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Summaries in English

The Visual World by Adolf Portmann

The more scientific knowledge of reality has progressed, the more the image of the world has receded from the sense manifold and its atavistic frames of reference. The so-called Ptolemaic universe corresponded to our concrete experience. The first split came with the rise of the Copernican world, for even though the latter conformed to what classical philosophy called the forms of sensory experience, it did not continue to do so from the time the scientific universe became Copernico-Einsteinian. How, in our age of intellectuality and technology, can man be given his essential unity, lacking which he is neither truly himself nor capable of real happiness? This is above all an educational problem which especially concerns teachers in charge of visual training. Their goal properly understood should be the encouragement of intuitive values to offset the inevitable rationalism arising from the exact disciplines taught pupils, so that a healthy integration of affectivity and intelligence may be achieved. This task is all the more urgent because the vast increase of pictures due to the multiplication of reproduction techniques (press, etc.) is continually giving rise to a new illiteracy (visually speaking). Properly conceived, visual training is indicated if we are to restore the equilibrium, which is at present unbalanced or at least seriously menaced, among the faculties of the mind.

The New Secondary School in Bellinzona 1958, Architect: Alberto Camenzind FAS/SIA, Lugano

In the Ticino, unlike the rest of Switzerland, school buildings have hitherto remained traditional, so that the now completed Bellinzona secondary school constitutes a happy innovation. Built in a newly planted green belt, it houses the four lower classes of the grammar school (15 classrooms plus special classrooms). The building as a whole, constructed of admirably simple materials, presents a remarkable and well-organized abundance of spaces and volumes.

The New Cantonal School at Wetzikon 1957, Architects: Schucan and Ziegler FAS/SIA, Zurich

Before 1952 the law authorized only two Cantonal Schools in the Canton of Zurich (Zurich and Winterthur). The new school, which is situated in the Zurich Oberland, is intended to create an equilibrium between town and country. It houses a secondary (6½ years), a modern (4½ years) and a commercial school (3 years). Simple construction in raw concrete, with all the furnishings designed especially for this building.

The Mural Paintings of Rudolf Mägl in the Sandgruben School I (Basle) 1958, Architect: Rudolf Mägl, Basle

Following his models submitted in competition (1952), R. M. has executed on the rear wall, divided in three by two columns, of a small courtyard these three paintings, two of them ("Building Site" and "Workshop") giving happy proof of this artist's affinity with the naive painters. The third ("Co-op Salesgirl") is characterized by an adroitly managed chromatic rhythm.

A Mural Painting by Albert Schnyder by Max Hugger

This painting executed for the new school at Bassecourt (Bernese Jura) and evoking life in this village before and after the industrialisation, for its rhythmic quality, free of all narrative elements, deserves to be considered a highly personal work and one which is significant in the development of mural painting in Switzerland.

School at Hedingen (Canton of Zurich) 1958, Architect: Otto Glaus FAS/SIA, Zurich, in collaboration with W. Kern, Zurich

The necessity of preventing mutual annoyance as regards noise between the new and the old school as well as the scarceness of available sites led to interesting solutions. As for street noise, the plan allows for the acoustic isolation of the classrooms. In addition, uniting several types of manual work in one classroom has given good results in the way of more unrestrained teaching.

School Building Extension at Davos-Platz 1957/58, Architects: Krähenbühl & Bühler, Davos

For reasons of economy, the construction of this new primary school, designed for twelve classrooms, is being carried out in stages, the first of which, now completed, comprises the classrooms for the four lower grades. The building has a massive construction of "verrucano", a beautiful local reddish stone. Flat roof, owing to slow melting of snowfalls. Especial attention devoted to interior colour scheme. The stairway is decorated with a fresco by Turo Pedretti, whose son Giulio has, moreover, done a remarkable graffiti.

Secondary School "Im Schnegg" at Näfels (canton of Glarus) 1957/58, Architect: Thomas Schmid SIA, Zurich

A 6-classroom school, plus a music room, a science room, a domestic science kitchen and a manual training room. The commune was as open-minded about artistic decoration as it was insistent in its demands for a cubic construction. Concrete reliefs by Emanuel Jacob.

Mural Reliefs by Emanuel Jacob in the Schools at Näfels and in Allenmoos-Zurich 1958, Architect: Emanuel Jacob

At Näfels the sculptural idea emerges from the technical process: the relief was poured in concrete at the same time as the wall.—In Zurich the large-scale work having already been completed, the relief was fixed before the wall, the intention being to mitigate the cubic severity of the construction.

Secondary School at Mollis (Canton of Glarus) 1958, Architect: G. Leuzinger, Jun., Zurich

Schoolrooms with daylight entering on two sides; some of the lamps designed by the architect; colour scheme by the Zurich graphic artist Karl Schmid.

On the Use of Colour in Schools by Karl Schmid

In every architectural space, colour ought never to be used except as an auxiliary element in the total architectural scheme. In schools, e.g., the function of colour, by making the premises more attractive, will be to offset the hyperrationalism of the instruction. But in order for this effect to be truly achieved, it is necessary (when works of art displayed on the wall perform remain isolated) for the use of colour to be all-inclusive and in conformity with the plastic essence of the architectural whole. In this respect there are no rules of thumb. Each individual case calls for its own solution, if we wish our children to lead joyous and full lives.

Kindergarten at Tapiola, Helsinki 1956, Architect: Viljo Revell, Helsinki

Kindergarten and nursery of a new satellite town of the Finnish capital, this small building is intended for the children of working mothers. Part of it is also serving temporarily as a primary school.

Re-education Centre for the Blind in Haifa (Israel) Architects: M. Weinraub and A. Mansfeld

Designed for residents staying for varying periods (maximum six months), this centre has a rectilinear plan, and all materials were selected for their tactile properties, as an aid to orientation; for the same purpose, grouping of flower scents in the garden.

Sculpture of Bernhard Luginbühl in the Rossfeld School, Berne

The artist's inspiration for this vigorous evocation of a legionary composed of free oxyacetylene-welded iron elements no doubt stems from the fact that the site designated on the outskirts of Berne is a place where excavations have revealed that the site was already inhabited in the Roman period. B. L. was born in 1929.

Sculpture of Robert Lienhard in front of the Hohfurri School, Winterthur 1957

This "Contest with the Wind" in cast aluminium, height 3 m, looks from below like the prow of a ship, whereas, from courtyard level, even before one has identified its "theme"—child with his kite—one is aware of the intuitively imaginative dynamic relationship with the surrounding space.