply a 'ready-to-move-into house at a fixed price', and they go on to say that it does not look like a pre-fab house and does not entail any standardization. This Issue examines what is on the market in the line of pre-fab houses in an attempt to find out which types are genuine and satisfactory from the design point of view. In this connection the following systems are conceivable: skeleton type of construction consisting of supporting frame with panel or cavity filler elements, element type of construction composed of elements which carry themselves as well as the roof load, large-slab construction composed of self-supporting slabs that have to be assembled with construction machinery, space-involving element construction consisting of three-dimensional elements that can be compactly transported, circular cavity construction composed of spatial elements consisting of floor, roof and two walls, cavity construction involving stacking of entire spatial units on the building site, composite cavity elements that are folded out upon assembly, movable houses.

The Trelement House

Architect: Eberhard G. Rensch, Frankfurt am Main

The Trelement house consists of a supporting construction, which is made up, in plan, of unilateral triangles measuring 230 cm along a side.

Quelle Pre-fab House

Manufacturer: Quelle-Fertighaus GmbH, Fürth (Bavaria)

A supporting steel frame structure is erected on a foundation built on the site; sandwich panels are then brought into position.

Hoesch Bungalow

Manufacturer: Hoesch AG, Bandstahlwerk, Hamm (Westphalia)

Steel frame construction with sandwich panels of composite 'Platal' plastic-steel sheets.

Bloc pronto

Architect: Eduardo Anahory

Manufacturer: Cogialu S.A., Boulogne-sur-Seine

This living-room unit with corner window can be delivered as hotel room, week-end house or construction workers' barracks.

Multi-family House according to the Elcon System

Architects: Fritz Stucky and Rudolf Meuli, Zug

The pre-fab construction cell units are shipped on flatcars and assembled on the site as school buildings, kindergartens, office buildings, etc.

Plastic Pre-fab House

Designer: Andreas Christen, Zurich

Walls, ceilings and floors of this pre-fab house consist of statically shaped two-ply plastic panels with a centre insulation layer.

Nursery in St. Gall and Double Kindergarten in Frauenfeld

Architect: Max Graf, St. Gall

The pre-fab elements are suspended together with 'Menig System' bolted metal stoppers and protected on the outside with a bolted-on asbestos-cement slab.

Design for a Multi-storey Residence Cell Combination

Architect: Paul Maymont, Paris

A home can be assembled by combination employing a two-storey cell element, which can alone serve as a small week-end house.

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Student Residence of the Institute for Design, Ulm/Danube

Institute for Industrialized Construction. Direction: Herbert Ohl, Ulm

The cell units are fitted together employing tubular concrete elements and are intended to be stacked without reinforcement.

Terrapin Construction Unit

Manufacturer: Terrapin Ltd., Bletchley, Buckinghamshire

The construction element, consisting of roof, floor and two walls, is assembled, delivered and folded open on the building site.

The Comprehensive Construction System

Architects: A.R. Boutwell & F.M. Mitchell, Epping, Essex

The system is based on the principle of a movable supporting unit and non-supporting wall panels, which can be assembled on the construction site within very few hours.

Sculpture by Hanspeter Fitz in the Institute of Technology, Stuttgart

by Heinz Keller

The sculptor Hanspeter Fitz, born in 1929, created in 1963 for the entrance hall of a section of the Institute of Technology in Stuttgart a sculptural figure measuring around 5 x 4 x 2 m. It is suspended on wires in the upper part of the hall and consists of irregular perforated slabs composed of thin brass tubes soldered together. The surfaces are polished and act as reflectors, so that as the observer moves he becomes aware of a constantly varying play of shadows, gleaming and glistening metallic surfaces. The whole sculpture gives the appearance of hovering diagonally through the hall, but at the same time each element suggests a quivering readiness to start moving. These lines of force set up by the sculpture are related to the falling veils of water to be seen in the Stuttgart fountains by the same artist, which describe standing prisms.

Jean Lecoultre

by Georges Peillex

The painter Jean Lecoultre was born in Lausanne in 1930. From 1953 on he was resident for a number of years in Madrid; at the present time he again lives in Lausanne. His first works betrayed his admiration for Paul Klee. In Madrid his independent artistic personality developed. From 1955 to 1957 his painting became brighter, and there appeared in it hieratically severe human figures. Since 1957 his palette has grown darker once more; the depth dimension in which the figure partially merges has become important, and a dramatic tension has grown ever more pronounced. Lecoultre is now a painter of our age, in whose pictures there is reflected the dynamic spirit of the film, television, the motor-car and automation. There make their appearance in a pale light, fleeting, dissolving shapes and motions. The extraordinary motility of the scenes stems from the vortex of onrushing impressions received in modern big cities.

The sculptor Silvio Mattioli

by Paul Nizon

The sculptor Silvio Mattioli, who works in iron, was born in Winterthur in 1929. In his field he is quite alone. Iron is an anti-naturalistic material, and sculptors who use it seldom produce fully rounded shapes with it. Mattioli, however, creates figurative fully developed shapes. They comprise life-sized torsos, half or full figures, figures of warriors of reduced size and stick-like forms. Mattioli handles his iron sculptures on the anvil and in the fire as others proceed with wax tablets. This iron rout of disorderly figures, these chimeras, devils and demons represent the struggle with the ideas of mutability and death, embodying a conception that is in its quality of feeling baroque and very much in the Italian manner.

Gustave Eiffel's Viaduct of Rouzat-sur-Sioule

by Otto Kolb

Familiarity with the engineering constructions of the 19th century can stimulate design ideas applying new materials and new shapes.

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